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## Brief Notes on Recent Publications

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*Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 9, *Southwest*. Alfonso Ortiz, Vol. ed. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1979, xvi + 701 pp., figs., bibliog., index, \$17.00 (cloth). The scope of this 59-chapter volume places it well beyond reach of meaningful review. Volume 9 encompasses the archaeology (13 chapters), and ethnohistory/history (11 chapters) of the Southwest generally, and the remaining chapters treat the ethnology and linguistics of the Puebloan peoples. Volume 10, *Southwest* to follow will treat the non-Puebloan peoples of the area. The format is the same as Volume 8, *California*. Without question, this publication provides California and Great Basin scholars with a valuable reference and research tool.

*Alfred Kroeber: A Personal Configuration*. Theodora Kroeber. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979, xi + 296 pp., photos, \$4.95 (paper). Theodora Kroeber's sensitive biography of her husband, first published in hardcover in 1970, is now available in paperback.

*December's Child: A Book of Chumash Oral Narratives*. Thomas C. Blackburn, ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980, xxii + 359 pp., \$5.95 (paper). This is the first

paperback edition of the 111 Chumash myths and tales originally collected by J. P. Harrington and analyzed by Blackburn, which appeared in hardcover in 1975.

*Plants Used in Basketry by the California Indians*. Ruth E. Merrill. Ramona: Acoma Books, 1980, 30 pp., 6 maps, tables, appendix, bibliog., \$2.95 (paper). This re-issue is a valuable discussion of plants and their use by California Indians in the production of baskets. It was first published in 1923 in the UCPAAE series and reprinted by Acoma in 1970.



*The Shoshoni Indians of Inyo County, California: The Kerr Manuscript*. Edited, Annotated, and with Introductory Preface by Charles N. Irwin. Ballena Press Publications in Archaeology, Ethnology, and History No. 15. 92 pp., 23 figures, 2 frontis., \$6.95 (paper).

Reviewed by ROBERT L. BETTINGER

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In comparison to other parts of North America, particularly the East and Midwest, California and the Far West are blessed with an immensely rich body of published ethnographies of aboriginal cultures at a time when

they retained much of their native character. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that for these areas there still remains a large reservoir of ethnographic records all but unknown except to a handful of regional specialists who have had occasion to use them in their research. Fortunately, in recent years a few small presses have begun to publish such accounts, thereby making them available to a larger audience. The Ballena Press is particularly active in this field, their latest contribution being an edited and annotated collection of ethnographic notes on the Shoshoni of southern Inyo County gathered by Mark Kerr.

A native of Ireland, Kerr lived in Independence, California, in the interim between World Wars I and II and during that time served as the first curator of the Eastern California Museum located in that town. In 1936, while working with F. S. Hulse and F. J. Essene on a WPA project devoted to Owens Valley Paiute ethnography, Kerr, aided by Esther Checo, a Shoshoni living in Darwin, California, recorded native accounts of the lifeways and folklore of the Shoshoni groups who occupied a large, arid territory that included Rose Valley, Saline Valley, and the northern parts of Death Valley, Panamint Valley, and Indian Wells Valley. For this volume, Charles N. Irwin, the current curator of the Eastern California Museum, has organized the Kerr material in a coherent format, adding to it a general introduction, several brief section prefaces, a comparative Shoshoni vocabulary collected between 1976 and 1980, and 265 individual annotations ranging from translations of native terms to amplified discussions of points raised by Kerr.

The original notes cover a diverse range of topics, divided here into five broad categories: plant collection and hunting (22 pieces), ritual, politics, and war (10 pieces), folklore (16 pieces), folkhistory and geography (9 pieces), and vocabulary (1 piece). Within these sec-

tions, the sequence of alternating original text and annotations is occasionally hard to follow; one wishes that either another format had been adopted or that the annotations had been consolidated into a smaller, more manageable number. Even so, Irwin's comments and revisions of Kerr's spellings of native terms immeasurably improve the utility of the manuscript, although he probably overemphasizes the complexity of Shoshoni sociopolitical organization and Shoshoni concern with war. In general, the volume is well done, marred only by some errors in the reference section: at least one work cited in the text is omitted (Strong 1929) and some of the references are incorrect (Steward 1938*a*) or incomplete (Steward 1938*b*).

Those familiar with the ethnography of eastern California will no doubt notice many similarities between Kerr's notes and published accounts of the Shoshoni, particularly those of Steward. It is probable that this reflects the use by Kerr of Shoshoni informants that had either been interviewed by Steward or had obtained knowledge of certain aboriginal beliefs and practices from the more elderly of Steward's informants. Thus, in all probability, one of Kerr's principal informants, George Gregory, born in 1860, was Steward's informant GG, a Shoshoni born around 1860 who had lived at Little Lake, Darwin, Olancho, and Coso Hot Springs, all in southern Inyo County (Steward 1941:213). In addition, Irwin indicates that Kerr's informants, including George Gregory, recounted anecdotes told to them by George Hanson, who was born in 1839 and owned Indian Ranch in Panamint Valley; this was almost certainly Steward's informant GH, who was born around 1845 and had a ranch at Indian Springs in Panamint Valley (Steward 1941:213). Curiously, Kerr mentions nothing in this regard, and Irwin seems to ignore the possibility. Despite this potential duplication, Kerr's notes are quite valuable in their own right. They are more detailed in many respects

than those published by Steward and treat many aspects of Shoshoni culture (e.g., folk-history) that Steward largely neglected.

It is to the credit of Kerr, Irwin, and the editors of the Ballena Press that this material is now readily accessible to students of California and Great Basin anthropology. One hopes that other examples of its kind will appear in the near future.

### REFERENCES

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 1938a Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 120.  
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 1941 Culture Element Distribution: XIII, Nevada Shoshoni. University of California Anthropological Records 4(2).
- Strong, William Duncan  
 1929 Aboriginal Society in Southern California. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 26:1-358.



*Lost Copper.* Wendy Rose. Morongo Indian Reservation, Banning: Malki Museum Press, 1980, 130 pp., illus. by author, \$8.95 (hardbound).

Reviewed by JACK HIRSCHMAN  
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The poetry of Wendy Rose, gathered in a beautifully published edition by Malki Museum Press of the Morongo Indian Reservation represents, in 1980, the serious and authentic urgency of the native American's (Indian and non-Indian alike) struggle to exist

*in praise* in a society choking on the barbarism of its own capital and dying in groundless exploitation.

Her persona are from the spirit pantheon of the Hopi Indians, of whom she is, with a northern element of Miwok, a descendant. So it is the curve of the California-Southwest (north and south, in effect) that is inscribed in this book. But the poet is also speaking as a woman of contemporary life, as a figure of adamantine whispers; as a vessel of loving kindness; and in this respect the "local color" of the text achieves its universal plane: she is writing of woman in a time when women themselves are being threatened with being erased from their own authenticity by a rootless artificiality which more and more seems to have conquered the depth of "things."

That is why Wendy Rose takes the "death-walks" that occasion so many of the poems in this excellent volume. She is looking for songs in that invisible realm—a realm of great power, the realm of the voices of the native breath of America—so that she might offer the consolation of a singing archeology to a world more and more in the service of unresonating transience. And looking for songs, she stumbles upon the names of the "things" of a past which still subsists and sustains, her harvest of

squash-brown daughters,  
 blue corn pollen,  
 lost copper.

These, and many other, shards from her unwilling "Indian invisibility" are her offerings to a world wired to corporate despair and alienation. For her poems are indeed braveries of the kind not often read. They reflect an animal and nomadic realm illuminated by the nerve-ends of massacred things, things of nature which nonetheless resonate with a common, in fact communal, depth. She "recovers" these things in the alchemy of her writings in a voice stoic with quiet despair and proud veneration