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#### **Title**

Walsh: *John Peabody Harrington: The Man and His California Indian Field Notes*

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least one indirect or adverse comment may be made: Before finishing the book, the reader will probably realize that the "older" authors named seem to have exercised a great deal more modesty and restraint in their analyses and interpretations of the aspects of California they were concerned with than some of the "younger" ones. This appears slightly paradoxical when we know that the elders for the most part had access to more and perhaps better informed respondents, even though they worked largely in that not-so-remote but somehow yet ancient period called pre-World War II.

One gets the feeling, for example, after imbibing some dreary technical dicta from Lewis Binford (cf. article by Blackburn) that Kroeber, Goldschmidt, or Gayton ("anyone over fifty", so to speak) were little better than "normative" innocents, perhaps at times not fully capable of appreciating the deeper implications of what they were writing about. Can one seriously believe that the "non-systemists" of the twenties, thirties, or even the forties were unaware of any glamor or excitement inherent in California studies, or that they did not nor would not understand, for instance, the adaptive qualities of native ritual events?

In the same vein, in Peter Kunkel's article the question is asked why California scholars have "failed to come forward with data relevant to the nature of food-collecting peoples." Perhaps Kroeber and others, lacking modern enlightenment, were remiss in gathering certain key information, preoccupied as they were with jogging the memories of old informants about what the Indian societies were like before the holocaust of White intrusion. A greater question, it would seem, is whether late-coming ethnologists, working with these apparently imperfect old data and such new data as can be elicited from younger informants living under drastically changed social conditions, can actually develop a viable

new analytical system concerning, among other matters, Native Californian social organization.

Even though some readers may choose to regard certain features in this volume as perhaps too speculative and even optimistic as to the future of California ethnology, the collection does bring together much valuable information, old and new. This mix, or balance, of older substantive articles with those suggesting new directions and possibilities at this late date, often makes for exciting reading. If a companion volume (promised?), including other elements of California studies like archaeology and linguistics is ever presented, the two (or more?) volumes would constitute excellent alternate reading sources for academic courses on California Indians.



**John Peabody Harrington: *The Man and his California Indian Fieldnotes*. Jane MacLaren Walsh. Ramona, California: Balena Press Anthropological Papers No. 6. 1976. 58 pp. \$4.95 (paper).**

*Reviewed by* CRISTINA KESSLER  
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"Give not, give not the yawning graves their plunder . . .

Lore that tomorrow to the grave goes down . . ."

—J. P. Harrington

John Peabody Harrington (1884-1961) was a man whose life was consumed by the drive to rescue what fragments remained of California's native languages and cultures. It is

ironic, therefore, that the vast body of field data which constituted his life's work has lain, until recently, unexplored and unappreciated, accessible to only a small number of dedicated scholars.

At long last a key has been provided to the tantalizing puzzle that Harrington left strewn piecemeal across the basements and archives of the continent; a puzzle locked in a confusion of yellowing foolscap sheets, fading ink, bewildering codes, and dust. Jane MacLaren Walsh has undertaken the enormous task of cataloging the main bulk of Harrington's unpublished California material—the collection which is housed at the Smithsonian's National Anthropological Archives in Washington D.C. Her catalog, published this year by Ballena Press in cooperation with the Malki Museum, should prove of great value to students of California history, ethnography, and linguistics.

The catalog is prefaced with an informative foreword by Lowell Bean and contains a section of fascinating photographs of Harrington in the field, most of which have not been published before. Ms. Walsh has also contributed the most complete bibliography to date of Harrington's published works (which are numerous and surprisingly broad in scope), a succinct biography, and an appendix which cracks much of Harrington's confusing system of abbreviations and notations.

The catalog itself is arranged according to Murdock's culture areas, the same system under which the original field notes are filed at the National Anthropological Archives. Under each culture area in California in which Harrington worked are listed the assets of the collection with brief, lucid descriptions of the type of materials to be found: original field notes, recordings, etc. A valuable addition to the cataloging of each area's resources is a frank and descriptive assessment of the numerous uncorrelated and seemingly random fragments which appear scattered amongst the

field notes, fragments which might otherwise be overlooked. The catalog provides a thorough, informative, and immeasurably helpful index: indeed, it is almost impossible to approach Harrington's raw data without it. I only regret that the author did not delay publication long enough to include catalogs of the portions of the Harrington material which exist outside of the Smithsonian, especially that in storage at Berkeley, which constitutes the heart of Harrington's linguistic work in several areas of California. Perhaps in the near future a more comprehensive catalog of the Harrington materials will be available which will include not only these scattered fragments, but an index to Harrington's substantial fieldnotes on culture areas outside of California as well.

The extent of Ms. Walsh's contribution is difficult to appreciate unless one has attempted to study the Harrington material firsthand. My own year of work with Harrington's Costanoan field notes (for which I owe a debt of gratitude to Rob Edwards and the National Endowment for the Humanities) was largely consumed with sorting, squinting, and sneezing. Much valuable time was spent attempting to systematize and decipher seemingly haphazard masses of information—a task from which Jane Walsh has at least in part liberated future researchers. The Harrington collection consists of more than 800,000 looseleaf sheets of heavy, yellowing paper bundled (with an enigmatic system of colored ribbons whose colors have long since faded to a uniform brown) into more than a thousand cardboard boxes. An additional set of boxes contains wax cylinder and aluminum disk recordings swathed in cotton wadding, envelopes of crumbled botanical specimens, letters, bank statements, pages of poetry, photographs, objects of ethnographic interest, and the occasional bits of stale cheese which Harrington was fond of squirreling away amongst his notes. In fact, when the Smithsonian first sorted through the

multitude of boxes which had been gathering there since Harrington's death in 1961, one archive worker discovered a carton of dead birds which had been sitting, unlabeled and unpreserved, amongst his field notes for at least two decades.

Harrington's field notes are not only intimidating in bulk, but nearly undecipherable to the uninitiated. Harrington's handwriting was poor at best, and his notes were often written in poor light, or in great haste at the bedsides of dying informants. An additional obstacle to the scholarly use of the notes has been the elaborate and eccentric "language" in which the notes themselves are written. Harrington was a victim of academic paranoia and sought to keep the location of his field work and the identity of his informants shrouded in mystery to even his co-workers in the Bureau of American Ethnology. Thus his texts are peppered with cryptic notations: informants are never identified in full, but referred to only as "Asc." or "SJOS". It is even difficult at times to know the identity of the language group whose vocabulary is being recorded. Furthermore, the language of the notes often lapses in a single paragraph from abbreviated English to phonetic Spanish to an unidentified Native American dialect recorded in Harrington's own linguistic shorthand and back to English again without pause. Future students of the collection should be as grateful to Ms. Walsh for her appendix of abbreviations as for the catalog itself.

Harrington's eccentricities were in many ways to prove his downfall, for they denied the academic community access to his fieldwork for a full generation. Gradually, the National Anthropological Archives have gathered together an almost complete collection of the unpublished field notes that Harrington stored, hid, or simply abandoned in rural post offices and isolated cabins, private homes, and archives across the country. Now Jane Walsh has provided us with an invaluable index; a

guidebook to the rich store of information that was amassed and squandered by the miser of California anthropology, the fascinating and frustrating John Peabody Harrington.



***Ethnographic Bibliography of North America.***

*George Peter Murdock and Timothy J. O'Leary.* 4th ed. New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1975. 5 vols. Until Jan. 1, 1977 \$26.00 per volume; \$125.00 for the set of five volumes. After that date \$35.00 per volume and \$175.00 for the set.

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This monumental guide to the published literature on North American Indians runs to a total of 1634 pages. Its coverage extends from the Columbian discovery to 1972, includes 40,000 entries and refers to 269 ethnic groups (tribes).

This encyclopaedic reference work is doubtless the most helpful and indispensable research tool that exists for students of American Indians. Volume 1 is concerned with North America in general, divided into Murdock's fifteen culture areas and appended by five subject bibliographies. Volumes 2-5 cover, tribe by tribe, the Arctic and Subarctic, Far West and Pacific Coast, Eastern United States, Plains and Southwest. Volume 3 covers the Far West and Pacific Coast and will be of especial utility to scholars interested in California.

If you have ever written anything on Indians you will find it listed here.

Each volume contains the same lengthy