

Cocopah Elder's Words of the Wise



Mar.-Apr. 2015

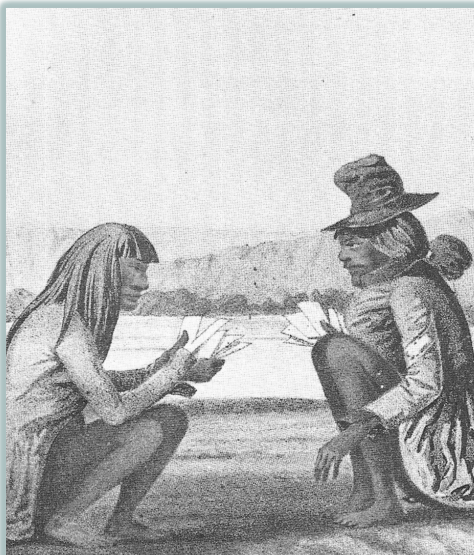
A Piece of Cocopah History: The Cocopah People

(Excerpt from: *The Cocopah People* by Anita Alvarez de Williams)

(Continued from the previous edition)

How then can we suffer Christians to come among us? We are happy already; and so long as we are free, we shall remain so. Our nation is disposed to be at peace with the white men, but our warriors have sworn that they will not suffer you to dwell amongst them." The extremes of virtue and evil represented in this oration, and the speech itself represent another element of Cocopah culture; the orator and his important place within Cocopah social organization.

Speeches were made to incite war, funeral orators were among recognized community leaders, and the head man of a family group made speeches when



Cocopah men playing cards. A European game they borrowed while dressed in coats and hats acquired from the settling along the Colorado River as seen in this sketch.

visitors came. It was and is, furthermore, through constant, well-defined, highly idealized "talks" that Cocopah parents trained their children in rules of conduct. These orally transmitted rules for proper behavior are of basic importance to the Cocopah, and such rules are apparently of very ancient origin.

They appear in the Cocopah creation myths and are mentioned in the works of both of the anthropologists who carried out major studies of the Cocopah. The results of such instruction are still evident among the contemporary Arizona Cocopah.

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Elder Spotlight: Lorelei Phillips

By: *Lynetta Thomas*



Lorelei Phillips

Mrs.

Lorelei Phillips was born July 30th 1954 at Yuma General Hospital.

She was the first born of four children and lived off highway 95, in a small home near Dead Man's Curve. She also remembers living on County 14th and near the mesa as a child. In 1967, Lorelei moved to the West Reservation.

Lorelei, attended O.L Carlisle in Somerton and she attended Phoenix Indian High School. After high school, she went to Lawrence, Kansas to attend Haskell Junior College where she stud-

ied finance. Lorelei says she enjoyed her college years in Kansas and meeting different tribes. While living in Kansas she visited Wounded Knee with college friends. It was a memorable time remembering the problems the native people went through with the government. Later she returned home to finish her college at Arizona Western College.

Lorelei, worked for the Cocopah Tribe in the Finance Department for many years. However, in 1997, she suffered a terrible car accident. This accident ended her active sports life. She played volleyball and basketball and she was a good softball pitcher. Lorelei, was active in sports throughout her life and misses playing.

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Special points of interest: Check out these online resources for more information on Native American issues and news

IndianCountryToday.com

Indiandcountrynews.com

Indianz.com - NativeTimes.com

Pechanga.net

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They maintain order amongst themselves with minimum policing. The relationship between the natives of the Colorado River delta with their next visitor, José Joaquín Arrillaga, in 1796 was far from friendly. Aside from the attitudes mentioned above, this animosity was probably influenced by two other factors, the rebellion of the mountain Indians of that era against the mountain and coastal missions and the fact that the traveling Spaniards were armed. Nevertheless, facts of interest are found in the journal of this expedition. Arrillaga reported seeing many fields and Indians, and commented that each house had at least one horse tied nearby. This information is especially interesting because eleven years earlier horses were only rarely to be found among the Cocopah and their riverine neighbors.

Another element of Cocopah culture having to do with travel and communication was first mentioned by Ensign José Velasquez in his record of a journey made in 1783 down from the mountains of Baja California across the Laguna Salada and around the southern tip of the Sierra Cucapá.

There, he and his companions found two trails, one leading north along the edge of the Hardy River, and the other going east to the mouth of the Colorado. This was the earliest record of some of the many routes employed by the Cocopah for purposes of trade, communication and travel. One of these trails, as just mentioned, led to the Gulf from which the Cocopah obtained seafood and shell for trade with other indigenous groups. Several established trails led west into the Sierra de Juárez for visiting and traveling

with friends and Pai Pai for wild sheep skins and for gathering acorns and piñon nuts. Of these trails up into the mountains, one led west across the north end of the Sierra Mayor (Sierra Cucapá) and crossed the arid Laguna Salada to the Sierra Juárez. Another led westward through a palm valley on one side of the Borrego Peak, descended the west side of the Sierra Cucapá, emerging near Agua de las Mujeres. It then struck out across the Laguna Salada to the mouth of Palomar Canyon at the base of the Sierra de Juárez. A third trail, probably the one used by Velasquez and perhaps by Arrillaga, passed around the southern point of El Mayor to Pozo Coyote (Coyote Well) where the trail divided. One branch went to Pozo Cenizo (Ash Well) and

“The Cocopah Women wore willow bark skirts, necklaces, and bracelets, curiously strung with shells.”

another to the south by Tres Pozos (Three Wells) and through Arroyo Grande to the mountains. One other trail was taken seasonally for food gathering. Led along the river to the large island at the mouth of the Hardy, and was used to go gather wild rice and water grass seeds. Other trails used by the Cocopah led to the northwest, where they were known at least as far as the lands of the Pomo Indians of the Northern California coast, and to the northeast to their friends the Maricopa on the Gila River in Arizona. The Cocopah also visited with the desert people of Sonora such as the Sand Papagos, and were probably known as far south as the coastal lands of the Seri.

The next recorded visitor to the Cocopah knew little of their land. Lt R. W. H. Hardy was an Englishman exploring the Gulf for pearls and coral. He sailed up the Colorado River and promptly became grounded on the bank of what is now known as the Hardy River. He spent nearly a month in Cocopah country awaiting the tides that would free him.

Although he scarcely left his ship, his forced stay in the midst of the native people has provided us with interesting information about the technology of the river people of that time. “The Cocopah women wore willow bark skirts and necklaces and bracelets curiously strung with shells.” The houses of the people, Hardy said, resembled those of the Seri except for the absence of turtle shells. He noted face and body painting among the people.

In some cases, the Cocopah painted their faces for therapeutic purposes, yet most of their face painting was very functional in preventing sunburn or chapping. The desert lands that stretch out from the delta include the fifth hottest desert in the world, and the lagoons and sloughs of the delta country reflect sunlight back on its human inhabitants. The Cocopah face paints protected them against the sun's rays and reflections inasmuch as most were mineral pigments.

The Cocopah used red hematite, black manganese dioxide, and made white pigment by burning an unidentified rock. Bulrush pollen provided yellow pigment. To paint their faces, the Cocopah mixed these pigments with oil from pumpkin seeds which served to augment the natural oils of the skin.

(Continued on the next edition)

COCOPAH AGRICULTURE

Clearing, Planting and Harvesting

(Excerpt from Cocopah Ethnography by William H. Kelly)

The Cocopah were careful to select good **seed** for future planting and they exercised considerable care in the protection of the seed in storage. Special ollas, storage baskets, and **gourds** were used for different kinds of seed, and these were ordinarily kept inside the **house**. It was said, if the family left their home for an extended trip, such as to gather **wild rice**, they put a tight seal of mixed mud and straw and placed the ollas in a crevice or shelter in the rocks of the nearby foothills or buried them in a sand hill. This precaution was taken to prevent anyone from eating the seed. Some families regularly hid their seed in this way rather than keep it in their homes. It is believed that if a person ate any of the seed during the **winter**, the balance of the seed would be stolen by birds and mice after it had been planted.

Seed was stored only from one year to the next, except on those occasions when the flood failed and little or no planting was accomplished. In this event, seed was held over for use during the following year. Informants stated that farmers along the main stream yearly stored twice as much seed as would be required so that in the event of a second flood the fields could be replanted. (This is a corollary of the frequently volunteered statement that late floods would sometimes ruin a planted field. No informants ever volunteered that they saved double quantities of seed, and the practice was denied until its necessity was pointed out. Such contradictions place a cloud upon much of the information gained by the interpreter-informant method, and they serve to warn the reader that even the most careful investigator cannot iron out all the doubts and contradictions that accumulate in his field notes.)

Preserving our past:

(Picture from: The Cocopah People by Anita Alvarez de Williams)



Two Yuman Speaking Indians, probably Cocopah's. On board a hydrological sip in 1874.

Cocopah Words of the Month

Cocopah words used in article:

Try to find the words in **bold** (Cocopah language words from the article)

Seeds – **Yas**

Plant – **I – Chashaach**

House – **wa**

Wild rice – **Aaruss Hlyak**

Winter – **xeesuur**

Gourd - **xalma**

Sand hill – **mat sh'aa maañu**

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Calendar of Events

March:

5th– **Commodities**

10th—**Elders' Language Meeting**

April:

3rd–**Good Friday**

5th– **Easter Sunday**

15th—**Cocopah Patent Day**

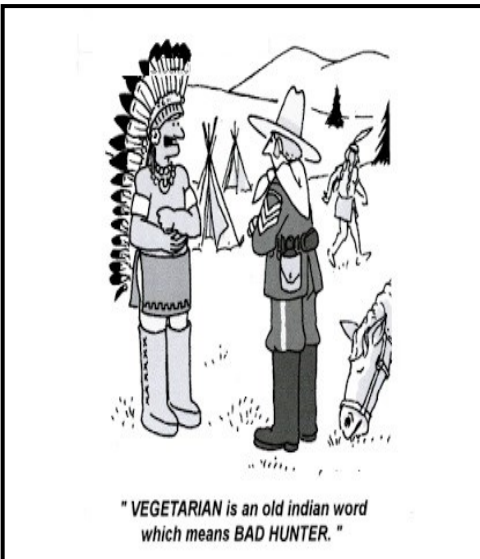
**Women's Sewing Circle. Every Monday 11am Community Center.*

Cocopah Humor

Res Dogs?

Between the reservation and the city, there is a road that marks the boundary lines. On one side of the road are the res dogs, and they just kind of lie around staying cool. On the city side are the city dogs, and they always chase cars as they go down the road, barking, "Bow-wow, Bow-wow". One day the city dogs ask the res dogs, "How come you never chase cars with us?" The res dogs respond, "What's the point, it's just a waste of time. The cars don't do anything when you chase them." The city dogs tell the res dogs that they think it's just a lot of fun, so finally the res dogs agree to try it just once.

The next car comes down the road, and the dogs from both sides chase the car. The city dogs bark, "Bow-wow, Bow-wow" and the res dogs chase too, but they bark, "Bow-wow, Bow-wow, Bow-wow, Bow-wow... eeehhhhhhhhhhhh."



(Elders, Cont. from pg. 1)

Before her accident, Lorelei was active making beaded jewelry and God eye's and sold them for extra money. When she recovered, she worked a few years at the casino in the Player's Club. Lorelei's favorite meal is Italian; mainly spaghetti and meatballs. Her favorite color is purple.

Lorelei has fond memories of fishing with family along the river and canals. Her favorite past time is visiting different casinos and socializing with people. Lorelei's word of wisdom to the young people is, "Stay out of trouble, don't do what you are not supposed to do and stay in school".

Words of Wisdom

"Stay out of trouble, don't do what you are not supposed to and stay in school!"

Mrs. Lorelie Phillips- Cocopah Tribal Elder

Wishing everyone with a birthday in March and April a very Happy Birthday!



Happy Easter



Happy Easter



LANGUAGE PROGRAM MEETING

ALL COCOPAH ELDERS' WELCOME

JOIN US MARCH 10, 2015 12-2 PM

WEST RESERVATION COMMUNITY CENTER

WE WILL BE DISCUSSING ONGOING AND FUTURE COCOPAH LANGUAGE PRESERVATION WORK.

PLEASE CALL, 928-627-5658 IF YOU NEED A RIDE. "FOOD WILL BE PROVIDED"