

**THE SHEEPEATERS**  
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**INTRODUCTION**

Every land has its past history and past peoples, and those citizens of today<sup>1</sup> question after those of yesterday. Who were the peoples here before us; where did they come from; how did they live; and lastly, where did they go? In the answering of these questions fact and fantasy often become entangled. Then to return to the historical scene and to try to separate the true from the untrue becomes a matter of adventure, for in trying to reconstruct what once was, mystery and romance still shine through from those former times.

In the high mountains of western Wyoming—the Absarokas, the Wind Rivers, the Gros Ventres, and the Tetons—and in the rugged plateau of central Idaho—there are left evidences of the existence of primitive peoples. Remains of their camps can be found today, as well as traps and pens once used to catch game, and arrowheads used to kill it.

During the first part of the nineteenth century the few trappers, traders, and explorers who could write, and had an inclination to do so, left scattered references to Indian peoples living in these mountains. Toward the end of that century official government documents by Indian agents and superintendents refer to the Indians in their charge, among whom were the people of the mountains.

These early historical sources called the people of the mountains “sheepeaters.” This English name derives from the Shoshoni Indian name *Tukudeka*, meaning “eaters of mountain sheep” (or more properly “eaters of meat.”) The identification of these supposed “sheepeaters” is not a simple thing; in fact, not nearly as simple as most writers have tried to make it. Therefore, the first section of this paper will deal with the problem of just who, if anyone, were the “Sheepeaters.”

As will be seen from a review of historical sources a confusing diversity of names were applied to the "Sheep eaters"; however, this is of less importance than the fact that a group of mountain-dwelling Shoshoni possessing a highly characteristic culture did in fact exist. Therefore the second part of this paper will attempt to set forth as much as we presently know about that now-extinct culture.

This description must come from a compilation of historical, ethnographic, and archaeological sources. In addition, I have sought to confirm and supplement these often scanty references through field work among the Shoshoni of the Wind River Reservation, Wyoming, and Fort Hall, Idaho, during the winter of 1959-1960, and by personal communications and interviews with Dr. Sven Liljeblad, Idaho State College, 1959; Dr. George Agogino, University of Wyoming, 1959; Dr. Omer Stewart, University of Colorado, 1964; and others. I am indebted to Dr. Liljeblad for the use of his unpublished linguistic and ethnographic material. Finally, I am indebted to Jack Contor of Blackfoot, Idaho, for access to unpublished materials gathered by him on the prereservation culture of the Northern Shoshoni.

## PART ONE

### THE PROBLEM OF IDENTITY

The Shoshoni Indians once lived in parts of present-day Wyoming, Idaho, Utah and Nevada. (See *Map Fig. 1.*) This region has been defined as the Basin-Plateau culture area by Kroeber.<sup>2</sup>

Linguistically the Shoshoni belonged to the Uto-Aztecan linguistic stock which was composed of their neighbors within the Basin-Plateau culture area; Gosiute, Northern Paiute, Southern Paiute, Bannock, and Ute, as well as their relatives to the south and southeast, Hopi, Aztec and Comanche.



**Area of the Sheep eaters (Fig.1)**

Classification of the many speakers of the mutually intelligible dialects of the Plateau-Shoshonean<sup>3</sup> language has been done from several points of view. Lowie<sup>4</sup> recognized different groups of Shoshoni in terms of the history of their habitation within a certain geographical area. Steward<sup>5</sup> did a comprehensive study of the Basin and Plateau people, and he based his classification upon the social and political organization of the various cultures he studied. He oriented these studies in specific localities; therefore, he uses place names for describing his classification. Nomenclature used by the Shoshoni Indians themselves in describing others who speak their language has stemmed not so much, however, from geographical place names, nor from sociopolitical distinctions, but from economic distinctions. The subsistence of all the Shoshoni peoples came from a great variety of sources. They utilized their environment in every possible manner by hunting game both large and small, by fishing, and by gathering nuts, berries, roots, herbs, and insects. Therefore, the Shoshoni "folknames" for each other have been based upon certain foods which seemed to predominate in the lives of any one particular group at any particular time.

Those who lived along the Salmon River and whose main subsistence activity was fishing were called Agaideka ("salmon-eaters"). Those who did not live near the spawning grounds of the big salmon but who ate smaller fish were called Pengwideka ("fisheaters"). Hekandeka or Hukandeka means "seed-eaters," but this is a pun, for it means "dirt-eater" too. Kutsundeka means "buffalo-eater," Padehiyadeka means "elk-eater." Of importance to us is the spelling and derivation of the word "sheepeater," which comes from the Shoshoni word collection Tuku-deka meaning "mountain-sheep eater" or more properly "meat-eater."<sup>6</sup>

Nowhere among Northern Shoshoni [Lowie's (1909) term] did these or other names relating to special food denote clearly defined local groups or individual bands. Rather, they referred to regional resources utilized by people who might travel widely. "An individual, a family, or an entire band, could be named differently at different times according to temporary whereabouts or to the seasons and the corresponding foods."<sup>7</sup>

By way of an example, Shoshoni from the Snake River Plains who had generally been called *Kutsundeka* appropriated for a short time the name *Padehiyadeka* when they went to the Teton country of western Wyoming to hunt elk. These same "buffalo-eaters", when traveling up the Portneuf River to dig roots, were referred to as *Kuyedeka*, meaning "eaters of the 'tobacco-root' " ( *Valerina obovato* ).<sup>8</sup>

It is in this manner that Dr. Sven Liljeblad has spelled out his significant findings on the problem of identification and classification of the various Shoshoni peoples.<sup>9</sup> He concludes that among the Shoshoni living west of the Continental Divide, that is in the Plateau region of Idaho, any particular group of these people is merely a "domestic group" with culture traits similar to all other Shoshoni of the Plateau. Group names are arbitrary and are not based on ethnic distinctions. It is Liljeblad's contention that all the Northern Shoshoni peoples had a general culture in common and that they all practiced varying methods of subsistence as the opportunity arose.

This is recognized by the present-day Shoshoni Indians of Idaho. W. G.,<sup>10</sup> who lives on the Fort Hall Reservation, Idaho, had this to say of his various neighbors, "Just whatever they ate at that time is what I called them. We could even call them 'coffee-drinkers.'" He told of a woman who was supposed to be a "meat-eater," that is, she preferred to eat only meat. But during the ration days of World War II this woman came to W.G. and his wife, C. G., and asked them for some food. They gave her both meat and fat and she took it and ate it. Later when W. G. and C. G. met her coming down the road, C. G. laughed and said, "Here she comes, here comes 'she-who-eats both.'" In speaking of the Shoshoni in general W. G. said, "We are all the same people . . . It is all mixed up [ meaning marriages and blood lines] all the way back." This is the consensus among all the Shoshoni at Fort Hall.<sup>11</sup> E.B.<sup>12</sup> Indians are all the same people .

The *Tukudeka* people from the mountains know people from all over Idaho real well . . . by names and by relation.”

Thus it can be seen that in Idaho all groups were in contact with each other; enough so that culture elements were shared by all. Inter-marriage between various groups seems to be the rule rather than the exception, and any distinctions which groups might have had in aboriginal times have largely disappeared by today.

In historic times Indians living on the east side of the Continental Divide spoke the same language, Plateau-Shoshonean, as did those to the west. These Indians have been called “Wyoming Shoshoni” by Steward,<sup>13</sup> “Wind River Shoshoni” by Kroeber,<sup>14</sup> and “Eastern Shoshoni” or “Eastern Snakes” by early historical sources. Ake Hultkrantz, who has done recent field work among the Shoshoni of Wyoming,<sup>15</sup> prefers to call these people “Wyoming Plains Shoshoni.” Hultkrantz prefers<sup>16</sup> this nomenclature for two reasons. Firstly, the name “Wind River Shoshone” actually refers only to reservation times, or the time since 1868 when these people, under the leadership of Chief Washakie, agreed to live on the Wind River Reservation. Before this time they roamed at will on the plains of Wyoming and even made buffalo-hunting forays into Montana and the Dakotas.<sup>17</sup> The second reason why Hultkrantz chooses to rename the Shoshoni of Wyoming is that he finds them to be a heterogeneous, not a homogeneous, group of people.<sup>18</sup> Hultkrantz has found what he believes to be three distinct ethnic groups among the Shoshoni of Wyoming. These are called by him the *Kucundika*<sup>19</sup> (“buffalo-eaters”), the *Tukudika*<sup>20</sup> (“sheep-eaters”), and the *Haivodika* (“dove-eaters”). The latter group is of less importance and seems to have become distinct only after 1825.

My investigations show that the present day Wind River Shoshoni—up to this time considered by ethnologists as a homogeneous tribe—is composed of descendants of three independent ethnic units as of 1960, within the present boundaries of Wyoming. If one goes further back in time, then one can conjecture that the number of independent groups was even greater, but that two large main groups stand out both through their sociopolitical structure, and their economic activities: the Buffalo Hunter or *Kucundika* of the Plains, the main portion of the present Wind River Shoshoni, and the Sheep-Eaters or *Tukudika* in the mountains.<sup>21</sup>

These so-called “sheep eaters”, with whom we are concerned, have been designated in other historical and anthropological literature by a variety of names:

Hoebel<sup>22</sup> calls them *Tuk-u-rika*, but recognizes the interchangeability of “dika” for “rika.” Hoebel also distinguished a separate group of *Pa-rah-ia-dika* or “elk-eaters” living in the Teton Range and a group called *Dayiane*, “Mountain Dwellers”, living in Yellowstone Park.

Lowie called those Shoshoni living in the mountains around Lemhi, Idaho, *Tuku-rika*.<sup>23</sup>

Stuart calls the “Salmon River Snakes” Took-a-rik-kah.<sup>24</sup>

Swanton, in his identification of North American Indian tribes, says that the name *Tukuarika* or *Tukuadika* was applied with some measure of permanence to a number of local groups “extending from Yellowstone National Park to the middle course of the Salmon River.”<sup>25</sup>

Humfreville,<sup>26</sup> Wheeler,<sup>27</sup> and Lander<sup>28</sup> applied generally the term *Tukuarika* to the Shoshoni of Salmon River, the Upper Snake Valley and the surrounding mountains. Hodge gives the home of a *Tukuarika* people as being in Yellowstone Park and the Lemhi Fork of the Salmon River.<sup>29</sup>

The Murphys recognize a *Tukarika* or “sheepeater” population living in the mountains of Wyoming<sup>30</sup> and a similarly named but socially and geographically separate group called *Tukurika* centered near the Lemhi River in central Idaho.<sup>31</sup>

Historical references to the “sheepeater” peoples is sparse in-deed, but what records we do have, left by early trappers and traders and official expeditions in the 19th century, indicate that encounters between the whites and the so-called “sheepeaters” occurred either in the high mountains of Wyoming, principally in Yellowstone Park, or in the mountains of central Idaho.

The first such historical record comes from the journals of Captain Bonneville, who in September, 1835, sighted three Indians in the Wind River Range.<sup>32</sup>

Captain Bonneville at once concluded that these belonged to a kind of hermit race, scanty in number, that inhabit the highest and most inaccessible fastnesses. They speak the Shoshone language and probably are offsets from that tribe, though they have peculiarities of their own, which distinguish them from all other Indians. They are miserably poor, own no horses, and are destitute of every convenience to be derived from an intercourse with the whites. Their weapons are bows and stone-pointed arrows, with which they hunt the deer, the elk, and the mountain sheep. They are to be found scattered about the countries of the Shoshones, Flathead, Crow and Blackfeet tribes, but their residences are always in lonely places and the clefts of rocks.

Osborne Russell made the following observation while trapping in the Lamar Valley of Yellowstone Park in July, 1835:<sup>33</sup>

Here we found a few Snake Indians comprising six men, seven women and eight or ten children who were the only inhabitants of this lonely and secluded spot. They were all neatly clothed in dressed deer and sheepskins of the best quality and seemed to be perfectly contented and happy. They were rather surprised at our approach and retreated to the heights where they might have a view of us without apprehending any danger, but having persuaded them of our pacific intentions we then succeeded in getting them to encamp with us. Their personal property consisted of one old butcher knife, nearly worn to the back, two old shattered fuses which had long since become useless for want of ammunition, a small stone pot and about 30 dogs on which they carried their skins, clothing, provisions etc. on their hunting excursions. They were well armed with bows and arrows pointed with obsidian.

C. W. Cook, in his account of the Folsom-Cook Expedition of 1869, *The Valley of the Upper Yellowstone*, says, “On the eighth day out we encountered a band of Indians, who, however, proved to be Tonkeys, or Sheepeaters, and friendly; the discovery of their character relieved our minds of apprehension, and we conversed with them as well as their limited knowledge of English, and our of pantomime would permit.”<sup>34</sup>

In *The Report of Lieut. Gustavius C. Doane upon the so-called Yellowstone Expedition of 1870 to the Secretary of War*,<sup>35</sup> Doane says: on the “Twenty-fifth day—September 15—the only traces of Indians [possibly nomadic Plains Indians] we had seen were some shelters of logs, rotten and tumbling down from age, together with a few poles standing in the former summer camps; there were no fresh trails whatever. Appearances indicated that the basin (of the Yellowstone Plateau) had been almost entirely abandoned by the sons of the forest. A few

lodges of Sheepeaters, a branch remnant of the Snake tribe, wretched beasts who run from the sight of a white man or from any other tribe of Indians, once said to inhabit the fastnesses of the mountains around the lakes, poorly armed and dismounted, obtaining a precarious subsistence, and in defenseless condition. We saw, however, no recent traces of them.”

The Earl of Dunraven took a trip into the northern half of Yellowstone Park in the summer of 1874. This observant old sportsman wrote, “Our path . . . crossed a low divide into the valley system of the Fire Hole, or east fork of the Madison River. Before crossing the divide we passed a few old wigwams, remains of encampments of Sheepeaters. These were the last indications of Indians that we saw . . .”<sup>36</sup> Also, “A few wretched Sheepeaters are said to linger in the fastnesses of the mountains about Clarke’s Fork; but their existence is very doubtful; at any rate they must be a harmless, timid race.”

Colonel P. W. Norris, who was superintendent of Yellowstone Park from 1877 to 1882, and who was largely responsible for having the last Indians removed from the Park in the late 1870’s, should have been well informed about the Indians of this area. He wrote that he found near the Sheepeater Cliffs in the northern Yellowstone Park the “ancient but recently deserted, secluded, unknown haunts”<sup>37</sup> of the Sheepeaters. Also, “The haunt of the main Bannock tribe was at Henry’s Lake, west of the park, that of their little Sheepeaters Band within [the Park(?)], and their main buffalo range upon the Big Horn, most of it.”

The letters of Luther Mann, Jr., Indian Agent at Fort Bridger, to the Superintendents of Indian Affairs, Utah Territory, in the 1860’s also give evidence that a group called Sheepeaters lived in Wyoming at this time (1850-1880).

Luther Mann, Jr., Indian Agent, to D. H. Irish. Supt. of Indian Affairs, dated Fort Bridger Agency, October 5, 1864.<sup>38</sup>

About the first of June a party of Loo-coo-rekah, or Sheep-Eater Indians stole and brought into camp nineteen head of horses belonging to a party of miners at Beaver Head, Montana Territory.

Luther Mann, Jr., Indian Agent, to F. H. Head, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, dated Fort Bridger Agency, July 15, 1867.<sup>39</sup>

Sir, your communication of June 3rd in regard to the Mixed Bands of Indians who range about the headwaters of the Yellowstone Galiton Madison Snake and Green Rivers around Bannack and Boise frequently in the Territory of Utah was duly received....There also exists another band of Tookooreka or Sheep Eaters a branch of Shoshonees who live almost entirely in the Mountains very seldom visit the white settlements. The last named Band speak the Shoshonee dialect....

Granville Stuart writing in 1865 says, “The ‘Salmon River Snakes’ occupy the Salmon River and the upper part of Snake River Valley, and ‘Coiner’s prairie,’ near the Boise mines. They are called ‘Took-a-rik-kah,’ or ‘mountain-sheepeaters,’ by the other Snakes, because in former times they lived principally on these animals, which were very abundant then in that region, but are about ‘played out’ now.”<sup>40</sup>

In 1877 W. H. Jackson, the famous frontier photographer, reported that, “There are 200 more (Bannocks) at the Lemhi reservation, where there are 340 sheepeaters, a band of Bannocks living a retired life in the mountains dividing Idaho from Montana, and 500 Shoshonees.”<sup>41</sup>

In Idaho the last distinct reports of a people designated as Sheepeaters came from the mountains of western Idaho between the Weiser River and the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. This is provided by the accounts of the so-called "Sheepeater Campaign of 1879."<sup>42</sup> In the summer and fall of that year, the U. S. Army tried to pacify or annihilate a small group of Indians roaming on foot in these mountains. These Indians apparently had never been on a reservation. And according to Col. W. C. Brown these "Sheepeaters were a small band of renegade Bannocks, Shoshones, and Weisers".<sup>43</sup> The Indians were pursued in the Big Creek and Elk Creek area of the mid-Salmon River drainages. They apparently lived on both sides of the divide. As Aaron Parker says, "The Sheepeaters were a few mongrel Indians of unknown pedigree who inhabited the Council and Indian valleys of the Upper Weiser Mountains."<sup>44</sup> These Indians had been raiding whites together with renegade Bannocks.

In Wyoming, the last official reports of a Sheepeater group concern their removal to the reservations in the 1870's. They soon lost their identity, at least from a group point of view, as there is no record that they were distinguished for long from the Shoshoni whom they joined on the reservation.

In 1880, Superintendent Norris<sup>45</sup> made efforts to have a treaty accepted by Congress, and to reach an agreement with the Indians who had frequented or lived in Yellowstone. The essence of this agreement was that the Indians would not come north into the Park further than Heart Lake.

There is a controversy described by Hultkrantz as to the time and place of removal of the Indians from Yellowstone. Letters by Superintendents Hass and D. G. Yaeger, from 1929, and kept in the archives of the agency at Wind River Reservation, stated that Sheepeaters were moved to this reservation in 1871 and 1879.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand there is information provided by Norris showing that Sheepeaters were moved to Lemhi.<sup>47</sup> Both may have been true.

Replogle shows a photograph of a "Sheepeater family in the Yellowstone country. The tepee is a temporary summer dwelling with aspen supporting an Army-style canvas."<sup>48</sup> This description shows that this picture must have been taken after the military occupation of Yellowstone in 1870.

A report of Sheepeaters remaining after 1879 is supplied by General Sheridan in his report "Report on Exploration of parts of Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana, 1882." He says that the expedition had "five Sheep-eating Indians as guides."

Scattered individuals claiming to be Sheepeaters remained after 1880. Among these was Togwotee who became an important chief and guide among the Wind River Shoshones.<sup>49</sup>

Hultkrantz deduces that in the late history of the Sheepeaters, marauding Plains tribes, plus smallpox introduced by the whites, diminished the number of those who were still free roaming.<sup>50</sup> Grace Hebard makes reference to the Sioux as bringing about the eventual extinction of the Sheepeaters. "Ultimately the Sioux penetrated to their recesses (she gives these as the Absaroka, Ten Sleep and Teton mountains) and virtually exterminated them."<sup>51</sup>

The most interesting story from a romantic point of view, but least substantiated from a scientific point of view, is W. A. Allen's account of the story he obtained from the alleged 115-year-old Sheepeater squaw, "Under the Ground". She was with a band of mountain Crows, near the Big Horn mountains, when Allen says he met her in 1913. According to Allen she described the smallpox epidemic and its consequences among her people. "By and by Sheep Eater not many. They go to other Indian tribes down in valley on river, where much big water runs, and eat heap buffalo, ride pony, marry heap squaw...then Sheep Cater no more, no more papoose, no more squaw, all gone."<sup>52</sup>

Left with these scant but often alluring historical accounts of the elusive “Sheepeaters” we must turn to ethnographic accounts and our own field work in order to better identify them.

J. T.,<sup>53</sup> living on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, spoke of the Tukudeka as being distinct from the other Indians of the reservation. He mentioned one of the few Tukudeka who after three generations kept his distinctiveness from the rest of the Shoshoni. This man, J. Q.,<sup>54</sup> lived on a part of the reservation away from all others (Sage Creek) and was known by the other Shoshoni not to participate in the regular Shoshoni dances. F. P. and P. P.<sup>55</sup> both made vague references to a group of people who once lived up in the mountains. S. N.<sup>56</sup> gave another name, *engaa*,<sup>57</sup> This means in Shoshoni “anything of the red color, maroon”. for the “mountainpeople” as he called them. He had also heard of the Shoshoni term *Tukudeka*. M. P.<sup>58</sup> distinguished clearly between Chief Washakie’s band (who were *Kucundika* as classified by Hultkrantz) and another group whom she called *Dukurika*.<sup>59</sup> Although Mrs. P. now lives at the Fort Hall Reservation in Idaho, she came originally from Wind River, Wyoming, where her mother’s father was a nephew of Chief Washakie himself. This is especially interesting since she identified the *Tukudeka* (or *Dukurika* as she called them) in the same general way as did all other present-day Wind River Shoshoni.

The general impression received from all of these Wind River, Wyoming, people is that there were a group of mountain dwellers who were definitely distinct from the buffalo-hunting Plains Shoshoni. In the light of this impression the conclusion reached by Hultkrantz is not at all surprising.

On the other hand, the statements by the Fort Hall, Idaho, Shoshoni concerning the identity of any particular group differ considerably from those given by the present-day Wind River Shoshoni.

As was seen, E. B., W. G. and C. G., of the Fort Hall Reservation, Idaho, all give credence to Liljeblad’s thesis concerning the Idaho Shoshoni and are unequivocal in their contradiction of Hultkrantz’ thesis concerning the Wyoming Shoshoni.

The anomaly will not be eliminated, but it can perhaps be explained in terms of cultural differences among groups in the two areas under question. Cultural differences among the Shoshoni were to a large degree influenced by a single thing. This was the introduction of the horse. All cultures to which the horse was introduced experienced a transformation.<sup>60</sup> But this transformation was not of the same magnitude in all cultures. I contend that the horse transformed the culture of the Wyoming Plains Shoshoni to a much greater degree than it did the culture of the Idaho Shoshoni, and that this difference in degree has direct bearing upon the problem of identifying the Sheepeaters.

The Comanche<sup>61</sup> and the Shoshoni both had the horse by 1700 in the vicinity of Black’s Fork, Wyoming.<sup>62</sup> The Comanche traded horses to their Shoshoni kin. The Shoshoni had in turn traded them north through Idaho to the Blackfeet. The Blackfeet had the horse by 1751.<sup>63</sup>

With the introduction of the horse, Shoshoni culture, which had once been simple and uncomplicated, began to take on new forms. The economic life of the people changed along with their material culture. With their new mode of transportation these people could carry a greater amount of material possessions. Clothing became more abundant and stylish, and the heavy skin tepee could now be carried from place to place. These new material possessions were made chiefly from the buffalo. This animal became the most important single thing in the lives of the horse-owning Indian, for from the buffalo came not only skins for making of leather goods, rawhide, and robes, but also food in large quantities. Horseowning Indians also experienced a change politically. Family units which had once traveled alone now came together to form groups classically described as bands.<sup>64</sup> Concomitantly, some sort of authority was vested in specifically recognized leaders who acted at the time of the communal buffalo hunts and in time of war. In addition the horse was a source of wealth and was easily stealable

or easily stolen. Therefore horse-owning Indians came to know the techniques of both offense and defense, and in the case of Plains Indians, such as the Crow, a “war-complex” developed.<sup>65</sup>

It must be noted, however, that these culture changes did not occur rapidly or completely among the Shoshoni living in Idaho. As a matter of fact, some groups such as the Sheepeaters were virtually unaffected. The cultural transformation experienced by the horse-owning buffalo hunters of the Snake River plains, Idaho, was of a much lesser degree than the transformation experienced across the mountains by the Wyoming Plains Shoshoni. This difference in degree was determined to a great extent by ecological factors.

The buffalo disappeared from the Snake River Plains in Idaho about 1840.<sup>66</sup> Before their extinction they were scarce in Idaho as compared to their numbers on the plains east of the Continental Divide. This meant that the horse-owning Shoshoni of Idaho could not rely wholly upon the buffalo for their subsistence. In the process of their yearly travels they might dig “tobacco roots” on the Portneuf River, and they might fish for salmon below American Falls on the Snake. They invariably would go in May or June to the Camas Prairie in Idaho to harvest the camas there. In the process of these annual migrations<sup>67</sup> the mounted Indians would make frequent contacts with other Idaho Shoshoni participating in the same activity at the same time.<sup>68</sup> Almost all of the Shoshoni of Idaho went to the Camas Prairie. Much trading between various “domestic groups”, and in fact between various tribal or linguistic groups, occurred in the vicinity of the Weiser River and Camas Prairie. “The Bannock traded buffalo hides to the Nez Perce for horses. The downstream Shoshoni came loaded with salmon; groups who wintered in northern Utah brought seeds and pine nuts; the impoverished local Shoshoni had nothing to offer but seeds, roots, and dried crickets.”<sup>69</sup> Such vigorous interaction would lead to cultural as well as economic exchange and would not lend itself to a high degree of specialization in one group or another. The folk names applied by the Shoshoni themselves to designate these various groups were, it will be remembered, arbitrary and flexible. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Fort Hall Shoshoni of today do not differentiate clearly between those people who at one time might have been called *Tukudeka* from those horse-owning people who were sometimes called *Kutsundeka*. It is with good reason that the Fort Hall Shoshoni maintain, “We are all the same people, all the way back.”

On the other hand, the situation among the Shoshoni of Wyoming would have been quite different. Here the *Kutsundika* or buffalo hunters took on a great number of the typical horse-owning Plains culture traits.<sup>70</sup> Hultkrantz says of these people, “No Shoshoneans deserve the name Plains Shoshoni better, because in cultural and social respects they approached the Plains Indians more than any other Shoshoni group, the Comanche Indians excepted.”<sup>71</sup> Nearly the entire yearly cycle of Plains Shoshoni was spent in pursuit of the buffalo herds and the grazing of their horses.<sup>72</sup>

In comparing the Wyoming Plains Shoshoni to any other of the Shoshoni peoples, such as the Sheepeaters, the cultural differences between the two are quite dramatic. The culture of the Sheepeater is essentially common to that of all the Plateau-Shoshoneans before the coming of the horse. All of these Shoshoneans can be generally classed as “walkers.” With the coming of the horse cultural transformation among the Wyoming Plains Shoshoni was of greater magnitude than for any other Shoshoni group. The differences between the Wyoming Plains Shoshoni and any other Shoshoni peoples who remained “walkers” were of considerable note. It is not surprising, therefore, that the present-day Wind River Shoshoni clearly differentiate between those former people of the plains, the *Kutsundeka*, and those former people of the mountains, the *Tukudika*.

It is my contention that the *Tukudika* people, described by Hultkrantz as being a distinct culture group, are very similar in all their cultural characteristics to the *Tukudeka* described by Liljeblad. The apparent contradictions of Hultkrantz and Liljeblad had been brought about by individually describing a highly similar type people in terms of the peoples and environments of a specific locale.

On the west, in Idaho, the *Tukudeka* are in an area populated by peoples of a generally homogeneous culture which the *Tukudeka* themselves share. Wyoming, on the east, is an area in which the culture, or rather cultures, are heterogeneous, and in which the *Tukudika* are but one distinct group of several.

The apparent anomaly existing between the classification of Hultkrantz and Liljeblad arises, then, from a difference in emphasis by the two men. But when the assumption is made that there were a particular people, namely Sheepeaters, several major and complex qualifications must be noted.

In the first place, contact, including trade, diffusion of culture traits and intermarriage, did occur between all groups of Shoshonean speaking peoples. The intensity of this contact, however, at any given point in time and in any geographical region, varied. The degree of intensity determined whether the particular groups in contact maintained an individual identity or became virtually one and the same people. Liljeblad emphasizes that the intense degree of contact among Shoshoni west of the Continental Divide made these people virtually one. Hultkrantz emphasizes that east of the Continental Divide specialization occurring among two groups who concomitantly experienced little contact gave rise to two distinct peoples.

Reservations must be noted, however, because Liljeblad recognizes specialization among the Shoshoni west of the Continental Divide, and on the other hand, Hultkrantz recognizes some degree of contact between groups east of the Continental Divide.

Liljeblad, contrary to the emphasis he places on the similarities of the Idaho Shoshoni, notes that after the coming of the horse such things as wealth, evidenced by material culture items and horse ownership, began to reflect a class-distinction among different groups. "There was also an apparent regional contrast between the up-to-date attainments of progressive groups and the backwardness of those remaining in isolation." In regard to the food names used by the Shoshoni, Liljeblad says, "Indeed, as band organization and class distinction evolved, these terms sometimes came to indicate a person's social standing. As a mode of expression, 'buffalo-eaters' became synonymous with 'well-to-do people'; a 'buffalo-eater' would rank socially above a 'salmon-eater,' as would a 'big-salmon-eater.'" <sup>73</sup>

On the other hand, Hultkrantz notes, (contrary to his general thesis), that there were instances in the later stages of pre-reservation time when class and ethnic divisions were broken down. A particular band or hunting group led by a man named Tavonasia spent most of its time on the plains following the typical yearly cycle of the *Kutsundeka*. Upon occasion, however, they took elk-hunting expeditions into Yellowstone Park. They were then called *Tukudika*. In addition, Hultkrantz notes a rather high degree of contact between the *Tukudika*, living on the southeastern slopes of the Wind River Mountains, with the Wyoming Plains Shoshoni. Horses were acquired by these *Tukudika* from the latter.

Hultkrantz maintains that the term *Toyani* was reserved for "isolated mountain settler"; in other words, the very people we have sought to describe. He claims that the *Toyani* of Yellowstone Park were among the most isolated, but again, notation must be made of the fact that the Wyoming Plains Shoshoni often called the Yellowstone Park *Toyani* "*P'anaiti Toyani*" ("Bannock mountain dwellers") because there were Bannock-speaking peoples among them. This leads us to observation that the Sheepeaters of Wyoming, that is those mountain peoples living generally in the Rocky Mountains along the Continental Divide, had opportunity for contact with the Shoshoni to the west just as they undoubtedly met in the summer elk-hunting expeditions of their brethren from the eastern plains. The Murphys document in some detail <sup>74</sup> transmontane hunting excursions to the upper drainage of the Missouri, made by the Bannocks of Idaho after they had acquired the horse. A portion of one of the routes followed by these hunters, and now known as the Bannock Trail, passed through Yellowstone Park, on the

way to the buffalo range in Montana. In addition, W. G.<sup>75</sup> also mentions that his people (meaning the Idaho Shoshoni in general) often made elk-hunting expeditions to Yellowstone Park itself. Contact probably occurred, therefore, between these migrating hunters from both east and west, and the supposedly “isolated” *Tukudika* or *Toyani*.

To summarize, let us disregard for a moment the nuances and various emphases placed upon the problem of identification by the anthropologists whose geographically-oriented works we have just reviewed. By using a few assumptions let us attempt to reduce this complex problem into a set of easily understandable generalizations.

First, let us assume that the variously named “mountain dwellers” or “Sheepeaters” noted in the early historical sources were for the most part the very people whom we have sought to identify through ethnographic material and field work as “Sheepeaters.”

Let us further assume, until it is proven otherwise, that much of the late prehistoric and Historic archaeological evidence of Indian habitation which is to be found above 7,000 feet in the mountains of Idaho and Wyoming, was left by the Sheepeaters.

And finally, let us assume that most of the culture to be described in detail in Part Two was shared by all peoples identifiable as Sheepeaters, regardless of time or location. This culture was characteristic of small independent groups of people who were alike in the subsistence patterns they practiced but who were absolutely lacking in any sort of territorial or political unity. And while it is recognized that the Wyoming *Tukudika* and the Idaho *Tukudeka* were distinct peoples, the exact differences existing between them or between any group of Sheepeaters cannot be known at this time. However, we can surmise that some such differences were naturally due to ecological circumstances persisting in the different mountain homelands of these scattered peoples, and that other differences must have been due to the various degrees of mixing and splitting which seem to have occurred at various times and places among the Shoshoni-speaking populations.

Therefore, the *caveat* will be maintained which recognizes differences among various Sheepeaters at a given time or place, and it will be emphasized that the term “Sheepeater” might most advantageously be employed in the adjectival sense. In this way we are better able to cope with the unmistakable archaeological, historical and ethnographic evidence which leads us to describe a particular culture, while at the same time allowing room for the inevitable differences in that culture.

We have reached a point then, in the definition of terms whereby we identify as “Sheepeater-like” peoples all those Shoshoni-speaking Indians who, throughout the greater part of their lives, possessed most or all of the culture to be described in detail in Part Two.

## **PART TWO**

Sheepeaters once lived through all of the mountainous country of present-day northwestern Wyoming, southwestern Montana and central Idaho. This vast region of distribution includes the Big Horn Mountains, the Absaroka Mountains, the Yellowstone Plateau, the Wind River Mountains (as far south as South Pass),<sup>76</sup> the Teton Range, the many ranges of southwestern Montana, the Lemhi Range, and the Salmon River Mountains.<sup>77</sup> Nearly all of these mountains rise from an elevation of 5,000 feet to over 11,500 feet. Relief in these mountains is exceptionally rugged, since the majority of them are uplifted and deeply dissected volcanic blocks. (The Wind River and Big Horn Mountains are not of igneous origin but have a rather smooth upland surface. However, canyons draining the slopes have made the topography here extremely rugged.)

Encompassed in the span of this relief are four major ecological zones.<sup>78</sup> These are the Transitional zone, located roughly between 5,000-7,500 feet; the Canadian zone, located roughly between 7,500-9,500 feet; the Hudsonian zone, located peripherally to the Canadian

zone and roughly between 9,500-10,500 feet; and the Arctic-alpine zone, located above 10,500 feet.

In the Transitional zone cottonwood trees and willows abound in the river bottoms, and good range feed is provided by the short buffalo grass growing on the foothills. On the mountain slopes of the Canadian zone are found heavy stands of conifers, and groves of aspen and alders grow in the protected canyons. Many kinds of edible plants are found here as well as game of all kinds. The Hudsonian and Arctic-alpine zones both lie in the vicinity of timberline and become the habitat for elk, deer, and mountain sheep during the summer months.

Of the climatic factors in this region snow is the most important. Depth of snow on Yellowstone Lake in February averages five feet on the level. Westerly winds sweeping the mountains take snow from the exposed places and pile it in great drifts. These drifts last until June or July. But once most of the snow leaves the Arctic-alpine zone above timberline, the long ridges and broad upland plateaus there provide easy traveling, and the mountain passes become heavily used by both game animals and their hunters.

Winter temperatures in the Transitional and Canadian zones range from 50 degrees above zero to 50 below. "Chinook" winds warming the mountains for several weeks at intervals during the winter provide an opportunity for travel and hunting. Sheltered canyons at 7,000 feet often record higher temperatures than do the windswept open prairie and desert land at lower elevations.

Rainfall during the summer is slight, and most of the water for the many streams and lakes in the mountains is provided by melting snows.

The particular environment of the mountain region had much to do in shaping the culture of the Sheepeaters. It seems fair to assume that the mountains isolated to a large degree people living there from their Shoshoni neighbors to the east and west. The ecological conditions of the mountains helped to create a sort of cultural "backwater" in respect to historical events occurring in neighboring regions.

Considered in the light of White's theories<sup>79</sup> on cultural evolution, the Sheepeaters are an excellent example of a group of people who did not evolve into a different cultural type at the introduction of some new cultural catalyst. With the introduction of the horse to North America the Sheepeaters did not undergo the transformation experienced by their kin, the Wyoming Plains Shoshoni. To the contrary, the Sheepeaters kept the *status quo*, culturally speaking, by retaining culture typical of all Basin-Plateau Shoshonean-speaking "walkers."<sup>80</sup>

Although in this respect the Sheepeater culture could be said to be stagnant, cultural specialization did occur. Culture traits, alone characteristic of the Sheepeater, developed. These specialized traits "overlay" the basic pre-horse Shoshonean-type culture.<sup>81</sup> This specialization was, I maintain, in response to the particular ecological conditions in which the Sheepeaters found themselves. It included the building of traps for large game and the use of dogs in hunting it, the making of a mountain sheep-horn bow, and the manufacture of warm winter clothing. Therefore it was both specialization and stagnation which helped shape the Sheepeater culture.

This culture was characterized by an elementary sociopolitical organization typical of the pre-horse Basin-Plateau Shoshoneans, and consisting of politically isolated, small, economically independent groups composed of one or two nuclear-families. The yearly subsistence cycle of these family groups centered principally around their pursuit of large game—deer, elk and mountain sheep, which represented their staple foods. The economics of such a subsistence pattern necessitated the simplest of social organizations. Elk, deer and mountain sheep are best hunted by less than four persons, and rarely would a kill of over three

animals be made. (Driving these animals into traps is an exception.) The amount of meat from one or several of these animals is enough to supply a small family group with food for a week or more, but would not be sufficient for a large group. Campsites selected by the Sheepeater usually could accommodate only a small group and foot travel between these sites would be best done in such a group. Such economically oriented “domestic groups” (as labeled by Liljeblad) were generally found among many of the Shoshonean peoples before the coming of the horse.

Archaeological evidence allows us to make certain assumptions about the yearly subsistence pattern of the Sheepeaters. During the summer months the large game animals were followed on their migrations to the high and beautiful alpine pastures of the timberline country. The Sheepeaters carried few possessions on these high summer hunts, and probably moved camp often. If game had been frightened out of the upper basins of one drainage, it could be quickly located in the headwaters of the next small drainage. Marches of less than ten miles over the 10,000 foot divides would bring the Sheepeater to a fresh country and a fresh kill could be made.

As the game moved to lower elevations with the coming winter, the Sheepeaters did likewise. Most probably they spent the winters in semi-permanent camps in sheltered creek bottoms and canyons. Snowshoes were necessary for travel here, and these are recorded in the literature.<sup>82</sup> J. T. claims that the Sheepeaters made snowshoe frames from mountain sheep horns.<sup>83</sup> Had any Sheepeaters owned horses they would have been forced to winter in the lower elevations of the foothills. Likewise, if a hard winter forced the game out of the mountains, the Sheepeaters, in all likelihood followed them.

Secondary activities, however, were not precluded from the yearly subsistence cycle of the Sheepeaters. Berries, roots, herbs, nuts and insects were gathered, and game birds and small mammals were eaten. Short migrations out of the mountains to the habitats of various edible roots might have been made. Contact with other Shoshoni at this time was probable and trade would have been carried on. Also during the mid-summer months, spawning fish may have been caught in the meandering streams of mountain meadows. In the fall, trips were also made to berry patches.

The rugged terrain of this mountainous country had a large influence upon the traveling done by the Sheepeaters. It is natural that most of them were “walkers” since without well-cut trails, use of the horse is difficult. As an exception, Hultkrantz maintains that a few Sheepeaters had contact with *Kutsendeka* and acquired horses from them. This contact occurred in the southern portions of the Wind River Mountains and some of the Sheepeaters there roamed for short periods of time in the Green River Valley. In fact, it seems that some of these “Sheepeaters” were really impoverished Plains Shoshoni who had lost their horses or had been forced by the powerful Algonquin and Siouan tribes to abandon their former life on the plains.<sup>84</sup>

Sheepeaters living in present-day Yellowstone Park and the adjoining Absaroka Mountains would have been much more isolated from contact with horse-owning Indians than those who lived in the Wind River Mountains. (The isolated *Tukudeka* of Yellowstone Park were called *Toyani* or “mountain-dwellers” by the other Shoshoni.)<sup>85</sup> The chance that they would have owned horses is therefore minimal.

In lieu of the horse the Sheepeaters had domesticated dogs, but sources are at variance in regard to the use made of these dogs by different Shoshoni groups. Liljeblad<sup>86</sup> says that prior to the introduction of the horse, large clogs were used by all Shoshoni for both transportation and hunting. Jack Contor<sup>87</sup> says that the travois was in use before the coming of the horse, and that dogs either pulled a travois or packed loads, depending on their size.<sup>88</sup> J.T. said the Sheepeaters had dogs which were better property in the mountains than a horse. He said these dogs were “big—like a Russian hound.”<sup>89</sup> It will be remembered that Osborne Russell<sup>90</sup>

observed Sheepeaters in the Lamar River of Yellowstone with 30 dogs which were used for packing. On the other hand, Hultkrantz maintained that the dogs belonging to the Sheepeaters of Idaho were not big enough to be used for transportation and were used only for pursuing game.<sup>91</sup> He is supported in this by C.G.,<sup>92</sup> who said that her father had had two dogs that he used to run mountain sheep in a circle back to him, but she said that these dogs were never used for packing.<sup>93</sup>

Even with dogs the Sheepeaters undoubtedly carried most of their possessions on their backs. This limited both the amount that they could move from camp to camp and the distance they could travel. Pack straps were made of skin or woven vegetable fibers. Goods were wrapped and carried in woven sage-brush-bark baskets, and food was carried in these baskets. Cradles were made of skin coverings over an oval structure of willow sticks held together within a hoop-shaped rim. Clay pots and steatite vessels<sup>94</sup> were too heavy to be moved from camp to camp and were therefore cached.<sup>95</sup>

The clothing of the Sheepeaters was probably very similar to the clothing made and used by all the Shoshonean Plateau peoples<sup>96</sup>. A woven rabbit-skin blanket is nearly universally recorded by ethnographers<sup>97</sup> and was probably used by the Sheepeaters as well. Strips of rabbit skin were woven tightly into a cloth and the white tails were left to stand out in a zigzag pattern on the fluffy weft.<sup>98</sup>

After the coming of the horse, it was in the manufacture of clothing that the Sheepeaters became recognized by other Shoshoni as specialists. Liljeblad<sup>99</sup> says that as furriers they excelled all other Shoshoni and their produce was sought in trade by both Indians and the white "mountain men." Again, Osborne Russell recorded this of his encounter with Sheepeaters in Yellowstone Park:<sup>100</sup> "We obtained a large number of Elk, Deer and Sheep skins from them of the finest quality and three neatly dressed Panther Skins in return for awls axes kettles tobacco ammunition etc. They would throw the skins at our feet and say 'give us whatever you please for them and we are satisfied. We can get plenty of skins but we do not often see the Tibuboes', (or people of the sun)."

In the tanning of hides, animals' brains were used to soften them. The Sheepeaters were in the habit of repeating the process with two brains to a hide instead of one as did other Shoshoni, thereby producing dressed skins of great quality. Even before the coming of the horse the Sheepeaters had learned to make tailored skin clothing, presumably in response to the severe environment in which they chose to live. Two mountain sheep hides were used in making a woman's gown, and men's shirts were made from elk, deer, or mountain sheep also. Mountain sheep skins were considered too cold for footwear, however, and unsuitable for robes and blankets. A hunter's moccasins were made from badger skin, supposedly being very tough; and the typical single-piece Shoshoni moccasin<sup>101</sup> was made for both men and women from deer skins. Elk-skin moccasins were also made but were less preferred. Headbands were made of fox skin but these were rare. Coyote skin was used for ear flaps in men's caps and for leggings. Antelope skins were used for a man's breechcloth and were also sewn together for blankets. As the brittle hollow hair was quickly worn off these blankets, snowshoe-rabbit skins were then sewed in as a lining, making the blanket very warm. Before 1900 a few wolves roamed in the mountains of Wyoming and Idaho.<sup>102</sup> To kill one was a great achievement, and a blanket made from two wolf hides was the *ne plus ultra* of Sheepeater handicraft.

J.T. claims that Plains Indians traded eagerly for the clothes made by Sheepeaters. In addition, the Sheepeaters traded mountain sheep hides in exchange for buffalo hides.

One other specialty practiced by the Sheepeaters, recognized by all other Shoshoni, was the manufacture of very powerful bows from the horn of a mountain sheep. Osborne Russell reported, "The bows were beautifully wrought from Sheep, Buffalo and Elk horns secured with Deer and Elk sinews and ornamented with porcupine quills and generally about 3 feet long."<sup>103</sup>

These bows were made from the thick ridge on the upper side of the ram's horn. The horn was heated over the coals to soften it and then the naturally curling horn was straightened. Unwanted portions of the horn were whittled away, and the remaining solid piece was 18 to 24 inches long and one inch thick at the butt. Heat was again applied, making the horn semi-plastic, and it was smoothed and shaped by pounding with a round stone. The end result was a very smooth and evenly tapered piece which was oval-shaped in cross section. A duplicate of this was made from the ram's other horn, and the two pieces were beveled at their butt ends and fitted together. A separate piece of horn about five inches long and as wide as the butt ends was placed at their junction. Wet rawhide was then wrapped around the three pieces. When it dried, this made a very firm joint. Sinew strips which came from the neck and back of large animals were glued to the back of the bow to give it added strength. The glue was made by placing shavings from the hoof and small bits of thick neck-skin or back-skin in boiling water, and then as a thick scum formed, it was skimmed off.

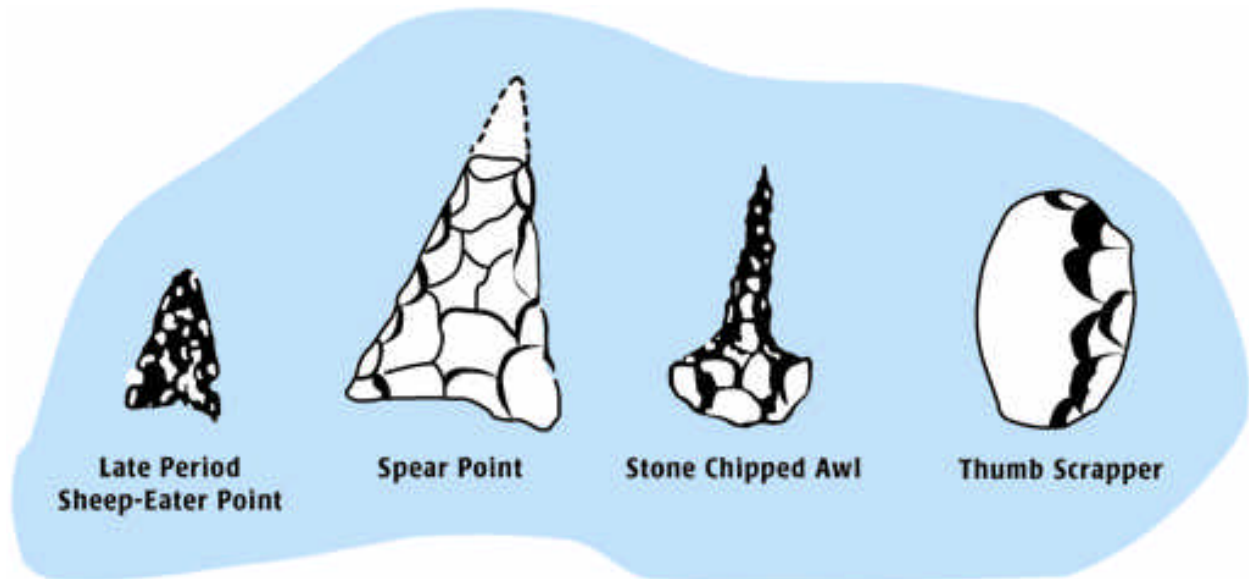
It took two months for a skilled specialist to turn out such a bow, and other Shoshoni people and even people of other tribes traded eagerly for them. "A well-made sheep-horn bow would sell for from five to ten good ponies."<sup>104</sup> These bows were so well known among all Shoshoni peoples that present-day Shoshoni still speak of them. F.R., a Shoshoni living at Fort Hall, claims that such a bow could have put an arrow completely through a buffalo. J.T., of Wind River, tells of knowing a very old man who came to the Reservation and brought with him a sleep-horn bow. But the man has died and the bow cannot be found. J.T. thinks the bow may be buried with him.

Arrows had to be made from wood that was straight and had few knots. The choice material used by the Shoshoni was dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*) and mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii* or *Syringa*). In making arrow shafts the wood was straightened with a wrench. Such wrenches were made by drilling a hole in a large rib bone. Shaft-smoothers were made from two grooved pieces of sandstone and a type of "sandpaper" was even made from sand glued to buckskin. The arrows themselves were made in three sections, each about four inches long, and these were jointed with glue or boiled pine gum and sinew. Owl or eagle wing feathers were used because they did not absorb blood and thereby soften.<sup>105</sup>

Before the Sheepeaters learned to make and use the bow and arrow, they probably used the spear common to all Basin-Plateau peoples.<sup>106</sup> Spears would have been especially effective in dispatching game that had been driven into traps constructed by the Sheepeaters. Spear points (*Fig. 2B*) as well as arrow points (*Fig. 2A*) can be found at surface sites throughout the mountains of Wyoming and Idaho. The great majority of these sites<sup>107</sup> are strikingly similar, and from their characteristic association with a particular environment a reasonable picture of the habits of the people who left them can be reconstructed. At these sites the ground is littered with chipped stone which includes agatized wood, flint, chalcedony, obsidian, and a very hard, small-grained, black volcanic rock.<sup>108</sup> From this material the Sheepeater made knives, stone awls, spear points, arrow points and scrapers. (*Fig. 2*) Broken pieces of all of these articles have been found at the sites, as well as some perfect objects. The majority of the artifacts at the sites, however, are large flakes removed from the outside of core rocks. These cores have been found partially buried in the turf. Small flakes produced in making the tools and points themselves are also in abundance. It is probable that these sites were used throughout a long span of aboriginal time.<sup>109</sup>

All of the sites lie near timberline, which is 10,000 feet in the Absaroka Mountains. They are all situated at vantage points at or near the top of the many small drainage passes in the region. Game trails make their way, even today, through all of these passes and the majority of movement by game animals is habitually along these trails.<sup>110</sup> During the summer months the large game in these zones, bighorn mountain sheep (*Ovis canadensis*), Rocky Mountain mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and American elk or wapiti (*Cervus canadensis*), usually lie or "bed down" below timberline during the hot part of the day when flies are abundant. Then as late afternoon approaches they begin to feed along the game trails, through the passes, and out

onto the nearby treeless upland ridges and plateaus.



***Sheepeater Artifacts (Fig. 2)***

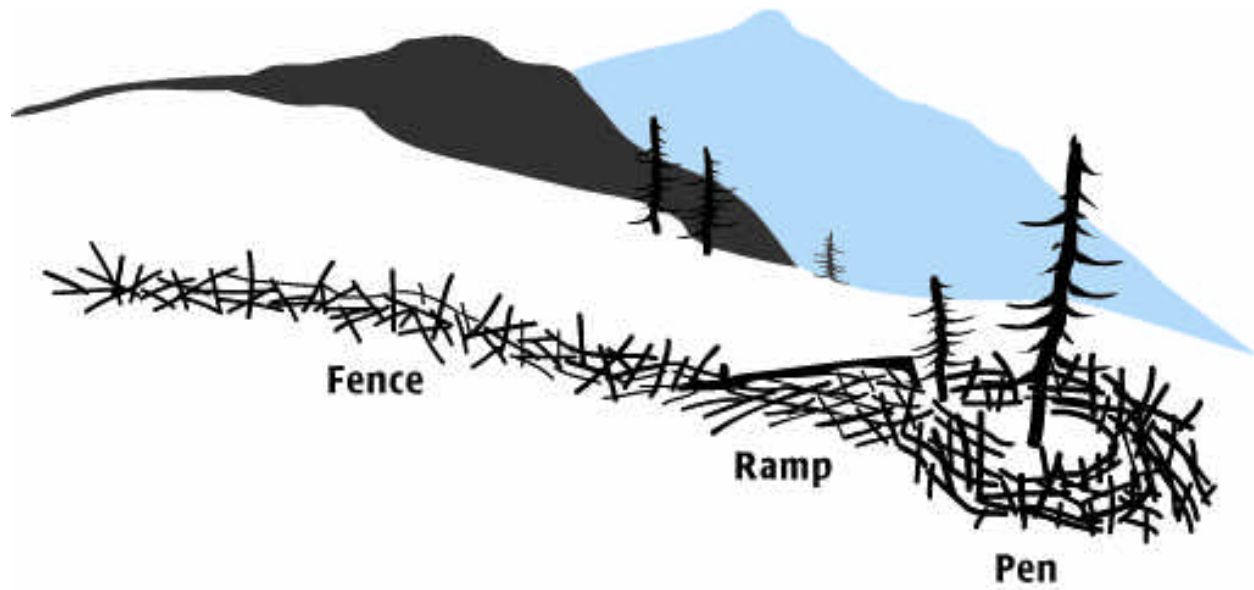
It is not hard to imagine (*Fig. 3*) a family of Sheepeaters coming to these sites and carrying with them cores of stone as well as their bows and arrows. They would sit on the ground all day chipping out projectile points and various tools. Then as game was sighted, the men of the group would get up slowly and quietly and leave the women and children behind. Testing the wind and taking advantage of cover, they would then stalk the game. If they were lucky, a kill would be made. The abundance of chippings at these grounds indicates that many groups of families frequented the sites in this manner.



***Sheepeater Family on Chipping Grounds (Fig. 3)***

The Sheepeaters not only stalked game animals but used other techniques as well. As has been noted, all sources of information are in agreement that dogs were used for hunting purposes. These dogs would help the Sheepeaters to drive game<sup>111</sup> into specially constructed traps. As with the chipping grounds these traps are located at many places throughout the mountains. Such traps are especially plentiful along the southern boundary of the Absaroka Mountains and along the adjacent northern portion of the Wind River Mountains. An

example<sup>112</sup> (*Fig. 4*) is found on a ridge at about 7,300 feet between Wiggins Fork and Bear Creek. A wing made of logs (now rotted) extends for a quarter of a mile. Another wing running off at an acute angle from the first extends 100 yards to a small cliff. At the apex of the “V” formed by these wings a ramp has been built up of logs and rocks. Below the drop off of the ramp a pen about ten by ten feet was constructed. A tree well over 100 years old is now growing out of this pen. Another trap on Jakey’s Fork of the Wind River consisted of a large pit that had been excavated, obviously requiring considerable labor. Both these traps are located in the winter-range environment of mountain sheep.<sup>113</sup>



***Sheepeater Game Trap (Fig. 4)***

Another trap is located above Middle Fork and Deep Creek in the Wind River Mountains. This was built at 10,000 feet on the edge of a very steep ridge. It was so constructed that it blocked a major game trail descending the sidehill. Game scared down this natural trail would be stopped by the semicircular trap and then killed by pursuing hunters.<sup>114</sup>

To make use of these traps the Sheepeaters must have hunted in groups, but the size of the group would not necessarily have exceeded the size of one or two nuclear families and therefore would have no significant effect upon social organization. The head of the family probably designated who would help drive the game and who would lie in wait near the traps to kill it.

One other type of trap was described by C. G.<sup>115</sup> She claimed that her father’s people had once firmly implanted sharpened sticks in the ground. Deer were then driven toward the sticks and some impaled themselves as they tried to jump.

Throughout the mountains are also many man-made structures which were apparently used as blinds by solitary hunters. Some, such as those located in the Owl Creek Mountains above timberline (*Fig. 5*)<sup>116</sup> are built wholly above ground and are made of rocks piled four feet high in a semicircle five feet across. Miles of open, upland plateau country can be seen from these blinds. Another type<sup>117</sup> consists of a small pit dug out level with the ground. The pit has been nearly covered with logs and rocks. These blinds are located close to cliffs. Mountain sheep, in order to see below them, are in the habit of walking along the edges of these cliffs. In the blinds the hunter merely waited for passing game.<sup>118</sup>



***Indian Hunter's Blind (Fig. 5)***

Although the Sheepeaters probably hunted large animals persistently throughout the year, game meat<sup>119</sup> was by no means all that they ate. Small animals such as various species of marmot, beaver, muskrat, pack rat, wood rat, porcupine, ground squirrel, red squirrel, fox, coyote, mountain lion, bobcat, badger, cottontail rabbit and snowshoe rabbit were eaten.<sup>120</sup> Ducks, geese and small birds were killed if possible. Most meat was broiled on coals, some was baked in a hole which was dug and then covered with fire. Some was boiled in water heated by hot rocks and contained in a heavy hide receptacle. If a large kill was made, some of the meat might have been dried on racks in the sun. But it should be remembered that the amount a Sheepeater could carry from camp to camp was limited by how much he and his dogs could pack. J. T. claims that the Sheepeaters professed a strong dislike for fish, presumably because only the poorest of Shoshoni ate fish.<sup>121</sup> If any fishing was done for the many trout and whitefish living in the mountain streams it was done with a snare. Large snare hooks were carved from the shoulderblades of deer or mountain sheep and fastened to a long pole.<sup>122</sup> The Murphys report that Wyoming Sheepeaters speared trout in the spring and summer and that “nets, traps and weirs were apparently not used.”<sup>123</sup>

The Sheepeaters were similar to all the Basin-Plateau Shoshonean peoples in that they were gatherers as well as hunters. They probably utilized all possible foods in their otherwise hostile environment. Edible herbs, roots, berries, and nuts can be found in the mountains of Wyoming and Idaho. The camas root (*Quemasia*), which grows between Baker, Oregon, and the Canlas Prairie in Idaho, was widely used by all peoples of that region. In addition, some peoples journeyed great distances to harvest and preserve this food. Shoshoni from the Lemhi district, including Sheepeaters, visited the Camas Prairie.<sup>124</sup> A digging stick was used by the women and was sharpened and then hardened in the fire. Its upper end was padded<sup>125</sup> Contor, Ms., *op. cit.* or fixed with a cross-piece handle of bone or elk-antler.<sup>126</sup> A good digging stick was a prized possession and was often willed by a woman at her death. Roots were carried back to camp in cylindrical gathering baskets and after being cleaned, they were cooked in earth ovens (simple pits) for several days. If the bulbs were to be stored for future use, they were pounded into a mash, made into loaves, cooked for a second time in the earth pits, and lastly patted into thin cakes which were dried in the sun.<sup>127</sup> Bitterroot (*Lewisia rediviva*), found in central and northern Idaho, was prepared merely by drying. (It was readily accepted in trade by the Couer d’Alene and Nez Perce Indians who might travel some distance to procure it.)<sup>128</sup> Other edible roots probably utilized by the Sheepeaters were the “tobacco-root” (*Valeriana obovata edulis*) and several species of *Carum*, the false caraway.<sup>129</sup> Yamp (*Carum gairdneri*) grows along the streams and in mountain meadows in central Idaho. It was sometimes eaten raw. Otherwise it was boiled, dried, pounded into flour, and stored. When eaten it was mixed with melted fat. The mano-metate, typical of all gathering peoples of the Basin-Plateau region, may have been

used by the Sheepeater women in grinding these foods, but because of its weight, like the steatite vessels, was in all likelihood cached.

Two vegetables probably utilized by the Sheepeater were *Chenopodium*, called “lamb’s quarters” by whites, and *Claytonia*, called “miner’s lettuce”.<sup>130</sup> Pinon pine nuts, gathered before they were stolen by red squirrels and Clark’s Nutcrackers, would also have been eaten.

Included in the many edible berries gathered in the late summer and fall were huckleberries, chokecherries, sarvisberries, currants, blackberries, and gooseberries. All could be eaten raw, but some were ground, seeds and all, then dried in cakes and stored. Others were boiled and a soup made. Root flour could be added to chokecherry soup in order to make a thick pudding.<sup>131</sup>

Insects, such as ants found under rocks in mountain meadows, and large grubs found in rotting fallen logs, may have been resorted to for food by the Sheepeater. Big ants were roasted on a low fire until only their large black tail segment remained, and then these were eaten. Grasshoppers were not eaten.<sup>132</sup>

Traps and chipping grounds remain as clear-cut evidence of the Sheepeaters’ previous existence. Dwellings are the third archaeological item of this sort. As with the traps and chipping grounds, dwelling sites have been found throughout the mountains of Wyoming and Idaho. One such site<sup>133</sup> was found at about 9,500 feet on the Buffalo Plateau in the southern Absaroka Mountains. It was a half mile below a major chipping ground and pass, and it was located on the edge of a snow-fed stream in a heavy stand of large Englemann’s spruce. It consisted of several logs and stumps (now rotted) pulled together between two large trees to form a windbreak. In addition, what could have been a fireplace remained. Its proximity to the chipping grounds and game trails 500 feet higher at the head of the small mountain valley leaves little doubt that the same people sat on the chipping grounds and hunted by day and then returned to this makeshift camp at dark.

Other dwellings are found at about 7,000 feet in the bottoms of steep-sided canyons. These canyons are filled with aspen, pine and alders, and are well protected from the weather. The dwellings found here are nearly identical in their construction. (*Fig. 6*) The dwellings have been called “wickiups” both by present-day Shoshoni<sup>134</sup> and local whites. A great number of poles, up to 100, from 8 to 3 inches in diameter and 10 to 18 feet long, have been braced together at the top to form a conical structure with a height of 5 to 8 feet and a diameter of 6 to 9 feet. A small triangular door opening is left. Most of these wickiups are made from aspen poles which would have been easier to cut than pine. These poles have rotted at their bases over time, thus decreasing the height and diameter of the wickiup. A covering of pine boughs was probably thatched in shingle fashion on to the poles. This technique was employed by all Shoshoni and is described by Lowie.<sup>135</sup> J. T. claims that the Sheepeaters were able to make a more weatherproof wickiup than were the plains people. He said one or two families lived in the Sheepeater wickiup. A covering of mountain sheep, elk, or deer hide may have been used by some Sheepeaters, though they lacked the large and heavy tanned buffalo hides used by horse-owning Shoshoni.



***Sheepeater Wickiup (Fig. 6)***

These wickiups probably served as warm dwellings during residence in the semi-permanent winter camps. Game of all kinds winters on the open ridges surrounding these canyons and only an exceptionally severe winter forces them to lower elevations. Given the warm clothing provided by the Sheepeater techniques, and given enough game herds, life in these sheltered canyons would not be unreasonable.

A third type of dwelling was found<sup>136</sup> at about 6,000 feet. It is located on the west side of Rattlesnake Creek which runs into the Shoshone Reservoir west of Cody. This is an open foothill region where the ground is often bare in the winter time, affording easy grazing for both horses and game. This dwelling site was peculiar. In fact, I have found none resembling it recorded in any literature. Building material had been taken from large-based pines. These pines had been struck by lightning and their centers had been burned and rotted until only an outer shell was left. Slabs 12 feet by 2 feet by six inches can be stripped from this shell. Walls of the structures were built up in a log-cabin fashion and they remain about four feet high today. A rough doorway was left on one side. Two such structures were present, and the larger had interior dimensions of 6 feet by 10 feet. The smaller structure had only three sides, the larger had four. Considerable soil has accumulated since these structures were built. A buffalo skull, with all of the nose and jaw rotted away, was buried one foot deep on the outside of the back wall of the largest structure.<sup>137</sup> It seems logical to assume that Shoshoni peoples of some sort once lived there. It is possible that these peoples possessed a few horses. Maybe they were Sheepeaters. J. T.<sup>138</sup> mentions that the Sheepeaters living in the Wind River Mountains often wintered in the foothills. Some of these possessed horses according to J. T. and Hultkrantz.<sup>139</sup>

Archaeological evidence has done much to help us reconstruct a description of some of the material culture of the Sheep eater, as well as providing us with a hypothesis as to their patterns of subsistence. We have seen that the food quest obviously predominated in the rigorous life struggle of the Sheep eaters so we assume that their intellectual culture, just as was the case with their social culture, was elementary and probably similar to all other Basin-Plateau, pre-horse, Shoshoneans. Their religion consisted of "primitive shamanism coupled with a belief in various nature spirits."<sup>140</sup> The Sheep eater may have held the belief that supernatural power was granted to them through dreams and visions. If any ceremonial dances were enjoyed by the Sheep eaters, it probably would have been in the company of different Shoshoni peoples.<sup>141</sup>

Speaking of their social institutions, it is known that marriage among the Shoshoni was an informal affair and was marked by no binding ceremonies. But among the more isolated of the domestic groups, marriage may have been relatively permanent. Sheep eaters who were especially isolated, such as those of Yellowstone Park,<sup>142</sup> would have had little opportunity to exchange partners. The customs of the levirate, and to a lesser extent sororate, were in operation among all Shoshoni and most probably applied to the Sheep eater. No particular rules of residence applied to the Shoshoni and especially not to the Sheep eater.<sup>143</sup> Patterns of descent were ambilineal and probably had little meaning for the Sheep eater, though cross-cousin marriage may have been preferred.<sup>144</sup>

Shallow though these descriptions of intellectual and social culture are, little more can be added without making the tenuous postulate that *all* intellectual or social customs of the Basin-Plateau Shoshoni were necessarily shared by the Sheep eaters. In the absence of any further information, I prefer to carry the description of Sheep eater culture only as far as has been done in this paper.

## CONCLUSION

In concluding, it must be admitted that relatively little is known about the Sheep eaters. A few inferences can be made on the basis of archaeological material but the exact nature of these peoples' lives may never be fully reconstructed. Problems of identification and of subtle cultural differences and similarities between various Shoshonean-speaking peoples remain only partially answered. The distribution of the Sheep eaters has not been clearly defined, and differences between various mountain-dwelling peoples themselves are not clearly understood. Nevertheless, the inherent complexity of ethnographic and historic reconstruction does not negate the efforts of those who have attempted it. The work of Liljeblad on the one hand and of Hultkrantz on the other has done much to acquaint us with the culture of an extinct people. A proper synthesis of these two points of view will carry us even further in the right direction. In addition, there is much need for detailed archaeological classification and description in the Rocky Mountain region. Such work would not only help us to locate and identify the Sheep eaters but would undoubtedly reveal that the mountain regions had long been frequented by a variety of ancestral peoples.<sup>145</sup>

Of the Sheep eaters, many unanswered questions remain, and those answers which were given here must be qualified as hypothetical at best. Nevertheless, the quest involved in making this reconstruction hopefully has led us to a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, a people who have gone, leaving little trace of their existence or their passing from it.

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<sup>2</sup>Kroeber, A. L. 1939, *Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America*, University of California. Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, 38, Berkeley, California.

<sup>3</sup>Liljebld, Sven, 1959, “Indian Peoples in Idaho”, *History of Idaho*, by Beal and Wells, Lewis Historical

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Publishing Co., Inc., Chapter 2, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup>Lowie, Robert H., 1909, "The Northern Shoshone", *American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. 11, part 2; and Lowie, Robert H., 1924, "Notes on Shoshonean Ethnography", *Anthrop. Papers of the Am. Mus. of Nat. Hist.*, Vol. 20, part 3, N. Y.

<sup>5</sup>Steward, Julian H., 1938, "Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups", *Smithsonian Inst.*, Bur. of Am. Ethnol., Bull. 120.

<sup>6</sup>Liljeblad, Sven, 1957, *Indian Peoples in Idaho*. Idaho State College. (Hereafter referred to as "Liljeblad, 1957".) All of the above names and spellings come from the manuscript listed here by Dr. Sven Liljeblad of Pocatello. Dr. Liljeblad, a linguist, has spent many years studying the Bannock and Shoshoni of Idaho, and can be cited as the chief authority in this field at the present day.

<sup>7</sup>Liljeblad, 1957, p. 56.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, pp. 56-57.

<sup>9</sup>Personal interview with Dr. Sven Liljeblad, 711 S. 10th Street, Pocatello, Idaho. December 31, 1959.

<sup>10</sup>Personal interview with W. G., Fort Hall, Idaho, December 30, 1959. W. G. is a 65-year-old Shoshoni "long-hair" or conservative. He is well informed about some of the past history of his people and tells correctly what he knows.

<sup>11</sup>Most of the Shoshoni originally living in Idaho are now located at Fort Hall. These include all the Northern Shoshoni as designated by Lowie (1909) among whom were people who had lived in the Lemhi Valley and were called "Lemhi" by Lowie (1909) and people who had lived in the mountainous region around the Lemhi River. These latter people were called Sheepeaters by early historical sources and have been termed *Tukudeka* by later anthropological sources. (Liljeblad, 1957, and others.)

<sup>12</sup>Personal interview with E. B. Blackfoot, Idaho. January 2, 1960. E.B. is an educated Shoshoni and head of the Fort Hall tribal council.

<sup>13</sup>Steward, 1938, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

<sup>14</sup>Kroeber, 1939, *op. cit.*, pp. 80, 82.

<sup>15</sup>Hultkrantz, an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Stockholm, Sweden, has been to this country for field work in 1948, 1955 and 1957, his chief concern being the Shoshoni of Wyoming.

<sup>16</sup>Hultkrantz, Ake, "The Shoshones in the Rocky Mountain Area," p. 21, originally published in Swedish in *Ymer*, 1956: 3, pp. 161-187. Translated by Dr. Arne Magnus, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado. Republished, *Annals of Wyoming*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 19-41, April, 1961. (Hereafter referred to as Hultkrantz, 1961.)

<sup>17</sup>Shimkin, D. B., 1947a, "Wind River Shoshone Ethnogeography", *Anthropological Records*, Vol. 3, No. 4, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>18</sup>Hultkrantz, 1961, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>19</sup>1825 is the date of the first rendezvous by fur trappers. It was held on the Green River which was to become the demographic center for the *Haivodika*, who because of the fur trade became specialized as middle-men and traders themselves.

<sup>20</sup>Note that the spelling given by Hultkrantz of the Shoshoni word "eater" differs from that given by Liljeblad. The former uses an "i" and the latter an "e". Hereafter the form given by Liljeblad will be used,

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except in reference to particular material given by Hultkrantz.

<sup>21</sup>Hultkrantz, 1961, *op. cit.*, p. 21. Hultkrantz plans to publish two monographs on these two groups. His findings on the *Tukudika* will be especially interesting in view of the fact that they have not, until this time, been the explicit subject of any published work.

<sup>22</sup>Hoebel, E. Adamson, "Bands and Distributions of the Eastern Shoshone". *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 40, pp. 410-413, 1938.

<sup>23</sup>Lowie, 1909, *op. cit*

<sup>24</sup>Stuart, Granville, 1865, *Montana As It Is*, New York, p. 81

<sup>25</sup>Swanton, John R., 1952, *The Indians of North America*, Smithsonian Inst., Bur. of Am. Ethnol., Bull. 145, Washington, p. 405.

<sup>26</sup>Humfreville, J. Lee, 1897, *Twenty Years Among Our Savage Indians*, Hartford, Conn., p. 271.

<sup>27</sup>Wheeler, George M., 1879, *Report upon United States Geographic Survey West of the One Hundredth Meridian*, *Archaeology*, Vol. 7, Washington.

<sup>28</sup>Lander, F. W., 1860, (Communications in) *Message of the President of the United States*, Communicating . . Information in Relation to the Massacre at Mountain Meadows and other Massacres in Utah Territory, Sen. Ex. Doc. 42, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., Washington.

<sup>29</sup>Hodge, Frederick Webb, 1907, *Handbook of American Indians*, Vol. 2, Bur. of Am. Ethnol., Bull. 30, Washington.

<sup>30</sup>Murphy, Robert F. and Yolanda, 1960, "Shoshone- Bannock Subsistence and Society", *Anthropological Records* 16:7, University of California Press, p. 309.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>32</sup>Irving, Washington, 1850, *Astoria*, Covent Garden, p. 139

<sup>33</sup>Russell, Osborne, 1955, *Journal of a Trapper*, Aubrey L. Haines, ed., Oregon State Historical Society, p. 26

<sup>34</sup>Cook, C. W., 1869, *The Valley of the Upper Yellowstone*. In: Cramton, Louis C., 1932, *Early History of Yellowstone National Park and Its Relation to National Park Policies*, Washington.

<sup>35</sup>Doane, Lieutenant Gustavus C., 1870, *Report of Lieutenant Gustavus C. Doane upon the So-called Yellowstone Expedition of 1870 to the Sec. of War*. In: Cramton, 1932, *op. cit.*

<sup>36</sup>Dunraven, The Earl of, 1876. *The Great Divide*, London, Reprinted in: *Hunting in the Yellowstone*, Edited by Horace Kephart, Outing Publishing Co., New York, 1917, pp. 221-222 and 246.

<sup>37</sup>Norris, P. W., 1880, *Report on the Yellowstone Park to the Secretary of the Interior*, 1878, Ex. Doc. House Rep., 3rd Sess. 46th Cong., 1880-81, Washington, p. 988.

<sup>38</sup>Morgan, Dale L., 1958, editor of: *Washakie and the Shoshoni*. A selection of Documents from the Records of the Utah Superintendency of Indian Affairs, *Annals of Wyoming*, 1952-1958, Vol. 29, No. 2, Oct. 1957, p. 198.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. 30, No. 1, April, 1958, pp. 54-55.

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<sup>40</sup>Stuart, 1865, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>41</sup>Jackson, W. H., 1877, *Descriptive Catalog of Photographs of North American Indians*, Ch. 5, p. 70.

<sup>42</sup>It seems clear that the people designated as “hostiles” by the U.S. government and pursued during the Sheepeater campaign had, by the time of that final campaign (1879), little in common with the peaceful, isolated, and defenseless “Sheepeaters” described in historical accounts prior to 1850. Some of these “hostiles” might well have earlier come from the “mountain dwellers” or “Sheepeaters” of Idaho whom we have sought to describe, but by 1879 any cultural relation to this ancestry was no doubt lost. In summary, these “hostiles” were best described as a “mixed band” of renegade or ill-contented and well-armed Indians who lived by marauding the white settlers and who resisted the white advance until subdued in this final campaign.

<sup>43</sup>Brown, Col. W. C., U.S.A., 1926, *The Sheep Eater Campaign, Idaho, 1879*. Reprinted from the 10th Biennial Report. Idaho Historical Society, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup>Parker, Aaron F., 192(?), *Forgotten Tragedies of Indian Warfare in Idaho*. Orangeville, Idaho, p. 1

<sup>45</sup>Hultkrantz, 1957, *op. cit.*, p. 145

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup>Replogle, Wayne F., 1956, *Yellowstone's Bannock Indian Trails*. Yellowstone Park, Wyoming, Yellowstone Interpretive Series, No. 6, p. 48.

<sup>49</sup>Hultkrantz, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>50</sup>cf., Shimkin, D. B., 1938, “Wind River Shoshone Geography,” *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 40, p. 415. “During the first one half of the 19th century, terrific epidemics of smallpox hit Wyoming, causing a decimation and scattering of the population. The dukureka of the Wind River Mountains (who, incidentally never had horses) were nearly wiped out.”

<sup>51</sup>Hebard, Grace Raymond, 1930, *Washakie*. Arthur Clark Company, Cleveland, 1930, p. 118. Dr. Hebard gives no references to her sources of material.

<sup>52</sup>Allen, W. A., 1913, *The Sheepeaters*, Shakespeare Press, New York.

<sup>53</sup>Personal interview with J.T., Fort Washakie, Wyoming, December 28, 1959. J. T. is one of the best informed Shoshoni about the past history of the tribe. He learned most of his information from his grandmother. From what other Wind River Shoshoni told me he was one of Hultkrantz's principal informants.

<sup>54</sup>I attempted to speak to this man but he refused to give me any information, interestingly enough because I probably insulted him by asking outright if he was a “sheepeater”. In the event that he was in fact insulted, graphic proof is thus afforded that “Sheepeaters” may well have been poorly esteemed by some Shoshoni as “lower-class”. I believe, however, that he may have given some information to Dr. Hultkrantz which should be very interesting if published.

<sup>55</sup>Personal interview with F. P. and P. P., Burris, Wyoming January 3, 1960. Both of these people are full-blood Shoshoni about 60-70 years old. F. P. had gone to school at Fort Hall.

<sup>56</sup>Personal interview with S. N., Burris, Wyoming, January 3, 1960. S.N. came to the Wind River Reservation at the age of two. His father came from a Paiute band in Nevada and he joined the Fort Hall Shoshoni and Bannock for a time before moving to Wind River. (This case, along with many others, shows

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the considerable amount of migration and contact of the present-day Shoshoni, and has bearing upon the fluidity of political groups and the loosely extended blood lines of aboriginal times.)

57

<sup>58</sup>Personal interview with M.P., Blackfoot, Idaho, January 2, 1960. Mrs. P. is in her fifties. Her husband is a Bannock.

<sup>59</sup>This deviation from the spelling given by Liljeblad is not startling in light of the fact that some Shoshoni dialects pronounce "t" with a guttural sound approximating "d". Likewise the "d" of *dika* is sometimes slurred to an "r".

<sup>60</sup>Wissler, C., 1914, "The Influence of the Horse in the Development of Plains Culture," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 16, pp. 1-25.

<sup>61</sup>The Comanche were a branch of Shoshonean-speaking peoples who moved south and east from the Basin-Plateau region to become an autonomous tribe possessing the classical Plains culture. Their split with the original Shoshonean stock was sometime before white contact.

<sup>62</sup>Liljeblad, 1957, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>63</sup>Haines, Francis, 1938, "The Northward Spread of Horses Among the Plains Indians", *American Anthro.*, Vol. 40, pp. 429-437.

<sup>64</sup>Steward, J. H., 1936, "The Economic and Social Basis of Primitive Bands", in *Essays in Anthropology* presented to A. L. Kroeber, pp. 331-350, Berkeley, California.

<sup>65</sup>Lowie, Robert H., 1935, *The Crow Indians*, New York.

<sup>66</sup>Liljeblad. 1957. *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 63-66.

<sup>68</sup>The most recently published monograph on the Shoshoni supports the general observations of conditions in Idaho, cf. Murphy, 1960, *op. cit.*

<sup>69</sup>Liljeblad, 1957, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>70</sup>Lowie, 1935, *op. cit.*

<sup>71</sup>Hultkrantz. 1961, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>72</sup>Shimkin, 1947a, *op. cit.*, p. 279, cf. The recent monograph of the Murphys (Murphy, 1960, *op. cit.*) which was published following their work as expert witnesses on the side of the United States in the recent claims cases made by the Shoshoni against the government. These authors vigorously contradict the clear positions taken by Hultkrantz and Shimkin. The Murphys refuse to give much emphasis to any degree of specialization or Plains-affinity by the Eastern or Wyoming buffalo-hunting Shoshone. Instead they claim that the military superiority of Shoshoni enemies, notably the Blackfeet to the north, who had by 1750 acquired both the horse and ample firearms (from the British), forced the Shoshoni, whose hunting expeditions had once carried them as far north and east as Saskatchewan, to withdraw south and west toward the Basin-Plateau region. They further cite competition for the buffalo-hunting grounds east of the Rockies between the Shoshoni and the Blackfeet and Siouan tribes, Cheyennes, Crows (intermittently) and Arapahoes. and warfare which was documented from the beginning of the fur trade era about 1810, until several years after Washakie had agreed to lead his band onto the Wind River Reservation in 1868. The Murphys claim that this warfare and competition forced the Eastern Shoshoni back toward a close geographical and cultural affinity with their Basin-Plateau relatives to the west of the Rockies. That the

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Wyoming Shoshoni were at times hard pressed to hold their own against their enemies is not doubted. However, the fact that the Wyoming Shoshoni did compete among the Plains tribes and did, in fact, persist in their pursuit of the buffalo is sufficient evidence that they embraced and maintained, over time, to a significant degree, the "buffalo complex" of the Plains. Thus it seems fair to assume that the buffalo-hunting Wyoming Shoshoni exhibited a high degree of specialization and noted cultural differences from their Basin-Plateau brethren of Idaho and the west.

<sup>73</sup>Liljeblad, 1959, personal communication. *op. cit.* cf. Omer Stewart, 1959, "Shoshone History and Social Organization", reprinted from *Il Tomo de Actas del XXXIII Congreso Internacional de Americanistas*, Celebrado en San Jose de Costa Rica del 20 al 27 de Julio de 1958, pp. 134-142. Stewart goes even further than either Hultkrantz or Liljeblad in describing what he calls the development, during historic times among Shoshoni of both Wyoming and Idaho; of a "remarkably fluid, almost modern class system." (p. 137). "The actual history of the northern Shoshone Indians from 1805 to 1870 suggests that the ancient territorial food-named bands, with slight need for political leadership, were overlaid by a widespread, simple democratic tribal structure by which the wealthy horse-owners of all ancient local bands combined and followed the chief they wished. The larger groups combined or broke up as individual Shoshone Indians elected to give allegiance to one chief or another. This loose democratic government of wide geographical extent was the product of a single, unified, upper class of horse-using Indians. The older, local, food-named bands (of which the Tukudeka were presumably one) thus became, in fact, lower class people who lived in a small area which could be exploited on foot. "The sedentary Shoshone, living beside the productive salmon fisheries, appear to be a middle class, intermediate between the poor Shoshococs, or Root Diggers, and the "real Shoshone", or "Buffalo Hunters." (p. 141.)

<sup>74</sup>Murphy, 1960. *op. cit.*, p. 328. cf. Replogle, 1956, *op. cit.*

<sup>75</sup>W.G., personal interview, *op. cit.*

<sup>76</sup>Hultkrantz, Ake, 1958, "Tribal Divisions within the Eastern Shoshoni of Wyoming", *Proceed. of 32nd International Cong. of Americanists* (1958) pp. 148-154, p. 152.

<sup>77</sup>Raisz, Erwin, 1954, Landforms map of the United States.

<sup>78</sup>Shimkin, 1947a, *op. cit.*

<sup>79</sup>White, Leslie A., 1959, *The Evolution of Culture*, New York.

<sup>80</sup>Hultkrantz, 1958, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>81</sup>Steward, 1938, *op. cit.*

<sup>82</sup>Hultkrantz, Ake, 1957, "The Indians in Yellowstone Park", *Annals of Wyoming*, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 125-149, October, 1957, p. 135.

<sup>83</sup>J.T., personal interview, cf., footnote 24.

<sup>84</sup>Hultkrantz, 1958, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 152; and Hultkrantz, 1961, *op. cit.*, p. 34. cf. Hoebel also rises *toyani* to refer specifically to the Yellowstone Park *tukudeka*. *Tukudeka* living in the mountains around the Salmon River, Idaho, were called *toyaino* by their neighbors. cf. Hultkrantz, 1961, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>86</sup>Liljeblad, cf. footnote 8.

<sup>87</sup>Jack Contor is head of the welfare office in Blackfoot, Idaho, and in that capacity has had contact (unfortunately) with most of the Fort Hall Indians. He has made the history and culture of the Northern Shoshone his hobby, and he has learned much from W.G. and his wife. He has compiled an ethnography

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of the Northern or Fort Hall Shoshoni which unfortunately lacks documentation.

<sup>88</sup>Cantor, Jack, Manuscript, *The Pre-Reservation Culture of the Northern Shoshoni*, Route 3, Blackfoot, Idaho, p. 8.

<sup>89</sup>J.T., cf. footnote 52.

<sup>90</sup>Cf. footnote 32.

<sup>91</sup>Hultkrantz, 1961, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>92</sup>Personal interview with C.G., Fort Hall, Idaho, December 30, 1959. C.G.'s father was a *tukudeka* of the Lemhi region and her mother was an *agaideka* from the same place. Her father was the principal informant from the Lemhi district for Julian Steward in 1936. C.G. made several articles of material culture for Steward at that time. Both Dr. Sven Liljeblad and Jack Contor recognize C.G. as being very honest.

<sup>93</sup>C.G. denied telling Jack Contor that these dogs had been used to pull a travois. This contradiction has not been resolved. cf. Lowie, Robert H., 1924, "Notes on Shoshonean Ethnography", *Anthrop. Papers of the Am. Museum of Nat. Hist.*, Vol. 20, part 3, New York. Lowie says that the Shoshoni never ate their dogs. pp. 215-216.

<sup>94</sup>Liljeblad, 1957, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-37

<sup>95</sup>Personal interview on December 17, 1959, with staff member, Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, who reported that typical Shoshonean steatite vessels had been found near the Medicine Wheel, Big Horn Mountains, Wyoming.

<sup>96</sup>Lowie's (1924) use of the term.

<sup>97</sup>Lowie, 1924, *op. cit.*, p. 216; Steward, 1943, *op. cit.*, p. 317; Liljeblad, 1957, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>98</sup>Liljeblad, 1957, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>100</sup>Russell, 1955, *op. cit.*, p. 27

<sup>101</sup>Steward, 1943, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

<sup>102</sup>Seton, Ernest Thompson, 1929, *Lives of Game Animals*, 3 vols., New York.

<sup>103</sup>Russell, 1955, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>104</sup>All of the above account comes from Jack Contor. Reference to such bows appears often in the literature, but I know of no other description of the actual construction of such bows.

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup>Steward, 1943, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

<sup>107</sup>Innumerable such sites have been found by the writer in the Absaroka Mountains and in Yellowstone Park.

<sup>108</sup>The agatized wood was formed in conjunction with the volcanic activity in this region and can be found outcropping in many places in the Absaroka Mountains. Likewise, obsidian is found in several places

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throughout Yellowstone Park, the foremost being Obsidian Cliff, midway between Norris and Mammoth. The source of material used as cores was close at hand, then, for the Sheepeaters.

<sup>109</sup>As all of these sites are in very exposed locations, weathering has prevented any stratification. All of the articles except some half-buried cores and bones (probably a rabbit) are presently on the surface.

<sup>110</sup>The writer had two similar experiences which help to dramatize the striking proximity between these sites, or "chipping grounds" as they are called, and the haunts of game animals. On the Buffalo Plateau which lies on the Continental Divide in the southern portion of the Absaroka Mountains, chipping grounds are found at every pass along the divide. One site was covered by an especially large amount of stone chips and a band of twenty mountain sheep were seen grazing within 500 yards of the site. In Hoodoo Basin which is again on the Continental Divide but in the northeast corner of Yellowstone Park and in the northern extreme of the Absaroka Mountains, chipping grounds were again found. Here within 50 yards of one site a band of over thirty elk were "bedded down."

<sup>111</sup>These traps were probably constructed mainly to catch the mountain sheep as these animals are more easily driven than elk or deer.

<sup>112</sup>Descriptions of these traps came from Wayne Darnall and Jock Conley, both Wyoming game wardens living in Dubois, Wyoming.

<sup>113</sup>Interestingly enough, the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission has constructed a trap for capturing mountain sheep within a short distance of the old Sheepeater trap on Jakey's Fork.

<sup>114</sup>Personal interview with Hugh Otte, Lander, Wyoming, December 27, 1959. Otte, a horse-packer and rancher, has seen many evidences of Sheepeaters in the Wind River Mountains.

<sup>115</sup>C.G., cf. footnote 91.

<sup>116</sup>The pictures in Figures 4 and 5 were taken by Bob Edgar who lives in Cody, Wyoming. Edgar found six blinds as are pictured here on the Owl Creek Mountains.

<sup>117</sup>Darnall and Conley, cf. footnote 111.

<sup>118</sup>Liljeblad (1957, *op. cit.*, p. 27) describes a special stalking technique. A preserved head and skin of a deer or mountain sheep was worn by the hunter who slowly worked his way close to a feeding herd. It is not known whether the Sheepeaters used this technique.

<sup>119</sup>Moose are present in scattered numbers in the mountains and were probably killed if possible by the Sheepeaters. Antelope may have been hunted on forays to the plains. Hultkrantz (1961, *op. cit.*, p. 35) cites such a case. Contor (Ms., *op. cit.*) says that bear was not eaten, but Liljeblad (1957, *op. cit.*, p. 38) says it was.

<sup>120</sup>Shimkin, 1947a, *op. cit.*, p. 265; Steward, 1943, *op. cit.*, p. 299; Contor, Ms. *op. cit.*, p. 10; Liljeblad, 1957, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>121</sup>Liljeblad, (1957, *op. cit.*, p. 29) and Shimkin (1947a, *op. cit.*, p. 265) contradict Contor somewhat and say fish was eaten by Plateau people and Wyoming Plains Shoshoni.

<sup>122</sup>Contor, Ms., *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>123</sup>Murphy, 1960, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>124</sup>Liljeblad, 1957, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

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<sup>126</sup>Liljeblad, 1957, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>127</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>128</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup>Contor, Ms., *op. cit.*

<sup>132</sup>Liljeblad, 1957, *op. cit.*, p. 37, p. 96.

<sup>133</sup>Found by the writer in August, 1958.

<sup>134</sup>M.P., (personal interview, cf. footnote 57) recognized the term “wickiup” and said it meant “lodge” or “house”. She said her people (the Wyoming Plains Shoshoni) did not use as many poles as did the *tukudeka*.

<sup>135</sup>Lowie, 1924, *op. cit.*, p. 211; cf. Steward, 1947a, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

<sup>136</sup>Found by the writer in September, 1958.

<sup>137</sup>No other artifacts were found, but no digging has yet been done.

<sup>138</sup>J.T., personal interview, cf. footnote 52.

<sup>139</sup>Hultkrantz, 1961, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>140</sup>Hultkrantz, 1957, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

<sup>141</sup>Lowie, 1908, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-226; Liljeblad, 1957, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>142</sup>Hultkrantz, 1958, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>143</sup>Liljeblad, 1957, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>144</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>145</sup>It is hoped that future publication of proper studies of the artifacts and culture layers presently being excavated in “Mummy Cave” on the North Fork of the Shoshone River, west of Cody, Wyoming, under the leadership of Dr. Harold McCracken and the National Geographic Society, will help to fill these current “knowledge-gaps.”