California Indian Languages

FLUTES OF FIRE

ESSAYS ON CALIFORNIA INDIAN LANGUAGES

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PART IV

Language and Dominion

Naming is an act of power. In Genesis, Adam's first recorded act of domination is naming, assigning the symbol, the act of a I-am-he-who-tells-you-what-or-who-you-are. It is the ultimate gesture of paternalism. The infant child is named. Similarly the first response to the other, to the outsider, is to assign a name. The one who assigns is the insider, the decider, the winner.

In early California there was little question who were the winners, who were the namers and who were the named.

—Judge Gary Strankman on the occasion of the naming of Ishi Court at UC Berkeley, 1993

All talk about Native Americans takes place against the backdrop of a spoken or unspoken understanding that over the last 500 years, one of the great injustices of human history has unfolded, as Europeans have systematically killed, tormented and dispossessed the American Indians of their land and cultures. Even now that the worst is over, intensive pressures of many sorts continue to burden Native American cultures, land tenure, and languages. It is not the purpose of this book to dwell heavily on this nightmare; instead, most of the last portion of this volume presents the ways in which Native Californians withstand these pressures against their cultures. Further on, we look specifically at how Native Californians are working to maintain and assert their identity through language.

Nevertheless, in a book about language, I would be remiss not to point out the role language plays in prejudice and repression. Language is the basis of law, which either legislates repression or acts to mitigate it. And language expresses and transmits attitudes toward others, whether respectful or prejudicial.

I begin this section with a discussion of how the California Indians got the names they are popularly known by. These are the names that the explorers, authors, and mapmakers gave them, which usually do not coincide with the names they gave themselves, an example of how Europeans have usurped the power to define Native Americans. Next I include a short essay about the name "digger pine," and how that tree came to be named with an opprobrious term for California Indians. Chapter 17 focuses on moving autobiographical accounts by two California Indian women who experienced, early in this century, the repression of their native languages through the policies of government-run schools. It was these policies more than anything else that caused the alarming decline of Native American languages in our time. To end the section on a more positive note, I present the Native American Languages Act, which shows the *new* language policy of the United States government, 180 degrees removed from the policy of forced linguistic assimilation that dominated in the first half of this century.

Mispronounced tribal names.—Mastamho said: "Some of you are outside, east of the house: I want you to be the Hamapaivek. Some of you are outdoors west of the house: I call you Hamivevek. You people in the house, just west of the door, I call you Hamitšanvek. You just inside the door, near these last, I call Hamiaivek. You people near the fire here, not against the wall, I call you Hamahavek." He called them by these names, but all the people did not answer. They did not say: "Yes, we will be called that." All of them said nothing.

Walapai and Yavapai tribes named.—Then Mastamho said again: "This time I will call you who are on the east Havalyipai." Then those people called that name easily, and all those indoors said: "Now they are the Walapai." Then he said again: "Those will be the Yavapai also. I want them (the Walapai and the Yavapai) to live near each other in the mountains." Those are the ones that at first he had called Hamapaivek.

Chemehuevi named.—Then he said again: "Those outdoors on the west, whom at first I called Hamivevek, I now call Tšimuveve. All say that!" Then all said: "Chemehuevi."

Yuma and Kamia named.—He said again: "Those just inside the door on the west of it I called Hamitšanvek. Now I call you Kwitš(i)ana (Yuma)." He said again: "You near them, whom at first I called Hamiaivek, I now call Kamia. You will live near each other."

Mohave named.—Then he said: "I have made you all to be tribes, Walapai, Yavapai, Chemehuevi, Yuma, and Kamia: you are all different. I also spoke the name Hamahavek. Now I call them Hamakhave. All will call you that, you Mohave, and will know you by that name."

—Kroeber, *Seven Mohave Myths*, p. 60

15

On the Origins of California Tribal Names

The frontispiece of this book, a map of Native California, depicts language groupings and original territories where the languages were spoken. Yet very few of the territories on the map match up with what Indians used to think of as the significant social divisions between peoples, and very few of the names on the map have any relation to what the groups called themselves.

Then how in the world did the California Indians get the names they are now known by?

The early literature is full of so many different designations for people that it boggles the mind. For example, in the California volume of the *Handbook of North American Indians,* the following are given as a partial list of names by which the Yurok have been known: Al-agnas, Al-i-kwa, Alioquis, Aliquois, Aliquor, Allequa, Alth, Cuthacs, Down-stream People, Eurocs, Eurok, Eurooks, Eurucks, Hiktin-taretahihl, Kanuck, Kenuck, Kenuk, Kiruhikwak, Klamath, Klamath River, Kyinnáa, Lower Indians, Lower Klamath, Palegawonáp, Palik-Ai-li-qua, Poh-lik, Poliklan, Pulíklan, Tlamath, Tolick Si-liqua, Tútlmús, Ulrucks, Wait'spek, Weits-pek, Weitspekan, Wish-pooke, Witsch-piks, Youruk, Yurock, and Yurús-árar! (Heizer 1978).

The Yuroks' traditional name for themselves is "Puliklah," which translates as "they walk the shoreside." The name "Yurok" was introduced into the literary fray in the 1870s, as a linguistic label; it is from the Karuk (usually "Karok" in the literature) word meaning "downriver." "Karuk" itself means "upriver"; and although the word is from their own language, it was originally a geographic designation, not what the Karuks used to call themselves. As Kroeber notes:

> The term "Karok," properly **karuk**, means merely "up-stream" in the language of the Karok. It is an adverb, not a designation of a group of people. The Karok have no ethnic name for themselves, contenting

> themselves, in general Californian custom, by calling themselves "people," **arara**. They will sometimes speak of themselves as Karuk-w-arara in distinction from the Yuruk-w-arara, the "downstreamers" or "Yurok"; but this denomination seems wholly relative. In thinking of the Shasta above them on the Klamath, they would probably name themselves Yuruk-w-arara. (Kroeber 1925, 98-99)

Nowadays, the people who used to call themselves **arara** prefer the term "Karuk" with a flapped r.

Most people of California, like the Karuk, used to call themselves "the people." Some of the present-day tribal names come from that self-designation. Chimariko, Maidu, Nisenan, Patwin, Wintu, and Yana all come from the word "people" in those languages. Similarly, Washo comes from the word **washiw**, meaning something like "people from here."

In some cases, one group's name for "people" got extended to a larger linguistic grouping. "Miwok" comes from the word for "people" in Sierra Miwok only, but was extended to other groups speaking related languages as well. "Yokuts" is a name that is applied to over forty politically separate groups speaking related languages; it is the Valley Yokuts word for "people." The Foothill Yokuts word for "people" is Tachi. (Sometimes the Tachi are called the "Tachi Yokuts people"—translate that one into English!) The various Yokuts peoples rarely use that word for themselves, preferring instead their own labels of Yowlumni, Chukchansi, and so on.

One reason why official names don't match with what people call themselves is that explorers first learned about many groups from other tribes, who had their own terms for them. The Karuk, asked about their next-door neighbors, mentioned the Yurok, thus providing the official name. The explorers went on to ask the Yuroks about the tribes living near them, and the Yuroks used their terms, Hupa and Tolowa, which thus became the official names of those tribes—but the Hupas call themselves **natinixw**, and the Tolowa call themselves **xəsh**—both terms being words for "people." The Yuroks were also the namers of the Chilula, which means "they walk the Bald Hills."

Other groups got to do some naming too. The Wailaki were so named by the Wintu. "Wailaki" is from a word meaning "north language," but

the Wintu applied it to all the groups, including even other Wintu who lived in that direction. The Wintu named the Yuki—with the Wintu word for "enemy," thus suggesting something about Wintu-Yuki relations. (To the Wintu, "Yuki" was not really their name for that tribe,

> Kashaya is derived from the native term **/k'ahšá·ya/**, which probably contains **/k'ahšá·ya/** 'agile, nimble.' The people are known to the Southern Pomo as **/k'ahša·ya/**, containing **/k'ahša/** 'light (weight)'; to the Central Pomo of Point Arena as **/káša·ya/** 'expert gamblers,' containing **/ka/** 'gambling' and **/ša·/** 'expert'; to the Northern Pomo as **/kašá·ya/**, with no meaning recognized for the first two syllables. The final syllable in the above four Pomo languages means 'people, group, race.' The Kashaya are known to the Wappo as **/k'ášа·ya/**, with no analyzable significance (personal communication from J.O. Sawyer). The name is spelled "Kashia" in governmental records and on the sign of the reservation school, and "Kacia" by Stewart....
>
> The older English terms Erio, for the Kashaya at the mouth of the Russian River, and Erusi, for those at Fort Ross, are probably from the Spanish El Rio and El Ruso. Venaambakaiia, employed in Powers' vocabularies (1877) is doubtless the phrase **/wina·má·bakʿe ya?/** 'person who belongs on the land,' a term for the native as opposed to **/?ahqʿa yów ?bakʿe ya?/** 'person from under the sea, undersea person,' a term for those at Fort Ross from across the seas—Russians, Aleuts, Eskimos, and mixed bloods.
>
> In a letter from Kuskov to Baranov dated October 7, 1813,... a group of Indians to the north of Fort Ross are called the "Wallalakh." This corresponds closely to the Kashaya name for an early Indian settlement at the mouth of the Gualala River, the site of the modern town of Gualala: **/qʿawála·li/** and its clipped alternant **/walá·li/** 'water coming down place, Rivermouth.' **/qʿa/** 'water' + **/wa/** 'comes' + **/la·/** 'down' + **/li/** 'place.' The evidence of the very early occurrence of Wallalakh is important for the etymology of Gualala, for it far antedates any use of Valhalla, believed by many to be the prototype of the modern name. Gualala is pronounced **[wəlálə]**; the spelling with a "G" is a mistaken Hispanicization of an earlier English form Walalla.... Kuskov seems to have been using a term acquired from the Alaskan hunters at Fort Ross, as the **-kh** of Wallalakh...
>
> —Oswalt, *Kashaya Texts*, p. 8

> In native parlance, Achomawi is the name only of that part of the group living in the basin of Fall River. For what ethnologists call the Achomawi, the Atsugewi generic term Pomarii, which denotes all the people speaking the same language—the Hamawi, Atuami, Ilmawi, and others, as well as the Achomawi proper—would therefore have been a more appropriate designation. But Achomawi is so well rooted that a new term would cause confusion. The universal local denomination "Pit Rivers" is appropriate even if it is inelegant and without native flavor.
>
> —Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*, pp. 307-308

but rather a descriptive term for any group with whom the Wintu had hostile relations. It was the Americans who redefined it as a tribal name.)

A great many names originally referred only to one village, and later got extended to a larger grouping. "Achumawi" is a native term for "river people." Originally, it was used to refer only to the Fall River group, but later historians and anthropologists extended it to include all who speak closely related dialects of the same language. To illustrate the complexity and potential for confusion found in tribal names in California, Shirley Silver provides the following discussion of "Pit River":

> The term "Pit River" can be used to refer to all eleven bands that live in the Pit River area as the river flows westward from the northeastern corner of Modoc County down into Lassen County and on to the Montgomery Creek area.
>
> Two of the eleven bands are known in the anthropological/linguistic literature by the cover term "Atsugewi," which is derived from the Indian language name for the area in which one of the bands lived. That band is known in English as the Hat Creek people: the other band, the Dixie Valley people. Politically, the Hat Creeks and Dixie Valleys are often locally referred to as "Pit Rivers," a term used to also designate the other nine bands along the Pit River. These nine bands are grouped under the cover term "Achumawi" in the anthropological/linguistic literature. This term is based upon the word for "river" in the language shared by the nine bands. However, from the perspective of most of the members of these bands the term "Achumawi" refers only to those Indians whose traditional territory was located around what is now the town of Fall River Mills.

> The nine bands fall into two major dialect groups which more or less correlate with distinctive differences in physical environment and traditional cultural orientation. The upriver bands include: The Goose Lake people (Hewisedawi), the Alturas people (Kosalektawi), the Likely people (Hammawi) and the Canby people (Astariwawi). The terms in parentheses are anglicizations used in the anthropological literature. The downriver bands include: The Big Valley people (Atwansini), the Fall River Mills people (Ajumawi), the Goose Valley people (Ilmawi), the Montgomery Creek people (Madesi) and the Big Bend people (Itsatawi).
>
> In addition to these major band determinations, there are also designations which refer to minor subgroups at the boundaries between the major groups (e.g., the people from Stonecoal Valley or the Ash Valley people.) And of course, the terms "upriver" and "downriver" can be used relative to the immediate location of the speaker—so a person from Goose Valley, for example, might refer to someone from Adin, which is in Big Valley, as "upriver."
>
> The moral of this story is, of course, that today's local usage by Indian people more closely represents the "indigenous" perspective than does the terminology used by scholars—also, this usage reflects the pre- and early contact situation more accurately than the scholarly terminology.
>
> It is sometimes to the benefit of a group to use the anthropological/linguistic designations—for example, when dealing with the U.S. government re land claims. And sometimes, the localized usages are more advantageous—for example, because of the demands of internal group politics. To my mind, the problem is with the scholars—because we insist on static, discrete labelling. (Shirley Silver, personal communication, 1993)

The Wiyot used to be divided into three separate political groups, which were known as **patəwát, wikí,** and **wíyat**. The latter was the native name of the Eel River delta, and applied only to the people who lived there. It was later extended by anthropologists to the entire linguistic group. "Nomlaki" is a River Nomlaki name meaning "west language," referring to the Hill Nomlaki on Thomes Creek. The name "Chumash" was arbitrarily chosen by record-makers from among the names that a dozen or so politically separate groups had for themselves. "Chumash" was a Coastal Chumash word for Santa Cruz Island and its inhabitants.

> The only general names applied to people by the Miwok were terms formed upon the names of the cardinal points. Examples of such names are: **ta'mūlekō**, northerners, from **ta'man** or **tama'lin**, north; **hī'sōtoko**, easterners, from **hī'sūm**, east; **tcū'metoko**, southerners, from **tcū'metc**, south; and **olowītoko**, westerners, from **olo'win**, west.
>
> —Barrett, *The Geography and Dialects of the Miwok Indians*, p. 341

Some other groups whose names come from single village sites include the Cahto (a Northern Pomo name for an important village, meaning "Lake"; the Cahto themselves are speakers of an Athabascan language, completely unrelated to the Pomo); and the Esselen, where a major village name was extended to the whole linguistic group by the Spanish. Pomo was the name of a village on the east fork of the Russian River, meaning "At Red Earth Hole"; but Kroeber notes that most place names in Pomo languages ended with the word **-pomo** or **-poma**, which must mean "town"; he cites the names Buldam-pomo, Dapishul-pomo, Sedam-pomo, Shanel-pomo, and even, for Red Earth Hole, Pomo-pomo (Kroeber 1925, 227-228).

A number of names were given by the Spanish. "Costanoan" is the linguistic term for the Ohlone languages, from a Spanish term meaning "coast people." "Salinan" was so named because of that group's location on the Salinas River ("salinas" means "salt mines"). The Gabrielinos, Luiseños and Diegueños all got their names from the Spanish missions that governed their territories. The Serranos have their name from the Spanish term for "mountaineer" or "highlander." The Cupeños were named from a native place name, **kúpa** (now called Warner's Ranch), to which the Spanish ending -eño was added. Further north, "Wappo" is believed to be from the Spanish word *guapo*, "harsh, severe; daring, brave; handsome, showy." In the *Handbook of the Indians of California*, Kroeber says this was a "sobriquet which they earned in Mission times by their stubborn resistance to the military adjuncts of the Franciscan establishments." (Kroeber 1925, 217). The Wappo used to call themselves **ʔonaʔcáṭis**, "the people who speak plainly and truthfully."

A few tribes have always been known by their own names for themselves, such as the Mojave. In recent years, some California tribes

have made an effort to make official their own names for themselves. The terms "Ipai" and "Tipai" (meaning "people") and "Kumeyaay" are self-designations that replace the Spanish cover term "Diegueño." The term "Yuma," which was first recorded in Spanish, was probably a borrowing from Pima-Papago for the Quechan. The name "Quechan" was the tribe's own name for themselves, meaning "those who descended," referring to the creation tale. The tribal council has now officially adopted the term Quechan, and encourages its usage by others. Similar action has been taken by the Tongva and Ajachmem, who have been known in the literature as the Gabrielinos and Juaneños.

Names, as George Stewart wrote (1967), are "symbols of empire." He was talking about land names, but in the same manner, he who names a people demonstrates the dominion of his society over their definition and perhaps their future. Naming is an act of power. Not all namers are like Mastamho, who, in the tale heading up this essay, shows a different sort of leadership than that of empire builders—Mastamho led by consensus, and the ones being named had to agree before their names became official. By retaking their own names, California Indians are asserting power over their own identities, redefining themselves in their own terms.

At dawn,
Lizard took his quiver and his storage baskets.
Now he went west,
Went west across the water,
Went west up the mountain.
He put his quiver down on the ground.
He climbed up to get pinenuts.
He climbed back down.
And then he piled pine-nut cones all around the fire.
Now he worked at pounding.
He pounded the pinecones for nuts,
That's what he did.
He picked up his storage basket,
Picked up still another basket,
And now he gathered up the nuts.
He took them up in his hands.
A great sound descended.

—Hinton, *Ishi's Tale of Lizard*, p. 22

16

A Pinenut By Any Other Name...

Juliet was wrong about roses. A rose by any other name does not always smell as sweet. A name confers meanings on the named that are not inherent, but derive from the minds of its namers. The horribly-named "Digger pine" (*Pinus sabiniana*) is a case in point. *Sabiniana* is a lanky pine, usually taller than most of the vegetation that shares its habitat, distinguished from other pines by a tendency to branch, and to lean out at odd angles from hillsides. It grows in dry foothill regions of central California. This species and the pinyon (whose territory does not overlap with *sabiniana*) are the most important food-giving conifers. They bear the largest, most accessible, and most flavorful nuts of any pine (although some people prefer the sugar pine). In its region, *sabiniana* used to be second only to the acorn in culinary importance. Besides the nuts themselves, the soft core of the green pine cones could be eaten, and the young buds, interior bark and resin also provided food. It was probably the pine nuts of *sabiniana* that Lizard collected in the tale excerpted opposite this page. And it may have been *sabiniana*, along with the heroism of Native Californians, that saved the life of one William Eddy, a member of the ill-fated Donner Party, in 1846. A group snowshoed out of the starving camp at Lake Donner in December, getting lost for weeks in the rugged canyons of the western Sierra, and losing many of their party to starvation and cold along the way. When they could find it, they ate grass; there was nothing else. After nearly three weeks, the survivors stumbled into an Indian village in the foothill region. The people of the village came to the aid of the emaciated wanderers and immediately gave them food, but Eddy was on the point of death, and could not even keep down the acorn bread that was provided him. For several more days, the party was led from village to village, with Eddy being carried or supported all the way by his hosts. Finally on the morning of January 17 someone was able to find the cure:

The chief of the village managed with great difficulty to gather a large

> handful of pinenuts, which he gave to Eddy. These seemed to supply some deficiency in his body, so that on eating them he felt wonderfully refreshed. His courage and energy revived, and he became the leader instead of the laggard. He was again able to proceed without help. (Stewart 1936, 125)

The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites this 1837 passage from Washington Irving's *Captain Bonneville II* as the earliest published reference to "Digger Indians":

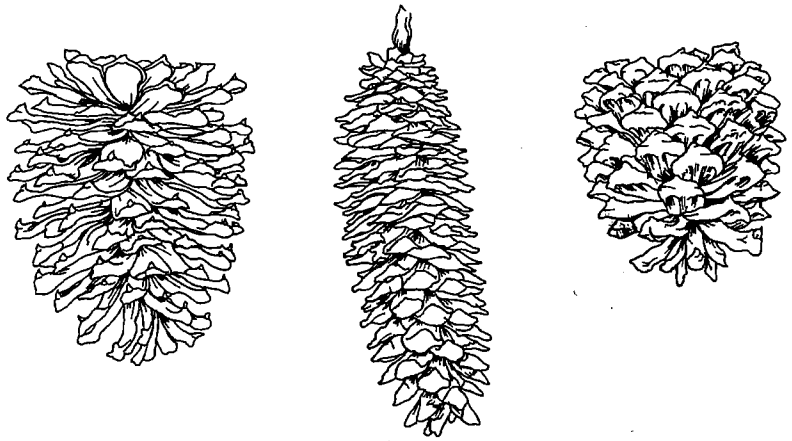
> Sometimes the Diggers aspire to nobler game, and succeed in entrapping the antelope.

The "Digger pine" is so named, of course, because it was the "Digger Indians" that utilized the nuts. It would seem appropriate that this wonderful tree, bearing some of the richest nutrition in the plant world, should be named in honor of the people who pioneered its use. Unfortunately, the name does no honor, but instead denigrates the Native Californians. The term "Digger" is rooted deep in the soil of racial prejudice. Early references to Native Americans by this term are all either blatantly or subtly derogatory. Here is an 1848 passage from *Blackwood's* magazine:

> They came upon a band of miserable Indians, who, from the fact of their subsisting chiefly on roots, are called the diggers.

Around the same time, the term was also showing up in the diaries of early wagon train migrants on their way to California. A diarist for the Stevens Party in 1844, no doubt using a term that had already been around for a number of years, applied the name "Digger" to Native Americans encountered on the trail in what is now Nevada. The travelers had no curiosity about the richness and diversity of the myriad cultures they beheld, and held all Great Basin and California tribes in contempt: "They were not really warriors at all; they fought in self-defense, and had no interest in counting coup or taking scalps. They had neither guns nor horses" (Stewart 1962, 93). Such an indictment!

It is strange that the migrants disrespected the Indians for digging for



From left: cones of ponderosa pine (Pinus ponderosa), *sugar pine* (Pinus lambertiana) *and gray pine* (Pinus sabiniana).

roots, since the migrants themselves dug for roots regularly along the trail. And, it was the maligned roots, provided through the generosity of another unnamed Native Californian, that fed still another of the starving members of the Donner Party.

> Then one day he was amazed to see a solitary Indian walking along from the direction of the lake, carrying a heavy pack. He seemed not to feel the slightest curiosity [no doubt because he had been aware of the party's presence from the moment they arrived in the mountains—LH], but as he caught sight of the white man merely gave a sign for him to keep distance. Then he took from the pack half a dozen fibrous roots, laid them on the snow, and went on his way. When he had gone as mysteriously as he had come, Breen went up and took the roots. They were shaped like onions, and tasted to him somewhat like a sweet potato. (Stewart [1936] 1960, 178)

To Native Californians, the term "Digger" ranks alongside the worst of racial epithets. And even though many contemporary people are unaware that the name is derogatory, there is evidence that it was originally given to the pine with full consciousness of its hateful connotations. David Douglas, the famous Scottish naturalist for whom the

Douglas fir was named, admired *Pinus sabiniana* greatly, and wrote in the early 19th century that it was a fine species for cultivation, but he mentioned that the settlers hated the pine. In 1953, Donald Culross Peattie expanded on this in his book, *A Natural History of Western Trees:*

> The tree was despised by the white settlers. Their thinking apparently ran something like this: the Digger Indian, a contemptuous name by which the pioneers inaccurately lumped all California tribes together, used the tree as food. What is good for an Indian is beneath notice for a white man. Ergo, the tree merited about the same respect as the Indians, who were dispossessed, when not enslaved, beaten, or killed. (Peattie 1953, 94)

The tree and its nut still lack public respect, while the nut of a better-named relative, the pinyon pine, has become a popular part of present-day California cuisine. Perhaps its shaming name is part of the reason for this disrespect.

Native Americans are openly questioning racist terms now, and this is having an important impact on public opinion. In response to the Native American outcry about racial epithets used to name sports teams, the Portland newspaper *The Oregonian* has recently stated that it will no

A few Native Californian names for *Pinus sabiniana*

Achumawi	**tujhalo**
Chimariko	**hatcho**
Karuk	**axyúsip**
Klamath	**gapga**
Maidu	**towáni**
Mono	**tunah**
Patwin	**tuwa**
	sanak (*sabiniana* pinenut)
South Sierra Miwok	**sakky**
Wappo	**náyo**
Wintu	**xisi** (unripe *sabiniana* pinenut)
	chati (ripe *sabiniana* pinenut)
Yana	**c'ala'i**

longer print offensive names such as "The Washington Redskins." It is time and far past time that the equally offensive term "Digger" be removed from common botanical nomenclature. This must of course be accomplished by a grass roots movement; common names are not regulated by any administrative or scientific authority; the best we can do is refuse to use a given term in print and in voice, and always use another instead.

What should *sabiniana* be called, then? Several candidates have arisen. Some people have suggested a variation on the scientific name, to call it the "Sabine pine." The name "Sabine" has a number of possible meanings. When I first heard the name *sabiniana* I thought (not knowing Latin) that it might be related to the Spanish verb *saber* "to know," and that perhaps it would give us reason to call the tree the "wise pine." But the Latin ancestor of *saber* is *sapio*, which originally meant "to taste or have flavor." That meaning would be appropriate to this flavorful pinenut—the "tasty pine" would be a truthful if not very poetic name—but *sabiniana* does not come from that verb at all. A look in the dictionary reminds us that the Sabines were a tribe in ancient Italy who were overrun and incorporated by the Romans—which would make "Sabine pine" a painfully ironic name in light of California history. As it turns out, however, the name *sabiniana* doesn't refer to the Sabines either. David Douglas named the tree himself in 1830, and he named it for Joseph Sabine, who was the secretary of the London Horticultural Society. Douglas's own admiration for *sabiniana* is described by Peattie, who preceded the paragraph below with a description of the tree's poor reputation:

> So it may seem surprising that David Douglas, the first discoverer of this tree, should have described it as "a noble new species" and "one of the most beautiful objects in nature," and that in sending it to Joseph Sabine, secretary of the London Horticultural Society, in whose honor he named it, he should have ventured to express the hope that in English gardens the Digger Pine would "exist and flourish when we shall cease to be, when we shall be gone forever." (Peattie 1950, 93)

The needles on *sabiniana* are distinctively grayish, making it stand out from the other greener plant life around it. Once while I was driving in

sabiniana country and thinking about the naming problem, I decided that from that time on I would call it the "gray pine." It turns out that this is such an obvious name that many people have independently come up with the same idea. This name, "grayleaf pine," and "bull pine" are listed in Peattie's book as alternative common names for *sabiniana*. Someone mentioned to me another common name, "ghost pine." While Peattie does not mention this common name, he does refer to ghosts in his description of the tree, which he says is so sparse of needles that it has been described as "the tree that you can see right through." He goes on to say:

> It springs now on hillsides which still bear the scars of the mad rush for gold and encroaches upon the old graveyards of the Argonauts. If indeed you "can see through" this tree, it is ghosts that you see. (Peattie 1953, 93)

Yet another possibility would be to call the tree by a name originally given to it in any of the Native Californian languages (see page 168). A name like "Towani pine" or "Nayo pine" would sound especially lovely.

But whatever choice any of us make, let it be anything but the old name, given as a name of hate in a dark period of our history. Juliet was wrong about roses. They would not smell as sweet to us if they were named with a racial epithet.

Afterword

The new version of the most important California botanical reference, *The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California*, has just been published (Hickman 1993). Originally published in 1925, this has long been the standard source for native plants, and now contains references to 8,000 varieties of plants indigenous to California—twice the number identified in the original manual. This tome will set the standard for future plant terminology for the state. The editors of the new edition recommend these two common names: "gray pine" and "foothill pine," adding, "the common name digger pine is pejorative in origin, so best avoided."

Several plant names that contain the derogatory word "squaw" have also been left out of the new version, replaced by non-pejorative common names. The manual no longer shows the common name

"squaw bush" for *Rhus trilobata*, listing only its other common name, "skunk brush." Also expunged was "squaw mat" for *Ceanothus prostratus*, in favor of "Mahala mat." Some of the "squaw" words still remain, however: no longer listed in the index but still in the text is "squaw waterweed" *(Baccharis sergiloides)*, also known as "desert Baccharis." And "squawroot" *(Apiaceae perideridia)* remains in both the index and the text, along with its other common name, "yampah." (The word "squaw," by the way, comes from a perfectly nice Algonquian word for "woman"; it only became derogatory after being borrowed into English.)

In government-run schools, young women were trained to weave lace instead of baskets, and to speak English over their own languages. 1904 photo of Luiseño students by Edward H. Davis, courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian.

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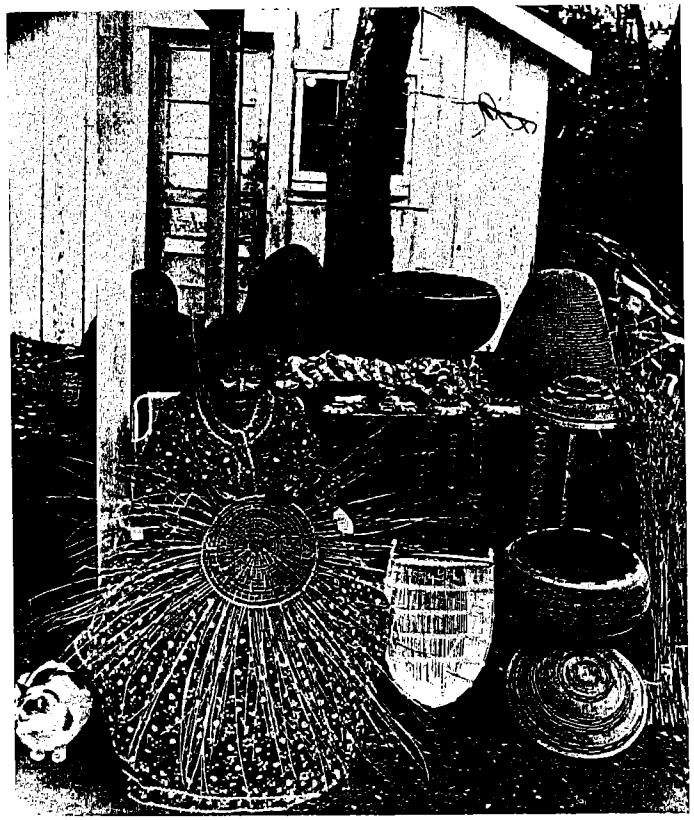
Languages Under Attack

During the first part of this century, Indian schools saw as part of their charge not just the teaching of English to their students, but also the forced eradication of their native languages, backed up by severe corporal punishment. It was not just Native Americans who suffered from this policy: this was part of an overall policy against "foreign languages" that the United States government adopted during World War I, and its reverberations are still with us today. The psychological devastation of children whose first language was not English had a fearsome impact on their lives and on the languages of their heritage.

There are in fact good reasons for people to give up a language in favor of another, and this choice is made all the time, all around the world. In our country, immigrants and indigenous minorities alike make conscious decisions to teach their children only English, hoping to give them a head start on social and economic assimilation to the American mainstream. Parents who decide not to teach the family language to their children do so out of love, to keep their children from suffering. Nor do parents who try to teach their children their language of heritage always succeed in doing so. In this environment where English is so dominant in daily life, teaching another language in the home is challenged by many factors—television, playmates, older siblings who have developed English-speaking habits. Children often reject their family language at school age, if not before, when they realize that it separates them from their classmates. It often takes only a single incident of being teased to make a child refuse to speak anything but English from then on.

There is no doubt that English fluency is an essential part of life in America. But that doesn't mean that people cannot know other languages as well. Bilingualism, we now know, is not only a very normal skill in most of the world, but seems to be beneficial to the intellectual development of an individual. If we can succeed in making our children bilingual, they have many more choices open to them in life. And people who have not learned their language of heritage often come to feel a



Elsie Allen, 1981. Photo by Scott M. Patterson.

great sense of loss as adults, believing that their ability to express their cultural identity has been denied them.

The point here is not that people ought to speak their language of heritage, but rather that they ought to have a choice. The schools and government policies of the first half of this century denied them that choice and robbed a generation of the right to feel pride in their language and culture.

Following are excerpts from the personal memories of two Pomo women about their school days in northern California. Native American children were forced into very hard choices by the language policies of the schools. As the narratives show, one woman chose to reject her language and, so that they would not suffer in school as she had, she never taught it

to her children. The other woman rejected school instead, quitting out of a sense of loyalty to her language. Virtually all Native American children of that generation had to make the same painful choices.

The excerpts are from tapes made in 1987 for an oral history documentary of Pomoan people, "These Things That Cannot be Replaced," by Vic Bedoian and Roberta Llewellyn. The tapes aired on KPFA radio in November/December 1988. They were transcribed by Vera Mae Fredrickson, who also wrote the introduction below (Fredrickson 1989).

Introduction

Indian children were not permitted to attend public schools in California until several court cases established their rights in the 1920s. Previous to that, the elementary school age children either attended the "separate but equal" schools established on the rancherias or the government boarding schools such as the one at Covelo in Round Valley. For further education, government-run Indian boarding schools were located at Riverside, California; Chemawa, Oregon; Phoenix, Arizona; or Haskell, Kansas. The expense of maintaining the Indian grammar schools, and the eventual refusal of the children to attend such schools which had a reputation for poor facilities and teaching, finally closed down the separate but empty schools.

Elsie Allen

Elsie Allen was born in 1899 in Santa Rosa. She went to school in Hopland and to the Indian boarding school at Covelo in Round Valley, which was closed in 1957. She was well known for her basketweaving and as the author of *Pomo Basketmaking* (Naturegraph, 1971). She passed away in 1990.

"They built a Catholic church and they opened up a building for the children to go to classes—religious classes. It bothered me; those children were still all small. Here I'm big. I used to lay awake at night and think to myself, 'Why did God make me so dumb, why am I so dumb?' That's the way I felt. I have to be so big to start learning this religion. Why couldn't I know that when I was small? That always bothered me.

"When I went to school at that time [to the boarding school at Covelo]

there were three girls there from Hopland. I already knew some of their language, it's a different dialect from mine. I couldn't talk the English language in the school at Covelo so I hollered at them when we lined up. Then one of the girls that was in my line reported me. They took me and strapped the heck out of me with a big leather strap. I didn't know what I got strapped for. Three days later those girls told me it was for talking the Indian language on the grounds which I'm not supposed to do.

"I was eleven years old [when I went to Covelo], and every night I cried and then I'd lay awake and think and think and think. I'd think to myself, 'If I ever get married and have children I'll *never* teach my children the language or all the Indian things that I know. I'll *never* teach them that, I don't want my children to be treated like they treated me.' That's the way I raised my children. Everybody couldn't understand that, they always asked me about it in later years. My husband has a different language. He can't understand me but I learned his language much faster. I can talk it too but I never taught my children. That's why they don't know. [My daughter] can understand it, but she can't speak the language.

"In later years I found lots of ways they could have taught me in school but they didn't. They just put me in a corner and gave me a card with a lot of holes in it and a needle and yarn. They didn't say, 'This is a needle.' I would if I was teaching, if the child didn't know. Nobody said that. Well, I guess they thought I was dumb or deaf or something. They treated me just like I was deaf and dumb. I was eleven years old, I wasn't a little kid, a baby. It should be easy to teach a person like that, but they didn't.

"How I got to school in Covelo was every year the agent of the government school came around in the fall of the year and gathered the children to take them to the school. My mother signed a paper for me to go up there. In the morning (after a two-day trip to Covelo by wagon, flat-bed railroad car, stage coach, and gravel wagon with six other children from the Hopland/Ukiah area), I just kind of stood around and watched the other girls, what they were doing and where to go. I didn't know what to say. I think I only knew two words of English, 'yes' and 'no.' I never got to ask my mother why she sent me like that when I didn't know the English language.

"I was scared, I had no one to talk to [no one spoke my dialect]. That was sure hard. I felt that if I said something or fought against how we

Girls at school in the Hoopa Valley. 1907 photo by A.L. Kroeber, courtesy of Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology.

were treated, they might kill me. I cried every night. I couldn't talk to anybody or ask anybody anything because I didn't know how to. I was so dumb, that's the way I felt. They knew that I couldn't understand so nobody talked to me. I was the only one that had my language.

"I was just a year at Covelo. In June we started coming home. I was supposed to go back but when my mother saw the kind of clothes I came back with, she got mad and never wanted me to go off to school after that. After that when I wanted to go to school, she said I wasn't treated right. She claimed I was just skin and bones and with ugly clothes—boys' shoes, I was wearing.

"When I was thirteen they opened a school on the Hopland Rancheria. I got a job as a janitor. The teacher was kind of goofy, there was something wrong with her mind. My stepfather was a trustee. He talked to the people in town and they changed her. Another teacher

Frances Jack, 1982. Photo by Scott Patterson.

came and she said, 'You can sweep the floor and be the janitor, but you can go to school too.' That's how I happened to go to school a little bit. I went to about the third grade, just on account of that new teacher."

Frances Jack

Frances Jack, born in 1912, was very active in the schools, in community activities and in the tribal status issues of the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians. She passed away in 1993.

"I must have been about six years old when I started to go to school. My father and my aunt's father, they got together and decided they were going to take a portion of my aunt's lot and my father's lot and give it so they can build a school, so that I can have a short distance to go to school. It was a pretty good-sized building, and it was always full. That was first to eighth, all in one room with one teacher.

"I liked it at first; then later on I didn't care for it. It had to do with one teacher. I talked my mother and father's language, and when I went to school the first thing they told me was, 'No, no, no.' Maybe it was the

government that said to stop the kids from talking their language in school. So she told me that anytime anyone speaks their language, their Indian language in the schoolyard, they were going to be punished. And the kids—I guess maybe she gave them something to tattle—she told me, 'You spoke Indian language in back of the school; I heard about it and now you have to go into that little room.' There I would be strapped. Well, I just couldn't help it; I talked my language. Others did too, but so that nobody heard them. One kid would always hang around, so that he could tell on us. Maybe he got candy or something.

"Anyway the last thing that woman did to me is the thing that made me rebel. I was still six years old. Because I got punishment more than the other kids, she was going to use me as an example. She brought me out there in front of all the class—eighth graders and like that, big kids—and she lifted my skirt and strapped me. She made some marks on my back. I never told my mother, and then one time she was helping me dress and she saw that. She asked me what happened. I didn't want to tell her, but I had to. Then she said, 'Well, that's what you're going to school for, to learn what the teacher tells you to do. Why can't you learn to do it that way?' I already had it in my mind that I wasn't going to quit talking my language. I told her that. I said, 'Why is our language bad? Is it bad what you and my father talk? Or other people talk? Is it bad? Why do you people talk it then?'

"So I said I don't want to quit talking my language. So in school I said the same thing. But nobody heard me talk the Indian language in school from that time on. But in my mind [I thought] whenever I get a chance to get out of that school, then nobody's going to stop me. And that's the way it was. I didn't finish school here; a fifth grade dropout. I didn't want to go to school any more."

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The Native American Languages Act

Who says we can't have an impact on our society? A small group of Native American educators and linguists got together a few years ago to try to influence public policy on Native American languages, with the result that an exciting bill was passed by both houses of Congress and signed into law by President Bush. Basically, the law states that it is the policy of the United States to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages. The law recognizes the right of Native Americans to use their traditional languages as a medium of instruction in the schools, recognizes the rights of Indian tribes to give official status to their Native American languages for conducting their own business, and encourages all educational institutions to allow the same academic credit for proficiency in Native American languages as for proficiency in foreign languages.

Is this the same government that used to run schools where children were beaten for speaking their language? It is hard to say what sort of impact a law like this will have, for it is largely symbolic, but at least, for the very first time, the government has officially recognized the right of Native American languages to exist.

To understand the social attitudes and events that led to this law, we must look at United States language policy in historical perspective, back to the turn of the century. Native California and the rest of our country emerged from a long period of warfare and attempted genocide against American Indians by Euro-Americans into a more peaceable era, but one where Native Americans experienced social and legal oppression by the government. It was determined that Indians should be assimilated as quickly as possible into mainstream American society, which meant they must be socialized to give up their traditional ways of life, including their languages.

Indian language policy of the early twentieth century was also shaped by philosophical tenets that developed in the United States from

two events that had nothing to do with the Indians: the giant wave of recent immigration from Europe, and World War I. Americans felt threatened by the influx of foreigners, and the war increased their sense of hatred toward newcomers. Theodore Roosevelt gave a speech in 1917, during World War I, which expressed the cultural and language attitudes of the times:

> We Americans are the children of the crucible. It has been our boast that out of the crucible, the melting pot of life in this free land, all the men and women of all the nations who come hither emerge as Americans and as nothing else....
>
> The crucible must melt all who are cast in it; it must turn them out in one American mold; and this must be the mold shaped 140 years ago by the men who under Washington founded this as a free nation, separate from all others....
>
> We must have but one flag. *We must also have but one language* [emphasis added]. That must be the language of the Declaration of Independence, of Washington's farewell address, of Lincoln's Gettysburg speech and second inaugural.... (*Annals of America* 1968, 14:129)

During this era, which supplanted a time of relative linguistic freedom and tolerance in the United States, many new laws were passed against the use of languages other than English in schools and elsewhere. There was even one law on the books in the Midwest that made it illegal to use a foreign language over the telephone. To make matters worse, during the twenties the I.Q. test was developed, and a battery of faulty, poorly designed research projects seemed to show that speaking two languages was correlated with low intelligence. (Whether bilingualism was the cause or the result of low I.Q. was a matter of debate in those days!)

This, then, was the mood of the times when the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools established their policy of punishing Indian children who spoke their language. Generations of Native Americans were made to suffer corporal abuse whenever they dared use a word of the language of their heritage.

But in the late fifties and the sixties, a new attitude toward language began to develop in the United States. The Civil Rights Movement led to increased protection under the law for all races, and this relatively

benign atmosphere, combined with the aftermath of the Vietnam War, resulted also in liberalized immigration laws. In the meantime, new psychological research refuted the earlier findings about the negative effect of bilingualism on I.Q., and in fact discovered the opposite—that bilingualism actually has a beneficial cognitive effect. Then in 1974 came a key Supreme Court decision, *Lau* v. *Nichols*, which said that children have the right to an education in their native language if they do not know English. The new idea that people have the right to speak their language of heritage spelled the end of the old BIA school policies.

But the liberal attitudes that gained ground in the sixties and seventies were countered by a conservative backlash in the eighties. S.I. Hayakawa led the "Official English" movement, and established the U.S. English committee, with the motto "One Flag, One Language." Due to Hayakawa's influence, English became the official language of California during those years. Probably few if any of the backers of English as the official language thought about Native American languages at all; they were more concerned with the influx of immigrants and, especially, the growing number of native speakers of Spanish in the United States. Nevertheless, Native Americans stood a big chance of losing their language rights to this conservative political movement, and one clearly visible result of the backlash was that bilingual education funds were being cut, and many Native American language programs that were funded by Title VII (Bilingual Education) were terminated.

A number of Native Americans and other people concerned with Native American language rights began to fear that if Hayakawa and his friends succeeded in making English the official language of the United States, Indian languages might be doomed. Action seemed necessary to define Native American languages as having special status in our country, in order to protect them from this backlash.

Here is how it happened. In June 1988, a group of people met at a conference in Tempe, Arizona, and wrote the first version of the resolution. Present were Kathryn S. Begaye (Navajo), Paul Platero (Navajo), Lucille J. Watahomigie (Hualapai), Ofelia Zepeda (Tohono O'odham), Elizabeth Brandt, Sandra Johnson, William Leap, Teresa McCarty, Casey A. Nagy, William Wilson, and Akira Yamamoto. After they wrote it, they sent copies of the resolution to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs,

chaired by Senator Daniel Inouye. Senator Inouye introduced the resolution to Congress in September 1988, and it was referred to his committee for revisions. In April 1990 the bill was incorporated into a larger act, H.R. 5040: the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act. On October 11, 1990 it was passed by the Senate; and the very next day, the House. President Bush signed it into law on October 30, 1990.

Here are the most important excerpts from the Native American Languages Act, which was included in Public Law 101-477:

Findings

Sec. 102. The Congress finds that—

(1) the status of the cultures and languages of Native Americans is unique and the United States has the responsibility to act together with Native Americans to ensure the survival of these unique cultures and languages;

(2) special status is accorded Native Americans in the United States, a status that recognizes distinct cultural and political rights, including the right to continue separate identities;

(3) the traditional languages of Native Americans are an integral part of their cultures and identities and form the basic medium for the transmission, and thus survival, of Native American cultures, literatures, histories, religions, political institutions, and values;

(4) there is a widespread practice of treating Native American languages as if they were anachronisms;

(5) there is a lack of clear, comprehensive, and consistent Federal policy on treatment of Native American languages which has often resulted in acts of suppression and extermination of Native American languages and cultures;

(6) there is convincing evidence that student achievement and performance, community and school pride, and educational opportunity is clearly and directly tied to respect for, and support of, the first language of the child or student;

(7) it is clearly in the interests of the United States, individual States, and territories to encourage the full academic and human potential achievements of all students and citizens and to take steps to realize these ends;

(8) acts of suppression and extermination directed against Native American languages and cultures are in conflict with the United States policy of self-determination for Native Americans;

(9) languages are the means of communication for the full range of human experiences and are critical to the survival of cultural and political integrity of any people; and

(10) language provides a direct and powerful means of promoting international communication by people who share languages.

Declaration of Policy

Sec. 104. It is the policy of the United States to—

(1) preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages;

(2) allow exceptions to teacher certification requirements for Federal programs, and programs funded in whole or in part by the Federal Government, for instruction in Native American languages when such teacher certification requirements hinder the employment of qualified teachers who teach in Native American languages, and to encourage State and territorial governments to make similar exceptions;

(3) encourage and support the use of Native American languages as a medium of instruction in order to encourage and support—

(A) Native American language survival,

(B) educational opportunity,

(C) increased student success and performance,

(D) increased student awareness and knowledge of their culture and history, and

(E) increased student and community pride;

(4) encourage State and local education programs to work with Native American parents, educators, Indian tribes, and other Native American governing bodies in the implementation of programs to put this policy into effect;

(5) recognize the right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies to use the Native American languages as a medium of instruction in all schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior;

(6) fully recognize the inherent right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies, States, territories, and possessions of the United States to take action on, and give official status to, their Native American languages for the purpose of conducting their own business;

(7) support the granting of comparable proficiency achieved through

course work in a Native American language the same academic credit as comparable proficiency achieved through course work in a foreign language, with recognition of such Native American language proficiency by institutions of higher education as fulfilling foreign language entrance or degree requirements; and

(8) encourage all institutions of elementary, secondary and higher education, where appropriate, to include Native American languages in the curriculum in the same manner as foreign languages and to grant proficiency in Native American languages the same full academic credit as proficiency in foreign languages.

No restrictions

Sec. 105. The right of Native Americans to express themselves through the use of Native American languages shall not be restricted in any public proceeding, including publicly supported education programs.

Evaluations

Sec. 106.

(a) The president shall direct the heads of the various Federal departments, agencies, and instrumentalities to—

(1) evaluate their policies and procedures in consultation with Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies as well as traditional leaders and educators in order to determine and implement changes needed to bring the policies and procedures into compliance with the provisions of this title;

(2) give the greatest effect possible in making such evaluations, absent a clear specific Federal statutory requirement to the contrary, to the policies and procedures which will give the broadest effect to the provisions of this title; and

(3) evaluate the laws which they administer and make recommendations to the President on amendments needed to bring such laws into compliance with the provisions of this title.

(b) By no later than the date that is one year after the date of enactment of this title, the President shall submit to the Congress a report containing recommendations for amendments to Federal laws that are needed to bring such laws into compliance with the provisions of this title.

Use of English

Sec. 107. Nothing in this title shall be construed as precluding the use of Federal funds to teach English to Native Americans.

The Native American Languages Act of 1990 did not include funding provisions. However, a new bill, the "Native American Languages Act of 1992" (S. 2044), was passed by both houses and signed into law by President Bush in November 1992. It amends the Native American Programs Act of 1974 with a new section that establishes a grant program to assure the survival and continuing vitality of Native American languages. The specific purposes for which grants will be awarded include:

(1) the establishment and support of community language programs to bring older and younger Native Americans together to facilitate and encourage the transfer of language skills from one generation to another;

(2) the establishment of programs to train Native Americans to teach native languages to others or to enable them to serve as interpreters or translators;

(3) the development, printing and dissemination of materials to be used for the teaching and enhancement of Native American languages;

(4) the establishment or support of programs to train Native Americans to produce or participate in television or radio programs to be broadcast in their native languages;

(5) the compilation, transcription, and analysis of oral testimony to record and preserve Native American languages;

(6) the purchase of equipment (including audio and video recording equipment, computers, and software) required for the conducting of language programs.

Funding allocated by Congress to pay for this grant program is expected to be available soon. This will be very helpful in the quest of Native Californians to keep their languages alive.

To the Lonely Hearts Language Club

At night
when the work is done
and the children are in bed
and the roar of the freeway is quieted
and the house cools and darkens and sighs into stillness,

She holds in her hands the pages
on which rest spidery symbols
of sounds whispered by dying grandmothers
and written down by a crazed linguist, long dead too,
of words spoken for the final time generations ago
entombed now in perpetual silence,
the last sound waves decayed into carbon traces
in a paper monument to the passing of a language from this earth.

Called each night by a power beyond her understanding
She lifts a page into her circle of light
and begins a ceremony of resurrection.
The pencil scratchings that encase the grandmothers' gifts
fall away and the words reawaken;
Her voice frees them one by one
and they fly into the night,
echoing into and out of corners.
The air vibrates with their saying.
The world resonates with their being.

by Leanne Hinton, for Cindy Alvitre,
L. Frank Manriquez, Ernestine
McGovran, and Linda Yamane

21

Keeping the Languages Alive

Language Action in California

As international economics and political structures spread and overwhelm the small traditional societies of the world, their languages spread with them, and the languages of small groups start to disappear. It has been estimated that half of the world's languages may die out in the next few generations; and in North America the situation is even worse. As linguist Michael Krauss says,

> For the whole USA and Canada together... of 187 languages, I calculate that 149 are no longer being learned by children; that is, of the Native North American languages still spoken, 80% are moribund. (Hale et al. 1992, 5)

California probably has the dubious distinction of having the most endangered languages of any part of North America. This is of course partly because there are so many Native Californian languages to begin with. Nonetheless, most Native Californian populations are small, and speakers are rarely in daily contact, because their communities seldom have a land base. These facts combine for a deadly situation: in California it is nearly *100%* of the Native languages that are no longer learned by children.

The loss of a people's cultural heritage and traditional values brings about great despair. And language is seen by many to be at the very root of culture, culture's vehicle, the means of expressing culture and values. Many Native Californians feel the loss of their language strongly. There are those who speak their language of heritage but have no one left to talk to. There are those whose ancestral language has not been spoken by anyone at all for a generation or more. Many people feel the loss of language as a loss of personal history, a loss of identity. There is a sense of loneliness, of yearning for lost meaning, lost values.

This yearning has led to action in Indian communities. People are doing whatever they can. They are forming tribal language committees, school and after-school programs, evening language classes; they are

audiotaping and videotaping elders, and researching tapes and field notes from university archives. Along with these linguistic activities, there is also a resurgence of cultural and ceremonial activities. Basketmakers are organizing intertribally and negotiating with government agencies about the maintenance and harvest of plants that give basketmaking materials. New roundhouses and sweat lodges are being built; multi-generational singing and dancing groups are developing all over the state.

On the weekend of August 22 and 23, 1992, a group of Native Californians from every part of the state came together for a retreat at Walker Creek Ranch in Marin County, to share ideas and learn from each other about how to preserve their languages. The conference was funded by the Native California Network, a foundation dedicated to helping Native Californians save their cultures. Organized by Malcolm Margolin and foundation members Mary Bates Abbott and Robin Collier, the invitational conference hosted people who are dedicated to the task of teaching or learning or recording their languages. The energy and level of inspiration they generated have furthered greatly the task of saving the California languages.

Problems. There are a few major problems that all members of the conference had in common, and at the same time each community has its own unique problems. For all California languages, there is one basic problem: they are no longer the primary languages of the household, so the children are not learning them. Another common problem for the people trying to preserve their languages comes about because of the controversial nature of their task. People who believe that the preservation of Native American languages is a hopeless or even worthless task, or that it keeps people from assimilating to "mainstream" American culture have challenged their involvement. Those who would preserve their languages are criticized, embattled, ignored or ridiculed by various authorities, by the odd racist or superpatriot, and even sometimes by their own communities and families.

But beyond these fundamental issues, each language situation presents its own set of problems. Some communities are making an effort to teach the languages in schools or in after-school programs, and

The 1992 Tribal Scholars Language Conference. Front row, from left: Mary Bates Abbott, Jean Perry, Eric Elliott, Katherine Saubel, Martha Tapleras, Mary Jones, Vinna Smith, Berneice Humphrey. Middle: Bun Lucas, Ray Baldy, Brian Bibby, Betty and Mark Macarro, Maynard Gary, Nancy Richardson, Leanne Hinton, Susan Weese, Malcolm Margolin, Linda Yamane, Cindy Alvitre, L. Frank Manriquez, Laura Buszard-Welcher, Jeannine Gendar, Robin Collier, Sandra Camarena, Parris Butler, Ernestine McGovran. In the tree: Boss Wilson, Preston Arrowweed, Darryl Wilson, Carolyn Kuali'i, Darlene and Kowonash Franco, Hoss Wilson. Photo by Mary Bates Abbott.

are having to fight to have sufficient funding and sufficient hours of school time made available to the language learning process. Some languages are spoken by people who live far apart from each other, so that in-school or after-school programs cannot work. Some people fear that their educational programs actually undermine the language because it may lessen the parents' sense of responsibility. Parents may say, "Oh, I don't have to worry about it; the schools will take care of our language, so I'll just teach the kids English!" Some programs cannot find enough fluent speakers to be language teachers, and some have enough speakers but have to battle restrictions that don't allow the elders to teach without certification. Some people are trying to develop writing systems from scratch; some have more than one writing system in

competition, and have to suffer factional struggles over which one should prevail. Some are trying to research and develop oral language teaching techniques, and get away from a dependence on writing. Some people are emphasizing the task of teaching adults the language, and are trying to develop language programs for them. And some are working with languages long dead, just trying to gather materials and learn what they can.

The Elders. Coming together at this conference were many Native Californians who share a common love and concern for their languages, including elders who have worked hard to pass on their languages to the next generations. There was Berneice Humphrey (Tolowa), who has been working on language programs for children since 1973. She brought a copy of an impressive book on the Tolowa language that she and other Tolowa tribal members created; the book was dedicated to her. There was Bun Lucas (Kashaya Pomo), who sings and tells stories in his language, and goes to schools all around him to spread his knowledge into the wider world. There was Mary Jones (Konkow Maidu), who works on language curriculum, and described how she feels now that there is no one left for her to talk to. There was Ray Baldy (Hupa), who has been teaching in the language programs at Hoopa for years. He described the approach he uses in language teaching, including games and songs he has developed, and showed us a video of a class. Vinna Smith (Karuk), one of the few fluent speakers left, is part of a team that has joined together to try to pass the language on to the next generation, and she is an important part of the Karuk language program in the public schools. Katherine Saubel (Cahuilla) is the director of the Malki Museum and the Malki Museum Press; she has published books on her language and other California languages and cultures, and has long worked with anthropologists and linguists to record her language and cultural knowledge. (Subsequent to this meeting, Ms. Saubel was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.)

The younger generations. Inspiring too are members of younger generations, most of whom did not learn to speak their languages as children but have made great efforts to do so as adults. There is Mark Macarro (Luiseño), who started his journey toward language learning when he

decided to learn how to sing. Elders are very proud of him and his singing ability, but he tells the story of an elder who asked him one day how he thought he could ever be a singer without knowing the language. After some hard thinking, he began learning the language from the elders, studying language-learning materials, and gathering together everything he could find, published or unpublished, about Luiseño. Not satisfied with just learning the language himself, he has also started youth programs and has researched modern language teaching theory to help develop curriculum and teaching styles.

Then there are the members of the Wukchumne language program—present at the conference were Martha Tapleras, Susan Weese, and Darlene Franco. Darlene showed some of the materials they have developed: a lovely coloring book with Wukchumne words, and a lesson book. Susan says that when they began to try to get a language program together, it took a year or so before the elders would open up and share with the younger generation. The elders needed to be sure they were serious. She pointed out that people sometimes take too much from the elders without giving anything back. It is especially important to share the results of your study with them, to show them what is being done with the knowledge they have given.

Then there is Parris Butler, a Mojave artist and poet who is directing a language program at Fort Mojave. He has a background in creative writing, with a linguistic component, and is now working on developing a writing system with some of the fluent elders. Like Mark, Parris has researched modern language teaching techniques and applied them.

Another dedicated language activist is Brian Bibby, who is well known in California as a traditional singer and dancer, and also as a teacher. He has worked with Northern Sierra Miwok and Southern Maidu (Nisenan) elders to develop language curricula for children, and when it became obvious that people lived too far apart from each other to get the children together for language lessons, he began to develop curricula for computers and Language-Master machines, and put the machines in people's homes for the families to use. He points out that the main benefit of this technology is that it allows people to actually hear the language being spoken. Another benefit is that it gets whole families involved in the language teaching process.

Also present at the conference was Nancy Richardson (Karuk), the talented coordinator of the Indian language program at Humboldt State University, who works closely with the language teachers for Karuk, Yurok, Tolowa and Hupa. She has also worked with the Karuk Language Restoration Committee, an exciting committee that was founded to work out a plan to restore the waning Karuk language. Remembering when there were 150 native speakers, she illustrates the grave danger Karuk is in by pointing out that now there are only 12.* She stresses that a language plan has to be done by the community itself. One could hire a talented expert to create one, but no one would ever use it! It must be created through the deepest thought, hardest work, and best intentions of the people themselves.

Working on a more individualized project is Darryl Babe Wilson, Achumawi-Atsugewi writer, now completing a master's degree at the University of Arizona. While anthropologists like Harrington (Chapter 19) worked hard to discover elderly speakers of California languages, Darryl did a turnabout and discovered an elderly anthropologist instead. Susan Brandenstein (Park), when she was a student of A.L. Kroeber and Robert Lowie at Berkeley in 1930, was sent by them to Atsugewi country. She never published the results of her field work, and Darryl, with her cooperation, has been working for a couple of years now to make sure that her notes are copied and safely deposited. Darryl is basing his graduate work on the study of the linguistic and cultural information contained in the notes.

By no means was every language activist in California present at that meeting. Among the other people doing important work are Loren Bommelyn (Tolowa) and Julian Lang (Karuk). Loren Bommelyn has been discussed frequently in this book (see especially Chapters 20 and 22). Julian Lang also learned his language fluently as an adult, through hard work and sheer talent, and is active in language development and teaching as well as in song, literature, visual arts, and an astonishing number of other pursuits.

* Recently Jeanerette Jacups-Johnny, Karuk medicine woman, told me that in 1910, the Karuk people successfully fought off an attempt to build a dam on their river, even though none of them knew English. So we see that in only 80 years, Karuks have shifted from monolingual Karuk speakers to monolingual English speakers.

Languages with no speakers. The person mentioned most often at this conference was the early 20th-century linguist J.P. Harrington, who devoted his life to gathering linguistic data of the languages of the West, especially California (see Chapter 19). His unpublished field notes are a great resource now for many languages, and for some languages, his notes are all that remain. Several people who attended the conference work with Harrington notes, trying to understand as much as they can about the now-unspoken languages of their heritage.

Cindy Alvitre (Tongva, also known as Gabrielino) lived in Inuit villages through her teens and early twenties and was inspired by their living language. When she went home she devoted herself to revitalizing her own culture and language. She works with Harrington field notes, and has dreams of resurrecting Tongva to spoken status. Chair of her tribe, she tries to bring in a few words of her language at each meeting. She is also heading a project to build a plank canoe and paddle with a team of her people to the islands they once inhabited.

L. Frank Manriquez (Tongva and Ajachmem), artist and carver of stone, and cartoonist for *News from Native California*, years ago also caught the language bug, and surrounds herself each day with thousands of slips of paper filled with words taken from Harrington's field notes on her ancestral languages.

Linda Yamane (Ohlone) spent years gathering together the voluminous notes of Harrington on the Rumsen language, and teaching herself to understand his peculiar handwriting and special characters. Now, from his notes and from old recordings in archives such as the Hearst Museum at the University of California, she is learning the old words and stories, and recreating as well the song traditions of her ancestors.

Ernestine McGovran (Chumash), whose family worked closely with Harrington for many years, has a particularly interesting mission. Her mother, Mary Yee, learned to write her language fluently, and kept notebooks of her sessions with Harrington. Ernestine (in the small amount of time left to her each day after her demanding job as an intensive-care nurse) is working on her mother's notebooks.

Some language teaching ideas. The most popular language teaching method among the members of the conference was TPR, short for "Total

Physical Response," a method that involves teaching words, phrases and discourse accompanied by gestures and activities, and gets the students to join in on these activities. Nancy Richardson gave an exciting demonstration lesson, teaching Karuk. She began with a set of commands, such as "Stand up!" and "Sit down!" showing us by gestures what she wanted the learners to do. As is the case when children learn their primary language, we all learned to understand these words long before we could say them; that period is called the "silent period," and is every bit as important as the later stages when one can actually utter the words. Nancy also taught the audience the words for some body parts (head, shoulder, knees, feet), and then told us (in Karuk) to point to each part when she said the word. She taught us how to say "yes" and "no," and then asked us, "Is this the shoulder?" (etc.) while pointing to a body part. She taught a song (based on an English song "Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes") which the audience had to sing with the appropriate gestures, and this allowed them to learn how to say the words out loud. Since everyone was singing together, forgetting the words didn't embarrass anyone. She went on to teach words for basketry materials in the same general way. The delight of TPR and related methods lies in their naturalness. Language learning is no longer a task of grueling drill and memorization, but something that actually seems easy, and certainly fun!

School language programs and after-school programs in the United States never give students enough time to become proficient. As one language-teaching specialist recently told me, it almost doesn't matter what method is used in language teaching, so long as students get regular and well-structured instruction. And what really matters is that it takes about five hundred hours of such instruction to reach basic proficiency. Thus it was with great delight that the conference attendees heard Nancy Richardson tell about the summer language immersion camps for Karuk children and their families that took place in 1992 in northern California. Such camps give great hope for the survival of California languages. In summer 1993 the same pattern was used for language immersion camps in the Hupa language.

Carolyn Kuali'i is an emissary from her people in Hawaii to the people of Native California. She brought with her an inspiring message about language teaching in Hawaii. Twenty years ago, Hawaiian would

have been defined as "moribund," because the children were not learning it. But now there are several elementary schools where the primary language of instruction is Hawaiian all the way through sixth grade, and the ultimate goal is to have bilingual schools up through high school. These schools have not only saved the language from dying by creating a new generation of fluent speakers, but they have also increased the scholastic success of the children. Native Hawaiians used to have a very high dropout rate from school, but the Hawaiian language schools have reduced the dropout rate significantly. Of course given that the previous generation had not learned Hawaiian, finding a sufficient number of teachers to staff the schools has been difficult. Helping solve this problem is the Hawaiian language program at the University of Hawaii, which is good enough to teach a person to speak fluently. Hawaii developed its school program through the inspiration of the Maoris of New Zealand, who have developed one of the best indigenous language programs in the world.

Despite the inspiring nature of the Hawaiian program, the number of speakers and even of people who might ever be interested in speaking a given language is so small for each of the California languages that the idea of training hundreds or thousands of children to speak one seems unthinkable. In California, teaching even *one* child to speak is a great feat.

This chapter began with the statement of the basic problem leading to language death: that the children are not learning to speak their language of heritage at home. Schools can never teach a language as well as a child could learn it as the primary language at home, so one problem of great interest is how to make a language important enough at home to allow the children to learn it. At home, specific teaching techniques don't need to be considered; if the parents speak a language constantly to each other and to the children, the children will learn that language. But this seemingly simple solution is fraught with problems. For one thing, few Californians of parenting age know their ancestral language well enough to use it dominantly in the household; and even more rarely do both parents know the language well enough to use it as the primary language of communication with each other. Also, the child herself (or himself) may well have experiences that lead her to reject the language. Once she realizes that none of her friends, schoolmates or teachers speaks it, and once she gets

teased about it a few times, she may refuse to speak the language again. This problem is prevalent in all types of bilingual households. There are many families where the adults speak the language of heritage, while the children refuse to reply in any language but English.

Jean Perry had some wise suggestions about language teaching in the home, and talked about her efforts to teach Yurok to her daughter, Orowi (from the Yurok word for "dove"). Jean, who has a background in linguistics and has started to learn Yurok over the last few years, and her husband Merk Oliver, a semi-fluent speaker, have worked at speaking Yurok to each other and to their daughter at home. At three and a half years old, Orowi knew a lot of Yurok words, and was just beginning to form sentences. Her Yurok probably lagged behind her English by a couple of years. Her most important language crisis came about when she entered preschool, where no one else spoke Yurok. At that point, she discovered that many things for which she only knew Yurok names had English names too. After a few experiences of being misunderstood, she decided that her parents had played a very dirty trick on her, and after three or four months simply refused to speak Yurok at all. Jean recalls a moment that seemed like a death knell for Yurok in her family, when during a conversation about her stuffed bear, Orowi said with finality, "That's *not* a **chir'ery**, that's a teddy bear!" But the lesson here is that a committed family must not give up hope, but must work through the problems as well as they can. Jean and Merk kept on trying, and several things happened that helped Orowi understand the value of Yurok. She found several friends at preschool who were bilingual—one in French, for example, and one in Japanese. And with the help of the teachers, who asked them to share their special language knowledge with the class, all the bilingual children, including Orowi, began to realize the importance of knowing different words for things. Even more importantly, Orowi began to take her place in traditional Yurok cultural activities, fishing with Merk and Jean, and participating in Brush Dances. In 1992, a Brush Dance was held for Orowi herself; she was ceremonially purified through a night of fasting and bathing and dancing, and was given a new set of clothes to begin life anew. These events showed her the value of being Yurok and of speaking the Yurok language, which is probably the most important lesson a child can learn about her language and

culture. The future of Orowi's relationship to Yurok cannot be predicted, but as of now she is taking great pride in her language.

Steps toward the future

The final parts of the conference were devoted to the question of what should happen next. Here are just a few of the many exciting ideas that people put forward.

A master-apprentice language program. This program emphasizes teaching the languages to highly motivated young adults (see Chapter 22). The idea is to fund the living expenses of teams of elders and young people with grants, so that they do not have to work for several months, and can thus isolate themselves from English-speaking society and become immersed in traditional culture and language. It was estimated that three to four months in an immersion situation would go a long way toward the development of proficiency, especially for people who already have some passive knowledge.

Stipends for scholarly efforts by Native Californians trying to research their languages of heritage.

A language learners' retreat, modelled after writers' retreats, where people trying to learn their languages can come with their materials for a week or two and spend full time at it, coming together during breaks for discussion and mutual support.

A newsletter for the California languages.

Lobbying for relevant legislation and funding.

Help in credentialing or certification of elders, or in finding ways to get schools to allow elders without teaching certificates to teach in the classrooms.

Developing centers where linguistic and educational materials on California languages can be found, or help in finding the materials.

Videotapes on the California languages.

Language restoration plans, to be produced by each interested tribe.

Workshops on how to teach languages, how to develop writing

systems or written materials, how to find and study linguistic materials, and how to record the elders.

Setting up a California language committee that will develop plans and proposals in cooperation with Native California Network. This idea was implemented on the last day of the conference, and a committee was formed, consisting of people from all over the state, and from all sorts of language situations. The committee, in cooperation with the conference group as a whole, came up with this statement of overall purpose: "To empower the diverse native population of California by creating a network that will support and provide necessary resources to maintain and regain the native languages that are the vital link to our culture."

The language committee, known as the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival, is now well-established, and has been active in assessing needs and implementing programs. One important program in progress right now is the Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program; the first six language teams began their work together in summer 1993 (see Chapter 22).

A number of people who attended the 1992 conference went to the NALI (Native American Languages Issues) conference in May 1993 in Hawaii and saw firsthand the result of language revival work there. As they listened delightedly to grownups and children making speeches and chattering to each other without self-consciousness in the Hawaiian language, they remembered that a generation ago there were no children speaking the language at all. It is a fine model to aspire to.

Some Final Thoughts

Looking back, many vivid moments of the 1992 conference take shape in memory. The Wukchumne talked about the importance of ceremonies to validate one's membership in a culture, and said that they have brought back naming ceremonies as a meaningful part of their culture. Names came up often in the conference: knowing your own name is an important part of realizing your membership in a culture, and understanding your place in it.

Katherine Saubel told of an old woman of her tribe who said that

Parris Butler, first chairperson of the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival. 1993 photo by Mary Bates Abbott.

when the white man came he wanted to destroy them and their culture. Speaking the language and doing the ceremonies just reminded her of this, and the pain was too great. She just wanted to forget. But Katherine's response was, "We're still here and I want to *stay* here. We survived."

Mark Macarro related a story of someone who said to him, "Why are you bothering to try so hard to learn the language? You don't have anyone to talk to, and in ten years the language will be dead anyway. No one will know or care." When Mark told this to an elder, she said, "How could he say that? Doesn't he know that the spirits will know?" Mark took this to heart, and it gave him a respite from the loneliness of his work. As Mark says, "You aren't really doing this alone. The spirits are there watching; the spirits know."

And then there was the time I was talking with L. Frank and Cindy. Cindy said she yearned for the recreation of a Gabrielino-speaking community, but has been told by many—and sometimes believes herself—that it is hopeless.

"Sometimes I think it is hopeless, too," I said. "But then this conference has been so inspiring..."

"Yes," said L. Frank, crystalizing the thought. "How can it be hopeless when there is so much hope?"

Okay, you children listen. If he won't tell you, then I must. You must know your language first. Yes, we must know the white man language to survive in *this* world. But we must know our language to survive *forever.*

—Darryl Babe Wilson quoting his aunt Gladys,
in "Salila-ti Mi-mu d-enn-i-gu,"
News from Native California 7:2, p. 38

22

Rebuilding the Fire

We are in the early stages of a renaissance of native language and culture revival the world over. New Zealand and Hawaii are two examples of places where endangered languages have been restored to a flourishing status in the last ten years. Before the revival began, the Maori and Hawaiian languages were threatened with extinction because, just as in California and so many other places, the younger generation no longer spoke them. But a language immersion program that involved schools from preschool to the university turned the situation around.

These models provide hope to California Indians who are striving to save their own languages from extinction. But can California emulate these inspiring programs? One difference between California and the New Zealand-Hawaii model is that the latter two areas focused their energies on a single language. California, in contrast, has no single major Indian language, but instead has fifty or so languages spoken by individuals or small groups. Second, Maori and Hawaiian, even at their lowest points, were still spoken by thousands of people. California languages nowadays may be spoken by only a few dozen, or even as few as one or two individuals, almost always of an advanced age.

For years, now, Native Californians have been working to save their languages. As we saw in the previous chapter, elders who speak their language of heritage have teamed up with younger tribal members who are trained in education, along with other educationists and linguists, to develop teaching curricula and programs that will give children an appreciation and beginning knowledge of their languages and cultures. People have developed tribal writing systems; they have collected materials, made tape recordings, dictionaries, and collections of stories. Yet still they have to watch the languages erode, and the number of speakers diminish. And notwithstanding these wonderful programs, given that the languages are not being taught in the home, there are no new fluent speakers growing up. Is it too late for the California languages?

Ray Baldy and Melodie Carpenter. 1993 photo by Mary Bates Abbott.

A new program is now being piloted that is designed to suit the particular needs of Native Californian communities. Right now it is of great importance simply to produce new fluent speakers to carry on these languages in crisis. Many other steps are also necessary if the complete loss of California languages is to be averted, but this one is crucial. To this end, twelve talented people, supported by many others just as committed, are embarking on a program of intensive language work: six native speakers and six of their young friends or relatives who are committed to learning the language of their heritage fluently. Funded by grants from public and private sources that were gathered together by the Native California Network, the teams were selected from a pool of highly talented applicants and invited to a training workshop in June 1993. The members of each team committed themselves to spending approximately 20 hours per week for a period of four months or so speaking their language together, so that the younger member could gain proficiency. All the younger team members are people who have already had some experience with the language, so none of them is starting from scratch.

The Teams

Hupa. Ray Baldy, speaker of Hupa, talented story teller and talented teacher, works with elementary school children in the Hupa Language Program. His imaginative lessons, his patience with students, and his overall dedication to passing on his knowledge of language and culture to future generations make him an ideal elder team member.

Winnie Baldy-George, Ray's sister, a medicine woman for ceremonial dances, is fluent in the Hupa language, and has great knowledge of Hupa lore. She is helping the team.

Melodie Kay Carpenter, Ray's niece, is the youngest team member. She is an eighth grade teacher at Hoopa Elementary School and teaches Hupa after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays with Ray. Melodie wants to become proficient in Hupa so that she can participate more effectively in the teaching and restoration of Hupa language and culture.

Karuk. Violet Super is an elder of the tribe, and a fluent Karuk speaker and story teller; her work with linguists has helped define the way Karuk is characterized in the linguistic literature today.

Terry Supahan, Violet's grandnephew, is the younger member of this team. He is a member of the Karuk tribal council and also a member of the Karuk tribe's Language Restoration Committee. He is the Karuk language program facilitator and a teacher at Orleans Elementary school. He also teaches a community Karuk language class to regular classroom teachers and adult tribal members; he has helped plan and teach at the tribe's language immersion camps. Increasing his Karuk to fluency has long been a goal for Terry, but when his great-uncle died two years ago he really began to realize how little time he had left to learn it. It was that impetus that led him to step up his efforts and commit himself to this program.

Terry's wife, Sarah Supahan, is also a teacher and also involved in Karuk cultural and linguistic preservation and restoration. She is supporting Terry in his project with Violet, and learning along with him.

Mojave. Claude Lewis, the elder member of this team, has been a member of the Mojave tribal council for twenty years. He is a fluent speaker of Mojave and has much knowledge of traditional culture, Mojave geography, and tribal history. A kind and generous man, he is

willing to devote a great deal of his time to working with the younger generations.

Parris Butler is the director of the Aha Makav Language Education Program, and has been working for years on documenting his language and perfecting a new writing system for it. He has a background in linguistics and art. Parris is also the current chair of the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival. He wants to become fluent in Mojave for his own deeper understanding and participation in his culture, and also to be more effective in his language teaching efforts.

At the workshop with Parris and Claude was Sylvia Arteaga, who also works in the language program, and is benefitting from the summer's language learning project.

Wintu. Florence Jones, an Indian doctor, is the elder member of this team. Emmerson Miles, Florence Jones' interpreter while she is doctoring, is helping Florence and her apprentice and granddaughter, Caleen Sisk-Franco, in the language project. To quote Caleen:

> Florence Jones was born at the turn of the century in a mountain home near a place called Baird, California which is now under Lake Shasta. The youngest of fourteen children born to William and Jenny Curl, at age five she was caught by white men and taken to an Indian school in Greenville, California some 300 miles away. Within two years the school burned down and Florence returned home to the McCloud River. Her mother, Jenny, was a very respected and powerful medicine woman for the Wintu. Her father, Bill, [was] a speaker and leader of the people. Florence began her official training to become an Indian doctor at age ten. When she was born, six Indian doctors came to doctor her and announced that she was a "spiritual child." (They believed when a child is born to a woman of her mother's age that the child is either evil or spiritual.) Tildy Griffith, a medicine woman (Florence's aunt), was her coach into the spiritual doctoring of the Wintu. She is now the last Wintu doctor. She and Emmerson are the last two speakers. She is the last one who knows the higher language of the Wintu, the "doctoring language." (Caleen Sisk-Franco, at the Master-Apprentice training workshop, June 1993)

Caleen is trying to learn doctoring practices and philosophy, as well as the language. Despite a heavy workload and a big family, she drives the

Florence Jones and Caleen Sisk-Franco. 1993 photo by Mary Bates Abbott.

95 miles to Florence's house about four times a week to work with her and learn the language. At 18 months, Caleen's youngest daughter is just starting in on language learning, and Caleen hopes the two of them will learn Wintu together.

Yowlumni. Agnes Vera, the elder member of the team, grew up speaking Yowlumni, a Yokuts language, and knows tribal history, legends, customs and spiritual traditions. She is looked up to in the community as a wise elder who can give guidance and support.

Her son Matt Vera, the younger member, participates strongly in spiritual gatherings. Matt is involved with many traditional cultural activities. He is currently working on the development of a tribal orthography, and has been working on a dictionary, a collection of common phrases, and stories. His goal is to carry on tribal traditions, and he wants to know his language of heritage fluently as a part of that goal.

Matt and Agnes lead sweat house ceremonies together and also, at their lovely ranch, host people who are fasting and purifying themselves. Their spiritual strength provides great inspiration to members of their community and to guests like me as well.

Present at the workshop with Agnes and Matt was Darlene Franco, Wukchumne, who will be participating in language learning with them when she can.

Yurok. Jessie Exline has been teaching the Yurok language for twenty years. She received a Lifetime Eminence Credential from the state of California for her teaching of language and culture. She wrote a Yurok dictionary. It is her life's dream, as Carole Korb says, to produce fluent speakers in the younger generations.

Carole Korb, a teacher, has taken Yurok classes from Jessie and has taught as a substitute in Jessie's place when needed. By herself and together with Jessie she has given presentations on the Yurok language to teachers and others. Today there are no more than about twenty fluent speakers of Yurok, all in their seventies or older. Among other things, the language is necessary for tribal ceremonies, so vital elements of the culture will be lost along with the language if it dies.

The Method

On the weekend of June 4–6, 1993, the teams gathered at Walker Ranch in Marin County for two days of training in special techniques for teaching and learning second languages, to guide them in their quest for language fluency. A six-person professional staff handled the training:

Mary Bates Abbott, Director of Native California Network, administrator of the program;

Leanne Hinton (this author), designer of the training component;

Nancy Richardson, Language Program Director for the Center for Indian Community Development at Humboldt State University;

Martha Macri, linguist and Assistant Professor in the Native American Studies and Anthropology departments at the University of California at Davis);

Jean Perry, linguist and Coordinator for Sponsored Projects at Humboldt State University;

Claire Kramsch, an expert in second language learning and teaching, and a professor in the Department of German Language and Literature at the University of California at Berkeley.

The Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program is based on the

theory that adults can learn language informally, through listening, practicing, and eliciting language from a native speaker. We can take many lessons in language learning by observing the natural way in which children learn their first languages. They do not need to be consciously taught, even though their parents enhance their learning in many ways. So long as their environment is rich with language, they cannot *help* but learn it. Through the context of activities and actions and gestures and objects, they manage to unconsciously sort out what words mean; and through constant hearing and practicing and experimenting, they figure out the grammar of their languages.

In much the same way, when adults move to a country where another language is spoken, even if they don't take any formal classes they tend to learn the language, *if* they are exposed to it enough. Among immigrant families, the children learn the new language fastest and best, primarily because they are exposed to it and practice it more than their parents, through their schools and friends. Adults tend to be more restricted in their social networks, and often have less exposure to the new language than their children.

So what we want is a kind of *language immersion* program, where the student can gain many hours of exposure to the language. The major challenge is to find a way to get that exposure. We cannot simply send them off to a community where their language is spoken all the time, for such a community does not exist. Instead they must *create* the immersion situation. The habits of speaking the traditional language are gone, even for the fluent speakers, in all but a few restricted events. Even people who speak the same Indian language fluently tend to use English together in everyday communication. So the Master-Apprentice program requires the development of new language habits in order to create the desired immersion situation.

The model for the Master-Apprentice program is Loren Bommelyn, Tolowa educator, dancer, basketmaker, and overall creative force. He has been extremely successful in learning his ancestral language as an adult. When I first met Loren in 1982, we shook hands and I said something like, "Glad to meet you." Loren responded with a stream of Tolowa, and then went on in English, "How do you do?"

"Gee, what was that you said before?" I asked. Loren spoke in

Tolowa again, and then explained, "I'm learning to speak Tolowa, and so I try to say everything in Tolowa first. Then if I don't know it, I'll ask my teacher next time I see him." Loren spoke this way to friends, family and strangers for a few years; and he now speaks Tolowa fluently.

One of the reasons that his technique of self-teaching is so ingenious is that he has created his own immersion situation. Realizing there was nowhere to go where the language was spoken all the time, Loren created a fantasized speech community for himself, by translating whatever anyone said into Tolowa as he went about his day. He lived in the language by making the language live in him.

The desire to speak in the language of mutual understanding can be overwhelming, and leaving English behind while developing the habit of speaking in the language of heritage is the single biggest challenge the pioneering Master-Apprentice teams have to overcome. For everything they do together they try to develop habits of speaking to each other in their language. In many of their activities, the language can be used readily. For example, when I called Parris and Claude to see how things were going, they were making bows and arrows together. Claude can speak in Mojave to Parris while doing this, and the actions he performs and the objects he manipulates while talking provide the context for Parris to understand what is being said, even if he does not recognize all the words.

The teams try to use their language in non-traditional settings as well. If they are fixing a car together, or going to a store, they try to speak in their language. The lack of words for non-traditional concepts, which some people might think is the main difficulty in using the language in these situations, is in fact the least of their problems. If the team doesn't know a word in their language for some non-traditional item, they can borrow a word from English, or they can make up a descriptive term. But many terms for new items already exist in Indian languages. For example, Jaime deAngulo noted in his writings that the Achumawis had words for all the car parts based on animal body parts—the engine was the heart, the headlights were the eyes, and so on.

Eight rules of teaching and learning were given to the teams at the training workshop. In general, these rules are simply reminders of how to recreate the sort of environment that allows children to learn language. The rules are as follows:

Claude Lewis. 1993 photo by Mary Bates Abbott.

Eight Points of Language Learning

Teachers	Apprentices
1. Be an active teacher. Find things to talk about. Create situations or find something in any situation to talk about. Tell stories. Use the language to tell the apprentice to do things. Encourage conversation.	**1. Be an active learner.** Ask about things. Create situations, bring things to ask your teacher to tell you about; find things in the environment to ask about; ask him/her to tell you stories.
2. Don't use English, not even to translate.	**2. Don't use English,** not even when you can't say it in the language. Find other ways to communicate what you want to say.
3. Use gestures, context, objects, actions to help the apprentice understand what you are saying.	**3. Use gestures, context, objects, actions** to help in your communication when you don't know the words.

4. Rephrase for successful communication. Rephrase things the apprentice doesn't understand, using simpler ways to say them.
5. Rephrase for added learning. Rephrase things the apprentice says, to show him correct forms or extend his knowledge to more complex forms. Encourage communication in the language, even with errors.
6. Be willing to play with language. Fantasize together; make up plays, poems, and word games together.
7. Understanding precedes speaking. Use various ways to increase and test understanding. Give the apprentice commands to follow. Ask him/her questions. It is not necessary to focus on speaking each new word right away; that will come naturally.
8. Be patient. An apprentice won't learn something in one lesson. Repeat words and phrases often, in as many different situations and conversations as possible.

4. Practice. Use new words and new sentences and grammar as much as possible, to yourself, to your teacher, to other people.
5. Don't be afraid of mistakes. If you don't know how to say something right, say it wrong. Use whatever words you know; use gestures, etc. for the rest.

6. Be willing to play with language like children do. Name things you see, count them, talk about what color they are. Make up stories.
7. Understanding precedes speaking. You may recognize and understand many things you cannot say. Focus on understanding: that is the most important step toward language learning. After you understand an utterance fully, learning to speak it will not take long.
8. Be patient with yourself. It takes a long time to learn a language well. You are doing a heroic task; forgive mistakes.

The teams were given pointers on how to communicate successfully without using English. The use of context and gestures and rephrasing was suggested; the learners were also instructed to ask the elders how to ask for information in their language; they need to be able to ask things like this in their language:

"How do you say .... ?"
"What is this?"
"What are you doing?"

Learning how to ask "How do you say..." in the Indian languages was not easy. Some teams feared there was no way to ask it at all in their languages! (But have faith, there is *some* way to communicate the idea, *any* idea, even if it has to be said in a completely different way from English.)

Over the weekend, the teams did exercises in which they had to spend anywhere from half an hour to two hours at a time together without speaking a word of English. At first, this sort of task is nerve-wracking; the effort to communicate and understand without using the language we know best results in frustration, headaches and exhaustion! If you have ever been to a foreign country, you may remember this feeling: I once spent a year in South America, arriving with only the most rudimentary knowledge of Spanish, and for the first few weeks I felt sick by the end of every day. But learning was taking place, and eventually it all fell together and I found myself understanding and communicating; no more headaches.

The staff focused on many other aspects of language learning: Jean Perry discussed the use of the tape recorder in language learning, and I discussed the use (and misuse!) of writing in the language learning process and in analyzing the grammar of sentences. Nancy Richardson showed how people can structure language lessons together, and demonstrated a lesson. Claire Kramsch talked about *functional* learning—one does not learn to speak fluently by simply learning words and grammar; language is also a series of social customs. How do people greet each other in a particular language? How do they say goodbye? How do they ask for something? How do they make a complaint, or show appreciation? How are conversations structured? When people converse, do they tend to talk fast or slow? Are there long pauses between utterances, or is silence shunned? All these things are done in very different ways in different languages, and it is that sort of understanding that makes a person able to use a language in everyday communication. As an example of how different customs can be, Havasupai people did not traditionally express anger in words. Instead, they would go off alone and make up a song about the incident, and when they returned, they would sing the song where the person they were aggrieved by would hear it. Another example: Nancy Richardson mentioned that in Karuk, one never apologizes verbally. Apologies are

unacceptable; one makes reparation instead. And Terry Supahan pointed out that when the elder Karuks are conversing, they speak extremely rapidly, and they tend to use a great many contractions and abbreviated forms that make the language very different from formal Karuk.

Martha Macri brought out some of the emotional difficulties surrounding language learning. For example, the discrimination that elders have had to face during their lives for speaking their language; these unpleasant memories can be dredged up again when they use the language now. There is also the humility that some elders feel in the face of what is being asked of them; they think about how much more *their* elders knew, and they may balk at passing on what they believe to be a small and partial understanding of their language and culture. Sensitivity to criticism and ridicule is an issue for some of the younger team members, especially, because they might be told they aren't speaking the language right. Team members have experienced all of these problems and others in the past, and it is good for them to air the problems and understand that they are not alone in having to face them.

The guidelines presented to the teams are loose enough to allow for individual situations, learning styles and activities. The teams are really designing their own means of learning, within the contexts of their own lives and their own communities.

As I write this last chapter, the six teams are at work in their communities. Martha Macri, Nancy Richardson and I recently travelled around the state together to visit them, and found that they were making excellent progress in their languages and doing wonderful projects. Two different learning styles have emerged among the six teams: the "intuitive" and the "analytical" styles, I call them informally.

The apprentices who are learning by the "intuitive" style have taken to heart the idea that children are the ideal language learners, and are learning and speaking their languages much in the same way children do. Nancy Richardson points out that they are good at taking risks: they are not afraid to make mistakes, and they are willing to make grammatical errors. They have the courage to launch into long statements in their languages even though they know they will have to ask for words along the way and get corrected by the elders afterwards. This style means

they get lots of practice and have developed a great deal of communicative competence along the way.

The apprentices who learn by the "analytical" style focus on understanding the rules of grammar, and tend to develop word lists and ask for paradigms of new verbs. While the intuitive teams talk about their activities and the world around them, the analytical teams also talk a great deal about language itself. The analytical apprentice is slower to develop communicative competence, but quicker to develop grammatical accuracy, and his speech contains very few errors. Both sorts of teams will come to proficiency, but they become good at different language skills at different rates.

None of the teams works in a social vacuum; the elders and apprentices are all sharing their knowledge with relatives or other people around them. The Karuk, Yowlumni, and Wintu teams are involving their whole families in the language learning process. The Karuk, Hupa, Mojave and Yowlumni teams have all been teaching language classes either to children or to families during this summer. Two teams have produced excellent videos: the Karuk team did a video about their language immersion camp, and the Hupa did a wonderful series of instructional videos all in Hupa, teaching language by the "direct method" where English is not used at all. Parris Butler of the Mojave team finalized the writing system he designed and it was approved by the tribal council. And all the teams have been using their languages in religious ceremonial activities—down south in the sweat house or memorial ceremonies; up north in the Deerskin Dance and Brush Dance and other important ceremonies.

There couldn't possibly be more dedicated and qualified people than these. Their successes and failures alike will form the basis for fine-tuning this model for language learning that we all hope will help rescue the California languages from their downward spiral into extinction, and restore the activities and values that are so important to the cultures of Native California. Is it too late for the California languages? No. How can it be when people like these bend their efforts to saving them?