

# Handbook of North American Indians

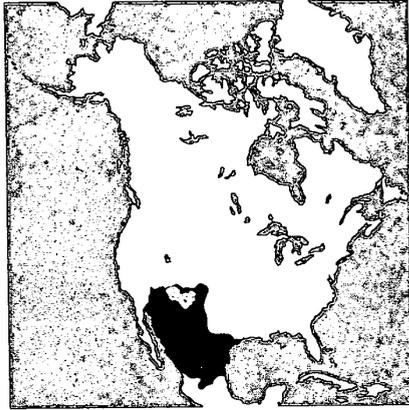
WILLIAM C. STURTEVANT  
*General Editor*

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# Havasupai

DOUGLAS W. SCHWARTZ

The Havasupai (*hävə'sōōpī*), a Yuman-speaking group,\* are closely related to the Walapai and Yavapai, their neighbors in northwestern Arizona. In the past the Havasupai tribe lived in bands composed of a few related but autonomous families. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these bands became consolidated both territorially and politically as pressure from White settlers and government reduced their territorial size and increased the need for a single group voice. Since 1939, tribal unity has been formalized under a constitution and by-laws that provide for a partly elected tribal council.

## Territory and Environment

The Havasupai occupied a territory approximately 90 miles wide by 75 miles long (Spier 1928:91) on the Coconino Plateau, a range including the drainage area of Cataract Creek Canyon through which flows a tributary of the Colorado River. The territory extended from the south bank of the Colorado River within Grand Canyon south to Bill Williams Mountain and the San Francisco Peaks, and from the Aubrey Cliffs east at least to the edge of the Coconino Plateau above the Little Colorado River (fig. 1). Only during winter was the whole of this range occupied, since summer was spent on the well-watered farmlands of Cataract Creek Canyon.

Since the nineteenth century the Havasupai have faced increasing competition for land from the Walapai on the west, the Navajo on the east, and particularly from Anglo-American cattlemen. This encroachment not only reduced Havasupai territory but also destroyed wild plant and game resources upon which the tribe was partially dependent. Consequently, by mid-twentieth century, the Havasupai were restricted to a 500-acre

\*The phonemes of Havasupai are: (voiceless unaspirated stops and affricate) *p, t* (dental), *č, k, kʷ, kʷ, q, ʔ*; (fricatives) *v* ([β]), *θ, s, š, h, hʷ*; (lateral) *l*; (alveolar flap) *r*; (nasals) *m, n, nʷ, ŋ*; (semivowels) *w, y*; (short vowels) *i, e, a, o, u, ə*; (long vowels) *iː, eː, aː, oː, uː*; (stress) *˙*. In the speech of younger speakers sequences of *h* followed by a stop or affricate are replaced by aspirates, giving rise to an additional phonemic series: *pʰ, tʰ* (dental), *tʰ* (alveolar), *čʰ, kʰ, kʷʰ, qʰ*.

Information on Havasupai phonology and the phonemicizations of Havasupai words were provided by Leanne Hinton (communications to editors 1974, 1981). A discussion of the development of a practical orthography for Havasupai is in Crook, Hinton, and Stenson (1977).

reservation in Cataract Creek Canyon within Grand Canyon. Because agriculture alone was unable to support the entire population, a growing proportion of the tribe began living and working off the reservation, especially in connection with the tourist trade at Grand Canyon.

From about 1971 to 1974 Havasupais were involved in a fight to regain land that was formerly theirs. In 1974 Congress passed a bill (signed into law in 1975) establishing a 160,000-acre reservation, and allocating 95,000 acres of Grand Canyon National Park for their permanent use (Hirst 1976).

Both the Coconino Plateau and Cataract Creek Canyon are semiarid environments, although a large permanent spring is found at the lower elevation, resulting in a lush creek-side environment. In the canyon, this spring gives birth to Cataract Creek, which contains ample flow for irrigation. During the violent summer thunderstorms common to the region, runoff from the

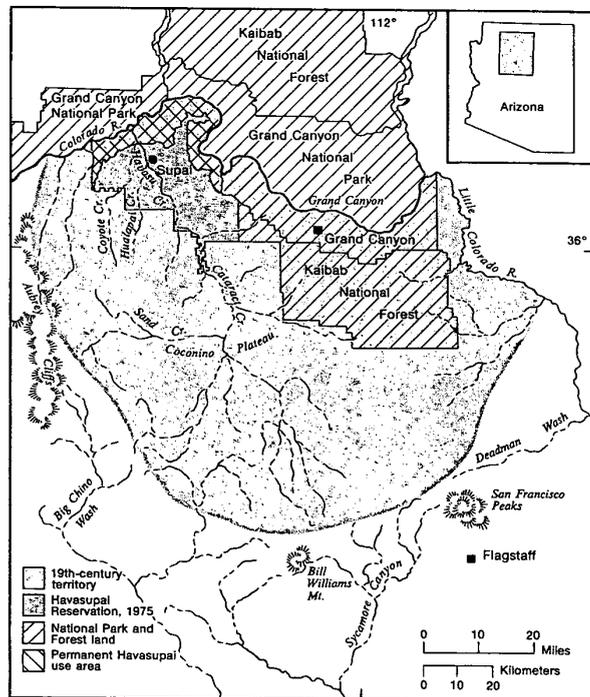


Fig. 1. Tribal territory in the 19th century.

plateau often sends disastrous floods through Cataract Canyon, destroying homes and fields alike.

Temperatures are relatively mild, ranging on the plateau from a winter average of 30° F to about 70° F in midsummer. Within the canyon, temperatures vary from a winter average of 44° F to a summer average of about 70° F with summer highs well above 100° F. The growing season in the canyon extends from April through September.

Vegetation is that of the Sonoran life-zone, characterized on the plateau by juniper, piñon pine, and in some areas by ponderosa pine. At lower elevations, trees are scarce, and desert plants such as sagebrush, grasses, yucca, and prickly pear become dominant. Near the canyon floor grow a number of edible plants, including agave, prickly pear, mesquite, Mormon tea, and grasses from which seeds could be harvested. Dense thickets of willows line the banks of Cataract Creek, while cottonwoods and introduced fruit trees are also common.

Prior to settlement by Whites, the Coconino Plateau supported an abundant fauna. Antelope, deer, and mountain sheep were plentiful, along with smaller game such as rabbits and squirrels. This environment offered the Havasupai a large variety of potential resources within a relatively small territory and made possible a wide range of economic activities.

#### External Relations

The Havasupai are most closely related culturally and linguistically to the Walapai. Each tribe occupied a territory from which it took a distinctive name. The Havasupai and Walapai were distinguished by name as early as 1776, and were perhaps distinct much earlier (Schwartz 1959; Dobyns and Euler 1970 believe it was not until 1882). The two groups may have become more politically and economically differentiated only after intensive White contact in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Martin 1966:11-14). Not only did Whites distinguish the two groups conceptually, but also differing historical events served to segregate the Havasupai from the Walapai. This trend culminated in the establishment of separate reservations for the two tribes and their separate administration.

Throughout historic times, the Havasupai have maintained consistently friendly relations with the Walapai. The two groups have been known to combine in offensive action against common enemies, to conduct extensive trade, and often to intermarry.

Both the Havasupai and the Walapai carried on hostile relations with the Yavapai, by whom they were frequently raided during the harvest season. Western Apache groups also joined in some of these raids. Due to their small population, Havasupai response was usually limited to defense and occasional brief retaliatory

attacks; offensive action was seldom undertaken. About 1865 the Havasupai and Yavapai agreed to end hostilities, and they have conducted peaceful trade relations since then.

Similarly, earliest contacts with the Navajo in the mid-nineteenth century were antagonistic, but relations of trade and friendship developed subsequently. The same was probably true of Havasupai relations with the Paiute. The Hopi, on the other hand, have for many years been friends, allies, and trading partners with the Havasupai.

#### Prehistory

The Havasupai are probably the direct descendants of a prehistoric group known to archeologists as the Coconina (Schwartz 1956; for another view on Havasupai prehistory, see Euler 1958). This culture first appeared in the plateau region south of the Grand Canyon around A.D. 600. Population, quite small at first, tripled by A.D. 800 and doubled again within the next century, probably resulting from a successful adaptation to an agricultural economy (Schwartz 1956a). By about A.D. 1050, population pressure for available land had increased to such proportions that new farmland in the canyon floors began to be cultivated on a permanent basis. Thus originated, in all likelihood, the characteristic Havasupai economic pattern based on summer irrigation agriculture in the canyon and winter hunting-gathering on the plateau.

Between 1050 and 1200, the Havasupai completely abandoned the Coconino Plateau for Cataract Creek Canyon in what appears to have been a defensive move. The cliffs lining the canyon contain dwellings dating to the second half of this period that have the appearance of being protective; however, other explanations, such as space pressure, must also be considered for the withdrawal. After 1300 the defensive pressure was removed, allowing the Havasupai to return to the Coconino Plateau. However, increased aridity on the Coconino Plateau, which occurred as a result of climatic change affecting the entire northern Southwest, prevented extensive farming. Therefore, the Havasupai at this time began a double economic life, farming Cataract Creek Canyon in the summer and supplementing their stored agricultural food resources by hunting and gathering on the plateau in winter. Year-round occupation of the Coconino Plateau was never re-established (Schwartz 1959).

#### History

Early Spanish explorers mention wandering tribes seen in the general area later certainly occupied by the Havasupai (Dobyns and Euler 1960). These observers in-

clude: Cardenas in 1540, Marcos Farfan in 1578, and Fray Esteban de Perea in 1598 (Schroeder 1953:45,46). According to Schroeder, the first reference by name to the existence of the Havasupai is in 1665 when Governor Peñalosa testified to subduing the Coninas (Havasupai) and the Cruzados (Yavapai) (Schroeder 1953:46). After 1700, references to the Coninas appear more frequently. In 1776 Father Francisco Garcés was guided to Cataract Creek Canyon by a group of Walapais. Spanish influence upon the Havasupai was negligible except for European items such as horses, cloth, and fruit trees, which were obtained indirectly through the Hopi.

Beginning about 1776, the Havasupai had sporadic contacts with European trappers and explorers (Schwartz 1956:82), including the expeditions led by Lorenzo Sitgreaves (1853) and Amiel Whipple (Whipple, Ewbank and Turner 1855) in 1853 and by Joseph C. Ives (1861) in 1857-1858. Acculturation was minimal during these decades and took place chiefly with respect to material items. During the late nineteenth century, White cattle ranchers began to encroach increasingly upon Havasupai land, and mining prospectors began to be interested in the copper deposits in Cataract Canyon itself. Therefore, a reservation was established within the canyon in 1880, after which the rate of acculturation rapidly accelerated. In 1895 a Bureau of Indian Affairs sub-agency and day school were set up on the reservation, and families were urged to remain there year-round while their children attended class. This restriction was aggravated by loss of territory and natural resources to cattlemen, until by the 1940s the annual migration to the plateau for hunting and gathering ceased to be part of the Havasupai way of life.

After the 1940s, acculturation increased as growing numbers of Havasupais came into individual contact with Whites in the course of wage employment and as federal government involvement in tribal affairs grew in intensity.

## Traditional Culture

### *Subsistence*

The economic system of the Havasupai involved a seasonal dichotomy between summer agriculture in the canyon and winter hunting-gathering on the plateau. In early spring, families began moving into Cataract Canyon to repair their summer homes and ready their fields for planting in mid-April. Corn, beans, and squash were raised in abundance with the aid of the hoe, the digging stick, and a simple network of irrigation ditches. A variety of other crops, including peaches, sunflowers, apricots, and figs, were added to the Havasupais' diet in historic times. Horse-raising has also become an important activity since the late nineteenth century.

Planting began in mid-April with corn harvesting starting in June and continuing until early fall, by which time all crops and many kinds of wild plant foods had been picked and processed for storage. Drying was the usual method employed in preserving food for winter use.

By the middle of October, families began moving back to their semipermanent camps scattered over the plateau, to spend the winter hunting deer, antelope, and rabbit, and gathering piñon nuts, mescal, and other wild plant foods. Camps were moved when necessary to follow newly available resources. When spring again brought planting time, the cycle began with migration back to summer homes and farmland on the canyon floor.

Trade was another important economic activity, although most trading expeditions were equally opportunities for visiting and diversion. The Havasupai participated in a trade network extending from the Hopi in the east, through the Navajo and Walapai, to the Mohave in the west. Buckskins, foodstuffs, and basketry were the main items of Havasupai commerce, for which they received cotton goods, horses, pottery, jewelry, and buffalo hides.

Division of labor by sex was not strict, with the exception of certain handicrafts. All members of the family helped with agricultural tasks and housebuilding, although men usually held the greatest responsibility for these chores and for hunting. While both sexes probably took part in tanning hides, the subsequent manufacture of clothing was done by males alone (fig. 2). Items made solely by women included sleeping mats, cradleboards, baskets, and pottery; however, most of their time was taken up by cooking (fig. 3) and child care. Women gathered wild plants growing near their camps, but large-scale gathering expeditions involved the entire family. There was no strong craft specialization within the groups, but merely the recognition of certain individuals as being particularly skilled in making various items.

### *Social and Political Organization*

The sole component group in Havasupai society was the family, either nuclear or extended, which functioned as both an independent economic unit and a local residential group. Family composition was not rigidly fixed but changed frequently as nuclear families merged or separated. Most common was the patrilocal extended family, composed of a man, his wife, their unmarried children, and their married sons and families. However, patrilocal residence (that is, with the husband's family) was normally preceded by a period of temporary matrilocality (residence with the wife's parents) immediately after marriage.

The Havasupai possessed no other social divisions 15



Amer. Mus. of Nat. Hist., New York: 316864.  
 Fig. 9. Fannie with her son Lorenzo in a willow cradleboard with wicker hood. Cradleboards are made by women, usually the child's grandmother (Spier 1928:302-303). Photograph by Joseph K. Dixon, John D. Scott, or W.B. Cline on Wanamaker Expedition, 1913.

### Synonymy†

The Havasupai call themselves *havasúwə ʔəpá* (pl. *havasuwə ʔəpačə*) 'person (people) of the blue or green water'; *ha-* represents *ʔaha* 'water' and *vasúwə* is a color term referring to any of the parts of the spectrum called 'blue', 'blue-green', or 'green' in English (Leanne Hinton, communication to editors 1974). Similar names are found in other Yuman languages: Walapai *Ha-ba-soo-py-a* 'green water people' (Corbusier 1923-1925:2); Yavapai *Ha-ba-soo-pí-ya* 'people of the green or blue water' (Corbusier 1921:3), *ähä hábasú* 'apá 'blue water people' (Freire-Marreco 1910-1912); Mohave *havasúpay* 'blue or green person' (Pamela L. Munro, communication to editors 1981); Quechan *xavašú'k apáy* 'blue people' (Abraham M. Halpern, communication to editors 1981). It is noteworthy that the Mohave and Quechan names make no overt reference to 'water' (since in these languages the syllable *ha-* or *xa-* is part of the color term), and that the English name Havasupai must come from a language in which 'person' is *-pai*

†This synonymy was written by Ives Goddard, incorporating some references supplied by Douglas W. Schwartz.

HAVASUPAI



Mus. of N. Mex., Santa Fe: 37711.  
 Fig. 10. Footraces, usually for stakes, were run to and from a point 50-125 meters distant. This diversion was superseded by horse races, run on a similar course (Spier 1928:337). Photograph by William H. Simpson, 1901.



top, Calif. Hist. Soc., Los Angeles: Title Insurance Coll., 4690; bottom, Harold M. Smithsonian, Salt Lake City, Utah.  
 Fig. 11. The game of stick dice. Each of 2 teams has a small stick marker, which is moved around the stone circle starting at the gap. Moves are counted, stone by stone, according to scores made by 3 dice (flat wooden billets marked in red on one side) that are bounced off the flat central rock. The first team to complete the circle wins (Spier 1928:341-342). top, Photograph by George Wharton James, copyright 1898; bottom, photograph by Carma Lee Smithsonian, 1950-1951.

(*-pay*) or *-paya*, rather than from Havasupai itself (which has *ʔəpa*). The name was first recorded by Francisco Garcés in 1776 in the Spanish spelling *Jabesúa*; he also used the compound name *Yabipais Jabesua* and *Yabipai Jabesua* (Coues 1900, 2:335, 340, 414, 444). Col-

loquial English has also an abbreviated form spelled Supai or Suppai (also Supies), the second of these being for a time the official government designation (Hodge 1907–1910, 1:538–539; Coues 1900, 2:346). Havasupai was perhaps used first by Cushing (1882) in the spelling Ha-va-su-pai.

An earlier name for the Havasupai in Spanish documents is written Coninas, 1665 (Diego de Peñalosa in Hackett 1923–1937, 3:264, as interpreted by Schroeder 1953:46), or Cogninas, 1672 (Bloom and Mitchell 1938:116), and Cosninas, 1775, or Cosninos, 1779 (Vélez de Escalante in Coues 1900, 2:472; Twitchell 1914, 2:269). This name, applied vaguely to Indians west of the Hopi, is derived from a name variants of which appear in a number of Indian languages but the origin of which has not been determined: Third Mesa Hopi *kô'nina* (pl. *-mî*) (Voegelin and Voegelin 1957:49); First Mesa Hopi *Kôhonino* or *Kôhonini* (Stephen 1936, 2:1232); Zuni *kohni·k'e* (Dennis Tedlock, communication to editors 1977), also recorded as *kuhnikwe* (Kroeber 1916:275) and *kochninakwe* (Ten Kate 1885:300); Navajo *Góóhnünii* (Young and Morgan 1980:370); Hopi-Tewa *ku'ni* (Paul V. Kroskrity, communication to editors 1977) and *koxnini* (Mooney 1895, normalized); Isleta *kúninide* (pl. *kyninin*) (C.T. Harrington 1920:47). In Navajo and Hopi this name may be used for the Walapai as well as for the Havasupai; Harrington (1913a) reported an Oraibi Hopi distinction between *kó'ninā* 'Walapai' and *sátákó'ninā* 'Havasupai', the latter differentiated by the addition of the word for red ocher (*sí·ta*), a substance obtained from the Havasupai (Stephen 1936, 2:1195). Many renderings of this name appear in nineteenth-century American and European sources referring to the Havasupai or other Upland Yumans, including Casnino, Coçoninos, Cohoninos, Cojnino, Cojonina, Cosninas, 1853 (S. Eastman in Schoolcraft 1851–1857, 4:24), Cosninos, 1854 (A.W. Whipple in Foreman 1941:204, 206), Ko-

koninos, and others listed by Hodge (1907–1910, 1:538–539).

The Havasupai are sometimes referred to as *Yampais*, 1858 (Ives 1861:108), or *Yampas* (Bell 1869:243), but variants of this name are more frequently applied to the Yavapai (see the synonymies in "Walapai" and "Yavapai," this vol.).

Other names recorded for the Havasupai are *Pima su'-pal't* (Russell 1902–1903) and Western Apache *Dězhī'piklakūh* 'women dress in bark' (Curtis 1907–1930, 1:134) and *t'ádüt'ijñ* 'blue water people' (Goodwin 1942:92).

## Sources

Among the Spanish chronicles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, only that of Father Francisco Garcés (Coues 1900) contains an eyewitness account of the Havasupai. Several American explorers mentioned the Havasupai during the 1800s, among them Ives (1861), but it was not until Cushing (1882) that any detailed ethnographic information was available. A popular account of both the Havasupai and the Walapai was written by Iliff (1954), based on her experiences as a reservation schoolteacher in the early 1900s.

The classic work on the Havasupai is Spier (1928), which furnished the bulk of the information on traditional culture for this chapter. Also of major importance is Smithson's (1959) monograph on the Havasupai woman, which updates many of Spier's topics. Smithson and Euler (1964) provide information on religion and myth.

Martin (1966, 1968) studied social and economic organization. Alvarado (1970) has discussed the cultural factors in Havasupai population stability.

Information on Havasupai prehistory can be found in Schwartz (1955, 1956, 1959) and Euler (1958).