

UC Merced

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology

Title

Beck: *Ethnobotany of the California Indians, Vol. 1: A Bibliography and Index*; and Strike: *Ethnobotany of the California Indians, Vol. 2: Aboriginal Uses of California's Indigenous Plants*

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0gw1d0zx>

Journal

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology, 16(2)

ISSN

0191-3557

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Publication Date

1994-07-01

Peer reviewed

a characteristic straight cutting edge where the tip of the point should be. This point is matched in the western Great Basin by comparable ones as described by Tuohy (1974:114, Fig. 5).

Also in Chapter 4, Studebaker discusses the "Proto-historic" (approximately A.D. 1805 to 1,500 B.P.) and the Shoshonean period (after A.D. 1805) burial practices, and the differences between them and the earlier cultures. He says that since the "Proto-historic" times, the Shoshonean peoples abandoned the dead, as opposed to the earlier cultures who deposited the dead with ". . . obvious exotic and distinctly select objects." This difference alone should point out Swanson's (1972) linguistic mistake. He continues by discussing what anthropologists (Liljeblad, Lowie, Walker, Kroeber, Boas, Radir, Schoolcraft, Steward) had to say about Shoshonean animism (puha) and its manifestation in various spirits.

In summary, the book is a rarity, discussing the ancient art of southern Idaho by a combination of scientific and "mythic" viewpoints. It belongs on most Great Basin bookshelves. Certainly, one wonders why such a combination of two authors was put together in the first place. Could it be a way of putting down archaeologists for their presumed lack of knowledge about anthropology and mythology in general? This reviewer thinks not. By the time of the first revision, I hope *two* anthropologists are chosen as authors; or one author, like Pavesic, could have handled it by himself. An "insider's view" of the arts of ancient southern Idaho has yet to be written, but this volume could be considered a starting point.

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- 1974 A Comparative Study of Late Paleo-Indian Manifestations in the Western Great Basin. In: A Collection of Papers on Great Basin Archaeology, Robert G. Elston and Loretta Sabini, eds., pp. 91-116. Reno: Nevada Archaeological Survey Research Paper No. 5.



Ethnobotany of the California Indians, Vol. 1: A Bibliography and Index. Beatrice M. Beck. Champaign, Illinois: Koeltz Scientific Books USA/Germany, 1994, iii + 165 pp., 1 map, bibliography, index.

Ethnobotany of the California Indians, Vol. 2: Aboriginal Uses of California's Indigenous Plants. Sandra S. Strike. Champaign, Illinois: Koeltz Scientific Books USA/Germany, 1994, ii + 210 pp., 1 map, 18 illus., 1 appendix, bibliography, index, \$80.00 (2 vol. set, paper).

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Many Californians interested in ethnobotany have been frustrated for the last 20 years because George Mead (1972) never published the second volume containing plant genera N through Z and all the references. At last, we have been provided with something far better: a new, two volume *Ethnobotany of the California Indians*, which combines an excellent bibliography with a good summary of plants used by various California native peoples.

The first volume, *A Bibliography and Index*, is the culmination of a long effort. Bea Beck, librarian at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, has spent years compiling lists of all known publications (and some unpublished works) on California Indian knowledge and uses of plants. She has thoroughly searched academic, public, and private library collections throughout southern California and at the Smithsonian, as well as directly contacting individual authors to obtain reprints for her files. Beck must have personally examined most of the material, not just scanned titles, to ferret out ethnobotanical content.

The book begins with a brief historical introduction, followed by a map showing locations of tribal groups in a manner consistent with the Smithsonian *Handbook of North American Indians*. Following that is the 145-page ethnobotanical bibliography: an extraordinarily complete inventory of books, articles from professional journals, popular magazines and newsletters, and even abstracts of papers presented at the Society of Ethnobiology's annual meetings. The standard reference format is generally used, except for listings by serial or title where the author was not credited. Entries date from 1871 to 1993 and span the area of the present state of California, as well as northern Baja California. Some listings have key terms appended in brackets to note particular topics, subjects, cultural groups, regions, or plant species mentioned.

Combing through this compilation repeatedly, I looked up one obscure reference after another, certain Beck must have forgotten something. Virtually everything I could think of was there, though I did note with secret triumph that Rothrock's 1878 *Notes on Economic Botany* and Isabel Kelly's Miwok notes (Collier and Thalman 1991) had apparently been overlooked. Additions are welcome and may be directed to either the author or publisher.

The 20-page index at the end includes locations, individuals, material culture items, botanical and common names of plants, and other

terms derived from titles and bracketed key words in the main entries. It is helpful but not comprehensive. When looking up "San Nicholas Island" (more properly San Nicolas), for example, only one page number is listed for referring to the citation in the bibliography. There are, in fact, at least eight other publications on San Nicolas in the bibliography which are not listed in the index.

It is unfortunate that Beck's fine work is marred by a high incidence of typographical errors. Many are easily decipherable, having perhaps occurred during transcription of handwritten notes (curing appears as "caring," totemism as "tolemism"), but more should have been caught during proofreading (the inexplicable "Apcelepeis" for *Asclepias*). Incorrectly rendered authors' names (e.g., Hutchens 1973, not Hutchins), publication dates (e.g., Grant 1965, not 1956), titles (words deleted or incorrect in, e.g., Barrows 1967; Hutchens 1973), and journal citations (Farris 1980 appeared in this journal, not its predecessor, *The Journal of California Anthropology*) represent more than mere annoyance; they are likely to be perpetuated in the literature by careless researchers. In dedicating this volume to the pioneering ethnobotanist V. K. Chesnut, Beck herself observes that for over 90 years his name has been the victim of this same phenomenon.

One hesitates to offer these criticisms because the bibliographer's task is a singularly thankless one, and such compilations often elicit more complaints over minor points than praise for their truly significant accomplishments. Those who would rely on this work as the definitive bibliography on California Indian ethnobotany—which it most certainly is—are encouraged to behave like good scholars and look at the documents themselves, not simply copy these entries directly into their own reference sections. Precision aside, the pleasure of being introduced to new knowledge is reason enough to seek out the more than 2,500 original and offbeat sources

which Beck has amassed in this valuable contribution.

The second volume, *Aboriginal Uses of California's Indigenous Plants*, functions independently of the first. Sandra Strike began the project as a docent at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. She has organized the information from a primarily botanical perspective, which is more appropriate than cultural categories (as in Barrows 1967) when covering such a large and diverse region as California. The main body of the book comprises 169 pages of text describing uses of nearly 500 native plants by indigenous peoples within California state boundaries (but not extending into Baja California). An appendix on California native peoples has a page of general information, a location map, and a 15-page glossary of the principal cultural groups. Indexing these group names back to their appearance in the text might have been helpful for some users. This volume has its own eight-page bibliography.

Plants are listed alphabetically by their botanical names; species may be listed individually or several included under a genus. Common names are provided for each plant and listed in a separate index at the end of the volume. This strategy is a commendable compromise between the accessibility offered by common names and the confusion which inevitably results from relying on them too heavily.

For each plant, indigenous uses are described under the headings of Food, Medicine, Basketry, Dye, and Other. The latter category encompasses a very large and heterogeneous part of Native Californian life to lump in such a subsidiary manner—beliefs, ceremonial items, clothing, cordage, structures, tools, toys, transportation—but discrete descriptions of the various recorded uses do help to overcome this anthropological objection. Information on each use ranges from fairly detailed (e.g., the seven pages on oaks), to relatively brief—"Concow mixed poison oak leaves into patties made of acorn

(*Quercus*) meal" (p. 154). Numerous interesting tidbits and comments are inserted on chemical constituents, rattles made of ceanothus silk moth cocoons, "digger" pine, drums, fire management, etc.

Many of the reported uses are ascribed to particular groups such as Cahuilla, Maidu, and Yokuts, while many others do not specify further than "California Natives." Summarizing information about certain widely distributed practices is reasonable. With so many plant uses unattributed to any particular group, however, Strike perpetuates the regrettable tradition in popular literature (Balls 1962; Sweet 1962) of lumping California's enormous cultural diversity under the rubric "the Indians."

The utilization of reference materials is my principal quarrel with Strike's volume. First, they are almost exclusively books, many of the aforementioned general, popular sort. There is a smattering of *News from Native California*, but nary an article from either incarnation of this journal, or *Economic Botany*, or the *Journal of Ethnobiology*. I will be frank: this means all my own papers are omitted, but so are several important works on California ethnobotany by other authors. A stronger infusion of Beck's bibliographic resources would have been beneficial.

Second, while it is far more pleasant to the reader not to be interrupted with parenthetical citations in the text, the more serious student will be frustrated at being unable to track down sources of information. This is especially true where statements might be questioned, e.g., the Chumash enhancing seed production by burning in the redwood belt (p. 145), or applying the asphaltum-pine pitch mixture to their canoe planks only after drilling and lashing them together (p. 146), or living on San Nicolas Island (p. 169). Had the references in the bibliography been numbered, the origin of such assertions could have been made accessible in a relatively unobtrusive way.

Nonetheless, Strike has done a good job of pulling together a great deal of material from many sources. The text is very well written in a straightforward, factual style without being dry. Readers can easily look up desired information but may well be tempted to linger over just a few more pages.

The widespread public fascination with Indian plant uses, particularly for food and medicine, means that this book will be regarded as a manual by many new age, back-to-the-land types. It is beyond Strike's scope to provide recipes or prescriptions, however, and she wisely cautions the reader against trying any of the native uses described. The 18 line drawings function more as decorative enhancement to page layout than as aids to plant identification.

Volume 2 will appeal to lay people, teachers, students, Native Americans, archaeologists, and anthropologists, and it is by far the best compilation yet produced. Until more scholars take an active role in making the results of their research interesting and available to the public, perhaps the convenience of this compact sourcebook outweighs this ethnobotanist's cautions that it not be relied upon for strict accuracy.

Though some may cringe at the \$80 price for two paperbacks, these volumes are extremely well produced with clear type, sewn signatures, and sturdy bindings. They should stand the heavy use they will get from frequent consultation, and the wealth of information they contain will be a most welcome addition to many institutional libraries and personal collections.

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