

Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History  
 Repatriation Office Case Report Summaries  
 California Region  
 Revised 2020

California	Pit River, Yahi, Yana, Redding Rancheria	1999	<p><b>THE HUMAN REMAINS OF ISHI, A YAHY-YANA INDIAN, IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPATRIATION</b></p> <p>The National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), following consultations with Northern California Native Americans, will repatriate the human remains of Ishi, a Yahi-Yana Indian. Contrary to the commonly held belief that Ishi was the last member of his tribe, the Yana people of California, his closest relatives, have survived more than a century of warfare, disease, displacement, and cultural destruction. The museum has sought out the Yana people and consulted with them on issues of Yana language, culture, and history necessary to properly complete the repatriation process under the law. We offer to repatriate the remains of Ishi to the sovereign tribal governments that represent these Yana descendants.</p> <p>Over the last two months the Repatriation Office of the National Museum of Natural History has consulted with Native American representatives of the Butte County Native American Cultural Committee, the federally-recognized Redding Rancheria and Pit River Tribe, as well as members of a number of California tribes not presently recognized by the federal government. This process has allowed the NMNH to provide information on its collections, policies, and repatriation efforts while at the same time ensuring that Native concerns and interests guide the repatriation of Ishi's remains. The return of Ishi's remains to California represents a first step in the much broader process of consultation and repatriation to return ancestral remains, funerary objects, sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony of these and the other culturally affiliated tribes of Northern California.</p> <p>This report summarizes available information on Ishi's cultural affiliation. The information includes anthropological and linguistic evidence on the culture of the Yana tribe, oral traditional information on the surviving Yana people of today, and historical records that document the Yana survivors who found refuge among other California tribes. Clearly, the Yahi band to which Ishi belonged was part of the larger tribal grouping known as the Yana</p>
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		<p>or Noso. These lines of evidence support the findings of cultural affiliation and the decision to return Ishi's remains to the living Yana descendants and the representatives of their tribal governments.</p> <p>The Smithsonian Institution acknowledges and respects that many California Native Americans feel a powerful connection with Ishi and consider it their responsibility to see that his remains are united and given a proper burial. The Smithsonian, too, shares the goal of returning Ishi's remains to California in a timely manner, provided that such return is consistent with the rights of living Native Americans who share a cultural affiliation with Ishi. Although the process of identifying the possible living relatives has taken some time, the Smithsonian now is in a position to return Ishi to living relatives.</p> <p>Like so many Native American tribes, the Yana were almost entirely destroyed, and as their numbers became smaller, they found refuge among their neighbors. Ishi was the last of a small band of Yana Indians who strived to survive in their homeland despite prolonged attacks. But Ishi and his band shared very close cultural ties with the larger Yana tribe whose descendants today continue living in their territory along the upper reaches of the Sacramento River in Northern California. These are Ishi's closest relatives and the communities that must lead the way in his return.</p> <p>Ishi's immediate family can never be known because we are missing so many of the most important details of his family history. It is to his people, the Yana of northern California, that we now turn for guidance. The great majority of people of Yana ancestry live today in Shasta County, where most are members of the Redding Rancheria and the Pit River Tribe. These two federally-recognized groups therefore stand as the closest culturally affiliated Native American tribe, the tribes which share the strongest links of identity, culture, and history with Ishi.</p> <p>In March of 1999, the Repatriation Office recommended that the Smithsonian Institution repatriate Ishi's remains to his descendants at the Redding Rancheria and the Pit River Tribe of California. The National Museum of Natural History notified the tribes that it was prepared to return Ishi's remains to the Yana people at the time and place, and in the manner, of their choosing.</p> <p>The NMNH held Ishi's brain until the descendants could recover cremated remains from the cemetery in Colma, California, where they were held by a private mortuary. The state of California released those remains and the brain and cremated remains of Ishi</p>
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			<p>have since been reunited. Ishi's remains were repatriated on August 10, 2000.</p> <p><b>Repatriation Update</b> The remains were reinterred by the tribes shortly thereafter at an undisclosed location.</p>
California	Paiute, Shoshone	2001	<p><b>ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN REMAINS FROM OWENS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION</b></p> <p>This report provides an inventory and assessment of the human remains in the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) from Owens Valley, California. Documentation of the remains was initiated in response to a request for the repatriation of an individual identified in the museum records as Paiute by the Koso Native Graves Protection Committee, on behalf of the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone, the Big Pine Paiute Shoshone, the Fort Independence Paiute, and Bishop Colony Paiute-Shoshone. These Native American tribes represent four of the five federally-recognized tribes in Owens Valley, California. The Benton Paiute (Utu Utu Gwaitu Paiute Tribe of the Benton Paiute Reservation, California) are also a federally-recognized tribe in the Owens Valley Paiute, although they are not members of the Koso Native Graves Protection Committee.</p> <p>A preponderance of the available information indicates the remains are those of an Owens Valley Paiute individual from California. No further information is available on this person, the circumstances and date of her death, or a more specific affiliation. No funerary objects are present in the museum collection.</p> <p>The Repatriation Office of the National Museum of Natural History recommended that the Smithsonian Institution offer to repatriate the remains to the Paiute from the Owens Valley that comprise five separate federally-recognized tribes: the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone, the Big Pine Paiute Shoshone, the Fort Independence Paiute, the Bishop Colony Paiute-Shoshone and the Benton Paiute. The Koso Native Graves Protection Committee represents the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone, the Big Pine Paiute Shoshone, the Fort Independence Paiute, and the Bishop Colony Paiute-Shoshone. The Owens Valley remains are likely to be most closely affiliated with the Paiute tribes that reside in Owens Valley. The Paiute</p>

			tribes in Nevada and Oregon were also notified of this recommendation.
California	Yokuts, Tule River Indian Tribe, Santa Rosa Rancheria of Tachi Yokuts Indians	2011	<p><b>INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN REMAINS AND FUNERARY OBJECTS POTENTIALLY AFFILIATED WITH YOKUTS TRIBES FROM KERN AND TULARE COUNTIES, CALIFORNIA, IN THE COLLECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION</b></p> <p>This report provides an inventory and assessment of the human remains and funerary objects from Kern and Tulare Counties in the possession or control of the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) potentially affiliated with Yokuts tribes.</p> <p>The report documents the human remains of 92 individuals in 88 catalog numbers and 8,110 funerary objects in 147 catalog numbers in the collections of the National Museum of Natural History. An additional six objects in three catalog numbers are non-statutory objects, arrowheads embedded in human vertebrae that do not fit the definition of funerary objects under the NMAI Act, but are included here as inseparable from the remains.</p> <p>The majority of the remains and objects considered in this report resulted from excavations conducted in 1933 and 1934 for the Civil Works Administration (CWA) by the Smithsonian Institution’s Bureau of American Ethnology along the southwestern shore of Buena Vista Lake, in Kern County, California. Human remains of 21 individuals were collected from what was originally referred to as Tulamniu Site 1 (KER-39/KER-116). An additional 44 individuals were collected from Site 2 (KER-60/KER-116). Another seven individuals were removed from Site 3 (KER-40). Finally, remains of three individuals were excavated from Site 4 (KER-41). The Civil Works Administration also excavated remains of seven individuals and 738 funerary objects from Lokern Mound, in the slough region northwest of Buena Vista Lake. One individual is identified in museum records only as originating at “Tulamniu, Buena Vista Lake,” with no specific site listed. Nine individuals and eleven funerary objects were collected in 1950 from the Slick Rock Village Site (4TUL10) in Tulare County by the River Basin Survey of the Smithsonian’s Bureau of American Ethnology. The majority of the remains and objects from the Buena Vista Lake and Lokern Mound sites excavated by the Smithsonian date to the Late Prehistoric period between A.D. 500 and A.D. 1200. The remains of two additional individuals from Site 2 (KER-60/KER-116) were found in a deeper stratum of the site that probably dates to 4,000 to 2,000 B.P. The use of the Direct Historical Approach establishes</p>

		<p>connections between the Late Prehistoric components at Buena Vista Lake and the historic period Tulamni Yokuts tribe. The mortuary practices and numerous material culture attributes of the Late Prehistoric components identified by the Smithsonian's excavations are consistent with early historic components found nearby on the northwestern shore of Buena Vista Lake. In the terms of the repatriation legislation, the earlier identifiable group in this case can be defined as the Late Prehistoric Yokuts inhabitants of the Buena Vista Lake area. The sites on the northwestern shore of Buena Vista Lake are linked with the historically known Tulamni Yokuts village recorded by Spanish explorers as Tulamni or Buena Vista Village in the 1770s. This shows by a preponderance of the evidence that the Tulamni Yokuts tribe were the descendants of the inhabitants of the Late Prehistoric Buena Vista Lake sites. The present day descendants of the Tulamni Yokuts are represented by the federally recognized Tule River Indian Tribe and the Santa Rosa Rancheria of Tachi Yokuts Indians.</p> <p>The remains of the two individuals found in the deep stratum of Site 2 (KER-60/KER-116) were buried using mortuary practices that differed from later periods and practices of historic Yokuts. Material culture traits of this stratum show no continuity with the material culture of the later components. The stratigraphy of the site exhibits evidence of a hiatus in occupation between the early components and the late components. The archaeological evidence from this period (4,000 to 2,000 B.P.) in the southern San Joaquin River Valley does not show cultural continuity or affiliation with later Yokuts cultural occupations. Linguistic evidence suggests Yokuts speakers had not entered the southern San Joaquin River Valley before around 1,500 B.P. and were probably still in the Great Basin area of western Nevada during the time of the early period occupation of Site 2. Therefore, the preponderance of the evidence does not support a cultural affiliation of the remains of these two individuals with present day Yokuts tribes.</p> <p>The remains of the seven individuals and 738 funerary objects from the Lokern Mound site belonged to a Late Prehistoric Yokuts component which can be considered an earlier identifiable group under the repatriation legislation. Ethno-historic and geographic evidence indicates the site was probably ancestral to the historic Tuhoumne Yokuts tribe, a group ancestral to the Tule River Indian and the Santa Rosa Rancheria of Tachi Yokuts Indians. The remains of the nine individuals from the Slick Rock Village Site (4TUL10) in Tulare County were buried using mortuary practices, including cremation, that were consistent with the practices of historic Yokuts. The site is identified as a historically documented Wukchumni Yokuts village. Artifacts found at the site date the</p>
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California	None identified	2015	<p><b>Inventory and Assessment of Human Remains and Funerary Objects from near Bakersfield, Kern County, California, in the Collections of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution</b></p> <p>This report provides an inventory and assessment of human remains and objects from site KER-185 near Bakersfield, Kern County, California, in the collections of the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH). This assessment was initiated in response to a repatriation request from the Santa Rosa Rancheria of Tachi-Yokuts Indians.</p> <p>The report documents the partially mummified human remains of one individual in one catalog number and four associated funerary objects in four catalog numbers in the collections of the NMNH. This single individual and four objects, collected by James Stockton and accessioned in 1903, are recorded as coming from a cave site (KER-185) near Bakersfield, California. The remains are those of a child around 10-12 years of age, originally found inside a large basket with a tule mat and a smaller basket fragment covering, with a fur and skin garment around the body.</p> <p>The interment location was near the historic borders of several tribes along the Kern River, a major route for travelers and traders from other regions to the east and west. The mortuary treatment and the associated basketry, mat, and the skin garment with the remains, are not specific to a particular tribe. The objects were radiocarbon-dated to ca. A.D. 1300. Given the linguistic, archaeological, and other evidence of movements of late prehistoric groups in California, it is difficult to identify the likely cultural group to which this individual belonged. The presence of turkey skin in the garment, given that the distribution of turkey did not include southern California, suggests the garment originated farther to the east and not in California. The baskets and tule mat exhibit a combination of basketry techniques that are not diagnostic or representative of any particular tribe. The mode of burial, inside a basket within a cave, is also unusual; the only other similar example of a cave basket burial is from a site well to the north of the San Joaquin Valley in Miwok territory. In that case, although the mode of burial was similar, it differed in its tribal territory location and in the types and construction of the basketry, mat, and garment to such an extent that it is unlikely the burial near Bakersfield was Miwok.</p> <p>The preponderance of the evidence does not indicate a specific earlier identifiable group to which this child and the associated objects would have belonged. Since the earlier identifiable group for this individual cannot be identified, it is not possible to trace a</p>
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			relationship of shared group identity between the remains and a present-day tribe. Therefore, it is recommended that the remains of this individual and four associated objects be retained by the NMNH until a preponderance of evidence is identified in support of a cultural affiliation.
California	Yokut, Tule River Indian Tribe, Santa Rosa Indian Community	2016	<p><b>Inventory and Assessment of Human Remains from the Tule Indian Reservation, California, in the Collections of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution</b></p> <p>This report provides an inventory and assessment of human remains from the Tule River Reservation, Tulare County, California, in the possession or control of the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) potentially affiliated with the Tule River Indian Tribe. This assessment was undertaken in response to a repatriation request from the Tule River Indian Tribe. The report documents the human remains of one individual in one catalog number in the collections of the NMNH. This single individual was collected in November of 1875 at the Tule River Reservation in California by Stephen Powers working for the Secretary of the Interior. Powers sent the remains to the U.S. National Museum, the predecessor of the NMNH, on November 11, 1875. The remains were transferred to the Army Medical Museum (AMM) in March of 1876 and transferred back to the U.S. National Museum in 1904. The “tribe” line of an original card from the collector listed the remains as “Tules.” The card also included the words “Skull of Francisca.” The transmittal letter sent to the Smithsonian by Powers listed the remains as “1 Skull of digger Indian.” The remains were included in the letter on a “List of Articles Purchased at Tule River Reservation.” The U.S. National Museum Mammals ledger entry from 1875 lists the individual as “‘Tule’ Indian Skull” and the locality of origin as “Tule R. Cala.” The condition of the remains suggests the individual had been relatively recently deceased in 1875 and may not have been buried.</p> <p>The preponderance of the evidence indicates that the earlier identifiable group to which this individual belonged was the Yokuts population of the Tule River Reservation just prior to 1875. The Tule River Reservation was established in 1856. It was shifted to its current location in 1873 by an Executive Order, but few families moved to the new location until forced to move by the military in 1876. The population of the Tule River Reservation consisted primarily of various Southern Valley Yokuts tribes who intermarried. When the Tachi Yokuts tribe moved to the Santa Rosa Rancheria in 1921, they split off from the larger mixed Yokuts</p>



		<p>group (Cummins 1978:55). Therefore, the federally recognized tribes representing descendants of the Tule River Reservation population prior to 1875 are today identified as the Tule River Indian Tribe and the Santa Rosa Rancheria of Tachi Yokuts Indians. Thus, a relationship of shared group identity can be traced between the remains and the present day Tule River Indian Tribe and the Santa Rosa Rancheria of Tachi Yokuts Indians. Therefore, it is recommended that the remains of this individual be made available for repatriation jointly to the Tule River Indian Tribe and the Santa Rosa Indian Community of the Santa Rosa Rancheria.</p> <p>The evidence suggests the individual may have been named Francisca, raising the possibility that lineal descendants may be identified, with rights to determine the disposition of the remains that supersede those of the culturally affiliated tribes. The Repatriation Office was unable to trace descendants of Francisca, but if any lineal descendants are identified by a preponderance of the evidence before a repatriation to the tribes is complete, the descendants will have the right to determine the disposition of the remains.</p> <p><b>Repatriation Update</b> In 2017, the human remains of this individual were repatriated by the Tule River Indian Tribe and the Santa Rosa Indian Community of the Santa Rosa Rancheria.</p>
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