

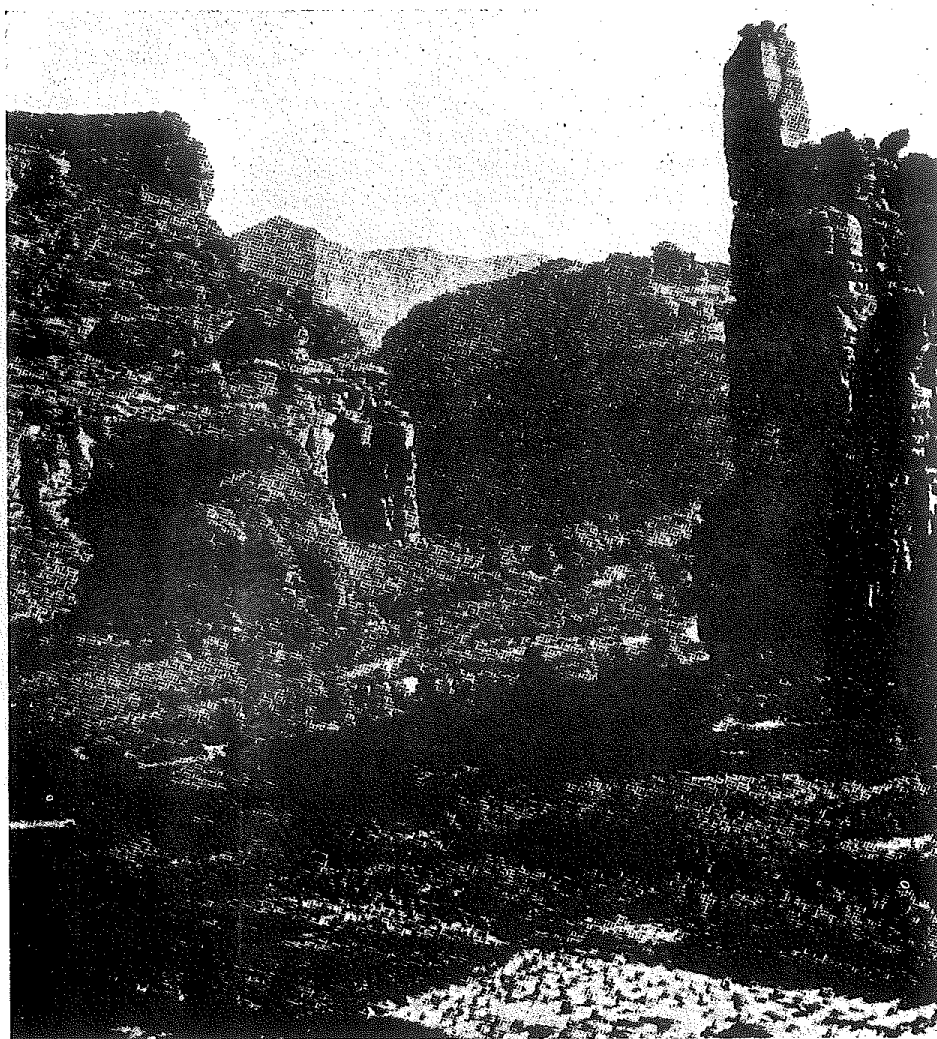
# DENVER ART MUSEUM

DENVER, COLORADO

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HAVASUPAI VILLAGE IN CATARACT CANYON

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## THE HAVASUPAI INDIANS

**LOCATION AND POPULATION.** The Havasupai Indians are a sedentary, agricultural people belonging to the Yuman linguistic stock, living in an area measuring about 75 by 90 miles centering around Cataract Cañon, a gorge entering the Grand Cañon of the Colorado River from the south, about 30 miles west of the railroad terminal and settlement on the south rim. Summers are spent in the canyon and winters on the plateau draining into the gorge. The 1930 Indian Bureau census shows 198 members, which indicates a slight increase since 1905. The tribe has probably never numbered more than about 275.

**NAME.** Havasupai is an abbreviation of their own name for themselves, "Havasuwai-paa", meaning "blue-green water people". They are also called Havasu, Supai, and Coconino.

**PHYSIQUE.** The people are of stocky build and medium height and are generally longheaded. Their light complexions are noticeable.

**HISTORY.** The Havasupai are very probably a branch of the Walapai, a Yuman people living immediately west of them. Indications are that they have lived in their present area for a long period. Padre Garces discovered them in 1776. After the middle of the 19th century a few American parties visited them, but until quite recent times they remained nearly untouched by white civilization. Their present reservation was established in 1882. Because of its isolation, the tribe has kept a large part of its aboriginal culture.

**DWELLINGS.** The summer homes in the canyon have a conical foundation of four logs locked together at the tops. Smaller poles fill in the gaps. Flexible rods are tied horizontally to these poles, an opening to the height of a man being left in one side. On these rods are tied rows of thatching. Willow brush is the most common thatch. A smoke hole is left in the roof. The sides and sometimes the top are finally covered with earth. Some houses have an entry way like that seen on Navahos hogans—see leaflet 9. An average house, occupied by one family, is 12 feet square and 9 high. Variations are earth covered gabled structures and those having walls made of horizontally laid logs. There is a central fireplace, and beds of cedar bark or rabbit skin lie against the walls. Property is tucked away in any available corner or hung from the roof. The door is closed with a loosely hanging blanket.

The winter camps sometimes have similar houses, but usually the winter house is a rectangular affair with a flat dirt roof and thatched sides. These houses are set in dense cedar or pinyon thickets, facing south.

Both summer and winter colonies have shade structures in many different forms.

**CLOTHING** was all made from animal skins until quite recent times, when garments of white manufacture have come into use. Work in skins, including the making of women's clothes, is done by the men. The men wear shirts, breechcloths, leggings and moccasins. The shirts and leggings were once like those worn on the plains—see leaflet 24—but nothing is seen now that does not show white influence in cut and sewing. The women's dress has two parts, an apron hung from the neck and reaching from chest to ankles in front, and a shorter piece hanging from the waist behind. A short apron reaching from waist to knees in front is sometimes worn under the dress. The two parts of the dress overlap and are held in place by tie strings and a Hopi woven belt.

Fringes are long and on the women's clothes are trimmed with metal or hoof jinglers. The men always wear a hard sole ankle high moccasin. The women's moccasin is also hard soled, but has a high upper wrapped around the calf. Women sometimes go barefooted. Both sexes, but especially the women, use rabbit skin blankets for warmth. The women also wear an ornamental shawl made of several bandannas sewn together.

Face painting and tattooing are done to some extent. Necklaces and ear rings of Pueblo and Navaho shell and silver are worn.

**FOOD.** The Havasupai are very successful farmers, being famous for their crops. The fields are all located in Cataract canyon except for the Indian Garden just under the El Tovar Hotel. There is considerable irrigation. Corn is the principal crop. Beans, squash, melons, sunflowers and tobacco are also raised. Mescal is roasted as by the Apache, see leaflet 16. Cactus and yucca fruits, peaches and figs, mesquite pods, juniper berries, pinyon nuts, and the seeds and leaves of several plants are all eaten. Honey is eaten when found. Salt is obtained from the Grand Canyon.

Meat, obtained by hunting with bow and arrow, is an important part of the diet. Deer, antelope, mountain sheep, wildcat, mountain lion, raccoon, rabbit and squirrel are all hunted. Rabbits are killed in drives by the men and boys. Small rodents are caught with traps. Turkey, quail and doves are eaten. Fish, lizards, etc., are not eaten. Dogs are used in hunting, but are not eaten.

Corn is ground on metates and in mortars and cooked in a great variety of ways. Roasting and boiling are the common methods of cooking. Meat is dried. Boiling in baskets has long been abandoned. Some native clay pots are still used in cooking, though metal utensils are more common. Most cooking and eating are out of doors. Three meals are eaten.

**BASKETRY** is made by the women in two technics, twining and coiling. Conical burden baskets, globular water bottles and shallow trays or bowls are made by twining. Twigs of the acacia (*Acacia greggii* Gray) are preferred for this work, though cottonwood and willow are also used. The burden baskets and water bottles are decorated with simple designs made by introducing different varieties of twining and with black from the martynia or devil's claw. They have loops for carrying. The water bottles are first coated with soapweed paste colored red and then with pinyon gum.

Most of the coiled baskets are shallow trays or bowls. The materials used are the twigs of cottonwood or of a plant for which there seems to be no English name. The sewing is on a three rod foundation. Simple geometrical and banded designs are made with martynia black. The designs have no meaning, though to oblige tourists names are often given to them. Basketry is still made in quite considerable quantities.

**POTTERY** is still made to a limited extent by the women. Brown, globular pots of coarse texture, unslipped and undecorated, and smoking pipes are the only articles made now. The pots are built up by a combination of the coil and paddle and anvil methods and after drying in the sun are baked, one at a time, in hot coals for about 24 hours.

**TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.** The family in our sense is the tribal unit. These small groups are loosely bound into larger ones by blood ties. There are no clans or gentes. There are six chiefs of equal power, though one usually acts as a discussion leader and spokesman. Chief-

tainship is theoretically inherited, but prestige has to do with the selection. The chiefs have little power, their principal duty being to give advice and to lead discussions. The tribal council decides all questions of importance. There was no war chief, the most competent available leader taking charge of the rare defensive fighting of the tribe.

**RELIGION** is very slightly developed among the Havasupai. Prayers are addressed to the sun, earth, rocks, trees, water, etc. Prayer sticks are used. There is belief in the soul's future life and in ghosts. There are shamans or medicine men who by means of their possession of familiar spirits, dreams and knowledge of various magical practices, cure disease and fractures, snake bites, etc., and regulate the weather.

**DANCES.** There are now only two dances, and were only three in the past. The largest affair is a general tribal reunion and dance held annually in the early fall. To some extent it is a prayer for rain, etc., but the social side predominates. Both men and women in ordinary clothes dance in a circle to the sound of voice and drum. There used to be special costumes. At intervals there are addresses by the chiefs and visiting Indians. The Mohave mourning dance is sometimes practiced, but not in its complete form. Both sexes take part and all sing. This ceremony is also accompanied by speeches, games and intertribal visiting. Until 20 years ago there was a dance of masked and painted men. They danced in formations like those of the Virginia reel while singing. The dance was to obtain good fortune and prosperity.

**DIVERSIONS.** Spare time is occupied in gossiping, bathing in the sweat lodges and playing games. Dice games are favorites. Foot and horse-racing, shinney, wrestling, hoop-and-pole, cup-and-pin and playing with dolls are the common amusements. Gambling is common.

**CUSTOMS.** Children are born in the homes and are placed on basketry cradle boards. There are various small customs for the event, but they are hardly ceremonies. Names are of little importance and are told to strangers without hesitation, which is unusual among Indian tribes. Marriages are now monogamous, though polygamy once existed. The only restriction is that blood relations may not marry. The young people arrange their own marriages and parental consent is sought. Gifts are interchanged. The couple first live with the wife's parents. The dead are well dressed and the whole tribe meets to mourn and to listen to talks by the chiefs. The bodies were cremated until about 1895. Now they are buried in the walls of the canyon. Personal possessions are burned and horses killed on the grave. Graves are avoided. The people are peaceful, industrious, intelligent and hospitable. They are great traders.

Compiled from the following sources by F. H. Douglas :

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Pictures, 1, 2; details on all points, 1; extensive bibliography, 1.