PLANTS AND ANIMALS IN YOEME CULTURE

Yoeme (Yaqui) Pascola Masks and Deer Songs plant and animal resource materials

by

Richard Felger and Felipe Molina

a report
submitted to

The Smithsonian Institute
Folklife Programs

1988

The Yoeme and the land

The ancestral land of the Yoeme people is in Sonora, Mexico. The Yoeme are a strongly enduring and territorial people from one of the most fertile areas of northwest Mexico, now living in a portion of their traditional homelands and in small communities in Arizona. In the early part of the 20th century, many people fled persecution and warfare in their homeland and found refuge in Arizona. There are now seven Yoeme settlements thriving in southern Arizona. The Yoeme in Arizona maintain close ties and interchange with people in Sonora despite the 400 mile distance and international border. The traditional lands of the Yoeme in Sonora, known as Hiakim,[1] or the Hiak Bwia, consist of about 6,000 square miles centered along the banks of the Río Yaqui. Prior to the arrival of the first Europeans, there were 80 rancherias scattered along the lower 60 miles of the river.

The Hiakim occupy the drainage of the Río Yaqui, from the sea at the Gulf of California into the subtropical foothills and lower mountains of the Sierra Madre Occidental. This region includes the rich agricultural lands of the great coastal alluvial plain where most of the people live. The Hiakim are ecologically transitional between the Sonoran Desert and subtropical vegetation (subtropical thornscrub). Although rainfall is insufficient for extensive agriculture, the river provides water for irrigation.

The winters are mild and essentially frost-free. Summer is long and hot. Life-giving monsoon-like rains begin after San Juan's day (June 24), the full force often coming about a month after summer solstice and continuing until early September. The time of the summer rains is called tevuhlia. Fall is a dry season, although occasional hurricane-fringe storms may bring considerable rainfall in relatively short span of time. Winter rains, severia yuku (cold-season rain) are sparse and unpredictable. Late spring and early summer is a long, hot dry season; by the end of April the wild trees and shrubs are leafless, and by May and June even some of the cholla and prickly-pear cacti are withered and drooping for lack of water. Renewal of the tevuhlia turns the leafless parched desert and thornscrub into lush jungle-like greenness.

The Hiakim support a flora of more than 550 species of wild and naturalized seed plants. These plants are mostly of tropical or subtropical origin--their closest relatives are mostly in more tropical parts of Mexico. Although some animals and plants are the same in Hiakim and southern Arizona, many of

1. In Yoeme nouns a final "m" almost always represents a plural.

the subtropical species of southern Sonora are not found in Arizona. The Yoeme settlements in Arizona are in the northern part of the Sonoran Desert. In contrast to the Hiakim the summer rains in southern Arizona are generally diminished and winter is bit cooler; minimum temperatures several degrees below freezing are common.

The People

A stable, agricultural people prior to European contact, the Yoeme have a long history of defending their land, beginning with the very first contact in 1533, when a party of Spaniards were driven away with heavy losses after crossing a line drawn by a Yoeme leader on the south bank of the Río Yaqui. While the Spaniards were repeatedly defeated, the fertile lands were destined to continue to attract attempts of foreign settlement. The Yoeme fought hard to keep their sacred lands.

The Yoeme invited Jesuit missionaries into their lands in the early seventeenth century, and peaceful relationships ensued until the Jesuit expulsion in 1767. These were the times when the Yoeme accepted Christianity, combining it with their own indigenous culture. Following Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821, relations with non-Yoeme began to deteriorate rapidly. Towards the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century conditions worsened into times of turmoil, hardship, and warfare, some of it involving the Mexican Revolution. The Yoeme population within the tribal lands was reduced from about 20,000 to a low point of less than 3,000 as a result of the wars, deportation of thousands to elsewhere in Mexico, and the emigration of additional thousands northward into the United States. Some of these political refugees established the Yoeme communities in Arizona. In 1939, President Lazaro Cardenas decreed exclusive Yoeme rights to about one-fourth of their original lands. Today about 30,000 Yoemem live in Sonora and about 5600 in Arizona.

A settled people, the Yoeme farmed the rich bottomland along the Río Yaqui. Their dome-shaped, often mat and grass and cattail-covered round houses were placed close to the river, and as a result the people were often forced to move because of the annual floods. Corn, beans, squash, amaranth, cotton, and tobacco were grown, both with annual river flood water and with summer rains. In addition to cultivated crops, wild plant foods such as mesquite pods, cactus fruit, grain from wild grasses, and succulent roots were an important part of the diet. Wild game, both fresh water and ocean fish, shellfish and various other animal resources formed an important part of the diet.

"Yaqui," the official designation used by the Mexican and United States governments for the Yoeme people and their

language, is in widespread use despite the fact that "Yoeme" is what the people call themselves. The term Yaqui was first used by Spaniards, apparently to designate the Yoeme as the people who live along the Río Yaqui. The Yoeme are closely related to the Mayo, whose language is mutually intelligible with Yaqui. Both are Uto-Aztecan languages belong to the grouping known as Cahita. The term "cahita," sometimes also used as a cultural designation, was pointed out as being an inappropriate name by the eminent scholar Alfred Kroeber even as early as 1911. In Yoeme, kaita means 'nothing' and its use must have come from misunderstanding.

Yoeme cultural values, as expressed in the arts of music, dancing, religious drama and oral literature have maintained an integrity while absorbing some attributes of the larger Spanish and Jesuit and later the Mexican and American cultures.

The Pahko

The pahko is a ceremonial ritual that involves prayers, songs, and dances. The pahkom and associated traditions, with their pahkola (pascola) dances, masks, and music plus the deer dance and songs are of vital importance in Yoeme culture. The pahko is carried out by a family or the entire village or town for certain saints, the village patron saints, a child's wake, or the death anniversary. Many people come to participate and witness a pahko; it brings the people together spiritually. Anyone is welcome to attend and enjoy the service, dances and music. Proper dress and behavior is required; picture taking, tape recording and note-taking is prohibited unless officially requested by the community leaders.

A pahko usually starts when the family gets ready to receive the participants who are going to carry out the rituals. The time could be noon or mid-afternoon. However, among the Arizona communities the pahko usually gets underway in the early evening, perhaps between 8 and 10 pm due to the participants' work schedule at the various jobs in the towns and cities. With the setting off of firecrackers by the pahkolam at noon the pahko in Sonora will get underway and last throughout the day and night until the next morning at about 4 am with the alva (dawn) service. After the alva a procession with the holy figures goes back to the church or the outermost patio cross to conclude the pahko. All participants and family will be thanked with a long sermon by the maehto yo'owe (elder maestro). A special grace is obtained from heaven after the pahko for all the participants and people who came to watch and listen with good hearts. However, for various reasons, especially in Arizona, the schedule sometimes varies according to local conditions.

Most of the pahko activities take place inside and in front of the ramá (ramada, or enramada in Spanish). On the right side is the altar for the santom (holy figures) where the maehto and the

kopariam (lady religious singers) sing and pray throughout the night. The left side is where the pahkoalentem (all the pascola group) and the deer dance group carry out their devotion and ritual. These dancers dance to the music of the harp, violin, drum and flute, wooden raspers, and water drum which are called alavansam. The alavansam are in three major sets that require different tuning throughout the pahko. There is a well-ordered complex of instrumental music, song and dance sequences throughout the pahko. One tuning is maybe from early afternoon to early evening, the next is from late evening to shortly after midnight, and finally the last tuning from sometime after midnight until the alva service. The musicians and dancers are allowed breaks between sets of music--longer breaks occur when meals are served.

The ramá in Hiakim (Sonora) is more traditional than the ones made in the Arizona Yoeme communities. The ramá in Hiakim has twelve forked mesquite posts. The framework of the roof is made of long mesquite or cottonwood poles and beams that lie on the forked posts. On top of these poles are slender poles of mesquite, cottonwood, or tamarisk, and thrown evenly and nicely on top of these are leafy stalks of cane. The sides are covered with leafy or leafless cane. Only three sides of the ramá are covered.

For the ramá posts big trunks of hu'upa (mesquite) are needed. Avaso (cottonwood) and pino (tamarisk) are not used for the posts because they rot too fast. The posts need to be about 6-10 inches in diameter and about 8 feet long, and long slender branches or trunks are selected for the roof beams and rafters. Cottonwood or tamarisk are preferred for the rafters and beams because they are long, straight and slender; mesquite is seldom straight enough.

1. The maaso.

The maaso (deer) dancer is the best known and a favorite among both the Yoeme and non-Yoeme. Any boy or youth who has the desire or calling can try to be a deer dancer. Not every boy or youth is meant to be a deer dancer. A boy or man can dance a few times and a dream will come to him that will challenge or test his braveness to continue dancing. If he passes the test of the dream people or dream animals and conquers their attacks or fears, he will overcome the obstacle or test and will be brave and continue to dance. He will continue to dance and serve the community unless sickness, accident, or old age infirmity prevents him from dancing.

The deer dancer is first and foremost called maaso, simply the term for the whitetail deer. The deer dancer is also known as the maso ye'eme "one who dances deer," sewata ye'eme "one who

dances the flowers," or sewatat chepteme "one who steps on flowers."

His regalia consists of many things. The maso kova 'deer head,' is from the white-tail deer. (The white-tail deer is preferred over the mule deer. The mule deer head is considered too large. Also, it does not range into the Hiakim). The rihhutiam, the deer hoof belt-rattle, is made from hooves of the whitetail deer, but nowadays domestic pigs' hooves are often used instead.

The tenevoim, cocoon leg-rattles, are made from the cocoons of a large native silkworm-like moth. Other items of the regalia include the ayam, the hand-held gourd rattles, the hoporosim, the special necklace of the deer dancer made from abalone shells and glass beads, the vuam, the white cloth on his head, and the hiniam, the rebozo or shawl worn around the waist over rolled up pants. He dances barefoot in the ramá but in the processions he wears cowhide sandals. Red ribbon or a red scarf is wrapped around the antler points to represent the Sea Ania (flower world) from where the deer comes to the Yoeme people.

2. The pahkola dancers.

The pahkolam (pascolas) dance to the indigenous music of the tampaleo (drum and flute) and wear wooden masks over their faces. They dance to tell the stories of the songs being played by the tampaleo. Also, they dance along side the maaso.

The pahkolam also dance to the music of the harp and violin, at which time the mask is worn at the side of the head. The pahkolam are pahko hosts, dancers, jokers, and clowns. As with the maaso dancer, any boy or youth who has the desire or calling can try to be a pahkola dancer. It not meant for everyone because they also go through the same supernatural experiences and obstacles. A pahkola will continue to dance and serve the community as long as he is able to do so.

Each pahkola wears a face mask, the puhva or mahka. The puhva is made from wood, animal hair, and decorated with commercial paint. The wood of avah nawa, cottonwood root, is the most commonly used wood. Others say that chiricote, coral bean tree, is excellent for mask making but it is too far away in the mountains (in Sonora), so they use avaso (cottonwood) because it is more readily accessible. Other kinds of wood used for making puhva masks include elephant-tree or torote (Bursera microphylla), palo chino (Acacia occidentalis), and a plant called hoosa, found in the Mayo country in southern Sonora.

Small bundles of white horse hair for the mask's eyebrows and beard are tied with string. The mask is decorated with commercial paint. According to some elders, the more traditional

color were often white and black, and other colors, the red, blue, yellow, pink, came in later. A small leather strap secures the mask to the face.

Other items include the senasom, koyolim, and hoporosim. The senasom is a wooden and metal-disk hand rattle and the koyolim, a belt with seven metal bells for the seven sacraments. Some say the seven bells are for the seven stars of the karom ("carts") or big dipper. The senasom frame is made from hardwood such as ironwood (Olneya tesota). The hoporosim necklace is described above (see deer dancer).

A piisa, blanket, is worn around the waist and to just below knees. A black wool sash is tied around the legs over the blanket on both legs. Some men use a leather strap instead of the sash. A tuft of hair on the top of the head is tied with a red string. Like the deer dancer, they wear tenevoim, cocoon rattles, but much longer than ones worn by the deer dancer. They dance bare foot but wear cowhide sandals for processions and when outside of the ramá.

3. The masobwikame, deer singers

The three deer singers wear regular clothes. Some men wear traditional Yoeme sandals. The men all wear hats, often white straw or felt hats. The lead singer and his accompanist use the hirukiam, the wooden rasper (musical rasping stick) which is played with a hirukia aso'olam, a wooden rubbing stick. The singers use a half gourd, bwehei, for their raspers to serve as resonators. The water drum is also a half gourd but from a larger gourd. It floats inverted in a pan or a large clay bowl of water. The water drum stick is often made from a soft wood or else from three pieces of split cane, vaaka, wrapped with corn husk and then tightly tied with a thin string.

There are hundreds of deer songs. Here are three wonderful songs.

Song of the Organ Pipe Cactus

Akita vampo nachine
husama yoliyoliti awa hiluke
Akita vampo nachine
husama yoliyoliti awa hiluke

Akita vampo nachine
husama yoliyoliti awa hiluke
Akita vampo nachine
husama yoliyoliti awa hiluke

Akita vampo nachine

husama yoliyoliti awa hiluke
Akita vampo nachine
husama yoliyoliti awa hiluke

Ayamansu seyewailo huyata naisukuni
yo vaa bwibwikola weyeka
Senu yo vai vakuliau su yepsaka
Husama yoliyoliti awa hiluke
Akita vampo nachine
Husama yoliyoliti awa hiluke

* *

Near the place of the Organ Pipe Waters,
I am rubbing antlers in an enchanted brown way.
Near the place of the Organ Pipe Waters,
I am rubbing antlers in an enchanted brown way.

Near the place of the Organ Pipe Waters,
I am rubbing antlers in an enchanted brown way.
Near the place of the Organ Pipe Waters,
I am rubbing antlers in an enchanted brown way.

Near the place of the Organ Pipe Waters,
I am rubbing antlers in an enchanted brown way.
Near the place of the Organ Pipe Waters,
I am rubbing antlers in an enchanted brown way.

Over there in the middle of the
flower-covered wilderness.
Walking along side the enchanted water.
Arriving to one enchanted fresh branch.
I am rubbing antlers in an enchanted brown way.
Near the place of the Organ Pipe Waters.
I am rubbing antlers in an enchanted brown way.

Ousei bwikam, mountain lion song. This is one of a set of four songs about the mountain lion sung during the killing of the deer ceremony. The deer killing ceremony is held during the death anniversary pahko.

Ai ouseli	Ay little mountain lion,
ouseli	little mountain lion,
omteka	you are angry.
Sewa huyapo	In the flower wilderness
omteka	you are angry.
Ouseli	Little mountain lion,
ouseli	little mountain lion,
omteka	you are angry.
Sewa huyapo	In the flower wilderness,

omteka	you are angry.
Ai ouseli	Ay little mountain lion,
ouseli	little mountain lion,
omteka	you are angry.
Sewa huyapo	In the flower wilderness
omteka	you are angry.
Ouseli	Little mountain lion,
ouseli	little mountain lion,
omteka	you are angry.
Sewa huyapo	In the flower wilderness,
omteka	you are angry.
Ai ouseli	Ay little mountain lion,
ouseli	little mountain lion,
omteka	you are angry.
Sewa huyapo	In the flower wilderness
omteka	you are angry.
Ouseli	Little mountain lion,
ouseli	little mountain lion,
omteka	you are angry.
Sewa huyapo	In the flower wilderness,
omteka	you are angry.
Ayamansu	Over there
sewa huyapo naisukuni	in the middle of the flower wilderness.
Kaita yumalika	You didn't over-power (seize) anything,
omteka	You are angry.
Ouseli	Little mountain lion,
ouseli	little mountain lion,
omteka	you are angry.
Sewa huyapo	In the flower wilderness,
omteka	you are angry.

The vaikumarewi, dragonfly song. This is an evening song sung during a pahko. It describes dragonfly and the place where it flies about, hovering over the water in motion seeming to take on the form of a flower.

yoyo vaikumarewi empo sewa vam manekapo
sewa soisoiti koweme
emop yoyo vaikumarewi sewa vampo sewa
soisoiti koweme

yoyo vaikumarewi empo sewa vam manekapo
sewa soisoiti koweme

emop yoyo vaikumarewi sewa vampo sewa
soisoiti koweme

yoyo vaikumarewi empo sewa vam manekapo
sewa soisoiti koweme
empo yoyo vaikumarewi sewa vampo sewa
soisoiti koweme

hunamansu seyewailo saniloapo naisukuni
empo yo vam manekapo uvalika
sewa soisoiti koweme
yoyo vaikumarewi empo sewa vam manekapo
sewa soisoiti koweme

Enchanted enchanted dragonfly, you sway and hover in the place of the flower water.
You enchanted enchanted dragonfly, in the flower water you sway and hover flower-like.

Enchanted enchanted dragonfly, you sway and hover in the place of the flower water.
You enchanted enchanted dragonfly, in the flower water you sway and hover flower-like.

Enchanted enchanted dragonfly, you sway and hover in the place of the flower water.
You enchanted enchanted dragonfly, in the flower water you sway and hover flower-like.

Over there in the middle of the flower covered grove you bathe and sway and hover in flower way in the enchanted water place.
Enchanted enchanted dragonfly you flower sway and hover in the flower water place.

Many animals are featured in the extensive repertoire of Deer Songs. Some of the more popular animals are listed below. Birds are listed first, separately from other animals.

wikichim: BIRDS:

cholloi, the common woodpecker, found in Sonora and Arizona.

ne'okai, mocking bird, found in both states.

ommo'okoli, inca dove, found in both states.

poutela, a small black bird which sings only in the morning before dawn, and it is near that hour when the men sing the poutela song. Common in Sonora.

semalulukut, any hummingbird, found in both states.

suva'i, the ordinary quail is common in both Sonora and Arizona. The tesaki suva'i, arroyo quail, is only found in Sonora.

tekoe, black vulture, found in both states, especially common in Sonora.

wichalakas, cardinal, found in both states.

wiiru, the turkey vulture, found in both states, especially common in Sonora.

wvaewakas, cactus wren, found in both states.

yoawam: MOST TERRESTRIAL ANIMALS.

huuri, badger, found in both states.

maaso, adult white-tail deer; fawn, malit; an old deer, maiso; found in both states but seldom hunted in Arizona. The maaso is the most spiritually important animal. In former times it was an important source of meat.

ousei, mountain lion, león, found in both states, now becoming rare. The mountain lion songs are sung during a death anniversary pahko in the evening, often about 9 or 10 pm. ousei. The mountain lion is the number one hunter of the white-tailed deer. A little, or young mountain lion is called ouseli (the "l" is also an affectionate term and also part of song language, see mountain lion song, above).

wo'i, coyote, very common in both states. The nama wo'i is larger than the regular coyote and reported to be only in Sonora. Coyote figures in many songs, legends, stories, and jokes. Coyote is smart and tricky, but sometimes made out to be a fool.

OTHER ANIMALS

aakame, any large rattlesnake, found in both states. The rattlesnake songs are sung anytime during a pahko.

awala, sidewinder, found in both states, but in Sonora occurs north of the Hiakim. Sidewinder songs are sung anytime.

kuta wikui ("wood lizard"), spiny-tail iguana, iguana. The large lizards, sometime reaching three feet or more in length, are common in the desert and semi-desert regions of southern Sonora,

especially in mountainous regions. They were hunted and used for food a long time ago.

For death anniversary pahkos, bread is made in the shape of the iguana. The pahkola dancers often pretend, in a humorous, joking way to play with the bread as if they are hunting an iguana.

mochik, desert tortoise, found in both states. Tortoise songs are only sung during a death anniversary.

sochik, any bat, found in both states. Bat songs are sung only around midnight.

4. The tampaleo or flute-drummer.

The tampaleo plays for the pahkolam playing both the drum and flute at the same time. He plays music of the animals and birds of the desert mountains and desert land, and also the ocean. He uses the kuvahe, drum, made from goatskin and soft wood for the rim. The preferred wood for the rim is from a Sonoran tree called aiya (Guazuma ulmifolia) that does not occur in Arizona. The hiponia, drumstick, is made from a Sonoran hardwood shrub called sitavau (Vallesia glabra) that also does not occur in Arizona. His flute, kusia, is made from vaaka, cane.

5. The laveleo, violin player.

The laveleo plays the alavansam (songs) during the pahkom, weddings, baptisms, and for the wake of a child. He plays the violin accompanied by the harp player. He uses chuukam to resin the bow; the chu'ukam is a resin from the choi, a palo verde tree.

6. The apaleo, harp player.

The apaleo accompanies the laveleo with his harp music. The harp is made from store bought lumber. The violin is store-bought or home made but the harp is always home made. The strings for both are store bought; sometimes fishing line is used. A special key is used for tuning the strings.

7. The moro ya'ut or moro leader, and the maso moro or deer manager.

The moro ya'ut is the main moro (manager) carrying out the requests of the sponsoring family or village. He is the one with the cigarettes and he in turn provides some for the maso moro to give to the dancers and musicians. He uses a home made or commercial broom to clean the dance areas in the ramá throughout the night. He cleans before and during the pahko.

Some Plants Important in Yoeme Ritual

Plants included in the text above are listed here in alphabetical order by their Yoeme name. The Yoeme name is followed by the common name, if known, first in English and then in Spanish, and then the scientific name and the plant family.

Aki. Organ pipe cactus, pitaya dulce, Stenocereus thurberi (Cactus family).

One of the most common plants throughout the Hiakim, organ pipe cactus there grow tall and very large with many arms reaching 10 to 30 feet in height. It occurs near the border in portions of southwestern Arizona, but not close to the Yoeme settlements. The fruit is sweet and succulent, and continues to be harvested as a favorite food. Ripe fruit is available in summertime.

Avaso. Yaqui cottonwood, alamo, Populus mexicana subspecies dimorpha (Willow family)

Great gallery forests of cottonwood and willow stretched along the lower Río Yaqui and the scene was repeated along the lower Río Mayo, Río Fuerte and other Sinaloan rivers. With all that nutrient-rich water and heat their growth was incredibly fast and their biomass enormous--fueling the teeming life at the deltas. Since construction of the dams on the Río Yaqui and other Sonoran and Sinaloan rivers, the annual flooding have diminished or ceased and the once great rivers have become reduced to trickles and dusty depressions during dry seasons. In the 1980s cottonwoods were still quite common, although the gigantic trees were far fewer and the willows had become rare.

This cottonwood forms great forests along the lower Río Yaqui, Río Mayo, Río Fuerte and other Sinaloan rivers. It is an immense tree, the largest reaching more than 20 m in height with a broad spreading crown and huge trunk, often 2 m in diameter. It is the largest tree in the region. Although individual trees and smaller groves will undoubtedly remain, the great riverine forests now seem all but doomed due to damming of the rivers. Young cottonwoods are often eliminated by cattle; seedlings were abundant along the lower Rio Yaqui in 1985 but saplings were scarce. In 1988 people at Potam said that there are fewer cottonwoods today; at that time many of the trees were large but not huge as in earlier decades. The trees are appreciated, and many are planted or protected around homes and along the larger irrigation ditches and drainage canals that run through the Hiakim agricultural lands.

Cottonwoods, and to a lesser extent the willows, are often planted in the Hiakim. They readily grow from cuttings of any size--the best time to strike cuttings is in winter before the buds leaf out. The wood is soft and of little value for fuel and construction but is used for such purposes because it is so readily available. In the lower Rio Yaqui and Rio Mayo regions cottonwoods and some willows are planted around ranches, and

willows seem more popular in the towns--probably because of their smaller size.

A different species of cottonwood, P. fremontii, occurs along the Santa Cruz and other river systems in Arizona and northern Sonora. Populus fremontii is also a large tree. It is still common in certain places in southern Arizona, but with destruction of the river ecosystems and desertification in recent decades, it is becoming ever more scarce. Although cottonwoods are easily cultivated in Arizona they are seldom planted today because they require large amounts of water which has become expensive.

Avah nawa, cottonwood root is one of the preferred woods traditionally used by both the Yoeme and Yoreme (Mayo) men for making pahkola masks. Green boughs and leafy branches are extensively used in Yaqui and Mayo rituals during the many fiestas through the year. Roofing poles for the ramá, especially in Sonora, are often made from avaso branches.

The wood is soft and the trees capable of extremely rapid growth. Flowering occurs in January or February, and the new leaves appear while the old ones are still being shed.

Aiya. guasima, Guazuma ulmifolia (Elm family).

This medium-sized tree has edible fruit. The wood is used for the tampaleo drum rim. These drums used to be made in Arizona, but the young people no longer know how to make them, so they are purchased from the Sonoran Yoeme. Aiya wood is much preferred for drum making, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain it. The northernmost Yoeme town in Sonora is called Las Guasimas; there are a few of these trees in a large wash near the town. However, it is much more common to the south and east of the Yoeme lands.

Chiricote. coral-bean, chilicote. Erythrina flabelleformis (Legume family).

Coral-bean develops into a small tree with a rather thick, straight trunk, reaching about 25-30 feet tall in the foothills and mountains of southern Sonora. It ranges as far north as southern Arizona, where it grows on rocky slopes, but it is merely a shrub in Arizona where the plants are repeatedly frozen back. The wood is very soft, and apparently does split upon drying. The bright red, showy flowers appear on leafless stems in early summer, and the pods ripen later in the summer. The seeds, bright red, about 12 to 18 mm long, are reported to be poisonous. The leaves quickly fall after the end of the summer rains and the plant remains leafless until summer rains of the next year. It can be grown from seed or cuttings but the plants are frost tender in the Tucson region, and are best planted on the south side of a building and in full sun. It would be easy to grow in Sonora. As with most other tree-sized species of Erythrina, the main branches should grow back rapidly after being cut.

Some people say that chiricote wood is excellent for mask making, but that it occurs too far away in the mountains in Sonora and for that reason is not used. Some still existing older masks (from the 1940s or older, but no longer being used) were made from this wood. The seeds are sometimes made into necklaces.

Hiak viva. "Yoeme tobacco", tobacco, tobacco, Nicotiana rustica (Potato family).

This used for viivam, cigarettes for the pahkom. Formerly it was commonly grown in household gardens; today only a few people cultivate it in both Sonora and Arizona. During the pahko the pahkolam distribute tobacco to the participants and audience. Nowadays commercial cigarettes are used. The homegrown tobacco is used for medicine.

Huchahko. brazilwood, brasil, Haematoxylon brasilleto (Legume family).

A spiny shrub with very hard wood and irregular bark, and masses of bright yellow flowers. It is common and widespread in southern Sonora and Sinaloa. In the Hiakim it occurs in thornscrub of the coastal plain as well as foothills and mountains of the monte. It is readily cultivated in Tucson except that it is rather frost-sensitive in colder areas and needs to be planted in a protected place, such as on the south side of a house. It requires full sun or near full sun. Propagation is only from seeds which are probably best obtained from Sonora, although local botanic gardens and nurseries specializing in Sonoran Desert plants sometimes offer nursery-grown plants for sale.

The wood is used for the notched rasper and rasping stick.

Hu'upa. mesquite, mezquite, Prosopis velutina in Arizona and Prosopis glandulosa var. torreyana in Sonora (Legume family).

Hu'upa is one of the most common and useful trees or shrubs in the Hiak Bwia. Large mesquite trees used to be plentiful along the floodplain of the Río Yaqui but now the people are using chain saws and axes to cut them down for the charcoal business; the river and its plants are also changing due to upriver diversion dams. Similarly, large mesquite trees are becoming ever more scarce in Arizona, but are still obtainable.

The large, forked trunks and major branches are made into posts for ramadas, traditional homes (mostly in Sonora), and the more slender, straight poles were used as roofing. In earlier times the sweet pulp from the fruit was an important food resource.

Kuu'u. century plant, maguey, Agave angustifolia (Agave family).

This is the most common wild species of agave in Hiakim. Several other species are common in the mountains. In addition, Agave americana is grown in home gardens. In former times the large "hearts" of plants about to flower were roasted and used

for making alcoholic beverages and eaten as a delicious vegetable.

Masa'asai. "wing older brother", queen's wreath, San Miguelito. Antigonon leptopus (Buckwheat family).
This beautiful pink-flowered perennial vine grows wild in Hiakim and is frequently cultivated in gardens in both states. The pink flowers are seen all through the summer and early fall.

Pino. tamarisk tree, Tamarix aphylla (Tamarisk family).
This non-native tree is grown as a shade tree in Arizona and Sonora, mostly near homes and also planted near the Río Yaqui. It is readily propagated by cuttings, which can be rooted in water or wet soil, at any time of year except the several coldest months in Arizona.

Sitavau. huevito, Vallesia glabra (Dogbane family).
An evergreen shrub 2-3 m tall, it has small shiny green leaves, star-shaped white flowers, and translucent-white fruit about 1 cm long. It is common along the upper banks of the Río Yaqui, in canyon bottoms and arroyos in the mountains, and scattered among the dense thornscrub of the coastal plains. Although it extends from Argentina to Sonora, it does not extend into Arizona. It is easily grown from seed, but it is a frost-tender plant. The winters in Tucson are usually too cold for it. However, it can readily be grown in the Phoenix and Yuma areas if well watered.
The wood is used for drumsticks. The small white fruit, the size of small grapes, are used as eyedrops.

Vaaka. cane or giant reed, carrizo, Arundo donax (Grass family)
This giant, bamboo-like grass has leafy stems 2 to 5 m tall. New shoots emerge from the thick, perennial rootstock throughout the warmer months and rapidly reach full height.
In Arizona vaaka is grown in household gardens and also harvested along the Santa Cruz River; there are smaller, more meager patches today. In Sonora it is also grown in household gardens and harvested from riverbanks. The people say that in earlier times, cane used to grow along the Río Yaqui and grow big and tall and arch over the river.
It has many uses; baskets, mats, fences, house walls, roofing, flutes, matachin koona (matachini crown), water-drum stick, coyote society musical stick, arrow shafts, frames for kites, holders for important papers, split cane instrument for beating the bow in the coyote dance, ceremonial arches, special official canes for matachin governors (in Arizona), and stirring stick for use in the kitchen.
Arundo donax is presumed to be native to the Mediterranean region, but is now widely cultivated and naturalized in the New World. It closely resembles the reedgrass or common reed, Phragmites communis, from which it is distinguished by details of the small flowers, and Arundo is usually larger and more robust. Since Arundo was not present in the New World in pre-European

times, Phragmites must have been there instead. Phragmites still occurs in some of more remote waterholes in the Sonoran Desert, such as on Tiburon Island, but for the part it has been replaced by the more robust Arundo.

Vachi. corn, maiz, Zea mays (Grass family).
Through the centuries, corn has been the most important crop of the Yoeme. Green corn is called avai. The young, developing ear is called sita.

Visa'e. gourd, bule, Lagenaria siceraria (Gourd family).
This is an annual vine grown in home gardens in both Arizona and Sonora. It is planted in late spring or early summer; the large gourds ripen in late summer or early fall. The seeds are obtained from neighbors. It is often planted next to a little mesquite tree so that the vines can grow up on the tree. Sometimes people grow them on fences.
A half gourd, bwehei, is used as a resonator for the musical rasper and water-drum of the deer singers. To harden and waterproof a half gourd for use as a water-drum, it is boiled in water with lime. When a pahko is about to start, animal fat is often rubbed on the inside of the gourd to further insure that it will be water resistent.

Wata. willow, sauce, Salix gooddingii (Willow family)
This large shrubs or tree is common in the lowlands of Sonora along the major rivers, irrigation canals and often planted around homes. Like the cottonwoods, it can easily be propagated from cuttings made during late December and early January. Even fenceposts made from live wood usually take root and develop into a new tree. Although commonly cultivated in Hiakim, willows are less cultivated in Arizona because they require relatively large amounts of water. This same species as well as another, similar-appearing willow, Salix bonplandiana, are common in areas close to the Yoeme settlements in Arizona. As with the two species of cottonwood, they can be used interchangeably. Salix bonplandiana is usually distinguished by slightly bluish-gray lower leaf surface while in S. gooddingii both leaf surfaces are the same green color.
This term wata appears in the name of one the Mayo towns, Huatabampo "in the waters of the willow." Both the Río Yaqui and the Río Mayo apparently supported larger willow trees in their great gallery forests, which are now virtually gone because of damming and diverting the rivers (see avaso).

YOEME CEREMONIAL YEAR

January 1. New Year's Eve. Matachini (a dance introduced by the Jesuits) dance in church. Arizona and Sonora.

January 6. King's Day. New governors of the pueblos in Sonora instated. Bow Leaders (Coyote) dance.

February or March. Lenten Ceremonies.
Ash Wednesday, start of the Lenten Ceremonies. All major communities in Sonora and Arizona.
1st week of Lent. The pahkom begin (in Arizona).
4th week of Lent. The pasion pahkom in Sonora. The pahkolam (pascola dancers) and musicians go with the kohtumbre ya'ura (ceremonial customs authority) and fulfill household mandas (vows) at many homes throughout the community and surrounding area. All household pahkom are all night or all day ceremonies.

March - April. Easter Holy Week. All major communities in Sonora and Arizona.
Palm Saturday. pahko, all night until an hour or so after sunrise with pahkolam and also the deer dance in some communities .
Holy Saturday. Deer and pahkolam and fight the evil forces during the kohtumbre ya'ura attack on the church and the good people. All night pahko with pahkolam and deer dance follows the Looria (Gloria).
Easter Sunday. Procession and Thank-you circle.

May 2. Santa Kus, Holy Cross Day or Dia del Santa Cruz. 5-day Pahko, Torim, Sonora. Weekend-long pahko with pahkolam, deer dance, and matachini, weekend closest to May 2 at Old Pascua and Guadalupe, Arizona.

Late May or early June (consult Catholic calendar). Trinida Pahko. Potam, Sonora. 5-day pahko with pahkolam, deer dance, and matachini.

June (consult Catholic calendar). Koopas Pahko, Corpus Cristi. Rahum, Sonora. 5-day pahko with pahkolam, deer dance, and matachini.

June 24. San Juan Pahko. Vikcam, Sonora. 5-day pahko. San Juan's (St. John's) Day, weekend closest to June 24, Yoem Pueblo, Marana, Arizona, with pahkolam, deer dance, and matachini.

June 30 - July 4. Kamino, Loma Vahkom, Sonora. Our Lady of the Road, Nuestra Señora del Camino, 5-day pahko with pahkolam, deer dance, and matachini.

July 12 - 16. Itom Ae Karmen, Our Lady of Carmen, Nuestra Señora de Carmen. Las Guasimas and Vatakomsikapo, Sonora, 5-day pahko with pahkolam, deer dance, and matachini.

July 28-August 1. San Ignacio (St. Ignatius), Torim, Sonora, 5-day pahko. Weekend closest to July 31, Old Pascua, Arizona, 2-day pahko with pahkolam, deer dance, and matachini.

October 1-31. Departed souls visit Yoeme homes and communities. Daily services for the departed souls in churches.

November 1. Table offerings of food, drink, candles and prayer and song services. Various households in Sonora and Arizona. Candle offerings in desert and fields near villages. Bow Leaders (Coyote Society) dance at village churches at dawn.

November 2. Families visit Kampo Santo (cemetery) and clean and decorate graves, in Arizona and Sonora. Prayer and song services by maehto and kopariam. Arizona and Sonora.

December 11. Walupe Vihpa. Arizona and Sonora. Vesper service and matachini dance in churches, and household shrine vigils.

December 12. Walupe Pahko. Guadalupe, Arizona. All night pahko with pahkolam, deer dance, and matachini, on weekend closest to the 12th.

December 24. Nochi Wena. Christmas Eve. Household pahkom with pahkolam, deer dance, and matachini at various villages in Sonora and Arizona. Pahtori (shepherd) dance in Torim. Misa de Gallo at most village churches.

December 25. Navidad. Christmas. Matachini dance in various churches, Sonora and Arizona.

References

Beals, Ralph L. The Aboriginal Culture of the Cahita Indians. Ibero-Americana 19. Berkeley University.

_____. The Contemporary Culture of The Cahita Indians. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 142. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945.

Evers, Larry, and Felipe S. Molina. Yaqui Deer Songs/Maso Bwikam: A Native American Poetry. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1987.

Felger, Richard S. and Mary B. Moser. People of the Desert and Sea: Ethnobotany of the Seri Indians. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1985.

Giddings, Ruth Warner. "Folk Literature of the Yaqui Indians." M.A. Thesis. Univ. of Arizona, 1945.

_____. Yaqui Myths and Legends, Harry Behn, ed. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1959.

Griffith, James S., and Felipe S. Molina. Old Men of the Fiesta: An Introduction to the Pascola Arts. Prepared in Coordination with an Exhibition by the Heard Museum, April 12 - August 15, 1980. Phoenix: The Heard Museum, 1980.

Holden, W.C., C.C. Seltzer, R.A. Studhalter, C.J. Wagner, and W.G. McMillan. "Studies of the Yaqui Indians of Sonora, Mexico." Texas Technological College Bulletin 12 (1936), vol. 1. Lubbock.

Johnson, Jean B. El Idioma Yaqui. Instituto Nacional de Anthropologia Historia, Departmento de Investigaciones Anthropológicas 10. Mexico. 1962.

Kaczkurkin, Mini Valenzuela. Yoeme: Lore of the Arizona Yaqui People. Tucson: Sun Tracks, 1977.

Kelly, Jane Holden. Yaqui Women: Contemporary Life Histories. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1978.

Kurath, William and Edward H. Spicer. A Brief Introduction to Yaqui, a Native Language of Sonora. Univ. of Arizona Social Science Bulletin 15. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona, 1947.

Moises, Rosalio, Jane Holden Kelley, and William Curry Holden. The Tall Candle: The Personal Chronicle of a Yaqui Indian. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1971.

Molina, Felipe and Mini Kaczkurkin. A Yaqui Folklore Map: The Power of Cultural Identity. Tucson: Tucson Public Library, 1980.

Painter, Muriel Thayer. A Yaqui Easter. 1950. Reprint. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1983.

_____. With Good Heart: Yaqui Beliefs and Ceremonies in Pascua Village. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1986.

Savala, Refugio. The Autobiography of a Yaqui Poet. Kathleen M. Sands, ed. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1980.

Spicer, Edward H. Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1962.

_____. "La Danza Yaqui del Venado en la Cultura Mexicana." América Indígena 25 (1965): 119-39.

_____. Pascua: A Village in Arizona. 1940. Reprint. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1984.

_____. Potam: A Yaqui Village in Sonora. Menasha, WI: American Anthropological Association, 1954.

_____. "Yaqui." In Perspectives in American Indian Culture Change. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961.

_____. "Yaqui." In Southwest, Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 10, pp. 250-63. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1983.

_____. The Yaquis: A Cultural History. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1980.

List of Illustrations

wears tenevoim (cocoon rattles) on his ankles and shakes ayam (gourd rattles) with wooden handles filled with small pebbles from ant hills. He also wears a rihhutiam (animal hoof belt-rattle), hoporosim necklace and a flower-embroidered red scarf in the deer's antlers. The deerhead from Sonora was prepared by Luis himself. Miki Maaso, a deer singer, plays a rasper on a half-gourd. His hat is part of the outfit necessary for a deer singer. The musician on the left plays the water drum. Peter Acuña at far left, a deer dancer from Tucson, intensely studies Luis' techniques. A pahko carried out for young deer dancers and singers at Marana, Arizona. Photo by David Burckhalter, December 22, 1987. Photo by permission of Yoem Pueblo.

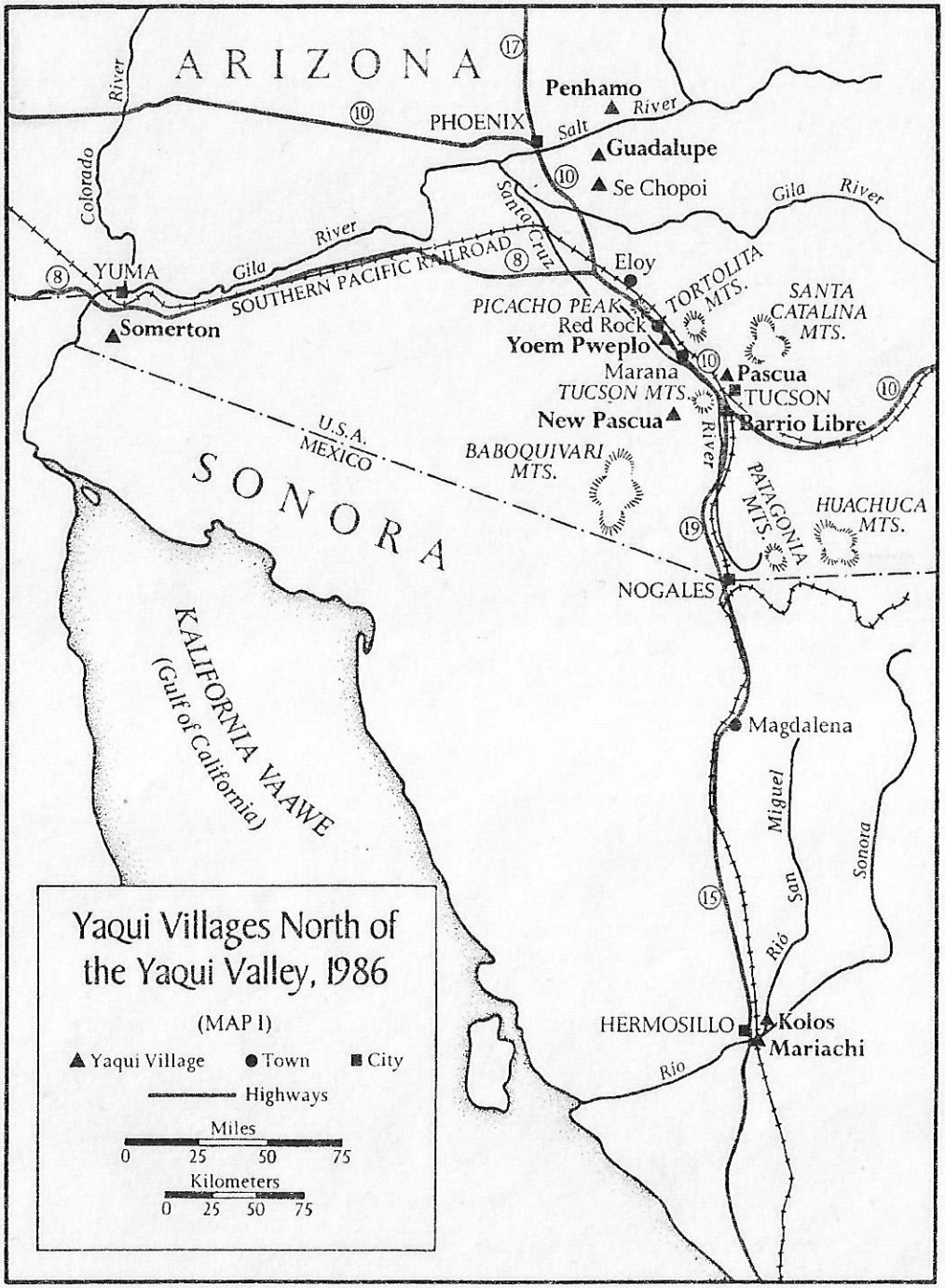
Figure 8. Juan Maaso (Juan Cruz), Tucson. Juan, of Potam, was the of the most famous deer dancers in modern times. Photo by Doyle Sanders, 1981.

Figure 9. Deer singers, Miki Maaso (middle) and his sons playing Yoeme instruments and singing deer songs. Photo by David L. Burckhalter, Marana, December 22, 1987. Photo by permission of Yoem Pueblo.

Figure 10. Pahkola dancer at Old Pascua. He plays the senasom rattle and wears a hoporosim necklace. Wooden face mask is probably made from cottonwood root. It is painted black and decorated with white, blue and red patterns, and the beard and eyebrows are horsehair. Photo by Tom Ives, 1977.

Figure 11. Chiricote (coral-bean), Erythrina flabelleformis. Drawing by Matthew B. Johnson.

Figure 12. Huchahko (brazilwood), Haematoxylon brasilleto. Drawing by Matthew B. Johnson.


ARIZONA
Penhamo
PHOENIX
Salt River
Guadalupe
Se Chopoi
Gila River
Colorado River
Santa Cruz
YUMA
Gila River
SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD
Eloy
PICACHO PEAK
TORTOLITA MTS.
SANTA CATALINA MTS.
Red Rock
Somerton
Yoem Pweplo
Marana
Pascua
TUCSON MTS.
TUCSON
New Pascua
Barrio Libre
U.S.A.
MEXICO
BABOQUIVARI MTS.
Santa Cruz River
PATAGONIA MTS.
HUACHUCA MTS.
SONORA
NOGALES
KALIFORNIA VAAWE
(Gulf of California)
Magdalena
Río San Miguel Sonora
HERMOSILLO
Kolos
Mariachi
Rio
Yaqui Villages North of the Yaqui Valley, 1986
(MAP I)
Yaqui Village
Town
City
Highways
Miles
0 25 50 75
Kilometers
0 25 50 75

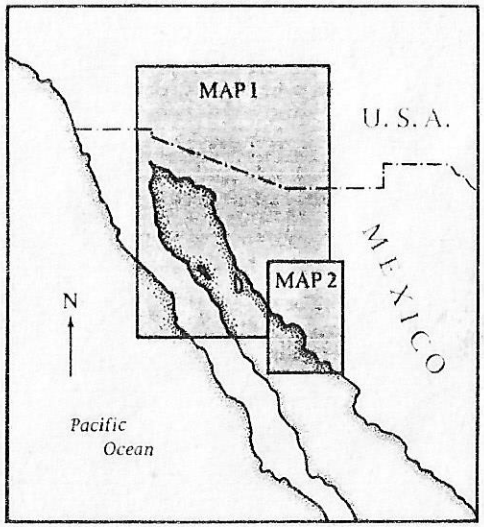

MAP I
U. S. A.
MEXICO
MAP 2
N
Pacific Ocean

Figure 1

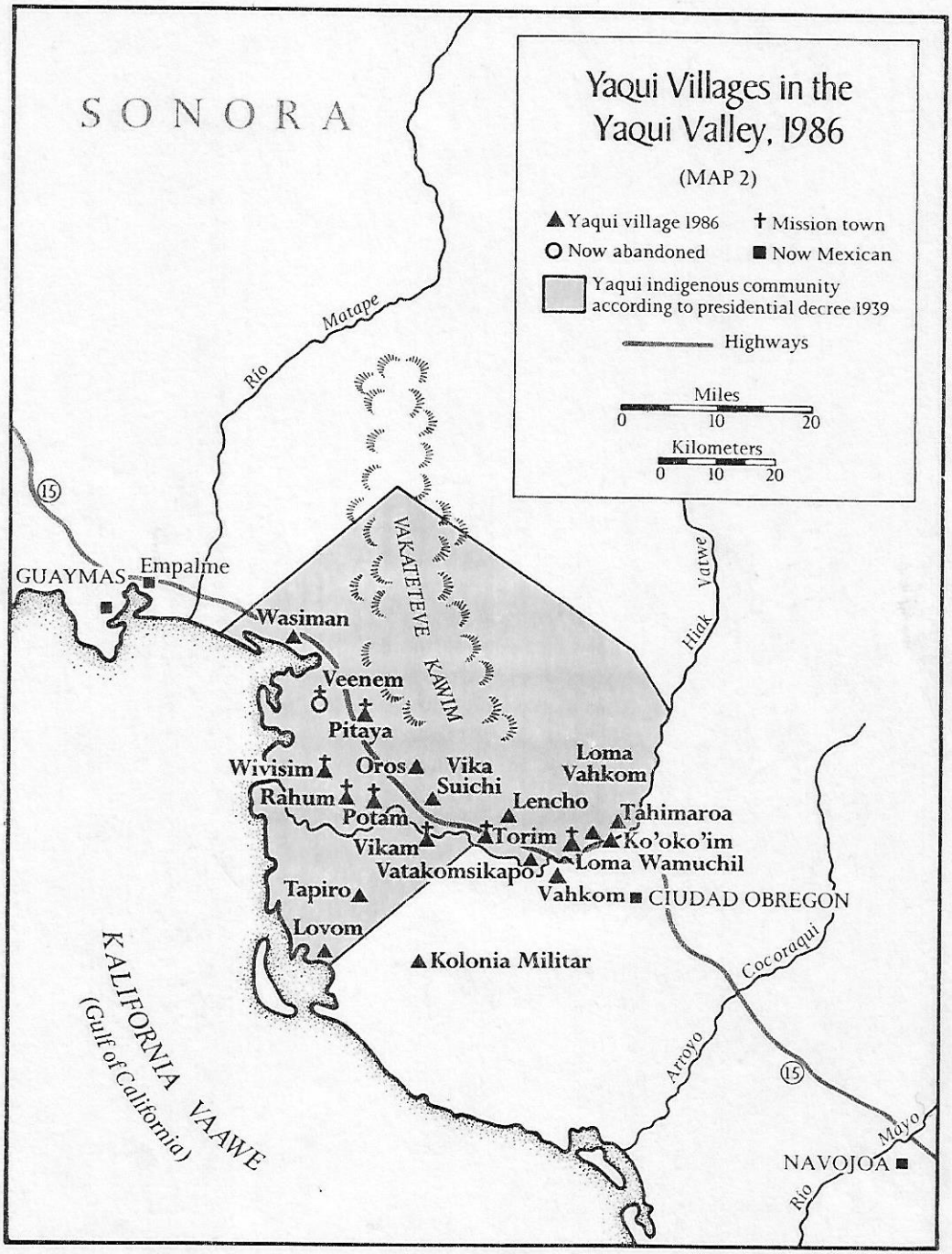

SONORA
Yaqui Villages in the Yaqui Valley, 1986
(MAP 2)
Yaqui village 1986
Mission town
Now abandoned
Now Mexican
Yaqui indigenous community according to presidential decree 1939
Highways
Miles
0 10 20
Kilometers
0 10 20
Matape
Rio
15
GUAYMAS
Empalme
VAKATETEVE KAWIM
Hiak Vatwe
Wasiman
Veenem
Pitaya
Wivisim
Oros
Vika Suichi
Loma Vahkom
Rahum
Potam
Lencho
Tahimaroa
Vikam
Torim
Ko'oko'im
Vatakomsikapo
Loma Wamuchil
Tapiro
Vahkom
CIUDAD OBREGON
Lovom
Kolonia Militar
KALIFORNIA VAAWE
(Gulf of California)
Cocoraqui
Arroyo
15
Mayo
Rio
NAVOJOA

Figure 2

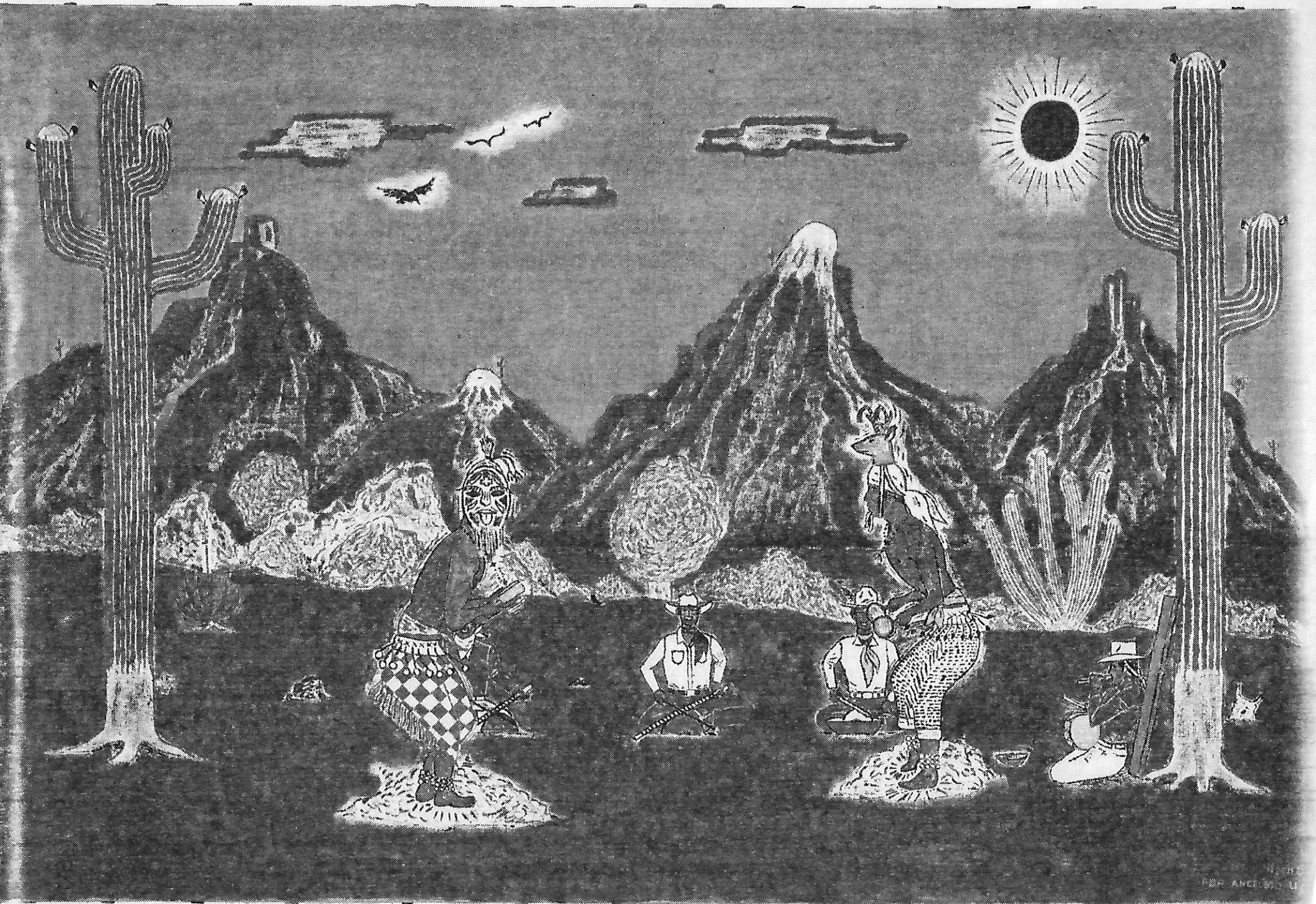


Figure 3.

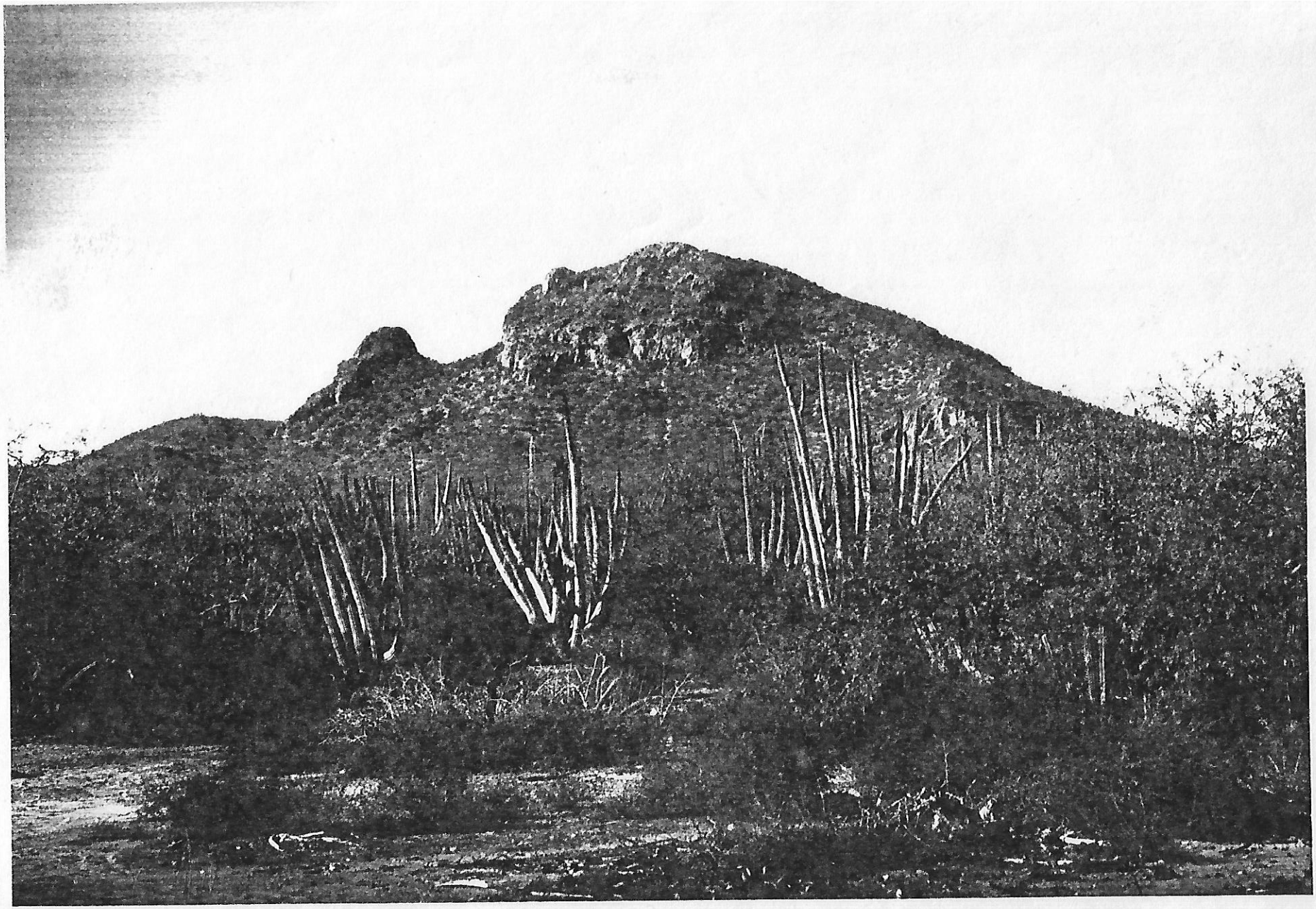


Figure 4.

Figure 5

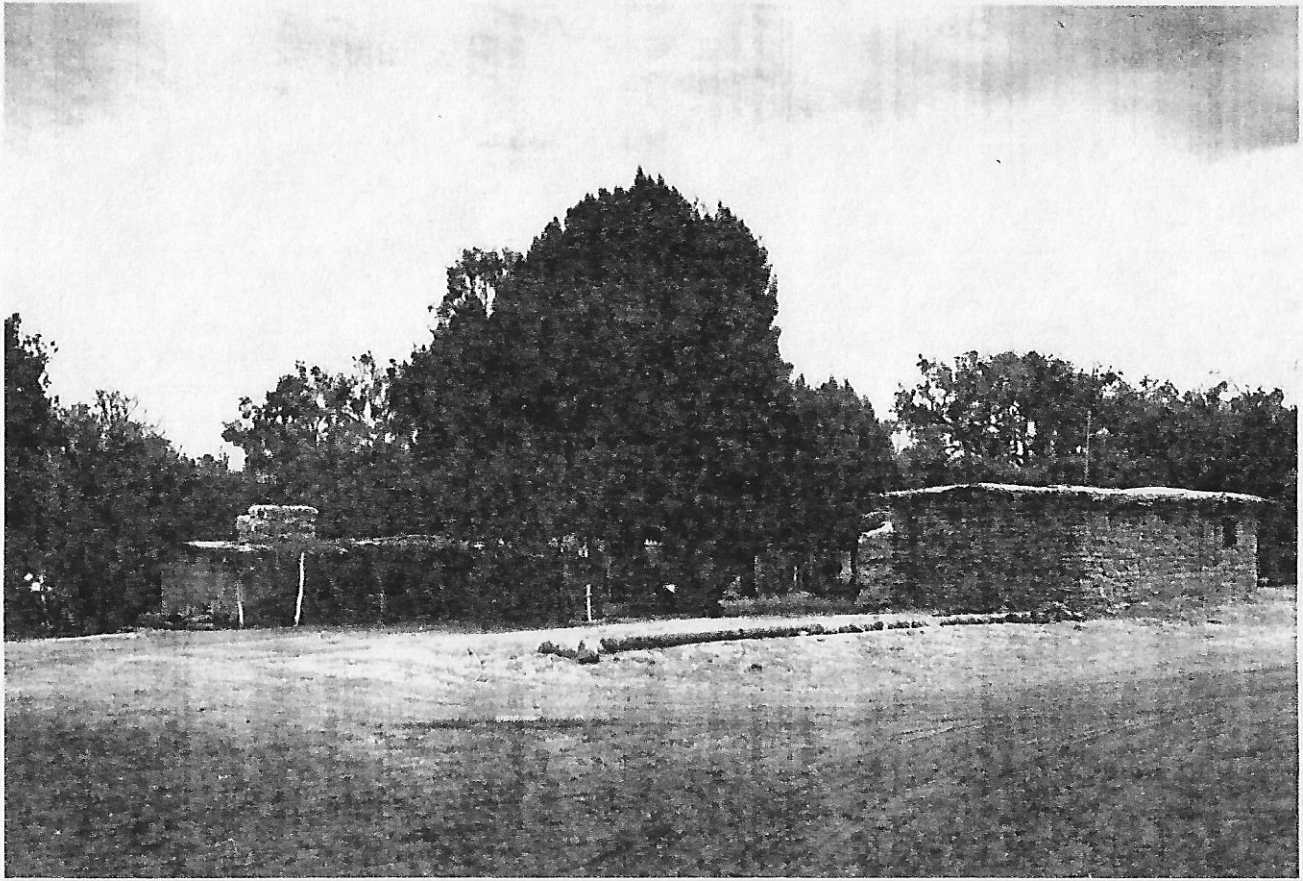


Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 9