

SOUTHERN PAIUTE



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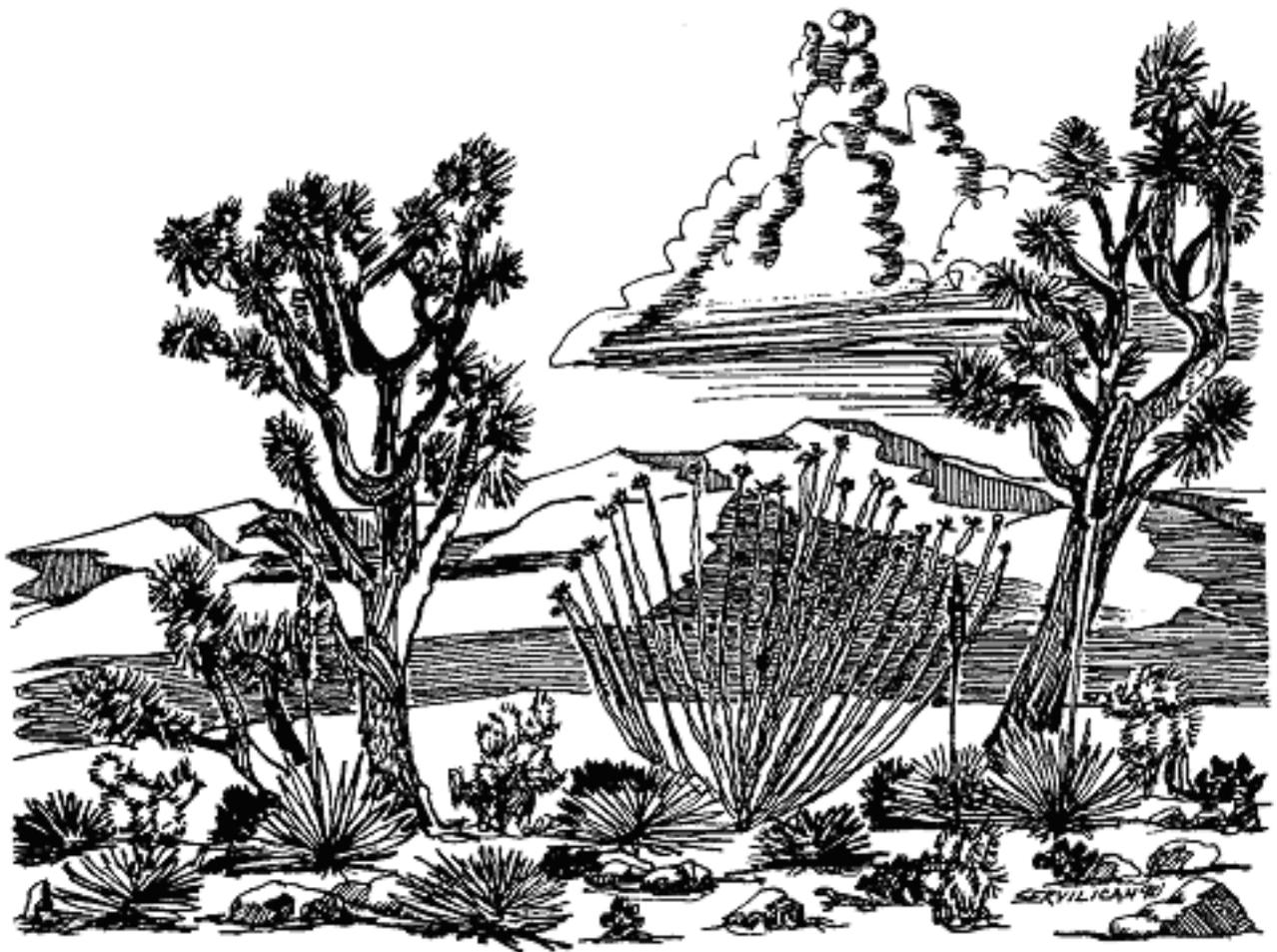
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The Southern Paiute

The Southern Paiute or “the Nuwuvi,” call themselves “the People.” The Shoshone and Northern Paiute are related to the Southern Paiute. They share many similar cultural traits such as foods, basketry, and animals used for hunting. These similarities are due to the same environmental factors.

The Nuwuvi people live in southern Nevada, southern Utah, southern California, and northern Arizona. They have many characteristics that are unique to their culture and traditions.

The Southern Paiute are divided into individual bands. Although they belong to the same tribe, each band is unique. For example, the Kaibab Band pronounces words differently than the Moapa Band. In the Kaibab dialect, the word snake is pronounced “quats” and in the Moapa dialect it is pronounced “tugav.”



The Southern Paiute bands are listed here:

NEVADA

Las Vegas - Las Vegas
Moapa - Moapa
Pahrumpats - Pahrump
Pahrnagats - Pahrnagat Valley
Panaca - Panaca

UTAH

Antarianunts - Henry Mountains
Cedar - Cedar City
Kaiparowits - Escalante
Saint George - Saint George
Beaver - Beaver
Gunlock - Gunlock
Panguitch - Panguitch

ARIZONA

Chemehuevi - Parker
Kaibab - Kaibab Plateau
San Juan - San Juan River
Shivwits - Shivwits Plateau
Uinkaret - Uinkaret Plateau

Each band had its own territory and land areas in which it traveled and gathered food, or planted its crops.

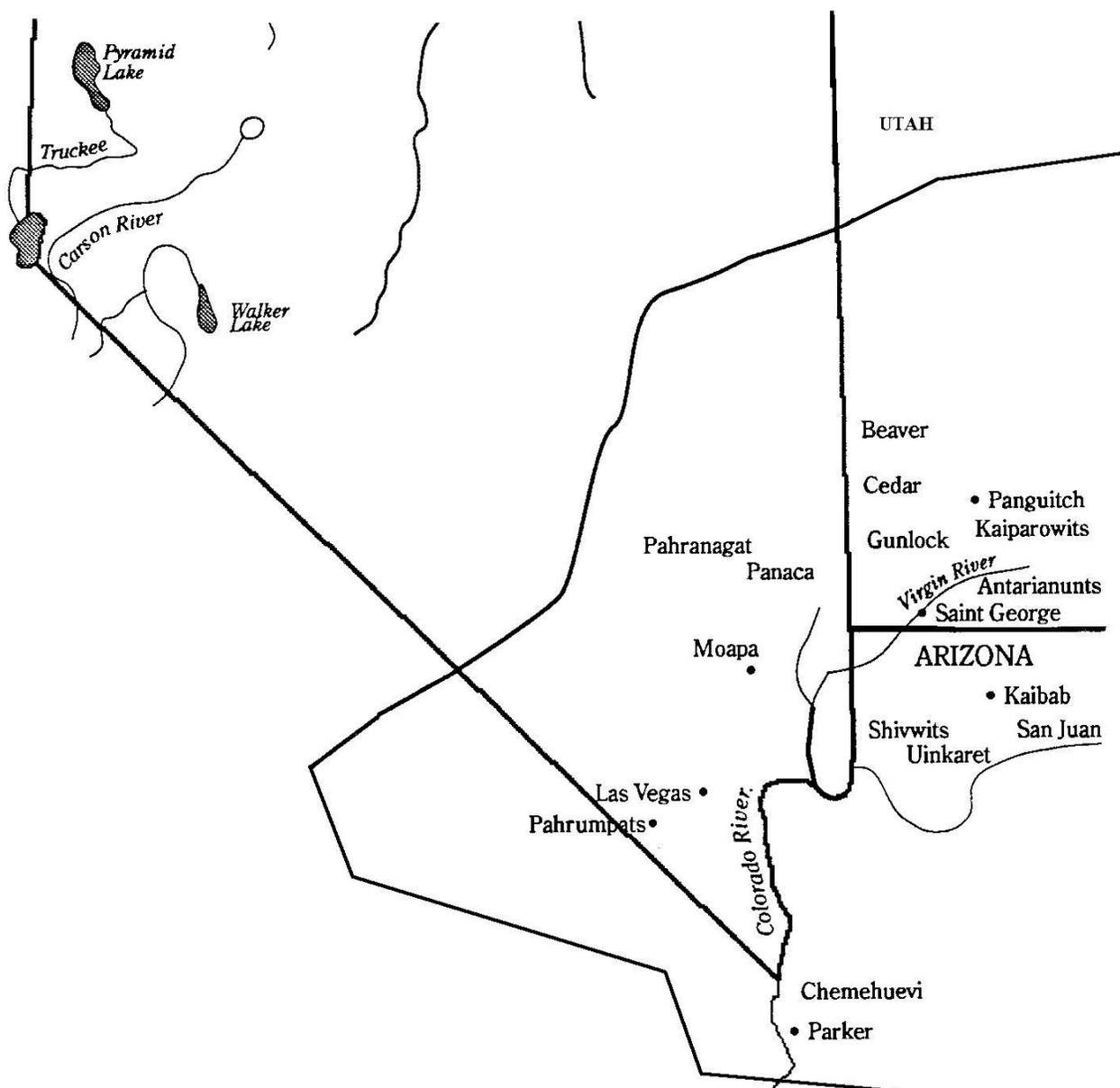
Bands would trade with other bands and tribes to acquire various items such as food, clothing, cloth, and tools.



Southern Paiute Bands

LOCATION: Seventeen identifiable groups at Southern Paiute were located in the previously mentioned areas of southern Nevada, southern Utah, southern California, and northern Arizona.

The names for these bands are listed for the communities they are located near. The original names of the bands were based upon the type of food gathered or the animals hunted in a particular area.



YEARLY SURVIVAL

The Southern Paiute moved to different areas according to a carefully planned cycle. This cycle evolved around the seasons of the year.

Spring

Small insects and rattlesnakes were eaten in the spring. Big game was not hunted because the animals were producing offspring and the hides and furs were not of a quality that could be used.

The Nuwuvi cultivated and fanned crops such as corn, cowpeas, mushmelons, watermelons, amaranth, winter wheat, squash, beans, pumpkin, and sunflowers. They would plant their corns in early spring, leave to gather early season plants, and return to tend and harvest the crops.

Planting methods included:

1. A flood irrigation system using ditches that diverted water from rivers, streams, and springs.
2. Digging pits three feet across by six feet deep. These pits would collect rain or spring water. This would water the plants growing in small mounds inside the pit. A wooden shovel and spade-type instrument were the only tools used.

SUMMER

The summer shelter was a shade or windbreak type structure made from willows, juniper, and/or brush. These structures could be either flat or dome shaped.

Berries, mesquite beans, and other plants were picked during the summer to supplement the diet. In late summer, big game such as deer, antelope, and mountain sheep were hunted and the meat was dried. Hides were dried and saved for tanning in the winter months.

Bows and arrows were used for hunting, especially big game. Nets and clubs were used for the small game. Knives were made from bone or certain types of stone.



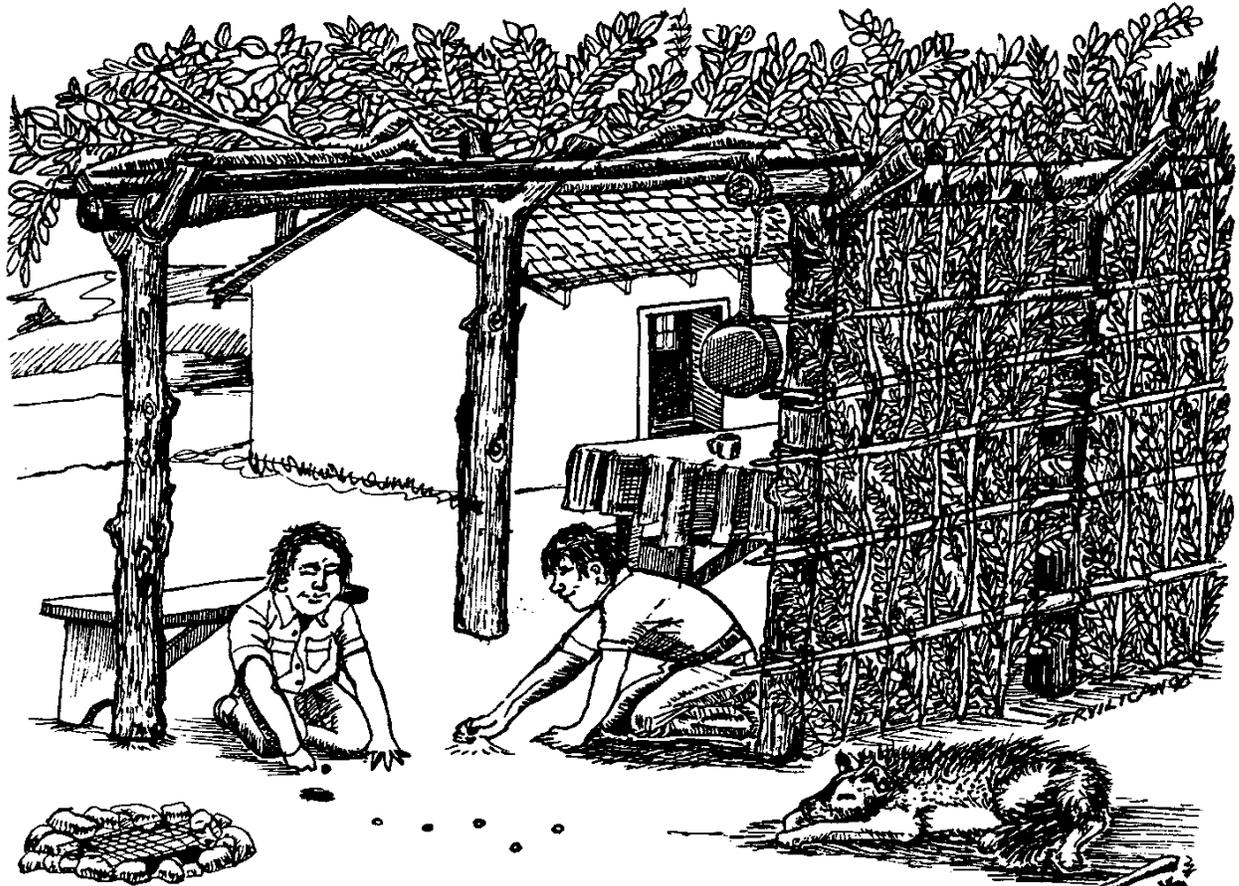
bighorn sheep



deer

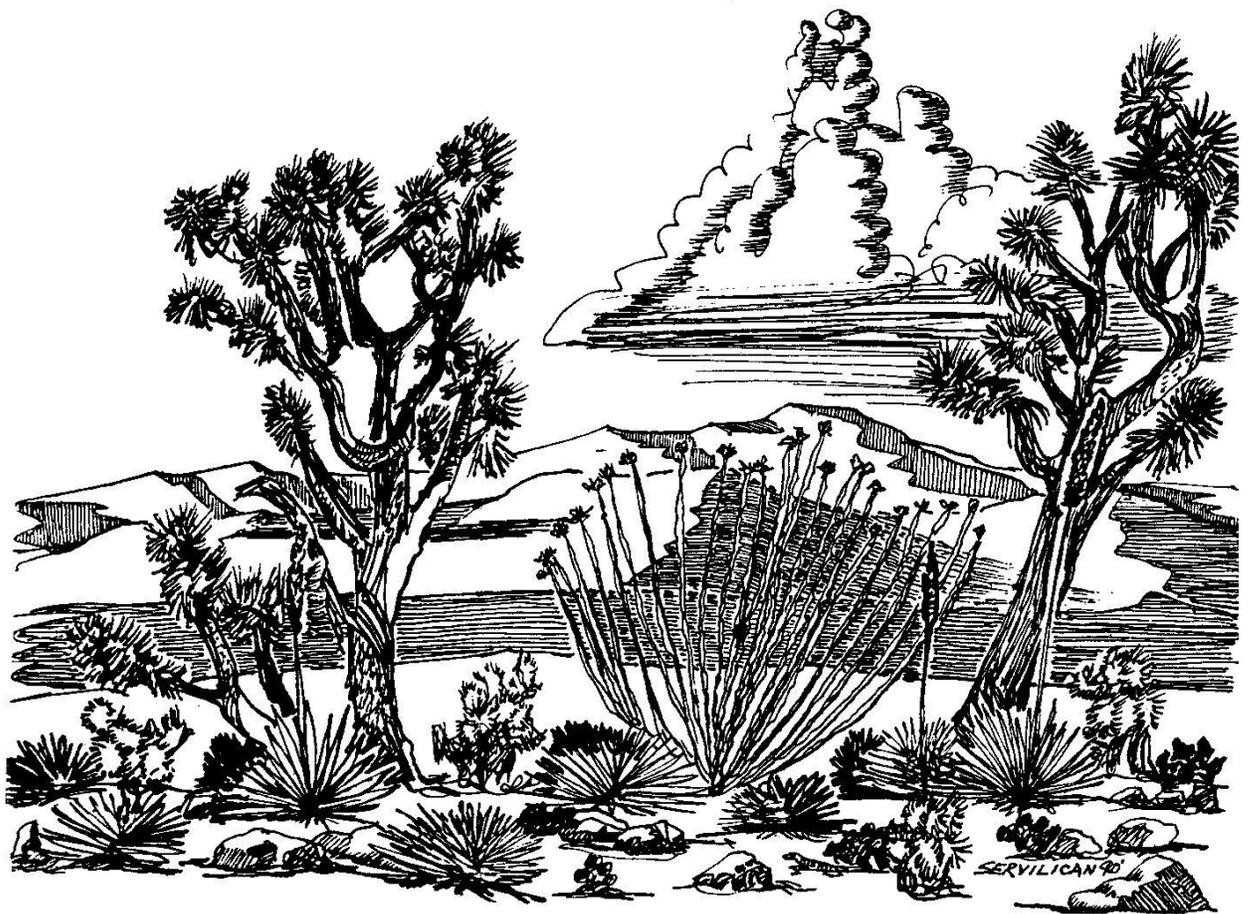


pronghorn antelope



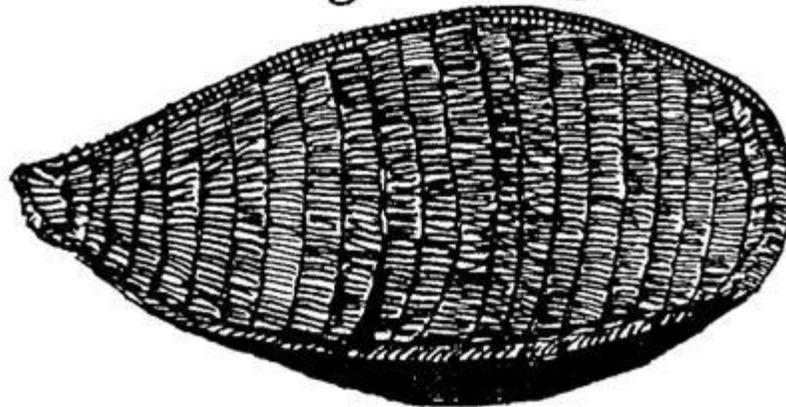
FALL

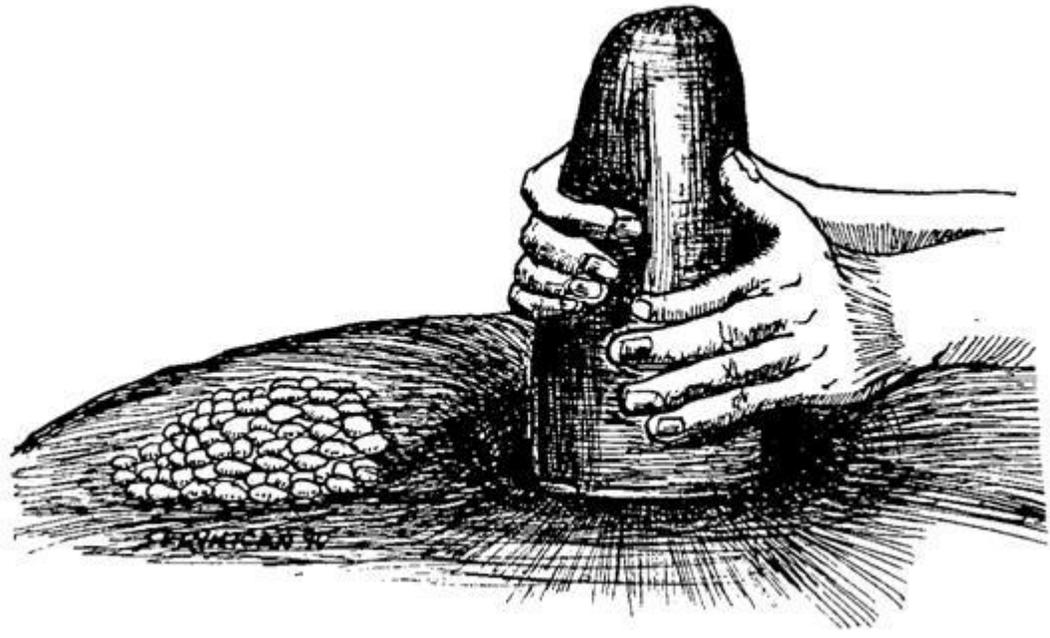
The bands would travel to different areas at just the right times to gather the ripening foods, or hunt migrating game in specific locations. Food was stored in caves and other safe places where the Nuwuvi would return in the winter months. Foods gathered included mesquite, screw beans, Indian spinach, agave, pinenuts, various seeds, Indian tea, sunflowers, berries and prickly pear cactus.



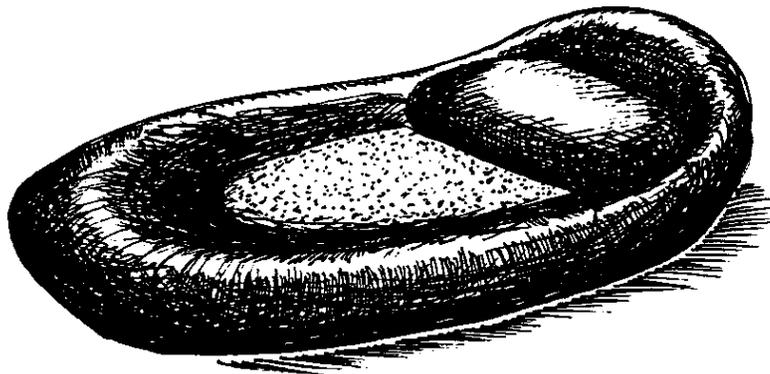


Winnowing trays were
used to separate the nutmeats
from the shells.
The nuts were gently tossed into
the air and a breeze
would carry away the shells
and other debris, leaving the
clean nutmeats
in the tray.





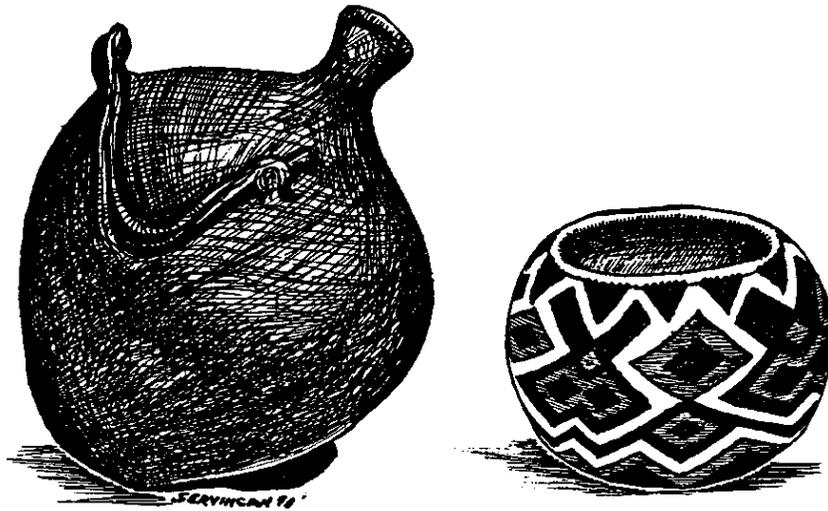
Grinding stones were used to hull seeds and mill flour. Hulling of the seeds was done to remove the shells from the nutmeats. The nutmeats were ground into flour for soups and breads.



WINTER

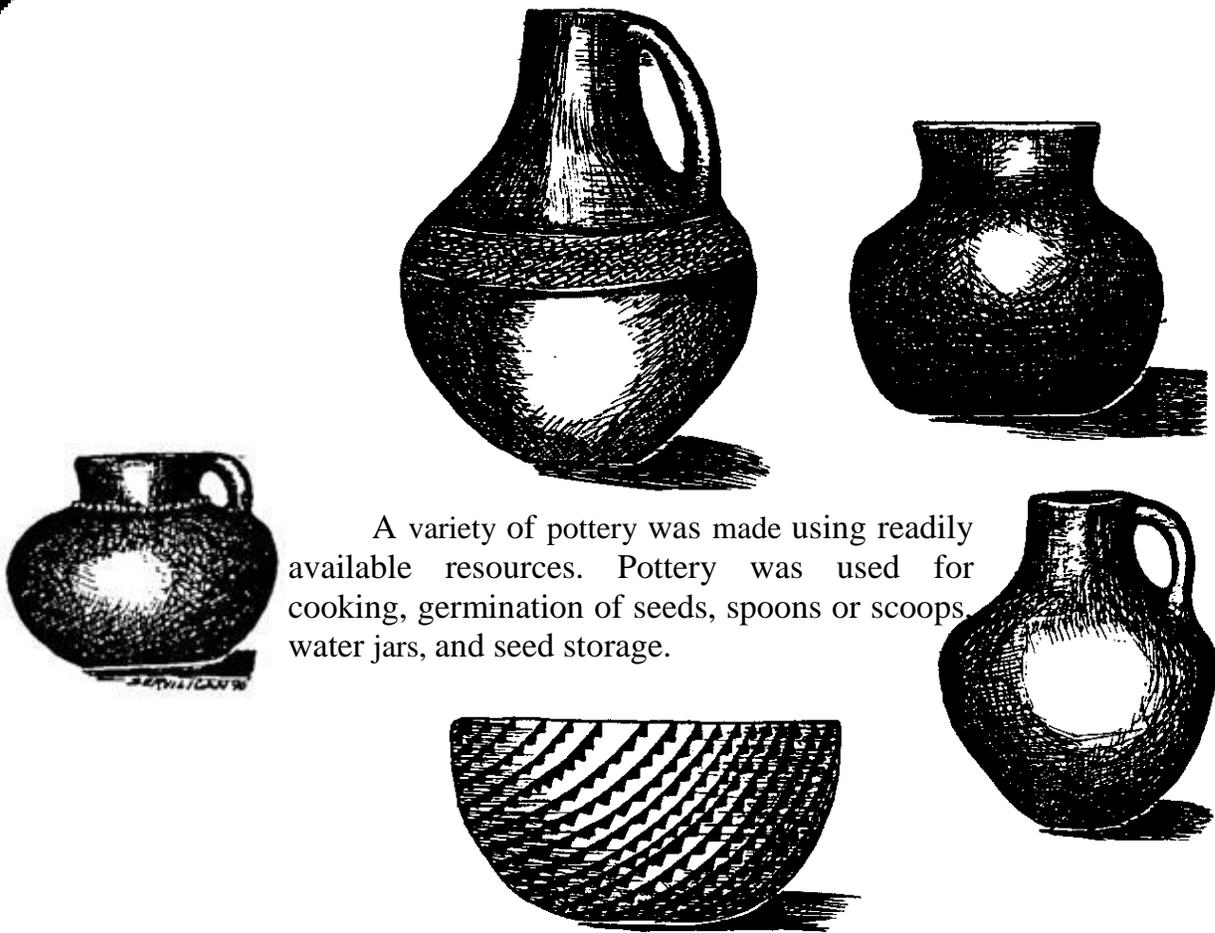
Winter homesites varied with each band. Some chose to winter at the higher elevations where they had plenty of fuel, food stores, and snow could be utilized for water. If the pinenuts were not a staple food, winter was generally spent at the foot of hills or in canyons. Caves were used as winter dwellings, or if no caves were available, a dirt covered shelter was made.

Small game was the chief source of protein. Rabbits were hunted individually or in drives. Other small game included woodrats, mice, gophers, squirrels, chipmunks, and birds. Some groups also ate lizards, snakes, chuckwallas, and tortoise. Tanned hides such as buckskin, antelope skin, and rabbit fur provided clothing for warmth and shoes. Cloth made from various plants such as sage, grass, and pine were used for skirts, shirts, hats, and leggings. Awls were made from bone or stone and used for serving and cooking.



Baskets were made from a variety of grass, willow, and bark. These included winnowing/parching trays, burden baskets, and seed beaters, cooking baskets, water jugs, and cradleboards. These baskets were made in the wintertime and were lightweight so that they could be carried with the group when they traveled.

Winter was also a favorite time for the family for telling stories and songs.



A variety of pottery was made using readily available resources. Pottery was used for cooking, germination of seeds, spoons or scoops, water jars, and seed storage.

One group of Southern Paiute made a large pot for ferrying children across the river.



GOVERNMENT AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

The Southern Paiute lived in small groups or bands. Various leaders were in charge of different group activities, such as food gathering, hunting, and social gathering. These leaders were different for various activities. The group could change a leader if they were dissatisfied with the person. Leadership was not passed down from a father to son. A person had to earn the respect of the group in order to become a leader.



SONGS AND STORIES

Songs served many purposes. Most songs served to identify places or events. Songs were used for events or activities which included funerals, salt gatherings, and hunting animals such as deer, mountain sheep, bird and quails. Coyote songs were used to tell stories for entertainment.

Four types of musical instruments have been identified. They are as follows:

1. Flageolet - a length of elderberry wood with the pith removed, similar to a flute. This was used by young boys but not used for love songs as is popularly believed.
2. Rasp - two sticks that were either rubbed against each other or held in the same hand and shaken.
3. Basket Drum.
4. Gourd rattle.

Stories

Stories served to record the history of a group. Stories were used to teach values, customs, social norms, and for entertainment. Many women knew the tales, but the men were the storytellers. Stories were told on winter evenings because if stories were told in the summer, it was believed, snake bite might occur.

SOUTHERN PAIUTE LANGUAGE

English

Southern Paiute

Rabbit

Kamu

Fish

Pagu'ts

Deer

Tuhu'i

House

Kan

One

Suwi

Two

Wai

Three

Pahi

Four

Watsu'i

Five

Manu'gi

Six

Na'vai

Seven

Mukw'ca

Eight

Nahnsuwi

Nine

Yuwi'pe

Ten

Masu

PRESENT DAY

The Nuwuvi of today live in many places. Some live on the Moapa Indian Reservation, east of Las Vegas. Others live and work off the reservation in communities that were built at the homesites of their forefathers. Some of these include Kaibab, Las Vegas, Cedar City, Konash, and Richfield.

Nuwuvi of today work in many occupations including ranchers, farmers, teachers, food services personnel, business men and women and a number of other vocations.

Many Nuwuvi carry on the culture and ways of their ancestors today. These include hunting, fishing, and crafts such as beadwork, basketry, and buckskin work Rodeos, pow-wows, hand games, and sporting events continue to carry on the music, dances, and social interaction that was so vital to the Nuwuvi of yesterday.

The tribal bands of today are governed by tribal councils which are elected by the people. Today the tribal governments are actively involved in the welfare of their people. For instance, the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe is financially stable due to economic growth from the smokeshop on the reservation. The Moapa Band of Southern Paiutes is engaged in farming enterprises and firework sales. Presently, the tribal council is negotiating a multi-million dollar cogeneration plant. Today the Nuwuvi live in modern homes with all modern facilities. Children attend the schools located in the nearby communities.

The Utah Paiutes were restored to federal status on April 3, 1980. Federal status allows tribes to operate their own government structure.

TOPSY CHAPEL SWAIN

Topsy Chapel Swain does not know when she was born. Topsy grew up in the ways of the old ones. She traveled from place to place, harvesting the crops of the ranches in Glendale, Overton, and Logandale. She remembers when the federal government ordered the Paiutes to move to the reservation. She said, "We didn't really know why the white people were taking our land. Now the younger people know why, and they're getting some of our land back" (*Nevada Magazine*, 7/89). Known for her skill as a basketmaker, she is one of the few who still have the knowledge of this art that was so vital to the survival of the Paiute. Topsy Swain passed away in 1990.



ILEE MORFY CASTILLO

Ilee Morfy Castillo was born in 1913 west of Las Vegas, Nevada. Her father was Joe Morfy and her mother was Tutupaum. When she was eleven years old, she was taken away to the Indian Boarding School at Ft Mohave, Arizona.

Ilee's experience at the Ft Mohave school were not happy ones. Students were not allowed to speak their native language. Ilee said, "If we did, we had our mouths washed out with soap and sometimes were locked up in the attic for days with only bread and water to eat and drink." Many of the students ran away from school, Ilee ran away twice and was whipped after she was caught. The dormitory matron permitted Ilee to choose the size of whip, thick or thin, Ilee said, "I always chose the thick one because it didn't hurt much." Another punishment was to make the students march back and forth "for what seemed like an hour to us." The boys would have to wear leg irons.

All the students at the school had to dress alike and were divided in companies - A, B, and C. Each student wore an identification number. Ilee was in company B, number 107.

Ilee went to Los Angeles as many of the students did in the summer. The girls who went there would go to school and work as domestic help. These jobs included working in the laundry, kitchen, waiting on tables, and sewing clothing. While in Los Angeles, the students were taken to movies, baseball games and picnics.

Ilee returned home to Las Vegas in 1929, where she resided thereafter.

STELLA SMITH

Stella Smith, one of the oldest residents on the Las Vegas Indian Colony, was born somewhere around 1895. Her parents were Southern Paiutes, Tracy Domache Smith and Bishop Smith. They lived in the traditional ways of the people in the area. When she was a child her family farmed melon, corn, and black-eyed peas. She remembers living in a willow home that was comfortable and pleasant, especially the fresh air.

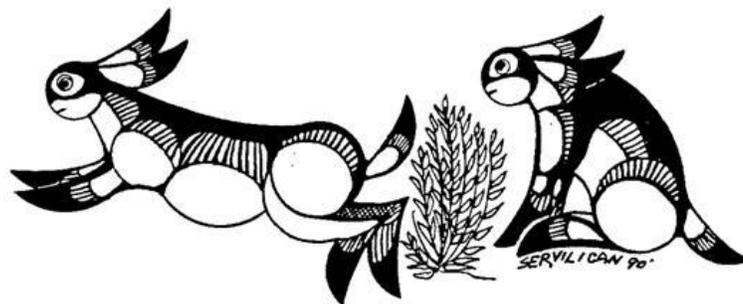
Stella was sent to school at Fort Mohave at an early age. She then moved to Phoenix, where she became sick and had to spend two years in the hospital. Returning to the Las Vegas Indian Colony in 1932, she realized things had changed. Many of the Indian people now worked on ranches and various jobs in the city. Stella worked as a housekeeper for many years in Las Vegas. At that time, many of the Indian people also lived in houses similar to the white man. Stella remembers that brush homes were still used in the colony until about 1950. Stella also remembers when she ate pinenut mush, cactus, deer meat, turtle meat, and fish. Although she does not depend on these foods now because canned foods are available, she still enjoys eating the foods she ate as a child.

TONEY TILLOHASH

Toney Tillohash was born about 1885. He and his parents lived on a small farm and garden in Moccasin, Arizona, that the Mormons had given them. Toney lived in Moccasin until his parents died. He then lived and worked on the farm of Jonathan and Alvin Heaton, two Mormons who also lived in the area. He left Moccasin in 1904 and attended school at the Teller Institute in Grand Junction, Colorado. In 1905, he moved to Pennsylvania and attended school at Carlisle. There he learned harness-making skills and served as an informant for the linguist Edward Sapir. The information Toney provided was used as the basis of Sapir's book, *Southern Paiute, A Shoshonean Language*.

Toney was not allowed to return home for vacations so he spent his summers working on farms in Pennsylvania. Toney returned from Carlisle after five years and moved to the Shivwits Reservation. There he married a Shivwit woman, Bessie, and they worked a small farm. During his life he worked as a cattle driver, a horse breaker, a farmhand and a miner in the mines around Moapa, Nevada. Tony was employed at Zion National Park where he supplied the Paiute names for the different geographical features in the area. The Indian specialist accused Toney of giving the wrong names for some of the areas. Toney said, "I give the names of my grandfather's land. It's there. It was there. Those are the names put there by the Indians."

Toney served as the Chairman of the Shivwits Tribal Council and was instrumental in the formation of the Shivwits tribal government. During this time, Toney read in a newspaper about a land claims hearing that was to be held in Moapa, Nevada. The claims hearing officials had not notified all the Southern Paiute of this meeting. Realizing important decisions might be made that would affect them, Toney and some other people went to the hearing. Toney discussed the land claims issue with the land claims attorneys, and was instrumental in helping to win the claim for the Paiute people.



SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL DATES

Several historical occurrences permanently altered the way of life of the Nuwuvi.

1776: The Escalante-Domingues expedition became the first Europeans to enter the Nuwuvi territory. The purpose of this expedition was to find a shorter travel route from Santa Fe to current day Monterey, California. This expedition was named after the Spanish friar whose purpose was also to “civilize” and “save” the Indians by converting them to Christianity.

Effect: This expedition opened the way for other explorers who had previously not explored the Great Basin area.

1800s: The Spanish explorers, traders, and slavers established the Old Spanish Trail connecting Santa Fe to Monterey, California. The Spanish, Utes, and Navajo would steal the Nuwuvi women and children and sell them as slaves. The livestock herders would also use the Nuwuvi crops to forage their animals. This destroyed the food that was to be used in the winter months.

Effect: The population of the Nuwuvi was reduced by about one half. The Nuwuvi also moved away from the prime farming areas to avoid contact with the traders. There was fear of kidnapping and destruction.

Mid-1800s: The Mormon settlements moved into southern Nevada. The best land was claimed for homesites. This was also the home of the Nuwuvi. The Utah Territory legalized indentured servitude, which allowed the Mormons to use the Nuwuvi as slave labor. Also the Nuwuvi were not allowed to attend school.

Effect: The Nuwuvi were forced to move from their homes and work for the people who claimed the land. Their way of life changed from one of gathering, planting, and hunting to one of working for wages. The Nuwuvi became dependent on the ranchers for employment and worked for minimum wages. They were unable to develop their own ranches because the Mormon settlers claimed the land and told the Nuwuvi that they were the ones who were trespassing.

1873-1875: President U.S. Grant created the Moapa reservation of 3,900 acres. Two years later the reservation was reduced to 1,000 acres. This reservation was to be set aside for all of the Southern Paiute of Nevada

1980: An additional 70,000 acres were restored to the Southern Paiute Tribe in 1980.

Effect: The original land base on which the Nuwuvi lived and roamed for subsistence was drastically reduced from approximately 2 million acres to 1,000 acres with the creation of the reservation. The Nuwuvi were unable to continue to live the way they had before. There was not enough land for all the Nuwuvi to live on, so many did not or could not live on the reservation. They lived on ranches or near the towns where they originally lived. The reservation was reduced in 1875 because white settlers had claimed the land that was part of the reservation and the U.S. Government was unwilling to make the settlers move. During this time the agents who were to assist in managing the reservation would sell the Nuwuvi crops and pasture. The agent would keep the money he received for himself.

1890: The State of Nevada created the Stewart Indian School located in Carson City, Nevada. Stewart Indian School was created to educate the children of Nuwuvi in the skills and ways of the white culture. Most of the Nuwuvi children were forced to go to Stewart or another boarding school to get an elementary and secondary education, and to also learn a trade.

Effect: The Nuwuvi children were removed from their families and homes and placed in a military school type of environment that was completely different from any they had known. The Nuwuvi language and culture was forbidden from being spoken and recognized so that it became almost non-existent today. The values and knowledge of the Nuwuvi was destroyed and replaced by the values of the European culture.