

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

A SURVEY OF INDIAN ASSIMILATION IN EASTERN SONORA

Thomas B. Hinton



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IN EASTERN SONORA

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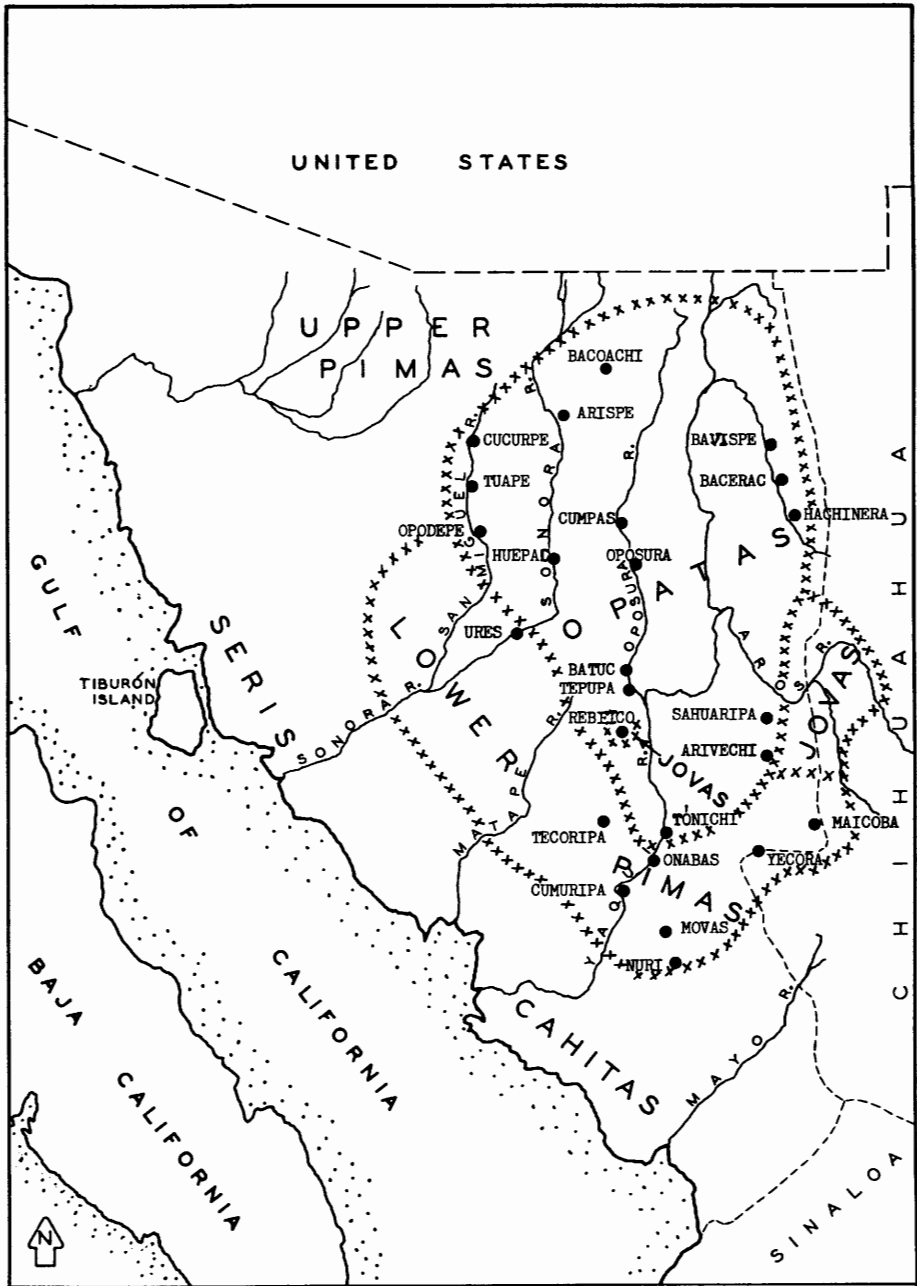
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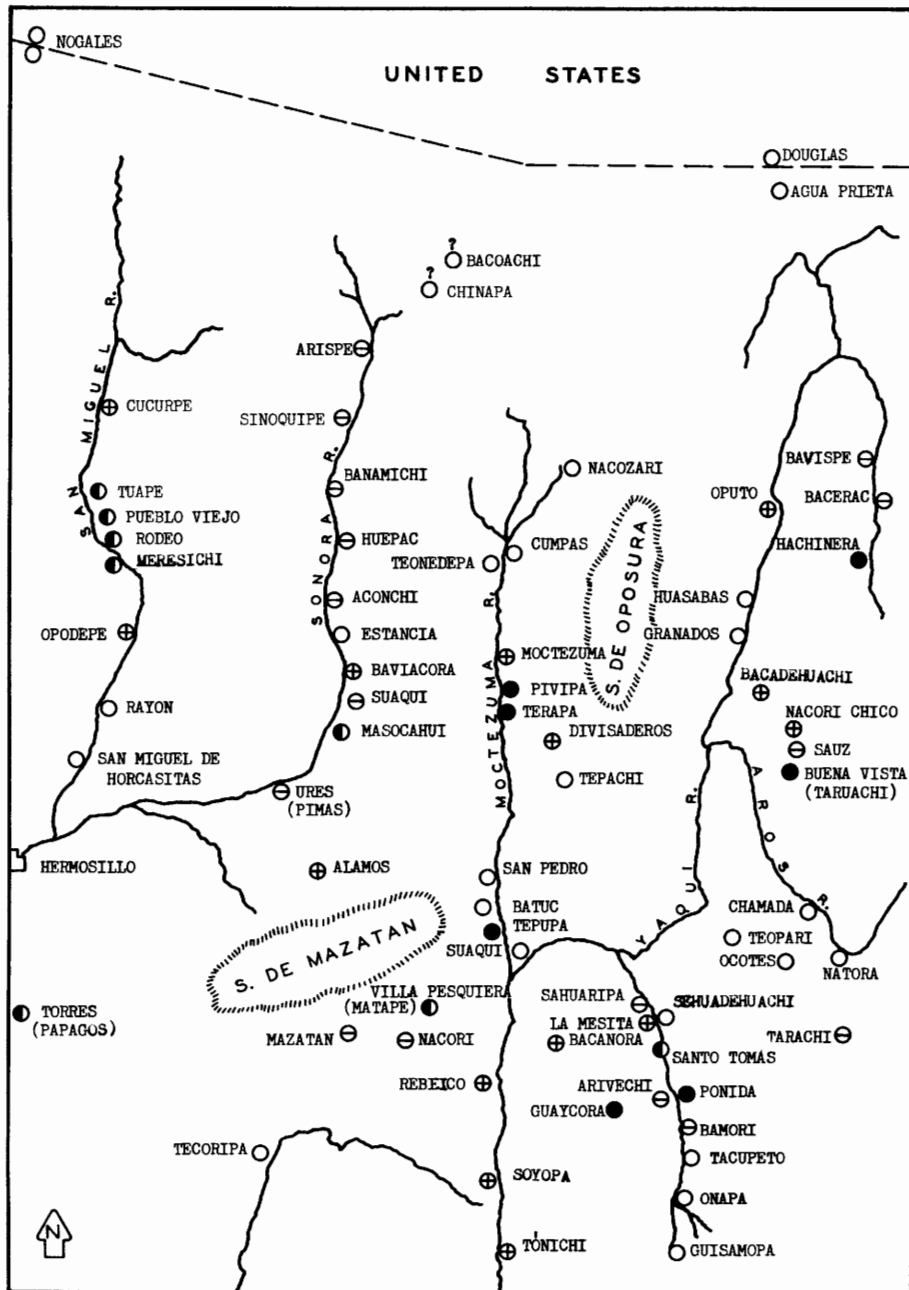
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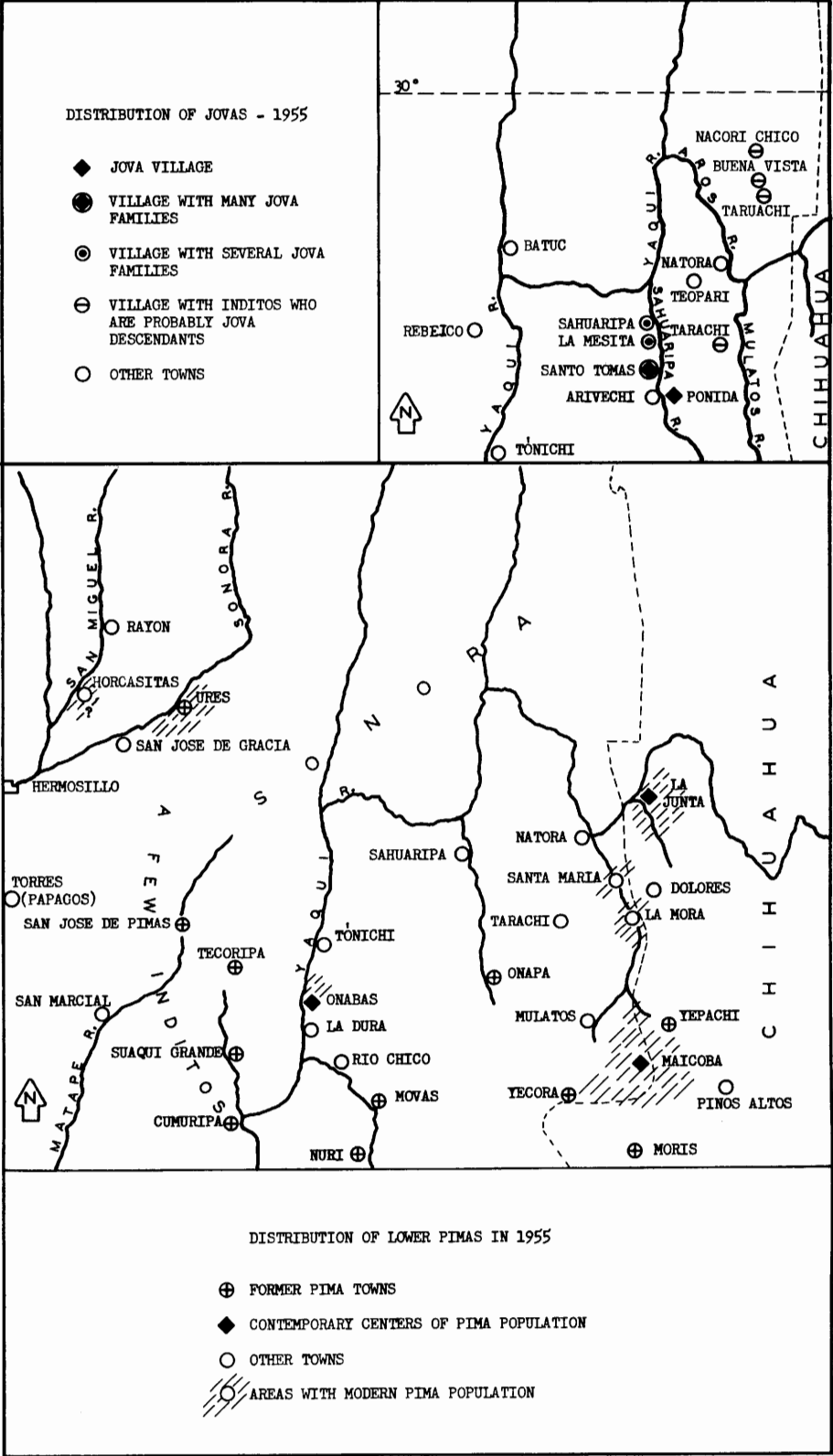


THE MODERN STATE OF SONORA SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE OPATAS, JOVAS, AND LOWER PIMAS AS THEY WERE IN 1678 SOON AFTER MISSIONIZATION.



MODERN TOWNS OF OPATA SONORA SHOWING APPROXIMATE DEGREE OF SURVIVAL OF INDIAN POPULATION IN 1955 (POPULATION OF OUTLYING RANCHES INCLUDED WITH NEAREST TOWN).

- STILL LOCALLY CONSIDERED AN INDIAN VILLAGE
- HEAVY INDIAN MINORITY
- ⊕ FIVE TO FIFTEEN PERCENT INDIAN FAMILIES REMAINING
- ⊖ ONE TO FIVE PERCENT INDIAN FAMILIES REMAINING
- FEW OR NO INDIANS



DISTRIBUTION OF JOVAS - 1955

- ◆ JOVA VILLAGE
- VILLAGE WITH MANY JOVA FAMILIES
- ⊙ VILLAGE WITH SEVERAL JOVA FAMILIES
- ⊕ VILLAGE WITH INDITOS WHO ARE PROBABLY JOVA DESCENDANTS
- OTHER TOWNS

30°



DISTRIBUTION OF LOWER PIMAS IN 1955

- ⊕ FORMER PIMA TOWNS
- ◆ CONTEMPORARY CENTERS OF PIMA POPULATION
- OTHER TOWNS
- ▨ AREAS WITH MODERN PIMA POPULATION

PREFACE

THE PURPOSE of this work was to survey eastern Sonora in an attempt to determine what, if anything, remains of the aboriginal groups to that area.

In the course of the survey, all settlements larger than small ranches in the old Opata and Jova area were covered, with the exception of those in the upper Bavispe Valley above Huásabas, Bacoachi and Chinapa north of Arispe, the town of Alamos south of Ures, and Soyopa on the Yaqui River. Unless otherwise indicated, all settlements mentioned in this paper were visited at least once. I feel justified in including data from towns not visited since residents of these towns were encountered and interviewed. Using Tepupa as a base, I covered the Valley of Sahuaripa and adjoining portions of the Sierra Madre into Chihuahua in addition to the Valley of Batuc. The San Miguel, Mátape, Bacanora, and middle Yaqui river valleys were visited several times, as was the Moctezuma area. Less information was collected from the upper portions of the Sonora Valley, so the coverage there is less complete than in the other sectors of Opata Sonora.

Whenever possible I stayed with Indian families and gathered data from both Indian and non-Indian residents of the area. Interviews were both formal and informal. The language used was

exclusively Spanish. This paper is a synthesis of these data in addition to those gained by personal observation.

I am indebted to E. H. Spicer for his direction, his suggestions and encouragement. The manuscript was critically read by Dr. Ralph Beals of the University of California at Los Angeles and by Mrs. Paul Ezell of San Diego, California. The help of both is gratefully acknowledged. At the time of this survey Roger C. Owen was studying a community of Indian background in northern-central Sonora. I am grateful to him for numerous useful comments and suggestions. In addition, the interest and encouragement of Mrs. Clara Lee Tanner and Dr. Harry Getty of the University of Arizona are much appreciated. Finally, I wish to acknowledge my debt to the many Sonorans for their hospitality and interested cooperation.

This paper is the result of field work undertaken between April and August, 1955 and in June of 1956 through a Comin's Fund fellowship from the Department of Anthropology, University of Arizona and under the direction of Dr. E. H. Spicer of that department.

THOMAS B. HINTON

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July 1, 1959

INTRODUCTION

THE ABORIGINAL peoples of the Mexican state of Sonora, of which there were seven major groups when the Spaniards arrived in the mid-sixteenth century, have to a large extent been lost sight of. These seven groups were the Yaquis, Mayos, Pimas, Papagos, Opatas, Jovas, and Seris. Acculturation has proceeded in such a fashion that, with the possible exception of the Seris, there is no group which can be said to observe aboriginal patterns to any great degree. None of the major tribes of Sonora, however, has disappeared completely. The descendants of these Indians, who can be found in most areas of the state, manifest, group by group, differing stages of physical and cultural absorption into surrounding Mexican populations.

The tribes of Sonora, in fact, present a rough continuum of varying responses to contact ranging from the least Mexicanized Seris, on the one hand, through the more Hispanicized Sonora Papagos, Lower Pimas, Yaquis, and Mayos, and terminating in the almost absorbed Jovas and Opatas (Spicer 1954: 663-678). Two other groups, the Cocopas and the Varohíos, with extensions into Sonora are not included. Among these peoples the processes of acculturation must be examined in terms of two major periods of change. The first of these is the colonial period at which time the natives were brought under mission influence and the cultures of all underwent extensive alteration. Again excepting the Seris, who will no longer be included in this paper, the result was a mixed Spanish colonial-native Indian type culture which in many ways parallels that outlined by La Farge for Middle America (La Farge 1940: 281-291). Today one of the major points of difference between mem-

bers of these groups and their non-Indian neighbors is the greater retention of Spanish colonial forms introduced by the early missionaries. These traits, particularly religious practices, have come, through long association, to be regarded locally as characterizing the Sonoran Indian.

The second period of change is seen in the gradual merging of Spanish-Indian colonial culture with that of modern non-Indian Sonora. For most of these groups, then, the contemporary situation can be described most accurately as that of participants, in varying degrees, in the peasant-like subculture of rural Sonora rather than that of tribal Indians (peasant subculture as defined by Wagley and Harris 1955: 431-433).

This paper is concerned with the three most assimilated indigenous groups in present day Sonora; namely, the Lower Pimas, the Jovas, and the Opatas. These are Indian groups among which there has been little ethnological work and which have been considered by most writers to be extinct or nearly so. The Upper Pimas are omitted because of their uncertain contemporary position. Although apparently extinct over their old territory in Sonora, the possibility remains that certain segments of this former Sonoran group may still exist, having been incorporated into the modern Papago of Arizona.

A second purpose of the paper is to delimit and locate the native Indians still existing in contemporary eastern Sonora and briefly to define the varying degrees of survival as ethnic entities which these people display, group by group and area by area. By this examination it is hoped that the place of these people in relation to the larger Sonoran society and their present orientation can be better understood.

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SCHOOL TEACHER OF JOVA DESCENT. PONIDA.

1

CONTEMPORARY SOCIO-RACIAL CLASSIFICATIONS

IN EASTERN Sonora there are several socio-racial designations in common use today. A definition of these is necessary if we are to examine the place of the Indians in that area at the present time. Although terms vary to some extent from district to district and from person to person, their use is roughly consistent over the whole region. In the case of the Opatas and Jovas, where present cultural differences from the non-Indian population are slight to non-existent, these classifications appear to be based largely on known or assumed physical ancestry with some consideration as to socio-economic position and village of origin. The Indian category, nevertheless, coincides to a high degree with those families still retaining features of "Indian" culture. In much of the Pima area, the designations have a language basis as well. In most cases, as there is no definite line of division between the groups, the categories overlap. It should be mentioned that often "Indianness" is a matter of generation. The grandparents may be classed as Indians while the continually more mixed and Mexicanized second and third generations become *gente de razon* (people of reason, i.e. non-Indian). These terms carry some social

rank connotations in that the Whites are characteristically at the top, both economically and socially, while the Indians most often are in evidence at the lower levels. *Mestizos* are found at all levels, but appear to be most numerous between the two extremes.

Blanco or white is used in two senses. In its primary use the word is applied to people of complete or nearly complete European physical appearance. In the area under discussion this physical type is confined largely to the upper class of the larger towns, being more in evidence in the northern part of the territory and in the vicinity of the old Spanish mining camps. In a wider sense the term *blanco* is used when referring to all those not tagged *inditos* or *indios*, being used interchangeably with *gente de razon*. In this paper *blanco* will be used in the primary sense.

Mestizo, also called *el tipo mexicano*, refers to the mixed European-Indian population where physical features are not pronouncedly Indian. These people are also often labeled *blanco* with the majority calling themselves *mestizos* only when discussing their ancestry.

The *indiada*, the Indians, is subdivided into

two groups, the *indito* and the *indio legítimo*. Another term, *indio crudo*, is also used; based on additional physical criteria, *indio crudo* cross-cuts both types.

Indito, although on occasion used for all Indians, refers primarily to people who retain a predominantly Indian physical appearance, especially dark skin, but who no longer speak Indian languages and who live much like the *mestizos* in most respects. A portion of this group retains slight cultural differences from the general non-Indian population, differences which will be examined later. In the Opatas area the *inditos* are referred to as Opatas and are pointed out by the Sonorans as the Opatas Indians of today.

Indio crudo refers to a person of marked Indian physical type showing no Caucasian mixture in either complexion, hair, or facial features. An *indio crudo* can belong to the same group as the *indito*, being merely the relatively unmixed individual but possessing the same culture traits as the *indito*. A person of strongly Indian physical type is likewise labeled an *indio crudo* in the *indio legítimo* division.

Indio legítimo (real Indian) refers to those who still speak an Indian language and practice other elements of what is considered Indian culture. In the great majority of cases such individuals are physically *indios crudos*. Often the term *indio* is limited to such "real Indians." In such a context the Pimas are usually called *indios*, as are the Yaquis and the Varohíos. Those considered Opatas are more often classed as *inditos*. The descendants of the Opatas find this term less offensive than the designation *indio* with its connotations of living as an Indian. The term *indio*

itself, although it is occasionally used loosely for all Indians or even all inhabitants of "Indian" villages, carries a connotation roughly that of "full blooded Indian" in common American usage. The inconsistencies of its use, however, destroy much of its value as a socio-racial classification in a study of the area in question.

A chart embodying these terms may add to the clarity of the designations. *Rural Sonoran* is defined as the peasant-like culture of the ranch and village agricultural areas. *Urban Sonoran* refers to that of the rapidly modernizing and industrializing cities of coastal Sonora.

The three groups in question, Opatas, Jovas, and Pimas, now live among the non-Indian population of eastern Sonora in such a way that it is possible to pass through a village inhabited almost exclusively by Indian descendants of these tribes and notice no difference in the appearance of the town from that of other villages in the area. As Indian families commonly live scattered on the outskirts of towns or on surrounding *rancherías*, they are seldom much in evidence. A few inhabitants of some eastern Sonoran towns, belonging mostly to the *blanco* category, are unaware of the existence of an Indian population. The knowledge of the word Jova, for instance, is limited largely to the more Indian descendants of this tribe and to some of their immediate neighbors in the district of Sahuaripa. To most of the population of Sahuaripa, the Jovas are merely *inditos*. The modern cultures of the Opatas, Jovas, and lowland Lower Pimas are almost identical, and they do not differ greatly from that of other Mexicans in the area. The mountain Pimas, however, remain as distinct groups to a much greater degree than do the others.

	PHYSICAL TYPE	CULTURE	LANGUAGE	SOCIO-ECONOMIC
BLANCO	Marked Caucasoid	Modern Mexican Urban Sonoran Rural Sonoran	Spanish	Upper
MESTIZO	Predominantly Caucasoid	Modern Mexican Urban Sonoran Rural Sonoran	Spanish	Upper Middle Lower
INDITO	Predominantly Indian	Largely Modern Mexican Urban Sonoran Rural Sonoran A few Indian (aboriginal and Spanish colonial) traits	Spanish	Middle Lower
INDIO CRUDO	Marked Indian	Can possess traits of either Indito or Indio Legitimo		
INDIO LEGITIMO	Marked Indian	Rural Sonoran Indian (aboriginal and Spanish colonial)	Spanish Indian	Lower to completely separate social group

2

THE OPATAS AND JOVAS

THE OPATAS, when first contacted by Europeans in 1538, lived in agricultural *rancherías* and villages along the river valleys of eastern Sonora. Their territory stretched from the western slopes of the Sierra Madre to the borders of the desert plains of western Sonora. They lived on the Yaqui River and all its tributaries from the northern headwaters near the present United States boundary as far south as the town of Tónichi and along the Sonora River from north of its headwaters south almost to Ures. The San Miguel Valley was occupied from Cucurpe south to the vicinity of modern Rayon. The Opatas, including those speaking the Eudeve dialect, were a numerous group. Sauer (1935: 29) places their aboriginal population at 60,000 while other sources give somewhat smaller estimates. A mission census of the native Christian population of the Opata and Lower Pima area of Sonora in 1678, less than sixty years after the establishment of the first mission, in which time no great epidemics are reported, gives a total population of around 20,000 (Bannon 1955: 145-146). This would seem to bear out a lesser estimate for the pre-Spanish Opata. This tribe, occupying the heart of Sonora, spoke a language of the Cahita-Opata-Tarahumar division of the Uto-Aztecan family (Kroeber 1934). Bordering them on the west, north and south were Piman speaking groups with which there probably was frequent mixture.

The pre-conquest Opatas possessed a culture which was similar in many respects to that of other Sonoran tribes, the Piman and Cahita peoples (Beals 1932: 144-147; Johnson 1950: 8).

As the history of the Opatas is fairly adequately covered in both documentary and secondary sources, it will be no more than touched upon here (Ocaranza 1933, 1937; Johnson 1950; Villa 1951; Bannon 1955). The Opatas were concentrated in missions by the Jesuits of the

seventeenth century and were rapidly converted to Christianity (Bannon 1955). They apparently accepted Spanish culture eagerly, and the Jesuit, Pfefferkorn, writing in the mid-eighteenth century, speaks of frequent intermarriage with Spanish soldiers and miners. There were probably several reasons for the Opatas' ready amalgamation with the Spaniards, their exposed position in regard to the Apache being a major consideration in later times. Another reason undoubtedly was the fact that the fertile Opata valleys attracted Spanish settlers to a greater extent than some of the more desert regions of Sonora. The assimilation of the Opatas was consequently far advanced by the end of the nineteenth century. Bandelier visited the Sonora River, the upper Bavispe River, and the Bacadehuachi-Nácori Chico area in 1884 and found some remains of Opata culture still in existence and a few people who still spoke the language (Bandelier 1890). Lumholtz passed briefly through the same area in 1894 and noticed little of Indian culture (Lumholtz 1902, Vol. 1: 10). Hrdlicka paid a visit to the San Miguel valley in 1902 and discovered Opata speaking people of the adult generation still living at Tuape and Pueblo Viejo and a few native ceremonies still in existence (Hrdlicka 1904: 71-84). Johnson studied Opata descendants at Tónichi in 1940. He reported that the Opatas "have completely disappeared today as a cultural and ethnic entity" (Johnson 1950: 7).

Whatever the factors may have been which led to the voluntary amalgamation of this group, the Opatas of today present a picture of a people on the verge of complete merger with their neighbors — a process, however, which is still incomplete in some areas.

The Jovas, whom the early Jesuits reported as speaking a language different from that of the Opatas, lived in the *barrancas* (gorges) of the Sierra Madre along the Papigochic River (Río

Aros) and its tributaries and in the sierras to the north and south. On the east they were bounded by the Tarahumaras, and on the west they were found among the Opatas in the valley of the Sahuaripa and possibly even farther west (Guitéras 1951: 114). Their native culture is reported as being generally similar to that of the Opatas, but with more emphasis given to gathering. They probably never numbered more than a few thousand (Sauer 1934: 26).



FIG. 1. OPATA WEAVER. ARIVECHI.

The Jovas, in contrast to the Opatas, were much less inclined to accept missionization. Missionary accounts complain of their frequent apostasy (Ocaranza 1937: 294; Guitéras 1951: 73-74). They were to a considerable extent driven out of the mountains by the Apaches in the middle and late eighteenth century, and many settled permanently in the valley of Sahuaripa (Guitéras 1951: 113; Jova oral tradition, Hinton field notes 1955). Late mission period accounts describe them as being absorbed by the Opatas and as rapidly abandoning their language for

Opata. There evidently are no post-colonial or modern reports of this tribe. As their present situation is almost exactly that of the Opatas, they will be treated here with the descendants of that group.

In the old Opata territory, from the Sierra Madre to the San Miguel Valley and from above the headwaters of the Sonora and Yaqui rivers south to the town of Tónichi, the population is today, according to local statements, overwhelmingly of partial Opata descent. As the great majority of these people are far removed from the Indian in both appearance and memories, they are not considered and do not think of themselves as Indians but only as Mexicans and Sonorans. Those still designated as Indians are scattered throughout the area, being in most places much in the minority. In most towns of the old Opata territory, nonetheless, there remain a few families who are called *inditos* by their neighbors. A generation ago there presumably was considerably greater proportion of these families. There are, in addition, a few small villages and *rancherías* which are designated, both by their inhabitants and by their neighbors, as *pueblos de puros inditos* (towns of just Indians) or *pueblos de puros opatas*. The population of these villages is considerably more Indian than that of neighboring towns, and they preserve an emphasis on certain practices, described below, which they consider to be Indian and which set them off slightly from the other Mexicans. These people are more often called *inditos* than Opatas, although their Opata origin is generally recognized by all concerned. While it is probable that there are few, if any, among them who have no trace of Caucasian ancestry, marked Indian physical types are fairly common. These characteristically are people five feet two inches to five feet eight inches in stature, usually of slight build, medium to very dark brown skin, and with purely Indian facial features. The heavy body types seen among the Pimas are rare. Caucasian mixture in many of the *inditos* is most apparent in that the nose and face appear slightly narrower and the beard is more pronounced than in those who are *indios crudos*. A very common trait among the Opatas

is an extremely long attached ear lobe. This is found in nearly all the *indios crudos* and in many of the other *indios* as well.

Population figures for the Opatas are non-existent. Any figure, therefore, must necessarily be arbitrary in the extreme in that it can be only a rough estimate at best, and it must depend on the writer's opinion as to where the line between Indian and *mestizo* should be drawn. In 1864-66 the French captain, Guillet, estimated the total population of pure and nearly pure Opatas at 5,000 to 6,000. He likewise remarked on the difficulties involved in arriving at an accurate figure because of the extensive mixture of Opatas with their neighbors (Torre Villar 1953: 53).

On the basis of a rough count of Indian families and their ratio to non-Indians in the villages covered, and extended by inference to those areas not visited, I estimate the "Indians" among the modern descendants of the Opatas number from seven to ten percent of the present population of the area, around 4,000, of which some 500 would be *indios crudos* showing no visible trace of non-Indian mixture. Hrdlicka estimated that the full-blooded Opatas numbered 500 to 600 in 1902 (Hrdlicka 1904). He, however, was not familiar with the entire area inhabited by Opatas descendants. The Jova descendants in the Indian category probably number about 250, with an estimated less than 50 showing no visible European mixture. Many of the Jova descendants have Opatas or Pima admixture as well.

The Indians of the old Opatas area today retain a few traits of presumed Opatas culture as well as memories of other items which were still in existence two or three generations ago. Some elements of Opatas origin have gone to make up the common culture of rural eastern Sonora and are shared by all the rural and small town people. Other elements, though they may be present in the *mestizo* population, are so much in evidence among the Indians as to be considered characteristic. An example of this is the working of palm leaf into basketry and hats. Such traits have been passed down from the Opatas through the generations to the progressively more *mestizo* population.



FIG. 2. JOVA. PONIDA.

The following is a breakdown of the cultural elements which set the last remnants of the Opatas and the Jovas off from their neighbors to some small extent, with some references to the disappearance of former elements of this type.

Both the Opatas and Jova languages apparently are now completely dead. Six months' search in the area failed to turn up a single person who had a knowledge of more than a few words of either language. From numerous informants it was determined that in the first years of the twentieth century only a few old people still spoke "*la lengua*" among themselves. In Tepupa the last two speakers of the language died in 1922 and 1935. It is possible that one or two may still exist among the oldest of the Sonoran Indians; however, in 1955 I traced down many rumors of a remaining Opatas speaker, and in every case these were found to be untrue, or the person was now dead. Apparently the last speakers of the language were unwilling for their children to learn it, not wanting them to be

"Indians." It is said they spoke it among themselves only when no outsider was present. Many of the present older generation, however, claim their parents had some knowledge of Opata, and many of these can repeat a few words or a phrase or two. Opata words remain in many place names, with towns, arroyos, hills, caves, ranches, and springs still called by their names in the old language. Other survivals of Opata speech are the names of some plants and certain family names which are fairly common among the *inditos* of eastern Sonora, the Tánori, Móvari, Mayve, Búsanic, Máhuari, Sagori, etc., all of which are called Opata, and Guirisa and Ubari which are considered to be of Jova origin.

A greater survival of folk Catholicism is found among the Indian descendants of the Opatas and the Jovas than among the non-Indian population. This is derived from religious practices introduced by the early missionaries combined with certain Indian elements (Treutlein 1949: 240-241; Johnson 1950: 37-44). A ceremonial round for the lenten season is still in evidence and roughly parallels that of the Yaqui. The *semana Santa* (Holy Week), the major ceremonial observance of the year, is celebrated with processions, dramas, dances, and devotions. The masked *fariseo* society appears in most villages of the area, those now *mestizo* as well as those still considered Indian.

Though these *semana santa* observances are quite general in most of eastern Sonora, representing in some villages a continuum from Indian mission times down to the present *mestizo* population, by far the most elaborate rites are carried on in the more Indian villages which characteristically considered the *semana santa* as particularly their own. In many of the non-Indian villages the observances are much abbreviated or have been replaced to a large degree.

Most of the *pueblos de puros inditos* have patron saints which serve as strong integrating features. These village *santos* are treated with extreme loyalty and devotion by the Indians.

At present the priests stationed in the larger towns are attempting to shift the emphasis toward more conventional Catholicism to the exclusion of the more "Indian" folk practices which they consider as disrespectful to the church. Although they have succeeded in this in some of the towns, folk Catholicism is still strong in the villages of *inditos* and is carried on today largely without the aid of a priest.

Fragments of former Opata ceremonials are seen in some of the modern observances of the region. In Tepupa a *pascola* dancer, dressed in work clothes with the addition of cocoon rattles but wearing no mask, appears in some of the Holy Week rites as does the *coyote*, another *pascola*-like dancer dancing to music imitative



FIG. 3. FARISEO MASKS. TEPUPA.

of coyote howls. The *taguaro*, which is evidently the remnant of an Opatata scalp dance, (Hrdlicka 1904: 75-77) is still carried on in Meresichi and possibly other villages in the San Miguel valley on the *sábado de gloria* (Holy Saturday).

The *matachín* is still held in several *pueblos* of the area. In Tepupa the performers, in this case girls, dance on Easter Sunday both in procession and in the church. They also appear on the *día de la Santa Cruz* and San Juan's Day. The *matachín* is performed also in the non-Indian town of Suaqui de Batuc and even in Sahuaripa.

Some ceremonies are no longer being performed although they have passed out of use so recently as to be remembered by some of the older Indians of Opatata Sonora. One of these, the *mariachi*, an obscene dance mentioned by Banelier for the Opatas, is today remembered as being held some seventy years ago at Pónida among the Jovas, and among the Opatas at Arivechi across the river. At that time, according to those who have witnessed it, the dance was performed only by the elderly while the younger Indians scorned it as a foolish old custom. Another ceremony, a comic dance called *el apache*, in which a performer dressed as an Apache stalks and shoots a deer, was witnessed by the Jova descendants of Pónida and Santo Tomás within the last thirty-five years, but has now disappeared. The *daguimaca*, a gift exchange dance, was held between the people of the towns of Opodepe and Huépac until about the turn of the century. The *daguimaca* or *cuelga* is likewise reported by Hrdlicka as still occurring at the time of his 1902 visit to Tuape. The *venadito* or deer dance appeared at Pónida on San Juan's Day until some fifteen years ago.

There are apparently no surviving shamans, although Indian *brujos* (witches) who met in sacred caves are remembered.

The values, attitudes, and manners of the nearly pure Opatas are indistinguishable from those of their neighbors, for they are now well integrated members of the rural society of eastern Sonora. Although they are sometimes teased for being Indians, they appear to suffer no overt

discrimination. It is my opinion, based on personal observation only, that the incidence of drunkenness, family instability and overt personality disorders among the Opatas and Jovas is approximately the same, and that these take the same forms as among other residents of the area who are at the same socio-economic level. This would suggest that some of the social and psychological maladjustments so common among half-assimilated Indian groups in the southwestern United States have ceased to appear here as a by-product of the assimilation process.

There is a strong tendency for the *inditos* to marry within the Indian classification. This, nonetheless, does not prevent frequent marriages with the *mestizo* group.

In the realm of material culture there is apparently a slightly greater survival of what must have been Opatata traits. These, however, have been taken into the present culture of rural Sonora and in most areas belong almost as much to the *mestizos* and even to the *blancos* as to the Indians. For instance, the present metate in use in all small town and ranch homes in the area is a legless trough variety identical to those seen in prehistoric sites in these valleys. This is used both to prepare food and to grind grain. Similarly, coiled and scraped handmade pottery is made today throughout all of eastern Sonora by both Indian and *mestizo* women, although the greater proportion of potters is in the Indian group. All cooking is done with this pottery in most rural homes in these areas, and in some districts the potter's tools and materials are still called by their Opatata names.

The weaving (twilling) of palm leaf into basket forms, petates, and hats is probably the chief home industry of the area stretching from the lower San Miguel and Sonora valleys into the Sierra Madre and increases in frequency as the *sierra* is approached. This industry is definitely linked with the Indians, being popularly considered in the area as an Indian invention. The settlements and families of Indians are the centers of palm work. Although the twilling of hats has become almost universal among *mestizo* as well as Indian women in the Batuc and

Sahuaripa valleys, most *mestizo* palm workers assert that they or their mothers learned the techniques from the Indians. Today Indian women are considered the best palm workers, and in many areas they are the only palm workers. Most Indian palm workers, and an occasional non-Indian, use the semi-subterranean weaving house known as the *huúki* in which they work in the dry season to keep the palm pliable. This structure appears in various forms among the Opatas and Jova descendants, the mountain Pima and the Varohío and must be of Indian origin. The basket forms similarly have Indian names. There is documentary evidence that the palm weaving complex is of considerable antiquity in eastern Sonora (Treutlein 1949: 245; Guitéras 1951: 24). There is also archaeological evidence, since I have found twilled palm material in cave sites.

In dress the descendants of the Opatas and Jovas differ in no way from their neighbors; conventional dress is worn by all. For the men this consists of shirt, trousers (usually jeans) with belt, a palm or straw hat, and shoes, or more often a type of heel-less, homemade shoe known as the *tegua*. No one now wears *huaraches*, although within the memory of living people old Opatas and Jova men wore one-stringed rawhide *huaraches*. Similarly, very old people of the valley of Sahuaripa remember old Jovas of Pónida

and Santa Tomás with long hair and G-strings. These have now passed completely. Hair is worn short by all men at the present time. Women's dress is the same as that of other rural Sonoran women, with canvas slippers being the everyday footwear. Indian women seem to prefer dark blue or grey, striped rebosos. Many of the unmarried girls curl their hair.

There is a tendency in many areas for the *inditos* to live in *jacal* type structures, (a hut, usually a framework of posts with wattle and daub walls) while the *mestizos* live in the conventional flat-topped adobe houses. Hrdlicka reported the same tendency for the Opatas and other Sonoran Indians at the time of his visit in 1902 (Hrdlicka 1904: 58, 63). Again this is not a rule but only a tendency. However, most villages of the Río Sonora and Río Yaqui drainages have a few *jacal* type structures scattered on the outskirts of the settlement in which live the families of *inditos*. The pure wattle-and-daub *jacal* is seldom seen today in this area, having been replaced by the *casa de dos naves* or the "house of two naves," referring to the two naves used in roof construction which give the structure a slightly sloping roof. This dwelling has a rectangular framework of upright mesquite posts with an additional support post in the center of the floor on which rest the two timbers (the "naves") used as a roof beam. The slightly slant



FIG. 4. HUUKI. PALM-WEAVING HUT. PONIDA.

roof is composed of a layer of poles, grass and earth. This structure differs from the older type *jacal* in that adobe bricks are laid between the support posts to form the walls whereas in the earlier types walls were of wattle and daub. In many places these are considered to be Indian houses, although they are also used as temporary shelters and as ranch housing by all inhabitants of the area. In addition, brush enclosed outdoor kitchens are often used by the Indian families. In some towns, however, the *inditos* live in conventional adobe houses. The dwellings of the Indians are usually well dispersed in contrast to the closely spaced homes of the non-Indians.

The *tepeste*, an aboriginal Opata bed consisting of cane poles tied together, is still used by many of the poorer Indians as is the *petate*, a palm leaf mat (Johnson 1950: 10). However, this, like other household items that the aboriginal Opatas probably used, has become so associated with Sonora ranch life that it can no

longer be considered an exclusively Indian trait.

Such are the few minor differences which to some extent still set the modern Opatas and Jovas off from their neighbors. Although the differences are subtle, they nevertheless exist, and there is a definitely recognized Indian population throughout the area. Whether these people can be said to constitute a separate ethnic group or merely the more Indian elements of this portion of rural Sonoran society is a point in question. The writer would be inclined to include them in the latter category. It is certain that these people consider themselves Mexicans and are deeply offended when a distinction is made between them and other Mexicans. The Pima Bajos, however, make a distinction between both themselves and "mexicanos" and between the nearly pure Opatas and Mexicans. Most Opatas, nevertheless, would apparently be happy to forget that they are Indians. With this attitude their complete disappearance seems assured within another generation.

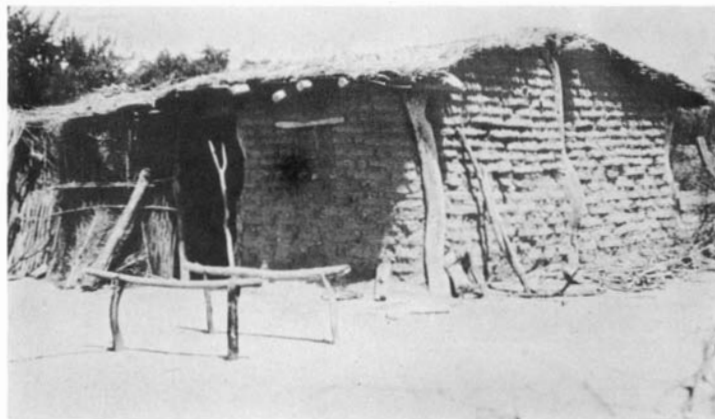


FIG. 5. CASA DE DOS NAVES. TEPUPA.

MODERN DISTRIBUTION OF OPATAS AND JOVAS

ALTHOUGH there have been extensive reshufflings of population from the arrival of the Spaniards to the present time, most of the area today is populated by families who have resided in the same district for many generations. The modern culture of the whole area is quite homogeneous, but there are variations in the ethnic make-up of the towns, a few being much more Indian in composition than others.

The people of all these *municipios* (the Mexican town unit with its lands) are primarily subsistence agriculturalists and small time cattlemen with, in addition, a few large cattlemen in the sierras. Home industries such as the twilling of palm hats, mescal making, wood cutting, etc., add to the meager income of many families. The last few decades have seen a heavy migration from all of these villages toward the new industrial and agricultural developments of western and southern Sonora.

Today Opatas and Jova descendants are the only recognizable Sonoran Indian elements in this area. The groups of Yaquis who lived and worked in many towns and on ranches before the 1910-1920 revolution are now gone, leaving only an occasional Yaqui here and there. Except for a few families in the Sierra Madre area, there are no Pima settlements in the region. The territory is much the same as that in which the Spaniards first encountered the Opatas four hundred years ago. I could not find any knowledge, in any of the villages, of the Eudeve dialect of Opatas mentioned in earlier sources. The inhabitants of the old Eudeve towns refer to their Indian ancestors as Opatas. Only some Yaquis still know the word, using it to refer to a tribe somewhere to the north of them (E. H. Spicer, personal communication). The term "Jova" is known by

the general population only in the valley of Sahuaripa and the sierras to the east, although the Pimas and Varohíos of the more distant mountains are familiar with it.

As the river valleys are the recognized geographical units, they will be used here as referents.

THE SAN MIGUEL RIVER

THE MAJOR VILLAGES of the San Miguel—Cucurpe, Tuape, Pueblo Viejo, Meresichi and Opodepe—are now predominantly *blanco* and *mestizos*, although all have Indian families. At Cucurpe the few remaining families of Indians live in the *pueblo viejo* which adjoins the old mission church and on nearby ranches. South of Cucurpe, at Tuape, Pueblo Viejo, Meresichi and adjacent ranches can be found the heaviest concentrations of Indians in the valley today.

In the area between Tuape and Meresichi perhaps a third of the population is considered as Indian. This holds for Pueblo Viejo, while the smaller settlement of Rodeo may be half Indian in composition. Tuape and Meresichi, although having substantial Indian minorities, have a smaller percentage, probably around thirty percent. In Opodepe the percentage probably does not exceed ten. Rayon at the south end of the valley has few *inditos* and little Indian association. As a whole, the San Miguel Valley can be pointed out as one of the major areas of Opatas survival, probably having an Indian population of at least 15 percent.

THE SONORA RIVER

THE FORMER INDIAN towns of the Río Sonora area from Bacoachi through Arispe, Sinoquipe, Banámichi, Huépac, Aconchi, Baviácora,

and Suaqui to Masocahui have retained a small percentage of *inditos*. Probably the greatest numbers would be found in the area surrounding Arispe, in the neighborhood of Baviácora, and at Masocahui, with the area between Arispe and Baviácora showing a smaller percentage. At Baviácora the complete *semana santa* rites are still held, while at Masocahui only the *fariseos* appear. Palm weaving (twill work) is done at the lower end of the area. Ures, below Masocahui, was Pima territory and most of the modern *inditos* of that area are Pima descendants.

THE MOCTEZUMA RIVER

MOCTEZUMA (old Oposura of the Opatas) today has many families of *inditos* who approximate Indian types and who are sometimes called *indios opatas*. Many of these people are natives of the village of Térapa some few miles away which is known as a *pueblo de puros inditos*. The present population of Térapa is around 130, with many more living in Moctezuma or having moved to the coastal agricultural region. These people are the palm workers of the district and are known for their devout folk Catholicism. Térapa is one of the main concentrations of people approximating the Opatas, physically and

culturally, still to be found in Sonora. Another *ranchería*, Pivipa, which was not visited, was designated as a settlement of Indians, although this was not confirmed by personal investigation. Moctezuma, however, has a majority of people of *mestizo* and *blanco* types, with the *blancos* being very numerous. Tepachi, south of Moctezuma, is a typical Sonoran town inhabited by *mestizos* and *blancos* and shows few traces of Indians. Divisideros some few miles to the north, however, has several families of *inditos*.

THE VALLEY OF BATUC

THIS AREA of the Moctezuma River valley includes the four towns of San Pedro, Batuc, Tepupa and Suaqui de Batuc. Of these Tepupa is known as an Indian town both by the other towns and by its own inhabitants. Here a large proportion of the population (one-third to one-half) are of marked Indian physical type, while even the more *mestizo*-like individuals usually consider themselves Indians. Tepupa has an elaborate ceremonial calendar climaxing in the Holy Week. Because they have good land, the 600 Tepupeños are the most prosperous people of the valley.



FIG. 6. PONIDA STREET SCENE.

Of the other villages, Batuc, although claiming Opata origin, now has no *inditos*, the population being *mestizo* or *blanco*. Suaqui de Batuc similarly has no Indians. Oral tradition has it that the population of Suaqui is partially descended from the Spanish miners of the old *real de Todos Santos* as well as refugees from Apache raids of the early nineteenth century. Suaqui de Batuc was established originally by the Spaniards to relocate rebellious Pima Bajos (Sauer 1934: 38). Several years ago, a few Pimas from Onabas were working at Suaqui, but all have since gone. San Pedro de la Cueva is a newer town with a population taken from many spots, there being nevertheless several families of Indian type probably originating in Tepupa.

THE MATAPE VALLEY

THREE PUEBLOS here are today usually recognized in the area as being of Opata origin and it is generally stated that until a generation or two ago they were heavily Indian. Today little remains of an Indian population in Mazatán and Nácori, there being only the usual few families of *inditos* with the vast majority of the people being *blancos* or *mestizos*. Mátape, however, retains an *indiada*, there being a high proportion of *inditos*. Mátape also has a greater proportion of *jacal*-like dwellings and is a center of palm weaving, while the neighboring *pueblos* do little or none. Mátape has little agricultural land, hence is very poor, depending to a great extent on mescal making and the wearing of petates as a means of livelihood. I would estimate that about a quarter of the people of Mátape today are *inditos*, while in Nácori and Mazatán it would be no more than five percent.

In all of these towns the *fariseos* appear during the *semana santa* (Holy Week) and at other folk Catholic ceremonies. The *pueblo* of Alamos to the north of the Sierra de Mazatán was not visited, but it is generally considered to be an Opata *pueblo* and today has a minority of *inditos*.

THE MIDDLE YAQUI RIVER

THE OLD INDIAN colonial *pueblos* of the middle Yaqui River — Rebeico, Soyopa, and Tónichi — retain the Opata-Spanish colonial

ceremonial calendar and are the home of many *inditos*. Tónichi, the most southerly Opata town on the Yaqui River, now is overwhelmingly of *mestizo* and even *blanco* make-up. There are, however, numerous families of *indios opatas*. When Johnson visited Tónichi in 1940 he found a person or two with some knowledge of the Opata language (Johnson 1950: 8, 43). The *semana santa* rites are held here today, evidently being carried over from Opata days while the population became predominantly non-Indian.

The families of Tónichi today known as *opatas* or *inditos* live largely in *jacales* on the outskirts of the village or on nearby ranches. They probably make up no more than five to ten percent of the population. The next town down the river—Onabas—was Pima territory and still has Pima inhabitants.

Soyopa and Rebeico have a rather heavy population of *inditos*. Soyopa is often referred to as an "Opata" village and it is mentioned that the language was spoken here later than in most towns. The majority of the population today, nevertheless, are *mestizos* and *blancos*. The *Rudo Ensayo* names Rebeico as a Jova town. (Guitéras 1951: 114).

THE BANCORA RIVER

BACANORA HAS only five families of *inditos*, with the majority of the population being *mestizos* of rather Caucasoid type. The small *pueblo* of Guaycora in the mountains at the head of the Bacanora River, however, has a predominantly *indito* population. The population of Guaycora is around a hundred.

THE SAHUARIPA VALLEY

THE VALLEY of Sahuaripa, today probably as old fashioned and undiluted an area of rural Sonoran culture as can be found in the state, has a population that is predominantly *mestizo*. Many, nonetheless, recognize their partial descent from the Opatas and Jovas. The following towns exist in the valley today.

Sahuaripa with around 4,000 people has a good many families of *blancos*, but the great



FIG. 7. JOVA GIRLS. PONIDA.

majority of the population is of *mestizo* type. There are many families of *inditos* as well as other families who are in the process of changing from the *indito* to the *mestizo* group or are Indians who have forgotten or have ignored their origin. Many of the *inditos* appear to have originated in Pónida or Santo Tomás and to have moved to Sahuaripa within the last generation. These are most in evidence in the Pueblo Nuevo. There is also a family or so of Pima origin who have come from the *sierra* to the east. The population as a whole, however, is far from Indian in appearance.

The people of both the towns of La Mesita de Cuahari and Sehuadéhuachi four miles south of Sahuaripa are partially descended from the old population of the area; there are, nevertheless, only a few families or individuals of La Mesita today classed as Indians, the majority being *mestizos*. Sehuadéhuachi across the river has no *inditos*. These towns have a population of several hundred each.

Six miles south of Sahuaripa is the village of Santo Tomás with about 600 people. Oral tradition has it that Santo Tomás was formed largely

by refugees from the former Jova towns in the sierra. Today the population is heavily Indian physically, with many families of *inditos* and others who have emerged from the Indian class within the last generation or so. Here most of the *mestizos* admit Indian grandparents, and the *inditos* are well aware of their background with the majority of the older people being able to trace Jova or Opata ancestry or both. Even here, however, the *inditos* are much in the minority. Distinctions between the groups at Santo Tomás are extremely vague.

Twelve miles south of Sahuaripa, the old Spanish and Opata town of Arivechi is today well mixed. Still, there remain several families of *inditos*. According to old people of the area, Arivechi was a village of the Opatas while Pónida across the river was a Jova town. Pónida is the only settlement still considered an Indian village in the valley of Sahuaripa. The twenty families remaining at Pónida are all classed as Indians except one which is a recent immigrant from Arivechi. Most of these families claim descent from the Jovas, although the majority also have some Opata or Pima ancestry.

In this area the Jova language lasted longer than that of the Opatas. Numerous reliable persons have reported Jova as being spoken by old Indians of Pónida until their deaths within the last decade. Even in 1955 I was able to salvage more words and phrases of Jova than of Oyata in any of the old Oyata towns. This is remarkable in that the Jova language was reported by the Jesuits of the late eighteenth century as being rapidly abandoned in favor of Oyata (Guitéras 1951: 53). Many "Indian" customs are remembered in Pónida but are no longer practiced. The people of this village say their ancestors came long ago from Nátora in the sierra to escape the Apaches. This is verified by Spanish reports (Guitéras 1951: 113). For a century and a half Pónida was a thriving village, but since the turn of the century the population has dwindled, becoming progressively poorer and moving away. The people of Pónida, at present numbering less than a hundred, live in great poverty, existing largely through wood cutting, palm weaving, and cotton picking near Ciudad Obregon. Although all claim to be Indians, most families show some Caucasian mixture, two decidedly so.

The towns south of Arivechi—Bámori, Cajon de Onapa, Valle de Tacupeto, and Guisamope—today have few if any Indians, all being well *mestizoized*. Of these a family or two of *inditos* live at Bámori. Tacupeto has a heavy Caucasoid strain tracing descent from the Spanish miners of the old *reales* of the sierra and retains little of the Indian. In 1955 a single immigrant family of Tarahumaras occupied La Laguna, a nearby ranch. Onapa and Guisamopa are *mestizo*, Guisamopa being, however, a center of palm weaving and a comparatively new town.

THE SIERRA EAST OF THE VALLEY OF SAHUARIPA

THIS ROADLESS mountain area stretching east from the Sahuaripa River into Chihuahua was the home of the Jovas in contact days and was largely depopulated during the intense Apache troubles of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The area has now been reoccupied, largely by people from the valley of Sahuaripa. This region

failed to yield any significant number of Jova survivors. There are Indians at several points in the area, but these are Pimas and will be touched on under that group. Oral tradition has it that some of the Jovas mixed with the Pimas in the past and were absorbed into that tribe.

The mining town of Mulatos has a mixed *mestizo* population drawn from many areas. The only Indians present here today are Pimas from Maicoba who come here to trade and to work. Along the Mulatos River north from the town of Mulatos are three small settlements: Santa María, La Mora, and Guadalupe. La Mora has two families of Indians who apparently are Pimas, and Santa María is a settlement of four such families. These people are part of a group found along various rivers in this part of the mountains, all of whose members bear the surname Sierra. Although they are generally called Pimas, it should not be overlooked that they may be partially descended from the former Jova population of the area. These people speak only Spanish around strangers, but are said to have members who still speak "the other language." I contacted these Sierras only briefly. Those seen appeared to be slightly mixed racially but living much as do the Pimas farther east and south. One family of the Sierra group was encountered living in a cave in the Aros gorge a few miles west of Refugio, Chihuahua.

Other villages of the river gorges and the smaller ranches are today purely *mestizo* except for a rare family of Indians living among the rancheros. These Indians are Pimas or members of the Sierra group. This is the case at Guadalupe, Nátora, Chamada, Guisopa, Gocopa, Los Ocotes, and Tunapa. Rancho Teopari, site of a former Jova mission, was not visited, but its present owners state that the population is now purely *mestizo*. The Jovas apparently are gone. At Tarachi a generation ago there was a group of people called Indians living in an adjoining settlement. These were popularly called the "*Tromperos*" and had marriage affiliation with Pónida. They were very probably the descendants of the Jova population of Tarachi. These people seem to have disappeared as a separate group,

although a few families of Tarachi are descended from them and other descendants are in the Ciudad Obregon area. Tarachi as a whole is overwhelmingly non-Indian. East of this area, in Chihuahua, knowledge and memories of the Opatas and Jovas disappear, being replaced by those of the Tarahumaras and Pimas.

THE GRANADOS VALLEY AND THE BACADEHUACHI AREA

MODERN GRANADOS and Huásabas are almost completely *mestizoized* and, though recognizing partial descent from the Opatas, little remains of either *inditos* or their distinguishing traits. Bacadéhuachi, an ancient Opatata village, is today a town predominantly of *mestizos* who have lost their Opatata classification, plus a large number of *blanco* families. There are, in addition, a number of families of slightly modified Indian physical type who live scattered among the rest of the population and on some of the nearby ranches. These are called *inditos* and Opatas, and they do much of the palm weaving of the district. Old informants of this group claim their parents had some knowledge of the Opatata language, but it has been dead in the area at least a generation. The *indito* population of Bacadéhuachi and

nearby ranches is much in the minority, probably being from five to ten percent. Here, as among most Opatata descendants of Sonora, there is much intergrading between *indito* and families of "*el tipo mexicano*."

Nácori Chico, reported as an Opatata and Jovata town in Spanish records (Ocaranza 1937, Vol. 2: 98), is a settlement largely of *blancos* and far removed from Indian *mestizos* who have their origin in the valley of Sahuaripa. There remain, in addition, twelve families of pronounced Indian physical type living in a group of adjacent *casas de dos naves* on the outskirts of Nácori Chico. These people are the poorest people of the town and do most of the palm work. The non-*indito* population of Nácori Chico recognizes these families only as poor people, not as Indians; however, questioning revealed that they are descended from the natives of the area, some of whom had a speaking knowledge of Opatata within the memory of living members of this group. Some four miles south of Nácori Chico at Sauz, a village of around 200, there is one family of *inditos*. A mile south of Sauz is a settlement of *casas de dos naves* called Buena Vista, and a mile or so south of here is a *rancheria* called Taruachi. The populations of Buena Vista and Taruachi, about fifteen families, are all *inditos* and are so called by their



FIG. 8. GIRLS IN FRONT OF A HUUKI. TEPUPA.

neighbors. Buena Vista is a center of palm weaving. Oral tradition has it that these people are descended from Opatá and Jová refugees from the old towns of Mochopá, Sétachi and Servas which were destroyed by Apaches in the mid-eighteenth century.

There are a few other ranches in the sierra east of Nácori Chico on which there may be *indito* families. Inquiry revealed, however, that most of the population of these ranches, and of Nopalera particularly, have their origin in Chihuahua. Certainly the population is predominantly non-Indian.

The upper Bavispe valley with the old Opatá villages of Oputo, Bavispe, Baccrac and Huachinera was not visited but numerous informants describe them as having many *indios opatas*. The writer was given the names of numerous old Indians in these towns who were described as *indios crudos*. Huachinera especially is pointed out as a town with heavy Opatá memories and large *indito* population. There is in addition a small but undetermined number of Kickapoos living in the Bavispe valley. These are described by neighboring ranchers as still speaking their own language and remaining a separate group.

I was told that there are several families of this tribe centering at the ranch of Tomechopá.

The small band of Apaches which ranged the sierra east of Nácori Chico until some twenty to twenty-five years ago is now evidently completely extinct, being exterminated by local ranchers in reprisal for the kidnaping of a child and the killing of mule drivers. The area they ranged has since been occupied by ranches. Two or three Apache captives from this group can still be found living among the Mexicans of Sonora and Chihuahua.

In Chihuahua, east of the sierra of Nácori, Opatá memories disappear.

The preceding roughly outlines the communities inhabited by Opatá and Jová descendants today. Though, of course, it is subject to error and a few *rancherías* of *inditos* may have been missed completely. I believe that it is a fairly complete coverage of the area. It does not take into account, however, the considerable migration of Opatá descendants to other parts of Sonora and to the United States, a movement which has been taking place for generations. There is every indication that most *inditos*, when they leave this area, rapidly lose their identity as Indians.



FIG. 9. MILLING WHEAT AT RANCHO TARUACHI.

4

THE LOWER PIMAS

THE LOWER PIMAS, or Pima Bajos, classified by Sauer into three groups, the Ures of the lower Sonora River, the Nebomes of the lower Mátape and middle Yaqui River valleys, the Yécoras of the Sierra Madre (Sauer 1934: 3), were exposed to the same intensive mission influences as were the Opatas. The first Jesuit mission at Onabas among the Nebomes was probably established in 1621 (Bannon 1955: 32). Both they and the Ures were converted soon after. The Yécoras were not completely Christianized until later in the century. The Lower Pimas, however, accepted the padres with considerably less enthusiasm than did their Opatas neighbors. Mission accounts speak disparagingly of their lack of industry, devotion to drunkenness, and indifference to Christianity. The Nebomes joined the Seris in several revolts in the eighteenth century. Possibly as a result of this greater resistance to assimilation, they have survived as separate ethnic groups to a much greater extent than have the Opatas.

Of the three groups of Lower Pimas defined by Sauer, two, the Nebomes and the Yécoras, retain their language and remain distinct ethnic entities. As the present situation differs among the various Pima divisions, they will here be treated separately.

I visited the Nebomes at Onabas on two occasions and spent seven days with them. The Yécoras or mountain Pimas were visited more briefly, as was another Pima group to the north at La Junta, Chihuahua. The Ures Pimas were not contacted personally; information concerning them comes from casual observations around Ures and talks with non-Pimas from Ures and with Onabas Pimas. Thus, data dealing with this group was of necessity superficial.

Among the Pimas as a whole the writer noted a much greater degree of ethnic awareness and a pride of identity largely lacking among the Opatas. The Pimas are proud of their origin and

prefer to be called Pimas. When speaking Spanish, the Nebomes often call themselves *poblanos* and the Yécoras call themselves *paisanos*. The terms Nebome and Yécora are not known. In their own language Lower Pimas call themselves *O-o-dam*.

The Pimas have retained a greater degree of physical differentiation from the non-Indians than have the Opatas. The great majority of the mountain Pimas show little or no Caucasian mixture. Consequently in these areas there is a definite and unmistakable line of physical demarkation between the Indians and *gente de razon*.

THE URES

THE URES AREA of the middle Sonora River and surrounding ranches and *rancherías* has a population containing numerous families who are still called Pimas and who are still Indians physically. Probably there are between 200 and 250 of these people. From the available information it appears that these Pimas are going the way of the Opatas and that their situation is roughly similar. Although the Pima language was spoken by the old people within the last twenty years, it may now be gone as the young have not learned it. The Onabas Pimas tell of a settlement called Báhui a mile from Ures where they used to visit Pimas who spoke their language; this was some thirty years ago. It was mentioned by the Onabas group that most of the Ures Pimas now retain the "color" of Pimas, nothing else. A few additional Pima descendants are mentioned by the Sonorans as living around San Miguel de Horcasitas. I did not visit this town.

THE NEBOMES

AT ONABAS on the lower Yaqui River is found the largest concentration of the remnants of the Nebomes. There are 125 living members of this group, 62 of whom are assertedly unmixed.

The others in Onabas are *mestizo* children and grandchildren of the "full-blooded" Pimas. About half the total population of these Onabas Indians now lives around Hermosillo and Ciudad Obregon, or is scattered through other towns of Sonora with only eight families remaining at Onabas. They are still a separate ethnic unit, however, and even the first generation *mestizos* consider and call themselves Pimas. This is perhaps the result of the special status these people enjoy in that all members of the tribe are equal owners of the extensive community lands of Onabas. The present town of Onabas has several hundred non-Indian inhabitants, many of whom rent land from the Pimas. The Indians live in scattered *jacales* and *casas de dos naves* on the eastern outskirts of the village. Although the Pimas own most of the agricultural and grazing land around Onabas, they lack the means to work it effectively and now exist in poverty, living from the rent for their land, palm work, and wage work for non-Indians.

At present, the "*jefe del ejido*" serves as the Pima governor. This man is elected from among the Indians each three years by the Pima owners of *ejido*. The Pimas, nonetheless, also take part in the voting for the *presidente municipal* of the town of Onabas who in 1955 was a non-Indian.

Some eight elderly people at Onabas still speak the Pima language. There are other Pima

speakers among the Onabas Nebomes now living in other towns. Most younger members of the group understand, but none speaks, "*la lengua*." While the Nebomes call themselves *O-o-dam*, the mountain Pimas, i.e., the Yécoras, with whom they have little if any contact, they call the *Tadmar O-o-dam* or "Tarahumara people," referring to their location near the Tarahumaras. The Opatas they call *Oob*. Non-Indians for whom, when speaking Spanish, they use the Yaqui word *vorí, blanco*, or the old Spanish *gente de razon*, the Pimas call *Dú-kahm*.

The older Indians of Onabas have a wealth of memories of Pima culture as it was before the revolution when the Pima population of Onabas dwindled. Most of this is now gone. However, a folk Catholic ceremonial calendar is still carried on by the Indians in their ancient mission church. The fiesta of San Francisco is celebrated on the 4th of October, as it is in the other Pima settlements of Sonora. An image of this saint is kept in the church. A few years ago the *venado, pascola* and *matachín* dances were performed on *el día de San Francisco*. Now only a devotion is performed. Other feast days are still observed, even if in abbreviated form. The church at Onabas is cared for and most ceremonies supervised by the Pimas although the non-Indian population participates to some degree.



FIG. 10. PIMA FAMILY FROM MAICOPA, AT YECORA.



FIG. 11. PIMA DWELLING. YECORA.

The future of this group is easily foreseen in the fact that only one family of the younger generation living at Onabas are full Pimas. The others will probably rapidly lose their identity when the older generation is gone.

The Onabas Pimas deny the existence of any people still classed as Pimas in the former Pima towns of Movas and Nuri on the Río Chico to the south. Nuri is mentioned by Ocaranza (1937) as having a mixed population of Jovas, Opatas, and Pimas at the end of the eighteenth century. Today there are Indian families on the outskirts who apparently have forgotten their origin. The old Pima village of Cumuripa, to the south down the Yaqui River, has been nearly destroyed by the Oviachic reservoir and the population resettled. New Cumuripa has one family of Onabas Pimas, apparently no others. I was able to visit Nuri and to confirm this. The Río Chico-La Dura area south of Onabas yielded no Indians.

The dry sparsely settled cattle country southeast of Hermosillo had Pima speaking inhabitants a generation ago. San Marcial in the lower Mátape Valley and the old Nebome mission settlements of San Jose de los Pimas, Tecoripa, and Suaqui Grande at present have no Pimas except for a few families of *inditos* who work on surrounding ranches and who appear to be abandoning the last

traces of cultural differentiation. During the last generation, many of these families have moved north to Hermosillo.

THE YECORAS

THE YECORAS, today known as the Pimas of Maicoba, are the largest and most distinct of the remaining remnants of the Lower Pimas. These people, numbering perhaps a thousand, live in the mountains around Maicoba, a town which serves them as a ceremonial center. Here their patron saint, again San Francisco, is housed and here the annual fiestas in honor of this saint are held. The mountain Pimas all speak their own language, which they say is a different dialect from that of the Nebomes, and ordinarily they do not inter-marry with the *mestizo* population. Families and *rancherías* of these Pimas are scattered throughout the sierra surrounding Maicoba, and they extend a short but undetermined distance into Chihuahua where they border on territory occupied by the Tarahumaras and Varohíos.

These Pimas are subsistence agriculturalists and have a few cattle. Many of them migrate annually to the mountain towns such as Yécora and Bermudez or to lowland towns such as Nuri to work for wages and sell palm leaf and basketry. Crop

failures and competition for their land in the last fifteen years have forced many of these people to the Ciudad Obregon agricultural and industrial area where some twenty families now live the year around.

Superficially at least, the life of these people seems much more akin to that of the neighboring Tarahumaras and Varohíos than to that of the lowland Pimas. Material culture appears similar to that described by Bennett and Zingg for the Tarahumaras (Bennett and Zingg 1935: part 1).

The Maicoba Pimas today wear conventional Mexican dress and the men wear their hair short. The only distinct touch is an occasional pair of one-string *huaraches* worn by the men. The women are palm workers, using essentially the same basket forms and the same techniques as do the Opatas and Onabas Pimas. The weaving house or *huúki* is employed. Dwellings may be caves, peaked *jacales* of perpendicular pine trunks, or adobe and thatch houses.

Little is known of Yécora non-material culture. A ceremonial calendar climaxing in the fiesta of San Francisco exists. A great emphasis on *compadrazgo* (ritual kinship based on godparenthood) is attributed to the Pimas by their neighbors. Shamans are reported.

These Pimas have a native *gobernador* who, however, apparently holds an office imposed from

the outside and who has no actual following or power among the Indians themselves.

The town of Yécora itself today is almost completely non-Indian, having only one permanent Pima family and temporary Indian visitors who have their homes farther east in the sierra.

Another group of Pimas, which is probably an offshoot of the Maicoba group, is located in the gorge of the Río Aros at the *ranchería* of La Junta and on the adjoining Mesa Blanca northwest of Dolores, Chihuahua. These people, numbering about thirty families, are reported by old people in the area to have come here from Maicoba several generations ago. They survive as a distinct entity both physically and socially, using their own language as well as Spanish and carrying on their own folk Catholic fiestas. A few members of this group were contacted, but lack of time and their extreme shyness prevented any but superficial observation. Those seen exhibited no signs of Caucasian admixture. They live in both palm leaf *jacales* and in caves.

The number of families known as the "Sierras," referred to in regard to the mountains east of Sahuaripa, may be an extension of this Mesa Blanca group. The few Sierras seen by the writer, however, appeared both more mixed physically and culturally more Mexicanized than did the Mesa Blanca people.



FIG. 12. PIMAS. ONABAS.

CONCLUSIONS

IT IS CLEAR that the three groups considered are no longer tribal Indians, but instead represent varying degrees of the assimilation of the Spanish colonial Indian into modern Mexico. The Opatas and Jovas together with some of the Lower Pimas are merely the physical residue of the aboriginal population of eastern Sonora, retaining a few slight traces of both Spanish mission and probable aboriginal culture and being in most respects well integrated members of rural Sonoran society. The remnant Pimas of Onabas and especially the mountain Pimas consider themselves, and in actuality are, still separate ethnic entities, preserving to a certain extent the same mission period culture that the Opatas have abandoned in the last hundred years.

Spicer, in his examination of adjustments to contact in the Southwest, tentatively places the Opatas in the category of a group which has undergone complete cultural assimilation, while the Cahitas, he believes, present a cultural fusion of Spanish and native elements with the probable retention of much of the original orientation (Spicer 1954: 663-678). I am essentially in agreement with this categorization of the Opatas. However, it seems clear that though the basic orientation of the Opatas and Jovas may have shifted completely, some elements which have emerged point to a certain degree of fusion here as well. Indeed, Ezell suggests in his analysis of Spicer's concept that divergent adjustments may occur within a dominant pattern of over-all response (Ezell 1955: 18-19). Something of the sort must certainly have taken place among the Opatas, Jovas, and lowland Pimas where a tendency toward fusion is greatly overshadowed by willingness to accept complete assimilation. Conversely, the mountain Pimas possibly exemplify a situation in which the trends toward assimilation are subordinate to those resulting in fusion.

The amalgamation of these Sonoran peoples with their neighbors displays certain contrasts with the acculturation process which has taken place among related groups in the Southwest and among the Indians of southern Mexico. In Sonora, among the Opatas especially, one is impressed by the apparent ready abandonment of all traces of cul-

tural differentiation. Taking into account the differing time element, it would appear that while Indians in Anglo-America may cling to portions of their old non-material culture as a defense against rejection by the dominant group, the Sonoran Indian has evidently been able to achieve integration with Mexican society as soon as Indian patterns are dropped, with greater incentive toward assimilation (Broom, Kitsuse 1955: 44-48).

The Opatas, Jovas and Lower Pimas have in addition been able to avoid the tightly closed societies which have perpetuated the "corporate" Indian villages of Middle America. This is apparently due to the fact that the system of civil and religious community offices introduced by the Jesuits (Johnson 1950: 42-43), which insulated the Indian from direct contacts with outsiders and has been a major factor in the continuance of the corporate pueblos of Middle America, fast crumbled away when the direction of the missionaries was withdrawn.

Another difference from Middle America is seen in the fact that the Pima and Opata villages were small in population compared with those of the former area. In the late mission period, they seldom had more than 300 Indian inhabitants and often had considerably less (Ocaranza 1937: Vol 2). The arrival in such a community of any number of outsiders with their subsequent mixed offspring soon resulted in the Indians losing their superiority of numbers and finally becoming marginal inhabitants scattered on the outskirts of the towns where they now await final assimilation, both cultural and physical. The survey of the area shows this to be the case in nearly all of the Opata colonial pueblos today. A few of the *rancherías* and small villages, which for some reason never attracted large numbers of *blancos* and *mestizos*, are the contemporary *pueblos de puros indios*. In these a few traces of Opata culture were retained, although the language disappeared with time. These few small settlements have survived until the present when the lack of a firm economic base (except in the case of Tepupa) and the rising incentives for migration to newly developed agricultural and industrial areas of coastal Sonora make their continued existence extremely unlikely.

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