

dependent upon the former, for the birds feed upon the seeds and starchy roots of the larger plants or upon fish or other animals that ultimately depend for their supply of food upon the minute algæ with which the waters of the marsh and lake abound.

One of the plants growing abundantly in the marsh and less extensively in some of the bays of the lake, the great yellow water lily (*Nymphaea polysepala*), was a staple farinaceous food of the Klamaths in primitive times and now is regarded by them as a delicacy (Plates 1 and 2). An opportunity presented itself to spend a week at Klamath Marsh in August, 1902, and to see the Indians harvest their crop of wokus (wo'-kas),<sup>a</sup> or waterlily seed. The industry is well preserved in so nearly its primitive form that a detailed record of it has seemed desirable and is herewith presented. A wokus gatherer's camp is shown in Plate 3.

It is estimated that Klamath Marsh contains about 10,000 acres of a solid growth of wokus. The plant is so vigorous and has such a habit of growth as usually to occupy an area suited to it to the complete exclusion of other characteristic and conspicuous marsh plants, such as tule and cattail. Certain plants associate themselves habitually with the waterlily, but these plants are for the most part submerged in the water, are inconspicuous, and subsidiary in their relationship to the waterlily, and in no effective or important way contest its spread. The principal of these latter plants are bladderwort (*Utricularia vulgaris*), mare's tail (*Hippuris vulgaris*), and pondweed (*Potamogeton natans* and other species).

#### HARVESTING.

Wokus is harvested exclusively in boats of the kind known as a "dugout." The dugout (wuns) is hollowed from a single log, commonly of the yellow pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), and ordinarily is about 18 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 16 inches deep (Plate 4). Sometimes logs of Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga mucronata*) are used. This tree makes a superior boat, but as the species normally grows at a higher elevation than the lake and marsh, it is less easily available to the boatmaker. The dugout is propelled usually by poling instead of paddling. The pole (la-gak'), made of a peeled sapling of the lodge-pole pine (*Pinus murrayana*), is about 9 feet long and 1½ inches thick. The lower end is split for a distance of about 6 inches, and the two split points are then spread abruptly to a distance of about 4 inches, where they are held by the insertion of a transverse brace. In all the poles seen the

---

<sup>a</sup> The alphabet and system of diacritic marks followed in this paper are those of the Bureau of American Ethnology, except that "sh" is here used instead of "c" for the sound of "sh" in shall, and "ch" instead of "tc" for the sound of "ch" in church. Secondary accents are not marked when they occur at the normal distance of two syllables from a primary accent.

Coville, Frederick Vernon. Wokas: A Primitive Food of the Klamath Indians. S.n., 1904. Indigenous Peoples: North America, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/75N2Y2>. Accessed 1 Oct. 2018.