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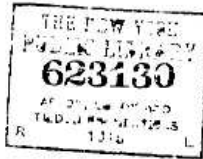
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BY

A. L. KROEBER

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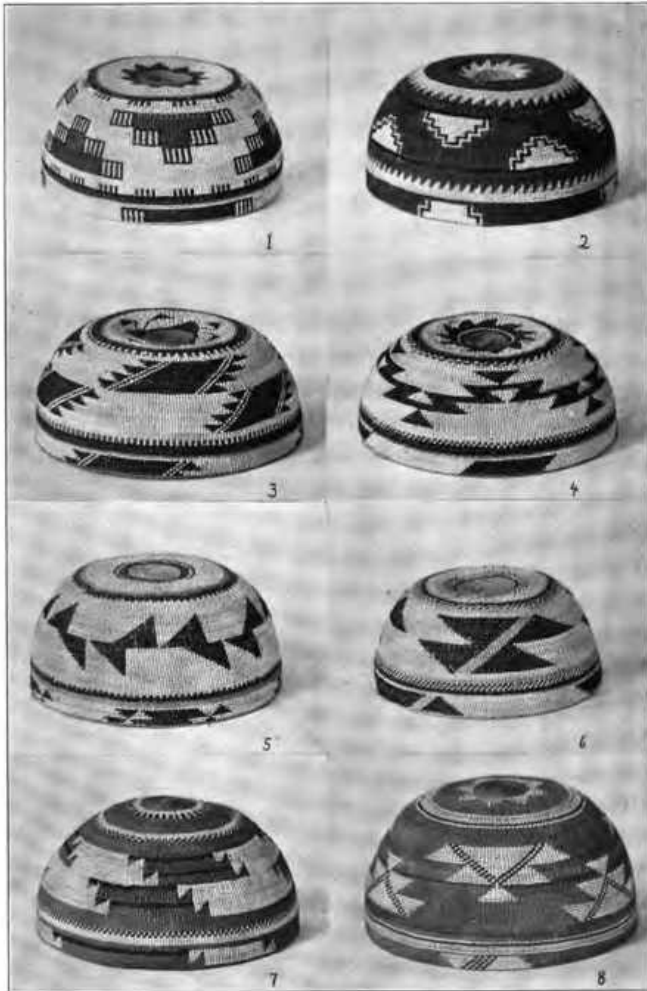
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A. L. KROEBER, *Secretary.* F. W. PUTNAM, *Director.*



Сара. Yurok. 4.

BASKET DESIGNS OF THE INDIANS OF
NORTHWESTERN CALIFORNIA.

BY

A. L. KROEBER.

INTRODUCTORY.

The Indians of extreme northwestern California, while showing many similarities to the other tribes of California, and some approximation to those of the north Pacific coast, are in many ways peculiar in their culture. The territory occupied by this group of tribes is very limited, comprising only Humboldt and Del Norte and small parts of Trinity and Siskiyou counties. Their specialized culture is found in its most highly developed form among the tribes of the lower Klamath and Trinity rivers: the Yurok, Karok, and Hupa. The Hupa belong to one of the California groups of the great Athabascan linguistic stock. The Yurok and Karok are small isolated linguistic stocks. The three languages are as radically different in phonetics as they are totally unrelated in vocabulary. The three tribes live in close contact, with more or less intercourse and generally friendly relations. In their culture they are remarkably alike.

The names of the basket designs described in this paper were obtained from Indians of the three tribes during 1900, 1901, and 1902. The most extensive investigations were made among the Yurok. This accounts for the larger number of designs obtained among this tribe. The Yurok designs described are taken from nearly a hundred baskets. The majority of these are now in the Museum of the Anthropological Department of the University of California. A number of baskets, and the names of their designs, were collected in 1900 for the California Academy of Sciences. Through the courtesy of the officers of the Academy this material is used in the present paper. Information was

obtained among the Yurok as to the designs of a greater number of baskets than were actually collected, the total number reaching several hundred. The more common design names are exceedingly frequent among the northwestern tribes, and, while exact duplications of designs ordinarily do not occur, yet many of the variations are so slight that it was often thought unnecessary to insure their preservation by purchase of the specimen. All baskets having characteristic designs but uncommon design-names were secured for the Museum of the Department. This selection gives the Yurok design names described an appearance of somewhat greater variety than they actually possess. Probably the fifteen most common design names constitute all but a very few per cent of the total number. Among the Karok and Hupa all baskets were secured about which information was obtained as to the design. The number of such Karok baskets is about fifty, and of Hupa twenty-five.

It was found necessary to get the names of the designs in the native language, as many of the words are not names of animals or objects, but geometrical or descriptive terms not translatable by the Indians.¹

KINDS OF BASKETS.

The basketry of northwestern California is characterized by circular open baskets somewhat rounded at the bottom and generally of no very great depth, and by women's caps, which are shallower than the basketry caps worn in other parts of California. Large baskets serving for the storage of food are proportionally of deeper shape than the smaller baskets used for cooking and eating. Conical baskets are used for gathering seeds, and flat circular baskets for trays, plates, and meal sifters. The acorn mortar consists of a basket hopper of the type used by the Pomo. Conical carrying baskets, baby baskets, plates, and some trinket baskets are made in open work. The various kinds and

¹ The following characters have been used: e = sh, x = spirant of k = kh, q = velar k, l = palatal or lateral l, ŋ = ng; a = a as in father; ū = a as in bad; ā = English aw; ð and ð̄ = long open e and o; ʌ, ɛ, i, o, u, = obscure vowels. Yurok r has the peculiar quality of American r in an exaggerated degree. Karok r is clear and trilled. Yurok v is bilabial, having nearly the the sound of w, and its g is always a spirant = g' = gh.

shapes of baskets can be seen in the accompanying plates 15 to 21, and in plates 20 to 27 published in the first volume of the present series of University of California publications.

Yurok names for baskets are: wāxpeya, cap, if brown (Plate 15, figures 7, 8); āqa', cap, if the ground is covered with overlaying (Plate 15, figures 1 to 6); hē'kwuts, small basket for acorn mush, especially for eating (Plate 16, figure 3, and figure 6, unfinished); muri'p, large basket for acorn mush, used for cooking (Plate 16, figures 4, 5; hē'kwuts and muri'p are called by the Karok asip: Plate 20, figures 4, 5, 6, 8); perxtse'kuc, a basket higher than hē'kwuts, used for keeping small objects (Plate 17, figures 4, 5, 6; Karok cipnuk, Plate 20, figure 3); rumi'tsek, an openwork trinket basket (Plate 19, figure 5, usual form; figure 6, unusual); qèwā'i, conical burden basket of openwork (see P. E. Goddard, *Life and Culture of the Hupa*, University of California Publications, American Archaeology and Ethnology, I, Plate 22, figure 1); terre'ks, conical basket for gathering seeds (Goddard, *op. cit.*, Plate 22, figure 2, of Yurok provenience); paaxte'kwe, basket for storing food, especially acorns, much like perxtse'kuc but much larger (Goddard, Plate 23, figure 1, a Yurok specimen); meixtso', storage basket similar in shape, but made altogether of hazel, without overlaying or patterns; poixko', large flat tray for acorn meal (Goddard, Plate 24, figure 2); poixtse'kuc, small tray for seeds used as food (Plate 19, figures 1, 2), also small, flat, conical dipper for acorn mush (Plate 19, figure 3, a Karok specimen); wetsané'p, meal sifter, flat without appreciable curvature (Plate 18, figure 2); laxp'ceu, openwork plates for eating salmon (Plate 18, figures 1, 3; Goddard, Plate 21, figure 2, a Yurok specimen); meco'lil, larger openwork plates on which salmon is laid; upè'kwann, mortar hopper (Goddard, Plate 24, figure 1, Yurok); qème'n, also called hāxku'm uperxtse'kuc, "tobacco its storage-basket," tobacco basket, often with a lid, and similar to the perxtse'kuc, though generally smaller (Plate 17, figures 1, 3, 5, 7, Plate 19, figure 4); uqèm'tè'm, said to have been a large form of perxtse'kuc with a small opening and a lid, used for storage of valuable property; ego'or, an approximately cylindrical basket used in the jumping dance, made of a rectangular sheet bent into shape of a cylinder slit

along the top (Plate 18, figure 4). A Hupa baby basket and seedbeater are shown in Goddard's Plate 21, figure 1, and Plate 23, figure 2. The äqa', perxtse'kuc, terre'ks, paaxte'kwe, poixko', poixtse'kuc, wetsanè'p, qème'u, uqèm'tè'm, and ego'or are generally overlaid with white; the wáxpeya, hè'kwuts, muri'p, upè'kwanu, and sometimes the poixtse'kuc, are mostly in unoverlaid brown, but usually with a pattern in overlaying; the rumi'tsek, qèwá'i, laxp'eu, meco'lil are in openwork.

MATERIALS.

The basket materials of this region and their employment have recently been given full treatment in Dr. P. E. Goddard's *Life and Culture of the Hupa*,¹ and on a less localized basis by F. V. Coville in Professor O. T. Mason's *Aboriginal American Basketry*.²

According to information obtained from the Yurok, the warp of their basketry regularly consists of hazel twigs. The woof is made of strands from roots of sugar pine and near the coast of spruce. Redwood and willow roots are inferior but used. Willow seems to be usual for the woof in beginning a basket.

While these root fibres give a colorless gray, deepening with age to a not unpleasant brown, designs and sometimes the entire ground color are produced by overlaying in other materials. The most important of these is the widely used and well known lustrous whitish grass *xerophyllum tenax*. In baskets for ordinary use the designs are worked in this white on the darker ground of root-fibre woof. In ornamental baskets the ground is overlaid with this material, and the patterns are black, red, and occasionally yellow. For black the outside of stems of a species of maidenhair fern, *adiantum*, are used; for red, alder-dyed fibres of a large *woodwardia* fern. The stems of this fern are bruised by beating, and two flat fibres extracted from each. These are usually dyed by being passed through the mouth after alder bark has been chewed. Yellow is produced by dyeing with

¹ Univ. Cal. Publ., Am. Arch. Ethn., I, 38 seq., 1903.

² Rep. U. S. Nat. Mus. 1902, 199 seq., 1904.