

# WIKCHAMNI DICTIONARY

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## Dedication

For the POHOTS

# Wikchamni Dictionary

This dictionary began in 1969 with a request by Cecile Silva that I 'write her history and language' for her and the other Pohots sisters, Mary Friedrichs, Virginia Aguilar, and Susie Metcalf. She felt this was important because many of the younger folks showed little interest in learning and speaking their language and those that did were missing some of the subtleties that these sisters had learned from their parents Mary and Joe Pohot. She asked me to promise to make this information available to others and I agreed. Of course I didn't realize it would take almost fifty years. Serious work on the project began in the summer of 1970 and continued over the following nine years. Cecile was the primary consultant with Mary and Virginia making valuable additions that can be seen and heard throughout this dictionary. Although all the sisters spoke English at home, Cecile, Mary and Virginia would carry out lengthy conversations in Wikchamni when they got together. Cecile took an active part in helping to preserve her language and culture as she patiently assisted me in the study of her language. Although these wonderful women have all passed away, the promise I made to Cecile in 1969 is now realized with this dictionary of the Wikchamni language.

Because of many special characteristics of the Wikchamni (also spelled Wukchamni by some) language spoken by these women, including alveolar (retroflex) consonants and partially rounded central vowels I have tried to include audio examples of as many words and example sentences as possible. There are digital audio copies of all the material used in this dictionary plus a larger collection of stories, ethnographic descriptions and conversations that can be accessed at (CSUF information here?)

I have included information for Yawelmani and Chukchansi, two languages that are related to Wikchamni, wherever possible. The Yawelmani data comes from an unpublished lexicon that is derived from the work of Stanley Newman. The Chukchansi material comes from an unpublished list derived from the work of Sylvia Broadbent and from a Chukchansi Dictionary by Niken Adisasmito-Smith (2016). The first two sources are unmarked in the Wikchamni Dictionary and the latter source is marked as (NAS).

This work has been supported over the years by the Linguistics Department, California State University, Fresno, the Survey for California and Other Indian Languages at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian Institution.

I want to thank the large number of people who have continued to provide encouragement to complete this project; and a particular thanks to Mr. William Flores, a grand nephew of the Pohots sisters, who helped renew my commitment to see the work done before I get too old to remember.

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## The Wikchamni Language

Today Wikchamni folks live in numerous locales in California and elsewhere. While a few of these people remember some of their ancestral language, none seem to have the fluency and complexity that Cecile and Mary had. Until the late eighteenth hundreds people speaking Wikchamni lived primarily in the foothill country of South Central California mostly along the Kaweah River and Deer Creek drainages. This was a rich environment in which to grow up and both Cecile and Mary remember camping for short periods of time further up in the Sierra Nevada mountains when it got very hot and camping down in the San Joaquin Valley near the lake when it was colder. But when they were young their parents and their grandmother talked mostly Wikchamni to them at home and while they were learning the cultural heritage of the Wikchamni people.

While there were some early studies done on Wikchamni, particularly Kroeber (1907) and Newman (1944) which led to some short lexical lists, Wikchamni Dictionary is the most complete lexicon available. I will continue to add to the dictionary as I analyze a large set of untranslated texts from both Cecile and Mary and I will update the dictionary from time to time with these new additions.

# The Sounds of Wikchamni

Wikchamni has 46 basic sounds in its inventory. 32 of these are consonants sounds and 14 are vowels sounds. The complete list of consonants and vowels includes:

## Consonants

p p<sup>h</sup> p'  
t t<sup>h</sup> t'  
ɬ ɬ<sup>h</sup> ɬ'

č č<sup>h</sup> č'  
k k<sup>h</sup> k'  
ʔ

s š x h

m m'  
n n'  
ŋ ŋ'

w w'  
l l'  
y y'

## Vowels

i i·      ɨ ɨ·      u u·

e e·      ə ə·      o o·

a a·

The consonants p, t, ɬ, č and k have three varieties referred to by linguists as unaspirated consonants (p, t, ɬ, č, k), aspirated consonants (p<sup>h</sup>, t<sup>h</sup>, ɬ<sup>h</sup>, č<sup>h</sup>, k<sup>h</sup>), and glottalized consonants (p', t', ɬ', č', k'). The unaspirated consonants are pronounced without an accompanying puff of air. In English unaspirated consonants occur following the sound [s] but otherwise they are pronounced with a puff of air. For example the English word 'top' is pronounced [t<sup>h</sup>ap] with an aspirated t, but in the word stop the [t] is unaspirated [stap] without the accompanying puff of air. You can feel this puff of air with aspirated consonants yourself by holding your hand close to your mouth and saying the two words 'top' and 'stop'. You will notice the puff of air when you say top but not when you say stop. Because of this important distinction in English, English speakers often misinterpret these unaspirated sounds in Wikchamni as b, d, and g, but in those sounds the vocal cords are vibrating and in Wikchamni the vocal cords are not vibrating when the unaspirated sounds are produced.

The glottalized consonants (p', t', ɬ', č', k') and the glottal stop (ʔ) have a fairly strong glottal release. Glottalization and the glottal stop [ʔ] are not basic sounds in English but are pronounced occasionally as

the quick break between syllables in utterances like Uh-oh. The symbol (č) is pronounced like the English sequence (ch) as in the word 'church'. The symbol (ṭ) sounds like the sequence (tr) in English as in the word 'train'. The symbol (x) sounds like the (ch) in German words like 'Bach' and is sometimes pronounced with a very raspy quality. The symbol (ŋ) is pronounced like the sequence (ng) in English words like 'sing'.

The vowels (ɨ) and (ə) are unique to Wikchamni and are pronounced like English (i) and (e), but with your lips rounded like when you make an (o) sound in English. The dot (·) after a vowel indicates that it is to be pronounced twice as long as a vowel without a dot.

A complete description of Wikchamni sounds as well as words and sentences can be found in *Wikchamni Grammar* pages 4-32.

## How to use the search functions

English words in the dictionary can be searched for by clicking the English tab in the upper right of the page, Wikchamni words can be searched for by clicking the Wikchamni tab in the upper right of the page, and selecting the beginning consonant from the list on the left. You can also search for a word or affix by clicking the Search tab.

When using the Search tab you can search for words by typing the word in the search box. For English click the English tab and simply type the word you are searching for. For entering Wikchamni forms, click in the Wikchamni Search tab. You may not have all the characters used in Wikchamni on your keyboard. In this case, to enter characters not on your keyboard you can use a copy and paste method using the special characters printed below. Simply copy the whole character and paste in in the appropriate place in the search box.

ŋ    š    ʔ    c    c<sup>h</sup>    c'    č    č<sup>h</sup>    č'    k<sup>h</sup>    k'

p<sup>h</sup>    p'    ʈ    ʈ<sup>h</sup>    ʈ'

i·    ī    i̇    e·    ə    ə·    u·    o·    a·



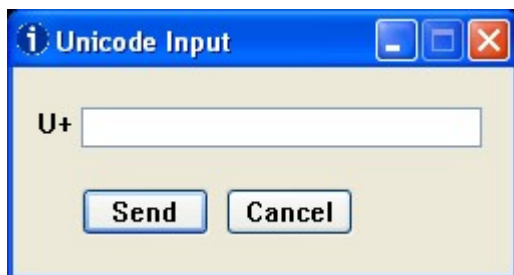
If you are working on a Windows PC and prefer to use keystrokes instead, you will need a way to access Unicode characters. There are many variables that will need to be handled and you may need to get help from a computer technician. There is one approach that seems to work for Chrome, Firefox and Internet Explorer browsers and for all version of windows and that is to utilize a Unicode input program such as "UnicodeInput Utility" (<http://www.fileformat.info/tool/unicodeinput/>). This is a small pop-up utility that allows you to enter Unicode numbers and have the character appear where the cursor is located in the search window. You would need to download the utility from the web link above and follow the instructions at the web site. It is a bit cumbersome but if you choose to try this, here are the codes that you would enter to get the various symbols.

ʔ = 294      ə = 259      ʔ = 1e6d      ı = 268      š = 161      <sup>h</sup> = 2b0  
' = 2bc      ŋ = 14b      č = 10d      · = 0b7

In order to search for ʔ<sup>h</sup>əʔət 'rattlesnake' you first download the program and start the Unicode input utility by pressing Alt+GreyPlus (on the number pad). The Alt key is the left Alt key and the GreyPlus key is the plus key on the number keyboard seen below:



That brings up the utility pop-up window:



So to obtain ʔ<sup>h</sup> you would type 1e6d in the Unicode pop-up window, press Send and a ʔ will be entered where your cursor is located in the search window and then clear the number you entered by using your backspace key and enter 2b0 (two +b+zero) and a raised small h <sup>h</sup> is added to the ʔ giving you ʔ<sup>h</sup>, clear the pop-up window again and enter 259 giving you ʔ<sup>h</sup>ə, clear the pop-up and enter 294 giving you ʔ<sup>h</sup>əʔ, clear the pop-up and enter 259 giving you ʔ<sup>h</sup>əʔə, then enter a t giving you the final form ʔ<sup>h</sup>əʔət. It takes a bit of work but you can use this utility and the codes above to type any Wikchamni word.

# Contact

For questions or additional information please contact:

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