

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Music Division - Recording Laboratory

FOLK MUSIC OF THE UNITED STATES

Issued from the Collections of the Archive of American Folk Song

Long-Playing Record L24

SONGS OF THE YUMA, COCOPA, AND YAQUI

Recorded and Edited by

Frances Densmore

Preface

The long-playing records of Indian songs, edited by Dr. Frances Densmore, make available to students and scholars the hitherto inaccessible and extraordinarily valuable original recordings of Indian music which now form a part of the collections of the Archive of American Folk Song in the Library of Congress. The original recordings were made with portable cylinder equipment in the field over a period of many years as part of Dr. Densmore's research for the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution. The recordings were subsequently transferred to the National Archives, and, finally, to the Library of Congress with a generous gift from Eleanor Steele Reese (Mrs. E. P. Reese) which has made possible the duplication of the entire 3,591¹ cylinders to more permanent 16-inch acetate discs and the issuance of selected recordings in the present form. The total collection is unique and constitutes one of the great recorded treasures of the American people.

Dr. Frances Densmore of Red Wing, Minn., was born May 21, 1867, and has devoted a rich lifetime to the preservation of Indian music. Her published works include volumes on Chippewa Music, Teton Sioux Music,

¹/ Certain of the cylinders transferred to the Library of Congress were made by other field collectors of the Smithsonian Institution, but the great bulk of them -- 2,385 to be exact -- were recorded by Dr. Densmore, and these have been designated as the Smithsonian-Densmore Collection.

Northern Ute Music, Mandan and Hidatsa Music, Papago Music, Pawnee Music, Yuman and Yaqui Music, Cheyenne and Arapaho Music, Choctaw Music, Music of the Indians of British Columbia, Nootka and Quileute Music, Music of the Tule Indians of Panama, and other related subjects. Now, as a fitting complement to these publications, Dr. Densmore has selected from the thousands of cylinders the most representative and most valid -- in terms of the sound quality of the original recordings -- songs of the different Indian tribes. With the recordings, she has also prepared accompanying texts and notes -- such as those contained in this pamphlet -- which authentically explain the background and tribal use of the music for the interested student.

This long-playing record, and the series of which it forms a part, is a valuable addition to the history, folklore, and musicology of our North American continent. Its value is increased for us with the knowledge that much of the music has, unfortunately, disappeared from the American scene. To Dr. Densmore, and other Smithsonian collectors, as well as to the Indian singers who recorded for them, we must be grateful for rescuing this music from total oblivion.

DUNCAN EMRICH,
Chief, Folklore Section.

CONTENTS

	Page
List of Songs and Singers	3
Phonetics	4
Introduction	5
Side A	
Dear Dance Songs	7
Yuma Deer Dance Songs	7
Yaqui Deer Dance Songs	9
Cocopa Bird Dance Songs	10
Side B	
Yuma Ca'koramu's Dance Song	11
Cocopa Tcumánpa'xwa Dance Song	12
Yuma Lightning Songs	12
Yuma Songs Used in the Treatment of the Sick	13
Yuma Song with Cremation Legend	14
Cocopa Songs with Cremation Legend	15

List of Songs

<u>Record No. L24</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Singer</u>
YUMA DEER DANCE SONGS		
A1	The Water Bug on the Mountain	Alfred Golding
A2	The Water Bug Sees a Fish	Alfred Golding
A3	The Water Bug Stands upon the Fish	Alfred Golding
A4	The Water Bug Wanders forever beside the Sea	Alfred Golding
A5	The Dance of the Blackbirds is Completed	Alfred Golding
A6	Song of the Nighthawk (a)	Alfred Golding
A7	Song of the Nighthawk (b)	Alfred Golding
YAQUI DEER DANCE SONGS		
A8	The Little Fly	Juan Ariwares
A9	The Summer Rains	Juan Ariwares
A10	The Rising Sun	Juan Ariwares
COCOPA BIRD DANCE SONGS		
A11	Song in the Early Evening	Numa'wásoá't
A12	Song at about Midnight (a)	Numa'wásoá't
A13	Song at about Midnight (b)	Numa'wásoá't
A14	Song concerning the Diver	Numa'wásoá't
A15	Song in the Early Morning	Numa'wásoá't
YUMA CA'KORAMU'S DANCE SONG		
B1	Song concerning the Lark and the Diver	Katco'ra
COCOPA TCUMÁNPA'XWA DANCE SONG		
B2	Dancing Song	Mike Barley
YUMA LIGHTNING SONGS		
B3	White Cloud Demonstrates His Power	Charles Wilson
B4	Song concerning the Ocean	Charles Wilson

List of Songs

<u>Record No. L24</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Singer</u>
	YUMA SONGS USED IN THE TREATMENT OF THE SICK	
B5	Song when Treating the Sick (a)	Charles Wilson
B6	Song when Treating the Sick (b)	Charles Wilson
	YUMA SONG WITH CREMATION LEGEND	
B7	Song concerning the Wildcat	Peter Hammon
	COCOPA SONGS WITH CREMATION LEGEND	
B8	The Illness of the Superman	Clam
B9	The Superman Speaks	Clam
B10	The Four Corners of the Earth	Clam
B11	Coyote Comes to the Cremation of the Superman	Clam
B12	Coyote Makes a Request	Clam

Phonetics

Vowels have the Continental sounds and consonants have the common English sounds except that--

- â is equivalent to English obscure a, as in the word ability.
- c is a sound resembling English sh.
- tc is a sound resembling English ch.
- x is a sound resembling German ch.

SONGS OF THE YUMA, COCOPA AND YAQUI

by Frances Densmore

INTRODUCTION

Two distinct cultures are represented in this series of songs. The Yuma and Cocopa belong to a group of tribes known as the Yuman, whose early home was the valley of the Colorado River. On either side of the river are sandy stretches, high mesa rims and barren mountains, while beyond is an expanse of arid desert. This geographical region shut in the tribes of the Colorado River and made them a unit, so that their culture, or civilization, is different from that of the Pueblo or the tribes of California. This is seen in the form of their melodies, while the words of the songs often mention the crossing of high mountains. The Yaqui are the principal members of the Piman family of tribes living chiefly in Sonora and Sinaloa, Mexico. Certain groups of these Indians live in Arizona and carry on their old customs but are not enrolled as United States Indians. The study of these interesting tribes was made in connection with the writer's research in Indian music for the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution,^{1/} in 1922.

The Yuma Reservation is on the California side of the Colorado River, opposite the town of Yuma in Arizona. The United States Indian Agency and School are on a high promontory overlooking the river and are on the site of Fort Yuma which was established after California was acquired by the United States. The Yuma Indians were living in the region at the time but offered no resistance to the coming of the white man. The Cocopa live south of the Yuma, on the Colorado River, and the Mohave, the third member of the group, live above the Yuma on the river. The Mohave were included, to some extent, in the regional study but none of their songs are in the present series. The river civilization comes to a sudden stop with the Mohave, and above their country is the Eldorado Canyon, a bend of the river, and the vast gorge that culminates in the Grand Canyon.

^{1/} Densmore, Frances. Yuman and Yaqui Music, Bull. 110, Bur. Amer. Ethnol. 1932.

The Yuma and Mohave songs were recorded near the Agency. In order to secure the Cocopa songs it was necessary to go to a small Cocopa village near the town of Somerton, in the extreme southwestern portion of Arizona. A few Cocopa from Mexico live in this village but are not enrolled as United States Indians. The Government maintains a day school for the children but since the school was not in session, it was possible to obtain living quarters and a place to record songs. It was necessary to take two interpreters from Yuma, as none was available who could speak English, Yuma and Cocopa. Accordingly, Luke Homer went to translate English into Yuma and Nelson Rainbow translated the Yuma into Cocopa. Homer had interpreted during the recording of the Yuma songs and was familiar with the writer's method of work, and Rainbow had recorded two songs, so he knew what was expected from a singer. Throughout this difficult trip the writer had the helpful companionship of her sister, Margaret Densmore.

The Yaqui songs were recorded at Guadalupe Village, not far from Phoenix, Arizona. I went to this small village, from Phoenix, almost daily during the week preceding Easter, 1922, and witnessed the native celebration of holy week. On the day before Easter a performance was enacted in which the Deer dance was an important feature. A portion of the songs were recorded the day after Easter by Juan Ariwares who led the dance, and several are included in the present series. Two other Yaqui recorded their songs, which show Mexican influence.

More than 160 Yuman and Yaqui songs were recorded but only 130 were transcribed. The remainder were studied and found to contain the same peculiarities. The most important songs of both groups are in cycles, some with dancing and some without dancing. Such cycles of songs embody and preserve the traditions of the tribes.

A peculiar musical custom was found among the Yuma, Cocopa and Yaqui which has not been noted elsewhere. This custom consisted in a brief pause between the first and second periods, or sections, of the melody. The singers said there was no prescribed length for this pause and in the renditions it corresponds to only a few units of the tempo. In these songs the first melodic period is long and its phrases are sometimes repeated in irregular order. The second period begins in a different rhythm and is short, often containing tones that do not occur in the first period. This peculiarity occurs in the following songs of this series -- A1 (Yuma), A9, A10 (Yaqui); and A11, A12, A13, A14 (Cocopa).

A2

The Water Bug Sees a Fish

(Cat. no. 1167,
ser. no. 61)

Free translation:

While the water bug stands there, the ocean seems to draw nearer and nearer, and in the water he sees a fish traveling up and down with the tide. (This fish was said to be shaped like a sunfish but larger).

In the record of the next song the melody is sung through once, after which the phrases are slightly changed and sung in irregular order.

A3

The Water Bug Stands upon the Fish

(Cat. no. 1168,
ser. no. 62)

Free translation:

Standing as in a dream, he came to the ocean and stood on the top of the fish, thinking that he was standing on the ground. Then he found it was moving and said, "This is something alive."

A4

The Water Bug Wanders forever beside the Sea

(Cat. no. 1169, ser. no. 63)

Free translation:

The water bug wanders forever beside the sea. After standing on top of the fish the water bug became black, this being caused by a disease that he took from the fish. Therefore he wanders forever on the shore of the ocean.

The four preceding songs, as stated, were sung in the early portion of the night. The next songs of the cycle state that the deer takes away the daylight, one song containing the words: "After the deer had been in the darkness a long time he asked the spider to have a road made for him in the darkness. The spider made the road and the deer is now traveling on it." The deer met various birds and animals and asked each to do something characteristic. The blackbirds, the buzzards, the raven and the howling coyote were among those who consented. The little blackbirds sang as they danced around the four corners of the sky, and the song which follows is that with which their dance was completed.

B1

Song concerning the Meadow Lark and the Diver

(Cat. no. 1236, ser. no. 97)

COCOPA TCUMÁNPA 'XWA DANCE SONG

The meaning of the name of this dance was not ascertained. It was danced by unmarried girls and men, usually five to seven in number. There were more singers than in the Bird dance, the leader often having three or four men on either side, each with a gourd rattle. At first they were all seated, the singers in a row and the dancers facing them. When all was ready they sprang to their feet, the singers advancing and pushing the line of dancers backward. The distance thus traversed varied according to the wish of the singers and might be a few feet or a longer distance. In its action the dance resembles the Bear dance of the Northern Ute, songs of which are contained in long-playing record L25 of this series.

The songs of this dance were recorded by a young man known as Mike Barley who spoke no English and hesitated to sing the songs in the daytime. He said that he inherited them from his grandfather. The series required an entire night for its rendition, each part of the night having its own songs, but there was no narrative connected with it, the series being only for dancing. The words were in the "old language," and the first songs of the series were said to mention the evening and certain animals and insects, but beyond this the meaning of the words was not known.

In general character the songs of this dance are different from those of the Bird dance. They are spirited and the rhythm is more decided. Six songs of the dance were recorded by Barley but only one is presented. This melody has a compass of four tones and progresses chiefly by whole tones. The lowest tone of the compass is strongly accented.

B2

Dancing Song

(Cat. no. 1270, ser. no. 117)

YUMA LIGHTNING SONGS

The songs in this group were said to have been received from White Cloud who controls the lightning, thunder and storms. They were received in a dream by Charles Wilson who recorded the songs and gave the information concerning them. He said that White Cloud appeared to certain medicine men in their dreams and gave them power to bring rain or to cause a thunderstorm. Thus if a man with this power were with a war party, he could summon rain or secure a storm to conceal the warriors.

The narrative embodied in the Lightning songs concerns the journeys and demonstrations of White Cloud as a "wonder child." Wilson said, "He has only one bow and one arrow. He holds them in his hands and

B5

Song when Treating the Sick (a)

(Cat. no. 1197,
ser. no. 41)

During this second song of the series, Wilson said his "feeling" is that the hemorrhage will cease. The song mentions a small insect that lives in the water and has power over the fluids of the body. It is believed this insect will respond and exert its power to aid the sick man.

B6

Song when Treating the Sick (b)

(Cat. no. 1198,
ser. no. 42)

During this song, which is third in his series, Wilson has a "feeling" that the patient will regain the power of motion, and the song mentions a lively insect that gives its aid.

His "feeling" when singing the fourth song (not presented) is that the patient will regain the power of speech, and the song mentions a certain buzzard that "flies so high that it is out of sight." The buzzard has great power in itself and also exerts an influence over the insects mentioned in the preceding songs, increasing their power. It is said that "each of the insects does his best, but it is the buzzard whose great power gives the final impetus and cures the sick man." The confidence in Wilson's own mind was the more interesting as he did not "absolutely promise" to cure a sick person when undertaking a case. It was said, however, that he "had never lost a case."

YUMA SONG WITH CREMATION LEGEND

It is the belief of the Yuma, Cocopa and Mohave that if a man's body is not cremated his spirit will "wander around and talk to its relatives in their dreams." The origin of this ancient custom is contained in traditions and in series of songs which are similar in these tribes.

An opportunity to witness this rite of the Yuma occurred on February 13, 1922 when the writer was present at the cremation of Bernard Flame. The ceremony was given as it would have been given for a chief, since Flame had been a singer at cremations, singing with the leaders of the ceremony. Bernard Flame died in a sanitorium for the insane and his body was brought to the Yuma reservation for cremation. The wailing, the ceremonial speeches, and the entire procedure was in accord with tribal custom. The body was cremated in a frame or crib constructed of cottonwood longs.

The Yuma legend concerning the cremation custom required about nine hours for narration, with the singing of the songs, but it was condensed for the writer and 26 of its songs recorded by leaders in the

B9

The Superman Speaks

(Cat. no. 1259,
ser. no. 30)

Preceding the second song, Clam said, "At length the Superman grows drowsy, but rouses himself to express his love for his children.

B10

The Four Corners of the Earth

(Cat. no. 1260,
ser. no. 31)

Continuing his talk to his children, the Superman says, "As I have said before ... I have in mind the four corners of the earth. Among these I may choose the place to which my spirit will go, but I have not yet chosen."

B11

Coyote Comes to the Cremation of the Superman

(Cat. no. 1262, ser. no. 33)

The Superman died, and, as the fire of his cremation burned brightly, Coyote traveled toward the place. It was said that this coyote was "one of the very wild sort that no one ever sees."

B12

Coyote Makes a Request

(Cat. no. 1265,
ser. no. 36)

Coyote joined the circle of animals that stood close together around the cremation fire. He said that he wanted to find a place where he could stand and cry with the others, but it was his plan to seize the heart of the Superman.

The later songs of the series relate that Coyote seized the heart of the Superman, carried it to a mountain and ate it. He then became unconscious as the result of a powerful spell that was cast over him, and immediately afterward died. This accords with a similar legend of the Mohave related by Billie Poor, a Mohave living on the Yuma Reservation, who recorded two Mohave songs that are sung preceding the memorial ceremony in that tribe.