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Eggen's Yuchi Kinship Interpretations

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lost up to that time had been killed, and there is scant reason for supposing that the "four or five" just mentioned fared any better; but it is only on the supposition that at least a pair of them were left alive that any theory of the introduction of horses into North America in this way can be maintained. As intimated in the quotation from Elvas, the Indians always showed great fear of these animals and this persisted into the time when the French and English made their appearance in the country.

Mr Haines' skepticism is, therefore, fully justified. There is little doubt that the first horses kept by the Indians along the lower Mississippi were of the so-called "Chickasaw" breed and that they were obtained from the tribes to the westward.

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EGGAN'S YUCHI KINSHIP INTERPRETATIONS

In an article entitled *Historical Changes in the Choctaw Kinship System*¹ Fred Eggan has suggested an explanation for the "complicated problem" presented by the conflicting series of Yuchi kinship terminologies as collected from this people by myself in 1904-05 and by Dr Günter Wagner in a more recent period of research.

The difficulty of interpreting the Yuchi kinship terminologies is therefore apparent. The points of difference between the two recorded lists lie in the classification of the grandmother, the father's sister and her children. These terms, according to my notes of thirty years ago, are "suggestive of a Crow type of system, especially when coupled with a matrilineal system."² Wagner's notes on the other hand indicate the existence of an Omaha type of kinship structure. Eggan offers the conjecture "based on probabilities" that the Yuchi system had undergone considerable modification even before 1904-05. He infers that factors inducing change from the aboriginal Yuchi system in which there was a patrilineal emphasis (War and Peace societies confined to males and patrilineal in membership), as among the Creeks since their removal in 1836, have affected the Yuchi. He refers to their contact with Shawnee and Sauk and Fox in recent years, quoting me as authority. "The Yuchi, then, possibly have gone through the whole sequence of changes from a Crow to an Omaha type of descent, though we have definite evidence for the last series of changes only."³ Acculturational processes are suggested as influencing factors in the modification of patterns of descent not only among the Yuchi but for the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Creek as well. That historical changes have occurred in the northeastern Algonkian area, as Hallowell has pointed out, is accepted in support of this interpretation. The change of pattern in such instances is shown by Eggan's argument to be ascribable to borrowing but this only as a single force in the process.⁴ So much for summary.

As one whose material has provoked the discussion over so interesting a question of social change as that propounded by Eggan, it gives me pleasure to express satis-

¹ American Anthropologist, Vol. 39, pp. 34-52, 1937.

² Eggan, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

faction with the logic of his argument so far as the Yuchi are concerned. I would also add a word of corroboration to his idea of Yuchi instability in kinship terminology. The impression is distinctly recalled, as of 1904, gotten from the Yuchi men with whom I associated in the Creek Nation of 1904-05 and 1907, how many Yuchi families traced descent and relationship to alien ethnic and racial groups. Statistical data collected then would have settled points that now arise to perplex us, but few ethnologists were then aware of the importance of genealogies. I reached the conclusion, however, that there were no families classified as Yuchi at that time free from mixture with outsiders. This induced me to record in my study the closeness of association with Shawnee and Sauk and Fox. Had I pursued the matter further it would have yielded results, so I believe, leading to better understanding of what has transpired in the changing growth of social patterns in the Southeast and of possible social composition of the Yuchi. All those Yuchi with whom I had relations were Creek-speaking, many of them Shawnee-speaking. Creek was the familiar tongue of many part-Yuchi families who lived apart from other Yuchi in the districts where Creeks exceeded and Shawnee were near at hand. In the family of the chief Jesse Allen, to cite an instance, there were three sets of children from different mothers speaking familiarly three languages. It is easy to imagine the effect of these varied influences of tongue, descent, and social usage upon a group tracing its tribal distinctiveness to the unity of an idiom, a name, a tradition, and a religion rather than to concentrated residence and internal intercourse. Flexibility of kinship structures and terminologies we now admit, and I would regard the Yuchi as I knew them to have constituted an example of deviation from a former and more solid social pattern subsequent to their dispersion from Georgia and their incorporation among the Creek towns. In agreement with Eggan I would not attribute all the factors which have influenced change here to borrowing.⁵

Were I to try it again I would want to collect Yuchi kinship terminologies and pertinent data from a number of different individuals of diverse family connections, of different social and ethnic extraction. If they should be found to coincide precisely in glossary and in application it would be more than is true of the present-day Catawba, another Southeastern group far advanced in the paths of acculturation. One might expect to discover, however, that social cross-fertilization in the case of the locally disintegrated Yuchi has been operative between them and other Indian types, while in the case of the Catawba it has been with the pattern prevailing among Carolinian whites. It will be interesting to see what interpretations will be made of the Catawba kinship lists and the associated familial practices when the material now in note and manuscript form becomes available in print and can be checked with principles of native social usage in the extreme Southeast.

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⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.