

**UC Merced**

**The Journal of California Anthropology**

**Title**

Gathering Grass Seed

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8gr558w6>

**Journal**

The Journal of California Anthropology, 1(1)

**Publication Date**

1974-07-01

Peer reviewed

# The Pomo Kin Group and the Political Unit in Aboriginal California

P. H. KUNKEL

## MODELS AS MYTHS AND THEIR ALTERNATIVES

IT has now been over ten years since Elman Service introduced into the folklore of anthropology the myth of the patrilocal band as the principal, logical form of social organization for food-collecting societies (Service 1962, 1966). Those of us who know California ethnology well have always known that this model was a myth. Yet the most effective rebuttals to Service's model have come from workers in other areas (Lee and DeVore 1968). These were mostly anthropologists who have been doing field research among recent or contemporary food-collecting societies. It is surprising how much opportunity there still is to carry out such field work. It is also surprising, perhaps, that there is still such interest in the food-collecting ways of life.

Of course, food-collecting societies of the Paleolithic period were ancestral, ultimately, to all subsequent types of human social organization. We have, therefore, some reason to be curious about what such societies were like and how they arranged their social interaction patterns. Service's quite positive and rather male chauvinist myth certainly had the merit of telling us quite specifically, logically, and in some detail how those Paleolithic humans arranged their marital,

residential, economic, and kinship affairs. It replaced the three rather tentative models which Steward (1936, 1955) had previously proposed by telling us that two of them were merely acculturally disoriented relics of the third—Steward's patrilineal band, which with some embellishments became Service's patrilocal band.

The many anthropologists who contributed to the Lee and DeVore symposium presented abundant recently observed evidence for the variability and flexibility of actual food-collecting societies. Thus they destroyed the positive, universal character of Service's formulation, reducing it to its present mythological status. Of course, it is clear that the patrilocal band, or something like it, can be one phase in the cycle of change and regrouping which such societies act out. But the "logical inevitability" of the model is rather effectively refuted. It has been replaced, for an interim, by a "trial formulation" which Lee and DeVore label the "nomadic style." This nomadic style, they suggest, has the following characteristics:

1. Limited personal possessions.
2. Small group size, usually under 50 persons.

3. Usually no exclusive claims to resources.
4. Food surpluses not prominent.
5. Frequent intergroup visiting and shifts in residence.

The Lee and DeVore trial formulation does perpetuate one implied assumption that is also part of the Service myth—namely, that food-collecting societies have to be small and mobile. Those of us who know the California data well have good reason to question this assumption also. Of course, it has always been recognized that the Indians of California and of the northwest Pacific coast of North America were “exceptions” to many generalizations concerning food-collecting peoples. (It is interesting that populations whose total numbers may well have exceeded those of all the “classical” food-collecting societies put together are characterized as “exceptions.”) I would like to advance the counter-hypothesis that it is the nomadic food-collectors who were the exceptions, at least in Middle and Late Paleolithic times.

The “classical band-level” nomadic societies of hunters and gatherers are mostly recent or modern occupants of peripheral or “internally marginal” territories with inferior resources. As surviving examples of a once more widespread way of life they have generally been pushed into these less favorable areas by agricultural and “civilized” peoples. But there once were no civilizations and no agriculture. In those days, food-collecting societies had available to them most of the habitable parts of the earth. To get some idea of what food-collecting societies could accomplish when fertile lands were available to them we must turn to two major well-documented peoples—the Indians of the Northwest Coast of North America and the Indians of California. For both there is a considerable literature, albeit with tantalizing gaps in the demographic and ecological infor-

mation. I maintain, however, that these peoples represent more closely the “normative” food-collecting situations of pre-agricultural times than do the peripheral badlands wanderers discussed by Service and by most of the participants in the Lee and DeVore symposium report.

Why have California scholars failed to come forward with data relevant to the nature of food-collecting people? There are probably several main reasons. First, until recently there were few recognized experts in California ethnology actively engaged in such research. The few students who were interested were struggling to get through the crisis rites of our profession. We were definitely not the sort of people who got invited to symposia or came forward with manifestoes (to which anyone would have listened).

A second reason for the relative silence from California specialists is that California ethnology is based mainly on “salvage ethnography”—the mining of the memories of old people—not on contemporary, on-the-spot, participation-observation of on-going societies. Data obtained by salvage ethnography methods are generally regarded as inferior in quality to data obtained by participant-observation. The greater prestige of the latter is reflected in the Lee and DeVore symposium report; most of the contributors were participant-observers during their field work. We California ethnologists have probably tended to be overly inhibited about entering broad fields of controversy for both of the reasons I cite. (Though we have muttered in our beards—actual or figurative—or to each other.)

Whatever the limitations of the California data—or of those of us who have become the caretakers of the California ethnological tradition—there is pertinent information here, which should be brought to bear on general theoretical questions concerning hunting and gathering peoples who live in favorable, rather than unfavorable environments. This paper

presents some conclusions I have come to concerning the nature of political organization among the tribes of northern California. I concern myself mainly with the nature of the basic political units, ambilateral residential kin groups. However, these units were involved in several kinds of more complex social, political, and religious systems, which reflected rather favorable ecological conditions and what may seem to be very "exceptional" demographic conditions. Most of these systems were characteristic of "tribelets" which were semi-sedentary, rather than nomadic; organized at the levels of tribes or chiefdoms, rather than just at the "band level"; and which had population densities running well above the one per square mile figure so often cited as the upper limit for hunting-gathering populations.

#### HISTORY OF CONCEPTS IN CALIFORNIA ETHNOLOGY

Important theoretical generalizations concerning California Indian political organization have been advanced by A. L. Kroeber (1925, 1932), E. W. Gifford (1926a), and Walter Goldschmidt (1948). I will briefly review the essence of their generalizations.

In his *Handbook of the Indians of California* (1925), Kroeber first advanced the concept of the "village community" as the basic, autonomous political unit within the non-political, ethnologically recorded "dialect-tribes" of California (e.g., Yuki, Pomo, Miwok, Yokuts—really linguistic units, not tribal entities). He originally conceived these units as consisting of quite small populations, averaging about 100 persons, bound together by kinship ties, and occupying a principal village plus one or more subsidiary hamlets. These populations exploited fairly specific territories for their subsistence (see Kroeber 1925:161-163, 228-230, 830-834).

Kroeber later modified this concept in

certain respects. In his monograph *The Patwin and Their Neighbors*, Kroeber (1932:258-259) proposed the term "tribelet" as more appropriate for the autonomous political unit, since the "community" (i.e., the group of people within a given territory) seemed more important and more permanent than the village, which might in the long run be subdivided or moved from one locale to another. As Kroeber (1932:257) put it, each tribelet was a homogeneous unit in matters of land ownership, trespass, war, major ceremonies, and the entertainments entailed by the latter. He also considered the possibility that his original estimate for average population might be low. In this he was largely influenced by Gifford's (1926b) census data from the Pomo village of Shigom, which appeared in a monograph *Clear Lake Pomo Society*.

Gifford's (1926a) most significant theoretical contribution to the political organization of aboriginal California is his paper "Miwok Lineages and the Political Unit in Aboriginal California." In his paper, Gifford suggested that the underlying basic unit of California political institutions was a unilineal (usually patrilineal) kin group, the "lineage." By the term "underlying" Gifford implied that, although evidence for the existence of lineages was not always clearly present in ethnographic data from many California Indian tribes, it seemed reasonable to hypothesize their former presence. He cited definite evidence for the presence of lineages among the Sierra Miwok and various southern California peoples—including the Cahuilla, Serrano, Diegueño, Cupeno, and Luiseño. He also attributed lineages to certain of the Clear Lake Pomo, a point I will presently challenge.

In a sense, Goldschmidt's (1948) general paper, "Social Organization in Native California and the Origin of Clans," is a further extension of Gifford's thesis. By this time, Duncan Strong (1929) had demonstrated the validity of the lineage concept for much of

Southern California with impressively detailed data. Anna Gayton (1945) also had discovered the presence of lineages among the Yokuts and Western Mono, something Gifford had apparently only suspected. Goldschmidt thus marshalled evidence suggesting the presence of unilineal tendencies among various tribes of northern California. Moreover, he went beyond the bounds of Gifford's original formulation to suggest the prominence of clans in aboriginal California. This hypothesis seems to be based on the assumption that extended corporate kinship groups among primitive peoples must inevitably tend toward lineality. In 1948 this was possibly still a reasonable assumption. But, in the years since then, Murdock (1960), Davenport (1959), Goodenough (1955), and others have made us aware of the importance of ambilocal or ambilineal corporate kin groups—"cognatic forms of social organization" as Murdock terms them.

I wish now to propose the possibility that there were two widespread types of corporate kin groups present in aboriginal California. They may have been characteristic of geographically distinct parts of the state. Let us assume a line running east through the Golden Gate, thence north up San Francisco Bay, east again through Carquinez Strait and the joint delta of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, thence north up into the Sierra Nevada foothills. South of this line there is no doubt that Gifford's thesis held true: political subdivisions seem generally to have been patrilineages. Occasionally these were also independent political units. However, Kroeber's tribelet concept applied in most areas; that is, the lineages were usually political divisions within tribelets.

Tribelets also occurred north of the Golden Gate-Delta line. But, with respect to corporate subdivisions, the situation is less clear, partly because the data are less clear. McKern (1922) claimed patrilineal "func-

tional families" for the Patwin in the southwestern portion of the Sacramento Valley. These have been interpreted as lineages, although McKern himself disavows such an interpretation (personal communication 1966). He feels that: "The political structure of the community was wholly independent from both the functional activities and social status of such families." Furthermore, he points out that only certain families among the Pomo were specializing "functional families." Other families were not.

Gifford believed the Pomo had lineages at one time, some patrilineal, some matrilineal (Gifford 1926a; Gifford and Kroeber 1937). Goldschmidt (1951) in his *Nomlaki Ethnography* reported lineages and even clanlike units for the Nomlaki, a Hill Wintun division. In addition, Goldschmidt (1948) had already made the argument mentioned above for the predominance of unilineal tendencies throughout the state.

I wish to argue against the importance of corporate, unilineal kin groups in northern California. I will first present positive evidence that the Pomo had ambilocal residential kin groups as their basic political subdivisions. Then I will suggest that the best interpretation of evidence elsewhere is that similar residential kin groups were present in most of the other ethnolinguistic divisions of "tribes" of northern California. I use "tribes" in quotation marks because the units which are frequently labelled as tribes in California ethnology were not truly functional sociopolitical units. They were mainly dialect or language groups. Kroeber's "tribelet" is the true sociopolitical tribe for most of the area, and these units were usually smaller than the ethnolinguistic divisions both in population and in territorial extent. The residential kin groups were, in turn, subdivisions within the tribelets.

The residential kin group is essentially the "local group" which Linton discussed in the

*Study of Man* (1936:209-230). The usefulness of applying Linton's concept to California Indian political units was suggested some years ago by Ralph Beals and Joseph Hester (1955). However, they mostly saw it as applying to total, independent political units. I see it as applying in most cases to political subdivisions within Kroeber's tribelets.

I must stress the fact that this unit is basically a residence group. In northern California, as well as in many other "primitive" areas, such local political units consist largely of people who are also related. The relationships may tend to be predominantly patrilineal, matrilineal, or ambilineal. They are not properly to be conceived as lineal relationships. Their principal basis is co-residence, not descent. For this reason, I will stress the use of such terms as patrilocal, matrilocal, or ambilocal as the proper descriptive adjectives, and will use the "lineal" terms only in very restricted ways as when describing inheritance or chiefly succession. The next section of this paper discusses the Pomo residential kin group.

### THE POMO RESIDENTIAL KIN GROUPS

The Pomo ethnolinguistic "tribe" occupied a considerable territory in the Coast Ranges, north of San Francisco Bay. The Pomo heartland was the Russian River drainage, but Pomo also occupied considerable areas to the west and east of this drainage. Three ecological habitation zones were long ago outlined by Barrett (1908): (1) the Valley Zone, essentially the Russian River drainage; (2) the Coast Redwood Zone, a mountainous and heavily wooded area between the Valley Zone and the adjacent coast, which included the coast; and (3) the Lake Zone, in the drainage basin of Clear Lake, east of the Valley Zone.

The Pomo were probably the most intensively studied ethnolinguistic "tribe" of native

California. Ethnographers who have studied these people include Barrett, Kroeber, Gifford, Loeb, Essene, the Aginskys, Omer Stewart, and the geographer Fred Kniffen. From reading their various reports one gets the impression that Pomo political organization was very complex, but that only fragments of the total system have been reported by any one ethnographer. Some years ago I attempted to reconstruct Pomo political institutions by means of structural-functional inferences (Kunkel 1962). By this I mean that I tried to piece together the known fragments in terms of functionally consistent and reasonable relations among them. In doing so I devised four models which perhaps approximate the real aboriginal political institutions in different parts of Pomo territory, and which relate to the major Pomo ecological habitation zones set up by Barrett.

My four models may be as mythical as Service's universal patrilocal band. It is quite clear, however, that the Pomo area was characterized by constantly shifting political alignments with residential kin groups the most stable elements in the system. Tribelets were important but somewhat fragile political entities, breaking up fairly often into their component parts—the kin groups—which then recombined in new ways. Three principal factors seem to have been variables in this situation: (1) the politically uniting functions of men's societies (Ghost Societies) and secret societies involved in the Kuksu religion; (2) the nature of secular chieftainship and its prestige relationship to ceremonial chieftainship; and (3) the political relations among corporate kin groups. I am mainly concerned, in this paper, with the nature of the corporate kin groups, for these are the units which Gifford has characterized as lineages, but which I claim are ambilocal residential kin groups.

My disagreement with Gifford concerning the nature of these kin groups is based largely on census data for the multi-kin-group village

of Shigom, which also constituted the Shigomba tribelet on the eastern shore of Clear Lake. Data from other Clear Lake communities found in text and tables of Gifford's monograph *Clear Lake Pomo Society* (1926b) reinforce my position. If Gifford had not been so conscientious an ethnographer I would have far less evidence against his lineage hypothesis as applied to the Pomo kin groups.

Gifford's census data indicate that, around 1850, the population of Shigom, some 210-235 persons, was divided among 47 hearth groups, which were essentially nuclear or stem families occupying 20 houses (1926b:291-295). The 20 households belonged to three larger groups on the basis of chiefly allegiance (Gifford 1926b:343). Allegiance to each chief was through kinship ties which were predominantly matrilineal in nature (Gifford 1926b:344-346). However, matrilineality was a statistical trend, not an inflexible rule. For 53 individuals whose chiefly allegiances are listed by Gifford, 51% of the allegiance ties were matrilineal, 13% were patrilineal, and 36% could not be determined (i.e., the chiefly allegiance was known but kinship relationship to chiefs was unknown).

Residence patterns showed similar statistical variability. Viewing house residence in terms of the connecting links between constituent hearth groups, 62% of the links were matrilineal, 27% were patrilineal, 9% were "neutral" or "mixed," and 2% were unknown (Gifford 1926b:304). Here, the total sample consisted of 58 possible linking bonds between families. Oddly, when looking at hearth group membership in terms of relationship between male family head and persons (other than wives or unmarried children) belonging to their hearth groups, the picture is reversed and there is a predominant patrilineal pattern! That is, 66% of the cases were patrilineal, 26% matrilineal, 4% avunculocal, and 4% "mixed"

(Gifford 1926b:300-301). The total sample consisted of 70 cases. Both the statistical variability and a matrilineal tendency are again emphasized in figures on 44 Shigom residents whose parents were from two different villages (i.e., one parent from some village other than Shigom): 66% matrilineal, 34% patrilineal.

Now it may be argued that, although these figures indicate ambilineal residence and ambilineal allegiance to chiefs, they are not directly relevant to descent, hence do not disprove the existence of lineages. However, it is precisely these residential clusters, with their associated chiefly allegiance patterns, that Gifford claimed as political lineages. His ethnographic and demographic data from Shigom fully support the political significance of these units.

I can record that Gifford was aware of the possible non-linear implications of his demographic data. In 1926 (when he published both his general paper on lineages and his Clear Lake monograph), he did not see these implications as disproving his lineage hypothesis. Instead, he took the position that the chiefly allegiance groups were "modified lineages." However, in 1957, when I had a brief interview with him in Berkeley, Gifford took the generous position that I should interpret his published data as seemed best to me, that he had no strong convictions on the matter 30 years later, and no unpublished data to add.

My interpretation is that whatever their past these chiefly allegiance groups were not lineages by 1850. Further, in view of our present knowledge about the frequent occurrence of non-linear corporate groups, I see no need to set up an assumption that these groups were ever lineages.

Gifford's Clear Lake data go beyond the village tribelet of Shigomba in respect to certain matters. Among other things, he records 23 contemporary chiefs of equal secular rank for the Lake zone, as of ca. 1850 (Gifford 1926b:333-346). Thus 23 kin groups

are indicated for the zone. My analysis suggests that these kin groups were single village tribelets like Shigomba; others belonged together in rather complexly confederated tribelets, at least in proto-historic times (according to unpublished notes of C. Hart Merriam on file with the Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley), although most Pomo ethnographers have treated the villages in all cases as separate tribelets (e.g., Gifford 1926b; Kroeber 1925; Stewart 1943).

Gifford's scattered census data for other Clear Lake communities suggest the same ambilateral pattern for allegiance to chiefs as that indicated at Shigom (1926b). Moreover, the residence pattern is ambilocal as at Shigom. Furthermore, Gifford's descriptive ethnographic data indicate that residence was a matter of choice throughout the Clear Lake zone. This is, in fact, the key to understanding corporate kin groups of this sort. There is the possibility of choice, after marriage, between residence with the husband's joint natal family household and residence with the wife's. With the Pomo, such choice seems to have been tentative just after marriage. There was a good deal of moving back and forth, especially if the kin groups involved were in different villages. But, ultimately, a final choice was made, thus determining initial chiefly allegiance for children. Chiefly allegiance for in-married spouses remained ambiguous, a fact that is reflected in apparently inconsistent statements of allegiance presented in some of Gifford's tables.

The presence of the same types of ambilocal and ambilateral residence and allegiance patterns in the other two Pomo ecological habitation zones is inferred from general statements concerning chiefly succession and residence pattern in certain tribelets. Also, I have abstracted 35 clear cases of chiefly succession from the Pomo literature. Of these, 14 involved sister's sons as successors and 7 more involved other kinds of matrilineal

succession. On the other hand, 9 cases involved chief's own sons as successors, 3 involved chief's brothers, and 1 involved some other kind of patrilineal succession. A single case involved some other mixture of both matrilineal and patrilineal connections, a succession by a sister's son's son. In summary: 21 cases were matrilineal, 13 cases were patrilineal, and 1 was mixed. Data on chiefly succession were abstracted from the following sources: Loeb (1926:231-233, 240-241, 243-245), Gifford (1926b:336-341), Gifford and Kroeber (1937:196), Kniffen (1939:384), and Stewart (1943:50, 51).

Two other ethnographically recorded characteristics of Pomo culture are consistent with my thesis: (1) succession to various specialized economic or ceremonial roles was validated by sponsorship at Ghost Society initiations, and such specialization could be passed along by a sponsor who was either a matrilineal or a patrilineal relative; and (2) the Pomo could not marry cousins of any kind or degree.

### COMPARATIVE DATA

I now wish to discuss evidence for residential kin groups as basic political units for other ethnolinguistic "tribes" of northern California. To a considerable extent, this evidence is negative in character. That is, except for the Nomlaki and perhaps the Patwin, there is really no definite evidence for the presence of lineages in the corporate sense in northern California. This is in contrast to the very full and specific evidence known from the southern part of the state. I must stress the implications of this contrast. Lineages involve more than just tendencies toward unilineal descent, unilineal inheritance, or unilocal residence. Lineages as corporate groups are always self-conscious entities and usually have specific symbols of in-group solidarity: collective representations such as

sets of lineage-owned personal names; direct or indirect totemic terms used as lineage labels; more general terms referring to the corporate body as a category of group; lineage-owned ceremonial or political functions; and the like. Such things are well-known to have occurred frequently in most of the ethnolinguistic "tribes" south of San Francisco Bay and the Delta. North of the dividing line I know of only two good cases of such symbolism associated with possible corporate groups (and one of these is open to a different interpretation). One of these cases is suggested by the Patwin term *se're* for the supposedly patrilineal "functional family" as reported by McKern (1922). The other is the term *olkapna* applied to a localized clan as reported by Goldschmidt (1951) for the Nomlaki.

The Patwin term may not really refer to a unilineal group. According to data collected by Kroeber, and reported in his *The Patwin and Their Neighbors* (1932), *se're* could mean a family or any body of kin or other associates (Kroeber 1932:273). For instance, it could refer to the people of a village. This suggests the possibility of a village population which consisted of one residential kin group. Kroeber (1932:272-273, 291-292) further reports that Patwin residence, after marriage, was not always strictly patrilocal and that ceremonial functions or offices could sometimes be inherited from mother's brothers as well as fathers. Thus, one gets an initial impression that Kroeber's data contradict some of McKern's statements and certainly cast doubt on the possibility of Patwin lineages. McKern (personal communication) indicates that there is no contradiction, but that he too doubts the reality of Patwin lineages. He points out that he (McKern 1922:238) as well as Kroeber (1932), describes variations in post-marital residence after marriage. With respect to lineages, I have abstracted the following statement from

information provided by McKern:

If I know anything about Patwin political structure and social concepts, and I believe that I do, the Patwin "functional family" can not reasonably be considered as a politically significant lineage, for the following reasons: (1) It was not the social unit of the community structure since it included only certain families, excluding others. Its existence derived from the family inheritance of certain properties consisting of ritualistic matter and charms which added persuasion of supernatural agencies to its chances of success in a specific social or economic function. The possession of such aids, inheritable within a family, exclusively, according to any prevailing rule of inheritance, would automatically produce a similar functional family in any society. (2) Although the possession of such functional assets added to the social prestige of a family, it yielded no political powers or influence as such. The chief of a village might or might not belong to a functional family. In any case, such membership would have nothing to do with his political status. The special esoteric aids considered as property by such a family related exclusively to a special social or economic specialty. The political structure of the community was wholly independent from both the functional activities and social status of such families. How can such a specialized group, not sufficiently representative to qualify as the social unit of the community structure, and entirely independent, as such, from political duties and responsibilities, be considered, even tentatively, as a lineage unit in the community social structure? [McKern, personal communication]

McKern, himself, never made a claim that the Patwin had lineages. Rather, that claim was made, at least implicitly, by Goldschmidt (1948) as part of his sweeping hypothesis concerning the emergence of clans in California. (I use "clan" here in the sense of "sib" as used by some American anthropologists.) Goldschmidt's (1951) best evidence for a type of corporate linear kin group comes from his

own work on the Nomlaki. He gives persuasive evidence for interpreting the Nomlaki *olkapna* as a patrilineal corporate descent group.

The Nomlaki were a Wintun tribelet and the Wintun were closely related linguistically to the Patwin. Data summarized and tabulated by Goldschmidt indicate that these and most other divisions in the Sacramento Valley had patrilineal tendencies with reference to chiefly succession or other types of inheritance. Further, they had patrilocal tendencies with respect to residence.

Patrilineal norms with respect to chiefly succession and inheritance, along with patrilocal norms with respect to residence, would certainly be consistent with the existence of patrilineal lineages. But they do not of themselves constitute full proof of their existence. The general pattern for the Central Valley seems to have involved tribelets consisting of one or more villages, villages which consisted of one or more extended residence groups, which tended to have patrilocal, patrilateral ties to chiefs, and the patrilineal/patrilocal tendencies outlined above. However, there is no evidence for symbolic collective representations, such as totems, lineage names, and the like (except for the terms *se're* and *olkapna* as applied to categories of groups among the Patwin and Nomlaki, respectively). The residence groups of the Sacramento Valley may well be thought of as extended kin groups which were the structural expression of a lineal descent pattern. But the existence of lineages is doubtful.

Let us now look at data from "tribes" in the Coast Ranges and in the northernmost reaches of California. The Hupa, Yurok, Karok, Tolowa, and Wiyot of northwestern California all had patrilocal preferences with respect to residence. But such institutions as "half-marriage," formally defined illegitimacy, and slavery introduced alternative norms to such an extent that 20% or more of

these populations must have been residing in a non-patrilocal fashion. Further, the emphasis on rich men as relatively informal power figures must have rendered patrilineal or patrilateral ties subject to so much exception as to be almost meaningless. The settlements among these peoples generally consisted of single residential kin groups or, in some cases, of clusters of such groups. It is a moot question whether these should be termed patrilocal or ambilocal units. No symbolic collective representations of a lineage-defining sort were present. Also, contacts with members of the Hupa tribe from 1962-64 yielded no clues whatsoever of present or past lineage-like groupings.

In the northeast part of the state, the Pit River tribelets had ambilocal and ambilateral residence and kin ties, according to Garth (1944, 1953). But Erminie Voegelin (1942) records patrilocal and patrilineal institutions. This difference may reflect variations among different tribes of the Pit River drainage. (To the east, perhaps, they were patrilocal; to the west perhaps ambilocal.) Ray's (1963) data on the Modoc suggest very definitely ambilocal residential kin groups.

Back in the Coast Ranges, the social organization of the Eel River Athabaskans is practically unknown. A few scraps of circumstantial evidence suggest that they had composite or patrilocal hunting bands that tended to settle down as small ambilocal or patrilocal kin group villages. The Yuki of the upper Eel River drainage had patrilineal and patrilocal preferences, respectively, to chiefly succession and residence, according to Foster (1944). However, the Coast Yuki as described by Gifford (1939) seem to have had ambilocal, single-kin-group villages and no larger political units. In the makeup of their villages, they were similar to some of the smaller Pomo villages of the Coast Redwood zone (though the latter were loosely linked into tribelets).

South of the Pomo territory, between the

Russian River drainage and San Francisco Bay, dwelt peoples of the Wappo and Miwok "tribes." According to Barrett (1908), these peoples had social organizations similar to the Pomo. There is one bit of more specific information. This consists of census data collected by Driver (1936) for a Wappo village in the Russian River Valley.

This village, *Unuts-waholma*, had a population of 92, involving 21 hearth groups in 11 houses (Driver 1936:201). Various statistical tables indicate an ambilocal residential pattern (Driver 1936:211, 201-204). Property inheritance was ambilineal (Driver 1936:211). Marriage was proscribed among all known blood relatives. This last point strongly suggests that the village population was a single, exogamous, ambilocal, residential kin group, since all the houses seem to have been interrelated. There was one head chief and one assistant chief, a pattern quite similar to the chieftainship situation in a Pomo corporate kin group.

### CONCLUSIONS

I have presented evidence for the existence of ambilocal corporate residential kin groups among the Pomo. In addition, I have in summary fashion indicated the nature of evidence for this residential type of corporate kin group elsewhere in the northern half of present day California. Negative evidence seems fairly strong against the existence of corporate lineages or clans. In many ethno-linguistic divisions or "tribes," especially in the Sacramento Valley, it seems reasonable to suppose that patrilocal, extended family, residential kin groups were the key political subdivisions. But evidence for ambilocal political groups of the residential kin group type seems strong for peoples other than the Pomo: e.g., Wappo, Coast Yuki, Modoc, and some Pit River tribelets.

I have not used the term *ramage* for the

Pomo type of group. At one time I considered this usage but have rejected it because the *ramage* concept seems to be basically applied to descent groups of an ambilineal nature (Murdock 1960) and only incidentally is such a group a residence group.

Most of the peoples dealt with in this paper were organized into tribelets numbering into the hundreds. Demographic studies have indicated population densities well above one per square mile for considerable portions of the area (Cook 1955, 1956, 1957; Kunkel 1962). Much of the area was characterized by a very complex type of religious system, the so-called *Kuksu Cult*, with very considerable ramifications of a political nature. The area was quite varied ecologically, but there were many very favorable local ecological niches available, and these were efficiently exploited by the people who occupied them without too much moving around. Permanent or semi-permanent villages with substantial houses are well-recorded in the ethnographic literature. All peoples in the area were food-collectors, and agriculture was quite absent in aboriginal times in the northern half of the state.

All in all, this is quite a different picture from the conventional depiction of hunting and gathering populations as small, nomadic, owning little property, and characterized by only "band-level" types of social organization.

*St. Ambrose College  
Davenport, Iowa*

### REFERENCES

- Barrett, Samuel K.  
1908 The Ethno-geography of the Pomo and Neighboring Indians. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnography 6:1-332.

- 1917 Ceremonies of the Pomo Indians. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 12:397-441.
- 1952 Material Aspects of Pomo Culture. Milwaukee Public Museum Bulletin 20:1-508.
- Baumhoff, Martin
- 1958 California Athabascan Groups. Anthropological Records 16:157-238.
- Beals, Ralph L., and Joseph A. Hester
- 1955 Ecological Analysis of California Indian Territoriality and Land-use. Los Angeles: Department of Justice Indian Land Claims Project. Mimeo.
- Cook, Sherbourne W.
- 1955 The Aboriginal Population of the San Joaquin Valley, California. Anthropological Records 16:31-80.
- 1956 The Aboriginal Population of the North Coast of California. Anthropological Records 16:81-130.
- 1957 The Aboriginal Population of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, California. Anthropological Records 16:131-156.
- Davenport, William
- 1959 Nonunilineal Descent and Descent Groups. American Anthropologist 61:557-572.
- Driver, Harold E.
- 1936 Wappo Ethnography. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 36:179-220.
- Drucker, Philip
- 1937 The Tolowa and Their Southwest Oregon Kin. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 36:221-300.
- Essene, F.
- 1942 Culture Element Distributions: XXI, Round Valley. Anthropological Records 8:1-97.
- Foster, George M.
- 1944 A Summary of Yuki Culture. Anthropological Records 5:155-244.
- Garth, Thomas R.
- 1944 Kinship Terminology, Marriage Practices and Behavior Toward Kin Among the Atsugewi. American Anthropologist 46:348-361.
- 1953 Atsugewi Ethnography. Anthropological Records. 14:129-212.
- Gayton, A. H.
- 1945 Yokuts and Western Mono Social Organization. American Anthropologist 47:409-426.
- Gifford, Edward W.
- 1923 Pomo Lands on Clear Lake. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 20:77-92.
- 1926a Miwok Lineages and the Political Unit in Aboriginal California. American Anthropologist 28:389-401.
- 1926b Clear Lake Pomo Society. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 18:287-390.
- 1939 The Coast Yuki. Anthropos 34:292-375. (Reprinted by The Sacramento Anthropological Society, Spring 1965.)
- Gifford, Edward W., and A. L. Kroeber
- 1937 Culture Element Distributions: IV, Pomo. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 37:117-254.
- Goddard, Pliny E.
- 1903 Life and Culture of the Hupa. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 1:1-88.
- Goldschmidt, Walter R.
- 1948 Social Organization in Native California and the Origin of Clans. American Anthropologist 50:444-456.
- 1951 Nomlaki Ethnography. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 42:303-443.
- Goodenough, Ward H.
- 1955 A Problem in Malayo-Polynesian Social Organization. American Anthropologist 57:71-83.
- Kniffen, Fred B.
- 1939 Pomo Geography. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 36:353-400.

- Kroeber, A. L.  
 1925 Handbook of the Indians of California. Washington, D. C.: Bureau of American Ethnology.  
 1932 The Patwin and Their Neighbors. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 29:253-423.  
 1936 Karok Towns. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 35:29-38.
- Kunkel, Peter H.  
 1962 Yokuts and Pomo Political Institutions: A Comparative Analysis. Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Lee, Richard B., and Irven DeVore, Eds.  
 1968 Man the Hunter. Chicago: Aldine.
- Loeb, Edwin M.  
 1926 Pomo Folkways. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 19:149-405.  
 1932 The Western Kuksu Cult. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 33:1-137.  
 1933 The Eastern Kuksu Cult. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 33:139-232.
- Linton, Ralph  
 1936 The Study of Man. New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts.
- Loud, Llewellyn  
 1918 Ethnography and Archaeology of the Wiyot Territory. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 14:221-436.
- McKern, William C.  
 1922 Functional Families of the Patwin. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 13:235-258.
- Murdock, George P.  
 1949 Social Structure. New York: Macmillan.  
 1960 Social Structure in Southeast Asia. Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology 29.
- Nomland, G. A.  
 1935 Sinkyone Notes. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 36:149-178.
- 1938 Bear River Ethnography. Anthropological Records 2:91-124.
- Ray, Verne F.  
 1963 Primitive Pragmatists. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Service, Elman R.  
 1962 Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective. New York: Random House.  
 1966 The Hunters. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Steward, Julian H.  
 1936 The Economic and Social Basis of Primitive Bands. In Essays in Anthropology Presented to A. L. Kroeber, R. H. Lowie, Ed. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp. 331-350.  
 1955 Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Stewart, Omer C.  
 1943 Notes on Pomo Ethnogeography. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 40:29-62.
- Strong, William D.  
 1929 Aboriginal Society in Southern California. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 26:1-358. (Reprinted by Malki Museum Press, Banning, California 1972.)
- Voegelin, Erminie W.  
 1942 Culture Element Distribution: XX, Northeast California. Anthropological Records 7:1-251.
- Waterman, T. T.  
 1920 Yurok Geography. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 16:177-314.  
 1925 Village Sites in Tolowa and Neighboring Areas of Northwest California. American Anthropologist 27:528-543.