

TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND RESILIENCE OF THE  
SOUTHERN PAIUTE HIGH CHIEF SYSTEM

By

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*Whatever you want to do in this world, it is achievable. The most important thing that I've found, that perhaps you could use, is be passionate and enthusiastic in the direction that you choose in life, and you'll be a winner.*

*~Steve Irwin*

The words of the late Steve Irwin are so true for me so I would like to take this space to acknowledge those who helped make this thesis a reality. Without them, this never would have been possible. First, I would like to thank all the Southern Paiute people who made this study happen: Larry Eddy and Betty Cornelius, Daniel Eddy, and Amelia Flores from Colorado River Indian Tribes, Richard Arnold from the Pahrump Paiute Tribe, Dorena Martineau, Lora Tom, Marilyn Jake, Ernestine Lehi, Alvin Marble, and Eleanor Tom from Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah. I would also like to thank the CRIT and PITU tribal councils for granting me permission to talk to their elders. Next, I would like to thank my committee, Nancy Parezo, Tom Holm, and Emory Sekaquaptewa. They have given me tremendous amounts of support and guidance through this painful process. Most importantly, I am forever indebted to my advisor and committee chair, Rich Stoffle. He has always been the best mentor, advisor, and friend anyone could ask for! He pushed and challenged me to make me stronger and better because he believed in me. He never let me give up. Tough Team forever! Lastly, I want to thank my mom. She is my rock. She was always there to listen about my trials and tribulations and my successes through this process. She always gave me her love and support and told me I could get this thesis done.

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## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to the Southern Paiute elders- those who are still with us and those who have made that journey to the other side. This is for you. I hope I do this story justice.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	8
LIST OF TABLES .....	9
ABSTRACT .....	10
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....	11
1.1: The Great Basin as a Region of Study.....	12
1.2: The Importance of Documenting the High Chiefs .....	14
1.3: Methodology .....	16
1.4: Summary of the Remaining Chapters.....	19
CHAPTER TWO: SOUTHERN PAIUTE TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND CO-ADAPTATION .....	21
2.1: Co-Adaptation and the Building of Ecological Knowledge .....	22
2.1.1: Local Ecological Knowledge.....	26
2.1.2: Traditional Ecological Knowledge.....	27
2.1.3: Indigenous Ecological Knowledge.....	29
2.1.4: Intermediate Disturbance.....	32
2.2: Southern Paiute Epistemology- Puha .....	35
2.3: Southern Paiute Environmental Knowledge .....	38
2.3.1: Southern Paiute Agriculture.....	39
2.3.2: Whiptail Lizard Eye Surgery .....	50
2.4: Conclusion .....	55

## TABLE OF CONTENTS- Continued

## CHAPTER THREE: NUWUVI NEE-YAHVEE: THE SOUTHERN PAIUTE HIGH

CHIEF SYSTEM .....	57
3.1: The Southern Paiute Nation .....	58
3.1.1: Paranayi Subtribe .....	61
3.1.2: Yanawant Subtribe .....	62
3.1.3: Southern Paiute Districts .....	62
3.1.4: Local Communities .....	66
3.1.5: John Wesley Powell and the Southern Paiute Census.....	67
3.2: The Structure of the Southern Paiute High Chief System .....	68
3.2.1: <i>Tivitsitog<sup>wa</sup>intimi</i> : The High Chiefs .....	71
3.2.2: <i>Mi<sup>2y</sup>aupitog<sup>wa</sup>intimi</i> : Lesser Chiefs .....	75
3.2.3: Advisory Chiefs .....	76
3.2.4: High Chiefs and Power.....	78
3.3: The Roles and Function of the High Chiefs.....	79
3.3.1: Environmental Management.....	80
3.3.2: Traditional Exchange.....	84
3.3.3: Ceremony.....	88
3.4: Resiliency of the High Chiefs .....	92
3.4.1: Resiliency Tested- Responses to Encroachment.....	95
3.5: Chief Tecopa .....	102
3.6: Conclusions .....	103

TABLE OF CONTENTS- Continued

CHAPTER FOUR: GREAT BASIN HIERARCHY AND THE DECONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL COMPLEXITY .....	105
4.1: Culture Change in the Great Basin .....	105
4.1.1: From Dominguez and Escalante’s Farmers to Steward’s Hunter-Gatherers .....	106
4.1.2: What is Culture Change? .....	111
4.2: Culture Change in Southern Paiute Communities.....	113
4.2.1: European Encroachment.....	113
4.2.2: Disease Episodes .....	121
4.2.3: What is Devolution? .....	123
4.3: Hierarchy in the Great Basin.....	125
4.3.1: Julian Steward.....	125
4.3.2: Omer Stewart .....	129
4.3.3: Richard Stoffle .....	130
4.4: Conclusion .....	131
APPENDIX A: COPYRIGHTS AND PERMISSIONS .....	132
APPENDIX B: FIGURES .....	133
APPENDIX C: POWELL AND INGALLS’ SOUTHERN PAIUTE HIGH CHIEFS CENSUS DATA .....	138
APPENDIX D: SURVEY INSTRUMENT USED.....	144
REFERENCES.....	153

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 2.1: Co-Adaptation and Diachronic Learning Model.....	23
FIGURE 2.2: Couching Procedure.....	54
FIGURE 3.1: Map of the Southern Paiute Nation with Subtribal Boundaries .....	59
FIGURE 3.2: Map of Traditional Southern Paiute Territory.....	60
FIGURE 3.3: The Structure of the Southern Paiute High Chief System .....	69

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1.1: Interviews Conducted.....	18
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## ABSTRACT

Southern Paiutes of the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau have a deep connection to their environment. Since Creation, Southern Paiutes maintain that it is their duty to manage their environment to promote growth and sustainability within their ecosystem. They have developed numerous strategies and activities that have been integrated into their cultural system that increases biodiversity and biocomplexity throughout their homeland. The Southern Paiutes had a traditional leadership system that was responsible for the maintenance of social and ecological order throughout the Southern Paiute nation. The Southern Paiute leadership, more commonly referred to as the High Chiefs, was a multi-layered system that functioned on national, regional, and local levels. This essay examines the roles and functions the High Chiefs had traditionally in Southern Paiute culture and how it was used to maintain the Southern Paiute way of life and their environment.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since the beginning of ethnographic research, scholars have been interested in how different cultures organize themselves socially, politically, and spiritually.

Examining structure has allowed scholars to understand and explain how cultural groups function, relate to themselves, and maintain relations with other cultural groups.

Ethnographic research has also explored how cultural groups' political leaders possess certain societal and religious roles. Building upon this long-standing ethnographic tradition, this volume explores the socio-political structure of the Southern Paiutes, a Native American group whose traditional territory spans four states and two diverse ecological regions.

The lands of the Southern Paiute nation range from the low desert brush of the Mojave Desert along the western bank of the Colorado River, to lush riparian regions of southern Nevada, to the upland regions of southern and central Utah and northern Arizona. The Southern Paiutes have lived in this territory for at least 12,000 years. This long-term inhabitation has resulted in an intimate relationship with their environment through complex social and ecological understandings. These understandings and relationships exist on a social and spiritual level. In the past, the Southern Paiute leadership, also known as the High Chiefs System, had the task to ensure the people upheld these relationships. The High Chiefs also were responsible for other tasks such as negotiating exchange of goods and services within the boundaries of traditional Southern Paiute territory and beyond, and taking part in ceremonial activities.

The High Chiefs system was a resilient dimension of Southern Paiute culture until it collapsed in the early 1900s when it was disrupted due to the arrival of Euro-Americans. The High Chiefs system encountered perturbations beyond its capacity to return to pre-disturbance levels thus it declined in frequency and function due to the invasion of Euro Americans, their animals, and their diseases. Also contributing to the system's decline was that Southern Paiute people were forced away from their major water resources and found their traditional lands being encroached upon and taken away.

### **1.1 The Great Basin as a Region of Study**

The Great Basin is an environmentally and sociologically complex region. The Great Basin covers a one-third of the western United States. The Great Basin extends into four states, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, and Utah. The Great Basin is bounded by the Sierra Nevada in the west, Wasatch Mountains to the east, southern Cascades, and the Snake River plains to the north, and the Mojave Desert, Colorado Plateau, and the Colorado River to the south.

The Great Basin is considered basin-and-range country, which means that literally hundreds of relatively small parallel mountain ranges rise out of the desert plains. Most ranges run north to south and are short fault block volcanic ranges (Grayson 1994).

The Great Basin is like a large bowl in which all the water that enters the basin becomes part of the region's hydrological system and does not flow to the ocean. The rivers all flow towards the region's lakes. Some of the lakes and rivers are now dry but during extremely wet periods like at the end of the Pleistocene were flowing above

ground like the Amaragosa River, which flowed from central Nevada into California and emptied into Lake Manley in what is now Death Valley (Grayson 1993).

The Great Basin is a diverse desert ecosystem that has many different species of plants and animals. In the low elevation deserts, plants such as creosote, Mojave yucca, desert trumpets, and Joshua trees can be found. These low elevation deserts are home for numerous species of reptiles and small mammals like the desert tortoise, Great Basin rattlesnake, coyotes, and jackrabbits. As elevation increases, plants that are well adapted to colder temperatures exist, such as big sagebrush, Indian rice grass, piñon pine, and juniper. These habitats are home to animals like mule deer, mountain lions, and mountain sheep. When the elevation climbs to 8000 feet or above, plants like the ponderosa pine and quaking aspens are likely to be found (Beatley 1976, Grayson 1993).

The Great Basin is not only unique from an ecology and geology standpoint, but it is also unique from a human standpoint as well. The Great Basin is part of the traditional territory of the Numic language branch of the Uto-Aztecan language family. The Numic branch has three subcategories: western Numic, central Numic, and southern Numic. The different subcategories represent different geographical locations and ethnic groups. The western Numic language group is divided into Mono and Northern Paiute. Speakers of this group include the Owens Valley Paiute and the Northern Paiute groups of Bannock, McDermitt, Yerrington, and Schruz. The central Numic language group is comprised of Panamint and Shoshone. Speakers in this group include the Panamint Shoshone (Panamint), the Shoshone groups of Reese River, Austin, Duckwater, Ely, Battle Mountain, Elko, Ruby Valley, Owyhee of Duck Valley, Washakie, Fort Hall, and Wind

River, and the Goshute of Skull Valley. The southern Numic language group is divided into Kawaiisu, which is spoken by the Kawaiisu people and Southern Paiute-Ute, which is spoken, by the Southern Paiute and Ute tribes (Mithun 2001). All Great Basin peoples share similar languages, social structures, and similar epistemological beliefs (discussed in the next chapter).

### **1.2 The Importance of Documenting the High Chiefs**

The Great Basin as a culture region has long been an interest ethnographically for scholars and explorers dating back to the days of John Wesley Powell. The rise of Great Basin anthropology as an area study begins in the early the 1900s with Alfred Kroeber and then later Julian Steward. It has long been dominated by those who have reduced and homogenized Indian cultures to an essentializing categorization as simplistic hunter-gathers that were unable to organize above the extended family level without any form of religion. Since the 1930s, many scholars have often overlooked the existence of a complex political, and society system of the Numic speaking peoples. This interpretative and descriptive taxonomy is credited to Julian Steward. Steward reduced Numic cultures in order to fit his abstract theory of multi-linear evolution. Steward believed that societies develop and evolve at different rates and those rates were determined by the ecological setting. Steward described the Great Basin as a harsh environment in which it was difficult for complex societies to develop given their technology levels and thus his model reduced Paiute and Shoshone people to meager hunter-gathers who barely survived as they continuously roamed across the landscape in search of seeds and game (Steward 1955). Because Steward was a successful and powerful anthropologist, many

scholars that came after him chose to follow his model, (the last chapter further explores the Steward model further), and social and religious complexity was overlooked and purposely ignored.

Contrary to what many Great Basin scholars have stated, there is strong evidence in the historical and the ethnographic record that the Southern Paiute High Chiefs existed on the local, regional, and national levels (some examples: Laird 1976; Powell and Ingalls 1876; Stoffle and Dobyns 1983; Zedeño et al. 2003). There as been documentation of complexity amongst other Numic speaking groups such as the Northern Paiutes (Stewart 1939) and even Julian Steward documented complexity and social structure for the Owens Valley Paiutes (Steward 1933). It should be noted that complexity is being used here to counter claims by scholars that Great Basin peoples are simple. Complexity is understood as how societies organize themselves (Lewin 1993) and this can be reflected in, but not limited to, its socio-political structure, religious systems, and environmental uses and management.

An in-depth ethnographic description of the High Chiefs system's structure and functions is lacking in the literature so it is appropriate that a detailed study be undertaken. Now it the time to bring this aspect of Southern Paiute culture to the forefront. Steward's cultural model is outdated and it is important that Great Basin anthropology be brought into the modern period and move away the gastric interpretation of Numic culture. This document describes the Southern Paiute High Chiefs system and its traditional functions and it examines why scholars for have generally neglected this important aspect of Southern Paiute culture so long.

In addition to attempting to shift academic thinking on Southern Paiute culture, the most important goal of this document is to provide the Southern Paiute communities with a document that they can view as useful for cultural preservation initiatives. Cultural preservation and revitalization are common themes throughout Indian country and projects that seek to record tribal histories are extremely useful. This thesis has acted as a vehicle to exclusively interview elders and collect information on the traditional leadership. By systematically collecting data and compiling it in this format, it provides a way in which information can be shared throughout the different Southern Paiute tribes.

### **1.3 Methodology**

How does one begin to discuss a system that has very little ethnohistorical documentation available? The best option is to combine the limited ethnohistorical information with ethnographic data collected from contemporary Southern Paiute people. The first document that details the High Chiefs system was recorded in 1871. John Wesley Powell's survey collected the names of leaders across the Southern Paiute nation (Powell and Ingalls 1871)<sup>1</sup>. The second document produced was an ethnography of the Chemehuevi Paiutes, which was written in 1976 (Laird 1976). Richard Stoffle with the assistance of Henry Dobyns produced the most recent essay discussing the High Chiefs in the early 1980s for a technical report for the Bureau of Land Management, which expressed Native American concerns for culturally important places along a power line route across Utah and Nevada (Stoffle and Dobyns 1982, Stoffle and Dobyns 1983). The essay was later revised for a series of technical reports for various United States land

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<sup>1</sup> A table documenting all the chiefs recorded by Powell and Ingalls is included in Appendix B.

management agencies in the 1990s and early 2000s (Stoffle et al. 1994, Stoffle et al. 1997, Zedeño et al. 2003). These three documents have served as the foundation pieces for the ethnohistorical component of this research project. Other sources have been used and consulted to uncover information on the High Chiefs system but they are not as detailed as the three pieces previously mentioned.

To collect more information ethnographic interviews were conducted with Southern Paiute elders in 2006 and 2007 from three tribes (Colorado River Indian Tribes Pahrump Paiute Tribe, and Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah) and a total of seven interviews were conducted. Each tribe granted approval of this study; they received a copy of the research proposal and a letter detailing the project objectives and intended goals. Once permission was granted, the elders selected to participate in this study were contacted and ethnographic interviews were conducted a short time later. The elders who participated in this study were selected by the researcher or by the tribes' cultural resources' officer. Elders were selected based on their high level of cultural knowledge they possess about the different regions of the Southern Paiute nation and the overall functions of the High Chief system. Only three Southern Paiute tribes were part of this study due to time and financial restraints.

Elders were interviewed with a 10-page open-ended survey instrument with questions designed to elicit specific information regarding the roles of the chief system in Southern Paiute culture. Each interview was transcribed and put into a database where the information could be analyzed by question and by tribe. The data collected served as the foundation for describing the High Chiefs in terms of its function before encroachment

and during the post-encroachment period of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The form has also led to insights on how contemporary Southern Paiutes feel about leadership today in relation to the leaders of the past.

<b>Tribe</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Chemehuevi- Colorado River Indian Tribe	<b>High Chiefs</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
	Old Spanish Trail	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Pahrump	<b>High Chiefs</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
Moapa	Old Spanish Trail	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah	<b>High Chiefs</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
	Black Mountain,	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
Kaibab	Black Mountain	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>

Table 1.1 Interviews Conducted

Some interviews on the High Chiefs were collected earlier during research conducted by the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology (BARA) at the University of Arizona. The data collected during these projects were also used as data on the ethnographic description of the High Chiefs system. The author served as a research assistant on the two projects and the author received permission to use the data from the projects' principle investigator. The information collected on the High Chiefs during these projects were collected through informal interviews which means the questions being asked were not part of the traditional survey instrument. These interviews were also transcribed and included in the database. Table 1.1 shows interviews collected on the High Chiefs cross-tabulated by tribe, project and gender and a total of eleven interviews were conducted.

Confidence in research findings depends directly on the number of Indian people who are interviewed with a specific form. Knowledge in human societies is unevenly distributed by gender, age, and status. This study uses the BARA position on conducting Native American ethnographic studies. The BARA team has taken the position that a minimal ethnographic study requires four people per ethnic group be interviewed with the same form on the same topic that is being studied (Stoffle et al. 1999). In this case, the term ethnic group means people who share a common history, language, and culture. These requirements have been met by this study. This study has also tried to achieve gender balance. In ethnographic studies, it is important to interview men and women on the topic being studied to understand the broader perspective. Men and women might have knowledge on the topic that may be culturally transmitted in different ways and they may relate to an issue differently so it becomes important to document those differences.

#### **1.4 Summary of the Remaining Chapters**

This chapter is followed by three chapters that contribute to understanding Southern Paiute culture and the High Chiefs system. These chapters use theoretical, ethnographic, and historical data to bring together the story of the High Chiefs system. The following is a summary of the remaining chapter.

**Chapter Two:** This chapter is entitled “Southern Paiute Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Co-Adaptation.” This chapter focuses on how people learn about their environmental and develop a co-dependent and co-adapted relationship with nature. The chapter discusses how the Southern Paiute people view their environment and the importance of nature in their epistemology. The chapter concludes with two case studies

of Southern Paiute environmental learning and co-adaptation. The first case study highlights the natural resource partnership Southern Paiute people have with beavers along the Santa Clara River in southwestern Utah. The second case study documents the use of whiptail lizard tails for cataract eye surgery.

**Chapter Three:** This chapter is entitled “*Nuwuvi Nee-yahvee: The Southern Paiute High Chief System.*” This chapter describes the structure and functions of the High Chief system in Southern Paiute culture. In the beginning of the chapter, there is a detailed discussion on the geographic and social makeup of the Southern Paiute nation, which leads into a thick ethnographic description of the High Chiefs System. This ethnographic description examines this system’s structure, roles, and functions in Southern Paiute society. The chapter concludes with a section on resiliency and how the High Chiefs functioned as a resilient system until its eventual collapse in the early 1900s.

**Chapter Four:** This chapter is entitled “Great Basing Hierarchy and the Deconstruction of Social Complexity.” This chapter examines the process in which the High Chiefs system became excluded from the ethnographic record for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and how this exclusion is a direct result of forced culture change. There are discussions of the works of Julian Steward, Omer Stewart, and Richard Stoffle and how each anthropologist has or has not contributed to the documentation hierarchy and complexity amongst Great Basin societies. Lastly, the chapter concludes the argument for complex social structure amongst Great Basin people.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**SOUTHERN PAIUTE TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL**  
**KNOWLEDGE**  
**AND CO-ADAPTATION**

The High Chief System has contributed to the cultural connections and the relationships Southern Paiute people have with their local environment. These connections and relationships allow Southern Paiutes to build a broad body of knowledge that is part of every aspect of life. The Southern Paiutes believe that they are mandated by the Creator to be stewards of their land. They must use the knowledge of the land and appropriate resource management to tend to it properly. They must maintain a level of balance to keep the ecosystem around them healthy. The knowledge they possess about their environment is a result of living in the same landscape for over 12,000 years (Stoffle et al. 2003; Whitley 2006).

This chapter examines Southern Paiute ecological knowledge in terms of co-adaptation to the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau ecosystems and the different levels of knowledge that is possessed by the people. This chapter begins with a description of societies co-adapting with their environment and the environmental learning that takes place through time and three levels of knowledge are defined. Next is a discussion on how ecological knowledge helps to promote and create biodiversity. The chapter concludes with a description of Southern Paiute epistemology and two case studies of Southern Paiute ecological knowledge.

## **2.1 Co-Adaptation and the Building of Ecological Knowledge**

Ecological knowledge is the result of living in an area for an extended period of time. People who inhabit an ecosystem will learn about its ecology, hydrological systems, and the cycle of disturbance. The longer a group of people lives in a given location, they develop a more expansive knowledge base, and they develop a deeper to their connection to the land. Ecological knowledge allows a community to build buffers and plan strategies to deal with changes to their ecological systems such as ten to fifteen year droughts or small wildfires. Communities have in place social regulations and hierarchies that allow them to maintain control over how resources are being managed and used by individuals and groups. Social institutions arise when people become extremely knowledgeable about their local environment through years of learning and interacting with the natural features of a landscape (Nazarea 1999, Stoffle et al 2003). This type of knowledge is a result of long-term occupation in an area. In the paper, “Landscape, Nature, and Culture” (2003), Stoffle, Toupal, and Zedeño believe that groups of people moving into new environments will learn about the place that surrounds them and become knowledgeable about their environments. Their model argues that everyone can learn about their environment. The longer a group stays in one place, the more they will learn and they will develop deep emotional, social, cultural, and spiritual attachments and this permeates aspects of life. Over time, people move from depending solely on the environment for survival to deep rooted spiritual attachments. Figure 2.1 visually represents this concept.

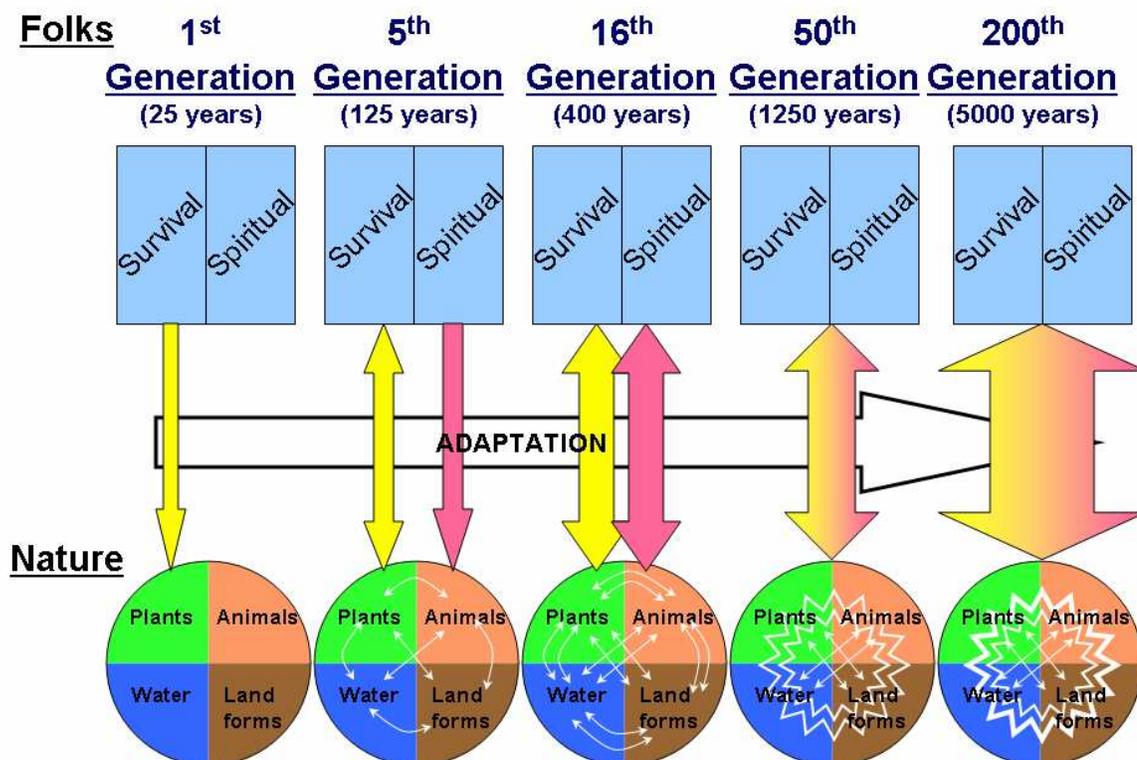


Figure 2.1 Co-Adaptation and Diachronic Learning Model

Stoffle, Toupal, and Zedeño also stress that people need to live in a location for a period of at least five generations (100 to 125 years) before they develop a deep attachment to the environment with a conservation ethic and become traditional. A group of people become traditional after living in a place for at least five generations and they have shared experiences and interactions with the landscape.

Human ecologists, Fikret Berkes and Nancy Turner have defined four attributes that are associated with how traditional people acquire knowledge through time and make it part of their cultural knowledge system. These attributes are:

- “Incremental learning of individuals and groups and elaboration of environmental knowledge as a result of detailed observation and experience of variations in nature and leading to a sophisticated understanding of the ecosystem in which they dwell.”
- “Development of committant belief systems that help avert serious resource depletion and promote conserving approaches,”
- “Creating and perpetuating ways of encoding, communicating and disseminating both the practical aspects if such incremental learning and adaptive response and the ideologies and belief systems associated with it,”
- Development of institutions that consolidate environmental knowledge and practice, or development of rules by which members of a society deal with their environment and resources,” (Berkes and Turner 2006: 497).

This connection to the environment and the subsequent conservation ethic becomes engrained in the cultural system of the group and is passed down through generations; it becomes part of the group’s cultural belief system.

People and their environments co-adapt with each other and become heavily dependent on each other over time in order to keep the system productive and to increase biodiversity, which is necessary for healthy ecosystems. How is TEK translated into resource use practices that promote sustainable use of natural resources and conservation of biodiversity? The answer lies in the conservation-oriented practices of traditional people, which tend to be grounded in the notion that humans are a part of nature worldview. Traditional peoples consider themselves to be members of a wider community of beings that include animals, plants, rivers, rocks, and air. They respect these beings, even as humans can disturb, cut down, kill, or consume them. Their relationships with nature are directed by channeled prescriptions as to what, when, and how much is to be left undisturbed. Social restraints are often based on supernatural

forces. These restraints commonly lead to conservation practices. They provide protection to some ecological communities and habitat patches and they provide total protection to certain selected species. Social constraints assist in protection of life history stages and organize certain resource gathering events under key experts to prevent exploitation (Berkes et al. 1995). The environment and the surrounding landscape become part of a society's oral history, ceremonial cycle, and language, and everything becomes intertwined systemically with each other.

In American Indian Studies, many scholars have written about people's co-adaptation to the land. Edward Spicer calls this a persistent cultural system (Spicer 1971). The phrase persistent cultural system describes how a group of people are linked by a common identity through a shared history, sense of place, and language. A few Native American scholars define this as "the peoplehood matrix." Peoplehood is a way of describing how the land, ceremony, oral traditions and language are linked to each other and that they are all interconnected and must be understood as such (Holm et al. 2003).

Vine Deloria also discusses Native peoples' connection to the land and their understanding of their surrounding environments. He calls this phenomenon a "sacred geography." Deloria contends that tribal peoples combine history (oral traditions) and geography so they have a "sacred geography," and every location within their homeland has a wide variety of stories that recount migrations, revelations, and particular historical incidents that have cumulatively caused the tribe to be in its current condition. Deloria adds that the most distinct aspect of Native American traditions is "the precision and specificity of the traditions when linked to the landscape," (Deloria 1994: 122).

Attachments to place and time spent in one of those places lends itself to the development of three levels of ecological knowledge: local ecological knowledge, traditional ecological knowledge, and indigenous ecological knowledge. The levels of knowledge represent a wide range of uses and understanding of a landscape. They represent the processes of knowledge acquisition, knowledge maintenance, and knowledge transmittal. The levels of knowledge are also situated in a time scale. For example, some types of knowledge types are gained rather quickly like learning about seasonal water flows while others take many generations to learn like whiptail lizard eye surgery.

### **2.1.1 Local Ecological Knowledge**

Local ecological knowledge (LEK) is gained over a very short period. Stoffle, Toupal, and Zedeño (2003) place LEK in the context of the first twenty-five years a group of people occupy an area. In this model, the size of the group is projected to be 200 hundred people who occupy an area roughly of 500 square miles. The population density would be 2.5 people per square mile, which is defined as the natural caring capacity of unaltered land.

LEK is different from other forms of environmental knowledge in that local knowledge is not deeply rooted in religion and oral tradition. Per Olsson and Carl Folke (2001: 88) define LEK as:

...knowledge held by a specific group of people about their local ecosystems. Because it is labeled 'ecological,' it concerns the interplay among organisms and between organisms and their environment. LEK may be a mix of scientific and practical knowledge; it is site-specific and often involves a belief component. LEK differs from traditional ecological

knowledge (TEK) in the sense of historical and cultural continuity of resource use.

Olssen and Folke believe that LEK does not have the historical and cultural continuity to be considered traditional because of the short length of time a given group has lived in an area and the time taken to acquire this knowledge (Olssen and Folke 2001). LEK is extremely idiosyncratic and is highly accessible to everyone through observation. LEK is used to explain very simple ecological cause and effect; it often manifests itself in observations of 10 to 20 year rain and drought cycles, plant harvesting cycles, and migration patterns of animals. Generally, LEK begins as individuals learning about an ecosystem, then moves to the family level, and becomes knowledge shared by families. In some instances, the knowledge will be passed to the community level over a period of generations as seen in pine nut harvesting.

### **2.1.2 Traditional Ecological Knowledge**

After living in an area for at least one hundred years, a group of people becomes traditional. They possess a body of knowledge that has become time tested and shared on a community level. A critical element is that the knowledge is generally not debatable. Because it is so trusted, people use this knowledge to make ecological predictions. Also with this type of knowledge, there is a blurring of the lines between secular and sacred. The environment becomes deeply engrained in the religious system of the people and they developed a ceremonial cycle that revolves around it.

An ecologist from the University of Manitoba, Fikret Berkes, in his book *Sacred Ecology* (Berkes, 1999: 8) offers a fundamental definition of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) as “a cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by

adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another with their environment.” The people and their environment co-adapt with each other and become heavily dependent on each other over time in order to keep the system productive and to maintain and increase biodiversity.

One example of this process of this type of knowledge is linked to a girl’s first menses ceremony. This ceremony is common amongst Numic-speaking peoples of the Great Basin. As the girl passes to womanhood, she is taught how to harvest pine nuts and is taught a series of songs associated with this activity. As part of the ceremony, the girl must take a stick and whip the ends of the piñon pines. The whipping action not only knocks down the pine nuts but it also snaps the tips of the branches off. The branches will grow back next year with more shoots at the end, thus increasing the amount of pine nuts a tree can produce. The piñon pines benefit from this activity because this type of pruning is good for the trees in that it promotes new growth and keeps the trees healthy. Since this ceremony has occurred throughout the Great Basin for thousands of years in the pine nut forests, it is likely that they increased the carrying capacity of the land and contributed to its biodiversity. The genetic structures of some plants are modified because they are regularly selected for certain characteristics and moved to places more useful to humans (Stoffle et al. 2003). In this relationship, the piñon pines play a role in a ceremony that helps young girls learn about becoming women and in return the girls help stimulate growth in the trees through pruning.

### **2.1.3 Indigenous Ecological Knowledge**

According to the Stoffle, Toupal, and Zedeño model, indigenous ecological knowledge (IEK) is extremely complex and develops after a group has lived in an area for at least fifty generations (Stoffle et al. 2003). This type of knowledge is characterized by grand observations and experimentations that are strictly explained and supported by supernatural, religious, and epistemological foundations and constraints.

IEK and TEK as concepts have been used interchangeably in the ecological knowledge literature to discuss environmental knowledge of indigenous peoples from around the world. By using the terms interchangeably, it suggests that it only implies to indigenous peoples and not those considered traditional like the lobster fishermen of Maine and the people of the Bahamas. Both the lobster fishermen and the people of the Bahamas have a deep understanding of their surrounding environments (Acheson 1988, Stoffle et al. ND). It is being proposed here that there is a distinction between the two types of knowledge because there are numerous factors that set indigenous knowledge apart from traditional ecological knowledge.

By definition, IEK resists simple explanation and people believe it is taught by the supernatural. IEK has to have a spiritual-ceremonial component and religious specialists like medicine men hold this type of knowledge. TEK is shared amongst community members. For example, all women learn how to whip pine nut trees during their first menses ceremonies. In contrast, only religious specialists know how to perform eye surgery with the tail of a whiptail lizard (this is discussed later on).

Continuing with the Stoffle, Toupal, and Zedeño model, IEK develops after at least fifty generations or 1,250 years of inhabiting an area as opposed to the one hundred years it takes to develop traditional ecological knowledge. Over a period of 1,250 years, many natural resource changes occur and the people would have lived so long in place that they have clear adaptive strategies for surviving a range of temporal and biotic shifts in their ecosystem. They would have seen new plants come into the ecosystem while old ones went extinct. Stream flows would have varied depending on climate change and use.

By this time, the people have embedded these adaptive strategies in their culture, which is similar to TEK, however, they have moved key values into the spiritual realm. The lessons and the sanctions are spiritually defined. Science and religious are brought together as one because the scientific findings of past generations are understood and recognized as essential to life. These findings are moved to the realm of the sacred and thus are beyond human control.

An example of a working definition of IEK comes from Henry Lewis and Kat Anderson. They define IEK as knowledge that has “spanned centuries or millennia and could reveal innovative ways to combat destructive insects, weeds, and diseases; [offered] innovative uses of the native flora and fauna; and provide insights into advancing the fields of theoretical and applied ecology,” (Lewis and Anderson 2002; 5-6).

IEK is directly linked to sacred orientation. Indigenous peoples honor their lands and often consider themselves to be situated in the center of a sacred space (or universe) (Cajete 2000:8). Scholar David Suzuki describes Native American IEK as an “ancient,

culturally diverse aboriginal consensus on the ecological order” and this “integrity of nature which might justifiably be described as a *sacred ecology*,” (Suzuki 1994: 233). An example of IEK is the use red harvester ants in vision seeking ceremonies amongst tribes from southern California.

Red harvester ants that are members of the genus *Pogonomyrmex*, play a key role as vision-inducing agents in the religious and medical systems of many indigenous groups in southern and central California. Seven tribes in this region swallow ants as part of vision seeking and power acquisition. The person who is seeking a vision would have to prepare himself before taking part in the ceremony. He has to fast for three days, avoid meat, grease, blood, and salt, and abstain from sexual activity. Also nightly vomiting occurs to purify the body. When it is time for him to seek his vision, he seeks the help of an ant doctor. The ant doctor is an old woman who is responsible for tending to the vision seeker. The vision seeker ingests large quantities of harvester ants in order to induce prolonged catatonic states. The vision seeker also is given datura to assist in the ceremony. The ant doctor repeatedly pokes the vision seeker so the ants will be startled and will bite. During these prolonged catatonic states, hallucinogenic visions are reported. The ants also play an important role in both curative and preventative medicine, treating a diverse body of natural and supernatural ailments (Groark 1996).

The Kawaiisu are one of the seven tribes that use red harvester ants for vision seeking and medicine. They believe that red ants were one of the four medicines given to people at Creation, along with tobacco, nettles, and datura. Because of this belief, ants are treated with respect and not disturbed by most regional Indian groups. If someone hurts

the ants, punishment will befall upon that person. In Kawaiisu oral traditions, the ant has key roles in supernatural events and they believe the ant is a type of human relative.

#### **2.1.4 Intermediate Disturbance**

Environmental knowledge and use can keep ecological systems productive and can help increase or maintain biodiversity. One way to promote healthy and diverse ecosystems is by creating small to med-range disturbances. The work of biologist Joseph Connell (1978) examines how intermediate natural disturbances affect marine ecosystems. His studies have discovered that mid-level disturbances<sup>2</sup> are beneficial for the environment and actually increase biodiversity and biocomplexity. Connell's theory can be applied to humans and environmental management. Numerous scholars have attempted to understand the positive impacts of human caused disturbances in the environment. They have looked at different types of disturbances in a variety of ecosystems such as clearing spaces in forests (Turner et al. 2003), conch shell removal in the central Bahamas (Stoffle and Stoffle 2007), pruning piñon pine trees (Fowler 2000; 122) and moving seeds and animals to new areas and habitats (Nabhan 1989; Nabhan 2003).

Fire has always had an important impact on the environment. Fire, whether human or naturally caused, alters the landscape in many ways. Before and through the contact period Native Americans use fire as an important tool in ecosystem management. In California alone, fire ecologists estimate that between 5.6 and 13 million acres burned annually under both natural and indigenous fire regimes. Traditional Native American

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<sup>2</sup> Mid-level disturbances are types of disruptions in the ecosystem that are restricted by size, space, and time.

burning applies fire to particular vegetation areas under specified and controlled conditions to achieve desired cultural purposes. Traditional burning entails knowledge of a number of important factors such as seasonality, weather conditions, the rate that certain vegetation types burn, the frequency of burning in a particular area, and the aerial extent of the fire. Fires are started, maintained, and extinguished in a number of ways; in California, for example, the majority of Native peoples use a slow match or a torch of tightly packed flammable material that smoldered for an extended period of time. Often Indian people utilize fire fans to control the direction and the intensity of the fire. The Pomo, for example, use tail feathers of herons with long wood handles as fans for augmenting the blaze. The Western Mono used a fan made of hawk or buzzard tail feathers to smoke out ground squirrels (Anderson 2005: 136).

Traditional burning is used to increase the density and availability of food, medicinal and utility plants. It also enhances feed for wild animals, control insects, pests, and diseases that could harm wild foods, medicinal plants, and basketry materials. Fire increases and improves the quality of cordage. Burning encourages young plants to grow and it removes dead materials and promotes growth through the recycling of nutrients, decreased plant competition, and maintained specific plant communities (Anderson 2005; Lewis 1993; Stewart 2002).

Controlled burns are set in places to alter the current ecological conditions and avoid disasters. Controlled burns help to clear out underbrush and leaf litter, which prevent large fires that had the potential to destroy all the plants within a given eco-zone.

Controlled burns also disrupt the plant communities by burning off the plant parts above ground. In some cases, the plants that survive increase their physical size and yield.

Omer Stewart documents in his book, *Forgotten Fires: Native Americans and the Transient Wilderness*, the use of fire amongst Native Americans in the United States and Canada (Stewart 2002). He states that the Southern Paiutes use fire to assist in animal hunting and to increase food plants and tobacco. He writes:

Information for the Southern Paiutes of Northern Arizona, southern Utah, and southern Nevada, who are linguistically and culturally similar to the Utes, is found in CED<sup>3</sup> reports from three ethnographers. Drucker recorded use of fire in antelope and rabbit drives by the Shivwits band of Southern Paiutes in his Yuman-Piman monograph. Stewart obtained positive responses from one informant regarding fire drives for antelope and from three regarding the fire drive for rabbits. Southern Paiutes also told Stewart that they burned to increase yield of wild seeds and tobacco. J. Stewart's Southern Paiute informant from the western edge of that tribal area was uncertain as to whether his group had burned for deer hunting but was positive that they set fires to increase wild seeds. Thus the evidence for a Southern Paiute culture pattern of burning is strong in spite of their having lived in the driest and hottest part of the sagebrush desert (Stewart 2002: 230).

Indian ricegrass (*Oryzopsis hymenoides*) also known as *waii* is one of the wild seeds frequently burned by the Southern Paiutes. It needs to be burned annually or else it would not be reseeded in an area.

Southern Paiutes harvest *waii* by using seed beaters. Seed beating allows for repeated harvests of indeterminate inflorescences, thus maximizing the numbers of ripe seeds gathered and minimizing the extent of the plant parts detaching with seeds (Anderson 2005: 129). When the seed beaters hit the *waii*, some of the seeds fell to the ground in the collection area. This helps enhance the grass population in a few ways. The

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<sup>3</sup> CED- Cultural Elements Distribution

scattering of seeds left some on the ground so the seeds can germinate and new plants grow. The seeds also provided feed for small animals. The beating method also guarantees that only fully ripe seeds were removed from the plant and collected, leaving immature seeds to develop fully. Leaving the majority of the plant behind is important because it ensures that the biomass would eventually be recycled in a particular gathering area. This was critical when it was time to set controlled burns. As waii and other seed bearing grasses and wild flowers dry, they become excellent fuel sources that will carry frequent, light surface fires, which promote new growth and a healthy ecosystem (Anderson 2005).

## **2.2 Southern Paiute Epistemology- Puha**

Southern Paiutes of the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau have a deep connection with their environment. Southern Paiutes maintain that it has been their duty to manage their environment to promote growth and sustainability since Creation. They have developed numerous strategies and activities that increase biodiversity and biocomplexity throughout their homeland. The basic tenants of Southern Paiute epistemology help forge the relationship they have with their environment. To Southern Paiutes, the universe is alive and everything is interconnected through all types of relations, what anthropologist, Roy Rappaport (1999:263-271; 446) calls the “the ultimate sacred postulate.” The concept of the living universe is so fundamental that any discussion of Southern Paiute culture and social structure cannot occur without it. The universe is alive in a similar way that humans are alive and the universe possesses most of the same characterizes as well. The universe has discrete physical components such as power and elements.

As explained by Liljeblad (1986: 643-644), power is everywhere and is “a source of individual competence, mental and physical ability, health, and success.” Power is often referred to as *Puha*. This concept is common the different tribes throughout the western United States. Other Numic speaking people such as the Ute, Western Shoshone, Owens Valley Paiutes, and Northern Paiutes have similar words in their languages<sup>4</sup> and it is a fundamental principle of their epistemologies as well. Such a concept of power is not limited to Great Basin and Colorado Plateau peoples, it is also a fundamental epistemological principle the nearby Yuman-speaking peoples such as the Mojave, Hualapai, and Havasupai.

The five tenets of *Puha* need to be explained in order to understand the role it has in Southern Paiute culture. *Puha* is derived from Creation and permeates the universe, which resembles a spider web. Sometimes it is like a thin scattering; at other times, it occurs in definite concentrations with currents where there are clusters of life. *Puha* exists throughout the universe but it will vary in intensity from person to person, place to place, element to element, and object to object. This is similar to how strength differs among humans. *Puha* can also vary in what it can be used for and it determines the tasks certain elements (air, water, rocks, plants, animals) can do. *Puha* is networked; it connects, disconnects, and reconnects elements in different ways. This occurs because of the will of the elements that have the power. *Puha* is present in and can move between the three levels of the universe: the upper level- where powerful anthropomorphic beings live, the

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<sup>4</sup> Ute- *Puwavi*, Western Shoshone- *Puha* and *Poha*, Northern Paiute- *Puha*. The Chemehuevi and Southern Paiute are the same people with a common language. The word for *Puha* is the same.

middle level- where people live now, and the lower live- where extraordinary beings with reptilian or distorted humanoid appearances live (Stoffle et al. 2001).

In his article, “Basin Religion and Theology: A Comparative Study of Power (Puha),” Miller (1983: 79-89) noted:

Power is diffused everywhere in continuous flux and flow, which however, is not haphazard because, as an aspect of memory, power is rational. From all available evidence, the routes of concentrated power within generalized dispersion are web-like, moving both in radial patterns and in recursive concentric ones, out from the center and back again...The web image is reflected in the stories where Coyote assumes the form of a water spider to carry humans to land and Sun takes the form of a spider who is webbing the firmament of the universe...The web of power, however, is not static like that of a spider because the webbing actually consists of the flow of power rather than filaments per se. Rather, the web is pulsating and multidimensional, even having aspects of a spiral, some times regular and sometimes erratic, intersection with the radials from the center. This spiral movement is represented most graphically by an indwelling soul of a person that can be seen escaping the body at death as a whirlwind.

Puha, while operating in a dynamic equilibrium within the universe, is also entropic (Blackburn 1974; Bean 1972; Stoffle et al. 2001; White 1963). This means that over time, Puha has gradually diminished since Creation in quality, quantity, and availability. The reason for this is that man has at various times treated it improperly, and has failed in upholding his responsibilities in the relationship he has with the interdependent system. Indian people believe that a very rapid loss of Puha occurred after the European encroachment. Knowledge concerning how to regulate relationships with powerful elements was lost through the processes of colonization. Despite this Puha is always retrievable in some form as long as new guidelines are established for obtaining and maintaining it.

In Southern Paiute culture, there are rules for handling Puha and powerful objects. These rules function to control the person with the Puha and prevent him or her from misusing it in one of two ways. First, power can only be used at proper times and in proper places and it must be used in accordance with standardized procedures such as preparation and pilgrimage to ceremonial areas. Secondly, people who have Puha and knowledge may withhold information on procedures for acquiring and maintaining power from uninitiated persons or persons who are deemed unworthy candidates. Stoffle, Zedeño, and Halmo (2001: 65) wrote; “the diversity and unpredictability of power was consistent with an ecosystem that was equally diverse and unpredictable, although often kind and bountiful in the resources provided by nature.”

### **2.3 Southern Paiute Environmental Knowledge**

Parallel to the relationship Southern Paiutes have with Puha, is their interconnected web of relationships with the environment around them. The knowledge they have with their natural landscape and how the relationship with the universe can be seen in the different case studies presented below. These relationships also demonstrate the different types of knowledge a group can have about their environment if they inhabit an area for hundreds of generations. The use of beavers along the Santa Clara River (the *Tunakwint*), Utah is an example on how the Southern Paiutes and the beavers became dependent on each other over time, needing each other for survival. The next example, whiptail lizard eye surgery, represents a type of ecological understanding that can only exist because

Southern Paiute people have lived in the same territory for over multiple generations. Using lizard tails in eye surgery is a non-intuitive use of the environment and it represents a deep spiritual connection to the land.

### **2.3.1 Southern Paiute Agriculture**

Rivers in the desert southwest and Great Basin were important resource use areas and population centers for native peoples. Historical and ethnographic records have documented Indian people using river water to irrigate agricultural fields. Along the Gila River, the Akimel O’Odham had large farms and managed orchards of mesquite trees. Along the lower portion of the Colorado River south of the Virgin River and Colorado confluence were the large irrigated fields of the Mojave Indians at Cottonwood Island. The Shivwits Southern Paiutes have traditionally used the Tunakwint to irrigate their farmlands and support a large population.

A. L. Kroeber, a prominent anthropologist who worked in the Great Basin and Mojave Desert, believed that Indian people inhabiting a river valley typically used the upland resources on both sides of the stream (Kroeber 1974:31-33). Kroeber’s economic and ecological model for riverine resource use can be applied to the Shivwits Paiutes. The Virgin River and its tributaries are the riverine core of traditional Southern Paiute territory. Kroeber's model suggests that Southern Paiutes who farmed in the riverine core along the Tunakwint and Virgin Rivers would have also harvested wild resources in uplands to the south on the Shivwits Plateau, and north, along the watersheds that fed into the upper Tunakwint.

The word Tunakwint was first recorded by early Mormon colonists. The term translates to “dark waters,” “black water,” or “black water running” (Stoffle et al. 1994). The early Mormon colonists also used *Tunakwint* to refer to the Indian people living on the river (Hamblin 1969:28). Jacob Hamblin, who was the principal figure in Mormon dealings with the Indians of this region during the early years of Mormon colonization, recorded that the Paiutes living on the Santa Clara referred to themselves as *Tonoquints* (also spelt Tunakwints), after the Paiute name for the river (Hamblin 1971).

Early travelers’ accounts thoroughly document that the Southern Paiutes practiced irrigated farming on an extensive scale along the Tunakwint before Euro-American settlement. Farming had a significant role in Southern Paiute life. They would plant a variety of different crops, typically inter-planting several crops in the same field. Their crops include the aboriginal cultivars of corn, squash, beans, sunflowers, chenopod, and amaranth, as well as introduced Old World crops including wheat and peas. The Southern Paiute system of inter-planting shares many characteristics with multi-cropping systems used by indigenous peoples throughout most of the Western Hemisphere.

Accounts written by early travelers before the beginning of colonization on the Tunakwint also document the cultivation of corn, squash, beans, and sunflowers among the Southern Paiutes of this region. Historian Andrew K. Larson notes the centrality of agricultural produce in the diet of the aboriginal farmers of the Tunakwint, “They supplemented their diet of corn with meal made from grass, weed, sunflower, and pumpkin seeds, and the strong mesquite bean,” (Larson 1961:21).

Corn is the most thoroughly documented aboriginal crop of the Southern Paiutes, because it was the crop of greatest interest to Euro-Americans, and was eagerly sought by Euro-American travelers and settlers. Euro-Americans would purchase corn from Indian farmers for their own consumption, and would allow their livestock to graze upon the cornstalks in Indian fields. Native Americans typically inter-planted beans with their corn. Bean plants sustain root bacteria, which fix atmospheric nitrogen. Nitrogen that is fixed on bean plant roots fertilizes the adjacent corn plants and in turn, the maize stalks provide the growing beans with supports to climb upward toward sunlight (Stoffle et al. 1994).

Members of the cucurbit or squash family are other well documented crops grown by the Tunakwint farmers. The Southern Paiutes often inter-planted cucurbits with maize. In 1849, James Brown recorded Indian inter-planting of squash with maize a day's travel downstream from Mountain Meadows: "Next day we came to some Indian farms where the savages had raised corn, wheat and squash" (Brown 1954:120). Also in 1849, Walter Van Dyke noticed "squash or pumpkins" growing on the Indian farms along the Tunakwint and Virgin Rivers (Van Dyke 1954:303).

In addition to the familiar Native American crop trio of corn, beans, and squash, Southern Paiute farmers grew a variety of other plants, which were inter-planted in the same fields or in separate cultivated plots. Early settler, Thomas D. Brown noted an unfamiliar cultivar in fields on the Tunakwint; he originally thought that it was a weed but the Southern Paiutes corrected him,

There was good crops of wheat ripe in some places which they were cutting and using, and abundance of corn, many beans, and a green

substance between the rows which we stooped and wished to pull out, till they told us it was part of their food, (Brooks 1972:57).

The plant Brown saw may have been amaranth. In 1857, Elder George A. Smith saw a plant resembling amaranth among the corn plants in the Indian farmers' fields on the Tunakwint. He noted that in addition to corn:

They also cultivated a certain weed resembling the red root or green amaranth, for the sake of the seed it yielded. When I went down there and stepped into their corn patch, I pulled up one of these red roots, and they were offended about it, observing that they raised them for the seed. (Smith 1861:3)

There is additional evidence for the cultivation of amaranth by Shivwits Southern Paiutes. Edward Palmer, a professional botanist in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, obtained the herbarium type-seeds for Native American amaranth. These seeds were obtained from Southern Paiutes (Palmer 1878:603). When the seeds Palmer collected, germinated, they yielded *Amaranthus hypochondriacus*. These seeds were enlarged and white in color, contrasting with the small, dark-colored seeds of wild amaranths (Bohrer 1962:107-09; Dobyns 1974:43-44). Today, the San Juan Southern Paiutes still cultivate at least one type of amaranth (*Amaranthus retroflexus*), called *kumutu*. They consume both ripe seeds and green leaves (Stoffle and Dobyns 1983:63). To the Mormons, however, amaranths were "pig-weeds" to be weeded out of monocropped fields and it was neither tolerated nor recognized as domesticated plants or cultivars. Palmer's amaranth seed collection came from a persisting Native American agriculture sufficiently complex that it included domesticated plants.

Shivwits Southern Paiutes would also irrigate domesticated sunflowers as a seed crop. Euro-Americans sometimes did not recognize cultivated sunflowers as food crop

plants in Native American fields because native North American sunflowers can seed themselves in disturbed soil. This self-seeding ability makes sunflowers capable of regenerating themselves on the floodplains of the Virgin River watershed. Both ethnographic data and early Euro-American travelers' accounts make clear that Southern Paiutes grew sunflowers in many fields widely scattered through Southern Paiute territory. Cultivation of sunflowers is reported for widely distributed locations within Southern Paiute territory, including Beaver Dam Wash, a tributary of the Virgin River located just west of the Tunakwint. Mormon parties traveling from Salt Lake to Southern California reported sunflowers growing under irrigation with other domesticated food plants on Beaver Dam Wash (Bigler 1954:153).

Jacob Hamblin in 1880 notes that the production of sunflower stands in the Kanab Creek-Kaibab area had declined disastrously for the Native American population. Hamblin believes livestock consumption contributed to the disappearance of these plants. He notes that "the foothills that yielded hundreds of acres of sunflowers which produced quantities of rich seed," (Hamblin 1880) were in serious decline. It is likely that sunflowers were among the crops grown by Indian farmers in fields along the Tunakwint.

Southern Paiutes also irrigated, encouraged, and may have transplanted or seeded gooseberries, currants, morning glories, mesquite, and grapes, as well as other minor crops. Some of these may have been planted on occasion, though most were capable of seeding themselves. Even when they did not plant these species, the overall water-management and plant management strategy of Indian farmers included assuring good growing conditions for these valued species.

Southern Paiutes have grown plants for fiber as well as for food. Traditionally they cultivated devil's claw and encouraged the growth of willow and milkweed. Observations of Mormon explorers along the Virgin River watershed during the early 1850s record that milkweed was an abundant plant in the river floodplain (Pratt 1854; Martineau 1857:3). The various native species of *Asclepias* ssp. could reproduce themselves without human aid. The reported near-dominance of milkweed plants in the riverine oasis vegetation suggests that Southern Paiutes may have deliberately planted seed there.

Southern Paiute farmers utilize the riverine systems throughout their territory to grow the many types of plant species. They use a variety of techniques to promote growth in their fields. The Southern Paiute fields along the Tunakwint were irrigated by stream diversion into primary canals and field laterals. Southern Paiutes adapted their irrigation technology to a variety of environmental conditions in their diverse habitat. For example along the Colorado River the volume of flow was too large to permit diversion canals, therefore the Southern Paiutes cultivated some of the sand bars after spring inundation (Laird 1976:23; Powell 1957:103,108; Euler 1966:81; Brooks 1977:67).

In contrast to the rapid uncontrollable flow of the Colorado, spring flows in other rivers are physically easier to divert and manage. Southern Paiutes diverted water from many springs throughout their territory to irrigate crops (Lyle 1872:84, 85, 90; Lockwood 1872:75; Angel 1881:186). Located at the head of Pahrangat Creek in southern Nevada, at Crystal Spring is had an eight-foot wide by six feet deep Southern Paiute canal that runs for several miles (Angel 1881:186). Flow from the Tunakwint was small enough that

Southern Paiutes could successfully dam it and divert its waters. Dams sometimes were up to about fifty feet wide across the river (Brooks 1972:56-57). At peak flow, the Tunakwint occasionally damaged the Southern Paiutes' dams, but they would repair them or built new ones. Hamblin watched Southern Paiutes repair a dam in 1854 (Hamblin 1969:22).

The Shivwits Paiutes used dams and canals for irrigation and flood control before Euro-American colonization of the area. Eyewitness accounts documented this in the early in the nineteenth century. Historian Andrew K. Larson noted, "The first irrigation in Washington County was carried on by the Indians who lived here before the advent of the Whites," (Larson 1950:36).

When a Mormon party came to the Tunakwint area in 1854, they were taken to see a large dam and the irrigation system constructed by Indian people near the main population center. The Mormons saw a dam across the river that stretched nearly fifty feet and fed into an irrigation canal that extended about three-fourths of a mile long. This canal had cuts, which were as deep as ten feet at points along its length. The entire system was built using aboriginal hand tools.

One of the members of a Mormon party, Thomas D. Brown, recorded in his diary that after a meeting with about forty Indians, most of the Mormons accompanied Chief Tsatsegoup to see the Indian irrigation ditches. Brown wrote, "This council broke up, and most of us went with Tsatsegoup and other Indians to see their improvements, a good dam three rods [48 feet] wide slanting across the Tunakwint," (Brooks 1972:56). Brown

also included in his diary a sketch what the canal system looked like, which has been reproduced in Brooks (1972:57):

...1 being the banks of the river, 2 the dam and 3 the course of water, from 2a, a water ditch or irrigating canal runs for 3/4 of a mile, round the base of rocky mountain in some places cut & worn from 6 to 10 feet deep, all this accomplished with their hands and small sticks, no other implements being among them. There was good crops of wheat ripe in some places which they were cutting and using, and abundance of corn, many beans, and a green substance between the rows which we stopped and wished to pull out, till they told us it was part of their food. (Brooks 1972:57)

During the first few weeks of Mormon presence along the river in June 1854, Jacob Hamblin recorded in his diary that an Indian dam near the main Shivwits settlement broke and that he helped repair it. He recorded in his diary, “The next day thare dam brock away. I helpt them repair it,” (Hamblin 1969a:22).<sup>5</sup>

### ***Beaver Ecology: A Natural Resource Partnership***

The Tunakwint was a delicate ecosystem that required attentive management practices to prevent massive environmental degradation and the destruction of Southern Paiute farms. The Southern Paiutes would rely on the river’s beaver population to manage the river’s water flow. Paiute farmers depended on the beaver dams along the river to help control the flow of water and maintain stability in the riverine system.

The beavers were extremely important in promoting biodiversity across the Tunakwint landscape. When beavers were present in the river, they acted as ecosystem engineers by modifying their environment. The dams slowed the flow of water and created large areas of still water, which became ideal habitats for fish and many species of birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. The ponds filtered sediment out of the

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<sup>5</sup> The errors are in the original document.

stream water, improving the quality of water downstream for Southern Paiute farms and communities. The water percolated into the soil causing the aquifer to recharge and created moist upland habitats in areas surrounding the dams. Over time, the ponds would fill with sediment and become shallower. Eventually they brake and the ponds turn into marshes and meadows. By this point, the beavers moved to other parts of the stream or watershed and begin the process again. The meadows formed by beavers have nutrient-rich soils and more light penetration, higher soil moisture, increased nitrogen, and different vegetation than the adjacent riparian forest (Johnston et al. 1995; Wright et al. 2002).

Southern Paiutes were able to farm along the Tunakwint for thousands of years during which time the land remained largely in balance in part to the beavers modifying the environment. The close association of Indian farms and beaver dams suggests that the presence of beaver dams was an intentional part of Southern Paiute water management strategy. Early travelers and settlers in the region noted this association. One man named Thomas D. Brown noted, "There appears [to be] many patches of good wheat land on this stream, across which Beaver dams are built every few rods, & the banks being low, the water overflows much & renders the bottoms good grazing patches," (Brooks 1972:55).

Beaver engineering regulated the hydrological system during times of extreme flooding and drought. During floods, the dams held back water to prevent rapid flows down stream. The dams greatly reduced erosion and channelization, which protected Paiute farms and gave them access to slow moving water for irrigation. Additionally

during times of drought, the beaver dams retained water, which was used to support agriculture and the surrounding communities.

The Southern Paiutes practiced agriculture that included the planting and irrigation of domesticated plants such as maize, beans, squash, amaranth, and chenopods and a variety of wild non-domesticated species. These wild plant species were an integral part of the traditional Southern Paiute diet. The Tunakwint water management system that spread the flow of the river helped retain nutrient rich topsoil. The soil optimized the growing conditions for desirable wild plant species as well as for domesticated crops. The irrigation of wild plants in the agricultural fields provided shade and helped the irrigation of stands of wild plants located along the edges of farms. This was directly linked to the beaver dams across the river. In 1854, as Mormon traveler Thomas D. Brown ventured up the Tunakwint from its confluence with the Virgin River, he recorded, "...there are many patches of good land on both sides [of this stream], and a long strong grass abounds here well headed, which when rubbed out resembles oats..." (Brooks 1972:56).

As part of their plan to build a Mormon political empire from Salt Lake City to California, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) began colonizing the Great Basin in 1844. The Church provided people with an infusion of capital and goods to start communities by taking over the riverine oases. In 1852, LDS church members explored southward from their villages in central Utah, and in 1854 began colonizing the Tunakwint region. When the Mormons moved into southern Utah, they immediately began to appropriate Paiute agricultural fields for their own uses and limited Southern Paiute access. The Southern Paiute people were forced off their traditional lands along

the river and were eventually forced to relocate to other locations like the Shivwits Plateau or the St. George area.

By not understanding the ecosystem, the Mormons eliminated the beavers and their dams. The beavers were removed because their pelts had a high market value and because Euro-Americans were afraid that the standing water in the beaver ponds would breed malaria-infected mosquitoes. This action resulted in violent outbursts by Southern Paiutes. Historian Juanita Brooks noted that a young Indian man shot the wife of LDS church member Thales Haskell because Haskell was "away up the creek taking out beaver dams" (Brooks 1950:154). Elimination of the beaver dam flood control system contributed to a series of disastrous floods that swept away much of the rich bottomland soil after Mormon colonization began.

Euro-American farming practices also differed from Southern Paiute practices in other ways that contributed to flood damage on the Tunakwint. Indian fields were clearings surrounded by protective vegetation. The Southern Paiutes formed their fields on hillocks that prevented floodwaters from sweeping across large expanses of soil. They planted multiple crops in these fields so the ground was well covered. In contrast, Euro-American fields were large, flat, and plowed so bare soil was exposed between the rows. Their practices that contributed to soil loss during irrigation, rains, and especially seasonal flooding.

Within two years, Mormon settlers had made a large ecological impact on the environment. In the summers of 1856 and 1857 there were drought conditions on the lower Tunakwint, and very little water flowed in the lower reaches. Chief Tutsigavits

attributed the lack of water on the lower Tunakwint to the Mormons' diversion of water from the upper watershed. In June 1856, Chief Tutsigavets offered this summary of the Paiutes' complaints about the impacts of Mormon settlement:

The chief of the Lamanites said the Toaquint is dead. You told us if we would hear your talk and plant corn, the Lord would bless us. My corn is dying for water. On what shall I feed my children next winter? The Mormons are using the water in Pine Valley. You said they would not use it there only for cutting pine logs. We once could feed our children on Rabbits when they were hungry. Now there are no rabbits for us; what do you think about it? (Hamblin 1951:23-24).

A few years later, in 1861, there was severe flooding on the lower Tunakwint. Many of the Mormons' houses and much of the farmland was swept away. Deforestation of the upper watershed by Mormon logging operations contributed to the severe runoff in heavy rains. The changes the Mormons had made on the lower Tunakwint by eliminating beaver dams and exposing soil in Euro-American-style fields-were conducive to maximum soil loss under flood conditions (Stoffle et al. 1994).

Despite, environmental damage caused by the Mormon settlers and the loss of access to the Tunakwint, Shivwits Southern Paiutes have continued to practice traditional agriculture in the Tunakwint region at locations like Camp Springs. In the early 1990s, the Shivwits Southern Paiutes reached an agreement with Washington County to regain their legal rights to Tunakwint water flow.

### **2.3.2 Whiptail Lizard Eye Surgery**

Another example of environmental knowledge that is possessed by Southern Paiute people is the use of the tails of whiptail lizards in cataract eye surgery. Southern Paiute medicine like other forms of Native American medicine is similar in many ways to

Western medicine. Diagnosis and curing experimentation are found in both the western world and in Native communities. One type of Southern Paiute medicinal practice that is the result of multiple generations of environmental learning is eye surgery using the tail of a certain species of whiptail lizard.

The species of whiptail lizard used in this form of eye surgery is known as the Great Basin whiptail lizard (*Aspidoscelis tigris*). This species has a slim body and is just over a foot long, four inches for the body and about 9 inches for the tail. The lizard has smooth scales and its back has dark spots with light colored strips. The Great Basin whiptail is found in a variety of ecosystems but the lizards prefer hot and dry open areas with sparse foliage but they can be found living the chaparral, sagebrush, woodland or riparian areas. The Great Basin whiptail lizard is found throughout the Great Basin and into New Mexico and west Texas. They tend to live in areas at sea level to about 7,000 feet above sea level (Behler and King 1979).

There are many species of whiptail lizards found in traditional Southern Paiute territory but the Great Basin whiptail lizard is the preferred choice. When asked about other species of whiptails, Southern Paiute people described one particular species (desert grassland whiptail-*Cnemidophorus uniparens*) as dangerous. This species is easily distinguishable from the Great Basin whiptail lizard because the desert grassland whiptail has noticeable black stripes down its side.

When a person developed cataracts, they could visit a medicine man so he could remove them. Only specially trained medicine men had the authority to perform such a

dangerous and complex ceremony. Cataract surgery involved a special ceremony, medicinal plants, and a tail of the Great Basin whiptail lizards.

When the patient was diagnosed by the medicine man to have a cataract, the medicine man would perform a doctoring ceremony. First he would watch the whiptail lizard and he would say prayers and explain to the lizard what was about to occur and asking it for help. If the lizard obliged then the medicine man would snap off its tail. Quickly after doing this, the jagged end of the still wiggling tail was used to remove the cataract from the eye. During this process, songs were sung and prayers were said to ensure good thoughts for the patient and the lizard who sacrificed his tail. As a Kaibab Paiute elder (Van Vlack 2004) said, “You have to pray in everything you do, don’t want to upset anything.” After the cataract was cut out, the eye was very bloody and prone to infection. The eye needed to be covered to make the bleeding stop and to prevent germs from entering the wound. Also something would be needed to reduce inflammation. The medicine man made a poultice using the milky sap from the stems, leaves, and flows of rattlesnake weed (the Southern Paiute term, *tuvipaxghaiv*, means “necklace for the ground”). Rattlesnake weed is used as a wash to treat eye ailments including cataracts (Stoffle et al. 1990). This poultice was placed on the eye and the medicine man said more prayers. After the ceremony, the tail of the lizard and other items used would be properly disposed of, usually by burning. The lizard within some amount of time would regenerate a tail and would continue living a normal productive life.

During a Traditional Cultural Property eligibility study of a ceremonial area on the Nevada Test Site, a Southern Paiute elder recounted a story of her grandmother performing this surgery on herself in the 1900s:

*I remember my grandma actually doing this to herself when I was a young girl. She never let me watch because she said it was always too bloody and dangerous, but I always wanted to see. They used to do this all the time, not too long ago. Paiute medicine is a lot better than what we have today. Ours comes from the Earth...the other kind comes from a lab...you know it's hard to trust it (Van Vlack 2004).*

What makes this procedure unique is that the medicine man uses a whiptail lizard tail instead of other doctoring tools like obsidian and chert points. The jagged edge of the tail had to have been just sharp enough to remove the cataract but not sharp enough where it would destroy the entire eye. The end of the tail is also probably the right thickness to put inside the eye to cut out the cataract. A stone point could have been too large and sharp. This procedure begs one to ask the question how did the Southern Paiutes know to use the broken tail of a Great Basin whiptail lizard to remove cataracts. The answer can be found in the idea that the longer people are in a place the more they learn and the people develop deep spiritual understandings and relationships with their environment. Whiptail lizard eye surgery is a common practice amongst many Great Basin groups. Omer Stewart documented this practice for the Southern Paiutes and Utes, (Stewart 1942). Contemporary ethnography documents this activity for the Western Shoshones as well (Van Vlack 2005). What is interesting to note is that Stewart recorded that his Navajo informants (Stewart 1942: 320) did not practice this type of eye surgery, whereas the San Juan Paiutes who share a boundary with the Navajo did. This is further evidence that this

type of knowledge is obtained through thousands of years of environmental learning and interaction in the same ecosystem.

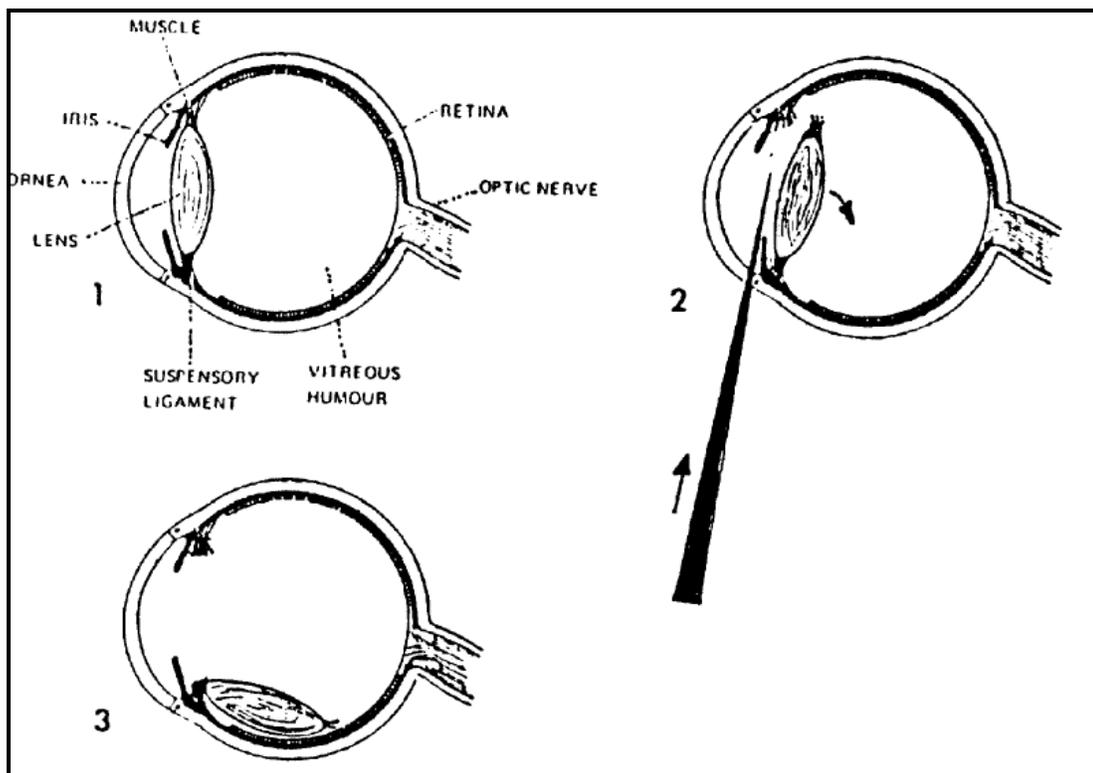


Figure 2.2 Couching Procedure (Schrader 2004: 154)

Whiptail lizard eye surgery is a type of optometric procedure known as “couching.” Couching is a technique that dislocates the cataractous lens through the use of a sharp object or by blunt manipulation as seen in Figure 2.2 This technique is found in many places around the world and in some places like in rural Sub-Saharan Africa, Morocco, India, Nepal and China is still the preferred form of cataract treatment. In Old World societies, “couching” can be traced back to 1700 BC and the Assyrian Code of King Hammurabi in the Middle East; in India “couching” was first documented around 700 BC by the Hindu surgeon Susruta (Schrader 2004). Around the world, highly specialized traditional doctors

performed this surgery. In many societies, these doctors have been predominantly male and the knowledge was passed on from fathers to sons. This form of surgery is so successful that many patients will regain full vision on the infected eye. During a recent study of traditional healers in Nigeria, scientists learned that of the 65 eyes they examined that has been subjected to the eye surgery, 65% showed a corrected visual acuity between 20/20 and 20/40 (Schrader 2004: 155).

The Southern Paiutes were among many societies around the world that developed a form of couching or cataract eye surgery. The Southern Paiutes were able to use elements of their environment such as whiptail lizards and rattlesnake weed to develop a style of surgery uniquely theirs.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Southern Paiute epistemology has shaped how they interact with and use the landscape. Viewing the world as alive and having Paha causes a person to think about the consequences of his or her actions. Knowing that a single decision may ultimately cause harm to a person and the people and places around them, and may result in the people and environment becoming out of balance, makes a person more aware of the physical environment and actions carried out in it.

Living in the diverse region that encompasses the aboriginal lands of the Southern Paiute nation for thousands of years has led to the accumulation of a broad base of ecological knowledge. This knowledge exists on three levels- the family level (LEK), the community level (TEK), and the spiritual level (IEK). Paiute people have taken this

knowledge, applied it to various aspects of resource management, and have caused small to mid-level disturbances, which have promoted healthy and sustainable ecosystems.

Southern Paiute ecological understanding of the environment has caused them to survive through a multitude of social and ecological perturbations; this is often viewed as resiliency. As part of maintaining social and ecological resilience, the High Chiefs were able to use their authority to make decisions for the Southern Paiute nation in order to keep order and spiritual balance.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **NUWUVI NEE-YAHVEE: THE SOUTHERN PAIUTE HIGH CHIEF SYSTEM**

Societies throughout Native North America and the world traditionally had complex hierarchical social systems that helped maintain a sense of order culturally, socially, and ecologically. A number of Native American societies have been examined to understand this type of system. Scholars have invested a great deal of time and effort in documenting these systems and in understanding how the traditional leadership structure functioned. In the southwestern United States, anthropologists have examined the traditional leadership of many of the Yuman-speaking tribes of Arizona, the Takic-speaking people of California and the Numic-speaking groups of southern Colorado and eastern Utah (Dobyns and Euler 1998; Phillips 1875; Simmons 2001). What is important to note is that these systems are not rarities. The traditional leadership systems shared many of the same characteristics and functions.

The basic premise of these studies was understanding what social structure is and the role it played in shaping a society and culture. Social structure is a term that frequently appears in anthropological and sociological literature and yet it is rarely defined or is clearly articulated (Jary and Jary 1991, Abercrombie et al. 2000). Generally, social structure refers to groups that are in definite relation to each other, and have relatively enduring patterns of behavior and relationships within social systems. Social structure is also understood as social institutions and norms that become engrained into a

social system in such a way that they shape the behavior of the people within that system. The concept of social structure is founded on the idea that relationships between groups are enduring and stable and that a society is grouped into structurally related groups or sets of roles that have different functions, meanings, or purposes (Abercrombie et al. 2000). The concept of social structure can be applied to understanding Southern Paiute society and their traditional leadership system.

The Southern Paiutes had a traditional leadership system responsible for the maintenance of social and ecological order throughout Southern Paiute society. The Southern Paiute leadership, more commonly referred to as the High Chiefs, was a multi-layered system that functioned on national, regional, and local levels. This chapter explores the roles and functions the High Chiefs had in Southern Paiute culture and how it was used to maintain the Southern Paiute way of life during the pre-contact period until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **3.1 The Southern Paiute Nation**

In order to understand the functions of the High Chiefs system, a discussion must first be had about the geographical and ecological structure of the Southern Paiute nation and how the political units were formed and functioned (please see Figures 3.1 and 3.2 in for maps of traditional Southern Paiute territory). The Southern Paiute nation was divided into at least two larger divisions, which each encompassed a number of districts. Within the different districts were local communities. Currently, ethnographic research suggests that prior to 1825 there were two major divisions, a western subtribe labeled Paranayi

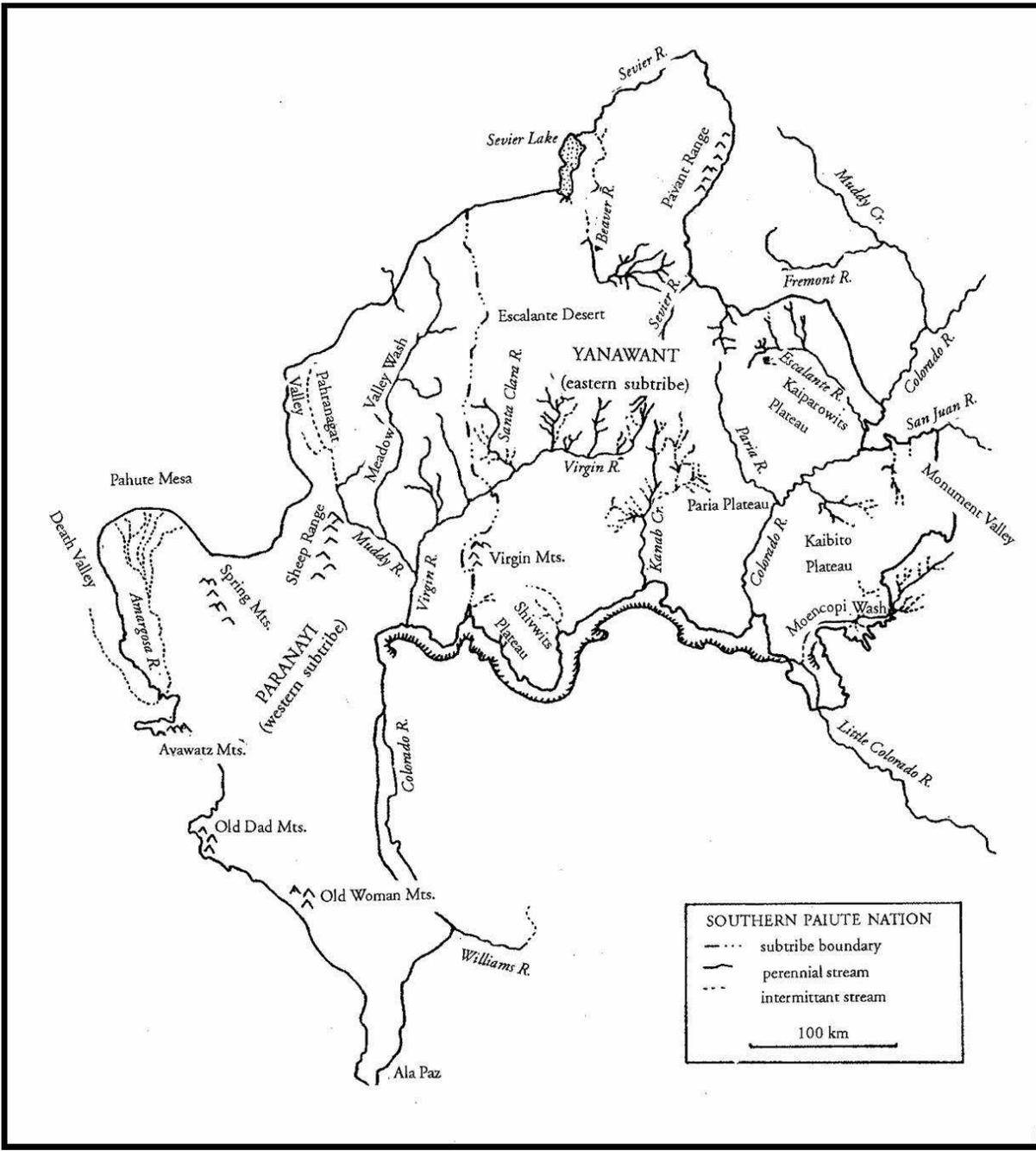


Figure 3.1 Map of the Southern Paiute Nation with Subtribal Boundaries

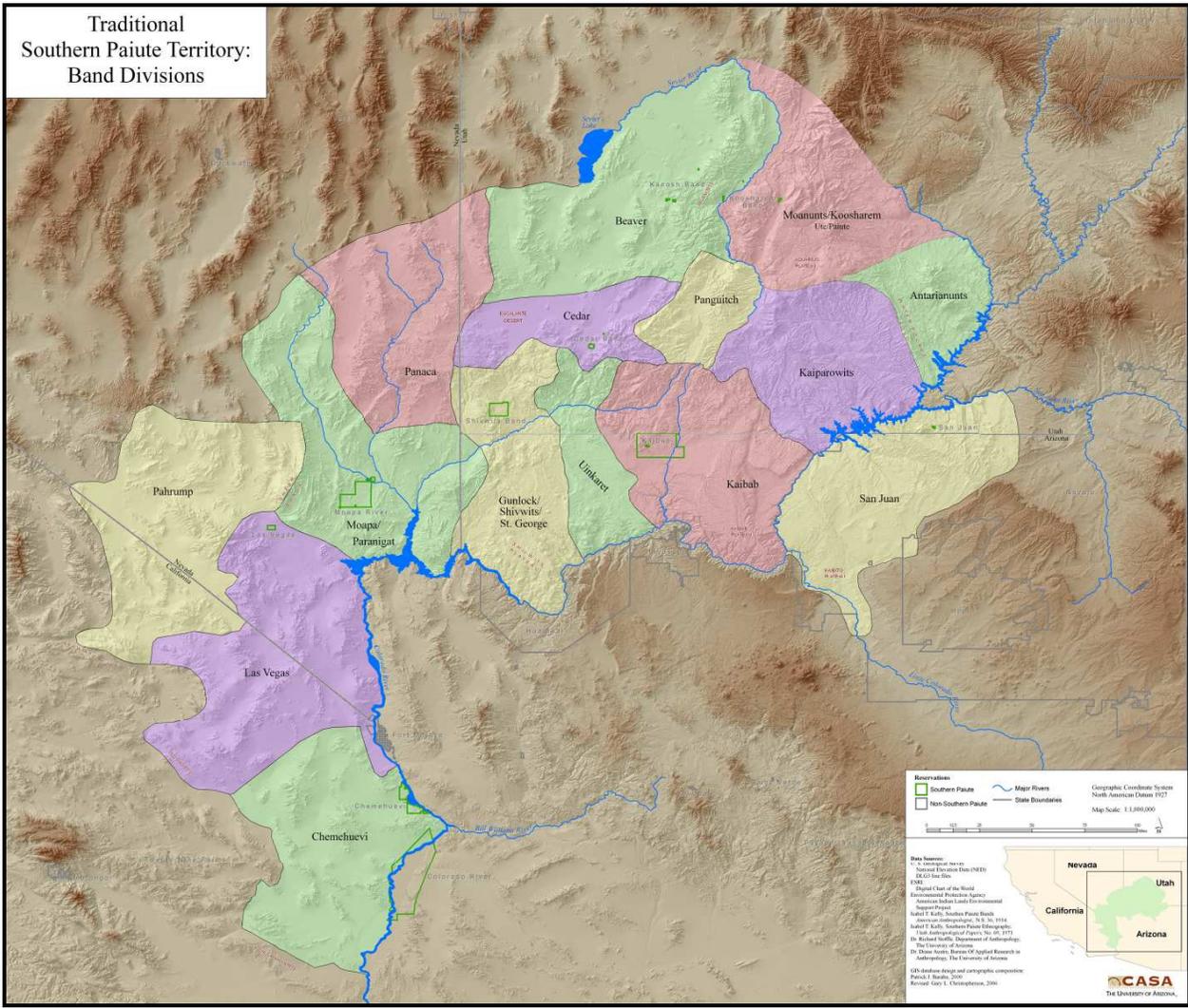


Figure 3.2 Map of Traditional Southern Paiute Territory

(Sapir 1910) and an eastern subtribe, recorded by Jacob Hamblin as Yanawant (Brooks 1950: 27; Stoffle and Dobyns 1982; Stoffle and Dobyns 1983; Stoffle et al. 1994: 7-8).

The term “subtribe” is only used here to refer to western and eastern divisions of the Southern Paiute nation.

Traditionally, there was a direct relationship between ecosystems and the division of land within traditional Southern Paiute territory, which was very evident in the structure and naming of the subtribes. The subtribes’ riverine oases made key contributions to Southern Paiute subsistence thus making the major water sources both culturally and geographically central to aboriginal life. Please note that socio-political units do not always adhere to the natural boundaries of ecosystems. The following sections will describe how the nation was structured starting with a description of the two subtribes and concluding with a description of local communities.

### **3.1.1 Paranayi Subtribe**

The term Paranayi has two rough translations: “marshy spring people” (Hodge 1910: 202) and “people with a foot in the water” (Palmer 1928: 11; Kelly 1934: 554). Paranayi refers to the people who lived in the Pahranaagat Valley-Meadow Valley-Moapa Valley riverine oasis. The important water source flows down the Pahranaagat Valley, Meadow Valley Wash and joins up with the Muddy River. Then the water flows into the Virgin River and on to the Colorado River. From here water flows back upstream to the headwaters of Pahranaagat Valley and Meadow Valley. This area was rich in Southern Paiute irrigated agriculture until Euro-American encroachment (Stoffle and Dobyns 1983).

The Muddy River was the hydrological core of this subtribe. Stoffle and Dobyns suggest that during colonization, the name Paranayi was given to the entire western and southern regions of the Southern Paiute nation by Euro-Americans. Thus, this large geographical area housed a number of districts, which included Moapa-Pahranagat, Las Vegas, Pahrump-Ash Meadows, and Chemehuevi.

### **3.1.2 Yanawant Subtribe**

The Southern Paiute who lived in this district inhabited the higher plateaus of southern Utah and northern Arizona. The people frequented a number of water sources for agriculture. For example, people frequented the Tunakwint oasis (tributary of the Virgin River) and Kanab Creek to tend to their summer crops. It has been documented that Paiutes grew corn and other crops on the sandbars along the Colorado River (Stoffle et al 1997). The San Juan Paiutes planted their fields along the San Juan River and its tributaries and additionally they practiced flood plain farming along the Echo Cliffs (Bunte and Franklin 1987: 30).

Like Paranayi, the term Yanawant can be somewhat misleading. During the 1850s, Yanawant was the term the Santa Clara Paiutes called themselves. Jacob Hamblin used Yanawant to describe all the Paiutes living in the eastern portion of the Southern Paiute nation and the name stuck (Corbett 1952: 84).

### **3.1.3 Southern Paiute Districts**

The term district can be applied to describe the different regions that make up the Southern Paiute nation (Steward 1938, Kelly 1934). Each district constituted a sphere of influence within a geographic territory. The individual districts were defined by the

natural features located within them (mainly the water sources and watersheds) and on some level the existence of neighboring groups. Each Southern Paiute district contained all or most of the resources necessary for the survival of its population (Stoffle et al. 1994). Each district contained a full range of resources, including oasis areas with either riverine or spring fed water sources which provided sufficient water for irrigation farming, and upland and desert areas containing game animals, piñon nuts, and wild seed grains. Each district had permanent settlements near irrigated fields in these oasis areas where the people were concentrated. The districts also had outlying temporary camps in the upland and desert territories that were used for intermittent and seasonal harvesting of wild plant and animal resources.

This resource use style is known as a “transhumant adaptive strategy.” A transhumant way of live involved the harvesting of a diverse range of plants and animals during the course of a complex annual cycle that involved periods of travel throughout an expansive territory. This environmental adaptation optimized the carrying-capacity of the desert environment by spreading resource use over a wide range of species.

The adjacent districts in each sub-tribe traditionally had close economic and social ties through intermarriage, and political cooperation. They established and maintained social and political agreements to define their spheres of influence and resource use territories. Southern Paiutes often maintained permanent habitations near major water sources to safeguard their claims to those crucial resources.

The number of Paiute districts recorded has varied throughout the contact period due to population change, movement of local groups, and by how ethnographers and

demographers defined the districts. The first census data collected for the Southern Paiutes occurred in the early 1870s by John Wesley Powell and George W. Ingalls. They documented thirty-one Southern Paiute groups living in Arizona, Utah, Nevada, and California, which they refer to as districts. Additionally their data show that the people took on the name of the land that they inhabited. Powell explained that in order to find out which tribe an Indian person belongs to, a person must ask which place he or she inhabits.

Years later, Isabel Kelly and Catherine Fowler (1986) defined sixteen Southern Paiute subgroups. Their term subgroup corresponds with the term district, which is being used here. Their data suggest that four of the districts, the Gunlock, St. George, Shivwits, and Uinkarets, made up a single subgroup. It is important to understand that in the decades after contact, there was a massive impact from Euro-American encroachment, which caused a major shift in traditional Southern Paiute society and resulted in the gradual breakdown of regional political organization. Many Southern Paiutes were forced to relocate to regions of refuge in the upland areas like the Shivwits and Uinkaret Plateaus on the Arizona Strip (Stoffle et al. 1994) and the Spring Mountains (Stoffle et al. 2004).

Kelly and Fowler (1986: 368) identified the sixteen Southern Paiute subgroups and believed that with the exception of two subgroups, each was economically self-sufficient. They believed that the exceptions were Gunlock and Saint George. They stated that people had to “go outside their own areas for certain staples” (Kelly and Fowler 1986:368). The Gunlock and Saint George areas were not extensively and ecologically

diverse enough to provide all the resources needed for a self-sufficient and semi-autonomous district. But stating that they were individual districts, however, violates the definition set forth in this chapter and by other scholars (Steward 1938, Stoffle and Evans 1978). St. George and Gunlock were not individual self-contained districts but rather components of a larger district that contained upland resources that Gunlock and St. George lacked. These two groups more accurately represented post-contact development of localized labor gangs in the corresponding Mormon communities. Traditionally the Gunlock and Saint George areas were part of a single larger subgroup or district that included the Shivwits District; this also included the Tunakwint and the Shivwits Plateau and the Uinkaret District.

Ethnographic research conducted by Richard Stoffle and his research team (Halmo et al. 1990, Stoffle et al. 1990, Stoffle et al. 2004) have been used to construct a map of traditional Southern Paiute territory based on the previous work of Powell and Ingalls and Kelly. Stoffle's team added three more districts to Kelly and Fowler's list of districts. The other Paiute groups added to the list were the Pahvants and the Moanunts-Koosharem Paiutes as the northernmost Southern Paiute district, and the Pahrump-Ash Meadows Southern Paiutes as the westernmost district. With these changes, the Southern Paiute nation would include the following districts:

- Chemehuevi District<sup>6</sup>
- Las Vegas District
- Pahrump-Ash Meadows District
- Moapa-Pahranagat District
- Beaver District<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The Chemehuevi District includes Chemehuevi people from the Chemehuevi Indian Reservation, Colorado River Indian Tribes, and the Twenty-Nine Palms Indian Reservation.

- Cedar City District<sup>8</sup>
- Shivwits-St. George-Gunlock District
- Uinkaret District
- Panguitch District
- Moanunts- Koosharem<sup>9</sup>
- Kaibab District
- Kaiparowits District
- Antarianunts District
- San Juan District

This list, like Kelly's list, contains fewer districts than the number that Powell and Ingalls' recorded in their census survey. Powell and Ingalls identified every Southern Paiute community that had a chief as a district though many of his thirty-one districts were actually communities within a larger regional territory. For example, they mention two separate groups within what is now known as the Shivwits district (people who live on the Shivwits Plateau and people who live near St. George). Based on information presented earlier in this chapter, the people who lived in the St. George area used the Shivwits plateau as part of their yearly environmental use cycle.

### **3.1.4 Local Communities**

Local communities were the smallest socio-political and geographic unit of the Southern Paiute nation. The communities are sometimes referred to in the literature as bands, which meant that the communities were composed of numerous families and extended family members. Communities were located at specific permanent water sources such as springs or segments of the various river systems. These communities

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<sup>7</sup> The Beaver District includes the Pahvant, the Koosharam, and the Kanosh Paiutes.

<sup>8</sup> The Cedar City District also includes Cedar City, Indian Peaks, Shivwits, Kanosh and Koosharem currently make up the consolidated Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah.

<sup>9</sup> The Moanunts-Koosharem district was an area that was used by the Moanunts who were a Ute group and the Koosharem Southern Paiutes.

varied in population size and this was directly linked to the size and stability of the water source. In areas such as Pahranaagat Valley, Paiute communities numbered over 200 hundred people (Nye 1886). At Cottonwood Spring, a much smaller water source than in Pahranaagat Valley, located near Mount Potosi at the southern Spring Mountains, the local community only had a population of 69 people in the late 1860s (Powell and Ingalls 1871).

### **3.1.5 John Wesley Powell and The Southern Paiute Census**

Various government officials who had come to survey Southern Paiute territory have documented leaders on the national level. Between the years 1859 and 1869, some government officials declared that Tutseguvits was the leader of the Southern Paiute nation (Fenton 1859: 203; Forney 1859: 73). In the early 1870s, John Wesley Powell and his team recorded that a man named Tagon was the principle chief of the entire nation (Powell and Ingalls 1871). Powell and his men were unclear as to what role Tagon played in Southern Paiute society as the nation chief. They noted that they thought the nation leader had a larger and more important role during the pre-contact period.

John Wesley Powell and George Ingalls were important figures in documenting the existence of the High Chiefs system and they attempted to unpack the complexity of the Southern Paiute leadership structure. They believed that the regional chiefs were leaders of what Powell and Ingalls termed confederacies of local communities (Powell and Ingalls 1871; Fowler and Fowler 1971:104). During their expedition, Powell and Ingalls identified twelve High Chiefs as Chiefs of Alliance. The regional chiefs were in charge of the local leaders and their communities (Powell and Ingalls 1871). One of the

Chiefs of Alliance that Powell mentioned was *To-ko-pur* or Tecopa. He served as the leader for at least seven local communities that were located in the Pahrump District such as (1) the vicinity of Potosi, (2) Pah-room Spring; (3) Kingston Mountain, (4) Ivanpah, (5) Providence Mountain, (6) Ash Meadows, and (7) Amaragosa (Fowler and Fowler 1971: 104-105; Laird 1976: 24).

Powell and Ingalls also recorded detailed information on the other regional leaders and the local communities they oversaw. They acknowledged in their documentation that what they recorded during the late 1860s and early 1870s was an altered version of how the system previously functioned and existed prior to contact. Powell and Ingalls stated that communities along the water systems in the Moapa-Pahranagat District had relocated to other communities or other areas due to Euro-American colonization. By this time in Southern Paiute history, they had been affected by numerous devastating disease episodes and encroachment by explorers, traders, and settlers.

### **3.2 The Structure of the Southern Paiute High Chief System**

Traditionally, the Southern Paiute nation had a hierarchical political structure that functioned on three levels: local (individual communities), regional (districts), and national (entire Southern Paiute nation) with three types of leaders: High Chiefs, Lesser Chiefs, and Advisory Chiefs. The High Chiefs were the ruling elite and led people on the national and district levels. These positions were patrilineally inherited. The leadership position was fulfilled differently at the community level; leaders were known as Lesser Chiefs and this was an elected position. The third type of leader was an Advisory Chief.

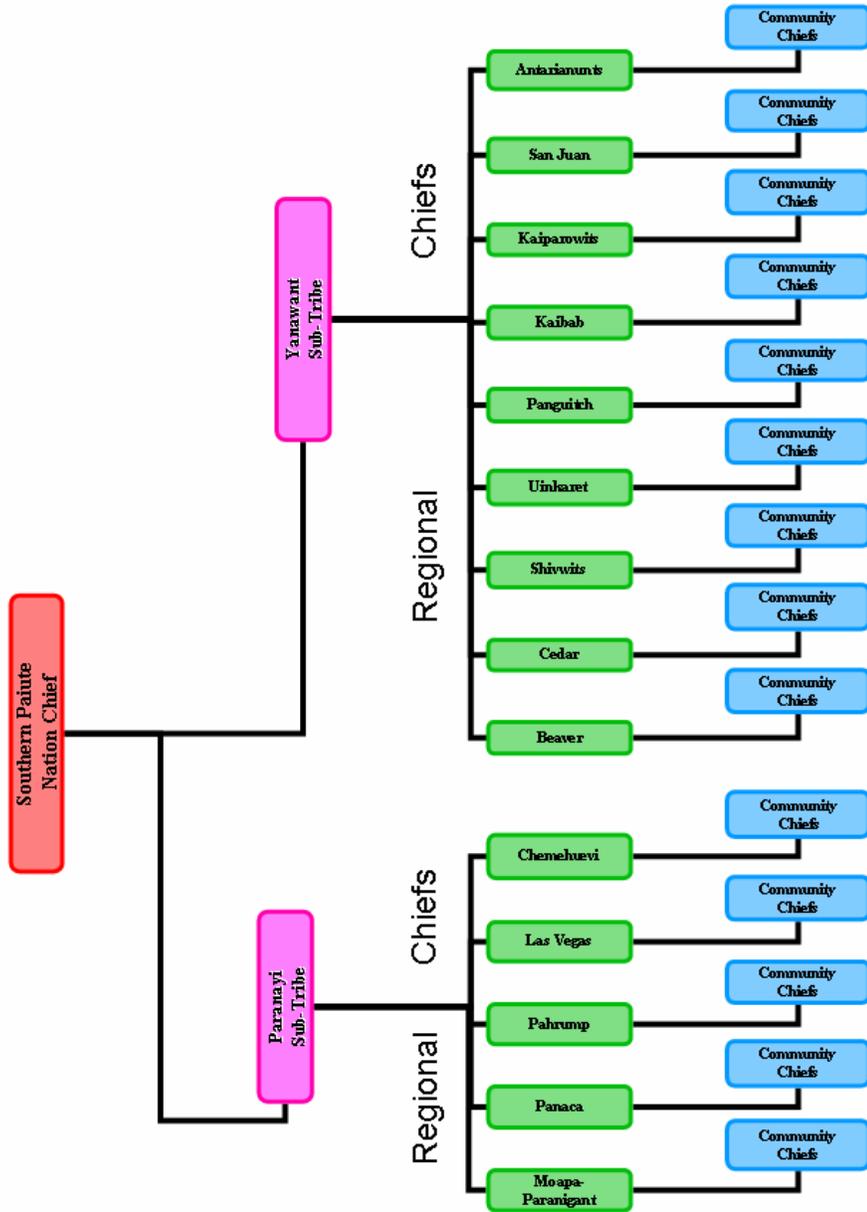


Figure 3.3 Structure of the Southern Paiute High Chief System

Advisory Chiefs were people with specialized knowledge gave the High Chief or the Lesser Chiefs, vital information that was needed to ensure the survival and success of the nation. Advisory Chiefs were very important in environmental management and ceremonial activities. In the early literature by government officials and anthropologists, the Advisory Chiefs were often identified as political chiefs because people followed their directions. Advisory Chiefs were not considered political leaders because they were not elected nor were they necessarily members of the elite families. Their knowledge and abilities were gained through vision seeking or pure talent.

The community leaders interacted and reported to the district leaders. District leaders made decisions based on their interactions with the community leaders and also with their interactions with the national High Chief. The national High Chief took on a leadership position over the regional and local chiefs. Figure 3.3 visually represents the structure of this system. The system was described by a Southern Paiute elder in 2004,

*There were big chiefs over all the other chiefs and they would have a council. There was the local group, and regional chief, then a chief who looked over the whole nation. They cooperated together all the time. If there was a local problem they would spread the word of the problem with a runner. Then the other chiefs would come to see what needs to be done and meet together to solve the problem (Stoffle 2004).*

Southern Paiute representatives interviewed during the High Chiefs study said that communications between the different levels of leadership were carried about by a series of Indian runners. According to Carobeth Laird, the High Chiefs employed a specialized corps of runners to transmit communications. The runners were most likely young men who were specially selected for this role (Laird 1976: 47).

According to a Chemehuevi elder, certain families had this gift and it was passed from one generation to the next. He said, “Being a runner is something that was carried on by someone from a family of runners. A child was born to be a runner,” (Interview Tape 3 Side A).

### **3.2.1 *Tivitsitog*<sup>wa</sup>*intimi*: The High Chiefs**<sup>10</sup>

The High Chiefs were the ruling elite of Southern Paiute society. Each High Chief was a descendent from a long line of leaders who was given the gift of being a great communicator. Southern Paiute cultural representatives who took part in this study described the High Chiefs as:

- *The chiefs were the main source of knowledge and guidance for the people in those days. They were the great leaders and the great talkers. They told the people all kinds of stuff and they would listen (Interview Tape 4 Side A).*
- *The chiefs were the best talkers, the supervisors. They were good family wise and survival wise. The chief was a traditional person who was into the land. This knowledge of the land was something that was inside of him. The chief was everything (Interview Tape 6 Side A).*

The High Chiefs held special social status in Southern Paiute society and in many instances, the chiefs functioned as religious leaders. Southern Paiutes regarded the position of chief as a sacred office that was interlocked with the religious belief of the people (Laird 1976). The Chiefs had special symbols that were once highly visible in Southern Paiute culture. The High Chiefs, the Lesser Chiefs and their families wore turquoise, which was a culturally significant stone. They were privileged to the extent that they were able to eat quail beans (*Kakaramurih*- black eyed peas). The High Chiefs

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<sup>10</sup> Laird 1976.

spoke a special dialect of the Southern Paiute language known as “real speech” or *tivitsi’ampagapi*. Carobeth Laird who wrote a detailed cultural history of the Chemehuevi Paiutes as told to her by her husband, one of the last Paiute runners, George Laird, documented an encounter her husband had with two Chemehuevi High Chiefs:

On one memorable night in the year 1891, ?Ayarupagimi and ?Otawiniri, and another chief from the vicinity of Banning named Nagaramaupa, left the Mountain Sheep Bend (and, incidentally, said to have been the biggest liar among the Chemehuevis) were together in Chemehuevi Valley. They sat by the fire and talked all night long in the dialect reserved for chiefs, and George Laird kept silent and listened spellbound. First one would speak for half an hour or an hour at a time, then with great dignity another would take his turn. This dialect was known as a ‘short way’ of talking. In so far as he was clipped short with final vowels omitted, or perhaps even stripped down to the bare roots, they were declaimed or chanted with a strong accent. This manner of speaking is unintelligible to ordinary folks (Laird 1976: 24).

George Laird also stated that it was the duty of the High Chief to set a good example and teach his people a moral code. The Chiefs guided the Southern Paiutes in the ways of peace and when it was necessary for them to go to war against groups like the Mojaves, the High Chief would select a special War Chief.

Even though the High Chiefs have a moral responsibility to the people, there were chiefs who ultimately were labeled “bad chiefs” based on their decisions and actions. One

such occurrence took place around 1850. This particular chief was described as bad because he led his people in “depredations that could only eventuate in disaster for all” (Laird 1976: 28). George Laird believed that the chief in question was a Lesser Chief under one of Chief Tecopa’s predecessors who made a decision viewed as detrimental to the Chemehuevi people. The incident that provoked the chief’s decision occurred somewhere between the Providence and Soda Lake Mountains. While the men were away hunting, the women were collecting wild plants near their homes when a group of non-Indian people came upon them and killed the women and children. Shortly afterwards, the men of this Chemehuevi group were camped at Snake Water Spring, which is located forty to fifty miles from the town of Barstow. Two of the men attacked and killed members of the non-Indian caravan. They took the items and money on the caravan. According to Laird, this sparked of a series of incidents in which this particular group of Chemehuevis continuously attacked and killed travelers going through their territory upon the direction of their chief. Laird believed that this bad chief was not justified in his decision to declare war even though there was a great sense of provocation. The chief’s actions were counterproductive to what a leader should do such as promote peace (Laird 1976: 27-28).

Whether or not a High Chief was deemed a good or bad leader by his people, the position of High Chief was a role that was inherited. The Southern Paiute nation traditionally had elite families and certain family members (one at a time) would take on the role of High Chief. Male members of these specific families, which had the ability to

communicate, held the position; women never took on this leadership role. A

Chemehuevi cultural representative from Colorado River Indian Tribes said:

*Usually the chieftom was hereditary and it was handed down in one family...it always stayed in one family. It was either a son or a nephew, or a grandson, or whatever. It stayed like that. It was only like a sub-chief that was...anyone could be named if he was a proven person or he had some knowledgeable things or he could do things or he had proved himself as a leader or whatever and then he would be a chief of that vicinity or band or whatever. But he always had to answer to the top dog (Interview Tape 1 side A).*

Each district had a ruling family that had been in charge of overseeing the people for hundreds if not thousands of years. One Southern Paiute representative stated:

*Their leadership and their strength were, in a sense, the pillar of the Southern Paiutes and despite whatever band they came from. And certain ones of them, you know, they had all these bands that were out there that belonged to just that one guy. They all knew and they were intermarried with each other. And to me what always struck me about the Southern Paiute society is the respect they displayed for each other...especially the man. The women were important to the men too. It was always the men who were considered the ones who carried the true leadership in the tribe or in the society (Interview Tape 1 Side A).*

When succession to the chieftaincy was in doubt or when the Chief was unsatisfactory and needed to be replaced (only if they were Lesser Chiefs); the people would take the opportunity to decide these matters. A small number of men would volunteer to be selected by the people for the role of chief and the people (local communities, districts, or the nation) would reach a consensus on who should be their leader. They would choose the person who was a senior community member who was still active and who was in “pursuit of a long life” and “had learned the landscape in both its routine and unexpected forms,” (Knack 2001: 22) and he had to have the ability to communicate.

### 3.2.2 *Mi<sup>ʔy</sup>aupitog<sup>wa</sup>intimi*: Lesser Chiefs<sup>11</sup>

The people of the individual communities selected Lesser Chiefs or community leaders. The community chose Lesser Chiefs based upon who they believed was the most qualified in terms of life experience and cultural and environmental knowledge. The Lesser Chiefs were generally senior male members of the community. The leader chosen had to have excellent communication skills. This person had to incite people to listen to him and follow the decisions he made in regard to environmental management, social relations, traditional exchange, and so on (Stewart 1942). One Southern Paiute representative added, “The people themselves picked them. He knew, he was wise; they knew he was the talker. He would call the council [Advisory Chiefs] together and all decide what to do. And any family could have someone be chief, as long as that person could talk,” (Interview Tape 6 Side A).

The *Mi<sup>ʔy</sup>aupitog<sup>wa</sup>intimi* had many responsibilities to the people such as making sure community members got along and were happy. Like all human societies, people tend to get into disagreements, which have the potential to cause problems. The *Mi<sup>ʔy</sup>aupitog<sup>wa</sup>intimi* assisted in settling disputes between community members over issues such as failure to share food as required by cultural rules, anger at a spouse, or any other types of inevitable daily irritations. At first, those involved in the dispute rallied their relatives and claimed their rights as kin for support. Because the *Mi<sup>ʔy</sup>aupitog<sup>wa</sup>intimi* was often kin to both parties, he mediated and served as a vehicle for communication

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<sup>11</sup> Laird 1976

between those involved in the dispute. The Mi<sup>ʔy</sup>aupitog<sup>wa</sup>intimi “voiced ethical axioms so general that neither party could dispute them and tried to apply those stipulated tenants to the specific case,” (Knack 2001: 23). The chief was not attempting to establish guilt or innocence, right from wrong or determine punishment. He could only try to use his influence and rhetorical skills to persuade them to chose his solution. His solution was based on compromise so that both parties involved could accept it as reasonable and fair. If the Mi<sup>ʔy</sup>aupitog<sup>wa</sup>intimi failed then the disputants would consider drawing upon their family connections elsewhere and move to another community.

### **3.2.3 Advisory Chiefs**

The role of Advisory Chief was not an inherited or an elected position. People who filled these roles had special types of knowledge and power that they used to aid the High and Lesser Chiefs. Their areas of experience varied based on their knowledge base. Some possessed the ability to know where all the game animals were located and could assist the chiefs in directing the hunters where they should go. Others had the ability to call on certain natural elements like the wind, while others were skilled in the art of war. The Advisory Chiefs were not directly involved in the decision making process. They could only offer the other chiefs their opinions as experts on whatever subject was at hand. The High or Lesser Chiefs made the final decisions

There were times when decisions had to be made to go to war to protect the people from a direct threat to the traditional Southern Paiute way of life. The High Chiefs were responsible for protecting the nation and the individual districts. The War Chief was appointed by the High Chiefs during these times of crisis to lead the Southern Paiute

fighters into battle against neighboring tribes or against non-Indian groups. A

Chemehuevi Paiute representative described the war chief as:

*The war chiefs did nothing but talk about going to war. When they weren't doing nothing they would lead the warriors around. They were like generals in the army...they took care of all the men. They went hunting with them and they did this and did that. But when it came down to when they had to fight and war, he would become a war general. All the war tactics were in his head. He knew how to hunt and how to kill (Interview Tape 1 Side B).*

If a situation arose where there was a possibility that people needed to go to war against a rising threat, then the High Chief would call upon the war chief to give his advice and guidance about the current circumstances. After the war chief would advise the High Chief, the High Chief made the final decision to go to war. A Chemehuevi cultural representative explained:

*The war chiefs would recommend it [going to war]. The High Chief was the only one to make that decision if that was going to take place. That's where the chief came in...see his word was law. If everyone wanted to fight and he said, "No. We're not"; they didn't. If they convinced him that they should go to war then those lead warriors would become the war chiefs like Crazy Horse. See that's what he was...see he was a medicine man...he wasn't really no chief until they went to war. He had it all figured out in his head (Interview Tape 1 Side B).*

Once the decision to go to war was made, the warriors had to prepare themselves.

This was a spiritual, mental, and physical process. Taking a human life was not something that was taken lightly and it involved pre-battle preparations and post-battle cleansing. Southern Paiute representatives added:

- *The High Chief, medicine men, and the war chief did that [prepare the warriors for battle- mentally, spiritually, and physically]. They had their war dances. That's what they would do...they would psych themselves to actually take another man's life or installing in their minds that they were invincible (Interview Tape 1 Side B).*

- *I think a lot of Indians were like Crazy Horse and were so enmeshed in the spiritual world and in the way they talk to the four directions and what not. You know a lot of their spirits were with them and this is where they got their strength and their power. I think a lot of it was given how to behave and the Paiutes were no different. They were the same too. The warrior society that he was talking about they wouldn't deliberately go into war. They would have to rely on the High Chiefs and their system of how they deal with battles and because what a chief had done in the past would tell them, you might say his record of what he's done and what he's capable of doing, his wisdom and how it guides him and stuff like that. He would say this battle no, this battle yes. The men were ready to protect their women and children and their territory. It was a matter of being aroused and having the war dances. It was a matter of the reflection that was done upon them. They didn't go to war for nothing. It has to be something that was...I don't know...would make them want to go to war (Interview Tape 1 Side B).*
- *Before battle, the chiefs would talk to the warriors and the medicine men would prepare them (Interview Tape 3 Side A).*
- *When the warriors went to war, they had to prepare themselves and the chiefs helped them. They knew when they had to go and fight. They had to come back because they all had families. When they returned, the warriors for victory and the chiefs were there too. The chief took part in everything (Interview Tape 5 Side A).*

The chiefs had a responsibility to protect his people during times of war as well. One Southern Paiute cultural representative explained, "The chief would hide his people underground and they would cover up the entrance with rocks. That's how they were protected and saved," (Interview Tape 4 Side A).

### **3.2.4 High Chiefs and Power**

Sociologists define authority as power that is understood as legitimate and justified by the powerful and the powerless and The High Chiefs and Lesser Chiefs had the power to assert authority and influence over decisions and actions of the Southern

Paiute people. The High Chief system had traditional authority. Traditional authority derived from long-established habits and social structures (Weber 1962). Those who were placed in the role of High Chief were put in that role because they were members of an elite family. They were never removed those in this position from power. Being placed in a position of power might cause some to assert coercive and totalitarian authority over the people however this was not the case with the High Chiefs. The High Chiefs had responsibility to the people to reinforce cultural standards and values. They also listened to the and made decisions that best suited those around them. The Lesser Chief, as discussed before, was an elected position. They had to use influence to assert power over community members. Because they were elected, people had the option of removing leaders, if the community felt that they were not fulfilling their roles. This created a balance of power between the Lesser Chiefs and the community. People generally trusted the decisions made by their chiefs at all levels of the system because they respected their leaders and they also knew the chiefs made decisions based on information from the Advisory Chiefs who were the spiritual guides.

### **3.3 The Roles and Function of the High Chiefs**

An important part of understanding the High Chiefs system is clearly defining the roles and responsibilities these leaders had in regard to Southern Paiute society and culture. The term “role” is defined by social scientists as behaviors, rights, and obligations that are conceptualized by actors in a social situation (Merton 1996). It is also viewed as the expected behavior given a person’s social status and position. The High Chiefs roles’ were to lead the people by upholding the society’s cultural beliefs and

values by providing them with guidance and information. He had a series of community advisors, which has been defined as Advisory Chiefs who had special skills and knowledge that assisted the High Chiefs in making decisions.

### 3.3.1 Environmental Management

As part of environmental management, the High Chiefs depended on the expert knowledge of their Advisory Chiefs to prevent resource overexploitation and to promote ecological conservation. One of the Advisory Chiefs usually was as the most successful hunter within a community and his district. He was known as the *niaapi<sup>n</sup>η<sup>w</sup>ai* or the hunting chief (Sapir 1992: 790). The person who held this position knew the land extremely well and knew how the game traveled. It was his duty to inform the chief where to direct the communities to hunt. The chief, even though he was an authority figure and could technically easily reject Advisory Chief's information, would listen to his advisors because the chief had a great amount of trust and respect for them. The advisors held this position because of their spiritual and natural abilities. Southern Paiute cultural representatives described the role of this particular advisor:

- *These people were all together, they had different needs, like you say, and things weren't going their way...this guy who was a medicine man, he would be the only guy who had some sort of inclining to be something. There would be a bunch of them...all the young guys that would all gone under...they would all be known for their different skills or whatever. Like some of them would have the gift of being a hunter. They had a name for that person and see he was a gifted person. In Chemehuevi that call him the Kah-su-pan. He was a guy who never went hunting without killing something. Now he was a hunter and then there were guys like that and that's all they did, hunt. He would, in his mind, would dream where all the deer and the buffalo and everything was. So rather than go out and go all over the place, he knew where he was going before he even left. The same way with people that were looking for food...if it became scarce, like that they would go to him. The chief he ran everything but there were other*

*people that were gifted in those kinds of things...they would go to him and they would tell him. He would say 'well okay we need food or whatever; it's over there in that mountain.' And they wouldn't question it, they would all pack up their belongings and head over to the mountain (Interview Tape 1 Side A).*

- *The High Chief appointed the person who had that power to know where the animals were (Interview Tape 3 Side A).*
- *They told the people where to hunt; they had scouts [Advisory Chiefs] that would help the chiefs pick the areas (Interview Tape 6 Side A).*

According to people interviewed, traditionally, the niaapi<sup>n</sup>η<sup>w</sup>ai was a separate position from the High of Lesser Chiefs, however it can be assumed that population loss through encroachment caused the consolidation of social roles. Isabel Kelly's work in the 1930s is an example of this process. When she conducted her fieldwork at Kaibab, Kelly noted that there were three "big chiefs" and two "little chiefs" and she noted a "big chief" named Keno from the Houserock Valley area. She documented that every morning Keno would address the people:

Keno spoke early in the morning, every morning, standing by the door of his house. He spoke loudly so all could hear from their camps. He told the people how to hunt and where to hunt; and after a time everybody answered 'Yes.' Then they went for deer. The chief went first, alone, and the men followed his tracks. He went to the hills and everyone gathered around him. He had them circle about in the timber and chase the deer towards him. Sometimes there were 15 or 20 men. The chief stayed on the mountain until all the hunters left. Towards the evening, he came home

alone. When he reached camp, everyone gave him a piece of meat. Then he spoke again to the people, (Kelly 1964: 27).

Kelly's account suggests that Keno held two positions in Paiute society. He was both a High Chief and an Advisory Chief. Contemporary ethnographic accounts place these roles as two separate entities held by two separate people. Population loss impacted the line of succession amongst the High Chiefs' families and traditional ecological knowledge. In order to offset these impacts, people had to adjust. Sometimes it meant altering the structure of the society through combining positions.

The harvesting of plants was a very important aspect of Southern Paiute life. During certain times of the year, Southern Paiute communities would travel to places to harvest resources like pine nuts and agave. To harvest these resources, it involved organizing the whole community and temporarily relocating people to camps in the upland regions like in the Spring Mountains (Stoffle et al. 2006). Harvests would not necessarily occur in the same area every year because of climatic variation and the need to let the soil rest, so people would have to go to different locations to harvest depending on the area's abundance. In order to prevent people from wasting time wandering from potential harvesting area to potential harvesting area, a community would depend on their advisors to pass information onto the chief on where the people should gather. The chief in turn would formally decide where his people should go and he would be responsible for making sure that his people followed the proper rules of harvesting by making sure everyone helped each other, took what they needed, and shared what they harvested with the animals.

- *Pine nuts were picked in autumn and chokecherries in the early summer. When it was time to pick them, the chief sent out his scouts in the four directions and places where picked based on where the animals migrated (Interview Tape Number 6: Side A).*
- *The chiefs would send out runners first to see where the pine nuts were and then the chiefs would decide where to pick them (Interview Tape Number 5: Side A).*

Places in the Spring Mountains were often prime locations to harvest plant resources.

One Chemehuevi Paiute described one particular location called Mountain Springs. She said:

*This would have been a place where Chief Tecopa would call his bands together. It would be a place where people fell in love and the women would go away without hostile feelings. They could visit the Providence Mountains or the Chemehuevi would come here. Chief Tecopa loved Mount Potosi and he got his power from there. Maybe they would go to another spot. They were a controlled people. They had a lot of respect for their High Chief. When he would tell them to go to some place they would do it. The High Chief would be a diplomat and protect his people. He had to take care of the women and children (Stoffle 2006).*

Sometimes when environmental disturbances prevented a community from using their traditional gathering or hunting areas thus, they would have to use other communities' areas. The chiefs had to negotiate access to each others' territories. One Southern Paiute cultural representative said, "The chiefs would grant permission for other groups to come into their territory to use resources. You just had to ask for permission," (Interview Tape Number 5: Side A). The chiefs would visit the leaders of the neighboring communities to discuss access privileges. In order to ensure his people would be allowed to gather resources, sometimes, cultural items and songs were exchanged as gifts.

Another aspect of environmental management that the chiefs played a major role in was in the maintenance of irrigation systems. Irrigated agriculture along the Tunakwint

and the Muddy River required active management in order to maintain the canal systems and properly allocate water to the people's fields. The chief had an active role in the management of these systems. He helped and oversaw the construction and the maintenance of the canals. When maintaining the canal system, repairs had to be done periodically to patch and reinforce canal walls that were worn over time. The chief was in charge of the process of allocating water to the fields to prevent someone from taking more than his or her share, and to prevent the fields from flooding. Southern Paiute cultural representatives added:

- *The High Chiefs looked out for the people. The individuals couldn't control it [water allocation and canal management] so the High Chiefs had to facilitate it (Interview Tape 3, Side A).*
- *The chiefs helped manage the canals down at Shivwits. The people were only allowed so much water for their fields so it would prevent them from flooding (Interview Tape 6, Side A).*
- *The Indians managed the system themselves. The leaders would appoint someone to do it. In early spring they would clean the brush out of the canals and maintain it (Interview Tape 7, Side A).*

### **3.3.2 Traditional Exchange**

Tribes had a long standing tradition of exchanging goods and services with each other in the Great Basin and on the Colorado Plateau. Goods and services were exchanged in a number of ways. Sometimes, they were distributed during festivals where Indian people traveled for many miles to come together for social occasions. Exchange would also occur when Indian people would take part in expeditions in which they would travel sometimes great distances to other Indian communities to exchange items. Numerous scholars' recorded the different Southern Paiute communities exchanging

items amongst themselves and with neighboring groups such as the Mojave, Western Shoshone, Utes, and the Hopi (Hughes and Bennyhoff 1986: 238-242; Steward 1938).

Traditional exchange occurred both formally and informally throughout the year. According to Southern Paiute cultural representatives, Southern Paiutes and other tribes would meet at central locations for dances and would use this opportunity to engage in traditional exchange. Sometimes rendezvous places were established so many tribes like the Utes, Shoshones, Southern Paiutes, and others would come together for the sole purpose of exchanging items (Hafen and Hafen 1993). Not all exchange was conducted in formal settings; some interactions took place when a small group of people from a particular tribe would visit another to obtain specific items.

The phrase traditional exchange best reflects the activities as opposed to trade because trade implies that these activities had strictly economic benefits. While some items were exchanged for economic gains, many items were given to other Indian people to establish social and political relationships. It was also common for people to use traditional exchange as a way of establishing relationships with places as can be found in the use of hot springs. In the Great Basin, Indian people visited hot springs for healing and doctoring and in order to be healed by the waters, a person would bring an offering like a pretty stone or a finely crafted knife point. The offering was viewed as a gift to the spring so it would cure the ailing person.

Items such as turquoise, paints, and salt from the St. Thomas Salt Cave (a Southern Paiute ceremonial center in Nevada) would be exchanged with neighboring tribes and non-Indian people as a way of showing signs of non-aggression and peaceful

relationship building. For example during the Old Spanish Trail period, travelers documented that Southern Paiutes attempted to trade them salt. The travelers thought the Paiutes were exchanging salt for economic gains but the Paiutes were trying to exchange salt that had been collected through a ceremonial process as a way to establish some sort of non-violent relationship with the travelers (Stoffle et al. 2006). The key to this exchange was who was carrying out this activity. Exchange was the responsibility of the chiefs (at all three levels) because they were mandated to make decisions that would protect the people they presided over and chiefs had to maintain a sense of balance and order.

When Southern Paiute cultural representatives were asked, “When Southern Paiute people wanted to establish social and economic relationships with other tribes and non-Indian people, what kinds of items were exchanged and who was responsible for these exchanges?” they responded:

- *They would have pine nuts to share. They would share salt. I know Arizona and Nevada have an on going joke who grow the biggest pine nuts. Nevada makes fun of Arizona because Arizona’s is little and Nevada grows ones like that. I know they do that...that’s very traditional...very traditional. They would probably share leather goods like buckskins, dish wear for the women...especially when it was first starting to come into our area with the Old Spanish Trail. A reason why they shared a lot of the frying pans was because of the traders. I know those were considered real valuable. I know they shared salt with the Old Spanish Trail people that were traveling here. That way relations were built so that they had ‘Détente’, as you might say where everyone was happy. And then towards the end of the century is when they started mining that salt cave. But I know some of the Southern Paiute consider that Salt Cave to be a Creation place and that they were given the Salt Song there and that’s where they begin their journey through life is there at that Salt Cave. So I know, you know, the local Indians believe that, the Moapas and what not. Ours is different, ours is with the white clay on top of Mount Charleston. There was pottery exchange too...pottery. Probably the revelation of where to get the clay too because sometimes Indians don’t like to tell*

*of their sites where they get it so they continue to hide it (Interview Tape 1 Side B).*

- *I know the Southern Paiutes- the Chemehuevi people would be leery at first, and bring the non-Indians to the High Chief and meet them and what not. I know with the Mojaves you get permission to travel through, you know people coming to the river, they had to get permission to go through. These guys had to do the same thing with chiefs that were local to make it through that territory. Otherwise, without the High Chiefs' knowledge and protection, they might get killed you know. The non-Indians might do something to the Indian people, you know (Interview Tape 1 Side B).*
- *There was trade going on. They traded items and knowledge. Songs were exchanged between groups. People would come to other areas to get resources and so on. In order for this to happen, you would need concurrence from the High Chief. He would help negotiate it. When white people came in there was a fear of them because the Paiutes never saw anything like it before. And if the white people had any power, they tried taking over the resources and the Paiutes were being hunted down. As a way of dealing with this, the chief would call upon the resources to try to correct the situation (Interview Tape 3 Side A).*
- *They traded paints, some people had to put charcoal on their faces in exchange for rocks that were used in traditional ways. And the chief would be involved in trade. He needed to know what was coming and what was near. See that's a kind of exchange. They could foresee what was ahead (Interview Tape 4 Side A).*
- *They traded pine nuts, red paint, deer meat, rabbit skins...when they traded, they made sure they got along with the people they were trading with. Sometimes the chief was involved in this and sometimes he stayed out of it (Interview Tape 5 Side A).*
- *The chiefs would come first to deal with other tribes that came into Paiute territory. The chiefs were always real protective of the land and his people. He would be involved in trade. So, they traded articles like buckskins, red ochre, salt, medicines, sagebrush, and lots of herbs. There was a lot of trading that went on, the chiefs all knew each other so they would get together and talk (Interview Tape 6 Side A).*
- *Negotiating relationships and trade with the non-Indians was something that was done by all three levels- national, regional, and local of chiefs (Interview Tape 6 Side A).*

### 3.3.3 Ceremony

In some instances, the High Chiefs were responsible for conducting certain types of ceremonies and community events. The chiefs called the people together by sending runners to the communities to inform them of the upcoming events which would be held at places that had an abundance of resources, like Ash Meadows and Kanab Creek. These events would bring together Southern Paiute communities from great distances. When asked about the roles the High Chiefs had in ceremonies, Southern Paiute cultural representatives responded:

- *I guess that even before back when the Indians were here and there were no [white people]...way before my time...the Paiutes when they would send the runner out, and they would say one of their favorite places to meet was Ash Meadows because of the water and the resources there. They would have tens of thousands of people or hundreds of people there and still have enough water and resources to do that. The same way amongst the Hualapais when they had their pow-wows. They had spots like that that could accommodate a lot of people. When they [Paiutes] had their pow-wows like that, it would last days and the Chemehuevis generally in those days would have one pow-wow...a memorial in a certain part of the country like in Chemehuevi Valley or Ash Meadows, Twenty-nine Palms...they stored up all their goods so they could have it. These memorials were for anyone who was in the neighboring tribes that passed away during that year. Every other year they would have them at Ash Meadows in September, which was a favorite month because the gardens had put out all the melons and stuff so they had all the resources. But they would have a memorial like that put on by the Big Chief or someone right next to him (it would stay within that family or whatever) and he would notify them and they would send out the runners and say it is going to be here and all the people would come (Interview Tape 1 Side B).*
- *They [the chiefs] would call the people together for large events. Depending on what the event was, the chief would organize it and balancing ceremonies...see the whole nation would take part in it*

*but it wouldn't necessarily occur at the same location (Interview Tape 3 Side A).*

- *All the chiefs would have to come and work together to help prepare for ceremonies (Interview Tape 4 Side A).*
- *The chief were involved in ceremonies because he was the head guy. The regional leader married people. He talked to them and made sure they would make a good married couple. This was a multiple day process. Sometimes the boy would stay with the wife's family so they could make sure he was good enough (Interview Tape 6 Side A).*

In Laird's ethnography of the Chemehuevis, she documented that ceremonies such as the Cry (the funeral ceremony) and the Gathering (*Suupaaru<sup>2w</sup>ap̄i* or *Nagr̄ip̄i*) were types of occasions in which people were brought together from across the Southern Paiute nation. When preparations were underway for either event, a date would be established, and runners with *tapitcap̄i* (knotted strings) were sent out.<sup>12</sup> The *tapitcap̄i* had knots that corresponded with the number of nights that would elapse before the occasion would occur. Runners traveled along a complex trail system that was constructed by Southern Paiute people. In the Mojave Desert, the Chemehuevi Paiute runners used a trail network that connected water locations. Travel throughout Southern Paiute territory was done at night and the runners would sing songs in order to remember the routes they needed to take. The songs described the trails and the songs helped the runner recount the stories of mythic beings that once traveled the trails or helped create them (Laird 1976: 19-20, 268-276). Each night the runner (*tapitcap̄iyawitsi-* the bringer of knotted strings) would spend on the trail, he would untie a knot. Laird wrote that when the

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<sup>12</sup> Dates for the Cry ceremony were selected by the family of the deceased and dates for the Gathering was chosen by consensus within the communities. Other dates for ceremonies were selected by a chief in coordination with his Advisory Chiefs.

tapitcapiyawitsi arrived at a community, “there would be great excitement; the people would exclaim, ‘*Tapitcap nayaak<sup>a</sup>ingu*, the knotted string is brought!’ (Laird 1976: 27).

The Cry was the Southern Paiute funeral ceremony. It was held when a person died and one year following the death. This ceremony brought people together to sing the deceased along a song trail to the afterlife. The High Chief had a very important role in this ceremony as described by the following Southern Paiute cultural representatives:

- *Those memorials were done for a number of reasons- to honor the people that had lost a member of their family during that year, then like I said the Chemehuevis live that close to the spiritual world, there was only one person in that tribe that was gifted with the knowledge of the talk song. Only one family...and generally that was the Chief's family...the Big Chief's family. During that ceremony, usually, the last day of that ceremony in the morning, he would sing his talk song. This song that he sang, you'd hear in Coyote's Language or somebody's language...HIS own language actually was to present those spirits to his ancestors so they could take them into the next world. He was the only one who could do that. He was the only one who could send those spirits that had passed on that year to the other world. When he danced, nobody danced with him. The only person that could dance with him was his daughters...nobody else. His immediate family was the only ones who could dance with him. So when he sang and danced like that, they all just sat down and watched. It was a spiritual kind of a thing that he did and it was all his own...his own spiritual dance. That was usually why every year they had their memorial dances was for that very reason was to send their spirits [the deceased] into the other world. That guy with his talk song- his Coyote Song was the only guy who could do it (Interview Tape 1 Side B).*
- *If the memorial ceremony was in his vicinity, the chief he might come and be there and be a part of it...if they were from a different band, he wouldn't be there because this is why they had their memorial services and he would perform his rites for all of them at the same time. That's why they had their memorial services. A lot of the times the chiefs, they did sing the salt song. The Chemehuevi, they had a few songs...they had the Deer Song, the Salt Song, they had the Flock Song...it was depending on whether he could get there and sing. Generally, the chief would get there*

*and intermingle with all the people and reintroduce himself to all the people, and talk to them and listen to what their concerns were (Interview Tape 1 Side B).*

- *In the old days, there were many testimonials and the chiefs would bring people together. They would talk to the people and encourage everyone's participation. The chief would also take this opportunity to speak about things that were going on (Interview Tape 3 Side A).*
- *At funerals, the chief would talk and tell everyone about the person who died. Everybody had a role in the memorials...the chief, he would be there with his people (Interview Tape 5 Side A).*

The Talk Song or Talking Song that was sung during the Cry ceremonies was the exclusive hereditary property of the High Chiefs and their families. It was called *?Amagahuv<sup>w</sup>iyahi* because portions were sung in Real Speech, the Chief's language. This song, unlike some of the other Southern Paiute songs, was not associated with territorial hunting rights. The territory described in this song was not a part of this world and this song was only used for spiritual purposes. It was a song that could never be borrowed or imitated; it could only be sung by one of its legitimate owners or it was not sung at all (Laird 1976: 25).

The other ceremony that the High Chiefs were actively involved in was called the Gathering. Gatherings were at one time frequently held. Persons who wished that certain matters be brought up and discussed among all the people (both men and women) would, in consultation with others, select a time and meeting place for these types of events. People might have wanted to discuss environmental changes that were occurring, strategies for coping with resource loss, issues of spiritual imbalances amongst the community, or threats posed by neighboring tribes. Usually these events were held in the

homes of those who called the Gathering and where food was abundant as well. The High Chief or the Tivitsitog<sup>wa</sup>intimi would be present to address the people. He was so great in his dignity that he would have a spokesman known as *?ampagangkivi* to speak for him. The *?ampagangkivi* knew what was in the mind of the Chief and conveyed his thoughts to the people (Laird 1976: 27).

Powell and Fredrick Dellenbaugh documented an event like those described above which brought Southern Paiute people together on January 6, 1872. The entire Kaibab Paiute tribe came together just outside of present day Kanab, Utah for a round dance. The estimated Kaibab Paiute population at this time amounted to slightly more than 200 people (Stoffle and Evans 1976). They gathered around the dance circle and in the center was a cedar tree that had all of its branches removed except a piece of its top. The entire band danced around the tree and sang. In the center of the circle, was a man who could have been an Advisory Chief, like a medicine man, who was the guardian of the songs. He would first recite a piece and then all the dancers would sing it. The songs were a combination of original pieces and songs that have been handed down over many generations (Dellenbaugh 1962:178).

### **3.4 Resiliency of the High Chiefs**

When people become extremely knowledgeable about their ecosystems, they adjust their adaptive strategies to protect them from natural and social perturbations. If these disturbances occur, there are social and ecological systems in place to cope with small scale to mid-range disturbances. Thus, it can be said that they have developed a resilient way of life. Resilience is a concept that was derived from the field of natural

ecology and is currently being used as a tool to bridge ideas between natural and human studies. Resilience is focused on the magnitude of disturbance or disturbances that can be absorbed or buffered without the social system undergoing fundamental change in its functional characteristics (Holling 1973, Berkes, et al. 2003: 14). Resilience is a society's ability to bounce back from environmental or social perturbations like ten year droughts and warfare and still retain its overall structure and function. Holling (1973) states that resilience must be understood in terms of three characteristics:

- The amounts of change the system can under go and retain the same controls on function and structure, or still be in the same state, within the same domain of attraction, essentially keeping central cultural core values.
- The degree to which the system is capable of self-organization.
- The ability to build and increase the capacity for learning and adaptation.

Resilience is directly linked to the capabilities of the community to learn and handle disturbances (Berkes et al 2003). Additionally, the Resilience Alliance adds that resilience is “the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure and feedbacks and therefore the same identity,” (Resilience Alliance 2007).

Socio-ecological systems that are resilient have cultural and ecological redundancies. Redundancy in the socio-ecological systems literature is understood as multiple units or building blocks within some larger system that is repetitive in nature. There are two kinds of redundancies that are important to the Southern Paiute case and they are: (1) “the redundancy of many similar (but not completely identical) subsystems

and (2) redundancy arising from functional overlap of closely related species (functional redundancy of non-identical species),” (Low et al. 2003).

In the case of the Southern Paiute nation and High Chief System there are redundancies at many levels which fit into the general definition and the two specific types. In the geographic composition of the individual districts of the nation, each district is similar in relative size and resource availability. All districts had similar lowland locations that were used for agriculture and settlement and similar upland locations that were used for harvesting and hunting activities. The districts’ specific territories were defined in such a way where the nation could buffer itself against environmental perturbations. For example, if members of the Kaibab district were not able to gather certain resources because of drought or naturally caused fire, the district leader would negotiate with a neighboring Paiute district so Kaibab would get assistance and access to the needed resource. This is only possible if the districts had redundant resource use areas. If a district would not grant access to the district in need, then the national leader would step in and negotiate and grant the district in need access to resources.

The individual districts were similar in resource availability but because the Southern Paiute nation covers a diverse amount of territory, there are different varieties of the use plants. Water sources used for agriculture differed too. For example, in the Las Vegas district, Southern Paiute communities were centered around the large springs in the Las Vegas Valley. The springs were large artesian springs, which supported large populations (Stoffle et al. 1998). This contrasted with the river system in the Shivwits

district. While from a hydrological perspective, the two systems were dissimilar, they were socially similar because they provided life for the people.

The High Chief system itself is a redundant system. All districts had a district chief followed by a number of community chiefs and Advisory Chiefs. By all districts having the same system in place, it ensured that there was continuity across districts to deal with perturbations and that each district knew how to respond when another district was in need of assistance when faced with both social and ecological perturbations. This type of system traditionally existed amongst the different Numic-speaking groups of the Western United States. When members of a given Numic society could not fill traditional leadership roles, leaders from other Numic groups would join those in need of a leader and become their chief. Oral history accounts have documented these occurrences and one particular example is linked to the Western Shoshone chief, Chief Kawich. Chief was a Southern Paiute leader who responded to the Western Shoshones need to a leader. Kawich responded by relocating to Belmont area of central Nevada and he became a regional and national leader for the Western Shoshone people.

The High Chiefs system was a resilient system for thousands of years. It was able to ensure the cultural persistence of the Southern Paiute people until its recent collapse. The High Chiefs reinforced cultural checks and balances, which prevented behaviors that could have hurt the people and their environment around them.

### **3.4.1 Resiliency Tested- Responses to Encroachment**

When non-Indian people began arriving in the Great Basin-Colorado Plateau region, it put pressures on Native peoples that they had never before seen. In order to

combat these pressures and seek solutions, the Southern Paiutes turned to their leaders to help them weather these troubled times. The High Chiefs used their time-tested knowledge and adapted their traditional resilient strategies to confront these new threats.

The Southern Paiute nation began experiencing an influx of non-Indian people following the arrival of the Spanish in the 1500s. European followed by Mexican and American explorers and traders began traveling through Southern Paiute lands. Their actions caused perturbations throughout the entire nation. The High Chiefs and their people tried different methods to deal with the increasing threat of encroachment in order to maintain the resiliency of the Southern Paiute cultural system.

#### ***Traditional Exchange with European and American Explorers and Traders***

The Southern Paiute nation had different strategies and mechanisms in place to socially and culturally handle new arrivals into their traditional lands. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the High Chiefs would exchange items of cultural importance to establish peaceful relationships. This system of traditional exchange proved effective. There are many cases of the Southern Paiutes and the Mojaves exchanging items such as salt and pigments with each other (Brooks 1977: 64; Cerveri 1992). There has also been documentation of Southern Paiutes allowing Western Shoshone people into the Spring Mountains to gather pine nuts and when pine nuts were not available, the Western Shoshone granted the Southern Paiutes access to the Shoshoni Mountains for pine nut harvesting (Steward 1938: 183). While Steward did not mention any type of exchange occurring, it can be assumed based on current ethnographic data that such an activity occurred.

If the Southern Paiute High Chiefs negotiated through traditional exchange with other Indian groups for access rights and resources to ensure resiliency of the Southern Paiute nation, then is it possible they carried out similar activities when faced with the arrival of the Spanish and Euro-Americans? The answer is yes. The historical record notes many instances where the Southern Paiutes tried to exchange cultural items with European and American explorers with the desire to establish a peaceful and respectful relationship.

One example comes from the journal of Dominguez and Escalante in 1776. During their expedition, they visited a Southern Paiute community located near present day Hurricane, Utah. The friars noted in their journal that the Paiutes offered to trade turquoise with the party but the Friars told them they had nothing to trade with and they did not want to engage in trade. The Friars said that if some of the Paiutes accompanied them on the remainder of their journey to Santa Fe, they would be rewarded with goods (Dominguez and Velez de Escalante 1776). The attempt made to exchange turquoise was probably more of an act of attempting to establish some sort of social relationship with the Friars as opposed to trading of items in the European sense. Ethnographic data shows that Indian people, such as the High Chief exchanged items of cultural importance and significance to other groups and these types of interactions were conducted by the High Chiefs. During the rest of their journey to Hopi and Santa Fe, the Friars noted that every time they visited a Southern Paiute community, they were given gifts such as pine nuts. As mentioned earlier, pine nuts were one of the items shared with people when wanting to establish a peaceful relationship with other tribes or people.

Another example of this type of traditional exchange occurred during the Old Spanish Trail period where a group of Southern Paiutes brought salt that was ritually collected from the St. Thomas Cave to exchange with travelers. Prior to the Old Spanish Trail's establishment, salt was a commonly exchanged ceremonial item. Salt collected from the Salt Cave had a reddish color and was used a medicine in different types of ceremonies. Early explorers documented traditional Indian use of the Salt Cave. Jedediah Smith in the late 1820s noted that Mojaves from the Cottonwood Island area traveled up river to trade for salt and mineral pigments with the Southern Paiutes (Brooks 1977:64; Cerveri 1992).

A few years after Jedediah Smith traveled through Southern Nevada, the Old Spanish Trail officially opened for trade. The Old Spanish Trail Period began in 1829 and this trail was a trade trail that linked the Santa Fe with California. Traders moved woolen goods from Santa Fe to California in exchange for horses. The trail traversed through most of the Southern Paiute nation and affected the lives of all Indian people living along the route. The Southern Paiutes often tried to engage in traditional exchange with travelers along the trail. In 1830, there was a documented instance where Southern Paiutes brought salt to exchange with New Mexican travelers who were en route to California (Camp 1977:64). While the account did not reveal the purpose of this exchange, a few conclusions can be drawn. The Southern Paiute delegation probably was led by a High Chief because it was the chief's responsibility to protect the traditional lands and the people. Importantly, they brought salt from the Salt Cave, not gold or turquoise, which are items of high monetary value to the Mexican travelers and are items

that can be found in the region. This can be explained by going back to the period prior to 1830 when early travelers passed through this part of Paiute territory. When the first groups of travelers passed through, Paiutes might have made efforts to give them red ochre, gold, turquoise, and obsidian without much success, as seen in the Dominguez and Escalante example. Old Spanish Trail travelers were also not looking for items that would weigh down their animals any more than they were and they simply could not have been interested. The salt from the Salt Cave proved enticing because the travelers were at this point of their journey low on supplies and days away from a rendezvous point. They needed something that would have been useful for the remainder of their journey and the rock salt would have been much desired by travelers to replenish their animals. This exchange of salt was used as an attempt to establish a non-aggressive relationship with the new arrivals. The relationship established from this exchange could have been used to ensure a peaceful relationship.

### ***Regions of Refuge***

Traditional exchange was not the only resilience strategy that was used by the High Chiefs during Encroachment. After the Old Spanish Trail closed in 1849, settlers began to expand into Nevada, particularly in the Las Vegas and Pahrump valleys. Southern Paiute people found themselves in resource competition with the Anglo-arrivals. The Paiute communities surrounding the Spring Mountains, the Southern Paiute Creation Mountain, took refuge from the non-Indian people coming into the region. Starting in the early 1820s, Euro-American explorers, traders, and settlers and the conflicts they brought with them came into the Las Vegas and Pahrump districts. This

caused the Paiute people to seek protection from all the factions encroaching on their life ways, whether it was slavery, trade, or disease. The Paiute people retreated to regions of refuge within the Spring Mountains.

A region of refuge is a term that was defined by anthropologist Aguirre Beltrán to describe places with a dual economy consisting of a national and a local sector resulting from colonialism (Aguirre Beltrán 1979). Essentially, the local sectors were arranged as refuge regions, and were areas isolated both physically and socially from the mainstream of the national society. These areas contained close communities of indigenous peoples. The indigenous communities were subjected to massive changes under colonization, and Beltrán explained that these communities could have both internal and external mechanisms and procedures to deal with imposed cultural changes that were occurring during this period. The stability of the hinterland as a safety region was part of the resistance and protection from these forced changes (Aguirre Beltrán 1979:71).

During the period of colonization and encroachment, the Southern Paiute living in Las Vegas, Pahrump, Indian Springs, Cottonwood Springs and other areas turned to the Spring Mountains, for protection and resistance from Euro-American expansion because this mountain range contains a permanent source of water and Puha. In comparison, the Pintwater Range, a powerful and culturally important area, lacks permanent water. During the Spring Mountains Cultural Landscape study, a Southern Paiute religious leader stated,

*People would worship on the mountains but would leave this area after a few days and go back to their settlements where agriculture was possible. After invaders came along and took their family area, they moved into the*

*mountains for protection and because they had no choice, that was their last bit of land and if they lost it that was that (Stoffle et al. 2003: 83).*

Decisions to leave their traditional communities and move to regions of refuge were made by the chiefs. The chiefs made these decisions based the types of events that were occurring in their territories. Non-Indian people caused a physical and spiritual pollution of the land. An example of physical pollution occurred when non-Indian people were traveling across the Old Spanish Trail. Their large animal herds destroyed fragile desert vegetation and their droppings polluted the water, thus making some of the springs uninhabitable. Non-Indian people spiritually pollutions places when they improperly entered places by Southern Paiute standards. When Southern Paiute people arrive at a place it is customary to introduce oneself to the place by telling it where one is from, where one has been, and where one is going. A person must seek permission from the place to engage it. It was also important when in the mountains not to be loud; a person must be respectful and quiet. Non-Indian people often violated this and it caused a spiritual imbalance. The chiefs were faced with two options, stay and try to rebalance the area or move to a new area if they felt that the place they were in was unable to be spiritually fixed

- *The people would share with each other and respect each other. The Indians were real similar but they all knew who was more powerful and who ruled areas. The people would have gone far away like to the Kingston Mountains to the south and Black Mountain in the north. They went there because they would have lived there. They had family and relatives in other places. The places and the people would have been under the control of a High Chief (Stoffle 2006).*
- *Chief Tecopa or his father or grandfather probably went west or south into the Kingston and Providence Mountains. Some went to the north side of Mount Charleston, Ash Meadows, Black Mountain, Shoshone*

*Mountain, Las Vegas Wash area the Las Vegas Springs area, and Cottonwood Spring. They went to those places because they are traditional territories. These places offered similar resources found on Mount Charleston (Stoffle 2006).*

- *During times of encroachment, the chiefs would try to fight for their land, and they always lost even if they fought hard for it. The chiefs had to find places to go- winter places, fall places, spring places, and summer places. They needed to pick places close to water. They needed it to survive (Interview Tape 5 Side A).*
- *They [the chiefs] knew where to go and where there was water. Water was the main source of life for Indian people (Interview Tape 6 Side A).*

### **3.5 Chief Tecopa**

When talking about the High Chiefs system it is only fitting to talk about Chief Tecopa, who some argue was the last traditional High Chief. Chief Tecopa, a Pahrump Paiute, is arguably one of the most revered leaders in Southern Paiute history. He was not only the district leader for the Pahrump Southern Paiute, he oversaw a community near Mount Potosi, and he was also viewed as the leader of the Southern Paiute nation. According to one Pahrump Paiute representative, “Tecopa...he was our chief. He came through as a natural leader. He was a *talker*. He had the gift of talking and through that everyone supported him.” Julian Steward (1938:185) recorded information on Chief Tecopa; his informants mentioned that there was a chief from the Pahrump and Ash Meadows region who was named Takopa (Tecopa). Steward noted that Tecopa was viewed as the leader of “all the Southern Paiutes.” The Indian people who Steward (1938:185) interviewed in the 1930s also stated that,

The Paiute of the Pahrump and Las Vegas regions were never unified in a single band. A.H. names a succession of three Las Vegas chiefs

(towin'dum): Patsadum, who died many years ago; then Tasidu'dum, who also died many years ago; then A:udia', who was recently killed. For the region of Ash Meadows and Pahrump he named Takopa (who was probably born at Las Vegas and died at Pahrump about 1895 [actually 1905]). Takopa's main function was to direct the festival. Ch.B. added that when Mojave raided Las Vegas people, Takopa might assist them, perhaps even taking command.

It is important to note that the people interviewed by Steward listed the names of three chiefs from the Las Vegas district but only named Tecopa as the leader of the Pahrump district. This reflects the fact that Tecopa had been the Chief of the Pahrump district from mid 1860s until 1904, or approximately two generation.

Encroachment caused massive changes that affected the resiliency of the High Chiefs system. After the death of Tecopa, the Southern Paiute nation struggled to maintain their national identity and function. Leaders from the Las Vegas and northern Arizona areas tried to keep the system together but the pressures were too much and the system collapsed.

### **3.6 Conclusions**

The High Chief system was stressed and eventually declined in extent and function due to invasions by Euro-Americans, their animals, and their diseases. Scholars and laypersons alike came to characterize Southern Paiute people as any lacking social organization above the family level even though this was not the case. The High Chief system lasted into the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but the deaths of so many Southern

Paiute people due to epidemic diseases meant that many of the traditionally held socio-political positions could no longer be maintained and the need for a multi-layered system lessened. Despite this, some aspects of the traditional system have been maintained and persisted until today.

While it was touched upon briefly in this chapter, the next chapter details the process of culture change and the deconstruction of the High Chief system. Euro-American encroachment affected the stability and resilience of the system until it could not carry out its traditional functions.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **GREAT BASIN HIERARCHY AND THE DECONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL COMPLEXITY**

By the early half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, encroachment impacts had caused Southern Paiute society to undergo an extreme culture change. Encroachment led to a breakdown of the High Chief system as a functioning aspect of Paiute culture. While the High Chiefs remained an important part of their oral histories and identity, many anthropologists of the 20th century have chosen to overlook, to misinterpret, or not to contextualize the data they have collected. This chapter explores this issue and shows how some scholars are trying to shift the collective thinking on Numic hierarchy and complexity to best reflect the cultures and the peoples.

#### **4.1 Culture Change in the Great Basin**

More often than not, mainstream archaeological, ethnographical, and ethnohistorical research tends to operate in isolation from the people whose ancestors are under study. The researchers in these fields expect the study communities to embrace willingly their research findings as factual pieces of tribal histories. Tribal societies have maintained that their accounts of their own histories are facts. These points of contention are critical for understanding a people's history because sometimes it must be conceded that the oldest pieces of history may be lost and portions of other accounts might have been enriched through new memories and increased knowledge of their homeland. For

most Indian people, research findings are not actually historical truths, but instead they are viewed simply as products of a different culture also known as Western science.

Through a variety of research projects (social impact assessments, cultural resource and cultural preservation studies, and oral history projects) that directly involve Indian people, there has been more of a focus on recording tribal histories and knowledge. By making Indian people partners in this process, there have been great expectations put on the researcher to bring forth tribal histories as building alternative hypotheses to the ones that have already been established by Western science (Stoffle and Zedeño 2001). With this in mind, is this applicable to Southern Paiute culture and the Great Basin region? The answer is yes.

#### **4.1.1 From Dominguez and Escalante's Farmers to Steward's Hunter-Gatherers**

Euro-American documentation of Southern Paiute people began in 1776 when Friars Dominguez and Escalante arrived in the Southern Paiute homelands. The friars were the first to mention Southern Paiute agriculture and homesteads along the portions of the Colorado River watershed (Dominguez and Velez de Escalante 1776). When their expedition entered the upper portions of the Virgin River, they were met by Southern Paiute farmers who held up ears of corn as a greeting and sign of peace. On October 15, 1776, Dominguez and Escalante continued to be impressed by the agricultural activities of the area and at a place currently known as Ash Creek, they found a large supply of green corn on a well-constructed mat. In addition, in the nearby plain along the riverbank were farms fed by irrigation ditches; growing in these fields was maize (Dominguez and

Velez de Escalante 1776). The excitement of finding agricultural people can be seen in this statement:

We felt especially pleased, partly because it gave us hopes that we should be able to provide ourselves farther on with assured supplies, but principally because it was evidence of the application of these people to the cultivation of the soil, and because of finding this preparation for reducing them to civilized life and to the Faith when the Most High may so will, for it is well known what it costs to induce other Indians to do this, and how much their conversion is impeded by their dislike for this labor [agriculture], which is so necessary for a civilized life, especially in pueblos (Dominguez and Velez de Escalante 1776: 88).

The friars' pleasure in finding a pueblo-like people who were farming meant that they were happy to find sedentary people who practiced agriculture and lived communities. This indicated that the Ash Creek Southern Paiute community was close to meeting the Spanish standards of civilization, only lacking conversion to Christianity.

In the winter of 1864, almost ninety years after the Dominguez and Escalante expedition, William Nye spent a winter with the Southern Paiutes living in Pahrnagat Valley, Nevada. Nye described the area as an "Indian paradise" that was blessed with fertile soils and abundant water in a rather arid region. Nye recorded that Pahrnagat is a Paiute word for Valley of the Shining Water. Nye documented that there was an agricultural community of 200 people headed by a

chief named *Pah-Witchit*. This community actually stored corn for the winter, which they grew and harvested in the fall. Also during Nye's visit, he had a brief encounter with Pah-Witchit. The chief asked Nye, "What for you come to our country, digging up stones? And your ponies eating up the grass in the valley, and next summer, perhaps, destroying our corn and melon patches," (Nye 1886: 296). The chief's statement confused Nye greatly, but meaning can be extracted from it. Pah-Witchit was concerned because by this time in Southern Paiute history, Paiute people had endured multiple environmental and social impacts. By 1864, they had lost large portions of their traditional territory and saw important resources be decimated by traffic to and from California.

A few years after William Nye visited the Southern Paiutes of Pahrangat Valley, George M. Wheeler was commissioned by the US Geological Survey to explore the lands west of the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian. His expeditions, which spanned a decade (1869-1879) took his team through California, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. His team was responsible for the recording of details of the physical features, geology and any American Indian groups in the areas they visited. In 1871, members of his team visited Ash Meadows in southern Nevada. While in Ash Meadows, a member of Wheeler's team observed:

We found plenty of excellent grass and water, the latter from warm springs...I then moved southward and crossed a low range into another sandy and gravelly desert, (Pah-rimp Desert), which extends south for miles, and skirts the Spring Mountain Range. This desert contains several

beautiful oases, the principle one being at Pah-rimp Springs, at which point are located quite a number of Pah-Ute Indians, very friendly and quite intelligent. These Indians raise corn, melons, and squashes. Great quantities of wild grapes were found around these springs, (Wheeler 1872: 84).

Wheeler's team also documented a small agricultural community at Cottonwood Springs at the southern portion of the Spring Mountains. One of Wheeler's men wrote:

At Cottonwood Springs and at Las Vegas there were quite a large number (Southern Paiutes), who moved back and forward between the two places, according to their fancy. They have small farms or gardens and besides the corn, pumpkins, melons, etc., raised by themselves, obtain scanty supplies for what little work that they do (Wheeler 1872:75).

After the Wheeler Expedition came John Wesley Powell and George Ingalls. Powell and Ingalls, like the explorers before them, encountered Southern Paiute agriculture. They went on record stating that, "all Pai-utes subsist on agriculture in part by cultivating the soil," (Fowler and Fowler 1971: 98). Powell and Ingalls also documented the well- developed socio-political structure of the Southern Paiute nation (please refer back to chapter 3 for more information). They found that the Southern Paiutes had a broad and extensive knowledge base of their landscape, ranging from geography and ecology to astronomy.

Despite these recorded accounts, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, anthropologists adopted a position that defined all peoples of the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau as

non-farmers and socially ranked among the “simplest people” on the planet (Stoffle et al. 1982: 110). Alfred Kroeber and Julian Steward wrote that Paiutes and Shoshones were simple and not very intelligent. They perceived that the environment dominated the Numic-speaking peoples of the Great Basin. Kroeber wrote in the *Handbook of California Indians* (Kroeber 1925: 582-583) that Great Basin Paiute culture was considered to be: (1) rude and too flexible to be elaborated, (2) monotonously simplistic, (3) not integrated into broad cultural patterns, and (4) interesting only because they lived in poverty. Kroeber further stated that Paiute people were small in population size and that seasonal movement was dictated by the environment and their makeshift subsistence pattern. He also added that they were intermittently idle and had no imagination.

Julian Steward continued to perpetuate these perceptions of Numic-speaking peoples in his book *Theory of Culture Change: the Methodology of Multilinear Evolution* (1955). Steward characterized Paiutes and Shoshones of having only family level social and political organization. This position was not supported by his own data or the data collected by one of his Ph.D students, Omer Stewart. Julian Steward stated that Paiute people were like “living fossils,” exemplifying what human societies must have been like tens of thousands of years ago before the advent of agriculture, cities, and any other cultural trait that was used to define civilization (Steward 1955). Please note that this issue will be revisited later in the chapter.

What caused Numic people to move from being a relatively complex people who possessed environmental knowledge and irrigated agriculture and a hierarchical political system (King and Casebier 1976, Powell and Ingalls 1874) to being labeled some of the

world's simplest societies (Steward 1955)? To answer this question, one must look at the processes in which cultural and social deterioration and change occurred.

The Great Basin and Colorado Plateau region is a unique cultural area with long standing traditions of cultural continuity (Whitley 2006). The native peoples of this regional had complex social structure and culture. Like other Native American groups, they were impacted by the arrival of Euro-American people in their traditional lands. The effects of this clash of cultures led to detrimental impacts to Great Basin peoples and caused social and cultural change. Culture change is a common phenomenon amongst all human societies. Change occurs on many levels and it can happen for a number of reasons. Some types of change are forced upon a society based upon outside forces and are unexpected. Some types of change are part of a conscience effort to alter certain aspects on a culture. Culture change is a complex process that can only be explained by exploring ethnographic and historical data.

#### **4.1.2 What is Culture Change?**

Culture change is has been one of the most studied issues in Sociology and Anthropology since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. If one was to use one of the many internet databases to search for scholarly articles on culture change, one would note that there are over two million hits on this subject. These articles range across disciplines and cover a variety of issues that fall under the umbrella of culture change. In terms of this document, the exploration of culture change focuses on *acculturation* and *assimilation* and how they can be used to help understand the changes in complexity and culture in Great Basin societies in the post-contact area.

Acculturation is defined as a type of process rather than a single event.

Acculturation is an adaptation to new conditions of life (Thurnwald 1932: 557). Some scholars have defined it more boldly as changes in a society that result from direct and aggressive contact of two societies (Titiev 1959:196-200) Alfred Kroeber (1948) described acculturation as changes produced in a culture that resulted from the influence of another culture, with the two cultures becoming similar as a result. The changes that occur might be reciprocal, and the two cultures become similar or the changes might be one sided and thus causing the extinction of one culture when it is absorbed by the other (Kroeber 1948:425). Anthropologist Ralph Linton defined acculturation as “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both group,” (Linton 1940: 501).

Acculturation is a dynamic process that is directly linked to a contact situation with two cultural groups coming into continuous first-hand contact. Edward Spicer (1961) emphasized the role contact played in acculturation processes. Spicer argued that alternative types of contact situations lead to a wide variety of responses both positive and negative.

Assimilation is similar to acculturation in that they both describe processes of culture change. While they may be interrelated, they are not interdependent and assimilation must be treated as its own entity. Assimilation is a unidirectional process in which individuals or different ethnic groups of differing are absorbed into the dominant society's culture. Usually the groups absorbed are immigrants or isolated minority groups

who, through contact and participation in the larger culture, gradually give up most of their former culture traits and take on the new traits to such a degree that socially they are no longer part of their original cultural group. Assimilation involves subject, or internal, change as well as external change, suggesting that a change in values occurs. Assimilated peoples develop a positive orientation and identify with the values and culture of the out-group or the dominant culture (Teske and Nelson 1974).

## **4.2 Culture Change in Southern Paiute Communities**

In the Southwest United States, Native American people have been subjected to three waves of colonization and forced culture change. The Spanish, Mexican, and Euro-American periods ushered in different philosophies and government policies on how to address the Native peoples living within their boundaries. The following is a short discussion on some of the major events that affected Southern Paiute culture and led to culture change.

### **4.2.1 European Encroachment**

Given the location of their traditional territory, the Southern Paiutes were subjected to many types of Euro-Americans traveling through and settling their homeland. The first time the Southern Paiutes had any type of direct interaction with a non-Indian occurred in 1776 when Dominguez and Escalante arrived in present-day central and southern Utah particularly near the Virgin River area. According to the friars' journal, the Southern Paiutes were aware of non-Indian activities taking place in the west and east and that information was obtained from runners from tribes that were great distances away.

One of the Southern Paiute communities visited by Dominguez and Escalante was located outside of present day Hurricane, Utah. At the camp, they noted a Mojave person amongst the Paiutes because the language he spoke was not like any they had heard before which they concluded had to be Jomajaba (Mojave). The Paiutes offered to trade turquoise with the party but the Friars did not have any times to trade with so they declined. The Friars said that if some of the Paiutes accompanied them on the remainder of their journey they would be rewarded with goods.

Why was a Mojave person in this part of Southern Paiute territory? It is likely that this person was a Mojave runner who was sent from Mojave territory to inform the Southern Paiutes that Francisco Garcés was leading an expedition from California and was heading towards Paiute country. According data collected during my interviews on the Southern Paiute High Chief system, tribes would have sent runners to different locations to warn them of the impending arrival of the Spanish explorers.

In addition, the exchange of turquoise was probably more of an act of attempting to establish some sort of social relationship with the Friars as opposed to trading of items in the European sense. As previously discussed, Indian people exchanged items of cultural importance and significance to other groups and the High Chiefs conducted these types of interactions. During the rest of their journey back towards Hopi and Santa Fe, the Friars note that every time they visited a Southern Paiute community, they were given gifts such as pine nuts. According to Southern Paiute representatives, pine nuts were one of the items shared with people when wanting to establish a peaceful relationship with other tribes or people.

Dominguez and Escalante requested that some Southern Paiutes lead them south to Havasupai territory. The Paiutes told them they could not go south because there was no water located along the route the Friars wanted to travel and the friars were told that they could not cross the canyon or the river. This is an interesting statement in that from Hurricane, Utah south towards the Grand Canyon there are many springs and water sources. If Dominguez and Escalante headed due south, they would have encountered the Mount Trumbull and Whitmore Canyon. Both areas are linked to ceremonial activity and are deemed very sacred by Southern Paiute people. Both areas are associated with pilgrimage. The Mount Trumbull area is associated with pilgrimages from Nixon Spring-Uinkaret Pueblo to Little Springs lava flow, Nampaweap rock art site and then to Vulcan's Throne and Toroweap Overlook for vision seeking. Whitmore Canyon is associated with ceremonial activities at Mount Trumbull and places located with the Grand Canyon (Stoffle, Van Vlack, and Chmara-Huff 2005: 183-192). Whitmore Canyon is the entrance into the Grand Canyon and the gateway into a major ceremonial area, which includes a Water Baby pecking, a hot springs, a paint source, a ceremonial preparation cave, and the destination site- Vulcan's Anvil. Vulcan's Anvil is an important doctoring and medicine area. Southern Paiutes likely wanted to keep Dominguez and Escalante away from these locations to protect the cultural and spiritual integrity of these sites.

When Dominguez and Escalante left the Hurricane area with their Paiute guides, they reached a place that has been identified as Rock Canyon. The area was so rocky and difficult to traverse that the Friars and their party could not follow. They claimed in their

journey that the Paiute guides took off. After this incident, the Friars decided that they were going to attempt reaching the river and crossing over to Havasupai territory. They proceeded south along the Hurricane Cliffs. They noted that there was water available contrary to what the Paiutes had told them. The Friars felt as though they were lied to intentionally and expressed some resentment.

Being tired, short of food supplies, and unsure where the next water source could be, the group made a decision to cross over the Hurricane Cliffs approximately ten miles east Diamond Butte. After ascending the cliffs, they headed southeastward. During this portion of the journey, they spotted five Southern Paiute men spying on them from above. Dominguez and Escalante describe in the journey this encounter:

There were five Indians peering at us from a short but high mesa; as we two, who were coming behind the companions, passed along its base, they spoke to us. When we turned toward where they were, four of them hid themselves and only one stayed in sight. We realized the great fear they had; we could not persuade him to come down, and we two went up on foot with plenty of trouble. At each step we took, as we came closer to him, he wanted to take off. We let him know that he did not have to be afraid, that we loved him like a son and wanted to talk with him. And so he waited for us, making a thousand gestures to show that he feared us very much (Dominguez and Velez de Escalante 1776:101).

It is unproven at this time, but what is likely is the two guides from the Hurricane area might have went to the Uinkaret district and informed the leaders of the possibility of the arrival of the Friars and their party.

The Paiute men identified themselves as Uinkarets and they conversed with the Friars for over an hour. They told Dominguez and Escalante that there was a good water source in the form of a rock tank near by and after much pleading the Paiutes agreed to lead them to it. The men in Dominguez and Escalante's party eagerly drank the much-needed water and when they led the horses to the water tanks, the horses drained them.

The next day numerous Indian people arrived at the Paiute men's camp (Dominguez and Escalante called this the "king's camp) and they brought the Friars and their party goods and food items. The friars said that one of the people who arrived at the camp was not Southern Paiute. The Paiutes identified him as Mescalero Apache. He and three other Mescalero Apache men were visiting the Paiutes at this time. The following is an excerpt of Dominguez and Escalante's account of the events:

In the afternoon, many more came over than those who had been with us previously, and among them one who they said was a Mescalero Apache and explained he had crossed the river a few days before. He had very unpleasant features and differed from these Indians in his dislike of seeing us around here and, as we noticed, in the great animosity which he purposely displayed. They said that these Apaches were friends of theirs (Dominguez and Velez de Escalante 1776: 103).

The Mescalero Apache in the Paiute camp is intriguing because the Mescalero Apaches were living along the Pecos River in eastern New Mexico during this period. This man and his group were a great distance from their home. One possibility for why they were with the Southern Paiute is that these men were runners sent out to inform the various tribes about Spanish activities. The Mescalero Apache, who the friars mentioned, were well aware of the Spanish and the events occurring in New Mexico.

Dominguez and Escalante noted in the diary that one of the Uinkaret men who spent the first night with them mentioned that he had heard of Francisco Garcés and his expedition. The Uinkaret Paiutes also denied knowing the Havasupai, even though Dominguez and Escalante believed that they did know who they were and were lying to them. The friars stated that the Paiutes left their camp before it was decided which one was going to guide them to the Colorado River. The actions displayed by the Uinkaret Paiutes suggest that they did not trust the friars nor had a desire to help them reach their final destination, even though the Paiutes brought them food items and other gifts.

The Dominguez and Escalante encounter was a precursor for events to come. The Southern Paiute reactions to the friars were attempts to protect their people and resources from the encroaching Europeans. This ultimately set the tone for how they would respond to people traveling through their lands during the Old Spanish Trail period. The Old Spanish Trail officially opened in 1829. The Old Spanish Trail linked Santa Fe and Los Angeles. Trading caravans left Santa Fe in the fall with woolen goods and returned in the spring from Los Angeles with on average one to two thousand horses (Hafen and Hafen 1993). The volume of traffic moving across the desert destroyed fragile vegetation and

scared away animal. The horse herds needed large amounts of water so it was imperative that they stop at numerous springs along their journey. Often this left the springs in a severely damaged state, pushing both humans and non-humans away from key water sources. When this happened in the Mojave Desert, the people, plants, and animals suffered a horrific blow. The Indian people were faced with very limited options; either they relocated and lived with other Southern Paiute communities or other tribes or they stayed and struggled to survive with very limited resources.

Old Spanish Trail traffic was not limited to traders, moving across the trail were people en route to California for the 1849 Gold Rush. The forty-niners also contributed to resource depletion and destruction. Like those of the Old Spanish Trail traders, the forty-niners' pack animals needed water and plant resources to survive the journey. What made this event appalling was that it further contributed to environmental degradation. The Old Spanish Trail period was just ending at this time and the environment was subjected to more traffic. It never fully had a chance to recover.

Mormon colonization followed the Old Spanish Trail and forty-niner periods. Building on discussions in previous chapters, Mormon colonization had profound impacts on Southern Paiute culture and resources. In addition to pushing Paiutes away from their agricultural areas in Utah, Mormons expanded their empire into southern Nevada. Brigham Young in April 1855 announced a Mormon mission would be established in the Las Vegas valley. On June 14, 1855, a group of thirty missionaries and forty ox drawn wagons arrived in the valley. They selected a location about four miles east of Las Vegas Springs. They cleared the land for their farms and began construction

on the Las Vegas Mission. They took over the water resources in their immediate area forcing the Indian people out to other locations.

Lead mining became an important aspect of the Mormon economy while at the Las Vegas Mission. A lead deposit was discovered just south of the Old Spanish Trail at Potosi Spring and Brigham Young commissioned the mine to be developed. In January 1857, a lead mine with a small smelting furnace was opened. The mine produced well over 9,000 pounds of lead. The lead was enough to meet the demands for some period until operations were suspended (Lingenfelter 1986:61; Paher 1970:264-266). Unlike other European-Americans who traveled through Paiute territory, the Mormons had intentions of permanently establishing settlements in the Las Vegas Valley therefore they began to actively compete for water and land resources with Paiute people.

The arrival of new people brought the possibilities of engaging in exchange. Archaeologist Gordon Baldwin uncovered that starting during the Old Spanish Trail period, Southern Paiute people began acquiring iron tools and other Euro-American objects from travelers and traders. This caused a rapid decline in pottery manufacturing; pottery was no longer needed once they got cast iron utensils. Baldwin stated that many historical accounts from the late 1800s made no mention of pottery so archaeologists and cultural anthropologists assumed that Southern Paiutes never had pottery. Baldwin countered this point by adding that archaeological data uncovered by M.R. Harrington in the Moapa- Muddy River area found evidence of pottery as late as 1890; it just was not the preferred type of storage or cooking device (Baldwin 1950).

#### **4.2.2 Disease Episodes**

The arrival of new people also meant the arrival of unwanted sickness. The Southern Paiutes were probably affected more by the arrival of Old World diseases than by any of the other impacts of European expansion. Diseases such as small pox, measles, influenza, malaria, and tuberculosis often reached areas long before European explorers set foot in these places. These epidemics ravaged Native American populations throughout the West. They were most likely first impacted by European diseases during the smallpox pandemic of 1520-1524, which spread from Mexico City throughout much of North America (John 1975).

From the 1500's through the 1700's, major disease episodes spread from Mexico into present day Arizona into populations like the Hopi and Hualapai, and ultimately the diseases spread across the Colorado River into Paiute territory due to Paiute contact with these tribes through trade and other forms of interaction (Stoffle et al. 1995). The disease outbreaks during this period were often documented by the Spanish through contact with Pueblo groups after 1625.

The Spanish documented one outbreak that occurred between 1777 and 1780. The Hopi were suffering from a three-year drought, which had caused water and food supply to run low, and Hopi's animal herds (sheep and goats) were affecting the land. With stagnant water breeding diseases and the Hopi weak from hunger, they were unable to resist infectious illnesses. When Spanish soldiers arrived in 1780 to force the Hopi to succumb to Spanish policy, they discovered a smallpox epidemic raging amongst the Hopi and other pueblo groups in New Mexico. Five years prior, Father Escalante visited

Hopi and estimated a population at around 7,500, and after this smallpox outbreak, only 798 remained. The Spanish military did report some Hopi had moved to other regions in Arizona and New Mexico but largely most had died due to illness. This outbreak most likely affected the Southern Paiutes also because they and the Hopis frequently interacted with each other for purposes of traditional exchange. The strongest evidence of disease outbreaks having major impacts on Southern Paiutes came during the 1840s when wagon trains began to frequent the Old Spanish Trail as settlers, miners, and ranchers headed to California (John 1975:600).

Ten diseases (measles, cholera, malaria, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, whooping cough, typhoid fever, intestinal parasites, mumps, and smallpox) attacked Southern Paiute peoples from 1847 until 1856. These diseases were responsible for the deaths of thousands of Southern Paiutes. During an eleven-year period (1857-1876), the rate of direct European transmission of Old World diseases began to slow appreciably. However, this reduced impact largely resulted from a major population decline in 1857 (Stoffle et al. 1995:194).

Also in the historical records from the 1800's, travelers and Mormon immigrants noted changes among the Indian population and the presence of diseases within their own communities. As the immigrants ventured westward, they passed through southern Utah, and moved into Southern Paiute riverine oases like Moapa, where they passed on diseases, which resulted in declines of the Indian populations. The reductions were so widespread and so quick that many of the national and sub-tribal functions were essentially eliminated by the latter part of the late 1800s.

The disease outbreaks were responsible for the depopulation of Indian communities throughout North America. These diseases can be attributed to the deaths of thousands of Southern Paiute people. Spread of disease, slavery, the Mormon migration, and the horse trade impacted Southern Paiute culture and ultimately transformed communities. This transformation forced Paiute communities into the mountainous regions of their territory.

#### **4.2.3 What is Devolution?**

Upon examining Euro-American encroachment and the impacts of Old World diseases, one can see that they greatly affected traditional Southern Paiute life. They contributed to rapid change in all aspects of Southern Paiute culture thus leading to a loss of socio-cultural complexity. This process is labeled devolution (Martin 1969) and has four distinct stages.

The first stage occurs when community units at the tribal level become disarticulated or become separated. This may be the result of a type of adaptive response to deal with military confrontations with hostile outside groups, or the arrival of one thousand horses into one's territory. If the community is depopulated or displaced then they might be integrated into other communities. Significant ties with other communities within the same ethnic group are limited to exigencies of exogamy and the lowest and highest levels of political leadership are merged. The second stage of devolution involves the disarticulated communities splitting into smaller residential groups. The third stage leads to the creation of bilateral composite groupings, thus fragments of formerly distinct units are merged into anonymous categories. The fourth and final stage of this process

leads to the extinction of communities “whose social fragments have completely atomized into small familial groups,” (Martin 1969: 71) and these familial groups become the lowest level of human organization in post-colonial Indian populations. It is important to note that the devolution process does not necessarily represent a linear or irreversible process and thus groups can reconstitute themselves given special external circumstances. Devolution is not social evolution, in stead it is a term used to describe the processes an indigenous population after contact.

Specific examples can be given to understand the devolution of Southern Paiute society. When depopulation and loss of territory occurred, some Paiute groups relocated to live with other communities in neighboring districts like the Pahrangat Valley Paiutes. They relocated to the Indian Peaks area in Utah after Euro-American encroachment. Some Southern Paiutes became incorporated into work camps that were established by the Mormons in the Utah towns of St. George and Gunlock. Depopulation led to a reduction of the number of Southern Paiute bands, thus causing some of the surviving members to become part of other districts like when people from the Kaiparowits District were absorbed into the Kaibab District. Some Paiute districts and communities ceased to exist.

In regard to the High Chiefs system and hierarchy, political positions were impacted. Many levels of leadership were merged because surviving Southern Paiute people had to find ways to compensate for the massive loss of lives. Specialized roles had to be consolidated and assigned to people who might not have been qualified to take on these multiple positions like being a community chief and an Advisory Chief. Prior to

contact, they were separate roles that were filled by two different men; after contact, one man might have had to take on both levels of leadership. As the population numbers grew smaller, the need for leadership on a national level was reduced. The nation became decentralized and more emphasis was placed on regional and local leadership.

### **4.3 Hierarchy in the Great Basin**

With decimated populations and lost resources, many aspects of traditional Southern Paiute society were lost. This breakdown of the High Chiefs system and other aspects of Southern Paiute culture occurred before the arrival of anthropologists into the Great Basin and Colorado Plateau regions thus causing misrepresentations in the early ethnographic data. These misconceptions have been perpetuated by many others through time. Great Basin anthropology is unlike anywhere else in North America. Many scholars are strong supporters of Julian Steward's models and theories of Numic culture and social organization. These theories are unforgiving, short sighted, and refuse to acknowledge religious and social complexity amongst Great Basin peoples. These theories were defined almost seventy years ago by Julian Steward and his works are some of the most cited pieces in Great Basin anthropology.

#### **4.3.1 Julian Steward**

Steward's monograph' *Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups* (1938) is viewed as the foundation piece for all research within the Great Basin. The perceptions that are held by the dominant scholarly voices use the 1938 monograph as ultimate authoritative ethnographic piece, even though it represents a moment in time for Native peoples. It is stated here as it has been by others (Clemmer 1999; Howell 1998; Kerns

2003; Zedeño et al. 2003) that Steward's work purposely omitted critical components of Numic cultures. The omissions were calculated and purposeful to give further credence to his theories.

One example is from Steward's research on the Owens Valley Paiutes. Steward argued that the Owens Valley Paiutes (a group that is similar culturally and linguistically to the Western Shoshones and Southern Paiutes) had a complex chief system that had national, regional, and local leaders who all had specific functions and tasks (similar to what the author described the Southern Paiute High Chiefs system as in the previous chapter). When Steward described Southern Paiute political organization, he stated that Southern Paiutes were only organized on a village basis. Steward also added that the Southern Paiute were divided into definite dialectic groups but these groups lacked names and he claimed that in aboriginal times these groups had no political significance.

Another example is from the Indian Claims Commission hearings, Julian Steward and Omer Stewart testified in a case regarding the Northern Paiutes' claim to Owens Valley, California. Omer Stewart testified on behalf of the Indian people where as Julian Steward testified on behalf of the government. The contradictions in Steward's data and theories were brought into light. Omer Stewart used Steward's own data against him. According to Omer, "In court, Julian asserted that the tribes [Paiutes and Shoshones] did not define their territory, each simply made some use of the land on an irregular basis. When confronted with his own map, his response was that he had changed his mind," (Howell 1998: 165). Julian Steward only selected data that would feed into his theories and notions of Great Basin peoples even if it meant contradicting himself.

Steward purposely denied any possibility that encroachment may have impacted Indian people. In his state of denial, Steward took contention with Powell and Ingalls. In their report, Powell and Ingalls stated that during the time of their census, Numic speaking peoples were greatly impacted by the arrival of Euro-Americans. They wrote:

Their hunting grounds have been spoiled, their favorite valleys are occupied by the white men, and they are compelled to scatter in small bands in order to obtain subsistence. Formerly they were organized into nations, or confederacies, under the influence of great chiefs, but such men have lost their power in the presence of white men, and it is no longer possible to treat with these people as nations but each little tribe must be dealt with separately...The original political organization of the tribes under consideration had a territorial basis; that is the country was divided into districts and each district was inhabited by a small tribe which took the name of the land, and had one principle chief...sometimes two or more [chiefs and their districts] of them would unite in a confederacy under some great chief, (Powell and Ingalls 1874: 9).

Steward believed that his observations and conclusions of Numic cultures were more accurate based on his theories and observations and Powell and Ingalls were not capable of understanding what they saw.

Steward reduced many aspects of Numic culture in order to fit his model for multi-linear evolution. Steward believed that societies develop and evolve at different rates and that was determined by the ecological setting. Steward described the Great

Basin as a harsh environment in which it was difficult for complex societies to develop and thus his model reduced Paiute and Shoshone people to meager hunter-gathers barely surviving as they roamed across the landscape in search of seeds and game (Steward 1955). Evidence of social and cultural complexity in the Great Basin amongst the Southern Paiutes was evident in the early explorers like Powell and Ingalls, and Jedediah Smith but he blatantly chose to ignore them. He also did not put his data into any sort of historical context. The conditions present during the time of his fieldwork were the conditions he assumed to be present throughout the entire history of the Southern Paiutes.

While there were many flaws and inconsistencies in his theories and analysis, Julian Steward was powerful and influential. While trying to understand why his theories and models became so popular and widely used in Anthropology, Virginia Kerns concluded that:

Most of the students...grew up during the depression, and many had served in combat zones during the war. Their life experiences had inclined them toward materialist approaches to economy and political organization. They had 'no trouble understanding the compelling motivations of an empty stomach,' according to Murphy, and they had seen authority emerge from the barrel of a gun. While their powerful and visceral memories of hardship likely disposed them to view Steward's approach as timely and relevant, the students adapted or borrowed from his theories in noticeably distinct ways (Kerns 2003: 241-242).

An alternative understanding to the popularity of Steward's theories was that he used his position and power to dictate the direction of Great Basin Anthropology. As the vast number of his students entered the job market, Steward could use his position to help get his students hired at the top universities. With this in mind, his students often were reluctant to counter him so most of his students followed his example. Those students tried new generations of Great Basin Anthropologists who have continued to perpetuate the distorted view of Great Basin culture. Those who rejected his theories and challenged Steward were blackballed and it became impossible for those students to be employed by the major anthropology departments in the United States like at Columbia or Michigan (Stoffle 1992). One such student was Omer Stewart.

#### **4.3.2 Omer Stewart**

In contrast to Julian Steward was Omer Stewart. Stewart spent most of his career working on issues of Native American peyote use, traditional environmental management, and argued for some form of social complexity in the Great Basin. Omer Stewart was one of Julian Steward's first PhD students and became one of the first ones to take a stand against the Steward model of Great Basin culture and hierarchy. Omer Stewart wrote the first important essay during the Julian Steward era on Numic political organization. His monograph entitled, *Northern Paiute Bands* (1939) was an examination of Northern Paiute traditional territory and their leadership system. During his research, Stewart documented twenty-one different Northern Paiute districts. Each district had a chief and leaders with specialized roles. His Northern Paiute informants identified these

specialized chiefs as hunting captains and dance captains and people who held these positions were given them as a reward for their personality and experience.

Stewart's research also documented that Julian Steward's original classification of the Northern Paiutes as simple patrilineal hunter-gather groups was incorrect. According to Omer Stewart, the Northern Paiutes inherited items, knowledge, and resource use areas both matrilineally and patrilineally. Omer Stewart's research directly challenged Julian Steward's theories and assumptions. Stewart documented political organization that extended beyond the family group. He also documented leaders that functioned similarly to the Southern Paiute Advisory Chiefs. Stewart's data lacked any understanding of leadership on a national level, despite this, Stewart moved the discussion of hierarchy towards a more accurate understanding.

#### **4.3.3 Richard Stoffle**

Building on the previous work of Omer Stewart, Richard Stoffle and his ethnographic team at the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology long have argued that Numic speaking peoples had a complex leadership system that extended beyond the local family levels. The BARA model has been evolving for over 20 years and is the product of a long-standing research partnership Stoffle has with Southern Paiute tribes. The first discussion of the Southern Paiute High Chief system occurred in the early impact assessment studies of power lines on Native Americans and cultural resources. That particular discussion led to an essay that has been used in various technical reports for numerous federal agencies. The essay was the first of its kind that examined the basic structure of the High Chief system on local, regional, and national levels up until the

1930s in one concise essay. Prior to this thesis, the Stoffle essay has represented the Indian story and gave some insight as to what the High Chief System resembled and how Southern Paiute society functioned before encroachment.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The High Chiefs system collapsed by the early 1930s but it still persists in the hearts and minds of the Southern Paiute people. The respect and affinity they held for the leaders of the past has carried over towards their new generations of leadership. The Southern Paiutes know their history and know what it means to be a leader whether a person was a traditional High Chief or is a contemporary tribal chairperson.

The oral histories conducted during the course of this project have provided a vehicle for recording this important aspect of Southern Paiute culture. The Southern Paiute elders requested that this study be done over twenty years ago and now their request has been honored and brought into fruition.

## APPENDIX A: COPYRIGHTS AND PERMISSIONS

The maps used in this document were produced by members of the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology (BARA). Since I am a graduate research assistant at BARA, I was given full access to their resources as granted by my committee chair and BARA employee, Dr. Richard Stoffle.

Permission to use of Figure 2.2 Couching Procedure (Schrader 2004: 154) was granted by the author of the article, Walter Schrader, MD. His letter states:

April 27, 2007

*Dear Kathleen*

*Thank you for asking. You have got my permission and I appreciate the reference to the article.*

*If your thesis is finished I would like to order a copy, up until now I have found no single prove of traditional cataract treatment by Indians.  
I am very curious if you can inform me about this subject.*

*Walter Schrader (MD)*

## APPENDIX B: FIGURES

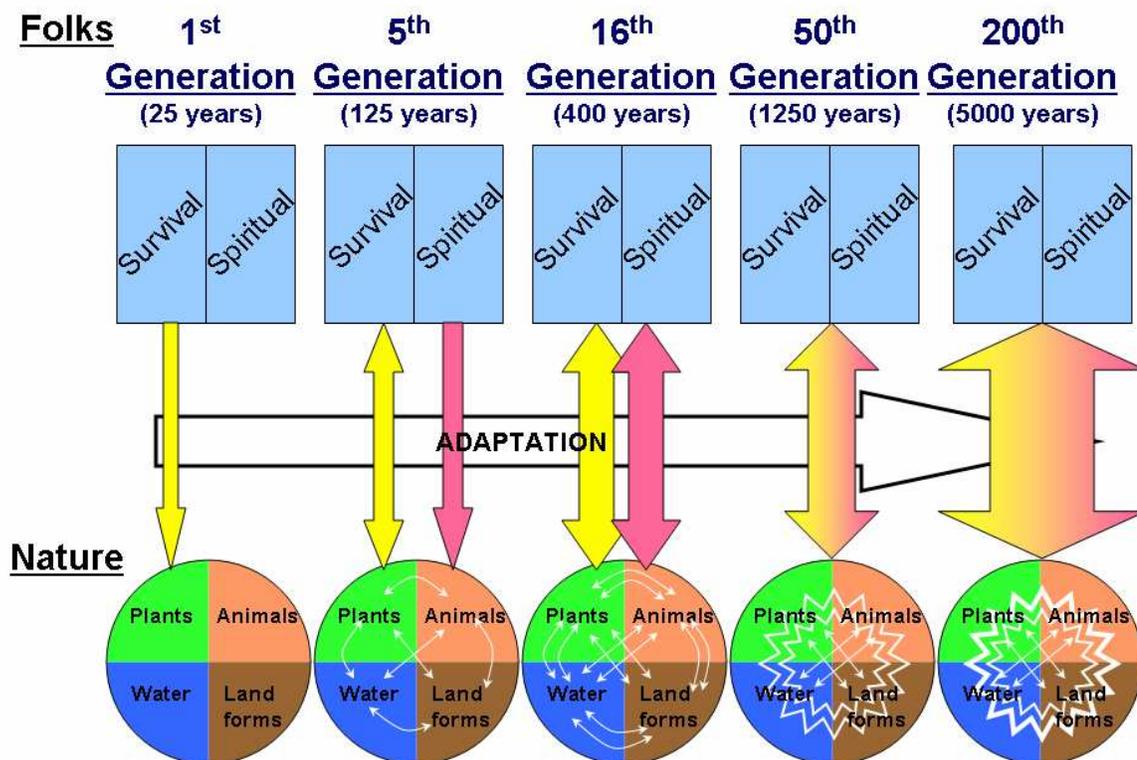


Figure 2.1 Co-Adaptation and Diachronic Learning Model

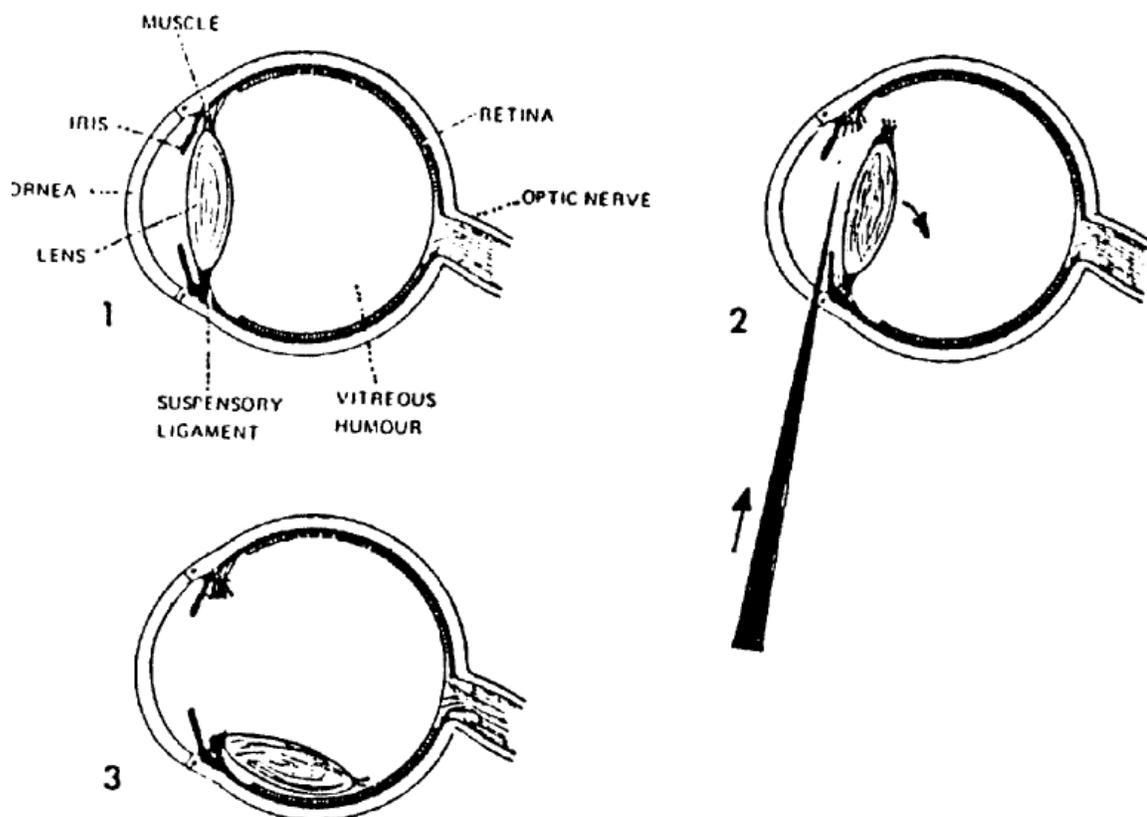


Figure 2.2 Couching Procedure (Schrader 2004: 154)

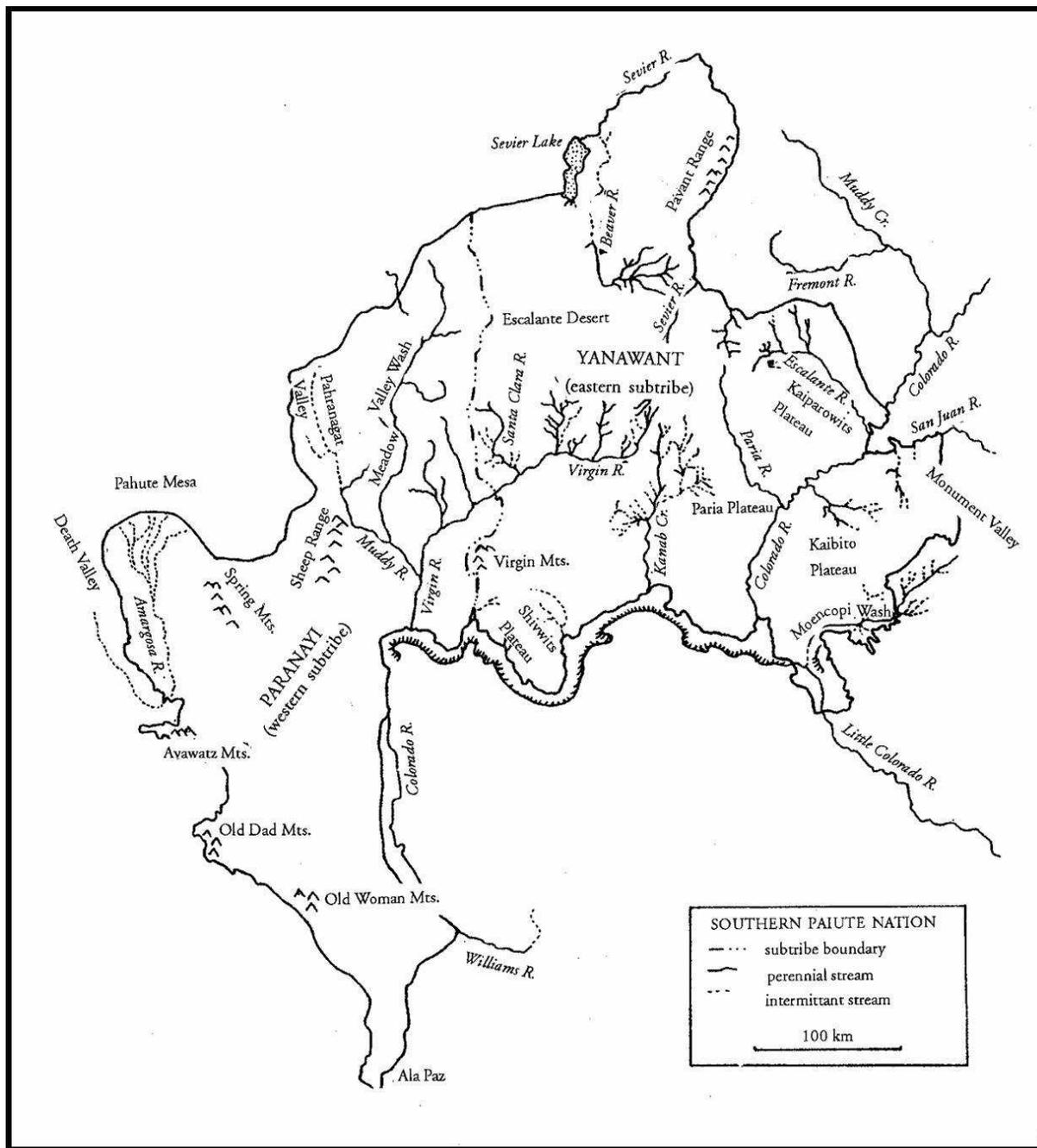


Figure 3.1 Map of the Southern Paiute Nation with Subtribal Boundaries



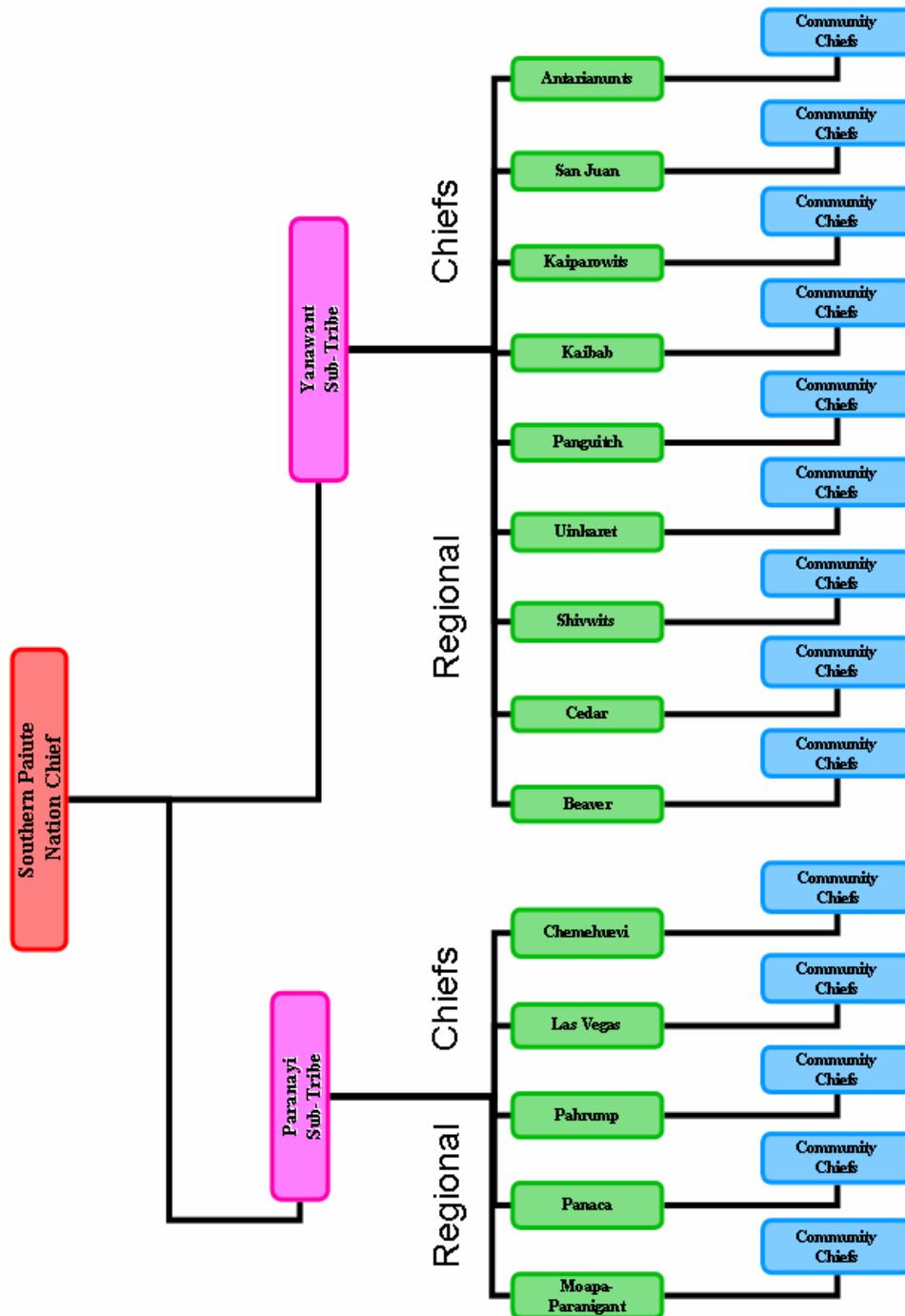


Figure 3.3 Structure of the Southern Paiute High Chief System

**APPENDIX C: POWELL AND INGALLS' SOUTHERN PAIUTE  
HIGH CHIEFS CENSUS DATA**

The following table is a reproduction of the Southern Paiute High Chiefs documented by Powell and Ingalls during their Southern Paiute Census.

Regional Chief- "Chief of Alliance"	State	Locality	Paiute Group	Local Chief	Type of Chief	Notes	Source
<b>Tau'-gu</b>	Utah	Vicinity of Beaver	Kwi-um'pas	Pi-vi-ats		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Utah	Vicinity of Parawan	Pa-ru'-guns	Tah-hun-kwi		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Utah	Vicinity of Cedar	Un-ka'pa-Nu-kuints	<b>Tau'-gu</b> , also known as Cole Creek John (Fowler and Fowler 1971; 161)		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880; Powell states that Tau'-gu is the principle chief of the Paiutes located in Northern AZ and Utah and was the regional chief for <b>ten groups</b> (Fowler and Fowler 1971; 103 and 107). He is one of Powell's Chief of Alliance	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Utah	Vicinity of Toquerville	Pa-spi'-kai-vits	Na'-guts		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Utah	Long Valley	Un-ka-ka'ni-guts	Choog		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Utah	Pa-gu Lake	Pa-gu'-its	Un-ka'-ta-si-ats		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Utah	Vicinity of Kanab	Kai'-vav-wits	Char'-um-peak		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Utah	Vicinity of St. George	U'-ai-Nu-ints	Moak-Shin-au'-av		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Utah	Santa Clara	Santa Clara Paiute	U-we-ta-ka (Running Water)		named as chief-Fowler and Fowler 1971; 161	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Utah	Santa Clara	Santa Clara Paiute	Pan-am-ai-tu-a (Hair Lip)	War Chief	The War Chief of the Santa Clara Paiutes (Fowler and Fowler 1971; 161)	Fowler and Fowler 1971

	Utah	Santa Clara	Santa Clara Paiute	Mu yav-uts		Another Chief of the Santa Clara- no description given (Fowler and Fowler 1971; 161)	
	Utah	Santa Clara	Santa Clara Paiute	Mon-tu-a (the space on the back of the hand between the thumb and the forefinger): Sore Hand	Leader of the Santa Clara	Chief of the Santa Clara- no description given (Fowler and Fowler 1971; 161)	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Northern Arizona	U-in-ka'-rets Mountains	U-in-ka-rets	To-mo'-ro-unti-kai		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Northern Arizona	Shi'-vwits Plateau	Shi'-vwits	Kwi-ous		Chief of the Shivwits Paiutes (Fowler and Fowler 1971; 161)	
	Northern Arizona	Shi'-vwits Plateau	Shi'-vwits	Kwi-toos'		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Northern Arizona	East of the Colorado River	Kwai-anti'-kwok-ets	N/A		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
<b>To-shoap</b>	Southern Nevada	Mo-a-pa Valley	Sau-won'ti-ats	Tau-um'-pu-gaip		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southern Nevada	Mo-a-pa Valley	Mo-a-pa-ri'-ats	Mau-wi'-ta		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southern Nevada	Mo-a-pa Valley	Nau-wan'-atats	Ai'-at-tau'-a		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southern Nevada	Mo-a-pa Valley	Pin'-ti-ats	Kwi'--vu-a		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southern Nevada	Mo-a-pa Valley	Pa-room'-pai-ats	Mo-wi'-un-kits		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971

	Southern Nevada	Mo-a-pa Valley	I'-chu-ar'-rum-pats	<b>To'-shoap</b>		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880; Powell notes that <b>7 Paiute groups</b> are organized into a confederacy under To-Shoap. He is one of Powell's Chief of Alliance	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southern Nevada	Mo-a-pa Valley	U-tum'-pai-ats	Tan'-ko-its		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southern Nevada	Pa-ran-i-gut Valley (spelt Pahrangagunt)	Pahran-a-guts	Ua gu-shup- Big Belly		The Pahrangagunt Chief (Fowler and Fowler 1971; 161)	
	Southern Nevada	Pa-ran-i-gut Valley	Pahran-a-guts	<b>An-ti-av</b>		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880; This group was originally <b>three separate groups</b> but their lands were taken away from them and have united under the leadership of An-ti-av; Powell does not list An-ti-av as a separate "Chief of Alliance" as he does for Tecopa, Tau'-gu, and To-shoap.	Fowler and Fowler 1971
<b>Pa-gwum'-pai-ats</b>	Southern Nevada	Meadow Valley	Tsou-wa'ra-its	<b>Pa-gwum'-pai-ats</b>		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880; Powell notes that the Meadow Valley Paiutes were <b>four groups</b> but now were one under the current chief (Fowler and Fowler 1971; 108). This chief is not considered a separate "Chief of Alliance" like Tecopa, Tau'-gu, and To-shoap.	Fowler and Fowler 1971

<b>Ku-ni'-kai-vets</b>	Southern Nevada	Las Vegas	Nu-a'-gun-tits	<b>Ku-ni'-kai-vets</b>		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880; <b>Four groups</b> organized into a confederacy under <b>Ku-ni'-kai-vets</b> (Fowler and Fowler 1971; 108). This chief is not considered a separate "Chief of Alliance" like Tecopa, Tau'-gu, and To-shoap.	Fowler and Fowler 1971
<b>To-ko'-pur</b>	Southern Nevada	Vicinity of Colville	Pa-ga'-its	Un-kom'-a-toa-kwi-gunt		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southern Nevada	Indian Spring	Kwi-en'go-mats	Pats-a'-gुरूke		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southern Nevada	Cottonwood Island	Mo-vwi'-ats	Ha-va'-rum-up		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southern Nevada	Vicinity of Potosi	No-gwats	<b>To-ko'-pur</b>		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880; Tecopa was the regional chief for <b>seven Paiute groups</b> (Fowler and Fowler 1971; 108). Tecopa is one of Powell's Chief of Alliance	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southern Nevada	Pa-room Spring	Pa-room'-pats	Ho-wi'-a-gunt		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southeastern California	Kingstong Mountain	Mo-quats	Hu-nu'-na-wa		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southeastern California	Vicinity of Ivanspaw	Ho-kwaits	Ko-tsi'-an		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southeastern California	Providence Mountain	Tim-pa-shau'-wa-go-tsits	Wa-gu'-up		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880	Fowler and Fowler 1971
	Southeastern California	Ash Meadows	Kau-yai'-	Nu-a'-rung		Chief during Powell and Ingalls	Fowler and Fowler 1971

			chits			Expedition-1868-1880	
	Southeastern California	Armagosa	Ya'-gats	Ni-a-pa'-ga-rats		Chief during Powell and Ingalls Expedition-1868-1880; Ya'gats is the Paiute group that lived near present day Tecopa, California	Fowler and Fowler 1971

## APPENDIX D SURVEY INSTRUMENT USED

**Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Resilience of the Southern Paiute High Chief  
System  
American Indian Studies  
University of Arizona**

**Interview Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Tribe/Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Gender: Male Female**
4. **Place of Interview (Town, Reservation):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please note:**

Thank you for allowing me to come and visit with you today. I would like to ask you some questions about the Southern Paiute High Chiefs system and how you believe it functioned traditionally. This system was well documented in the 1870s by John Wesley Powell during his expeditions along the Colorado River. The social structure he recorded was already greatly affected by encroachment and was reduced in size but from Powell's work we are able to get a sense of how the High Chiefs' positions were structured and functioned.

**General High Chiefs:**

- 1.) Who was the last high chief in your district?
  
- 2.) How was a leader chosen?



6.b) Who was responsible for this exchange?

7.) When Europeans began arriving in Southern Paiute territory, did the High Chiefs try to negotiate a relationship with them?

1.) Yes                                      2.) No                                      8.) Don't Know                                      9.) No  
Response

7.a) Did they give them important cultural items as a way to establish this relationship?

8.) Was it the responsibility of one of the chiefs to negotiate this relationship?

1.) Yes                                      2.) No                                      8.) Don't Know  
9.) No Response

8.a) What level was this carried out at?

- National

- Regional

- Local

9.) When the Southern Paiutes chose to declare war on neighboring tribes, how was that decision reached?

9.a) Was there a special chief selected during times of war or was it the responsibility of the local chiefs?

9.b) Did the chiefs help prepare the warriors for battle?

**Ceremony:**

*The ceremonial cycle had an important role in Southern Paiute communities. Community centered ceremonies had to be directed by a spiritual leader. In this section I would to ask you some questions on ceremony and what roles, if any, did the High Chiefs play in the traditional ceremonial cycle of the Southern Paiute people.*

10.) When communities got together for ceremonies such as balancing ceremonies and harvesting ceremonies, were the chiefs responsible for organizing the event?

1.) Yes  
Response

2.) No

8.) Don't Know

9.) No

10a.) If yes, which chief was responsible for organizing it?

National

Regional

Local

11.) When the communities came together for the Cry, did the chiefs have a role in this ceremony?

1.) Yes  
Response

2.) No

8.) Don't Know

9.) No

11a.) What role did they have?

12.) When warriors returned home after battle, did the High Chiefs lead ceremonies to restore balance afterwards?

1.) Yes

2.) No

8.) Don't Know

9.) No Response

### **Ecology and Land Management**

*The environment has been extremely important to Southern Paiute people and involved complex management. I would like to ask you a few questions to try to understand the role the High Chiefs had in this process.*

13.) Isabel Kelly and Edward Sapir noted that the High Chiefs selected when and where people would hunt deer and antelope, how did the chiefs decide this and why?

14.) When it was time to have large community harvests, did the High Chiefs decide where to gather?

1.) Yes  
Response

2.) No

8.) Don't Know

9.) No

14a.) Why did he chose those locations?

15.) Were the chiefs responsible for picking times to set control burns?

1.) Yes  
Response

2.) No

8.) Don't Know

9.) No

15a.) When were the control burns set?

15b.) Why were these times picked?

16.) When traditional use areas for your district could not be used due to fire, drought, etc, did the high chief negotiate with other districts to come in and use other areas?

1.) Yes  
Response

2.) No

8.) Don't Know

9.) No

16a.) Did they give them ceremonial items like salt, paint, obsidian?

16b.) Do you think this process was the same for other Southern Paiute districts?

17.) Along the major water ways such Santa Clara and Muddy Rivers, the Paiutes had numerous irrigation canals that fed their fields. Do you think the High Chiefs managed the canal system and water allocation?

1.) Yes      2.) No      8.) Don't Know      9.) No Response

17a.) How would they manage it?

18.) Did the High Chiefs have a role in passing on environmental knowledge to the younger generations?

1.) Yes      2.) No      8.) Don't Know      9.) No Response

18a.) If yes, how did they do this and who did they pass the knowledge to?

### **Community**

The High Chiefs were an important part of the community and worked to keep the community and its members in balance through means of maintaining relationships. In this section, I want to ask some questions regarding these relationships.

19.) Were the High Chiefs seen as religious leaders as well as political leaders?

20.) Do you think that all the Southern Paiute districts have the same number and kinds of medicine men?



25.) During times of encroachment, Paiute people were forced to leave their communities and sought refuge in other areas. Who made the decision to leave and how were refuge places chosen?

26.) Is there anything else you would like to share about the High Chiefs system that we have not talked about already?

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