Mount Shasta
Annotated Bibliography

Chapter 3
Chastacosta Tribe

In 1907 Roland Burrage Dixon discussed the derivation of the name "Shasta" and added the following comment: "The matter is further complicated by the difficulty of clearing up the precise relationship of the so-called 'Chasta' of Oregon, and of explaining the recurrence of the same term in the name of the Athabascan tribe of the Chasta-Costa of the Oregon coast" (see Dixon 1907). The entries in this section were selected for their relevance to Dixon's comment. It appears from the entries that the Athabascan-speaking Chasta and Chastacosta may have been one and the same tribe, different from the Hokan-speaking Chasta and Shasta. It is also possible that the Chastacosta extended geographically at some point in time as far east as the present town of Medford in the Rogue River Valley. One interesting problem raised by the following entries has to do with the identity of the tribe written of by Peter Skene Ogden in 1826 as the "Sastise," and who were the namesake of the mountain later called Mt. Shasty and presently called Mt. McLoughlin (see LaLande 1987). It is possible that the name "Shasta" was originally an Athabascan name.

The [MS number] indicates the Mount Shasta Special Collection accession numbers used by the College of the Siskiyou Library.

[MS997]. Allen, A. J. Miss. Ten Years in Oregon: Travels and Adventures of Doctor E. White and Lady, West of the Rocky Mountains; with Incidents of Two Sea Voyages via Sandwich Islands Around Cape Horn; Containing, also, a Brief History of the Missions and Settlement of the Country--Origin of the Provisional Government--Number and Customs of the Indians--Incidents Witnessed While Traversing and Residing in the Territory--Description of the Soil, Production and Climate. 1850. First published in 1848. Ithaca, N. Y.: Andrus, Gauntlett, and Co., 1850. p. 92, p. 112, p. 114, p. 128. First published in 1848. Mentions 'Mr. La Fromboy' being attacked by the 'Cheste Indians' (p. 92). Mentions 'Baily' attacked by the 'Cheste Indians' (p. 112) and on another expedition 'Baily' and 'Turner's' encounter with 'the Chestes' (p. 114). Mentions an Indian boy who had been a slave 'captured in warfare when about ten years old, by the Umpquas, from the Chestes' (p. 128). 03. Chastacosta Tribe. [MS997].

[MS1219]. Connolly, Thomas J. Points, Patterns and Prehistory. In: Table Rock Sentinel: The Magazine of the Southern Oregon Historical Society. Sept.-Oct., 1989. Vol. 9. No. 5. pp. 2-11. Contains an overview of the archaeological and linguistic research currently in progress as to the historical geographical relationships of the new-comer Athabascan speaking peoples, who migrated to the region during the last 1000 years, to the Hokan speaking peoples, who have lived in the region for perhaps as long as 8000 years. Excavations in southern Oregon have identified Native American artifacts as old as 9000 years. Contains a bibliography listing several unpublished theses and reports.

The basic question posed by the author: "The relative recency of the Athapaskan-Algic presence in southwest Oregon and northern California has motivated anthropologists about the possibility of identifying an immigrant population in the archaeological record. Could it be possible to identify evidence for an ancient indigenous cultural tradition in the region, then pick out cultural elements that are relatively more recent as evidence than other peoples intruded on the ancient ones?" (p. 3).

Note that through the research in progress by the author and others, the geographical distribution of the Rogue River Athabascan speaking Indians versus that of the Rogue River Hokan speaking Indians may someday be better delineated. It will be interesting to see if the upper Rogue River, which was the original "Sasty" River as named by P. S. Ogden in 1827, was at that time home to the Athabascan speaking Chastacosta tribe. 03. Chastacosta Tribe. [MS1219].
group of Athapascan villages formerly situated along Rogue r. Oreg., mostly on its N. bank from its junction
with Illinois.

Note that the significance of this towards the origin of the name "Shasta" is only in trying to determine what
Athapascan languages were spoken in the Applegate region. Dorsey himself described elsewhere that the Athabascan
speaking Chastacosta tribe had at least two villages above the confluence of Applegate Creek with the Rogue River (see
Goddard "Chastacosta" in Hodge 1907).

The 1970 cataloguer (SJB/1970) of the Dorsey Papers, on card catalogue card #2, of "Dorsey Papers: Applegate Creek
(4.1.1)" states: "The actual Nabiltse vocabulary in Gibbs' handwriting is Nabiltse Ms. No. 131; it is marked as being both
'Uppa' and Applegate' by Gibbs. Dorsey's judgement that the Nabiltse vocabulary represents a separate Athapascan
language was confirmed by A. R. Pilling (visit, 8/1970)." 03. Chastacosta Tribe. [MS1131].

James Owen Dorsey's 1886 notes, published manuscript, part of a series of related manuscripts from various ethnographers, including George Gibbs and
James Owen Dorsey, concerning the Applegate Creek Indians of southern Oregon. Found in Archives of the American
Indian Microfilm #MF 2381. James Owen Dorsey's 1886 notes, describing an unusual Indian vocabulary collected by
George Gibbs in 1851, came to the attention of several scholars who were trying to determine the language spoken by the
Indians of Applegate Creek, Oregon. The original vocabulary of about 160 words was collected by Gibbs from a traveling
Indian at the confluence of the Trinity and Klamath Rivers in California. This Indian informant stated that his word for
man was " Nabiltse." Some later ethnographers decided this vocabulary represented an Applegate Creek language, and, for
the sake of classifying have called it "Nabiltse;" it appears to be a distinct Athapascan dialect or language, perhaps
distinct from the Takelma.

Under "Chastacosta" the author states: "Chastacosta (Shista kwusta, their name for themselves, meaning unknown). A

By piecing together the various references and cross references, the author attempted to locate the historical
boundaries of the tribes. He states that he prepared a detailed map: "A map of western Oregon and California, covering
the region indicated, has been prepared by me for the Bureau of Ethnology, and on it have been placed the names of two
hundred and sixty-nine ancient villages..." (p. 227). Note that this map may still exist and would be invaluable in locating
the village sites. A sketch map with the article s

Dorsey, James Owen. Remarks...on 'Applegate Creek Indians' [D‡kubetede] and Nabiltse. 1886.

references to the "Chasta Costa" Indians and villages. In all, the author lists 33 Chasta Costa villages (p. 234). The
author's informants were Indians from six different linguistic groups who were living together in 1884 on the Siletz
reservation in northwest Oregon.

Under the heading: "Athapascans North of Rogue River" the author states: "Chasta Costa villages.-- The Chasta
Costa, or, as they call themselves, Ci'sta kwu'sta, belong to the Athapascan stock. The meaning of the name is unknown;
but Rogue River is called Ci'sta-qwzt n'i'i by the Naltžnne quinne; and the Cow Creek Indians are called by the same
people Ci'sta-qwzt ni'-li t'qžnne, People far from Rogue River. I obtained the names of the villages from four Chasta Costa
men, most of them being furnished by two old men, Cu• 1-tas'-se and Ta' te-la-tžn, and a few by 'Government George' and
'Chasta Costa John.'"

But under the heading "Lower Umpqua Villages" another use of the name "Ci'sta" is to be found: "The Umpqua River
is called Ci'sta' qwut by the Chasta Costa; and the Upper Coquille people (Micikqwžt-me qžnne) call the Lower Umpqua
people, Ci's'-qwžte-me-qžnne, i.e., People dwelling on the stream called Cista (Shi-sta)" (p. 231).

Dorsey indicates that he took down extensive vocabularies from the Indians at Siletz reservation: "It is unfortunate that
so many of the village names are given without translations, but it was impossible to obtain more information during the
limited period of my visit. Should I find time in future to prepare Indian-English vocabularies of the languages recorded at
Siletz Agency in 1884, it will be apt to lead to a satisfactory analysis of many local names which are now inexplicable" (p.
237).

Note that Peter Skene Ogden on Dec. 25, 1826 was told by Klamath Lake Indians that "the Sastise, a nation" resided
over the mountains from Klamath Lake. Could it be that this "Sastise," also spelled by Ogden as "Castise" (LaLande
1837) was one and the same as the "Cista kwu'sta" of the Rogue River? Ogden's scouts traveled down the Rogue River
and were perhaps within the tribal range of the Chastacosta. 03. Chastacosta Tribe. [MS1091].

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and were perhaps within the tribal range of the Chastacosta. 03. Chastacosta Tribe. [MS1091].

individual author's initials are given after most articles Contains extensive entries for both the "Chasta" and the
"Chastacosta." The initials P.E.G. appear after the "Chastacosta."

Under "Chastacosta" the author states: "Chastacosta (Shista kwusta, their name for themselves, meaning unknown). A
group of Athapascan villages formerly situated along Rogue r. Oreg., mostly on its N. bank from its junction with Illinois
An appended source list follows Goddard's Chastacosta entry. These sources list at least a dozen important leads for research into the name "Chastacosta." Among the more important sources are: "Ci-sta kqwu-ta," in: Dorsey, Chasta Costa MS. vocab. B.A.E., 1884; "Shasta Costa," in: Abbott, MS. Coquille census, B.A.E., 1858; "Sisticoota," in Schoolcraft, Ind. Tribes, VI, 702, 1857. 03. Chastacosta Tribe. [MS570].

[MS1169]. Hodge, Frederick W. 1864-1956. Chasta. In: Hodge, Frederick W. 1864-1956. Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of American Ethnology, 1907. pp. 236. Edited by Hodge, individual author's initials are given after most articles not authored by the editor. Under "Chasta" the author states: "A tribe, probably Athabaskan, residing on Siletz res., Oreg., in 1867, with the Skoton and Umqua, of which the latter they said were to have formed a part. The Chasta, Skoton, and Umqua were distinct tribes which concluded a treaty Nov. 18, 1854. The Chasta were divided into the Kwilsieton and Nahelta, both residing on Rogue R. J. O. Dorsey thought these may have been identical with Kushetunne and Nakakhetunne of Tututunne. Kane, in 1859, located them near Umqua R. In 1867 the Chasta, Skoton, and the Umqua together, at Siletz agency, numbered 49 males and 74 females, total 123. They may be identical with the Chastacosta or form part of the Takilma. They do not seem to have any connection with the Shasta, who did not extend down Rogue R. below Table Rock, and who were bitterly at war with their Athapascans..." Footnote states: "Chast".--Parker, Jour., 257, 1840. Chasta band of Rogue Rivers.--Palmer in Rep. Ind. Aff., 464, 1854. Chastay.--Wand. in N, Am., 182, 1859. Haw-quo-e-hoiv-took.--Palmer in Rep. Ind. Aff., 464, 1854. Illinois Creek bands.--Ibid."

Note that Hodge also has an entry for the "Chasta-Skoton" (p. 236) which he says: "Chasta-Skoton. A Tribe or two tribes (Chasta and Skoton) formerly living on or near Rogue r., Oreg. perhaps the Chastacosta or (Dorsey in Jour. A. Folklore, III, 235, 1890) the Sistikustun. There were 36 on Grande Ronde res. and 166 on Siletz res., Oreg., in 1875." The article is appended with the following source list: "Chasta-Scotons.--Ind. Aff. Rep., 62, 1872. Chasta Scoten.--Taylor in Cal. Farmer, June 12, 1863. Chasta Scoten.--U.S. State at Large, X, 675, 1854. Shasta-Scoton--Ind. Aff. Rep., 495, 1854. Scoten-Shasta.--Ind. Aff. Rep., 253, 1877.' 03. Chastacosta Tribe. [MS1169].

[MS998]. Kane, Paul. Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America from Canada to Vancouver's Island and Oregon through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territory and Back Again. Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle Co., Publishers, 1968. First edition published 1859 by Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts. Revised edition published 1925 by the Radisson Society of Canada, Ltd. First Tuttle edition published 1968.' At Fort Vancouver in 1845 the noted Canadian portrait and landscape artist Paul Kane encountered enslaved members of the "Chastay" tribe. He says: "The Chinooks, like all other Indians, pluck out the beard at its first appearance. Slavery is carried on to a great extent among them, and, considering how much they have themselves been reduced, they still retain a large number of slaves. They are usually procured from the Chastay tribe, who live near the Umqua, a river south of the Columbia, emptying near the Pacific. They are sometimes seized by war parties, but the children are often brought from their own people. They do not pluck the head, nor is the child of one of them (although a Chinook father) allowed this privilege. Their slavery is of the most abject description. The Chinook men and women treat them with great severity, and exercise the power of life and death at pleasure. I took a sketch of a Chastay female slave, the lower part of whose face, from the corners of the mouth to the ears and downwards, was tattooed of a blueish colour. The men of this tribe do not tattoo, but paint their faces like other Indians" (p. 124).

Note that it is not possible to determine from Kane's description of the "Chastay" whether or not this tribe was Athabascan-speaking Chastacosta or Hokin-speaking Shasta. The mention of the "Umqua" river would seem to favor a "Chastacosta" identification, though the bluish tattooing was a trait of the "Shasta" and many other tribes of the southern Oregon and northern California region. The spelling of "Chastay" with the "c" initial letter favors a "Chastacosta" identification. 03. Chastacosta Tribe. [MS998].
Treaty between the United States and the Chasta and Other Tribes of Indians (agreed in principle, 1854). Washington, D. C.: 1855. 12 1/2 by 8 inches on blue woven finish fine paper. Very faint U.S. Government embossed stamping on each page in upper corner. This is an original document, of which no more than ten copies are known to exist. As far as is known, no copies were issued to the Indians. Six pages. This 'Chasta' treaty was between the United States Government and bands of the "Chasta," "Scoton," and "Umpqua" tribes of southern Oregon Indians. Note that according to Ruby and Brown (see Ruby and Brown 1987) the "Chasta" tribe was a band of the Athabascan-speaking "Chastacosta" and therefore was not the same tribe as the Hokan-speaking "Shasta." Specifically the "Quil-si-eton" and "Na-hel-ta" bands of the "Chasta" tribe are involved in this treaty. There is a strong possibility that the name "Shasta" is derived from the tribal name of "Chastacosta" via the shortened form "Chasta." (see Swanton 1984, Ruby and Brown 1987, and Parker 1846). The treaty considered here adds geographic evidence that bands of the "Chastacosta" historically could have been the "Sastise" Indians of the other side of the mountains mentioned by Klamath Lake Indian guides to Peter Skene Ogden as recorded in the Dec. 25, 1826 entry of Ogden's journal.

The Palmer treaty begins: 'Franklin Pierce, President of the United States of America, to all and singular to whom these presents shall come, greeting: Whereas a treaty was made and concluded, at the council ground, opposite the mouth of Applegate creek, on Rogue River, in Territory of Oregon, on the eighteenth day of November, eighteen hundred and fifty-four, between the United States and the Chasta and other tribes of Indians, which treaty is in the words following..." The treaty was ratified on March 3, 1855, and signed by Franklin Pierce on April 10, 1855.

Nine articles are stated. Article First outlines in detail the boundaries of the land to be given up by the tribes—"Commencing at a point in the middle of Rogue River, one mile below the mouth of Applegate Creek; thence northerly, on the western boundary of the country heretofore purchased of the Rogue River tribe by the United States, to the headwaters of Jump-Off-Jo creek; thence westerly to the extreme northeastern limit of the country purchased of the Cow Creek band of Umpquas; thence alone [sic] that boundary to its extreme southwestern limit; thence due west to a point from which a line running due south would cross Rogue river, midway between the mouth of Grave creek and the great bend of Rogue river; thence south to the southern boundary of Oregon; thence east along said boundary to the summit of the main ridge of the Siskiyou mountains, or until this line reaches the boundary of the country purchased of the Rogue River tribe; thence northerly along the western boundary of said purchase to the place of beginning."

Article Second states that 'The said united bands agree that as soon after the ratification of this convention as practicable, they will remove to such portion of the Table Rock reserve as may be assigned them by the superintendent of Indian affairs or agent, or to whatsoever other reserve the President of the United States may at any time hereafter direct.'

The remaining articles outline the payment of thousands of dollars to the Indians, and provisions for the construction of schools and a hospital for the tribes. Joel Palmer was the superintendent of Indian Affairs who made this treaty with the tribes.

Perhaps coincidentally this 1855 treaty, by using the name "Chasta," is using the same spelling as Philip Leget Edwards used in his diary of an 1837 cattle drive (see P. L. Edwards. "Diary..." In Watson 1932). Parker in 1838 spelled the name as "Chast%" in referring to a tribe of the Umpqua nation (see Parker 1846).
Palmer states: "Before leaving the lower country, it will be proper to present, in a connected view, the best information I have been able to obtain of the several nations, their locations, and numbers...South of the Calapooah is the Um-baq% nation, residing in a valley of the same name. They are divided into six tribes; the Sconta, Chalula, Palakahu, Quattamy, and Chast'. Their number is about seven thousand. South of this nation and north of California, there was a very powerful nation called the Kinc"...

Note that Parker's book contains the 1838 Parker map which depicts present-day Mt. McLoughlin as "Mt. Shasty." In his introduction Parker credits the Hudson's Bay Company and others for supplying information: "The map which accompanies the work, has been prepared with much labor and care; and though some minute parts are omitted, it will be found far more accurate than any which has before been published. In addition to my own surveys, I have availed myself of those gentlemen connected with the Hudson's Bay Company, in parts which I did not visit, and am especially indebted to Vancouver and other explorers, for much that I have delineated of the North-West coast of the Pacific ocean and the Islands" (p. vii).

Note also that the use of the final '-a' in spelling the name 'Chasta' was very uncommon. Except for Philip Leget Edwards 'Chasta' in 1837, there do not seem to have been be any other such final '-a' spellings until after the Gold Rush.

03. Chastacosta Tribe. [MS861].


Note that in the book's index the "Shasta" tribe is entirely equated with the "Chasta" of Southern Oregon, and the "Shasta Valley" tribe of northern California is entirely equated with the "Idakariwakaha, the Ikaruck, and the Kose'tah." Note that it is seems likely that the "Chasta," as defined in these cessions, was not the same as the "Shasta" of northern California and southern Oregon.

The Chasta tribe is named in the Nov. 18, 1854 'council ground' treaty (p. 796) with the southern Oregon "Chastas, Scoton, and Grave Creek Tribes." This treaty was used as a reference in several later treaties. For example, the Dec. 21, 1855 treaty (p. 814) with the Umpqua tribe known as the Mollalla uses the former lands of, and mentions, the "Chasta, Scoton, and Grave Creek" tribes. One interesting variation of the spelling of the Chasta tribe as the "Chastes" is found in the Aug. 11, 1855 treaty (p. 812) with the "Coast tribes of Oregon," which names the Chasta, Scoton, and Grave Creek group as the "Scotons, Chastes, and Grave Creek Indians.

03. Chastacosta Tribe. [MS1197].

Ruby, Robert H. and Brown, John A. A Guide to the Indian Tribes of the Pacific Northwest. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986. Contains a one page summary of the little-known "Chastacosta" tribe of Southwestern Oregon (p. 16). Although the authors do not mention the possibility, it may well be that the name "Chastacosta" is the true namesake of the name "Shasta." Note that the relationship of the name "Chastacosta" to the name "Shasta" was an unsolved problem reported in 1907 by ethnographer Roland B. Dixon (see Dixon 1907). The authors, relying heavily on data from Frederick W. Hodge (see Hodge 1907, 1910), discuss the "Chastacosta" tribe's geographic range. By inference they have placed bands of the "Chastacosta" within or near the historical boundary of the southern Oregon "Shasta" tribe. The authors state that the "Chastacosta" were Athapascan-speaking peoples belonging to a group known as the Coast Rogues. Note that the "Chastacosta" therefore spoke a very different language than the Hokan-speaking "Shasta" tribes. The authors state that "Like other Pacific Coast Athapascan speakers, they perhaps migrated into the region from the north in some remote time." The tribe "...lived in southwestern Oregon on the lower course of the Illinois River, a tributary of the Rogue River. They also lived on both sides of the Rogue above its confluence with the Illinois and upstream on the Rogue north bank as far as the mouth of Applegate River" (p. 16).

The authors also mention that the "Chastacosta" were among those who met with Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs Anson Dart in 1851. One or two Chastacosta bands were also among those who met near the Applegate River in 1854 with Joel Palmer and signed a treaty, specifically the "Treaty between the United States and the Chasta and Other Tribes of Indians" (see Palmer 1855). Note that the name "Chasta" in the Palmer treaty referred to a "Chastacosta" band.

In 1856 there were only 153 Chastacostas. By 1950 the Chastacostas were virtually extinct. The authors have included a picture of George Harvey, a chief of the Chastacostas. This picture of the handsome chief adds a sense of reality to the former existence of this little-known tribe.

Peter Skene Ogden's 1826 Klamath Lake journal states that Klamath Indian guides named the Indians on the west side
of Mt. McLoughlin the "Sastise." In early 1827 Ogden travelled to the Rogue River Valley and named the "Sasty" River and "Mt. Sastise" (see LaLande 1987). In the light of the historical presence of the "Chastacosta" in the Rogue River-Applegate River area, the question is raised of whether or not the "Chastacosta" was the "Sastise" tribe of Ogden's 1826 entry. The fact that the "Chastacosta" referred to themselves as the "Chastacosta," combined with the evidence that several outlying tribes referred to the Chastacosta with names sounding like "chasta," lends credence to the possibility that the name "Shasta" was originally part of an Athabascan tribal name (see Dorsey 1890)." 

03. Chastacosta Tribe. [MS814].

[MS1298]. Sapir, Edward 1884. Notes on Chasta Costa Phonology and Morphology. Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania, 1914. A paper mostly containing transcriptions of "Chasta Costa" words and phrases with English translations. Paper written as a result of the author living with a full-blooded Chasta Costa Indian during the summer of 1906. Contains a statement by Sapir to the effect that J. O. Dorsey was probably mistaken about the geographic distribution of the Chasta Costa: "It has already been pointed out (American Anthropologist, N. S., (, p. 253, note 2) that there is reason to believe that J. O. Dorsey was incorrect in assigning the Chasta Costa villages above those of the Takelma (see his map in Journal of American Folk-Lore, III, p. 228). On p. 234 Dorsey gives a list of Chasta Costa villages." (p. 274). Sapir writes the name Chasta Costa phonetically as: "(Cis/ta q\!w‡s/ta)." The paper begins with a discussion of the range of Athabascan speaking tribes in southern Oregon, including those of the lower Rogue River and those as far east as 'the upper Umpqua, Upper Coquille, and Galice Creek.'

See also Edward Sapir's Takelma Texts Vol. 2. No. 1, of the same series, for mention of the name 'Saste' and for information about Sapir's main Takelma Indian informant; and 'Notes on the Takelma Indians of Southwestern Oregon' in American Anthropologist, N.S. vol. 9, 1907, pp. 252-275. 03. Chastacosta Tribe. [MS1298].