

loosely applied as a covering to the framework. Between the areas occupied by these two types of conical bark lodge are intruded the conical mat lodge (Interior Salish, Nez Percé) of the plateau and the buffalo-skin tipi of the plains. Obviously the mat and skin tipis are best considered as modifications of an older type of bark lodge. The point that chiefly interests us here is that the conical bark lodge must be assigned an age great enough to allow for the origin and development of its derivative forms. The older we deem the skin tipi to be, the greater the age we shall have to assign to the conical bark lodge itself. The comparison, with a view to determination of age, of culture elements with interrupted distributions among themselves and with such as have continuous distributions is naturally subject to all the cautions we have reviewed in dealing with continuously diffused elements.

DIFFUSION VERSUS COMMON HERITAGE.

A contrast is often made between identity or similarity of culture due to diffusion and to independent retention of a common heritage. The alternative is, however, one of degree rather than of kind. Any culture element is practically certain to be diffused over more than a single community, indeed its currency in a single community is already an instance of diffusion that has radiated out, at last analysis, from a single individual. When, for one reason or another, the continuous area of distribution is broken up into two or more isolated ones, the element in question will normally continue to be diffused among the new neighbours of one or more of the geographically detached groups. Hence at no point in the history of the culture element has its gradual diffusion ceased. All that we mean when we say that two non-contiguous tribes have independently inherited a culture element is that its former diffusion among them antedated the events that brought about their isolation, not, as is sometimes loosely assumed, that there is no problem of diffusion involved as far as they are concerned. For us this raises no new problems. It is simply a matter of estimating the age of one historical process in terms of another.