

Yuma by Jordan

Location and Homes

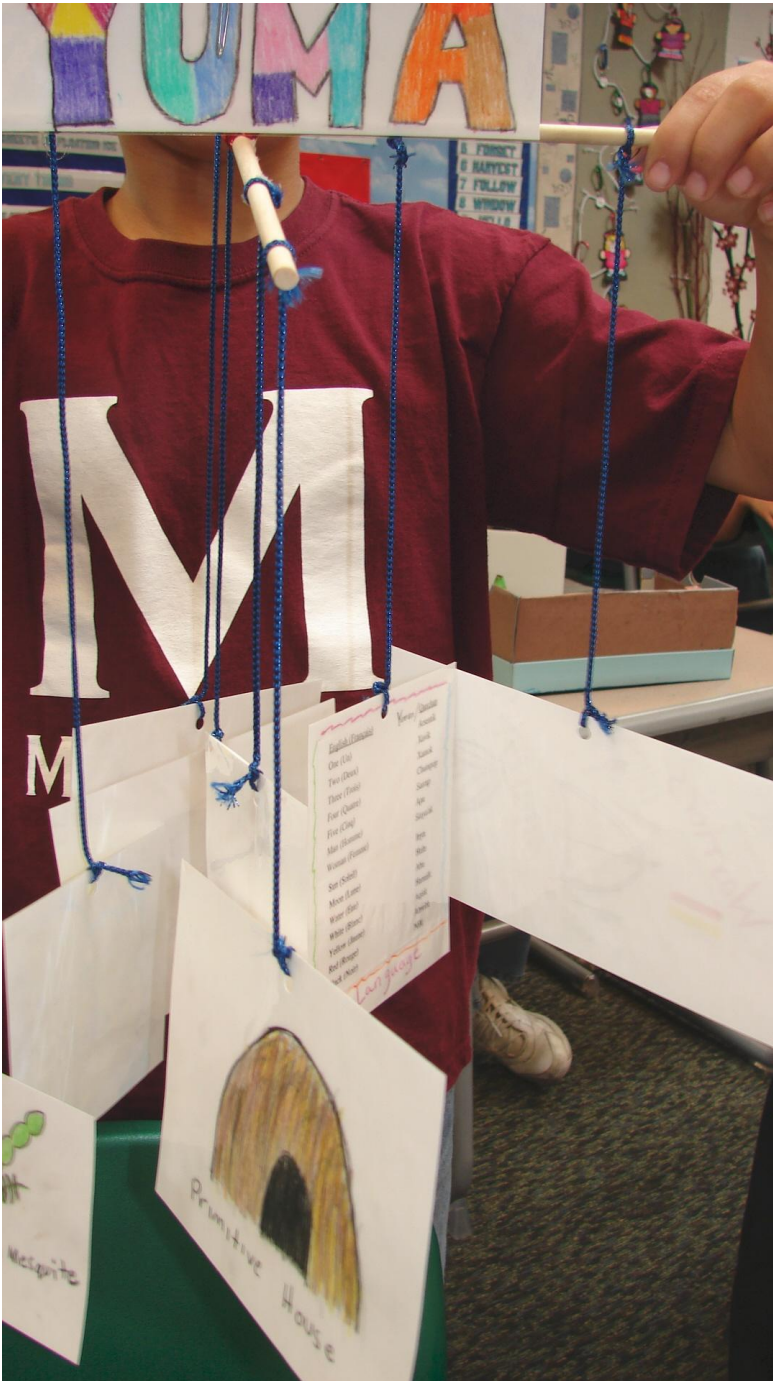
I decided to do my report on the Yuma Indians. The Yuma Indians were Indians that lived in the Colorado River Valley. The state that they lived in was Arizona, near Yuma, right by the California border. They also have been found in Southern California and Northern California. In the state of Arizona, by the Colorado River, it was very hot like a desert. Their houses were the Mojave type and made with a frame of logs and poles with a thatch or arrow weed covering. To keep out the heat, you could only see their houses from one side. Their houses were shaped like rectangles or squares. In the middle of the house was the door. The door was always on the side where there was a little heat to keep the house cool so the Indians wouldn't have to get out every hour. In ancient times, half of their house was underground and the top was shaped like a dome.

Food

The Yuma Indians were farmers. They grew maize and pumpkins. They ate seeds and honey mesquite. They also ate fish, birds, and small animals. They caught these animals using snares, or traps. They caught fish with home made nets. Most of what they ate came from their own farms.

Clothes

The men wore a cloth around their hips made out of grass. They put feathers in their hair and wore a bead necklace. Later on the Yumans traded other Indians for deer skin to make clothes. Instead of moccasins, they wore sandals. They wore no clothes on their chest. The women wore a really small apron that came to the middle of their thighs. They did not wear clothes on their chest either because it was so hot. Today, the women wear shirts and long skirts. Both the men and the women would also have tattoos on their bodies.



Family Life

The Yumans did not really live in towns. They lived on little farms around the river. Most of the year they lived in little families of 25 people. Their leader was a person that was good at war, Sometimes they were put into tribes of 2,000 to 3,000 people. If this happened they would have a chief to be their leader. The Yumans enjoyed fighting. They would paint their faces and bodies with red, yellow, and white clay. They were said to be good warriors

Art and Music

Like a lot of other Indians, the Yuma Indians liked to sing songs. The Yumans did not really sing out words, but noises. Their voices were smooth and relaxing, and they sung in higher pitches. For music, they would use percussion instruments, like drums, and would use them in their religious ceremonies. They were also good at certain crafts. They were good at making pots, and came up with a special way to make the clay stick together. They also liked making beads. The ancient Yumans liked to make baskets, and were very good at it.

Interesting Facts

The Yuma Indians held two special ceremonies every year. The first one was for being sad for those that died that year in your family. It was called Nimits, or crying time. If someone died that year, they would get a long stick and decorate it with a lot of colored cloth. The whole day, they would cry and say chants with other sad Indians. At the end of the day, they would put their sticks on a fire pit and burn them. The Yumans believed that when someone died, there were *two* roads that they could take. The North road was for people who did terrible things, and the South road was for the people that were good. There are two "aged keepers" that tell the dead which road they need to take. Four days after the burning, the Harvest Ceremony begins. The Yumans go from sad to happy. They gather all of the good that has grown and put it in a pile. They dance and sing for four days and they can take whatever they want from the pile and eat it. This is a time of happiness.

Conclusion

I really liked learning about the Yuma Indians. They were an interesting tribe. I also liked the fact that they are desert Indians, and we live in the desert. I am glad that I got to learn more about these Indians. I feel very lucky that I was born when I was. It would have been very hard to live like they had to.