

MOKIS DANCE TO PROPITIATE GOD OF RAIN

Arizona Indians, Far Removed From Civilization, Cling to Ancestral Customs.

AS IN DAYS BEFORE COLUMBUS

Mokiland is the Richest Part of the Union for Prehistoric Exploration—Medicine Man Determines Date for Snake Dance.

Smithsonian archeologists say that the most interesting aboriginal ceremonies performed nowadays in America take place in mid-summer days among the Moki Indians, who live in northwestern Arizona. Scarcely touched by our civilization and clinging to ancestral customs, H. G. Thesey tells the Dearborn Independent, the Mokis perform during the last days of each August dances and rites in propitiation of their god of rain, identical with those of their ancestors ages before Columbus sailed from Spain.

Mokiland, of the province of Tusayuan as the Spanish named it in the early part of the sixteenth century, is the richest part of the Union for prehistoric exploration. Cities of strong, intelligent people flourished here in the time of the Caesars. Ruins of heathen temples, which crumbled before the Montezuma dynasty began, lie among the drifting sands. The land of the Mokis abounds in ancient traditions still kept in their pristine freshness.

Studying Moki' Customs.
This month two scores of American ethnologists and archeologists, hailing some from Europe, have gathered in the Moki pueblos to study the customs, habits, thought and traditions of man in prehistoric America, as they have come down through generations of Mokis.

Spanish adventurers under Coronado reckoned in 1542 that there were about 13,000 souls in the Tusayuan confederacy of Moki tribes. Now there are but a few hundred Mokis. They are known also as Hopis, and their name signifies "peace loving." They have a tradition that several hundred years ago the warlike Apaches waged a terrible war against the tribe. The remnant of the Mokis fled in terror and took refuge on the two great tablelands of red sandstone which rise sheer some 70 feet out of a vast sea of sand. The great rocky formation has been a veritable Gibraltar of defense to the tribe and from the day the ancestral Mokis fled they and their descendants have dwelt there isolated. Rain is the all-essential element in the success of Moki agriculture, and in the desert region rains come capriciously.

The date of the Moki snake dance is determined by an old medicine man in the tribe. When during August the sun at its setting glints the sacred rock that stands before the door of the tribal kiva, the old medicine man, Hool, mounts the highest point at either Walpi or Oraibi and solemnly gives notice that 10 sunsets hence the solemn snake ceremonies will take place. He ends by invoking all to begin immediate preparation for the occasion. The women are to bake for a tribal feast, to dress themselves and their children in their best garments, and the men are to perform their several parts in the ceremonies.

A certain number of young men, appointed for the purpose, start out at next dawn to perform their part of the preparation for the dance. They are Jakulali (snake gatherers). They roam over the desert with a forked stick in one hand and a bag made of skins in the other. They know where to look for rattlesnakes, and some times they get more than 200 serpents in a week. They plant the forks of their sticks over the neck of the recumbent snake, and by an adroit movement throw the reptile into the bag. The serpents are brought to the pueblo and turned over to the old snake priests.

The Preliminaries.

Six days after the official announcement of the annual snake ceremonies, mysterious rites among 27 of the foremost men in the Moki tribe begin in a chamber hewn into the rock down below the pueblo. This is the kiva, the holy of holies of Moki belief. Dr. J. Walter Fewkes of the Smithsonian Institution is the only white person who has ever entered the kiva, and he says that the ceremonies there consist in washing the serpents captured and brought there by young men. The old men engage in barbaric incantations, and chant appeals to the serpents to bear messages of devotion and friendship to the powers that rule the rain clouds. The snake priests wear nothing to protect themselves from the reptiles' fangs. Each day they wash the rattlesnakes, sprinkle sacred cornmeal on the serpents' heads, and deposit the creatures in jars. Meanwhile the Moki boys—lives rook and bake in preparation for the event of the year—the snake dance on the plaza of the pueblo. The grandest tribal feast is brought forth and made ready. White and Navajo Indian visitors come across the desert to see the public ceremonies, and for a week all Mokiland bustles and buzzes.

At the setting of the sixteenth sun, from the official announcement by old

Hool the snake dance takes place. Late in the afternoon the spectators arrange themselves in vantage spots overlooking the plaza where the dance is performed. Some 2,500 persons are generally on hand to see the ancient marvellous ceremony. The roofs of the squat stone houses are crowded. Moki children with scarcely a stitch on them sit along the cornices with their brown legs hanging down. There are cowboys from all over the territory, reporters from newspapers, scientists from the cities, and hundreds of Indians in brilliant and quaint costumes. It is a rare scene; "one fit for a salon picture," said an enthusiastic artist. The white people laugh, the dogs and children make tumult, while every one awaits the opening of the dance. At just about six o'clock, when the sun is dropped into the yellow desert away to the west, some one calls: "Here they come." Instantly there is silence. Everybody knows that the antelope-men—young athletic snake dancers—are at last issuing from their stone chambers. The braves are scantily clad, and on each leg is a small terrapin shell, in which are placed small pebbles, which rattle as the warrior moves, and make of him, in sound at least, a human rattler. The dancers are smeared with red, white and black paints. Around each brow is bound a flaming handkerchief, the upper forehead being painted a deep black, and the lower half with black and white bands.

Live Snakes in Their Mouths.

The hand forms in a circle and a sack of serpents is brought forth and placed in the branches of a cottonwood shrub known as the kisi just where it has stood on Moki dance days for countless generations. A chief, hideously painted, opens the sack and as each brave marches past thrusts his naked arm within and jerks from it several writhing serpents, which he hands to the buck. The snake dancer bends and seizes the snakes by their middle with his teeth, while he holds one or two serpents in each hand. The serpents rattle, hiss and struggle while the human captors, gesticulating and stamping, join in a solemn rhythmic movement, in which, after each man has been supplied with serpents, the whole band is soon participating.

The Moki women and the several hundred Moki bucks who do not participate in the dancing at first sit in mute awe. As the dance proceeds the red-skinned spectators start a low humming, which gradually develops. Louder and louder rises the din of discordant voices until the women become wildly excited, and leap to their feet. The dancers glisten with perspiration and the pain on their bodies runs down their bare backs and legs. Some of the older ones, to show their prowess with venomous reptiles, carry three and five rattlesnakes about with them. They weave the snakes about their heads, they coil them in huge balls and toss them up and down; they twine them about their necks and tuck them between the belts of their kilts and their nude waists, and carry them, held at the middle, in their mouths. All this time they are hopping about the sun-baked plaza. Now they circle about the kisi with their burden of serpents in their hands. Then at a signal by old Kopolli, the snake chief, the dancers form in threes, and with the snakes wriggling for freedom in their hands, they march backward and forward. Another signal and they form in a row and toss the serpents to and fro. Then the dance starts anew. More circling, marchings and counter-marchings in ones, twos and threes. Occasionally a reptile wriggles itself loose from an Indian's hand. It is, however, instantly picked up like so much rubber hose.

An Hour of Horror.

The snake dance lasts about fifty minutes. At its close the Indian spectators have risen to their feet, and are weaving their arms and bodies back and forth in time to the rapid chorus they are shouting over and over again. The dancers are dripping with perspiration. The white spectators are dazed at the incredible scene. No one who has not seen it would believe these men can be so thoroughly indifferent to the serpent's venom. Several of the dancers reel and stagger, but catch themselves as they gyrate with the tangled snarl of serpents in their hands.

Suddenly at a signal from wrinkled Kopolli the dancing ceases and the high snake priest advances to an open place. He solemnly sprinkles meal in a ring, denoting all compass points to which serpent messengers are to convey the Moki petitions. At another signal the rattlesnakes are thrown in a heap within the circle. Meal is hastily thrown upon the wriggling leop, while a guttural invocation is pronounced. In a moment each of the dancers snatches several of the serpents in his hands, and starts at full speed for the narrow trail which leads down from the mesa to the plains below. There the gruesome burdens are thrown upon the sands and permitted to go their way in peace.

The dance is over, but there's another scene. When the athletic dancers have come running back to the plaza they hasten to the sacred kiva, where they remove all the trappings of the ceremony. Then they come out and drink deeply from a bowl of mysterious decoction of herbs brewed only by Salako, the oldest snake woman in Mokiland.

Then the Mokis go home in silence. They have performed the most important service in their lives and have propitiated the rain god as sacredly as they know how. Their wives and sweethearts wait upon them and wash them of their paint. On the morrow the pueblo feast takes place, and the

new green corn and melons are eaten without stint.

Very naturally the question is asked: Are not the rattlesnakes used in the Moki ceremonies drugged or deprived of their fangs? If not, why are not the half-nude snake dancers and priests bitten? White people who have seen several Moki snake dances say they have never known a Moki to confess he was fanged, but every year spectators see snake dancers pull away from their arms serpents that have fastened there. Every year some of the reptiles coil and strike at their captors. The best-posted scientists who have looked upon Moki snake dances say that the priests and dancers have a certain manner of handling the creatures, and that the strange broth which the snake handlers drink renders venom harmless. At any rate it is unique among barbaric customs.

BALLOONISTS ARE NOW THE "BEST OF FRIENDS"

MATHEW E. O'NEIL, Jan. 12.—The three American naval balloonists, who arrived here yesterday from Moose Factory, near where they descended December 14, left tonight for Cuernavaca on the eastbound Canadian National express.

The fight between Lieutenants Farrell and Hinton shortly after their arrival here yesterday afternoon was ascribed, in a statement issued today, to over-wrought minds induced by their hard ships and grueling struggles that had to be endured on the trip over the trail from Moose Factory.

The statement, presented to a newspaper man by Lieutenant Kloor, was prepared, he said, at the direction of Hinton and Farrell, who had mentioned their differences. The three officers were together in the private care of H. B. Way, division superintendent of the Canadian National Railway, when the document was drawn.

"On several occasions during the trip," the statement said, "after a long tressome walk one or two of us would become greatly and at the slightest irritation would make a fuss. Those quarrels were only on the spur of the moment and were just temporary disagreements. Almost as quickly as they would start they would end, leaving all hands as usual the best and strongest friends."

"I also wish to state that as commander of the balloon, I flew to Moose Factory. I had perfect liberty to select any officers at the station to accompany me and authorization from the commanding officer."

"In picking my passengers, Lieutenants Hinton and Farrell, I selected them because they were two of my best friends and themselves good comrades."

"During the trip all of us have been ready to make sacrifices for one another, without partiality. We have fought our battles as befits shipmates and in accordance with the traditions of the United States navy."

"We have done our best to uphold our own dignity as well as that of the service."

"We always will be brothers."

"Such petty quarrels as may have occurred will not lessen our affection for one another. Today, after the first real rest since we left Moose Factory our differences patched up and our friendship renewed, we cannot emphasize too strongly that there is not, and has not been, any misunderstanding in our party other than of a passing nature."

The statement was signed by Lieutenant Kloor.

ASKS FOR TARIFF OF 50c ON WHEAT

WASHINGTON, Jan. 13.—To stop "ominous" importations of Canadian wheat, Senator Mcumber, republican, North Dakota, announced today he would ask for a tariff of probably fifty cents a bushel on wheat to be included in the Embargo emergency tariff bill in stead of the duty of thirty cents carried by the act, as it passed the house.

CADDOCK VS. LEWIS

OMAHA, Neb., Jan. 13.—Earl Caddock will meet Ed. Strangler, boxer, in New York January 21 for the world's heavyweight wrestling championship, says a manager, Gene Melady, here today. The New York, where he will conduct his training.

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\$52 WAS ONCE BIG ITEM IN CONGRESSMAN'S INCOME

HARRISON, Ark., Jan. 13.—There was a time in the history of the United States when \$52, representing a year's loss or saving to members of Congress, was a vital factor in the consideration of a proposed moving of the seat of government, and, according to an officer of that same Congress, \$52 a year was "no trifling consideration."

This bit of history is contained in a letter written by Charles Thomson, secretary of the Continental Congress during the several years of its existence, to his wife Hannah, an aunt of President William Henry Harrison. The letter is dated Princeton, August 21, 1773, the Congress then being in session in the New Jersey town, and was addressed to Mrs. Thomson, Corner of Spruce and 4 Street, Philadelphia.

It was proposed that the residence of Congress be removed to Elizabethtown, N. J., but, according to the letter, there was opposition on the ground that "lodging" in Elizabethtown would cost \$1 a week, whereas it could be obtained for \$2 a week in Princeton. Whether the "high cost of living" in Elizabethtown finally swayed the Congress in rejecting it is not disclosed, but history records that the Congress met in Annapolis, Md., after leaving Princeton, and at no time sat at Elizabethtown.

The letter, in part, which recently came into the possession of Mrs. Rex Worthington, of Harrison, a descendant of Mr. Thomson, follows:

"Dear Hannah:
"I have received your letters dated Monday 12 o'clock and Tuesday 10 o'clock at night and acknowledged the receipt of them. Mr. Read was misinformed respecting the adjournment. They met on Monday but they might as well have adjourned till this time for any business they have done. I am very apprehensive that nothing but some calamity will awaken the states to a sense of their situation."

The President of Congress has not provided a house for himself nor is likely he will find one here to suit him. I find Elizabethtown has been talked of at his table as a proper place for the residence of Congress. He has a house there which he says has twenty rooms and which he will let for the use of the President. It is true the place is infested with mosquitoes in summer and lying low and near marshes may be liable to intermittent in the spring and fall, but these are trifling when it is considered that by fixing the residence of Congress there the value of his estate will be increased and he will have an opportunity of letting his house at a good rent. But yet I am inclined to believe this will be opposed by his colleagues; for Mr. Condit has found a lodging in this town at 3 dollars a week which enables him to lay up money. And there is reason to fear that at Elizabethtown, which is so near New York, it will cost him at least four. This would be a clear loss of 52 dollars a year which is no trifling consideration, and which I shrewdly will have the weight with some others. There are other weighty considerations which might be mentioned.

Your loving husband,
"CHAS. THOMSON."

DELEGATES HEAR ADDRESS BY "MOTHER" JONES

(By The Associated Press.)
MEXICO CITY, Jan. 13.—(By The Associated Press.) Delegates to the congress of the Pan-American Federation of Labor, in session here, listened today to an address by "Mother" Jones, the radical labor leader, who arrived here last week from the United States. She has been a regular attendant at sessions of the congress, although not a delegate, and yesterday was granted special permission to appear this morning before the federation.

Plans for today's session contemplated only a brief morning meeting, the resolutions committee being busy in preparing its report, which will be made tomorrow morning.

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