subject terms for search:
“burial practices and funerals (764)” and “special burial practices and funerals (766)”

all relevant results for hunter-gatherers shown below

summary of records returned in search:
Africa ( 81 paragraphs in 20 documents in 3 cultures )
Asia ( 276 paragraphs in 19 documents in 4 cultures )
North America ( 2299 paragraphs in 244 documents in 28 cultures )
Oceania ( 368 paragraphs in 23 documents in 3 cultures )
South America ( 306 paragraphs in 45 documents in 8 cultures )

In selecting excerpts, I focused on the earliest ethnographic accounts and those pertaining to periods when the society still practiced pure hunting and gathering before contact. I often did not record redundant observations (i.e., made by the same ethnographer, but cited by later authors).

Africa

Mbuti


“...body is buried either inside or immediately beside the hut of the deceased...” (p. 5)


“When a pygmy dies, his kinsmen bury him near the camp.” (p. 341-b)


“...the northern archers formerly abandoned the corpse, placing it with its back against a tree. If someone died inside a hut, the corpse was left there for about two weeks, until decomposition had well set in. Then, without burying the remains, the camp was abandoned.” (p. 182-c)

“Nowadays the burial takes place beside the hut of the deceased ...” (p. 182-d)

“...the Pygmies had agreed that the grave should be dug beside the hut.” (p. 179)

“Burial is the custom among the net hunters, as with the archers. In general it follows the same pattern, taking place inside or immediately beside the hut of the deceased; the hut is pulled down over the grave and the camp deserted immediately.” (p. 222-b)
“Anne Putnam (1954, 77) mentions the opinion of a Pygmy hunter concerning the village custom of burying the dead in a cemetery. He is reported as saying, “There the ground locks everyone’s arms together and it isn’t comfortable.”” (p. 223-c)


“In the forest the practice is to scratch a shallow hole in the floor of the hut and bury the deceased person there, pulling the hut down over the grave. The camp is then abandoned, nothing being left to indicate the grave site, nothing being buried with the body except maybe a few very personal belongings such as bark cloth, bracelet or necklace.” (p. 143)

“The most common method now, and apparently in the past, is simply to pull the hut down over the corpse, the body having been buried in a shallow pit dug in the ground or simply left on the bed, covered with leaves.” (p. 145)

“On some occasions bodies are buried up in trees, and in the southeastern region of net-hunters this is how the Mbuti say they dispose of dead lepers. Nearly all Mbuti say that in the old days they buried their dead in holes in the ground, filling the holes in afterward so that the animals would not find the bodies.” (p. 145)

Dorobo/Okiek


“When a Dorōbo dies, his body is taken out into the forest, about 200 to 300 yards from his hut, and left for the hyaenas (kimaroket) to devour.” (p. 353)


“… during the evening of the day on which he dies his body is taken out by his sons, or if he has none, by other men of his family or clan, and laid on its right side (men and women alike) with the legs straight and hands crossed over the breast, on the edge of the forest about three hundred yards away from the hut. If the hyaenas do not come and eat it, nothing is done, the body is just left to rot, and the bones are left lying there … Very old men and women are buried in narrow holes about 5 feet deep, in which they are laid wearing their clothes … Babies are buried in the dung-heap if there is one, otherwise they are laid out for the hyaenas like other people.” (p. 141)

San
“Burial of the dead is carried out almost universally at present. Among the more primitive groups, however, the corpse is left in the hut which is simply pressed down so as to cover it. After a death has taken place the camp is deserted and not occupied again.” (p. 95)


“The 94 people who died during the period were, according to !Kung custom, buried near their place of death, and their skeletons would be difficult to locate by archaeological techniques.” (p. 88)


“A distinction is made between people who have died “well,” that is, easily and without a painful illness, and those who die in great pain. The former are buried in the bush near the surface in the vicinity of the settlement, and the settlement is moved. The latter, whom the Bushman probably regards as possessed and fears even after death, are not buried at all since they are abandoned even before death, and the entire settlement flees. In the case of a burial, it takes place immediately after death.” (p. 53)


“As soon as death occurs, the corpse is unclothed, wrapped in hides or blankets, and is placed in the grave on its left side in an extended position with the head toward the west.” (p. 18)

“As soon as someone has died, all the women and girls sit around the corpse and weep. There is no singing on this occasion. Then some of the men go and dig a grave in the bush, cut off medium-sized pieces of wood, and place these in the bottom of the grave as a foundation, over which is spread the hay that the deceased was lying on. Then all take the body to the grave and bury it in a crouched position with the back toward the sunrise.” (p. 57)

“Before their interment, feared men, such as sorcerers who had a malign influence and others who were feared in life, but not women, are firmly tied up with thongs of game hide in the crouched posture described above; then, in some cases, the spine is crushed with a stone or ax, as a result of which the head can be bent even lower and placed between the knees. Tied up in this fashion, they are thrown into a fissure in the earth, into an anteater's hole, or into a small cave.” (p. 58)

“In olden times the dead were supposedly thrown into the bush; nowadays they are sometimes buried in a crouching position in [Page 123] 63 cont. termite hills, sometimes in rock fissures …” (p. 122)

“The dead person is buried immediately; there is no dancing, only weeping. The corpse is tied in a crouching position and buried on its side with the head toward the east … Among the Naron the corpse is tied in a crouching position and buried on his side with the face toward the east. These customs are
by no means always observed, however, especially when the ground is hard.” (p. 148)


“The deceased is buried near the village in a hole dug in the ground or bored deep into one of the towering, hard-earth termite mounds found scattered throughout the desert … After any death and burial, the village is abandoned and a new one erected nearby; the traditional huts can be built in a matter of hours, and a new village can go up in a few days.” (p. 203)


“When an adult dies, he or she is buried, wrapped in a cloak and [Page 93] bound in a squatting or foetal position, upright in a grave about five feet deep. If the death has occurred in or near the village, the grave is made in the floor of the deceased’s hut. The hut is then broken down. as are all the other huts in the village and this site is never used again for fear of angering the ghost. All implements and weapons of the deceased are broken and placed on top of the grave to mark it and warn others that it is a grave and the dwelling place of a ghost. The death is mourned for three days and then the whole band moves away from the vicinity of the grave.” (p. 92)


“The old people, the survivors, had not expected to outlive their children and grandchildren, and then they had to bury them; they had scooped shallow graves for them and had placed their bodies inside, then had covered the graves with branches. The old people had then lived by the graves for months to mourn and to protect the corpses from marauding animals.” (p. 124)

“We learned that the Gikwe dig a grave with digging-sticks, then bind the body with the arms crossed over the chest, the knees raised and bound, the ankles tied together, and the head resting on the fists, which are drawn up to the chin. The body is then wrapped in an old kaross and placed in a sitting position in the grave, braced upright by a forked stick. Each person present throws a handful of earth into the grave to “make the person remember them” and also to make the spirit go peacefully away. The grave is then filled up and covered with thorn branches to protect the dead person from wild animals, for a hyena will sometimes unearth a corpse … While performing a funeral, and from the time of the funeral on, the Bushmen always stay upwind from a grave, for after death the spirit blows down the wind and will be harmful to the living. Gikwe Bushmen remain by a grave for at least three months—three moons, or longer—before they [Page 126] move away because they cannot bear to leave the dead person, because they want to make sure that animals do not spoil his body, and because, said Ukwane, “He is our person, whom we love. We do not want to leave until we have given up hope.”” (pp. 125-6)

Asia

Ainu

“… the people did not like strangers to see where they hid their dead away …” (p. 149)

“When a death has taken place, messengers are sent off at once to relations and friends to tell them the sad news and invite them to the funeral.” (p. 156)

“The mourners follow the dead in single file, the men leading; each carrying something to be buried with the body. Whatever the distance to the grave may be, it is the custom, in some districts, to rest three times on the way. The grave is usually dug about three feet deep. [Page 159] Stakes are driven round the inside to which mats are hung. The earth is then thrown in and some branches covered over it.” (p. 158)


“Within an hour of the apparent cessation of life the near relatives and sometimes close friends are summoned. A little later the news is carried near and far by messengers. This news is known as ‘telling bad news’ (assurani or assuru-tasa), and the usual title for a messenger (shongo) is changed to ‘person with bad news’ (assuru-koro-guru).” (p. 124)

“In the past Ainu had no graveyards, burial in spots round the village being the rule. As we have seen, elders were sometimes buried near the house. But there have been graveyards for many years …” (p. 133)


“[for deaths occurring inside] When the ground is not frozen, the men dig a hole in the community cemetery located in the hilly area behind the settlement.” (p. 66)

“[for deaths occurring outside in the water] A messenger is dispatched to all the related settlements to gather relatives for the funeral … If found, the body must be buried in the grass field next to the sandy beach and not in the cemetery…. [for deaths occurring outside caused by bears] The funeral has to be given immediately and at the exact place where the bear killed the deceased. The victim must also be buried at the spot. ” (p. 70)

Veddas


“Till very recently the dead man was left where he died. The survivors covered the body with leaves, put a heavy stone upon its chest, and sought some other cave, leaving that in which the death occurred to the spirit of the deceased. They still desert the scene of the death, and the bones, constantly found in good preservation in the caves of Nilgala, prove how recently the practice of leaving the body unburied has been abandoned.” (p. 296)
“Caves in which a death occurred were deserted, the corpse being covered with leaves; perhaps men very near dissolution were left before death had actually occurred, but this did not seem certain. Bones found in the cave when the group returned to it after an interval of some ten or twelve years were thrown away quite carelessly.” (p. 34)

“WHEN a man or woman dies from sickness the body is left in the cave or rock-shelter in which death took place. The body is not washed, dressed or ornamented in any way but is generally allowed to lie in the natural supine position and is covered with leaves and branches.” (p. 122)

“At Bandaraduwa we were able to ascertain what was done after the death of a man named Tuta which had occurred in a neighbouring settlement two days before our arrival. The grave was dug by two of the man's brothers who carried the body to it; nothing was buried in the grave, not even the dead man's betel pouch …. These people, who settled some seventy years ago, as Tennant records1 [Ceylon, London 1859, Vol. II, pp. 446 and 447.], knew only of leaving the body in the cave as a custom practised long ago by their ancestors, and there is no doubt that the adults of the present generation have seen nothing except burial in graves probably conducted in much the same manner as that practised by the surrounding Sinhalese. The Omuni Veddas mentioned two interesting points with regard to burial. It should not take place in the immediate neighbourhood of any of their scanty and primitive chena cultivations, and the grave should be at least as far from the village as it was possible to hear a “Hoo” cry.” (pp. 123-4)

“Bodies were never buried until the English Government endeavoured to enforce burial. The Vaeddas have not the least objection to the corpse being buried, but object greatly to being forced to dig the grave...2 2 Taprobanian, Vol. 1, p. 179..” (p. 147)

“The grave must be at some distance from the habitations of the living and also from their cultivation patches.” (p. 339)

Andamans


“The Onge bury their dead in trenches, no deeper than three feet. Earth is tightly packed over the graves in order to prevent exhalations. Full details on the subject of Onge burial customs appear in the book that I am writing about the Onge. I slept with the Onge in communal huts that contained fresh graves, without suffering any inconvenience from the smell of the corpses. This recalls the palaeolithic sepulchral caves, where man probably lived as the Onge live in their sepulchral huts today.” (p. 485)


“The custom of burial within the communal hut follows the same logic - the spirits of the dead are kept near their bones and hence near their relatives, to help them in the daily round of hunting, fishing and gathering food.” (p. 44)
“Like the kitchen-middens of the Onges, those of the Jarawas contain human bones clearly interred in graves, and not scattered among the refuse. This refutes the Arioto accusation against the Eremtaga of cannibalism, and that of the people of South Andaman (now vanished) against the people of North Andaman and the Onges; the remains of cannibal feasts would undoubtedly have been found among kitchen refuse and not carefully buried in the ritual manner, with the graves filled in with earth. And the Jarawas and the majority of the Arioto buried their dead in the communal huts, continuing a custom which originated while they were still on Little Andaman.” (p. 78)

“In April 1954 I excavated the midden at Tambe-e-buiè on Little Andaman, abandoned after the earth tremors of 1951, to investigate the position of the beds. The custom of burying the dead underneath their beds made it possible to trace the latter by the human remains below them, arranged in a circle round the periphery. The Onges themselves helped in the work, sometimes even trying to recognize the remains as they came to light. There were clear signs of reburial. The body is buried immediately after death at least one metre deep; whereas after exhumation, cleaning and colouring, it is never re-interred more than thirty centimetres below the floor of the hut. When another death makes it necessary for a new grave to be dug under the bed, the piles of bones from the second are disturbed, so that in time a form of ossuary develops. In this it is not possible to identify the various remains of individuals unless some change in the position of the but, even by a few metres, preserves the bones from disturbance by fresh graves. Traces of the graves always remain, however, as they are invariably filled with fresh earth.” (p. 79)

“The custom of burying the dead in caves still occupied by the living apparently existed in the Palaeolithic era. The practice has continued to the present time in the Andamans, where the dead are still buried under the family bed in the communal hut. It is known from Palaeolithic burials that even in that era objects were sometimes buried with the dead, and it is thus possible that the culture of the Andamans dates back to very early times.” (p. 150)


“None save infants are buried within the encampment, all others being carried to some distant and secluded spot in the jungle, and there interred or placed upon a “machán,” or platform; it is generally arranged beforehand which of these two methods shall be employed, but the latter is considered the more complimentary, apparently because it involves a little more labour. Old persons are generally buried … Arrived at their destination, the corpse, which has been carried by one of the men on his back, is put down, while the final preparations are being made. A spot is selected where there is a boulder or large tree, They never wittingly use the same tree or spot a second time, and are careful to remember those which served on a former occasion. to mark it, and there, if a grave has been decided on, they dig a hole about 4 or 5 feet deep, with an adze ( w[unknownj]o[unknownj]lo- ), into which the body is lowered in a sitting posture, facing the east, all present then raise the leaf covering the head, and take leave of their friend by blowing upon his face … Should it, however, have been determined to dispose of the corpse by the alternative method, a small stage is constructed of sticks and boughs, about 8 to 12 feet above the ground, generally between the forked branches of some large tree, They are careful not to select a fruit-tree, or one used for the manufacture of their canoes, bows, and other implements. and to it the body is lashed. The head is raised slightly, looking eastward, and, though the position of the arms is not altered, the cords are loosened to allow of the legs being straightened, after which the leaves are re-adjusted, so as to cover the entire form, in order to protect it
from the attacks of hawks, crows, and vermin.” (pp. 76-7)

“The body of an enemy, stranger, or captive child would be thrown into the sea, or buried sans cérémonie, as the bones would never be in request.” (p. 78)


“The male relatives and friends then proceed to the spot selected for the burial, one of them carrying the corpse slung on his back. If the burial place can be reached by canoe, no hesitation is shown in making use of a canoe for the purpose.” (p. 107)

“In the case of very young children the burial ceremony is different … a grave is dug there in the floor of the hut. In this the child's body is placed, the grave is filled in and the fire replaced above it. Not only is the camp not deserted, but there seems to be an obligation on the parents not to leave the place until the bones have been dug up, or at any rate for some weeks after the death. If the mother went away, the natives say, the baby would cry for its mother's milk. This is the custom of the Northern tribes. Referring to the Southern tribes, Mr Man says that the baby is buried beneath the fireplace and the camp is then deserted, the mother placing beside the grave a shell containing some milk squeezed from her breasts. Some of my informants of the Southern tribes (Akar-Bale, etc.) told me however that the camp would not be deserted in the case of the death of an infant, thus contradicting Mr Man's statement. As there was no opportunity of testing the point by reference to an actual case, it must be left as doubtful. In the Northern tribes when an older child dies the body is buried away from the camp, but the latter is not, at any rate in all instances, deserted, though the hut in which the death occurred may be destroyed and a new one built a short distance away. It is only in the case of the death of an adult that the camp is abandoned … Should a person die while on a visit, he or she is buried in the usual way and news of the death and place of burial is sent to the relatives. A stranger who dies or is killed is buried unceremoniously or is cast into the sea … If a man were killed in a fight between two communities and his body remained with the enemy, they would dispose of it in this way. If the friends secured the body they would bury it in the usual way.” (pp. 109-10)

Semang


“The Batek Đè' are apparently the last people in the Malay Peninsula regularly to practise tree-burial, though it was probably once widespread among the aboriginal groups. Skeat records that tree-burial was still used for shamans by the Negritos of the Sam River (a tributary of the Kelantan River below Kuala Krai) in 1900 (Skeat [Page 115] and Blagden 1906b: 91), and the Batek Nòng told me (in 1972) that they still employed this form of burial for shamans (batèk potew) because, if they buried a shaman in the ground, a terrible storm would occur. The Temiar say that this was once their method of burial for all persons, and some claim that it is still done occasionally in areas where they would not be subject to interference from the Malays (Geoffrey Benjamin, personal communication).” (p. 114)

“A crude stretcher of sticks is then lashed together and placed under the corpse. The stretcher is suspended from a pole and carried by two men into the forest some distance from camp.” (p. 115)
“The aim of placing the body in a hut in a tree is always the same, but the means used vary according to practical necessities and possibilities. For example, the body may be transported by raft or canoe if this is easier than carrying it.” (p. 117)

“Among the Aring Batek, when a baby is still-born or dies soon after birth (there is little agreement on exactly how soon), before it has a name, it is buried in the ground instead of in a tree.24 [This is the reverse of the present Temiar practice. Normally people are buried in the ground, but unnamed babies are hung in a cloth bag from a tree (Geoffrey Benjamin, personal communication)].” (p. 120)


“Most groups bury the corpse in a shallow grave … Most groups reserve tree burial, or burial with the head above ground, for great shamans.” (p. 9)


“Every death has an effect socially insofar as the community flees from the camp after the funeral ceremonies and settles elsewhere, if possible beyond a body of water. A dead person is usually buried under his windscreens, and since the spirit of the dead is feared, the people flee before it. It seems that this custom, too, goes back to the influence of the neighboring Senoi … Sometimes, especially in the case of children apparently, the body is interred outside the camp in order to avoid having to leave.” (p. 280)


“The Jahay do not bury the Hala’, who after death turns into a tiger, like ordinary mortals, but rather either expose the corpse in trees or place it in a squatting position in the grave so that the head protrudes above the earth. I saw a grave of this type … The Menri’ expose the corpse of the Puteu (i.e., the great Hala’), which apparently means exposure in the dwelling in the manner of the Senoi. All the inmates abandon the camp out of fear of the tiger.” (p. 227)

“The Hala’ naki, in a squatting position, is buried up to his chest; his head protrudes out of the grave, but is covered. A protective roof is erected over the grave and a fence on either side ….” (p. 229)

“Burial customs vary slightly from tribe to tribe. King Chulalongkorn reports of the Tonga-Mos in Siam that the Semang only superficially bury their dead and then flee from the place out of fear of spirits and the tiger which devours the corpses (27/255) … I was able to attend a Jahay burial. A six-year-old girl who had died during the night was to be buried. Early in the morning the father of the child wrapped the corpse in a cloth, which I had given the sick child the day before, and carried her out of the camp. Only the near kin-group community took part in the burial; all the other inmates of the camp took no further notice of it. The corpse was buried outside the camp on the slope of a hill in a small bamboo clearing.” (p. 237)
“From this report one learns that blowgun, quiver, and tinder are put on the grave, and, indeed, in the roof of the windscreen which is erected over the grave; moreover, that after the burial, the people leave the camp and settle elsewhere ….” (p. 241)

“The corpse is buried outside the camp, beyond a body of water, so that the spirit of the dead person will not find its way into the camp. This is always done if the camp has a planting. Otherwise the corpse is buried in the hut and the place is abandoned.” (p. 241)

“A recent eye-witness account of a burial among the Lanoh of Langgong, given by P.D.R. Williams-Hunt, has been received in time to be incorporated here (60) … Four men carried the bier, to which the corpse was fastened with rattan, out of the camp, about two English miles away. Three bodies of water were crossed before they reached a hill on whose slope they dug the grave.” (p. 244)

“The corpse is buried on the day of death, if possible … The men carry the corpse on their shoulders to the grave ….” (p. 247)

“W. Skeat writes briefly about the burial customs of the Menri’, saying that laymen are buried in the ground, whereas the great Hala’ are exposed in trees so that the spirit of the dead can more easily fly over the monster that blocks the way to paradise.” (p. 261)

“The Menri’ on the Setong River practice burial in the ground, as I was able to convince myself when I opened a grave in order to recover the skeleton. I was surprised at the depth of the pit (about 1.20 meters) because I had not seen graves of this depth among either the Jahay or the Kenta’-Kensiu. Only the corpse of a Hala’ is exposed in a tree.” (p. 261)

“From Evans (23/267 f.) we learn the following about the burial customs of the Batek in Pahang: A few days before his visit in Jeransang, a death occurred. The man was buried in his hut where death had overtaken him; the survivors abandoned the camp and set up a new one several hundred meters away.” (pp. 262-3)


“The procession consisted entirely of men—eighteen in all—and I was told that women never go to an interment even when a husband or child is concerned, since ‘knowing the deceased, they would be too sad’ … The site chosen for the interment was in a patch of secondary jungle on a steep hillside near to some Malay rubber plantations and about 2 miles away from the camp. To reach this place one had to cross a large irrigation ditch, a small stream, and the Jepai River in two places. There was a previous interment on the hillside, that of a child, marked by a mound that had partially caved in, and the balan was set down beside this.” (p. 66)

“Two stakes of wood (TANGKAL) were sharpened at each end and placed upright on the grave. The larger, about 1 ft. high, was set at the head and the smaller, some 3 in. shorter, at the foot. These two tangkal placed in the grave are considered to be a measure to prevent the grave being disturbed by wild beasts, tigers in particular. The rock tangkal has an additional significance in preserving the memory of the deceased. Moreover, it ensures that the interment will not be excavated in future years for another grave.” (p. 68)
Australia & Oceania

Aranda


“In anticipation a hole for the grave had been dug some half a mile or more away.” (pp. 124-5)


“The graves for men are dug by men only, those for women and children partly by men and partly by women, a sandy spot being selected for the purpose, situated at some considerable distance from the camp … Soon after the hut of the departed is burnt down, with all his earthly possessions, that the Itana may not return and injure his kin or other persons. Moreover, the camp is shifted at once to another place for fear of the Itana … If others arrive from afar, they go first to the mourners and sit down with them, the women behind the men, the men behind the women, and those of the same sex beside or before each other, and show their sympathy with them by crying and lamenting for a while.” (pp. 238-239)


“The [deceased] man's or woman's camp is at once burnt down, all the contents being destroyed. The whole of the local encampment is shifted to a new place.” (p. 431)

Tiwi


“It appears that the favourite places for burying the dead are there, where a jungle or mangrove-thicket breaks to the ordinary eucalypt-woodland, usually near to the sea-coast or to a native water.” (p. 311)

“Captain Barlow as commandant of Fort Dundas, in his interesting memoir to the Royal Geographical Society also refers to native graves observed by him. He writes: “It appears to be the custom of the natives to bury their dead, their burial places being in retired spots near their most frequented encamping ground …” This description applies equally well to those seen by us ….” (p. 312)

“… when a male Ego dies and his relatives foregather for his funeral ceremonies …” (p. 464)


[the communities studied sound like they were already on reserves and no longer practicing hunter-gatherer mode of subsistence]

“At eight o’clock in the morning, the funeral procession started down the road toward the grave area set aside by the settlement.” (p. 243)

“Shortly after the burial and well before the start of the final preparations for the pukamani ceremony, messengers must be sent out to all areas where there are close relatives in order to announce the death and to give word when the final ceremony will take place.” (p. 269)


“The funeral ceremonies for adults were always held some considerable time after the death and burial of the deceased. How long a period elapsed between the death and the funeral ceremonies depended on the expected size of the gathering, and this figure correlated; at least roughly, with the importance of the deceased. Here again the overriding consideration was food supply, since the chief mourners (that is, the deceased's closer relatives) had to feed everybody who came to the funeral while the ceremonies lasted, which might be almost a week.” (p. 38)

“All bodies of dead persons were buried within twenty-four hours of their death by digging a hole near the camp where the death had occurred and placing the body, wrapped in bark, in it. Near most well-used camping spots there was already a graveyard marked by old graveposts, and the latest corpse was buried there or near there. Seldom was the body carried any distance for burial. If a person died even less than a mile from an old burial ground, there was little inclination to carry the body that far. He would be buried, instead, within perhaps a hundred yards of where he died. This had certain awkward repercussions for social organization, since occasionally a person died while away from his home district and, being buried where he died, his ceremonies were held and his posts erected in a district in which his immediate family did not live.” (p. 90)


“On the day that Waniampieri died, Marawani, one of his near relatives, who wanted the dead man buried near his mother ….” (p. 64)

Manus

When a person died, his or her tamatus assumed responsibility for the management of the burial: washing the body and caring for it, digging the grave, building the coffin, carrying it to the graveyard, making sure the deceased's spirit went to the graveyard instead of remaining in the village and so forth.” (p. 126)


“Furthermore, as a part of colonial administration, islanders were encouraged to set aside a part of their land to use as a cemetery, ending their older practice of burying the dead under the house.” (p. 50)


“After the death of a man his body would be placed in the family house where it was left to decompose. When only the skeleton remained, some of the bones were buried, and some were washed in salt water, and kept by the relatives of the dead man (Parkinson 1911: 404).” (p. 18)

“The people on M'buke converted to Catholicism at the beginning of the nineteen-thirties. They were thereby told to destroy or to throw away the old skulls and to bury their dead in cemeteries. The cemetery was situated at the village of M'bulol. By this time there were no remains of any cemetery belonging to the original Matankor population. Thus, whether the Matankor buried their dead in graves or just threw away the bones is impossible to say. However, there are two places at Ko-on, on M'buke, where the Matankor, it is said, used to dispose of the bones of their dead. These places, which are both situated on the beach, were earlier controlled by the spirits of the dead.” (pp. 130-1)


“The bodies are exposed on the more remote little islands until the [Page [319]] bones have been washed clean, when the skull and certain other bones are recovered and installed in the ceremonial skull bowl.” (p. 318)


“The dead are also laid upon more distant islands; this follows a desire to remove them from the close proximity of the village ….” (p. 201)

South America

Siriono
“As in the case of important game animals, it is important not to destroy or leave behind the bones of a deceased person, especially not the all-important cranium. Traditionally the body was exposed on a platform until the flesh had decomposed; then the bones were recovered and brought back to the village.” (p. 5)

“Aboriginally the Siriono do not bury their dead. The corpse, extended with arms to the side, is wrapped in two mats of motacú palm and placed on a platform in the house. It is not oriented in any special way. With the deceased are placed his calabashes filled with water, his pipes, and fire. No food is left. Once the corpse is disposed of the house is abandoned; but before leaving, the men shoot arrows in all directions through the house to drive out the evil spirits. The band then moves on to a new location—often several days' journey away.” (p. 87)

“After the death of a member of the group the hut is abandoned for good. The trifling belongings of the dead person stay behind in it. The corpse finds its last resting place in a special grave-hut which has a conical shape. It lies on mats of palm leaves, which are spread out on a wooden frame from one half to one meter high. It is also covered with similar mats. Above this is enthroned the severed head.” (pp. 293-4)

“the Sirionó had no indigenous tradition of burial, instead abandoning the dead in the forest ….” (p. 72)

“In former times, a person was buried in his dugout, a custom that still lives on in the dugout type “bongos” used for burial nowadays. If the head of a household dies, especially if he is an AIDAMO, the house structure is torn down and one or more new ones erected according to the number of sons-in-law. The wood is used for the burning of dugout canoes.” (p. 577)
where they open a hole in the ground, deposit the dead man, and then cover him up with temiche palm leaves. The Indians visit the dead man three days after the burial and then forget him. When the dead person is a child, instead of burying him far from the rancheria, they bury him near it (28). According to Professor Werner Schad, in the region with which he has his greatest firsthand familiarity, they normally build sepulchers above the ground in trunks and abandon the entire rancheria after several deaths. But Turrado Moreno, pp. 274–275, rejects/recha/this and other hypotheses.” (p. 64)


“Death.—Several kinds of burial have been reported. In the case of high chiefs, i.e., of a subtribe (?), the body is allowed to putrefy and the skeleton is then suspended in the chief's house. The skull is decorated with feathers and the dead man's gold plates (not mentioned otherwise) are hung around the bones. Or else, the body is tied to a rope and left a whole day hanging in the river until the fish have cleaned it to the bones … In some cases, a coffin made of hollowed tree trunk or a canoe is placed on two forked sticks thrust into the ground (fig. 134) near the hut, or on several sticks placed together in an abandoned hut. It is not clear if this method is reserved for chiefs, shamans, and other important people or is used during inundations when burial in the ground seems hardly feasible. In other cases, the corpse, rolled up in a hammock, is buried in a sitting position in a grave 3 feet (1 m.) deep … The corpse is always disposed of on the spot where the person expired. On one occasion, a shaman was buried in the house where he had died and the whole village was burned down.” (p. 876)


“The deceased, once inside the coffin, is covered with palm leaves and the funeral procession is then begun in canoes to the cemetery, located downstream in the vicinity of the settlement … In traditional Warao cemeteries two types of tomb are to be found. One is the place of primary interment in which the coffin, covered with mud and vegetable fibers, is suspended some 80 centimeters above the marshy ground on two forked poles fixed in the ground. The other [tomb type] is a secondary interment underground, which is made after the exhumation of the corpse. At the end of a year, the relatives return to the cemetery and open the suspended tomb. The older women take the bones out and place them in a smaller coffin which is then definitively placed in the ground and marked with a mound of soggy earth. If the deceased was an individual of great magico-religious prestige, a great wisidatu, for instance, a small, special hut is constructed for him as a secondary tomb, which is completely closed in. Until some time ago, bones were kept after exhumation in baskets hanging in the interior of huts constructed close to the settlements (Turrado Moreno, 1945).” (pp. 146-7)


“When everything is ready, they load the canoa in a curiara, if by necessity the route is by water, or four Indians carry it on their shoulders where there is a land route, and they go in a procession to the “joitanoko,” to the cemetery, which may be far from, near, or even within the rancheria itself ….” (p. 283)

“The belongings of the dead are placed in his hammock with him, the hammock is strung on a pole, and two men carry it to the boat, while the women continue loud wailing and screaming. The guests follow in their boats to the cemetery. Here the corpse is placed in a hollowed-out tree, a coffin which rests either on two wooden forks or on a platform of manaca beams. The hammock is slipped from under the body and is buried separately. The coffin is covered with timiche leaves and layers of mud tightly secured with lianas. A more or less elaborate roof is constructed over the coffin of a dignitary.” (p. 109)

“At the death of a small child, the close relatives come to mourn while the little corpse rests on the lap of a kinswoman. Several hours later, an uncle or an aunt will carry it to the cemetery and deposit the body in a wooden box or a small, hollowed-out tree trunk. The small hammock is buried separately near a tree or else is taken home to be kept by the parents in a safe place. Several children may be buried in the same box if multiple deaths occur in quick succession.” (p. 110)

Bororo


“Early on the following day, while some young men prepare a grave from thirty to forty cms. in depth in the plaza of the aldeia, next to the baimannagueggeu ….” (p. 269)

“At dawn, to the singing of the kiegue baregue, “birds and beasts,” the mat that contains the cadaver is disinterred and opened, and is taken to the nearby river or lagoon. Amidst that decomposition, the bones are extracted and washed by the young men, who perform the macabre office with indifference. Once the bones are washed and placed in a basket, they take them to the baimannagueggeu, where everyone is already waiting.” (p. 285)

“They paint all the bones with urucú and decorate the larger ones with feathers: cubiti and radii, femora and tibiae. Thus prepared, they enclose the bones in the basket. This basket stays in the home of the relatives two or three days, until one afternoon the mother or the closest female relative puts the basket on her back and at a slow pace, followed by all the inhabitants of the The bones of the deceased and the basket in which they will be placed, ready for the final burial in the water.” (p. 287)

“One morning the one who takes the part of uiaddo, together with the relatives of the dead one, takes the basket of bones, goes to a nearby river or lagoon already determined. There, where the waters are deeper, they lower the basket and fix it fast on the bottom with a stick which comes out of the water. This lagoon is the aroe iao, “dwelling of the souls.”” (p. 288)

“When a Bororó dies, his body is wrapped in the palm-leaf rug which has served as his bed and is carried to the baehytu, where the spectacle described above makes night and day hideous until the first sunset after death; then as the sun goes down the chorus becomes hushed, and the bundle of remains, with a nine-foot pole passing through the roll, is carried to the public play-ground just outside the baehytu, and about ten inches of earth heaped over it. Here it rests a week that the flesh may separate from the bones ….” (p. 52)

“Early next morning the bope-representatives resurrect the remains by means of the pole, carry them to the river, scrape and wash the bones and pack them in a basket, keeping the skull separate when they wish to decorate it.” (p. 53)

“… at sunset the basket of bones is laid away in the little cemetery outside the village ….” (p. 54)


“Their villages, at the extreme “outside” with respect to the Bororo village, are nevertheless connected to the village center, where remains of deceased Bororo are temporarily buried and prepared by ceremony for their final burial ….” (p. 60)

“Despite variations in the descriptions of the Bororo funeral, it is possible to distinguish the following principal and common features: initial songs and the preparation of the corpse for preliminary interment; primary, temporary burial in the western village plaza; a set of ceremonies that can be villagewide or clan-specific in scope; special social observances, including communal hunts and fishing, strict exchange patterns, and daily mourning, while the corpse decomposes; a three-day series of continual rituals immediately preceding the exhumation of bones; the exhumation, cleaning, and decoration of the bones; and final burial (in marsh, grottos, or today in an actual cemetery).” (p. 79)


“When the temporary grave has been dug in the plaza, the body is interred so that it lies less than a foot below the surface of the ground.” (p. 41-a)


“At sunset the body is taken to the men's club, where the chiefs chant and shake their rattles all night. After a brief rest in the morning, the song is resumed and continues until sunset. Near the club the young men prepare a shallow provisional grave.” (p. 430)

“After a night's chanting, the corpse is unwrapped, the bones spread out, washed in a stream, and then
carried to the club, where the souls of the dead are invited to a general repast ... The next morning the hunter, impersonating the dead man, and the mourners bury the basket in a stream at a depth of several meters, with a stick projecting above the water ... On the São Lourenço River the corpse is interred in the woods 2 or 3 days after death, and the ultimate fleshing and disposal of the bones occurs a fortnight later.” (pp. 430-1)

Xokleng


“… the Kaingáng no longer burn their dead ...” (p. 185)

“When the fire is out they throw the ashes off the bones and gather them together in bark. When they gather up the bones they make a big basket for them and put fern in the basket with kungglú and tai leaves. They carry the basket with the bones and go to another place to bury them ... When they reach the spot where they intend to bury the bones the ground is cleared, and hole dug and lined with fern, the bones and the basket placed in the hole, and a little house erected over the grave by the women.” (pp. 186-7)

Tehuelche

no relevant passages

Yahgan


“Formerly the most common form of the disposal of a corpse was by burning, but particularly after European contact, this gave way to burial in the ground or in a kitchen midden (for easier digging).” (p. 10)


“It is well known that the Yamana formerly burned their corpses in their own huts and afterwards buried the bone parts on the spot. It cannot be proved, but it is almost certain that they also buried the entire corpse in a shell mound without first cremating it. Unfortunately only an extremely small number of remains of human skeletons from the shell mounds have been gathered and accurately described scientifically.” (p. 349)

“Fatal accidents are not uncommon. A whole family may be taken if a canoe capsizes. A few men drag the body of a person who has drowned or fallen from a rock into his hut if it is not too far away. Otherwise, if the men are far from their families on a cormorant hunt, they bury the victim then and there and hasten to bring the news quickly to the family.” (p. 1047)
“I, too, must rely on the accounts of my Indians who gave me the following description. The corpse, which is wrapped in a large piece of leather and tightly bound with cord, is dragged out of the hut by a few men from among the close relatives. They take it to the nearest thicket or into the nearby woods. Here they lay it on a low bushy shrub with spreading branches. Smoldering sticks are pushed into the shrub and dry logs leaned against it. They fan it rapidly with leafy twigs, and in a few minutes the flames leap up. Usually after a short time the burned bush collapses. Then the burning corpse is covered with greater quantities of wood. The men alone do this first part, while the girls and women are obliged to fetch firewood incessantly and to keep the fire burning brightly until all the bones have been destroyed beyond recognition. Coarse sand or earth from the forest floor is dragged to the place with sticks or oars and scattered over the remaining small heap of ashes of the extinguished pyre. Finally the spot is covered with brush and fallen branches. After a few months it no longer is discernible … Even in regions where cremation was preferred over burial, the body of a child was customarily buried in the ground … Hyades (p):332, for example, writes: “Sometimes [the dead] are burned, especially when death has taken place far from the habitual residence of the family” /translated from French/.” (pp. 1049-1050)

“Hyades (c):142 generalizes this assertion (47)47. He says: “The Fuegians do not have a funeral rite; they inter the body near their dwelling at a shallow depth and later burn the bones” /translated from French/ … Spencer:74 may well appear as a witness for the cremation of bodies, but he is mistaken in his reasoning: “Old woman says that in olden times bodies were burned, which agrees with remnants of large fires met with in deeper parts of old middens, three and four and five feet down, where also are no shells, or very few, and only calcined light-coloured earth” /cited in English/ … Besides the burning of the bodies of adults in ancient times, burial in the ground was also customary, at least for children and possibly also now and then for adults. Fitz-Roy (a):181 credits all the water nomads of the Fireland Archipelago with it (48)48. He asserts: “When a person dies, his family wrap the body in skins, and carry it a long way into the woods; there they place it upon broken boughs, or pieces of solid wood, and then pile a great quantity of branches over the corpse” /cited in English/. and there is also no lack of witnesses for it from more recent times. Lovisato (b):148 certainly deserves assent when he says that “the burial of corpses in that tribe dates from the time of the Ushuaia Mission” /translated from Italian/, in contrast to cremation as a “custom also practiced today by some, but very rarely, and doggedly combatted by the missionaries” /translated from Italian/. Actually, with the coming of Europeans, cremation, which formerly was almost universal, gave way to burial in the ground exclusively. It is inaccurate to maintain that the Indians traveled to certain places solely for this purpose. According to Bridges (a):206, to whom Lovisato (b):147 refers, “small islands are preferred for burying-places, as there are no foxes to disturb the dead… Sometimes also the dead are buried at the foot of cliffs among the rocks, in places safe from foxes” /cited in English/. The Yamana would not take so much trouble; they customarily bury a corpse not far from the hut … A few decades ago they chose a large shell mound. It is easy to dig a rather large hole in it with poles and oars, and the hole can be quickly and easily covered again. In recent times our Indians prefer to bury the corpse in a sandbank lying off the shore or in a low hill of coarse gravel. ” (pp. 1052-3)

“In exceptional cases the body is interred in a small cave nearby or in the cavity of a rock if there is earth or gravel available to cover it. Even in our day the corpse has been destroyed in the hut fire. If, for instance, a married couple were all alone in some spot and the husband died, and other people, although notified by the customary triple smoke signal, could not get there quickly because of high waves, the surviving wife would be obliged to make the best of it. Without any special preparation of the corpse, she would drag it into the hut fire and pile brush and firewood on top of it. Soon the flames would leap so high that the hut itself would catch fire. The woman would keep the fire going until the corpse was completely destroyed. The same thing was done if the path into the forest was blocked or the customary
burial in the ground was in any way prevented. The concern of the survivors is always to do away with
the corpse without delay, and even a person by himself is able to do that … That is why it is a matter of
course for them “to burn the hut of the deceased, which was his last abode, and to leave the area for
some time,” to repeat Bove's (e):159 words.” (p. 1054)


“When death took place the corpse was wrapped in old seal-skins and buried outside of the house
within twenty-four hours. If the ground were frozen, the corpse might be covered with stones and
shrubs to keep off dogs and foxes, or it might be buried in a cave or on a small island. Hyades (1891, p.
379) says that when death occurred far from home the body was carried into the woods and cremated.
This was done that the bones might not fall into the hands of enemies and be made into harpoon-
points.” (p. 173)

Abipon


“The Abipones think it a great happiness to be buried in a wood under the shade of trees …. “ ( p. 268)

“It is incredible how religiously the Abipones perform the sepulchral honours of their friends. If they
see one of their comrades fall in battle they snatch the lifeless body from the midst of the enemies to
bury it properly in its native soil. To lessen the burden, they strip off the flesh and bury it in the ground;
the bones they put into a hide, and carry home on a horse, a journey not unfrequently of two hundred
leagues. But if the enemy presses on them, and they are forced to leave the body on the field of battle,
the relations seek for the bones on the first opportunity, and take no rest till they find them, however
much risk and labour must be encountered in accomplishing this. Moreover, the Abipones are not
content with any sepulchre, but take especial care that fathers may lie with their sons, wives with their
husbands, grandchildren with their grandfathers and great-grandfathers, and that every family should
have its own burying-place. This nation, having formerly inhabited more towards the north, know that
their ancestors' monuments exist there, and venerate them as something divine. They feel the most
lively pleasure in mingling the bones of their countrymen, where-ever, amidst their perpetual
peregrinations, they may have been buried, with the bones of their ancestors. Hence it is that they dig
them up and remove them so often, and carry them over immense tracts of land, till at length they
repose in the ancient and woody mausoleum of their forefathers; which they distinguish by certain
marks cut in the trees, and by other signs taught them by their ancestors.” (pp. 270-1)

“A FEW things remain to be said of the ceremonies with which the bones of the dead are honoured by
the Abipones when they are removed to their native land, and thence to the family burying-places.
Many translations of this kind have I witnessed: I will briefly relate that of the Cacique Ychamenraikin,
who was killed in battle by the savages at a place full forty leagues distant from the town of St.
Jeronymo. A drummer came announcing that the bones of the deceased leader would be carried into the
town next day about evening. After the flesh had been stripped off and buried by his companions, they
were put into a hide and conveyed on a horse. To receive these bones with due honour, preparations
were made by Hanetrain, the chief of the jugglers, and his companion Lamamin, and a house to place
the sad remains in appointed and properly furnished. The whole company of the women hastened to
meet the funeral at three leagues distance ... The bones being placed in a house prepared for their
reception, the regular mourning was carried on for nine days ... Whilst this was going on at home, persons of both sexes were chosen to accompany the bones of Ychamenraikin to his family burying-place, and there inter them agreeably to the rites of their country. These ceremonies were observed by the savages before they were instructed in the Christian religion only. Other removals of bones were conducted in exactly the same manner, with the exception of the canopy, which was reserved exclusively for their leaders. The bones of seven Abipones, who had been slain by the Spaniards, were brought home on one day, and skilfully constructed into as many images; hats being placed on their skulls, and clothes on their bodies. These seven skeletons were placed in a savage hut, honoured for nine successive days with mourning and drinking, and thence transported to their graves.” (pp. 281-4)

Ona


“If news of an accident reaches a camp, or, as a result of the long absence of a person, apprehension that he might have met misfortune finally gains the upper hand, a few men quickly come together to search for the one missing. Above all the intention to inter the corpse induces these men to go on the search. If the one missing should be found dead, they customarily bury him on the spot.” (p. 781)

“A few days after the end of a battle, the defeated party cautiously tries to creep back to the scene of its bravery in order to look after the fallen and to bury them. The victors bury the dead of their group immediately after the struggle (p. 640).” (p. 782)

“Our natives have never practiced cremation (cf. Gallardo:320); only the unauthoritative Lista (b):80 maintains this. Just as little are there any common graveyards, which would have been prevented from coming into being simply because of the restless wandering life. Each corpse gets its individual grave at a little distance from the place at which death occurred.” (p. 786)

“On Isla Grande there was only burial in the ground. In the south, a suitable spot for a grave was chosen in the forest; in the treeless north, people tried to find some brush or the foot of a hill if possible. (No one would think of carrying the corpse great distances.) They were never particular as to place and were satisfied if the corpse was buried a good distance from the dwellings. If a larger camp happened to be there, the men with the corpse took a longer route than when only one or two huts were counted. The burial never took place, however, in the hut itself … The scenery on the great island is too varied, and a person may be overtaken by death anywhere! Burial takes place right there, because transfer to another place would be too difficult. The three or six men who have carried the dead person out of the hut set out in any direction; if they come across a suitable spot, they put their burden on the ground.” (pp. 786-7)

“The men immediately make a layer of small trunks and short sticks, which almost completely covers the corpse; over this they pile heavy stones and on top a generous amount of dense brush. A few branches are scattered around and thrown down irregularly in the immediate vicinity; thus every trace of the footprints remains unrecognizable. (73) After only a few weeks this grave could no longer be found; only the few men who made it would remember the site … those men who have performed the duties of gravediggers do not make the burial site known to anyone.” (p. 789)

“… the corpse of one who fell by assassination or was slain on the field of battle was not buried by the
perpetrators themselves, but indeed by his relatives. Cannibalism and desecration of corpses were unknown here (p. 686).” (p. 791)


“The body of the dead was wrapped in skins and lashed between saplings; it was then placed in a hole in the ground which was filled; the sod was carefully replaced, and finally a fire was built over the grave to remove all traces of interment.” (p. 98)

North America

Aleut


“The people of Oonalashka bury their dead on the summits of hills, and raise a little hillock over the grave. In a walk into the country, one of the natives, who attended me, pointed out several of these receptacles of the dead. There was one of them, by the side of the road leading from the harbour to the village, over which was raised a heap of stones. It was observed, that every one who passed it, added one to it. I saw in the country several stone hillocks, that seemed to have been raised by art. Many of them were apparently of great antiquity.” (p. 519)


“When an islander [LSS: the Fox Islands in 1765] dies, the body is bound with thongs, and afterwards exposed to the air in a sort of wooden cradle hung on a cross-bar, supported by forks; upon these occasions they cry and make bitter lamentations.” (p. 230)

“Their ceremonies of burying the dead are as follow: The bodies of the inferior people are wrapped up in their clothes, or in mats, then laid in a grave, and covered with earth. The bodies of the chiefs are put, together with their clothes and arms, in a small boat made of drift-wood, [247] which is hung upon poles placed cross-ways, and the body thus left to rot in the open air.” (pp. 246-7)


“Poor persons were wrapped in their clothes, or in mats, and laid under some over-hanging rock, with a mask over their faces. A little drift-wood was sometimes placed under the body, but very rarely any weapons or implements. Often, to enclose the bodies, a sort of artificial cave was made by building up a wall of rough stones outside the bodies, until the face of the over-hanging rock was reached; when the
wall was closed over with earth and turf.” (p. 5)

“The remains of those whom the early inhabitants held in honor, especially wealthy persons having large families, or distinguished by their ability and success in the chase, were differently disposed of … They were said to eviscerate the bodies through the pelvis; and then, to remove fatty matters, they were placed for some time in running water, and afterward taken out and lashed into as compact a form as possible. The knees were drawn up to the chin, and the bones were sometimes fractured to facilitate the consolidation of the remains, which then were carefully dried. They were placed in a sort of wooden frame, with their best clothing and most valuable furs, and secured with seal skin or other material so that the package should be as nearly water-proof as possible. This frame or coffin was then slung to a horizontal bar supported by two or more uprights, and left hanging in the open air or in some rock-shelter … It is proper to remark also that the civilized form of burial, in the earth, has obtained among them since their conversion to Christianity, a period of some eighty years.” (pp. 5-6)

“We learn [LSS: from early explorers] that the bodies, while being prepared for encasement were sometimes kept in the compartment [LSS: of the communal house] which they had occupied during life until ready for deposition elsewhere. We also know from early accounts, proved true by our own excavations, that the bodies of the dead, in the compressed position before mentioned, were sometimes placed in the compartment, laid on their sides, and covered with earth with which the whole compartment was filled and then walled up. It is stated that others in the same yourt continued to occupy their several compartments after this, as usual, a proceeding very different from that of the majority of the Innuit, who usually abandon at once a house in which a death has occurred … This is only one of several facts which show that the Aleuts did not feel that repugnance to, or fear of, the dead which is generally characteristic of tribes of that stock. In our excavations at the head of Uhlakhta Spit, Amaknak Id, Unalashka, we found in the remains of an old yourt several skeletons so interred.” (p. 7)

“The cords by which they [LSS: mummies] were hung up, in the course of years, would be likely, and would be the first portion, to give way. Yet that they were originally so elevated is beyond doubt, as all of the packages are provided with loops for the purpose, and we know by the accounts of the early voyagers, that the natives were particularly careful to suspend the bodies of those for whom they had special regard, in such a manner as to prevent their touching the ground.” (p. 18)


In our excavations we found the remains of one or two cremated bodies in every rockshelter that had been used for burials; and in the warm Kagamil cave, at its lowest part and under a huge slab, there were the calcined remains of several females and children. All the cremated had doubtless been slaves, for the Aleuts did not cremate their free kind. A detail of interest—the cremation was achieved by fire, evidently very hot, of rich-in-fat whale bones.” (pp. 149-150)


“The poorest Aleuts and the slaves were placed in caves. It seems, however, that sometimes they also placed wealthy men who had died in caves as is still evident today from certain indications.” (p. 81)
“Aleut dignitaries when dying left instructions that their slaves be slain and placed with them in the belief that they will serve them over there just as here.” (pp. 126-7)


“An old Aleut informed us that not all Aleut were embalmed, this being the privilege of noted hunters, especially whale-hunters … Corpses of honored people and of the families of chiefs were also mummified.” (p. 44)


“The poorest and the slaves were placed in caves. However, it seems that even the rich were sometimes placed in caves as is seen now in several.” (p. 220)

“The war leader endeavored to bring home the bodies of his warriors who fell in battle ….” (p. 225)


“If a somewhat secluded cave or rock overhang was nearby, within a kilometer, the mummy might be carried there. The essential prerequisite was to keep the mummy dry, although close to the ocean.” (p. 98)

“Equally common was the burial of people in the debris surrounding the houses and found underneath them. These are the ones found in the excavations of the old village sites. In some cases, a house was abandoned and the dead were left sitting on a mat.” (p. 99)

“Dismemberment of a slain enemy or dangerous person was a regular and necessary way of protecting the living survivor from a fatal encounter … Seizing this, he staged a timely comeback, repulsing and killing his assailant. Having done this, he proceeded to chop the outside man apart, cutting off the arms and legs of the body and cutting them apart at the joints. He then threw the disarticulated parts into the sea. Parts of the deceased were later recovered and buried in the ground.” (p. 103)

“The summer of 1970 provided skeletal verification of this bloody struggle. The distal end of a tibia (shin bone) projected from a low point on the side of Chaluka, close to the cove. The bone fragment led us to remove what we supposed would be another old Aleut burial. However, the leg bone was connected to a thigh bone that was connected to a hip bone which, in turn, was connected to 13 Russian skeletons (Fig. 47). The bodies had apparently been thrown in upon each other in near random fashion. Heads, arms, legs, and trunk portions were interlaced so that it was difficult to determine which bones belonged to which particular skeletons Coat buttons had fallen down from the higher to lower bodies. They had obviously been hastily buried in a common grave.” (p. 122)

“It appears that a shallow pit had been dug into the midden, the bodies hastily thrown in, and then some
midden material (earth, ashes, sea urchin shells, and so forth) thrown over them. In later years some
disarrangement had been produced on one side of the pit by a modern Aleut garbage pit and other
dislocation done to the site by a curio hunter. The actual remains of this Russian party abundantly
confirm the Aleut account, verifying the undeniable accuracy of the rigorously maintained Aleut oral
tradition.” (p. 125)

Alutiik

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“At present a dead person is taken back to his village to be buried there, but formerly the burial took
place wherever the death occurred. The graves were situated rather far from the villages. Those of poor
people were not hidden, but rich persons were put in inaccessible places as for instance rock shelters
and caves in bluffs or the like, for fear that the grave should be robbed. Sometimes a chief’s body was
taken in a skin boat to a pinnacle rock where it was hoisted on top (Fig. 40). The grave was dug into the
ground as far as the gravel … The grave was marked with a painted digging stick or a wooden shovel.
A pole was put up besides, and if there was a tree close by all but the topmost branches were chopped
off. Stones were piled on the grave only if the person had been killed. Neither cremation nor artificial
mummification were practised (cf., however, pp. 90 and 91), and but for the more elaborate customs
bestowed upon a chief, everybody, including shamans, slaves, and transvestites, were disposed of in the
same way.” (p. 89)

“In some cases natural mummies have been found in caves, for instance on Knight Island opposite the
Pleiades group, and on the northern bank of the mouth of Valdez Arm where six male mummies had
been placed in a cave, wearing masks and dressed in ground-squirrel coats and armour. Such mummies
are now explained—though evidently erroneously—as the bodies of persons who have not been
actually buried but have been killed or have starved to death there, when they had tried to hide for their
enemies; such a person is called IriAq.” (p. 90)

“Simple exposure of the body may be the oldest way of disposing of the dead among the Eskimo. It is
still employed by a great number of tribes, including the Caribou Eskimo (Birket-Smith 1929, II 122.
Larsen & Rainey 1948, 62) … This practice is not known from Prince William Sound, however.” (p.
189)

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“Lisianski also observed a man and woman, faces blackened and hair cut short, in seclusion at Cape
Bay, or Rolling Bay as it is known today. He gives additional specific observations, and a summary.
The toyon of [Ugak or Oohack]. …had lately buried his father, and was erecting a monument over his
grave (Lisianski 1814:186). (It as all others, consisted of a low heap on which were laid some pieces of
drift wood, first along and then across the grave, and on top of all lay a few rounded stones [Lisianski
1812 in Hrdlička 1944a: 88]). The Cadiack people seem more attached to their dead than to their living
relatives, and often weep when their names happen to be mentioned. They dress the dead in their best
apparel, and lay them in state, commonly in the place where they sickened and died. While the grave is
digging, the relations and friends howl bitterly. When it is ready, the body is wrapped up in furs and
seal-skins and placed in it. Over the grave large stones are piled, and blocks of wood. The melancholy business of interment being ended, the distant relations and friends return home, but the parents of the deceased remain on the spot, wailing till sun-set.” (p. 149-A)

“Lisianski also points out that house side rooms sometimes were used for graves. Pinart has the following to say about mummies and whalers (1873 ms. translation by Gerald Clark):
In the depths of the forests or in other secluded places where profane eyes could not defile them, were caves belonging to the whalers wherein were preserved mummies (Inxout in the northern dialect, axat in the southern dialect.), which they regard as guardian divinities. …Along each wall of the cave are a number of partitions made of sea lion skin, in which are found mummies in the act of preparing some one of the tools necessary for whale hunting: on the right is a man working an arrow shaft;…[etc.].
Holmberg provides (apparently) a summary of previously published remarks and new information about the burial of shamans (1856:402–3 in Hrdlička 1944a:88). The body of a shaman, provided with his insignia, was laid in a bidarka and deposited upon some high rocky cliff, on a tree, or on some other elevation.” (p. 149-B)

“Father Gedeon (Valaam Monastery 1894:217–218) gives specific details for some of the practices mentioned by Davidov and Lisianski.
When an Aleutian [Koniag] dies, all of the relatives and friends, except the little children, are called together, and having assembled, they seat themselves around the deceased … Regarding the interment following the wake, Father Gedeon says:
After this they dig a pit some distance a way from their habitation, the coffin is made in the grave by placing cordwood criss-cross, —then they are placed there in their favorite habiliments and ornaments; then they are covered with lavtaks [sea lion hides], weighted down with rocks and finally covered with earth and over the grave some place logs set at an angle [Gray transl. p. 94].” (p. 150-A)


“Departure by death was not a total breakoff of interpersonal relationships as the dead were kept at hand in a side chamber of a house, nearby within the settlement area (Merck 1980:108) (Chugach excepted?), or, in the case of rich persons and special categories, were taken to secluded places and preserved in a form of mummification, sometimes for participation in secret whaling rituals (Lisűnskiǐ 1814:174). Following the initial mourning and interment, at which a slave sometimes accompanied a person of high rank (Lisűnskiǐ 1814:200) …. (p. 192)


“The whale hunters preserved the bodies of renowned men in caves, where they assembled prior to the hunt, carried the corpses to nearby streams, laid them in the water, and drank from this water.” (p. 49)

“After a magician’s death he was laid into a baidarka, along with his insignia, and then placed upon a tree trunk or other elevation on a high cliff.” (p. 53)

“As general in southwestern Alaska, the custom of making those captured in war slaves or serfs (‘kalgi’), was in vogue also among the Koniags. The slaves, except those that were sacrificed, eventually fused with the people, but as they fought mostly with their own kind the admixture of blood from this source could not have been of much consequence.” (p. 73)

“Šelekhov (1793, I, 76; also in Coxe, 1786, 297):
“The burial customs differ with various groups of the Koniags. I have not seen the ceremonies myself and can therefore say nothing about them; but it is a fact that some of them lay the dead with their best possessions in a baidarka and covered with earth, while others inter with the dead also a live former prisoner [of war] who was a serf [of the deceased] … Sauer (account of Billings Exped., 1802, 177):
“The dead body of a chief is embalmed with moss, and buried. The most confidential of his labourers are sacrificed and buried with him” (p. 87)

Chipewyans


“In former days it was customary to lay the dead on the ground without burying them.” (p. 77)


“The Northern Indians never bury their dead, but always leave the bodies where they die, so that they are supposed to be devoured by beasts and birds of prey; for which reason they will not eat foxes, wolves, ravens, &c. unless it be through mere necessity.” (p. 218)


“The aboriginal Chipewyan ordinarily disposed of the dead by simply wrapping the corpse in hides and leaving it exposed on the ground.” (p. 33)

“It also was customary for the people not to return to areas where loved ones had died for years, so they may have abandoned good trapping areas for long periods of time. Informants have noted that, even in the 20th Century, people did not like to continue to live in places where loved ones had died and admitted that this sometimes meant living in locales where game and fur animals might not be so plentiful.” (p. 67)


“The bodies of the dead were left on the ground surface; there was no effort made to bury them. After a death, the camp was abandoned ….” (p. 279)

“The aboriginal Chipewyan never buried their dead, but wrapped them in skins and left them on the ground where they would presumably be eaten by wild animals and birds (Hearne, 1958: 218–19; Curtis, 1928: Vol. 18: 44; Godsell, 1938: 250).” (p. 54)


“Death was also accompanied by a series of observances with regard to handling the body. Burial was usually in the form of abandoning the body in a snowhouse in winter or wrapping it in skins and laying it on the surface in summer (Jenness 1922: 171-172; Rasmussen 1932:44-47).” (p. 407)


“In winter, a corpse might be left in a snowhouse or snowblock enclosure and in summer within a tent which was also abandoned.” (p. 8)


“The body was then removed through a hole in the back of the snowhouse or through the rear of the tent. The corpse was interred in a circle of stones in summer or a small snow hut in winter.” (p. 43)


“Irkrarek was true to his word as he and Anilianaher walked ahead of the dog team for just a short distance [from the igloo] to a little knoll overlooking the gulf. They lowered the body to the ground facing it east so that the next morning it would greet the protective sun, source of all life and strength in the Land Beyond … Somehow it seemed appropriate that after wandering so much and so far during their lives, the Krangmalit invariably took their shortest journey after death. And it was usually to a height of land commanding a pleasant view where the open grave would be easily noticed by passing wolves and foxes.” (p. 225)


“The natives of Bathurst inlet and farther east leave the corpse inside the hut or tent and abandon the camp immediately … In the Coppermine region and in Dolphin and Union strait the Eskimos also
leave the body inside the tent in summer and move on to another camping ground. In winter, however, they lay the corpse out in the snow, and build a wind-break of snow-blocks around it to protect it from the weather. Usually it is conveyed to the land a few days later and deposited on the beach above highwater mark, though sometimes it is simply left neglected on the ice.” (pp. 174-6)

“The only recent burial we saw was that of one Puivlik Eskimo, Haviron, who died in April 1915, after an illness that had lasted all the winter. His body was conveyed to the mainland near Cape Lambert and deposited on the shore just above high-water mark. Mr. Wilkins, the photographer of the expedition, examined the body a month or so later and furnished me with the following description. ‘The corpse was on a point about twenty-five yards from the water and three or four feet above high-water mark. The coast hereabouts was a mass of broken rocks and an occasional boulder. The corpse was placed on the rocks, but no rocks had been placed on or around it.” (pp. 174-6)


“Eskimos are not buried in the sense that they are put into the ground. No one could dig into ground frozen rock-hard. They are laid to rest at a spot which they pick before their death. Nasarlulik knew where Alikammiq’s place was and took us to a gravel bar up on the side of the inlet overlooking the sea.” (p. 109)


“In winter the body is driven on a sledge to where it is to be laid, and when no stones are available, a small house of snow is built over it.” (p. 45)

Innu


“The Montagnais buried their dead in the woods near a large tree or other recognizable spot.” (p. 31)


“If misfortune befell the chief, his tribesmen were under no obligation to render him any help beyond the assistance due to an ordinary member of the band. Moreover, his death was marked with the same rites, not by any special ceremonies. He was buried as any other man of his tribe would be.” (p. 404 B)

“If a man died in the woods in the olden times, my informants report, he was buried on a platform high up in the trees.” (p. 415 B)
“If someone dies on the hunting-ground the family always leaves the locality where the death occurred, to move away, though not always far, erecting their tent at another spot.” (p. 416 B)


“Within a day or so of the event, according to the place and time of year, the body is put in the ground near a lake, facing the water. The trees are cleared in front so that the deceased can see persons passing by. Then a fence is built about it. In the case of an important hunter a pole, upon which are fastened bear and beaver skulls, is [Page 52] erected near the grave. Bodies of those who die far from home are often transported, frozen, by dog-sled to their home territories.” (p. 51)

“Among other details in the Relations of 1631 we learn that when demise took place in the winter, the corpse was placed upon a scaffold ten or twelve feet high and left until the ground thawed, when it was buried in a “cemetery.”” (p. 52)


“Sometimes the Indians appear on the coast in winter from force of circumstances. WALLACE met some at St. Augustine in the first days of April. They had failed in the caribou hunt and had come out from the interior half-starved a week or so before (995). TOWNSEND tells of a characteristic event from Natashkwain in the winter of 1911–12; some Indians turned up suddenly in February with the corpse of an old woman who had long been ill and died in the interior. Instead of waiting, as they usually did, for the spring journey to the coast, they felt an urge to come down at once, for they feared that the disturbed spirit of the dead would run riot in their district, and the best thing to do was to get her buried in consecrated ground as soon as possible. Even after the burial it was more than a month before they summoned up courage to return to their hunting-grounds (cf. 109).” (p. 626)


“Their dead are treated with no ceremony. They simply lash the limbs of the deceased to the body and expose the corpse to the elements, removing it, however, from immediate sight of the camp.” (p. 178)

“Away from the post the Indians suspend their dead from the branches of trees, if the ground be frozen too hard to excavate, and endeavor to return in the following summer and inter the body. A person who has distinguished himself among the people is often buried where the fire has been long continued within the tent and thawed the ground to a sufficient depth to cover the body. The tent is then removed to another location … In response to my inquiry how they disposed of their dead in former ages, I obtained evidence that scaffold burial and suspension from trees were formerly practiced and that subterranean burials were introduced by the missionaries.” (p. 272)

Kaska
Any other disposition of the corpse than burial in the ground is distasteful. A body should also be interred in a “nice place.” “If they throw in the water,” Edward Cross said, “No good. People can't go see graveyard.” … A small burial area is generally located close to each winter settlement, the few graves being marked by simple crosses on which individuals’ names are sometimes crudely pencilled. Sometimes a fence is constructed around the graves, “So dogs don't come around” (Plate 12, D). Two large graveyards are located in Lower Post. These are maintained in an extremely poor condition, being thickly overgrown with aspen, [Page 206] willow, and weeds. Crosses mark most of these graves and there are also a few wire fences. One grave house may also be seen; apparently it covers a Tahltan burial.” (p. 205)

“In the past] A corpse was disposed of by the opposite moiety through cremation, inhumation, abandonment, or caching in a tree.” (p. 448)

“The dead were disposed of in four ways, through cremation, inhumation, abandonment, and caching in a tree. In “really cold” weather the corpse was burned … ) Jones reports that among the Tlingit “at one time cremation was the universal way of disposing of the dead, except of the bodies of slaves, which were embalmed and deposited in dead houses … Jones, Study of the Thlingets of Alaska (1914), 136–137 … Variant patterns of inhumation include use of a hollow-log coffin and the winter practice of burying the deceased within the dwelling.” (p. 138)

“The corpse was kept in the house for one or two days or occasionally longer. It was taken outside when the pyre was ready and soon afterwards burned.” (p. 155)

“If the deceased was a wealthy man and possessed slaves one or more slaves were killed at his death. Their bodies were not burned but thrown away some distance or more often thrown in the river or in water. If the deceased had been a kind man and fond of his slaves he told the people before his death “Do not kill any of my slaves”, and none were killed. They became the slaves of his heir … If the man had been fond of his slaves and he thought they would not be treated very well by his heir, he requested that they should be liberated at his death, which was done.” (p. 158)
“After the funeral fire had burned out, the charred bones of the deceased were collected and wrapped in skin. They were then placed on the top of a small crib of logs built up a few feet from the ground [Page 160] on the top of a post erected for the purpose, within a small house or kind of box built on the ground or built some little height above the ground … It seems once they were deposited in the grave-house or vault or in boxes or trunks they were seldom troubled with further and the structures were allowed to fall into decay and gradually get scattered or disappear … Cemeteries or graveyards were generally situated on prominent points and edges of terraces near the main camps or villages.” (pp. 159-160)

Ojibwa


“groups of grave houses (pl. 30, b), as well as single burials, are common throughout the Chippewa country.” (p. 76)

“Informants differ concerning tree sepulture among the Chippewa. Some say that if a death occurred when the people were away from their customary camping ground the body was wrapped in birch bark and placed in a tree, on a scaffold made by tying poles together, this being a temporary arrangement until the people returned home. It seems probable that the custom varied with circumstances and with individuals … A permanent village had its burial ground. Thus at Leech Lake and at Odanah the burial ground was in the middle of the camp circle. An informant said that the camp circle at Leech Lake had its opening toward the lake, and she remembered passing alongside the graves as she went to the lake for water … A Canadian Chippewa said that when a death occurred they often buried the body inside the wigwam and then took down the wigwam. He said that if the burial were to be outside a tipi they took down the poles and threw them aside.” (p. 76)


“In the past, of course, the graves of deceased Ojibwa were much more scattered. When death occurred in the autumn and winter, individuals were buried wherever their relatives happened to be.” (p. 75)


“Each grave house in a M[unavailable]d[unavailable]wiwin cemetery on the Lac Courte Orielle Reservation had a 3 × 5-inch opening at the foot end or east end of the grave.” (p. 83)

“Cemeteries with many burials were found near permanent village sites and also near M[unavailable]d[unavailable]wiwin wigwams. Burials of smaller groups, five to eight graves, were often seen near homes in various parts of the reservations.” (p. 84)

“About 100 feet from a group of homes of related families, among them the home of the interpreter, on the Mille Lacs Reservation, were 13 graves. Burials included the maternal great-grandparents, brothers
and sisters, and children of the interpreter … No scaffold or tree burials
((unavailable)gåd(unavailable) [unavailable] [unavailable] [unavailable]mik), traditional modes of disposal of
bodies, were seen on any reservation, nor were any recent burials of this type known to either
informants or interpreters. Informants remembered well, however, when bodies were thus disposed of …
“I saw rough boxes with dead bodies on four poles and kettles hanging on the poles, when I was a
child,” said a White Earth informant. An old Mille Lacs woman remembered seeing burials on
scaffolds: Bodies were wrapped in birchbark or blankets and placed on four poles erected close
together and about one foot from the ground. “An island in Sandy Lake was the burial ground for all
the Indians in this area,” she added. “My mother used to say that you could go over there and see bones
on the ground in many, many places. And we know these things to be true, because people saw them.”
… Mounds on the Lac Courte Orielle Reservation are considered burial places of very early times. Old
Indians had repeatedly heard their elders say that the Od[unavailable]wå’, [unavailable]sometimes called
the D[unavailable]w[unavailable]s[unavailable]g[unavailable]n, built them “long, long ago. We always
believed that these mounds were their wigwams, that they lived in them, and died in them during
starvation times. At Old Post some mounds were opened some years ago when a cellar was dug. The
bones found in them were those of large [Page 86] people.” (pp. 85-6)

http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ng06-001 [1850-1929]

“Most Indians were buried in the ground, sometimes within the area of the wigwam itself, which was
then weighted down with stones and abandoned. More often the relatives dug a grave in the open ….”
(p. 104)

“ With the primitive tools at the command of the Indians the digging of a grave in frozen ground was
well-nigh impossible. Hence during the winter months they merely laid the corpse on the surface of the
ground, wrapped it in birch bark, and covered it with logs or stones. Sometimes they left the wigwam
standing over it, or, if they wished to keep the wigwam for further use, built a miniature wigwam in its
place. In the cemeteries of post-European times they substituted grave houses for wigwams, fitted them
with openings like windows, and gave them broad ledges to receive the offerings of food and tobacco.
Even commoner than surface burial was the deposition of corpses in trees. Nevertheless, both surface
and tree burial were no more than substitutes for burial in the ground. Indeed, relatives often returned
after the snow had melted to inter the remains they had left exposed to the elements.” (p. 105)

[traditional to 1850]

“ The high beach formed a rather sharp incline towards the water. On the topmost edge I saw three
white flags fluttering from tall poles: they marked the graves of those members of the family who had
died during the two years' residence here. The graves were carefully tended, and made at equal
distances from each other on the breezy cliff, so that the sea [Page 231] wind blew freshly over them,
and kept the flags in a constant state of flutter. From one of the poles waved a Sioux scalp, which they
had brought from the interior as a family trophy, and offered to one of their deceased.” (p. 230)

American Philosophical Society. Retrieved from http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ng06-
041 [1600s-1900s]
“Traditionally the Ojibwas left their dead in crotches or branches of trees, wrapped in a bundle. It was not until the contact period that they began burials. Archaeological evidence has indicated that they buried the bones of their deceased after the flesh was gone (Works Progress Administration 1936–1940; 1942, Envelope 6, No. 3: 7).” (p. 65)

Western Woods Cree

no relevant passages

Mi'kmaq


“Mourners blackened their faces and wailed for three days; messengers were sent out and friends came from other settlements; on the third day, a feast was given and burial took place with each guest adding to the grave goods. Several different modes of disposal are reported, which range from cremation to exposure, but the most frequent is burial with various types of sacrifices and grave goods. In the Gaspé and New Brunswick, the body was buried on an uninhabited island, wrapped in bark, seated in a deep grave, together with the person's tools, dogs, and personal effects. The practice of exposure on scaffolds may have been limited to Cape Breton Island. Mourning continued for a year, during which time mourners wore their hair short and widows were forbidden to marry; but once the allotted time had passed, mourners were encouraged to put aside their sorrow.” (p. 114)


“Long ago, it was said in 1912, the body was brought home for the funeral rites, no matter how far away a man died. The face of the deceased was covered with red pigment. After a death, all the people in the udan (settlement) moved away, perhaps to a distance of five or six miles, even though the deceased was a small child … As soon as death came, two men took the news to nearby settlements. Those who had assembled around the dying man remained silent.” (p. 258)

“Only LeClercq mentioned messengers who carried the news of death: Certain young Indians are appointed to go and announce to all the people, and even to the French settlements, the death of their relatives and friends. These deputies approach the wigwams to which they are sent, climb into a tree, and cry out three times with all their strength that a certain person is dead. After this they approach, and give to those whom they find an account of the circumstances of the illness and of the death of their friend, inviting them to assist in his funeral.” (p. 263)

“Exposure on a scaffold followed by secondary burial was the only type described or mentioned by Denys. No other seventeenth-century writer referred to this practice. A Micmac at Pictou, N.S., who in 1911 described the custom, was born in Cape Breton, and Denys alone of the five early French writers had been in that region; he had lived there for several years. As soon as death occurred, Denys said: The women went to fetch pieces of bark from which they made a kind of bier on which they placed him well enwrapped. Then he was carried to a place where they had a staging built on purpose, and elevated eight or ten feet. On this they placed the bier, and there they left it about a year, until the time
when the sun had entirely dried the body. The end of the year having passed, and the body [being] dry, it was taken thence and carried to a new place, which is their cemetery. There it was placed in a new coffin or bier, also of Birch bark, and immediately after in a deep grave which they had made in the ground.” (p. 264)

“The preferred graveyard was an uninhabited island not too near the shore. NO one visited the graves except for an additional burial. “The obsequies finished, they flee from the place, and from that time on, they hate all memory of the dead.” That was Father Biard's interpretation. Fear of the ghosts would be a more apt explanation of this behavior. Membertou and his people had a graveyard on a desolate island near Cape Sable, thirty leagues from Port Royal. Heron Island, in the south-western part of the Baie des Chaleurs, was in the seventeenth century an ancient cemetery for Micmac at Restigouche. These graveyards were [Page 267] supposed to be secret. A man who pointed out to some Frenchmen a burial ground near Canso was killed by fellow tribesmen.” (p. 266)

Chinookans of the the Lower Columbia River


“Slaves constituted the lowermost segment of Chinookan society. They were treated as articles of property, or chattels, which were bought and sold, thrown into makeshift graves or the water when dead, and sometimes killed at the burial of their owner.” (p. 8)

“Sometimes a slave was killed at the gravesite and buried in a shallow grave beneath the owner or master.” (p. 14)


“Two pall bearers carried the burden to the burial grounds when possible, while all the others travelled by canoe. When the corpse was transported in a canoe it was necessary to destroy the vessel. Graveyards were located on islands by preference but when this was not possible a plot bordering on the water was set aside at some distance from the village. Each village possessed its own burial ground … Interment was invariably above the surface for all but the slaves. Two forms were known, canoe burial (Plate 3) and box burial (Figure 8). Canoes were the more commonly employed but the use of boxes was not a post-white adoption. This is proved by the first white observations. Broughton writes: “The body was rolled up in deer skins, after them with mats, and then laid at full length in a wooden box, which exactly fitted it.”[Vancouver, vol. 2, p. 54.]” (p. 75)

“A slave was often killed at the grave and buried in a shallow excavation beneath his master. The treatment of slaves at death is discussed in the section on slavery.” (p. 76)


“ Seldom did medicine men conjure evil spirits from their sick bodies, and when they died other slaves threw their bodies to the wild animals, into the river, or into coverless pits. In some instances they
were tied to their owners' sepulchers and left to starve to death to serve their masters in the other world as their fellow slaves in this one were forced to mourn their masters' passing.” (p. 10)

“On January 26 the Nor'Westers made the Clatsop chief and his family remove the body of a slave girl who had died from venereal disease lest the pigs eat it. The natives disposed of the corpse by tying a cord around its neck and dragging it to the beach, where with a wooden paddle they squeezed it into a hole, covering it with stones and dirt.” (p. 155)

“The eerie appearance of this symbolic figure must have put Hinds [Page 199] in an appropriate mood as he left the stuffy house to visit the burial grounds—the highlight of any tour of a Chinook village.” (p. 198)

“On September 18, for example, he told with great poignancy of a Clatsop mother walking the beach on her way to bury her dead child, which was wrapped in a mat slung on her back, singing the death song as she carried out her mournful mission.” (p. 206)

Nuu-chah-nulth


“Within or near the village are several graveyards. On the far west end, a small graveyard dates from the period when the Makah were first persuaded by the whites to bury their dead instead of placing them above ground in canoes or trees.” (p. 42)


“ When a chief died, they wrapped his body in a cedar-bark blanket (and occasionally in robes of sea otter), without washing or painting it, and crammed it into an ordinary wooden box. A hole was made in the wall for the box to be passed through. Four middle-aged men carried the “coffin”; usually the same ones were called on to do this for all the deaths of the tribe. The tribesmen joined the procession, following the body to the burial place. It was tabu to wail while the body was being carried off. When taken by canoe, for instance to some burial islet, it was put in one canoe and towed; no one rode in the same canoe with a corpse. The box with the body might be put in a cave (or rock shelter), lashed in the upper branches of a tree, or merely set on some prominent point alongside a memorial (qamata’a’), such as was erected for the predecessor of the present Moachat chief (in this case the body was moved later in secret to a burial cave).” (pp. 147-8)

“The bodies of low-rank chiefs, and of commoners as well, were put into boxes, to be lashed to trees or stowed in caves, like those of high degree. At Kyuquot suspension of the coffin in a tree was practiced only for chiefs of the m’atsuíwai’ath lineage. Bodies of younger people were put in caves; those of the aged under a canoe. Small islets near villages were the usual burial places among all the Nootkans. Bodies of the very old Moachat were taken to a special burying place called ōtsa. Anciently, it was said, boxes were not used for commoners or slaves— their corpses were merely wrapped in mats. Aside from this, there were no differences in method of disposal of the corpse according to status. Shamans were buried like anyone else. The only people given special burial were twins and persons born deformed,
and their parents. Such persons were not put into boxes, nor lashed up in mats, but laid on mats at the entrance to a cave or rock shelter covered with a robe as though they were in a bed.” (p. 149)

“The beheaded corpses of war casualties were treated like any other dead.” (p. 150)


“A corpse was placed into a wooden box and taken to a burial place distant from their villages.” (p. 8)


“No one likes to visit Graveyard Island or any of the old cave burials on the various beaches around Kyuquot. There is a feeling that the dead should be left in peace and also a vague fear that one might get pulled into a grave if one is not careful. On the other hand, graves of the recently deceased are visited and tended by close relatives.” (p. 157)


“Although the custom of cave burial is a very old one, older than either rock burial or hut burial, perhaps the oldest and the most common mode of all is tree burial. That my informant considers tree burial the oldest seems to verify the opinion of an early writer who says that these Indians do not burn nor bury their dead. He adds, however, that “rudely made boxes are fastened in tree about twelve feet up. The mode as well as the place of burial is left to the decision of immediate relatives. A chief, however, is always buried in a prominent place. He is, therefore, never buried in a cave or on an obscure island. And for him, such symbols decorate the grave as unmistakably record his varied prowess, in hunting, for instance, by a carved bear, in fishing, by the image of a whale, and so forth (See Fig. 62).” (p. 106)

“As regards selection of a burial place, it would seem that no particular custom holds. An individual's wish is respected. As an instance, my informant related how an old man after selecting a certain tree for his burial place was wont from time to time to remind the members of his family of this final choice. His wish was subsequently carried out faithfully. When no specification has been made previous to death, as a rule relatives of the deceased consult among themselves. Those bearing the corpse away receive instructions after the corpse is taken from the house. Any selection made is in the same general section where others are buried, and that, removed from the vicinity of living quarters. The Clayoquot, for example, have a cemetery located about three hundred yards distant from the last house in the village. A few, however, are buried in huts on a small island about a half mile away.” (p. 109)

“Tree-burial is as a rule the most popular mode because thereby a body is not so openly exposed to attack by wild animals (See Fig. 63). Nor is it so apt to be desecrated by any passer-by.” (p. 110)

“In the event that relatives decide on a cave burial, the coffin, carried in the same manner as already described, is taken to the mouth of the cave. Here it rests on the ground, while one or two attendants enter the cave, if necessary, to clean the cave. Other burials may have taken place there. In any case, the
coffin is brought in and set in any convenient place. There is no semblance of rows in placing the coffins. Nor is one coffin ever placed on top of another. All the dead are arranged so as to “face” the west, that is, the corpse lies supine with the head toward the east, for the belief prevails that if the dead do not look at the sun, the latter god would be offended and would send chastisement on relatives.” (p. 112)

“It would seem that hut-burial is of comparatively recent origin, and that it dates no further back than from the coming of white men, some hundred and fifty years ago. Old timers, at least, maintain that hut-building for burial was not done years ago. Even planks, so I was informed by old warriors, were never laid over the tops of coffins.” (p. 113)

Nuxalk


“The body is placed in a box and the latter is either fastened on the lower branches of a tree or placed in a little house, which is set on posts, above the level of the ground … Formerly slaves were killed at the burial of chiefs.” (p. 419)


“Funeral rites varied according to the status of the deceased. Most often the corpse was bound into a squatting position and placed in a wooden burial box. A stone was placed on the back of the head to prevent the deceased's ghost from returning and bothering people. Most corpses were buried, but twins were placed in burial boxes in trees. Formerly, coffins were placed in caves, on top of memorial poles displaying the deceased's crest erected in the graveyard, or on scaffolds behind the village houses. Bella Coola people in the 1970s stated that in precontact times, corpses were wrapped in bearskins and left on tree stumps in the forest. Boas (1892a:419) also recorded this but indicated that the corpse was buried. Apparently the use of individual grave houses was a more recent practice that was adopted from the Bella Bella.” (p. 332)


“If children have been born and the woman has long become practically a member of her husband's family, she is buried by them as a matter of course, but should she die soon after marriage, her own family usually performs the obsequies.” (p. 417)

“Heralds go from house to house, and sometimes to adjacent villages as well, inviting the people to pay a farewell visit to the dead man who will soon leave them ….” (p. 438)

“Another reason for postponement is the absence of near relatives; if they can be summoned within four or five days, the funeral may be delayed until their arrival.” (p. 443)

“There is a cemetery near every village, usually fifty to a hundred yards behind the row of houses in a
place from which the heavy timber has been cleared ... A favourite location is close to the grave of a mother, father, or other near relative, but this is optional; bones are sometimes uncovered when digging, and in that case earth is thrown in once more and a new site selected.” (p. 444)

“At present, interment is the customary method for disposing of the bodies of all except twins, whose bodies are placed in trees. Formerly, other means were sometimes employed, as they still are occasionally. Instead of inhumation, a coffin was frequently placed on a scaffold close behind the deceased's house. Whenever another relative died, planks were laid across, above the first box, and the new one deposited on these, so that in time the scaffold grew to resemble a house-like structure with many compartments. In the last century a certain shaman, Āskaknts by name, is said to have pointed out that corpses were frequently carried off by wolves, snınıq, and other animals. For this reason he persuaded the people to inter their dead ... Somewhat similar to this practice was the placing of corpses in trees. Until the last few years this was sometimes done with poor children; formerly, it was not unknown even for chiefs. An elderly Kimsquit man mentioned that the coffin containing the body of his grandfather, a chief, was placed in the crotch of a tree where no rain could penetrate. This means of disposal was probably never habitual. Even at the present time, the corpse of a dearly loved child is occasionally placed above, instead of under the ground ... According to several of the older men, cremation was practised by the Bella Coola for some time after the first settlement of the earth. A fire was built outside the house and the body thrown on it. One rather philosophic old man suggested that in this way the soul could easily return to Nusmät’a. It is possible that this means of disposal was carried out in former times, but no informant had actually seen it practised ... The bodies of rich or poor, chiefs, commoners, or slaves, all are buried in a similar manner though with differences in the complexity of ritual. Nor is any different method practised for criminals, murdered people, or those committing suicide ... On the whole, Bella Coola methods for disposal of the dead have altered but little since the coming of the white man. The change from sub-aerial exposure to interment was probably not due to foreign influence although the introduction of metal shovels has facilitated the digging of graves and probably hastened the movement. A change in posture has, however, taken place. In former times, a corpse was always buried squatting, now it is customary to use the extended position. It is impossible to state whether this is the direct result of white teaching, or whether the ease with which large boxes can now be made has led to interment at full length.” (pp. 450-1)

“Near the village of Kwatna there used to be two cemeteries. One was on a small point of ground at the mouth of the river which became an island at high tide; here were interred the bodies of chiefs alone, a custom said to be without parallel on the coast. It is not known why there should have been this special burial-ground, but the place was always spoken of as “The Chiefs’ Island.” Instead of being buried, coffins containing commoners were laid on ledges of rock at the base of a cliff behind the village; this custom, though unusual, is known elsewhere on the coast, at Kimsquit and Port Simpson, for example.” (p. 751)


“Every Nuxalk village had its own cemetery.” (p. 16)

Pomo

“The salient features of mortuary customs among the Pomo have been summarized very well by Kroeber (1925; 253): 1. Cremation, with some marginal groups practicing burial also.” (p. 397)

“Throughout most, if not quite all, of the Pomo territory cremation was the honorable and the invariable mode of disposing of the bodies of the dead, except when an epidemic or other catastrophe made burial necessary. Loeb (1926; 286) states flatly that “… cremation was practiced prior to 1870 by all the Pomo.” His informants evidently did not mention the exception occasioned by an epidemic … Much property was brought by both relatives and friends to be burned with it. Some informants stated that, in case near relatives lived in different villages, there was sometimes considerable rivalry among them, each group trying to show its respect for the dead by providing the largest possible offering. Some informants stated that this spirit of rivalry even went so far that the group providing most bountifully had the honor of burning the body, and that they sometimes took it to their own village for the purpose. This was considered an honor not only to themselves but also to their village. This seems like a procedure which could result only from some most unusual circumstances, but no specific information on this point could be secured. Usually the cremation was near the house of the deceased, or at least somewhere near the home village. Usually also, the handling of all matters pertaining to the cremation was arranged by the immediate family of the deceased … As soon as the important relatives and friends from a distance had arrived, which usually was not more than twenty-four hours after death had occurred, the body was placed face down on the pyre … they returned and brushed all the ashes into the pit. which was then filled with earth. [Page 401] All these ashes, especially all remnants of charred bone, had to be covered.” (pp. 399-401)

“ As has been pointed out, cremation was universally practiced (except in cases of catastrophe) up to about 1870, when white influence caused burial to replace cremation. Tom Johnson, whose early childhood was spent at the old village of koi, on Lower Lake Island, recalled the cremation of his baby brother. This occurred when Tom was about eight or nine years of age and, as nearly as may be determined, in 1868. He said that he had a very vivid recollection of the occasion, and he gave the following details: The funeral pyre was constructed of logs and brush. Upon this a blanket was spread, and upon this blanket the body, which had already been carefully and nicely wrapped, was placed, [Page 404] together with the articles which were to be burned with it. More logs were then added above all this, and a lot of brush was piled all around at the base of the pyre. With several fire brands, applied to all sides of the pyre simultaneously, it was ignited. He stated that in this instance no additional articles were thrown onto the pyre after it was ignited. The burning lasted for several hours, during which time the fire was stirred frequently with long poles. After the fire had burned out completely (he mentioned a period of three or four days), the ashes were carefully scraped together at the center of the burning site, and over this whole area a considerable number of loose beads were scattered. This completed the ceremony so far as the actual cremation was concerned. He specifically stated that the ashes were not covered with earth, but that the scattering of these beads “covered” them.” (pp. 403-4)

“When contagion had carried off a considerable number of persons from any village at one time, burial was usually resorted to in ancient times. For such occasions a special burial ground was reserved at some distance from the village. For instance, the ancient burial ground at the old Upper Lake village of danō’ xa was situated down in a deep canyon a short distance east of the village. Burial under these special circumstances was considered necessary because it was feared that [Page 405] cremation would liberate into the air the supernatural force which had caused these many deaths, and that it would then attack other members of the village. Certain other rare and unusual circumstances other than epidemics might call for burial instead of cremation … Such an occasion arose in 1850, when Captain Lyons with his detachment of troops went through the Ukiah Valley and killed about seventy-five people at the old
village of cō'kadjal. Ordinarily anyone falling in battle was cremated. The cremation of such a large
number of bodies would have required such a great fire that it was feared that the smoke would bring
the soldiers back for another attack upon the village. The survivors have, however, never ceased to
regret that these bodies were not accorded the honor of cremation … Immediately the soldiers had
departed toward the south and the Indians felt reasonably sure that they would not be further molested,
they collected their dead and buried them, not in the regular contagion cemetery, but in a large pit dug
near the village. Into this pit with these bodies went the usual property sacrifices. Included with these
also were all of the presents which Captain Lyons had given to the cō'kadjal chiefs (See Appendix E)
… The contagion cemeteries were much feared by everyone, and no one ever went near them unless it
was absolutely necessary … The disgrace attached to burial was so great, however, that cremation was
always practiced whenever possible, even in some cases of epidemics, despite the danger involved. It
was related that, about 1840 as nearly as can be determined, an epidemic suddenly carried off about
forty of the people at cō'kadjal. The bodies were cremated on one great pyre. It is said that only the
strongest men participated in, or even witness, this cremation, and there was no wailing such as is customary at an ordinary cremation. It is said that no detrimental effects were felt by the
survivors, not even by those who did the burning.” (pp. 404-6)

“APPENDIX E: THE BLOODY ISLAND MASSACRE The three soldiers killed in this action were
immediately buried by their comrades. Later, after the soldiers had left, a large pit was dug and the
bodies of the Indians were buried in it. This was a very unusual procedure, since cremation was the rule
among the Pomo. The only time that burial was resorted to was when a large number of people had
died from pestilence or for some similar reason.” (p. 412)

http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ns18-007

“Among the Clear Lake Pomo disposal of the dead was by burning. According to the Eastern Pomo
informant Jim Pumpkin (113), it took about one cord of wood to cremate a corpse. Into a hole two feet
deep, six feet long, and three feet wide, wood was piled and the corpse placed on top of the pyre. After
the burning, the hole containing the ashes was filled level with the surrounding surface.” (p. 376)

Kennedy, M. J. (1955). Culture Contact And Acculturation Of The Southwestern Pomo. [S.L.]: [s.n.].
Retrieved from http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ns18-024

“Kostromitonov (1839, p. 88) leaves a record of his observation:
… The dead are cremated.” (p. 23)


“The dead were burned by the Pomo.” (p. 253)

id=ns18-003

“Cremation was practiced prior to 1870 by all the Pomo.” (p. 286)
“Each village had its own burning grounds. These were situated about half a mile from the villages and were not concealed nor secret places.” (p. 287)

“The following day the father, or some close male relative of the deceased, came to the place of cremation and picked up any pieces of bone which were not consumed in the fire. These were put in a basket or wrapped in a robe. The depression in which the fire was built was then filled in even with the remainder of the ground and covered with bush, thus removing all traces of the fire. Nearby a small hole three or four feet deep was dug and the robe or basket containing the charred bones was buried.” (p. 288)

“The burning ground was located near the village. It was called ca hone ma q’onen (person burnt ground right-there) … The wife of the deceased, or some other close relative, made a very fine basket and the bones were buried in this. Sometimes the bones were dug up and stolen by an outfit doctor to be used for medicine. After one, two, or even three years the bones were exhumed and a second burning took place. Even after the North Pomo commenced burying the dead, this second burning always took place on top of the grave.” (p. 291)

“These people had no special burning grounds, but the body was burnt just outside of the house. Wood was brought in from the forest for the purpose. Afterwards the house was burnt and also the possessions of the dead. The sacred paraphernalia were either inherited or buried in a swamp. The spot where the house had stood was never built upon again. Even if a small child died, the place was abandoned in the same manner.” (p. 293)

“After the funeral pyre had burned down, three or four men relatives kept watch, and the next day collected the bones. A woman relative usually buried them. A man relative might, if the deceased were an unmarried man. This woman relative was called dja ya homo dute (person bones ashes make). She was also the official who used the pole during the burning. This woman was forced to gather [Page 294] the bones in her hands, and dig a hole for them with her hands. 102[Among the North and East Pomo a stick was used in digging the grave, and no severe restrictions were placed on the grave digger]” (pp. 293-4)


“We have much less information on specifically Southeastern Pomo practices, although we do know that both groups cremated their dead up until the 1870–1880s.” (p. 22)

“The deceased was cremated in a special burning area at the edge of the permanent village on a funeral pyre, face down, with the head pointing south.” (p. 23)


“The deceased were formerly cremated, but about 1870 a shift was made to burial … One year after the funeral, the bones of the deceased were dug up and burned again, along with more gifts, thus terminating the period of mourning.” (p. 9)

“The dead are mostly burned.” (p. 169)

“They burn the dead, and always if possible on their native island. W. C. Goldsmith described a funeral he once witnessed, where a squaw was conducted from the main-land where she had died, across the lake by night, followed by a long procession of boats in single file, carrying torchlights, and filled with mourning women, chanting and wailing as the cortege moved with noiseless paddles across the water—a mournful and impressive spectacle.” (p. 216)


“In pre-contact times and until about 1870 the Coast Central Pomo cremated their dead … The remains of the burned bones were later buried.” (p. 21)

“According to Loeb (1926b:286) prior to 1870 all the Pomo practiced cremation. Traditionally the dead had been cremated at a burning ground near the village.” (p. 108)

Quinault


“I have called these houses of the dead graves; but the word grave properly applies only to a place where one is buried. These corpses were placed above ground.” (p. 476)


“It is said that slaves were not buried in the cemetery. Slaves about to die were usually taken out of the house and placed in a hollow among the roots of a tree. A blind slave was forced by his master to stay under a canoe, where were buried several of his master's children, until he died there.” (p. 98)

“The Quinault followed a number of burial practices without much real preference for any one type. Probably the commonest method was burial in a canoe which was raised several feet from the ground on a platform consisting of four posts and crossties. In some cases the body was placed in a rude box in the flexed position and a second canoe inverted over the box. In other cases the body was merely wrapped in mats or blankets and placed in the canoe, which was left uncovered. Another variant of the same method was to cut a canoe in half, placing one half in an inverted position over the other. One or more holes were cut in the upright canoe. Perhaps originally intended to prevent water from filling the canoe, the custom was interpreted as signifying that the canoes used in the land of the dead were so perforated. A related idea was that the canoe so treated was “killed” and so went to the other world, where the deceased might use it. In some cases the canoe was not elevated. Often the same canoe was used as a receptacle for several coffins or bodies, but ordinarily the individuals buried together were
members of the same family, or at least close kin. Another ancient burial method was the placing of the body in a box on four posts. In some cases a small gabled grave-house was erected over canoe or coffin. Or the body might be placed directly in the gravehouse. In some few instances the canoe or grave-box was placed in the branches of a tree—a variant of platform burial. In rare instances (e.g., if a person died while on a hunting expedition), the body was placed in a hollow tree or in the hollow at the base and the entrance blocked to prevent animals from eating the corpse. Still another form of burial was in a shallow grave in the earth. There was no special type of burial for shamans, except that those who had been much given to evil magic were buried a short distance removed from the graves of others. Usually the body was placed with the head to the east—the direction of a road to the land of the dead. Otherwise there was no very definite orientation. The body was usually lashed with knees against chin and hands interlocked around the knees, and was placed face downward in the grave. Only children born monsters were cremated. The face of the dead was never masked.” (p. 111)


“In the past, the Quinault buried their dead in a canoe, or box, raised on stilts.” (p. 9)


“ The body of an Indian girl who died about a month ago rests in a large ocean canoe, raised on posts, to which it is tied, a white roof covering the coffin … Between these two is a grave, to which are nailed rusty pans and crockery, and near by a small one resembling a house, covered with white cloth. These graves with others are on the river bank just across from the village and very near the river's mouth. Others are scattered along at short intervals on the way up the river.” (p. 277)

Tlingit

(There are many redundant accounts of the Tlingit, with most of the redundancy stemming from citation of or derivation from a few early sources. These excerpts are not the full set of relevant passages, but do capture the full range of reported and observed behavior.)


“Even in death the people remained near the beach. The cemeteries, now and in the past, are on the slopes close behind the houses or on the shore beyond the end of the village. A shaman’s grave always faced across the water from some headland or cave in the cliff above the shore, and those who paddled past usually cast a small offering into the water for his ghost.” (p. 30)


“Possibly this area has been in more or less continual use ever since the 18th century; first as a
depository for the ashes of the dead and later as a burial ground.” (p. 61-b)

“Some time, usually several months, elapsed between the funeral and the completion of the grave house that held the ashes of the deceased (or the erection of a tombstone at the grave).” (p. 531-b)

“Albin Johnson (1924, pp. 74-77) describes a funeral feast on Khantaak Island, which must have been held before 1890, since it was attended by Chief “Janaashoo” (Minaman). “The Tlingit used to ‘bury’ their dead in various ways. To burn the dead was the old method most usually followed. Great men and sometimes children, especially Indian daughters, were set in small houses, especially built for this purpose, and were not burned. To burn the corpse was, however, the original way. A big fire was made, and the dead body was thrown on it, amid screams, sobs, noise, and weeping. When the corpse was burned, the bones that were left were kept, and put into containers, and beautiful pieces of cloth were wrapped around them [the bones]. Their old cemeteries were covered by such small houses, resembling playhouses for children, in which the bones were placed.” (p. 534-a)

“The bodies of shamans were not cremated, but were laid in small elevated grave houses (p. 673). Sometimes brave warriors or very prominent men were entombed [Page [p.535-b]] in a similar fashion. I have been unable to find confirmation, either from informants or from the literature on the Tlingit, of Albin Johnson’s report that children, especially girls, were put unburned into grave houses (p. 534). We should note, however, that among the Copper River Eyak the dead were either buried or burned, according to their own wishes or those of their relatives (Birket-Smith and de Laguna, 1938, p. 164). The special treatment of children, if Johnson is correct, must reflect an older Eyak practice.” (p. 535-a)

“According to Swanton (1908, p. 430), entombment without cremation might be done to the corpse of a very noted warrior because he was thought to be too brave to need the warmth of the fire, and some individuals might request to have their bodies put away intact. Yakutat traditions indicate that the bodies of enemies slain in battle were thrown into the water, or left where they fell (p. 585). At one time the bodies of slaves who died or were killed were probably thrown out on the beach or in the woods, as was the custom among the more southern Tlingit (Krause, 1956, p. 161) … “If someone dies from a bear, or out hunting, far away, they just bring the head back,” it was suggested. Or, the body might be entirely cremated and the ashes brought home. “Maybe they didn’t burn the body and send the ashes because there might be too much brush. Or they were too high on the mountain [where there was no wood], and they didn’t want to bother with the body.” (MJ) Whenever possible, however, the corpse was brought home to the lineage house for the cremation (HB for FI). The scalps or heads of slain warriors, either of one’s own dead or of a noted enemy, were customarily preserved (p. 584), which might explain the skulls found by LaPérouse and Dixon.” (p. 535-b)

“While searching for the bodies of the lost seamen, LaPérouse’s men came upon a native grave monument which he called morai … “Our travellers saw likewise a morai, from which they learned, that these Indians were accustomed to burn the bodies of the deceased, and preserve the head. They found one wrapped in several skins. This monument consists of four tolerably strong posts, supporting a little chamber of planks, in which are reposed the ashes of the dead, enclosed in chests. They opened the chest, unfolded the skins in which the head was wrapped, and, having satisfied their curiosity, replaced every thing with scrupulous exactness, adding presents of iron instruments and beads. . . .” [Ibid, pp. 389-390.]” (p. 539b)

“Beresford has described somewhat similar grave monuments seen near the mouth of Ankau Creek, in
Yakutat Bay: Captain Dixon, willing to be satisfied in this particular, took an opportunity of going to the spot, and to his great surprize, found it to be a kind of burying-place, if I may be allowed to call it so, where dead bodies are not deposited in the earth. The manner in which they dispose of their dead is very remarkable: they separate the head from the body, and wrapping them in furs, the head is put into a square box, the body in a kind of oblong chest. At each end of the chest which contains the body, a thick pole, about ten feet long, is drove into the earth in a slanting position, so that the upper ends meet together, and are very firmly lashed with a kind of rope prepared for the purpose.” (p. 539b)

“One would assume from the above description that the decapitated but uncremated corpse had actually been seen, yet it would be more consonant with all known Tlingit customs if the body had been cremated, as described by LaPérouse, even though the head, or a head, were separately preserved in a box. Furthermore, the construction of the grave monument does not quite correspond to those seen in Lituya Bay in 1786 or at the same place on Ankau Creek in 1791 (see below). The taking and keeping of trophy or memorial heads, although perhaps less common in more recent times than the preservation of the scalp, is well documented (p. 584).

Near Sitka, Beresford saw a large cave in which was “a square box, with a human head in it, deposited in the manner already described at Port Mulgrave; the box was very beautifully ornamented with small shells, and seemed to have been left there very recently, being the only one in the place. This circumstance seems to show, that the natives of this place dispose of their dead in the same manner as [Page [p.540-b]] at Port Mulgrave, but probably make choice of caves for that purpose, in preference to the open air.” [Beresford, 1789, p. 181.]

It should be noted that no mention was made of bodies or of calcined bones in this cave. The head in the box was therefore a trophy or memento like those more recently found in a cave near Sitka (de Laguna, 1930).” (p. 540-a)

“When Ismailov and Bocharov visited Yakutat Bay in 1788 they apparently saw native burial places, for Shelikhov reports, on information received from them:

“They burn their dead, place the ashes in a chest, and suspend it on poles, called Imilasaby” (Coxe, 1803, p. 327). Although this description certainly fits Tlingit and Yakutat practice as known in more recent times, the word for the grave monument is not Tlingit or Eyak. Nor is the word Athabaskan, as far as I know.” (p. 540-b)

“The cemetery on the Ankau near Port Mulgrave was described by Malaspina and Suría in several passages.

“Having made an excursion to the nearby island, we came to a little one [islet], but of an agreeable amenity; it was covered with grass, many-hued with flowers, although the greater number of plants which were encountered were strawberry patches with fruit very little different in taste from those cultivated in the gardens of Spain. This spot was used for the deposit of the bodies, as it seemed to us, of persons of distinction. We saw three monuments: one of these was shaped like a large and horrible figure, holding in its claws a box in which we believed were the ashes of some personage [pls. 60, 61]; another which the chief told us contained the ashes of his father, and which was formed of two pillars which supported a box, about one vara [2.8 feet] in size, in which were calcined bones [pl. 59]. The ditches which were in front of these monuments, and the half-burned timbers which were found in them, inclined us to believe that which the natives gave us to understand, that they cremated the dead, like some other Indians of the coast.” [Malaspina, 1849, p. 289.] … Finally, not offending the natives, since they had been provided with gifts, they took out and sent to the boat one of the boxes that had been in the ancient sepulchre. It was lightly ornamented on the outside with the usual little snail shells (caracoles) [i.e., opercula]; inside it was another smaller box, in which were found, enclosed in a kind of small basket (esportilla), some few calcined bones, mostly pulverized. Nevertheless, the view of
these sepulchres which accompanies this narrative will give a better idea of its different parts and properties than could be comprehended from a difficult and tedious description. We will only state that we understood from the natives that these sepulchres were solely for the Ankaus or reigning family, and that there was no doubt that the bodies were burned around the huge figure, since, besides the indication to this effect by the natives, they saw three or four excavated little ditches, the size of a man, in which were covered with some planks and stones the charcoal or wood which had served as the pyre. [Malaspina, 1885, p. 161.]

“On the trip to Disenchantment Bay, Malaspina’s party examined Knight Island, or the “Isle of Pines.” “On its south shore, there could be seen other sepulchres, identical with those which we had visited in the vicinity of the port.” [Ibid., p. 164.] … Don Antonio Tova, on the other hand, found a similar group of monuments, facing in the same direction and with the same monster, on the Isle of Pines [Isa Pineda, Knight Island], which finally led us to believe that each branch or family makes its own particular monument, which made of wood and afterwards neglected, in a few years falls victim to weather and time.” [Malaspina, 1885, p. 346.]” (pp. 540-b – 542-b)

“‘The oldest grave houses that contained the ashes of the dead were described by informants as boxlike structures raised on four posts, like caches. There were also posts, presumably carved with sib crests, that were hollowed out behind to contain the ashes. Those of each sib were grouped together, usually behind the lineage houses of the sib, so that the ‘village of the dead’ ([unknow]sge qawu ’ani) duplicated in its arrangement the village of the living. Only the corpse of the shaman was carried farther away.” (p. 542-b)


“Apparently the ransoming of slaves destined to be sacrificed had become customary at Sitka by 1861, and even some of the other tribes gave them to the Russian-American Company for a return. The bodies of dead slaves were, however, simply thrown out on the beach or in the woods, not cremated.” (p. 45)

“Behind or at one end of the village, occasionally on an island opposite, was the graveyard, with small houses or mortuary columns to hold the ashes of the dead.” (p. 59)

“[Gravehouses were placed directly behind the lineage winter houses, if the ground permitted, or were placed at one end of the village, or even on an island opposite. The uncremated bodies of shamans were placed in gravehouses father away, if possible on a point overlooking the water, or in a cave. Carved posts and poles were another characteristic feature of Tlingit villages. Most of these were mortuary poles, hollowed out or fitted to receive the ashes of the dead.” (p. 74)

“[Garfield and Forrest (1948:4) pointed out that the Tuxekan poles were all grave markers or held boxes containing the ashes of the deceased, or were memorials of the dead, and that in contrast to those of Tongass they were very slender, measuring ten to thirty feet in height and only two to three feet in diameter. In 1916 there were 125 poles at the then already deserted village. And (p. 100), of all the poles in the area, none was known to have been carved before 1865. It is interesting that no carved house posts were found in this village.” (p. 195)

“[According to Shukoff, it was the duty of members of the opposite moiety to gather up the ashes and charred bones of the deceased in an expensive blanket and to put this in a wooden box, tlak [(unknown)]láqt. This was kept in a tent until a gravehouse was built to hold the box … At the cremation of a chief, sometimes one or more slaves were killed to attend to his wants in the next world. [A slave was always killed for a dead chief, according to Shukoff.] It is generally stated that the body of a slave killed at this time was cast into the sea, but Lisiansky (1814:241) wrote that the slave’s body was cremated with the master’s, and I know of one case in which the body of a slave was cremated.” (p. 276)

“Cremation took place on a little hill, some distance from the houses. Here the ashes were put into a box and the latter was set in a miniature house on four high stakes. The graveyard looked like a village of such small houses.” (p. 277)

“But some men were not cremated, because they were so brave they would not mind the cold (Swanton 1908:430).] Burial or the putting away [in a cave] of the body was sometimes accorded to a great chief … The shaman’s body was never burned, but was laid away intact in a small house on a prominent headland or island, or in a cave, the idea being that fire could not destroy it.” (p. 278)

“Shamans were never cremated, but their bodies were wrapped in skins and mats, and laid away in houses similar to those to be described … Shamans’ gravehouses were never with the others, but might be beyond the end of the village, and, if possible, always on an elevation overlooking the water. Often they were on some distant island or bluff point. Caves were often selected, and among the Chilkat, caves and rock shelters far up the mountains were used.” (p. 280)

“It was an old custom, especially for those who fell in war, and sometimes for chiefs, to cremate the body but preserve the head wrapped in furs and placed in a chest. La Pérouse, Dixon [Beresford], and Lisiansky all mentioned this custom, and described the disposition of the body or of the ashes in a box supported on posts, and the separate preservation of the head.” (p. 281)

“[Flanking this Bear were two other monuments, that on the left apparently older than the other, but otherwise very similar. Each consisted of a box, or open-sided shelter, raised on four posts about seven and a half feet high, with another box on the ground below. These structures were supposed to contain the ashes of the Ankau’s two sons; since he was a Raven, they would have been Wolves. The elevated box on the left was painted (?) with masklike faces, and both boxes contained two baskets, one larger than the other, and presumably the cover. The lower boxes on the ground were covered over with loose boards, and one at least contained bits of calcined bone, among which the Spaniards recognized fragments of a cranium and of the first two vertebrae of the neck. They collected one (the upper?) box from the older monument. This was inlaid with opercula, and contained a smaller box (basket lid?) that held a small basket with a few bits of calcined bone … Mr. Johnstone (Vancouver 1801, 6:47-48) saw graves in Hamilton Bay, near the eight deserted Kake villages or forts.

In the vicinity of these ruins were many sepulchres or tombs, in which dead bodies were deposited. These were made with a degree of neatness seldom exhibited in the building of their habitations. A wooden frame was raised about ten feet from the ground, the upper half of which was inclosed, and in the open part below in many, but not in all of them, was placed a [Page 283] canoe; the flooring of the upper part was about five feet from the ground, and above that the sides and top were entirely [sic] closed in with boards, within which were human bodies in boxes wrapped up in skins or in matting. These repositories of the dead, were of different sizes, and some of them contained more bodies than
the others; in the largest there were not more than four or five, lying by the side of each other, not one appearing to be placed above the rest; they were generally found near the water side, and very frequently on some conspicuous point. Many of these sacred monuments seemed to have been erected a great length of time, and the most ancient of them had evidently been repaired and strengthened by additional supporters of more modern workmanship.” (p. 282)

“Writing about the Sitka Tlingit in 1804-5, Lisiansky 1814:240-41) reported:
The bodies here are burned, and the ashes, together with the bones that remain unconsumed, deposited in wooden boxes, which are placed on pillars, that have different figures painted and carved on them, according to the wealth of the deceased.
On taking possession of our new settlement [Sitka], we destroyed a hundred at least of these, and I examined many of the boxes. On the death of a toyon, or other distinguished person, one of his slaves is deprived of life, and burned with him. The same inhuman ceremony is observed when a person of consequence builds a new house; with this difference, that on this occasion the unfortunate victim is simply buried without being burned. The bodies of those who lose their lives in war are also burned, except the head, which is preserved in a separate wooden box from that in which the ashes and bones are placed.” (p. 283)

“[A similar find (de Laguna 1933) was made by a resident of Petersburg, on an island some thirty miles south of that town. In a narrow cave or rock shelter were the remains of six boxes that had evidently been deposited there over a long period.” (p. 283)

“The mumified remains of a woman were found in 1905 in a cave in the rock not far from Old Sitka. The mummy was in a sitting position, with knees drawn up to the breast and the arms close around them. Surrounding it were a number of skulls placed with great precision … As to cave burial, the shaman’s body was often hidden in a cave. Of this I have seen two instances near Sitka … [Another note was “Head-in-Box Burial, Mrs. Don Miller”:
When a warrior who was a leader was killed far from home there was no way to bring back the body. There were no gas boats and no lumber for a casket. Therefore the head was cut off, placed in an empty food box and brought back to the relatives. When they reached home the head was kept for five days and then put away, usually in a natural cave or crevice in a rocky cliff. After one year, five slaves, sometimes ten, were killed and their bodies placed on the beach.” (p. 284)

“[Within more recent times, but while cremation was still practiced,] the ashes were placed in boxes or trunks of every description, and these were deposited without order in the family [lineage] gravehouses that stood directly in the rear of the dwelling houses, the terrain permitting. Otherwise the graveyard was at one end of the village, or, as at Hoonah and Tuxekan [in Henya territory], on an island opposite.” (p. 285)

“Cremation was practiced by the Tlingit for everyone except the shaman [not counting slaves whose bodies were simply thrown out in the water, on the beach, or in the woods.]” (p. 394)


“When a chief died, just as he was expiring several slaves were sacrificed near the door of his house. A chief was drowned in the treacherous waters of the Taku river. His body was not recovered, but at the spot where he was drowned two of his slaves were put to death and their bodies thrown into the river … The grandfather of one of our educated young men was a very high-caste man of the Chilkats. He
lived at Kluckwan, a renowned old Indian village. His male slaves lived in a house on one side of his and his female slaves in another on the other side. When he died a number of them were butchered and their bodies thrown into the river … The dead bodies of slaves were always thrown into the bay, sea or river. They were never accorded the honour of burning or burial.” (pp. 117-8)

“If a chief, great lamentation is heard from the entire tribe. As soon as he expires messengers are sent all over the country to announce his death to his tribal relations. No matter how far away they may be at the time, no disposition is made of the body until they arrive.” (p. 147)


“If a person died away from home, the body was cremated on the spot, but all of the bones and ashes were brought back and deposited among the remains of his matrilineal relatives.” (p. 50)

“When a chief or another high-ranking aanyádi died, it was customary to kill one or several slaves during the wake and cremate them along with him … Death by cremation was considered an honor for the slaves, since the usual manner of disposing of their dead bodies was to throw them on the beach to be carried away by the tide.” (p. 132)


“In general, however, slaves were humanely treated … Those sacrificed at funerals were commonly deemed fortunate, for they attained the honor of cremation, and went to the “happy hunting-ground.”” (p. 44)

“Slaves were thrown into the sea after death, or disposed of in any convenient manner, unless they were sacrificed “to wait on their dead master,” or on the occasion of a great feast or other important ceremony. They then were honorably burned or buried.” (p. 147)

Yokuts


“… cremation was once practised, the remaining bones and ashes being buried.” (p. 30)

“Kroeber also states:
The Tachi, like some Costanoan groups, burned everyone of any account, believing that burial gave wizards an opportunity to steal the hair of the deceased and thus evoke their ghosts; but they did not bury the ashes. A group of ancient bodies discovered in the Buena Vista hills, in Tulamni territory, included some skeletons painstakingly wrapped in strings or tules and others incompletely cremated before burial.” (p. 31)

“A death in a family might be announced by any of its members publicly or to any of the deceased's relatives. Relatives in other villages were usually notified by a winatum. Burial usually took place the
morning following the day of death; but if death occurred late at night, then burial would be postponed until the morning of the second day. Since relatives were normally within a day's traveling distance the corpse was kept until their arrival, but it was never kept more than two full days … The corpse of a person who died not more than one day's journey from home would be brought back on a litter by three or four men.” (p. 106)

“M.S., the ancient Yaudanchi, said that flexed burial was always practised by Yokuts people, cremation only by the Mono … Cemeteries were located one to two miles away from a village.” (p. 107)

“If it were thought a man would die within a day or two, the chief of his moiety would be asked to send a messenger to notify and assemble his relatives.” (p. 149)

“Burial.—When a man died, all his relatives, even his distant cousins, came and cried for one or two days … In the old days all bodies were cremated on a pile of brush and heavy wood; the pile was about 4 feet high. During the burning the relatives and others sat in a circle around the fire and wept. About one day later, when all was cool, the bones and ashes were gathered in a basket, and the receptacle and its contents were buried.” (p. 156)

“When a death was imminent, a winatum was sent to notify relatives on both sides of the person's family. Kin beyond the degree of first cousin were not usually notified, E.M. thinks, but this depended on how friendly a relative had been with the deceased.” (p. 168)

“A long time ago they didn't bury people, for there was nothing to dig graves with [sic]. They piled up wood and laid the body on the pile and burned it. Later on they picked up the bones and put them in a good basket. Then they dug a hole in the graveyard, close to the burning place, and buried the whole therein. No mark was put on the grave. The burying ground was just an open ordinary field.” (p. 197)

“Cremation.—The informant (S.O.) had never seen cremation, but knew that it was practiced just before his time. He thought that all the “people up this way” (Chukaimina, Michahai, Entimbich, Wobonuch) used cremation before white influence was felt.” (p. 236)


“The Yaudanchi and Yauelmani buried their dead unless they died at a distance, when they were cremated and the ashes interred in the graveyard of their home town. The underlying idea seems to have been to deposit the remains where the person had lived. All California Indians have strong sentiments on this point; old people will express satisfaction at the prospect of being buried adjacent to the house in which they were born.” (p. 499)

“Their huts were easily built and permanent; the climate was fine, they lived mostly in the open air, and when they died they were not put in the ground but up in the branches of the trees. The climate is such that a dead animal left on the ground simply dries up and only the eye gives knowledge of its presence.” (p. 37)


“If an Indian dies on a trail far from home he is buried beside it. Every one who passes the mound casts upon it a stone, or a string of shell-money, or some other offering, which pious service will secure him from the dire calamity of dying away from home and friends … Incremation is pretty general, though the Chukchansi are said to burn only those who die a violent death or are snake-bitten, and bury all others.” (pp. 382-3)


“Cremation and burials were typical funeral practices for the Yokuts, with the latter becoming more common in the historical period as a result of white contacts … Among the Southern Valley Yokuts cremation was reserved for shamans and individuals who died while away from home. After cremation, the remains of the deceased were buried in the village cemetery.” (p. 6)


“DEATH When a death was impending the relatives in other villages were summoned by the moiety chief's messenger. The funeral was delayed, but not more than a few days, until the relatives assembled … Cremation was supplanted by inhumation, evidently in response to Whites' urging, during the midor late nineteenth century. There were indications that both practices were known aboriginally in Foothill territory. Following cremation the bones and ashes were gathered in a basket for secondary burial.” (pp. 479-80)


“When a Northern Yokuts expired, his body was cremated or buried in a flexed position (Olsen and Payen 1969:39; Pritchard 1970:30–31). This difference in custom cannot be readily accounted for, though mixed cremation and burial was not exceptional in aboriginal California (Gould 1963:155–158, map 2). Inhumation was the usual practice in the southern valley, with cremation reserved for tribesmen who died away from home, shamans, and, among the Tachi, persons of any consequence (Kroeber 1925:499).” (p. 468)

“The corpse, tightly bound, was placed with the head to the west or northwest in a grave dug in a
cemetery outside the village. Various personal effects of the deceased were interred with the body and a
dog was sometimes sacrificed. Though burial represented the primary means of disposal, cremation
was practiced in special cases, such as individuals who died away from home or shamans. Among the
Tachi, everyone of any social consequence was burned (Kroeber 1925:499). The charred bones were
gathered together and buried in the regular graveyard.” (p. 455)

Yuki


“After a death, messengers were dispatched to neighboring villages to inform friends and relatives …
Burial occurred in a graveyard situated several hundred yards from the rancheria.” (p. 186)

“Cremation apparently occurred only under one circumstance. If a person died away from home and it
was impractical to return the body, it was placed on a pyre and burned, the charred bones then being
returned and buried beside the other members of the family.” (p. 187)

“After battle, the wounded and dead were carried home on stretchers made of grapevine lashings
between two poles. Ralph Moore stated that if the distance home were great, bodies were cremated and
only the bones returned for burial.” (p. 189)

“Several hundred yards from each village was a burning and burial ground (húlk'ilal-on-pet, devil
ground) … When the ashes were cold, the remains were gathered in a new basket and buried in the pit.”
(p. 232)


“There was no evidence of an assembly house at any of these sites. No doubt there was one at the
inland village where the community lived in winter. The burial place was there. If a person died at the
beach in summer, he was carried to this burial ground.” (p. 8)

“The dead were buried whenever possible. If a man died where he lived he was buried, but if he died or
was slain when traveling he was burned and his ashes buried at his home … Burial was at some
distance from the village. Thus, the Shipoi people of Westport buried their dead in sand dunes on the
south side of Wages Creek mouth, perhaps a mile from their residences.” (p. 70)

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“The Yuki returned to where the man and wife had lived. The woman had gathered a big pile of brush.
On top of the brush she had put all their baskets and everything they owned. The body of her husband
was put on top of the pile and set on fire. The woman returned to her folks and lived with them after
that.” (p. 145)

“Cremation was resorted to only when it was easier to dispose of the ashes of the deceased than his body. This, the Coast Yuki say, was the habit also of all their neighbors, including the Kato and the northernmost Pomo on the coast. The Pomo in general cremated regularly.” (p. 215)


“Their dead, the Yuki assert, were buried, usually in large baskets. Some of the dead person’s belongings were buried with him, but a part was preserved for the survivors. Cremation was practiced also, but was not the standard custom, being reserved for those slain in fighting or dying under exceptional circumstances. Regular burning of the dead is, however, ascribed by the Yuki to their kinsmen the Huchnom, and to the Pomo.” (p. 180)


“Messengers informed friends and relatives in neighboring villages of a death … Corpses were buried the next day in a hole 4 to 5 feet deep, several hundred yards from the residence, and facing east.” (p. 7)

Yurok


“They found the corpse of their relative fearfully mutilated and scalped, and brought it back to their burial place, together with the blood-soaked earth on which the body had lain.” (p. 129)

“They bury the dead near their huts and erect a high, close hedge around the grave. Sometimes the grave is covered with large wide, split boards, like a strong chest, in order to keep wild animals away.” (p. 152)

“13. Their dead were usually buried near the place of death at the village, in shrubbery a few hundred paces away on the slope or near the edge of the forest.” (p. 175)


“Burial was in town cemeteries, often in small plots where several bodies might occupy a single grave.” (p. 7)

“If a man died away from home his body might be taken back or buried on the spot. In the latter case the right to interment was purchased. Once payment had been accepted for this privilege, subsequent protest at the inclusion of a stranger's body in a family graveyard subjected the critic to liability for a claim for damages.” (p. 37)


“The reason why the Indians always have their grave-yards near the village or dwelling places is to keep the wild animals away from the grave.” (p. 78)

Assiniboine


“The body is placed in the fork of a tree, on a scaffold, or occasionally interred on the top of a high hill. No device, inscription, or hieroglyphics are made at or near the place of interment by any of these nations.” (p. 493)

“When the body is thus dressed and prepared for interment it is the wish of the relatives to get it out of sight as soon as possible, or in a few hours after dissolution, but it often happens that there is no suitable place in the vicinity for burial and they are obliged to carry it along for several days. Most of these tribes prefer scaffolding the corpse on trees, which is the most ancient method of disposing of them, arising from the want of tools to excavate, particularly in the winter season, when the ground is frozen to the depth of 5 feet as solid as a rock, and for the reason that they wish the dead to be placed where they can at all times feast and speak to them.” (p. 571)

“Yet occasionally some, either by request or desire of surviving relatives, or in the event of their dying where no timber can be found, are interred on the top of a hill … Very brave and formerly renowned warriors sometimes requested not to be interred in any way, in which case they are placed inside their lodge propped up, in a sitting posture, dressed and painted, the door of the lodge is closed tight, and the outside around the lodge inclosed by a hedge of thick branches and dirt to prevent the wolves from entering, and the whole is thus left on the plains … In the course of time the lodge rots away, the wolves enter, and the bones are scattered about or carried away by them.” (pp. 572-3)

“The Arikara prefer interring them in the ground, and all the rest of the tribes place their dead, secured in the manner described before, in the forks of trees, which in a year or two, as soon as the cords rot off and the envelopes fall to pieces, are blown down, and the bones are found scattered beneath.” (p. 574)

“There is no such thing as charnel houses or receptacles for the dead in all the district of the upper Missouri, neither are there any appearances of such things having been, each individual being buried or scaffolded separately at the most convenient place and as soon as possible after decease.” (p. 575)

“Occasionally at an earlier period the Assiniboines cremated their dead or deposited their greatest warriors on the surface of the earth beneath cairns of logs and stones, but usually they followed the procedure described by De Smet: “They bind the bodies with thongs of rawhide between the branches of large trees, and, more frequently, place them on scaffolds, to protect them from the wolves and other wild animals. They are higher than a man can reach. The feet are always turned to the west. There they are left to decay. When the scaffolds or the trees to which the dead are attached fall, through age, the relatives bury all the other bones, and place the skulls in a circle in the plain, with the faces turned toward the centre. They preserve these with care, and consider them objects of religious veneration. You will generally find there several bison skulls. In the center stands the medicine [Page xxxv] poke, about twenty feet high, to which Wah-Kons are hung, to guard and protect the sacred deposit. The Indians call the cemetery the village of the dead. They visit it at certain seasons of the year, to converse affectionately with their deceased relatives and friends, and always leave some present.”” (p. xxxiv)

“The head man took charge of the burial, which was high up in a tall tree. An untanned hide was wrapped over the body and made secure to the limbs. Then the people moved a short distance away in the direction of Cypress Hills, their winter home.” (p. 13)

“After a lodge burial, the people moved to another place.” (p. 165)


“Changes had already occurred in the burial of the dead. The burial on scaffolds had taken place until about 1878, the second re-opening of the old Fort Belknap agency.” (p. 12)

Blackfoot


“The dead were placed on a platform in a tree or in a tipi or were left on the floor of their dwelling. Some property was left with the body for use in the next life. The Blackfoot avoided the ghosts of the deceased and if a person died in a tipi the structure was sealed and abandoned and the camping spot was subsequently avoided.” (p. 6)


“If they had a choice, they would have him wrapped in blankets and placed in the forks of a tree or sewn up in his lodge on a lonely hill. On the other hand, if the missionary influence was strong, the family might build a tiny house, large enough to hold the coffin but open so that the spirit could leave whenever it wished. Such ghost houses were built in isolated coulees or on hilltops where they provided a dwelling which would probably keep the spirit around for many months, perhaps years.” (p. 58)

“After he died the camp was abandoned, as the Blackfoot believed that his spirit would haunt the area before leaving for the sand hills. His lodge was sometimes sewn up and used as a death lodge; otherwise the body was placed in a tree or on a hill for burial. It was not buried underground ....” (p. 424)


“... the bodies were sewn in buffalo robes and deposited in the forks of trees. Sometimes they were placed on the ground in a ravine or on the summit of a hill, then covered with rocks and dirt to keep the wolves from molesting them.” (p. 107)


“Three modes of burial were practised by the Blackfeet. They buried their dead on platforms placed in trees, on platforms in lodges, and on the ground in lodges. If a man dies in a lodge, it is never used again ... Until recently, the corpse was wrapped in a number of robes, then in a lodge covering, laced with rawhide ropes, and placed on a platform of lodge poles, arranged on the branches of some convenient tree.” (p. 193)


“In some of the many caves and crevices are now the final resting places of those Old People who passed away after laws were made forbidding the traditional practice of placing bodies near to the Spirit World on top of scaffolds or in branches of trees.” (p. 5)

“There are numerous open graves around the reserve. Most of them are pretty well scattered from the effects of nature. Open graves were usually made by placing a filled coffin or homemade box under a cutbank or next to some large rocks and boulders. Less often, the coffin was covered with a pile of rocks, or placed inside a specially built little cabin. Bodies were usually placed in open graves during epidemics, or by family members who did not believe in burial underground [Page 228] A long-ago burial in a tree along the Belly River. (National Museum) but were prevented by the government from placing the bodies on scaffolds or in trees.” (pp. 227-8)


“Joe Scabby Robe turned and pointed south, across the creek, to a high pine bluff about two miles away. “You see that pine bluff?” he said. “Just below the ridge, in that open place among the pines? You see that little house up there?” ... “That’s an Indian burial house. That’s where old Earrings is buried.” And Joe told me that a long time ago, before there was a road across this part of the Reservation, a man named Earrings had been returning from the Agency with supplies when he lost his way in a blizzard and froze to death. He was buried, in the Blackfoot tradition, in a small house constructed especially for that purpose, with his personal belongings left lying close about him in case
he should need them in the other life.” (p. 152)

“The traditional Blackfoot method of burial was the scaffold or tree burial (chiefs and men of prominence were sometimes left at rest in a teepee high on some hill or ridge), and the Chief explained the reason that the burial house came into existence among his people. The Blackfoots left the earthly remains of their departed loved-ones wrapped in a robe and tied to a scaffold which was placed either in a tree (usually by a stream or on a bluff above a stream) or atop a cairn of flat stones.” (p.165)


“The dead were placed upon scaffolds built in trees, upon the summit of a high hill, or laid in a lodge pitched in a thicket.” (p. 149)

“When No Chief’s brother was killed in battle by the Crows, he ascertained from the war-party the location of the body. After making a journey of several hundred miles, he found it and brought it home.” (p. 150)


“Numerous forms of interment were used by the Bloods. In the case of a rich, influential chieftain, his tepee would be erected and furnished as for immediate occupation. Beds were made around the walls complete and a fireplace installed in the centre. Food bags were filled with eatables and placed within. On a bed facing the entrance, covered with numerous robes, was laid the corpse. After this, the exit was sewn shut and the lodge abandoned … Another form of interment was to deposit the corpse on the branches of trees. The cadaver was wrapped in a huge bundle and left securely tied to the branches selected for this purpose.” (pp. 71-2)


“Formerly, the dead were buried on some high butte or the body tied in a tree ….” (p. 287)

**Comanche**


“Burial was in a crevice (ideally on a hill west of the death place) and less commonly in a tree or scaffold.” (p. 10)


“Burial was undertaken as soon as possible after death, with little attendant ceremony (Wallace and Hoebel 1952:149–154). The corpse was washed, painted, and dressed in the finest clothing available, then bound in a fetal position and transported by horseback to the burial site. The preferred location
was some natural grave lying to the west of the deceased's lodge - a cave, crevice, or the head of an arroyo. The body was simply deposited, facing eastward. For bands camped away from the rocky country, Plains-type elevated burials were also acceptable; here, the corpse was left in a supine position upon a platform set on a scaffold or tree limb.” (p. 36)


“The dead were usually interred in rock crevices.” (p. 895)


“The preferred burial place was a natural cave, crevice, or a deep wash among the rocks of the highest accessible peak, or in the head of a canyon, preferably to the west of the lodge of the departed. If such a place could not be found, a hole was made just large and deep enough to contain the body, or the body was set upon the ground and a pen of poles and rock erected around the grave. In either case the body was deposited in a sitting posture or on its side, facing the rising sun, and the grave was covered with rocks, sticks, and dirt, apparently with no special system or arrangement. The ideal burial place of a medicine man was high on the south side of a hill or slope—if possible, at the spot where he had received power … During the last half of the nineteenth century the Comanches, especially those living on the Red River, away from the mountains, occasionally used scaffold or tree burial, a method commonly practiced by the Cheyennes and other Plains tribes. In such instances the body was placed in a tree and made secure by means of ropes or rawhide thongs which bound it to the branches above and below the corpse. The elevated burial was also made by binding three poles together and raising them in tripod fashion, the crossing made as high as practicable, and the body bound securely to the poles above the point of intersection. The reason for the elevated burial was to protect the corpse from wolves and other predatory animals, but it seems to have been used by the Comanches only when a satisfactory ground burial place was not readily accessible. In the elevated burial the body was extended at full length, hands to the sides, and placed on robes or blankets, which were then folded closely over it, and the bundle bound with ropes or thongs of rawhide passed many times about the whole. In a few cases war parties buried their dead comrades in a water hole. Buffalo bones or skulls, stones, or something of an identifying nature were sometimes used to mark the spot of burial.27 27- This description of Comanche burial is compiled from statements by a number of informants; also, Parker, op. cit., 137; C. and J. D. Smith, op. cit., 53, 132, 162, 170; H. C. Yarrow, “A Further Contribution to the Study of the Mortuary Customs of the North American Indians,” B. A. E. First Annual Report, 99–100; Richardson, The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement, 42; Lee, op. cit., 152; Marcy, Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border, 56; Babb, op. cit., 142, 144; Rodney Glisan, Journal of Army Life, 74; James Hobbs, Wild Life in the Far West, 33.” (p. 150)

Crow


“ they proceeded to collect the human skulls and bones, which they judged very correctly to have once
belonged to living persons of their own nation, being those that had been massacred. After crying over them, cutting themselves, and making promises to their spirits to take ample revenge, they dug large holes and interred them. This is contrary to their usual custom. Dead bodies are usually enveloped and placed in trees. But as these were but the bones and no other way of disposing of them presented itself, they used this method to secure even these poor remains from further insult by passing enemies.” (p. 167)


“Upon death an individual traditionally would be wrapped in a blanket with his or her favorite possessions and placed either on a burial scaffold or in a tree. After decomposition the bones and remaining articles would be buried in the earth or a rock crevice.” (p. 8)


“A woman who grew up at Crow Agency in the years before World War I recalled that traditional tree burials continued to be a feature of tribal life and that coffins sat in the high branches of cottonwoods all across the reservation. “One could not observe the horizon in any direction without seeing one silhouetted against the sky.”” (p. 172)


“Child-in-the-mouth gave the following account of the Fox society, which is translated from a Crow text:—“… Then they went to the burial site. Whether it was on a tree, or in the rocks, or on a hilltop, they laid him there.”” (p. 162)

“The members then went to bury the dead man for his parents. They either put the corpse on a burial stage, or deposited it in the rocks.” (p. 180)


“There were two main forms of disposal,—either in the fork of a tree or on a scaffold of four forked poles. In 1910 I still saw the remains of a tree burial, and I also recall a number of burial stages on the Reservation. The feet, I heard, were placed towards the east. After decomposition the bones were sometimes taken down and deposited in rock crevices. According to Beckwourth, such double burial was once common … For a great chief, I learnt, a special method was used. His lodge was decorated with horizontal red stripes, and the corpse was placed indoors on a four-pole platform; then the tipi was left to be destroyed by the elements … His kin packed the corpse on his horse and went to bury him. Whether on a tree, or in the rocks or on top of a hill, they laid him down.” (p. 67)

“That night it rained violently, and the corpse lay in the water until daybreak. Then the Crow hung it over Cottontail’s horse. “Then they brought him home, grieving they took him to the camp, all the Crow, the entire camp cried. They laid him on a scaffold, they stuck a tipi pole into the ground and tied
his sashes to it, his drum and rattle they tied to it. Above they were blowing in the breeze. Then without him they moved.”” (p. 331)


“...They bury on scaffolds, in trees, and in some instances in the ground. The former is the usual way … It is then secured upon the scaffold, and allowed to remain for one or two years at the end of which time the bones only remain, and are free from offensive smell. Their principal burial place is at the foot of the mountains. To this place they expect sooner or later to remove the bones of their kindred. They remove or take them from the scaffold, tie them up in a bundle first in scarlet cloth, if they have any, and around this a lodge skin, and then carry them on horseback for hundreds of miles to the mountains, where they place them in clefts of the rocks, or in crevices, where they will be sheltered from the rain and snow. They leave tobacco and meat beside the bones and renew the offering whenever they visit the place. They do the same on the scaffold. Meldrum's son who was killed by lightning last July was buried upon a scaffold and this summer his bones are to be carried by his relatives to the common burial [Page [p 171(C)]…] place at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, a distance of 400 miles. He offers no objection as it would give offense. They usually make the scaffold and put the body in trees … The relatives of the tribe paint and dress the body and place it on the scaffold which Meldrum says is always placed in trees to conceal it from their enemies, who would throw it down.” (p. 171-B-C)


“The corpse is then deposited on a burial scaffold elevated on four poles, or in the fork of a tree, with its head oriented toward the west. The scaffold of a great chief is sometimes erected in his tipi, which is then abandoned … When the corpse has become decomposed, the bones are commonly removed and deposited in a cave or rock crevice.” (p. 277)


“Crow anciently buried their dead in rockshelters or caves and took over scaffold and probably tree burial from the Hidatsa around 1825 (Curtis 1907–1930, 4:179).” (p. 704)


“From time immemorial the Crows buried their dead in the branches of trees, on scaffolds, or in rock shelters; for the idea of interment was repugnant to them. It still is (1927) among the older living members of the tribe.” (p. 76)

Gros Ventre

“When death occurred the body of the deceased was washed and dressed in its best clothes by friends (not relatives), and accompanied by personal belongings, placed in trees, on high rocks, or in caves away from predatory animals. Burial in the ground is of relatively recent origin. At the death of a prominent man, his own lodge might serve as his last resting place. The body was laid in the lodge along with his personal belongings and rich furnishing, and the dwelling closed.” (p. 10)


“This reminded Coming Daylight of an incident in her own childhood. “I was walking near a grove of trees where several corpses had been placed (in the traditional manner of disposing of the dead).” (p. 166)

“The body was placed on a stretcher and put in a forked tree, if practicable, the head to the setting sun. Otherwise the corpse might be laid on a knoll and a structure like a sweatlodge built over it to protect it from the wild beasts; or it might be laid in the cleft of a cliff and covered with rocks. 5 5 Cf. Kroeber, 1908, p. 181. For a particularly prominent man, however, his own lodge might serve as his last resting place. In that case holes would be dug in which the lodge-poles were placed, in order that the structure would be more permanent … Even in times of great stress, such as in a smallpox epidemic when so many died that “the trees along the Milk River were just loaded with bodies,” as much care as possible was taken to place the bodies properly in their last resting place. When there was no more space on the trees, a large number of bodies were put in a [Page 202] lodge at some little distance from the camp. As exceptions to the rule, however, Coming Daylight told of a couple of instances which came within her experience in the first epidemic which she remembers. One case concerned a man who simply left the body of one of his wives where she had fallen and Coming Daylight came across the bones of that woman stripped of flesh by wild animals during the night. The other case was that of a man who mercilessly covered with stones the body of his infected sister, in spite of the fact that she was still alive.” (p. 201)


“But elders stress that in the days when they were children and young adults, Gros Ventre mortuary customs were different than they are today. One elder recollected: “… Before I came on the scene they [Page 184] were put on cliffs or ledges.”” (p. 183)


“Burial was in trees, on high rocks, or in caves inaccessible to wolves and coyotes. The corpse was wrapped in a burial robe.” (p. 181)

Klamath

“(1) When a person died, long ago they used to cremate him. (2) But recently they have not done thus, when I was small.” (p. 145)


“This advice was followed in 1868, two years before the ratification of the treaty. In the same year the old practice of cremating dead bodies was abandoned and inhumation introduced. The grave-yard was established around the ash-pile of cremation, still visible in 1877, and in 1878 a second [Page lxvi] cemetery was inaugurated between the Williamson River and Modoc Point, one mile and a half south of the bridge.” (pp. Lxv-lxvi)

“Cremation of the dead has been abolished since 1868, though during the Modoc war these Indians burned several of their dead.” (p. cvi)

“Cremating the dead is a practice which was abolished by the chiefs on the territory of the reservation in or about 1868. At the Indian graveyard north of the Williamson River a hill of 12 feet altitude, where the corpses of Indians of the Klamath Lake (not Modoc) chieftaincy were burnt, is still visible and untouched since then. With the exception of the sentence from Skentanápkash to ítpa, the first paragraph refers to the present as well as to the former mode of funeral, while the second describes the ancient mode of cremation. Cremation prevailed also among the Snake and Pai-Uta Indians, living in the vicinity of the Má[unknown]klaks; cf. Dr. W. T. Hoffman, Pahute Cremation; Cremation among the Digger Indians, in Proceedings of the Am. Philosophical Soc., Philadelphia; vol. XIV, p. 297 sq., 414 sq., (1876). According to Stephen Powers, cremation prevailed among the Pomo of Northern California, west of the Sacrameuto River, and the Erio, a tribe living at the mouth of Russian River, believe that all deceased Indians will become grizzly bears if not disposed of in this manner. The Indians inhabiting the shores of Middle and Lower Columbia River placed their dead on platforms erected on hills, or into the canoes of which they had been the owners; the Kalapuyas on both sides of the Willamet River buried their dead by inhumation … 85, 12. l[unknown]káppa. These piles of stones evidently were, as well as the piles erected on the spot of the burnt lodge, intended as monuments of the deceased. These cairns are of considerable size, and can be seen in the old Modoc country at the present time.” (p. 86)


“The deceased were cremated, with their possessions and valuables given by others in their honor burned with the body.” (p. 6)


“A crematory is on the hilltop on the east side a quarter-mile north.” (p. 20)

“Cremation is the universal practice, even for suicides, the newborn, and the stillborn. Only the bodies
of secretly aborted infants are buried in the bush. The body of a man killed in war is brought home for cremation. 98 Cremation was given up forty or more years ago (“in about 1868,” Gatschet, 1:86). The first burial was that of a Molala man, married to a Klamath woman, who was killed by a Klamath.” (p. 71)

“Near each group of settlements is a spot where all cremations take place. It is somewhat apart from the settlements but not isolated … Three of these serve the Klamath marsh people; on the eastern side of the marsh near the towns k’Etaiwas (2, see maps, figs. 1–3), g[unknown]up[unknown]ua'[unknown]si (3), and i’wal (4). For others of this division of the tribe, there is one on Sprague [Page 72] river at ka’un[kunknown]k[unknown]jan (14) and one on middle Williamson river near ya’ak (23). The du’kwa division crematory is near the mouth of that river. The Pelican bay division has a crematory at d[unknown]un[unknown]o’ksi (38). The remaining division, the Klamath falls people, have two at d[unknown]i’tkla[unknown]ks (50) on the cast side of Klamath lake and two on either side of Link river. These eleven constitute the total for the Klamath territory.” (p. 71)

“For ease in transportation on a man’s back, the legs of a small corpse are flexed and tied. A larger corpse is lashed between two poles so that four men may carry it. Canoe transportation is of course necessary in most cases since the settlements are strung out along the shores … The pyre of green logs, three or four feet high, stands in a slight depression on the ash-heap (s[unknown]ek[unknown]a’lgi) of preceding cremations. These heaps are said to have been ten or twelve feet high, “as high as a haystack,” built up of the ashes scraped together after each burning (sp[unknown]inu’). Gatschet states that the one north of the (middle?) Williamson river was twelve feet high in 1877. 100 Op. cit., 1:86. White vandals have long since leveled these in search of plunder. All those I saw are now low mounds not more than a few feet in height nor more than thirty feet in diameter … When the fire has burned down, several of the male relatives who stir it with long poles, roll the remains out to be rewrapped in a mat and burned again. It is said that bodies are hard to burn; the fire must be renewed several times. The heart is the last portion to be destroyed. Poor people might not be able to burn the whole body.” (p. 72)

Eastern Apache


“When death occurred the body was buried as soon as possible, often in a rocky crevice as far as possible from the camp.” (p. 9)


“When a child is stillborn or dies while it is being carried in the cradle, its body is hastily buried in a talus slope and is covered by rocks, branches, and earth.” (p. 14)

“They bury the corpse quickly and far from the settlements—in the mountains, if they are near … Out there the members of the burial party might strike a little natural depression at the bottom of a hill. They could use this as a grave. They wrap the body in a blanket or a hide, put a little brush under it and some on top, and put a few rocks on top if they are handy. Or they put down a layer of rocks, put the body on it, then brush and branches over, then leaves and dirt, and finally rocks on top until there is a
small mound.
If they find a little cave or a hole in the rocks, that is used. Interestingly enough, there is a term which means both “cave cache” and “grave.” The body is put on the floor, and the entrance is blocked up with rocks and covered with mud to hide it and make it look like the side of the cliff. They aren’t going to talk about the grave and tell where it is. They don’t want anyone to know or think about it.
When a cave is not handy, they might scoop out a hollow grave and bury the body in a hole in the ground. A hide or logs would be put over the body to keep out the animals.” (p. 473)

“The burial doesn't take very long, and they come away as soon as they can. They keep away from that place; it is not revisited.” (p. 475)


“At death a body was buried with dispatch in some rocky crevice at a distance from the encampment.” (p. 415)

**Mescalero Apache**


“Burial was hasty, the home and possessions of the dead person were destroyed, the grave was avoided after the burial, the name of the dead person could not be uttered, and references to him were deemed affronts to his relatives.” (p. 25)


“The corpse was washed and prepared by as few persons as were needed for the task, and the deceased was buried, with some of his possessions, as quickly as could be managed in a rocky crevice remote from the camps ….” (p. 436)


“As soon as a person breathed his last, close relatives who lived at some distance from the place where the death took place were notified at once and came to help prepare the body for burial. After guns were obtained by the Mescalero a relative discharged a gun into the air immediately after a death to notify the surrounding camps that a sick person had succumbed.” (p. 454)

“Graves were never revisited. “We didn't want to be reminded of the dead person,” said a shocked informant who was queried on this point. Anyone so aberrant as to return knowingly to a burial place was suspected of witchcraft.” (p. 455)
Northern Paiute


“At death the person was buried in the hills along with his or her personal possessions. Cremation was reserved for individuals suspected of witchcraft.” (p. 8)


“The body of the deceased was removed from the house, wrapped in skins with legs flexed in front or behind, and taken to the hills for burial. It might be placed in a rock crevice or cave, or it might be buried on a hillside.” (p. 450)


“It was wrapped in “good tanned deer skin” and carried on horseback or, in the old days, by two or three men. Formerly it was not taken far away and the camp was moved; but with the advent of horses, it was taken well into the hills.” (p. 167)

“No grave was dug; a few rocks were removed and the body deposited in the cavity. As Joshua put it, “Just hide him away in the rocks.” Sometimes a man's moccasins and bows were placed along-side. One informant, 211 211 JB. reported cremation for certain cases. “Sometimes [Page 168] an Indian was vicious; he fought, stole, and talked too much. He didn't know what was right. Then they burned him.” Other informants maintained that cremation was unknown.” (pp. 167-8)


“The usual practice was to burn the house over the murdered sorcerer; otherwise the body was buried in the usual manner.” (p. 44)


“Malevolent doctors (poisoners) were always burned after death and the ashes left lying where the burning took place. Helen Joaquin told of a suspected poisoner being burned to death while he lay too ill to escape. She also told of two other doctors, a man and his wife, who were “knocked in the head” and then burned.” (p. 60)

“When a person dies the friends and relatives wail and stand in groups and discuss the cause of the death. Someone is sent to notify the relatives who are not present … The body is then rolled in a
buckskin blanket and tied, and either carried or taken on horseback from the camp to some rocky place. Some informants stated that the body is buried in a knee-chest position, others that it is placed flat on its back. Everyone helps cover the body with rocks. A plain pole is stuck in the grave of a doctor or man of power; no marker on the graves of others.” (p. 106)

“A person who dies in battle is abandoned, unless the battle is close by a settlement. Mothers who die in childbirth are buried with the baby in their arms. Babies who die in infancy are buried in their cradles.” (p. 107)

Ute


“The extended body was usually buried in a rock crevice or cave with the head toward the east. O.C. Stewart’s (1942:313) informants also report cremation.” (p. 352)


“Bodies were washed, dressed, and wrapped and buried, extended, in a rock-covered grave in the mountains.” (p. 9)


“Bodies were disposed of in a number of fashions. Usually a funeral was held wherein friends and relatives of the deceased wailed and spoke a few words about the deceased. The deceased was dressed up in his best clothes, his personal effects were destroyed, including his horses (or his best horse). Finally the body of the deceased was either (1) cremated with the house, (2) buried in a ditch, (3) buried among rocks, or (4), buried in a dirt mound (Lowie 1924: 279–280; Stewart 1942: 312–313) … Actually, precious little is known about Ute burial practices. It is known that they had burial grounds; yet [Page 50] their general fear of ghosts keeps them from visiting these grounds and has contributed to a great body of lore associated with their sanctuary areas.” (pp. 49-50)


“Burial was in rock crevices. “Find a place where there is lots of rocks. Move these rocks and dig until there is just enough space to lay the man out straight. Wrap the body in buckskin, place it in the grave, with the head to the west, then pile on poles and brush, and lots of rocks on top.”” (p. 150)