

Pima-Maricopa Irrigation Project

Education Initiative

2003-2004



Restoring water to ensure the continuity of the Akimel O’otham and Pee Posh tradition of agriculture

The Consolidation of the Maricopas

Part 45

While the Pimas were consolidating their villages around Sutaquison, several Yuman-speaking tribes were migrating up the Gila River to the western edge of Pima country. Between the Mohawk Mountains and the great bend of the Gila River lived the Kaveltcadom (or the Opas as the Spanish called them) and the Maricopa (or the Cocomaricopa). In the early 19th century these two tribes would be joined by smaller tribes known as the Halchidhoma (Jalchedunes), Kohuana and Halyikwamai. By the middle years of the 19th century these tribes would consolidate and come to be known as simply the Maricopa.

When Kino visited the Pimas, in 1694, he noted two tribes to the west that spoke “a language very different” from the Pimas. Kino called these tribes the Cocomaricopa and the Opa. In 1698, Kino again wrote that “people of very distinct dress, features and language, though connected by marriage with the Pimas” visited him at the Pima village of San Andres. These people were the Maricopa.

While the Pima consolidated their villages in part due to Spanish influences (and increased Apache raids), the Maricopa appear to have already been in a state of consolidation when the Spanish arrived in the Southwest. They once lived on the Lower Colorado River, moving up the Gila in the 1500s. In language and culture they were nearly identical to the other smaller Yuman tribes that eventually joined with them. The Kaveltcadom also lived on the Colorado River near modern day Parker and followed the Maricopa up the Gila before settling near the Mohawk Mountains. They practiced no irrigation farming, living off the bottomlands along the river. The consolidation of the Maricopa was a result of frequent attacks from the more powerful Quechan and Mohave tribes, which at times forced the smaller tribes into positions of semi-servitude.

While the Kaveltcadom and Maricopa lived west of the Gila bend (in a series of villages, the largest of which was the Maricopa village of San Simon y judas de Opasoitac), they entered into confederation and a trade agreement with the Pima sometime in the middle of the 18th century. The tribes agreed to defend each other against enemy raids. The Maricopa further agreed to engage in more agriculture and less hunting. In all other matters, the Pima and the Maricopa were left to follow their own cultural beliefs and practices.

When Juan Diaz traveled with Juan Bautista de Anza Jr., across the Pimeria Alta in 1774-1775, he noted the Kaveltcadom and Maricopa were migrating upstream. He gave as the reason continuous warfare with the Quechan. While Opasoitac was still an important village, most villages further downstream had moved upstream above the Painted Rock Mountains, where there were “continuous villages and signs of cultivation” all along the river. Below the Mohawk Mountains, villages were unpopulated due to warfare.

When Garces visited the Kaveltcadom, in 1770, they still lived in several villages near modern Gila Bend growing crops of wheat, corn, and beans. At the village of Opasoitac, Garces met both Kaveltcadom and Maricopa, noting they had “good lands; they grow cotton, squash, watermelons, maize, and in the first rancherias, wheat.” The people were “robust and stocky, comparatively light skinned, and seem to be hard workers. Although the Opas are not very skillful when it comes to warfare, with the instruction of the Pimas they are showing an inclination and trying hard.” Garces estimated their population at about 2,500.

Traveling from the Colorado River back to San Xavier, in June of 1774, Garces followed the bend in the Gila up to the Gila-Salt confluence. Near where the Hassayampa River empties into the Gila River, Garces found a series of Maricopa villages. In 1775, Anza, preparing to open an overland trail to California, found the Maricopa living on the Gila River above the bend. When he passed through their villages a year later he found them “more closely united” than they had been a year earlier, something he attributed to a peace treaty he enforced between them and their Yuman neighbors. When warfare resumed, the Maricopa villages north of the Gila bend were entirely abandoned. The village of Opasoitac, inhabited by the Maricopa in 1774, was now completely uninhabited.

By the end of the 18th century, the Maricopa were less than 15 miles west of the confluence of the Gila and Salt, living on land similar in fertility to that of the Pimas. By 1800, they were living above the Gila-Salt confluence from Sacate and Pima Butte west towards Gila Crossing. No permanent villages were located on the north bank of the river since they were “too exposed to Yavapai and Apache attacks.” The Kaveltcadom did not move up the river at this time and, by 1830, were still living near the Gila bend.

A series of smaller Yuman-speaking tribes also lived on the lower Colorado and Gila rivers, including the Halchidhoma, Kohuana and Halyikwamai. When Spanish explorer Juan de Onate traveled down the Colorado River, in 1605, he noted the Halchidhoma lived below the Gila-Colorado confluence. By 1744, when Jacobo Sedelmayr visited the area, the Halchidhoma had moved up the river to modern Ehrenberg, where they were generally located until the early 19th century. Facing continued raiding from the Mohave and Quechan, the Halchidhoma fled the river. A Mexican priest named Father Caballero found them living on the lower Gila in 1823, although by 1828, they were living in northern Sonora, where they remained until their migration among the Maricopa between 1833 and 1838.

The Kohuana and Halyikwamai also lived on the lower Colorado River. The Kohuana lived near the Cocopa below the confluence of the Gila and Colorado rivers where they engaged in agriculture. Garces noted they lived above the Halyikwamai. Together with the Halchidhoma, these tribes faced constant harassment by the more powerful and larger Mohave and Quechan. Being engaged in constant “warre and that very great, and upon exceedingly small occasions,” the tribes fled up the Colorado River. When Garces visited the Halchidhoma, in the summer of 1776, he found them along the Colorado River some 35 miles south of the Bill Williams River, where some of the villages “abound[ed] in crops.” By 1800, the Kohuana and Halyikwamai joined with the Halchidhoma, who were rapidly declining in number because of warfare, and began their ascent up the Gila River.

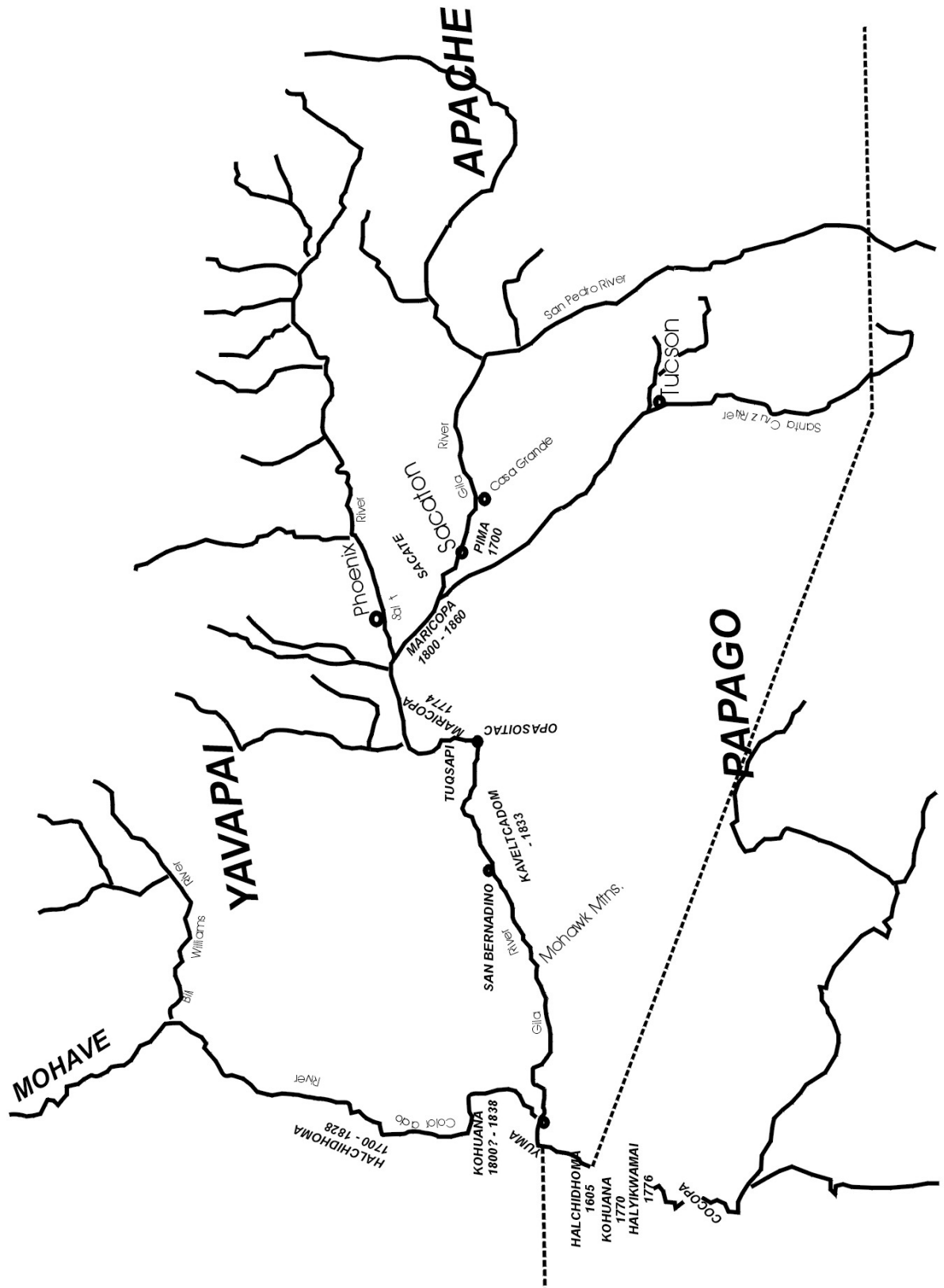
While the Halchidhoma turned southeast to northern Sonora, the Kohuana and Halyikwamai continued upstream. Tired of being harassed and enslaved, the two tribes moved up the Gila River, in 1838-1839, and joined the Maricopa, settling in the sandy hills north of the Gila River above modern day Gila Crossing. This was the northernmost Maricopa village at the time.

Before moving up the Gila River, the Yuman tribes maintained close trade and communication routes with both the Maricopa and Kaveltcadom. The Kaveltcadom-Maricopa village of Tugsapi was the site of “the best road to the [Halchidhoma living near Ehrenberg].” The tribes were not only linked through a shared culture but also through trade, which remained an important part of all the Yuman tribes’ way of life.

By the time William Emory and the American Army of the West arrived, in 1846, the Gila River was abandoned for more than 200 miles upstream from its confluence with the Colorado. Emory, passing through the Maricopa villages, found all the Maricopa (including the Kaveltcadom, Kohuana, Halyikwamai and Halchidhoma) living between Sacate and the Salt-Gila confluence. John Bartlett of the US-Mexico boundary survey of 1852, described the Maricopa villages as west of Maricopa Wells, where the “bottom-land [was] occupied by the Pimos and Maricopas.” The Pimas occupied everything to the east, although there was “no dividing line between them, nor anything to distinguish the villages of one from the other.” Bartlett was informed by the Maricopas they had come “here not many years before, to escape from the Yumas, with whom they were constantly at war, and by whom they had been greatly reduced in numbers.”

By 1850, the lower Gila River Valley was depopulated of Maricopas. The Mohave and Quechan now controlled the Colorado and Lower Gila River valleys. Nonetheless, there were 16 Maricopa villages between Sacate and Gila Crossing. The Pima and Maricopa remained confederated as allies yet remained distinct in culture and beliefs.

Consolidation of the Maricopa Villages



Teacher Plan for “Consolidation of the Maricopa Villages”

Terms to know and understand

- Consolidate
- Confederation
- Confluence
- Harassment
- Migrate
- Semi-servitude

Critical Thinking:

- What are some reasons why people move? This is part of the culture of modern life in the United States. What reasons are there for why people move in other parts of the world. Are there people who still move because of warfare and strife? Have reasons for moving changed with time? Why is it important to understand the events that may have impacted you and your family?

Activities

- There are many sayings and/or proverbs that relate to water (see list below). Write a few of these sayings on the board for students to see and ask them to add to the list. After you have a list of sayings and/or proverbs on the board, ask students to consider how these sayings came about. This will help them understand something of the relationship of culture and water. You may want to segregate the literal sayings and/or proverbs from the figurative ones.
- After you have discussed this with the students, ask them if they know any Pima or Maricopa sayings and/or proverbs related to water. If they do not, have them interview Community elders and ask them for any such sayings. Be sure the elders explain what the saying and/or proverbs means. Remind the students the purpose of this exercise is to understand the cultural importance of water.

<u>Sayings</u>	<u>Proverbs</u>
Just a drop in the bucket	Pull the child out of the water before you punish it (Africa)
A flood of tears	Have an umbrella ready before you get wet (Japan)
Blood is thicker than water	If you continually go to the well, one day there will be a smashing of the pitcher (Africa)
Break the ice	Little by little the cup is filled (Spain)
Water under the bridge	The stone in the water knows nothing of the hill that lies parched in the sun (Africa)
Down the drain	A heavy dew is the elder brother of rain (Africa)
Get your feet wet	You won't miss the water until the well runs dry
In hot water	Even if you sit on the bottom of the ocean, you cannot be a fish (Africa)
Make a big splash	
Raining cats and dogs	
Still waters run deep	

About P-MIP

The Pima-Maricopa Irrigation Project is authorized by the Gila River Indian Community to construct all irrigation systems for the Community. When fully completed, P-MIP will provide irrigation for up to 146,330 acres of farmland. P-MIP is dedicated to three long-range goals:

- Restoring water to the Akimel O’otham and Pee Posh.
- Putting Akimel O’otham and Pee Posh rights to the use of water to beneficial use.
- Demonstrating and exercising sound management to ensure continuity of the Community’s traditional economy of agriculture.

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the Yuman-speaking tribes that consolidated and became know as the Maricopa tribe.
2. Analyze sayings and proverbs of various people and explain their meaning.

Objectives