THE NATIVE PEOPLES

The story of the American Indian is an episode full of hypocrisy and contradiction. The American pioneer was often rather callous in his treatment of the red man. Probably the foremost gifts of the former to the latter were firearms and "firewater," both items direct contributions to the downfall of Indian society. The story of the natives of Shasta County can be termed a miniature of the national record—an account filled with injustice on the part of both parties.

The first white man to encounter Indians in both the Great Basin and northern California areas called them "diggers." Although anthropologists seem to feel this term refers specifically to their use of digging sticks in securing food, early trail blazers appeared to mean by this title that the northern California Indian was basically lazy and lacked the ambition of his eastern brothers, who had the motivation to paint up and ride out to attack a wagon train, or exchange volleys with the U. S. Cavalry. In addition, the type of Indian life along the northern part of the Sacramento River and its tributaries has been technically described as impoverished hill culture—probably another way of indicating the lack of activity on the part of these groups.

Although tribal boundary lines were never completely precise, anthropologists indicate four principal native groups within the confines of Shasta County. Along the banks of the Sacramento and extending into the western reaches of the county were the Wintus, the local representatives of northern California's largest language group—the Wintuns, a branch of the Penutian family. A rather domesticated people, the Wintun group encompassed the area from Mt. Shasta on the north to Suisun Bay on the south. The Wintus in Shasta County consisted of small villages estimated at a total population of 395 by the 1910 census. The principal Shasta County group was classified as the Bald Hills sub-area, sometimes known as the Cottonwoods. These Indians were located in the low, rolling Bald Hills southwest of Redding and immediately to the east of the Coast Range. Other Wintu groups were located in the present Shasta Dam area north of Redding. The Wintus in Shasta County were principally a hill people intermediate between two major spheres of influence, that of northwest and central California.

The Yana, the Wintus' counterparts in the foothills east of the river, did not share their neighbor's proclivity toward friendliness. Locally called the Noze, these natives, although somewhat similar in culture to the Wintus, were quite dissimilar in regard to stubbornness. The northern Yana, estimated at nearly 3,000 around 1860, had, because of white retaliation for their ardor, been reduced to a remnant of 35 by 1884. By 1907 there were scarcely a dozen Indians left who could speak Yana. It should be stated, nevertheless, that their warlike reputation was somewhat of an environmental circumstance, since the Yana resided in an area of heavy white infiltration and travel. Thus it was easy for these unfortunates to absorb frequently the white man's vengeance, often in response to mis-deeds of which they were totally ignorant. Professor Alfred Kroeber in his voluminous volume *The Indians of California* indicated that the Yana possessed essentially a plain and simple culture, devoid of the social and cultural distinctives that characterized the Wintus. Geographically, the Yana in Shasta County centered around the eastern tributaries of the Sacramento; the northernmost group on the drainage of Montgomery and Cedar Creeks, the central Yana on Cow Creek, and the southern segment on Battle Creek. Their greatest landmark was Mt. Lassen. Linguistically the Yana, although possessing numerous dialects, spoke a language basically different from their neighbors. This tongue, of Hokan origin, was marked by a slight difference in the speech of men and women.

The Wintu and Yana occupied the southern section of Shasta County. In the northern reaches of the county lived three tribes of the Shastan language family—the Okwanuchu, in the area of the streams draining from Mt. Shasta, the Achomawi on Pit River in the Fall River Basin, and the Atsugewi on three Pit River tributaries—Burney, Hat and Horse Creeks.

The former, a little known almost mythical segment of the Shastan family, occupied the upper Sacramento from about the vicinity of Salt and Boulder Creeks to the headwaters of the river, as well as the area north of the junction of Squaw Valley Creek and the McCloud River. The Okwanuchu were practically extinct by the time the white man evidenced any concern about their culture. As a result almost nothing is known about them. A. L. Kroeber did attest to the uniqueness of their dialect, composed of some pure Shastan words and others which were a distortion of the

Shastan language. These people lived in a heavily timbered region (which today approximates the Shasta-Siskiyou County boundary area), and were called the Ikusadewi or Yeti by their neighbors. Because of the lack of additional information, no further comment will be made regarding the Okwanuchu in this study.

Although different in language, the Achomawi and Atsugewi were similar in custom and friendly in relationship. Both tribes remained exceedingly well intact down to recent times; in fact, Achomawi population was estimated at 1,000 in 1910. This fact was based principally on the lateness and paucity of white settlement in the mountain region. A few Indian "incidents" in the late 50's and 60's and early 70's are the most noteworthy exceptions to this statement. These groups were jointly designated by white settlers as the Pit River Indians.

In the search for a common denominator by which to describe the Indians of Shasta County, several approaches might prove adequate to the task. In an attempt to synthesize, but yet clarify, this study will briefly summarize the aborigines on the basis of their natural habitats. Therefore, the initial section will consider the Indian groups in the valley floor and foothill areas, and the second section will seek to present the salient features of the culture of these natives whose footsteps trod the plateau areas of present Shasta County. With both geographical areas, an attempt will be made to note principal items of discrepancy and collaboration within language groups.

The peace loving Wintu and the pugnacious Yana occupied the lower elevations of the present day county area. Although the Yana were actually foothill natives, this study will refer to both Wintu and Yana as valley Indians. Their diet was a simple one, centering around four main types of food: game, especially deer; fish, notably the salmon and trout; roots and bulbs; and fruit and seeds. Both groups resorted to hunting, using such methods as the disguising of a hunter in animal skins, burning out animals from a wooded area, hanging a noose over a deer trail, or driving an animal over a cliff. The valley Indians also relished smaller prey—rabbits, squirrels and such delicacies as earthworms, red ants, grasshoppers, angleworms and crickets.

Fishing was also important to these peoples. Steven Powers in his book *Tribes of California* called the Wintu: "indifferent hunters, but good fishermen." Between May and October the Wintu traveled frequently to the Sacramento to launch a salmon drive, all the while keeping a wary eye on the eastern foothills for Yana warriors who would not only relieve them of their catch, but would also appropriate their women and children to prepare and serve the stolen repast. A variety of devices including spears, hook and line, fish traps and seine nets were standard fishing equipment. Both tribes applied various preservative methods, particularly drying, so these fish might be available during the winter. Trout and suckers were also procured, but salmon was the basic fish food.

Agriculture was an unknown art to these peoples. Only those crops which grew wild were used; most of these were procured by use of the digging stick. Of the vegetable foods, acorns were singularly important. In fact, the major dietary contrast between the mountain and valley peoples was the established reliance of the latter on the acorn. Acorn flour, acorn soup and acorn bread formed the backbone of the Yana and Wintu menu. In fact, so important was this food source to these peoples that a scarcity of acorns would prompt the typically docile Wintus to an incursion upon their more abundantly endowed neighbors. Next to acorns, edible roots and tubers, manzanita berries and some grasses were consumed by the valley peoples. The problem of obtaining food was somewhat evenly divided between the sexes—the women usually assuming responsibility for the vegetable resources, while the men obtained the animal provisions.

The Indian village usually was situated near a creek or river, but on ground that was high enough to avert flood peril. In addition, the natives wisely sought a plot of ground which might be warmed by the afternoon sun. The dwellings of these peoples were basically dug-out or subterranean, involving a three or four foot excavation with a conical, bark covering in the winter and a somewhat more temporary brush hut in the warmer months. Supplementing these family dwellings were large lodge-houses, used particularly by the valley Indians as a sweat house. Both hygienic and ceremonial significance was attached to these forerunners of the modern steam bath. If any distinction can be made between the dwellings of the Wintu and Yana, it was that the former

sometimes built more permanently, while the Yana were more often satisfied with simply a brushwood hut or other more natural enclosure.

In basketry the Indians of this area were quite proficient. Both the Wintu and Yana emphasized the twined product in which roots were woven around willow reeds. Over this basic weave came an overlay of some type of leaf or grass—ordinarily bear grass, redbud, or maidenhair fern.

Other crafts were also practiced. Both Wintu and Yana artisans specialized in the creation of blankets, caps, mats, cradleboards, ropes, fish traps and weapons, among other useful items. The latter art dealt mainly with producing bows and arrows. The bows of all the Shasta County tribes were characterized by their shortness and thickness. The arrows were usually about four feet long with feathers on one end to give balance, and points of flint or obsidian on the other. The manufacturing of grinding devides was a main item of discrepancy between the Wintu and Yana. The former usually employed a hopper or basket mortar while grinding; in other words, a twined pounding basket, open on both ends, over a flat pounding stone. The Yana, in contrast, employed both the hopper and stone mortars.

In general, the clothing of the valley Indians was rather meager. During the summer months the men forsook all forms of covering, while the women were adorned simply with a double apron of skins or natural material such as tule or shredded bark. The rigors of colder weather brought increased clothing, typically buckskin leggings and robes for the men, and dresses of the same material or rabbit fur for the women. Often the man's robe was used as a bed and pillow during the night. Although these natives were more often barefoot than not, moccasins of deer hide were sometimes worn to complete this outfit.

As to tribal organization, the local aborigines possessed a minimum. This was true of most California Indians. Evident with both the Wintu and Yana was a leadership position much less pronounced than the powerful position of the chief of more easternly tribes. Authority in the two local groups was basically hereditary, modified by the requirement that the apprentice be worthy of his hire. As in our day, leadership sometimes involved the ability to aptly coin a phrase. Cora DuBois in her authoritative study *Wintu Ethnography,* declared that: "Pre-eminent among requirements for the chieftain was the ability to talk well and much," while records indicated oratorical talent was equally as important in the Yana hierarchy. Besides the privilege of haranguing his followers, the local chieftain was also granted certain work exemptions as well as being the recipient of numerous gifts from his people. However, executive and organizational ability was required in the proper direction of tribal ventures ranging from meetings and dances to hunting and raiding forays.

Social custom among these people centered around several important crisis rites which followed the Indian from the cradle to the grave. Birth normally witnessed the separation of the wife from her husband, to be attended only by another woman. Many taboos restricted the existence of the expectant mother; for instance, the Wintu concept that if a pregnant woman looked at a rainbow her child would have a flat arm or leg, the idea that if she was not industrious the child would turn out to be a lazy good-for-nothing, or the belief she must not drink from a wide-mouthed vessel or the child would have a wide mouth.

The attainment of puberty by both the Wintu and Yana girl was also an occasion of major import. Isolation was the girls' lot during this time; however, her ordeal was rewarded by feasting and dancing in her honor. Even more taboos than were occasioned by birth accompanied this special time in the Indian girl's life, including a special diet and painting to signify the nature of her isolation.

Marriage among the valley Indians of Shasta County was typically a casual arrangement. Two young people simply "taking up with each other" was often the extent of it with the Wintu. The Yana seemed to be more definite in the marriage commitment. Although the young people in this group often decided for themselves, the parents frequently entered into the matchmaking with the exchange of gifts between families and the practice of certain taboos in regard to their in-laws-to-be. However, marriage in neither group was formalized by any ceremony. Terminating a marriage was as simple as its initiation in most instances; merely going home would conclude the relationship in most cases. Polygamy was sometimes practiced by more wealthy individuals,

although monogamy was the standard relationship. Powers reported that the infrequent polygamy of the Wintu led occasionally to savage fights between the two wives, with the husband standing placidly by waiting to see who would win the right to remain in his dwelling.

Burial was the method of disposal of the dead used by nearly all of the Indians of this area. Both valley language groups buried their dead in a flexed position and placed in the grave an assortment of their possessions to take with them into the hereafter. Wailing and oration at the grave site accompanied the interment of the deceased. In each of these tribes the widow was expected to go through a period of mourning during which she indicated her bereavement by such displays as cropping her hair and placing pitch on the stubble. The name of the dead was never to be used, especially among the Wintu. An accidental reference to a departed person would cause great consternation to both speaker and hearers, since such an indiscretion was considered to be one of the more dire encroachments possible upon the spirit world.

Mythology was a significant part of native society. Earthquakes, lightning, thunder and other phenomena were given supernatural explanations. The Wintu conceived of a Supreme Being whom they termed Ol-lal-bas or "One Above," practiced prayer and spoke of a first people, although they never developed actual religious ceremony or a consistent cosmology. The existence of good and evil spirits formed the basis of their religion; for instance, these valley people considered the grizzly bear to be the most evil of animals, since he was said to be in-dwelt by the ghost of a wicked Indian. Therefore, to say to one's enemy: "May a grizzly bear eat you," or "May a grizzly bear bite your father's head off," was to invoke the most ominous curse available to the Wintu. The Yana also possessed several picturesque myths regarding the supernatural. Their thinking envisioned a creative trinity of the rabbit, squirrel and lizard.

Shamanism was one of the most important socio-religious aspects of native culture. Supernatural powers, related both to healing and communication with the spirit world, were acquired in an initiation ceremony open to both men and women. Although various accounts of shaman practices are available, there seems to be a consistent dependence upon a trance induced by prolonged singing and dancing. A Wintu Indian's account of the process of becoming a shaman will serve as an example:

> Doctors (shaman) have to starve themselves. They have a hard time... They slide down a hole in a cave... When they get down there they sing songs... A pike lives in that hole. They ask him to help them... They dance and dance as if crazy. Blood comes from their mouths and noses. By and by they fall unconscious. They fall over in a trance. Maybe two or three will become doctors... When a person becomes a doctor he just stands around and sings and sings. He never seems to get hungry. Sometimes they wander off and do crazy things.

Through his singing until in a trance, a Wintu shaman was supposedly able to diagnose the sickness, while sucking on the infected area was intended to extract the "doko" or poison "spirit missles" from the victim. Both Yana and Wintu shaman relied on similar curative methods, which included swimming in certain pools, prayer, singing, and dancing. It should also be explained that two varieties of shaman existed in local society—those who dealt with diseases (usually men) and those who emphasized communication with the dream and spirit world (often women). The former variety received the greater emphasis in Shasta County society.

In appearance and personality the distinctions between the Wintu and Yana were marked. Steven Powers, who came into California in the late 1870's on a geographical and geological survey for the government, described the Wintu as a "healthy tribe . . . but physically apt to be obese." In fact, Powers pointedly stated that when a Wintu squaw was seated on the ground, she was apt to take up at least "a square yard" of space because of her excessive girth. Regarding personality, the Wintu were described as "joyous, blithe-hearted, excessively fond of social dances and gaieties." These festivities included a variety of gambling games, apparently almost a mania among the Wintu, and numerous social dances of both a rhythmic and pantomime nature. Almost any economic occasion might prompt a Wintu dance, such as the gathering of the pine huts and harvest of the clover, a deer or bear hunt, the season of the salmon run, or a rabbit drive.

Social justice with these people was of a rather casual nature. Even in the case of murder, physical retaliation was not necessarily expected; in fact, a payment in compensation for the life taken was often sufficient. Cora DuBois in *Wintu Ethnography* related the account of an Indian murder in the Bald Hills area in rather recent times which was presented to the judge at Ono. This magistrate decided the matter should be settled in Indian fashion and, as a result, the following decision was made:

> Dick (the murderer) was released and he and his relatives paid Connell's (the victim's) family, by giving him an elaborate funeral. This included a coffin and the clearing and fencing of the graveyard. In addition, Connell's mother was paid $40 with which she was satisfied... This affair was perfectly regular and in the best (Indian) tradition.

In contrast to the Wintu, the Yana were described as: "lighter colored than the Wintu... undersized for California Indians and delicate." Their personality certainly did not match their appearance. Yana games were more rigorous than their neighbors; their favorite sport possessing some similarities to modern field hockey. Although they practiced dancing, the Yana did not appear to enjoy this diversion as did their neighbors. This dislike seemed to apply equally to almost any ritual or ceremony. Steven Powers, who seldom had anything good to say about the local natives, did express begrudging admiration for the Yana. In listing their differences from other California language groups, Powers acknowledged their amazing: "fight to the bitter end" against the white man, in contrast to the rapid acquiescence of other California aborigines.

So much for the valley Indians. The area of study which follows will attempt to summarize briefly the plateau area tribes, those which occupied what is presently northeastern Shasta County. These were the Atsugewi and Achomawi, whom Alfred Kroeber termed similar in custom and friendly in association. The culture of these so-called "Pit River" or "Hat Creek" tribes presented somewhat of an amalgamation between Great Basin and California civilizations. James T. Davis in *Trade Routes and Economic Exchanges Among Indians of California* cites a wide variety of commodities received and dispersed by these mountain people. Thus they served as transmitters of trade and culture between the areas around them.

The diet of the Achomawi and Atsugewi resembled that of their southern neighbors. The four main types of food may be similarly classified under the categories of game, fish, roots and seeds. However, a difference in emphasis was evident. At lower elevations acorns were much more plentiful and salmon existed in greater numbers. Thus to obtain these commodities the Pit River tribes needed either to resort to trade or journey to lower elevations to acquire their own. This was often done. However, more importance was placed on hunting and seed gathering. Powers, in his discussion of the Achomawi, asserted their one distinction as: "digging pitfalls for trapping game," a practice which proved somewhat disconcerting to the early white settlers, who not only lost their cattle, but occasionally found themselves ensnared in one of these carefully hidden ten to twelve foot deep excavations. This Indian device also led to the naming of Pit River. Deer and bear, roots, berries, grasses, pine and buckeye nuts, fish including trout, pike and suckers, water fowl and a variety of insects were locally available and used by these natives. As with most Indians, these language groups practiced certain dietary taboos. For instance, the heart of the deer was not to be eaten by the Atsugewi male, while all members of this group refrained from eating fish and deer meat together.

In regard to housing, the mountain natives were again similar to their valley counterparts. However, they typically built a more substantial structure, based on the more rigorous winter climate. The winter house was circular, involving a sloping roof of bark and dirt covered poles over a four to five foot excavation. An opening was required near the center of the roof to admit the occupants as well as release the smoke. A small hole was also left at ground level for ventilation. During the summer the dwelling was usually a temporary brush hut. The Atsugewi did not build separate sweat or assembly houses, but used the larger earth lodge houses for these purposes. In addition, these people built their homes near a stream; the Atsugewi on Burney, Hat, Dixie Valley and Horse Creeks, and the Achomawi on Pit River and its major tributaries..

Thomas Garth in his report on *Atsugewi Ethnography* pointed out that basketry was a "chief medium of art expression" to these mountain Indians. Their basic product was twined; however,

by 1900 the Atsugewi had learned the art of coiled basketry from other tribes. These people were the only Shasta County Indians to add feathers to the basic overlays used in basket making. The basket produced by the Achomawi was characterized by its height and was often covered with a solid decorative white overlay. It was also of the twined variety. The production of dugout canoes was prevalent among these groups, who burned out a twenty-foot pine log to provide water transportation. The bow and arrow in this area was not unlike the weapon of neighboring groups. The bow was characteristically short, broad and sinew backed, while arrow points were made of obsidian. These were often poisoned with rotten deer liver, a slow, but effective venom.

The lack of clothing, typical of most California natives, was modified somewhat by the rigors of climate in this section. Buckskin provided the standard covering, while robes of bear skin or duck and geese weaving added additional warmth. While the men were covered with a deer skin with a hole for the head, women dressed in a type of short gown somewhat of a compromise between California and eastern cultures. Cloaks, mittens and leggings provided needed warmth, while in the summer a minimum of clothing was employed.

Leadership, particularly with the Atsugewi, was of stronger quality than in many California groups. Each village had a hereditary chieftain. This man, although possessing great prestige and authority, was still bound by the requirement that he continually keep the interests of his people at heart. His functions of speech making, and economic, social and political leadership were similar to his equivalent in other groups.

The social customs of the Achomawi and Atsugewi differed little from the valley people. The significance attached to birth, puberty, marriage and death prompted a variety of somewhat typical crisis rites. Exception to this included a more complicated marriage arrangement among the Atsugewi in which payment was made for a wife either in goods or through a work arrangement by the prospective bridegroom. Steven Powers noted that the life of an Achomawi wife was: "as degraded and servile a position as any," in which she might be brutalized by her husband at will and become a slave to her husband's brother upon the death of her first mate. However, the marriage relationship was still the loose arrangement evident in most California groups. Flexed burial was ordinarily practiced; the only exception being an occasional cremation by the Atsugewi. In general, few ceremonies invaded the culture of these people.

Mythology in this region followed the pattern of Central California. A horde of natural spirits closely associated with shamanism and mythology pervaded this section. The Atsugewi conceived of a dual creatorship by two animals with the silver fox serving as chief planner and creator. The Achomawi were similar in concept, believing that the earth was begun by the coyote and eagle, while the coyote and fox were responsible for man and the animal kingdom. Shaman were men of influence in these mountain societies, undergoing a rigorous program of singing and fasting to acquire their magic. There were many aspects of shamanism which must be omitted for sake of brevity. Two exceptions to valley healing practices are noteworthy. The northeastern county natives relied on the idea of "pain," a mysterious cause of sickness which was received as "pains" directed toward the individuals by an alien and hostile shaman. The Achomawi and Atsugewi used an equally mysterious fetish called a "kaku," a bundle of feathers collected from remote places, as a source of healing powers.

The Pit River tribes were comparatively friendly people, who engaged in combat usually only in cases of revenge, insult or abduction of women and children. Traditionally the Modoc and Klamath were considered enemies because of their slave raiding ventures into the Pit River area. Although Powers characterized the Achomawi as "squalid, peaked and miserable savages," he did admit much of this could be attributed to white influence, adding that these people possessed "strong affection," and obvious sociability. He indicated that Achomawi women often visited one another, and talked at length, their typical conversation including: "their youngest children, how many strings of shells one man paid another for his daughter, and at the last dance, how they had the head of a Modoc." A Mr. Hall, who married an Indian woman and lived with the Pit River people in the 1860's and 70's, described them as "very filthy . . . bathe only as amusement and comfort in the warm weather and as a cure for diseases." He further indicated that his adopted people had a mania for gambling, which they did "day and night for weeks," amid much cheating and singing. Hall admitted that they were very fond of their children, but never corrected them,

and indicated indolence as a major Indian vice. His characterization of the Pit River people was not complimentary. "They have very little character," Hall wrote, adding that most Indians stole when they had opportunity and were treacherous and deceitful. In concluding his remarks, Hall indicated his lack of insight into the native personality. He declared: "Ten years ago I thought I understood the Indian disposition and character, but the more I study them, the less I know of them. You never know what an Indian will do under certain circumstances."

To conclude this summary of Shasta County Indian life, a statement regarding the interaction of settlers and natives is in order. As was generally the case elsewhere, there was a poor relationship between Indians and whites in Shasta County. Numerous Indian "incidents" caused white retaliation, which eventually led to the extermination of Shasta County Indians as tribal groups, especially in the southern part of the county. Quite often thievery or maliciousness by Indians resulted in the wholesale massacre of natives completely unresponsible for the crimes. Three incidents recorded in the 1850's by the Shasta *Courier* present cases in point.

Terming this incident "an unfortunate occurrence," the *Courier* of March 26, 1853, revealed:

> An Indian was shot the other day at Woodman's Ranch on the east side of the Sacramento River under rather unfortunate circumstances. It seems that several men of one of the tribes were being examined upon accusation of stealing an ox. From some cause some of them became frightened and broke and ran, when the owner of the missing ox immediately shot down one of the absconding party. The next day the ox was found mired in the mud. This is a most unfortunate occurrence and may eventuate in the death of some innocent white man.

On October 8, 1853, a small clipping in the *Courier* stated:

> Two Indians were killed by Mr. Mackley, son of the gentleman whose death we noted last week. The Indians were friendly to the whites and were in search of strayed cattle, but were unfortunately not recognized as such by Mr. Mackley.

The February 25, 1854, *Courier* presents another episode that without exaggeration can be described as typical:

> We are informed by Mr. Gardner Brooks, that on Friday, the 17th inst., a party of nineteen white men started from Mr. Casey's on Clover Creek for the purpose of whipping a number of Indians, who, the day previous, had stolen some stock from Hooper's ranch on Oak Run. The first rancherie they attacked contained but one Indian man, whom they killed. They next fell upon the rancherie of the tribe headed by "Whitossa" killing eight men and seriously wounding five others.

The standard philosophy regarding the natives and the value placed upon their lives is aptly presented by a *Courier* editorial of April 2, 1853. This barbaric piece of journalism was prompted by the killing of a Lt. Edward Russell, stationed at Ft. Reading, by Indians. It said:

> We repeat a remark in our last number, "What are the lives of a hundred or a 1000 of these savages to the life of a single American citizen—to the life of Lt. Russell?" Our citizens below should not censure us and call us inhuman if we fight the Indians in their own mode of warfare . . . We say, shoot them down wherever you find them. Slay them as you would so many panthers and bears. Show them no mercy until they give satisfactory evidence of a sincere wish for peace.

The most widely known Indian encounter locally was the Battle of Bloody Island in 1844. In this fracas a group of men led by Sam Hensley routed a disorganized force of natives in an engagement at a point on the Sacramento River near the present division of Shasta and Tehama counties. This location has subsequently been called Bloody Island and a creek in the vicinity Battle Creek.

Pierson B. Reading, the first landowner in Shasta County, signed a pact known as the Cottonwood Treaty with the local natives in 1851. The Indians, by this document, were allotted a poor section of land thirty-five miles square at the head of the Sacramento Valley between Mt. Shasta, the Nevada and Coast Ranges. Despite the apparent unfairness of this treaty, Reading

was highly regarded by the native peoples, and served as their protector against white retaliation. In fact they called him "Shekta" or great chief. In 1852 Reading's name was placed upon a fort established on Cow Creek to assist in the protection of white settlers.

In the northern section of the county the Indian-white relationship was somewhat more amiable. However, there were several episodes which marred this tranquility. The first dates back to the northward trip of Peter S. Ogden in 1833. This explorer reported "trouble with the Indians in the Fall River area." Initial white settlement, that of Bowles, Rogers and Harry Lockhart in 1856, was also demolished by Hat Creek tribesmen. These killings brought forth the Pit River Rangers, a motley contingent from Yreka, who wreaked vengeance upon some sixty innocent natives. Further depredations upon the Pit River Indians were carried out by notorious Indian killer, Sam Lockhart, in revenge for the death of his brother. The year 1857 witnessed the erection of Ft. Crook in the mountain valley area. Even with the fort, problems occurred. A *Courier* account of September 17, 1859, informed its readers that:

> August 18 Nap Mellroy and David Wells were killed on Hat Creek. The citizens met and nineteen men organized and found the Indians at Roff's rancheria . . . They attacked at dawn and killed at least twenty-two warriors and forty squaws and children.

The October 8th and 22nd, 1859, and January 21st, 1860, *Couriers* carried additional articles regarding atrocities performed upon the Pit River natives. By the end of the 60's the Indians in the Fall River area were mainly relegated to their communities known as rancheries, and except for a few "scares" in the early 70's the problems were over. This is not to say that the mountain area natives were out and out pacifists. During the early days there was considerable conflict between these tribes and the Modoc and Klamath people to the north. The Atsugewi or Hat Creeks, as the whites called them, were particularly recognized for their relish of a good fight. Nevertheless, the northern county area showed at least a degree of contrast to that of southern Shasta County in respect to Indian-pioneer conflict.

The early 1860's saw the resumption of hostilities in southern Shasta County which culminated in 1864 and 1866 in the most well known Indian "incidents." The first of these was the Allen and Jones murders which resulted in the almost complete extermination of the Yana tribe. The murder of Mrs. Catherine Allen on September 8, 1864, took place on her husband's ranch twelve miles east of Millville. The crime was perpetrated by two Indians who entered the house, shot Mrs. Allen, beat the four Allen children unconscious and left them for dead. The children, however, recovered. A neighbor who happened upon the scene, N. Van Berry, was also shot by the savages, but he too survived. The second murder took place a day later fourteen miles from the Allen's on a ranch four miles from Copper City on the Shasta-Copper City road. Killed was Mrs. Arkansas Jones, also a rancher's wife, this time by twelve or thirteen Indians intent upon plunder. These killings created "the most intense excitement throughout our county" according to the Shasta *Courier*, which called the natives "monsters in human form" and resulted in the formation of two companies bent upon reprisal—one from the Cow Creek-Millville section and the other from Copper City. Approximately a month after the killings, residents of the area on the east side of the river put their thoughts into writing—the first resolution drafted at Millville on October 8th to be answered by a Churntown declaration three days later. The former treatise issued an ultimatum to the east side natives: either get out of the region in ten days as living Indians or become dead ones. On the other hand the Churntown statement described the Millville resolution as "inconsistent with humanity . . . and the best interests of the people," and supported their words with the threat that: "We will use all fair and honorable means to prevent the execution of those (Millville) resolutions." Both parties in a sense won their point. The Millville partisans were afforded the dubious pleasure of witnessing the extermination of the Yana tribe, while the Churntownites saw the preservation of the Wintu residing in their area.

Meanwhile, the barbarous assault on the Yana continued throughout 1864. The most fiendish slaughter took place at the head of Oak Run Creek where three hundred Yana attending a religious dance were annihilated. Many brutal and sadistic atrocities could be recounted. One told by Ann Hunt in the 1960 *Covered Wagon* will suffice:

A few miles north of Millville lived a Yana girl named Eliza, industrious and much liked by those who knew her. She was working for a farmer at the time. The party stopped before this house, and three of the men entered it. "Eliza, come out," said one of them, "we are going to kill you." She begged for her life. To the spokesman, who had worked for her employer some time before, she said, "Don't kill me; when you were here I cooked for you; I washed for you; I was kind to you; I never asked pay of you; don't kill me now." Her prayers were in vain. They took Eliza, with her aunt and uncle, a short distance from the house and shot the three. My informant counted eleven bullets in Eliza's breast. After this murder the party took a drink and started, but the leader in killing Eliza said, "I don't think the little squaw is dead yet." So he turned back and smashed her skull with his musket. The man who counted the bullet holes in her bosom, himself a white man, saw her after the skull was broken.

The second such "incident" was the killing of Mrs. George Dersh on Bear Creek northeast of Anderson (then the American Ranch). The Dersches had settled on this site during the winter of 1860-61. While John Dersch was away to get a load of lumber, an Indian band of fifteen men approached the house and shot Mrs. Dersch as she ran to the orchard. The two Dersch children and John's blind brother were in the orchard, but hid and were not harmed. After this tragedy, a posse was formed which made the rounds of southern Shasta County ranches, wantonly killing Indians at each place.

Thus by the opening of the 20th Century the Indian was either slaughtered or dispersed in this area. The Wintun tribe, estimated at a population of 12,000 in 1870 had dropped to 1,000 by 1910. By the 1930's tribal groups were a thing of the past. At the present time, local Indians typically own a small holding and support themselves as best they can by various kinds of labor.

Today the Indian, although extinct in a tribal sense, has left his mark on this county. The name of the county itself, and some local names are considered to be Indian terms. Evidences of Indian life—arrowheads, markings on rocks, and burial areas—are discovered periodically. Finally, many local Indians have assumed a variety of occupations and become useful citizens of Shasta County.