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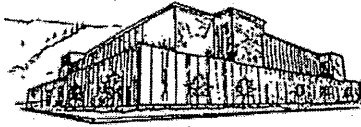
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**SYNCRETIC ICONOGRAPHY  
BY NATIVE AMERICANS OF MONTANA  
AND EARLY CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES**

**by Michael J. McGinley  
B. A. University of Montana, Missoula, 1974**

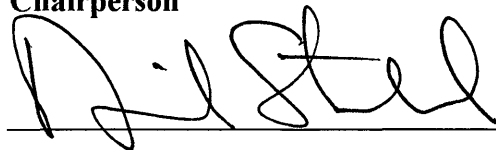
**Presented by partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Anthropology  
The University of Montana  
2004**

**Approved by**



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**Chairperson**



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**Dean, Graduate School**

**5-5-05**

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Syncretic Iconography by Native Americans of Montana and Early Catholic Missionaries

Chairperson: Foor, Thomas A. ~~TAF~~

The migration of Europeans from the Eastern United States brought many new challenges for the Native Nations of Montana. Catholic missionaries sought conversion of souls through sacramentalism and ceremony that uniquely intrigued the Native populations. This thesis details the syncretic use of symbols by both the Natives and missionaries in attempting to secure their respective goals and ideas.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The acquiring, or recombining of cultural items, or ideologies from a foreign tradition into one's own cultural paradigm is defined as syncretism (Edmonson, 1960). Exchanging, or manipulating society's icons may indicate something about how members of a subordinate culture accept themselves as members of a dominate culture. Furthermore, the ways that beliefs and practices are integrated into a unified culture should suggest how resilient a subordinate culture is to external pressures, and how successful it may be in preserving a distinct religious and cultural identity.

My thesis examines the historical and artifact records to determine the extent of syncretism that took place in the mid 1800s between Jesuit Missionaries and Montana Native Americans. My analysis will explain the forces and actions that shape a culture's effort for revitalization and survival in the face of uncertainty. Finally, I will examine whether syncretic use of iconography implies a fundamental shift in ideologies and traditional values, or if it is employed as an adaptive strategy.

Studies of the effect of Catholic Missions among Native Americans seek to understand the symbolic transmission of religious knowledge as grounded in controversial conversations about the nature of reality (Morrison, 2002). Native American values centered around religion, and whatever they undertook began with and was influenced by this single perception. It is a world view that applies to everything from child raising to crafts, from community relationships to warfare, and from

philosophy to story telling. It is important to recognize that the Native American production of artifacts, including weapons, was a result of what they had been shown in dreams and visions, and as such, were in themselves a link with the Supreme Being (Mails, 1995).

A study of world religions shows that many symbols used as ways of teaching, and expressing the sacred are universally shared by human beings. This view of the Native's place in the universe differs markedly from the Judeo-Christian concept of man as the most exalted of creatures. Instead, the Natives attempt to guide a person's behavior toward the world and its natural laws through individual experience of all things sacred (Morrison, 2002).

## Chapter 2

### Peoples, Places and Dates of Study Group

The focus of my study are the indigenous peoples of Montana, including the Salish, Kootenai, Blackfoot, Kalispel, Cree, Metis, Cheyenne, and Nez Perce. Catholic priests were drawn from the four mendicant orders: the Franciscan (primarily in the Southwest), the Dominican, the Augustinian (the Jesuits), and the Carmelite Friars. Of these four, the Jesuits were the only order of priests commissioned to Montana. Also associated with the Society of Jesus, was the order of the Sisters of Ursuline, who came after the Jesuit Missions were established in Montana. The Sisters of Providence were also present in the Catholic Missions of Western Montana and assisted in the teaching of Native children (Shea, 1969).

The geographical parameters of this study include sections of southeastern Montana, most of central Montana, northwestern Montana along the Canadian border, west central Montana and the west of Montana into Idaho and Eastern Washington.

Although the Jesuit Missionaries mainly established missions in proximity to west central Montana, numerous excursions were taken in all directions to encounter Natives. News traveled of their appearance and there was a growing curiosity about the mysterious, "Black Robes." Among Native American groups requests from neighboring tribes to have the Jesuits visit their villages was common. Seasonal hunting on the Plains found the missionaries accompanying the hunting parties to continue with their conversions. Ultimately, this resulted in numerous contacts with surrounding tribes (Point, 1967).

The missionary activities took place among the Natives when they were experiencing great crisis: the buffalo were disappearing, newly introduced horticulture was not producing what the tribes needed, and epidemics were decimating the Native populations. Throughout Native American history, there is evidence that they periodically believed in the appearance of a person who claimed to be a messiah, or prophet (Hultkrantz, 1981). Usually the prophet appeared when an Indian society was on the verge of decay, or disintegration as a result of contact with a stronger dominant culture. The missionary's teachings of a new prophet brought a message of hope and salvation.

The dates of this study start approximately in 1814, with the arrival of Ignace, an Iroquois, who brought the first introduction of Christianity to the Salish. The study period ends in the late 1800s, with the U. S. government imposing boarding schools on the reservations. This era was representative of the best extended first contact of the Catholic Missionaries with the tribes. During this initial period, the missions portrayed a frontier type venture, having a minimal amount of economic, technological, or political impact. Saving souls for God was their primary objective.

## Chapter 3

### Symbolism, Art and Iconography

A way of understanding religious phenomena in Native American religions is through the use of sacramentalism, (sacred-mental-image, or faith), which must exist within their iconic belief system as essential religious symbols. Without belief in the sacramental power of images, there is at most, an incomplete explanation of Native religion (Vecsey, 1990).

#### **SYMBOLISM:**

Ten thousand years of human cultural history, on the North American continent, brought a highly evolved set of symbols handed down through many generations. Symbols, or maps of the spirit world, were intended to evoke feelings of awareness for the forces behind the veil of nature. Any culture without these spiritual landmarks may find itself powerless to communicate with the spirit world, falling prey to the harsh realities of the environment. Since nature and spirit were perceived as one, these symbolic systems were essential requirements for a culture's survival.

Native Americans created a representation of nature, often done as an attempt to understand and adapt to the powers of the physical habitat they inhabited. They reduced the items of heaven and earth, which surrounded them, to functional symbols that were meaning systems rooted in religious values. Symbols were the means by which both the Jesuits and the Natives adapted. By shifting their symbolic story to suit the available

facts, Native Americans sought to ensure their survival. The workings of power mattered to them, more than the abstract theology which characterized Jesuit Catholicism. This power was vested in the Native symbols and its manipulation by missionaries was the technological means by which the Natives and Christians could facilitate religious change.

### **ART:**

Mails (1995) writes that every object served a three fold function to Plains Indian craftsmen: the first was to intensify the artist's spiritual feelings, the second was to play an utilitarian role in personal and community life, and the third was to be both mobile and durable. All of these elements were reflected in Plains Indian art, which was portable as befitted a nomadic people and which displayed advertisements of the personal daring and prestige of the owner. The decorative arts found their most intense expression in costumes and ritual (Brody, 1971).

There is no single word for art in the numerous North American Native languages. Because of the dual nature inherent in North American Native objects - utilitarian and aesthetic, it is not surprising that, "art," is not part of the North American Indian vocabularies. Instead, Lakota phrases like, "lena' taku waste," meaning, "for these good things," are often used (Mercer, 1997). A phrase like this simply and elegantly accepts both the utilitarian and aesthetic element as the natural and appropriate way things should be.

Art also expresses a relationship between a group of humans and the spiritual

world. Objects were made according to standards that expressed beauty, or the correctly balanced relationship between individuals, groups of people, and/or the spirit protector, ancestor, deity, or other non-material being that acted on their behalf (Riese, 1998).

Another issue in the role of representational art, is whether art must imitate appearance. Confusion about seeing symbols as art lies in the fact that art is not a phenomena, but a concept. As a concept, art has no objective referent, and so one cannot say what it is, or is not, but only what the user means by the term (Hatcher, 1999). The world is made coherent by our description of it. The complex process by which the artist transforms the act of seeing into a vision of the world, is one of the consummate mysteries of art, and one of the reasons why it is inseparable from religion for most tribal people.

What is Native about Native American art is not the depiction of indigenous scenes, but the mentality that underlies the whole process by which the work of art comes into existence (Highwater, 1980). Tribal art is almost always optically perceptual, its images come from the immediate locale, and visual experiences, except for dream or vision quest images. The optical basis for this art is apparent in its common tendencies toward spatial illusion, including suggestions of movement and narrative (Abramson, 2000).

The function of tribal art is distinctive. This art serves for the most part as an aid to ritual, acting to transfer information, and resources between ancestral and living communities. It may be to some degree archival, in that it can serve as an information repository, as well as a transfer device. For most tribes it is stylistically uniform, or may



be even astylistic. Although tribal art is fundamentally iconic, rather than representational, its images do involve specific entities (living, or ancestral personalities, and spirits) that are carefully qualified as such. The symbolic integration of the society's members is achieved by the ceremonial relationships among the publically accepted icons within the system, and art forms dramatize these relationships.

### **ICONOGRAPHY:**

While many symbolic forms were prerogatives of kin groups, the ceremony fitted these icons into the larger artistic unity of the whole festive-ceremonial occasion. Icons are symbols that take form so that everyone who shares a culture knows the meaning. Since meaning is arbitrarily assigned, an outsider has to be told. One can only be told the meaning of an icon by being given its significance in words by someone who knows the iconographic system of which it is a part. The iconographic system of a people is often expressed rather completely in their mythology, but all iconography may, or may not be, extensively represented in the visual art forms (Hatcher, 1999).

Certainly one of the roles of the priest was guarding Christian iconography and divulging its meaning and secrets to the initiate. New teaching tools using iconography were created by the Jesuits to attract and instruct the Natives. Revealing, or withholding, iconographic information by a dominant group becomes a means of manipulating power between two distinct culture entities (Hoyer, 1998). This would eventually bring conflict in the attempts of the Jesuits to convert the Natives.

## Chapter 4

### Montana Native Nations and Lifeways

The proto-historical background of the 19<sup>th</sup> century represents a series of regionally adapted societies who participated to a greater, or lesser degree, in an overall unifying cultural tradition that stressed a shared use of resources and traits among a diverse and wide range of Natives. These traditions provided a model for a long lasting, close relationships between groups with very different cultural traditions, social organization, and language.

The term tribe, as applied to groups with ethnic boundaries, may be acceptable for the Native systems from the early nineteenth century onward, but may be inadequate for the period preceding the arrival of the small pox epidemics of 1500 A.D. and even the following two centuries, despite continuing dramatic population losses. For much of the proto-historic period, we can view the Natives in terms of large conglomerates of loosely, widely dispersed populations, connected by a common language, or dialects of a common language, often including participants of different language stocks. They are drawn together by overarching national symbols which gave them the power and security of a common tradition (Schlesier, 1994). Even the equestrian groups of the nineteenth century, such as the Blackfeet and Crows, had centuries earlier consisted of numerous divisions organized much like their horticultural neighbors and trading partners.

After the small pox pandemic of 1780-82 and the Shoshone retreat to Wyoming, Salish survivors strengthened their resistance to the Blackfeet through an alliance with

the Nez Perce. In historic time, the Nez Perce were known for extended forays into the buffalo ranges of Montana and even northern Wyoming. Historic Nez Perce culture was a composite of Plateau and Plains elements, demonstrating the shared interaction of cultures as these nomadic groups criss-crossed each other's territories in search of resources.

Trade helped outside groups become more specialized and stable. Durable goods, such as projectile points, as well as craft items, were traded through interaction spheres. Ideas, as well as goods, were exchanged, often times stressing traditional values to keep societies intact. These interactions were a major vehicle for the distribution of craft beads and the new designs utilizing these beads. The exchange of art and ideas was as integral to a society's solidarity as was the importance of intermarriage in forming and keeping alliances between tribes.

The cultures of the Plains, after being reduced to 5-10 percent of their pre-European contact population levels, had become poverty cultures when compared with the richness of their past. That they stubbornly preserved important aspects of earlier cultural life and exhibited impressive adaptations to detrimental, ever-changing conditions, is a tribute to their resourcefulness. These cultural traditions were brought with them to the reservations and still exist today (Schlesier, 1994).

The Plains Indian Nations had developed by the 1800s a lifestyle that distinguished them from the other tribes and gave them their unique identity. In societies, in which almost all men were warriors of greater or lesser repute, a man's special qualities depended upon the nature of the supernatural powers he had acquired.

Each manifestation of nature had its own spirit which with the individual could contact, through his own spirit, or that of an intermediary. A Native world of symbols and images where the spiritual and commonplace were one (Dugan, 1985), and were manifest in the rites and sacred objects.

## Chapter 5

### The Arrival of the Jesuit Missionaries

Three and a half centuries after Columbus' landfall, the remote northwestern homelands of the indigenous peoples of Montana remained a safe haven, virtually unmapped and unexplored by Europeans. At the same time, the Jesuits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola, in 1541, began their mission to New France, later to become Canada, to spread Christianity.

The Jesuits had taken part in the fur trading enterprises of New France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The defeat of France, in 1763 by Britain, along with a strong interdiction against the Jesuits in Europe, saw the alliance of Church and State fall apart. The Protestant English took over the fur trade and pushed westward toward the Pacific Coast without a priestly presence. Frenchmen living under British rule formed their own fur trading companies, such as the North West Company, that were eventually swallowed up by the Hudson Bay Company. The French Canadians, many of them Catholics of mixed Native descent, became employees of the remaining fur trading companies (Vecsey, 1997).

Among those coming from the east were Catholic Iroquois, descendants of the Caughnawaga, and other mission reduction populations. It was estimated that as many as a third of the fur trading employees in the Northwest, in the early nineteenth century, were of this ancestry. As they traveled westward, they acted as incipient missionaries of their Catholic faith among the Natives who trapped, traded and intermarried with them.

## **SALISH MISSION:**

The most famous emissaries to the Salish of Montana were twenty-four Caughnawaga mission Iroquois, under the leadership of Ignace Lamoose, who settled among the them in 1816 and piqued the Salish's interest in their new religious practices. They taught their Salish friends of priestly sacramental dispensations and the good news of God's love and heavenly afterlife. Under Ignace's influence, the Salish observed Sunday devotions, baptized children, and placed crosses on the graves of their dead. For some Salish it was said to be high medicine and the deep secrets of the spirit world (Schonenberg, 1982).

The Salish and their neighboring tribes were excited by the spiritual possibilities and they decided that direct contact with the Jesuits was needed. During the same period, the northwest Natives were first coming to know of other western cultural influences. They obtained horses through trade and capture from other tribes. They secured fire arms, ammunition, and the technological products of metallurgy and weaving through the fur trade. The excitement of these innovations brought hopes of rich blessings and several prophecies began to circulate among various tribes.

One prophet was a messianic figure named Shining Shirt, possibly a Salish or an Iroquois, who lived in the early seventeenth century, before fur trading and horses. Shining Shirt foretold the coming of the Black Robes with their power to attain horses, defeat enemies, and live to an old age. The prophecy of Shining Shirt, likewise the prophetic culture that prevailed throughout the Northwest Plateau, in the early nineteenth century, fostered the gains of Catholicism in later decades (Vecsey, 1997).

In 1831, a delegation of four Salish arrived in St. Louis to seek a Black Robe to accompany them back to their homeland. The Catholic authorities greeted them and baptized two of them, but the clerics did not realize that the object of the Natives' visit was to obtain a missionary. None of the Native travelers made it back home, contracting disease, and eventually dying in St. Louis.

In 1834 and 1835, two delegations of Protestant missionaries approached the Salish, but they were rejected by the Natives. Instead, Ignace took two of his sons, Charlesa and Frances, on a journey to St. Louis, to once again obtain Catholic priests for the Flatheads. Upon their arrival in St. Louis, they told the priests of numerous Native souls in the northwest waiting for instruction in the Catholic faith. Despite promises by the local bishop, Ignace's 1835 delegation accomplished nothing. So once again, Ignace and four companions headed for St. Louis in 1837, only to be killed by the Sioux in hostile territory.

Two years later, a fourth delegation, led this time by Ignace's son and another Iroquois named, Left-handed Peter, set off eastward. At Council Bluffs, Iowa, they met the Belgian born Jesuit, Pierre Jean De Smet, who was very impressed by their determination. The following year, De Smet traveled to the Rocky Mountains and established the first Catholic Mission at St. Mary's, in the Bitterroot Valley (Evans, 1975).

The Society of Jesus conducted these early missions. Suppressed, but not completely disbanded by the papacy in 1773, the Order of Jesuits had been restored in the early nineteenth century. In 1833, the Second Provincial Council of Baltimore

recommended to Pope Gregory XVI that the Jesuits be assigned the task of Native American missions, a duty accepted by the Jesuit's Superior in Rome. Priests like the young De Smet came to the United States in the 1830s and 1840s, especially as anti-clerical forces gained power in Europe and America appeared to be a land of spiritual opportunity.

De Smet had arrived in St. Louis in 1823 and had become a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1833. Having received his commission, he accepted this fourth delegation of Salish. In 1841, De Smet, along with the priests Mengarini, Nicholas Point, and three Jesuit Brothers initiated the first Salish mission at St. Mary's, Montana. The mission derived its name from a vision of the Blessed Mary given to a dying Salish girl, who was told in the vision to construct a house of prayer in her name (Evans, 1975).

The priests had been instructed earlier by their Jesuit Superior, in 1829, to study the methods used by the seventeenth and eighteenth century Jesuits in Paraguay. These reductions of South America were to serve as models for the nineteenth century missionary goals in North America. Using Luigi Muratoris' *A Relation of the Missions of Paraguay (1759)*, as his textbook, De Smet and his companions set out to create a wilderness kingdom of God in the Rocky Mountains. With St. Mary's as the hub, they planned as many as a dozen reductions, separated from white contact in so far as possible (Peterson & Peers, 1993).

The Jesuits observed Native culture closely to determine how they could use indigenous ideas and customs to foster new Christian expressions. In order to better relate to the Natives, De Smet referred to his religious instruction as, "good medicine for



the soul,” (Evans, 1975). De Smet wrote that the Natives wanted the Black Robes because they thought that all other imaginable good would come with them. Not only courage to fight, but the discovery of nature’s remedies to enable them to enjoy corporal health. The Natives expectations were a direct reflection of the prophecies of Shining Shirt concerning the arrival of the Black Robes.

De Smet added the “Catholic ladder” to his teaching repertoire. This was a large drawing devised by Father Norbert Blanchet, a Canadian priest who instructed Natives of the Puget Sound, in 1839, with this instrument (Shea, 1969). The ladder depicted major events of the Catholic doctrine from the creation of the world to the present day (Figure 1). Later, De Smet commissioned a Paris painter to make copies for all the Native Missions, but the Salish whittled their own. On a long stick, forty short, parallel lines marked forty centuries of world history, thirty-three notches for the years of Christ’s life, three crosses to show the manner of his death, twelve notches for the Apostles, and eighteen more for the centuries since Christ’s crucifixion (Evans, 1975).

The Jesuits also espoused the philosophical rationale known as probabilism, holding that no universal moral code could apply to people in different cultures at all times (Muratori, 1759). Rather than impose inflexible beliefs and conduct, the probabilists first considered the particularities of local circumstances before determining possible improvements. They defined moral expectations in terms of individual conscience, a perspective relative to historically conditioned - human discernment. Instead of insisting on a single moral standard without regard to local context, they used cultural realities to set realistic goals for behavioral change. Instead of condemning

existing cultures outright, they tried to build on common denominators and gradually reshape native ways toward closer approximations of a Christian norm. Of course, they identified Christian values with European norms to some degree, but compared with other missionaries in North America, the Jesuits read fewer culturally determined preconceptions into the gospel. They were careful not to transgress on the host culture even when discussing Christian worship (Bowden, 1981).

By 1843, Father Point had journeyed to the Coeur d' Alenes to establish the Mission of the Sacred Heart. These Indians seemed unlikely converts, and Point experienced stiff resistance, especially when their fishing and hunting seemed to falter in his presence. Yet, within several years he baptized two-thirds of the 500 Natives and convinced the majority of those to burn their traditional medicine bundles. Christian Coeur d' Alenes competed successfully with their non convert relatives in finding game and some of the influential men were willing to give up the practice of polygamy. Nonetheless, Father Point grew discouraged in his inability to convince the Natives to settle into a reduction and cease their hunting way of life (Vecsey, 1997). This really was not surprising since hunting provided a vital source of high caloric nutrition for a minimum of caloric expenditure, giving these mobile people a large amount of freedom outside of resource gathering. The excitement of the hunt also provided other important social functions of status, power and rites of passage for young men and memberships into hunting societies.

The Natives of the Northwest could not rely on agriculture, even when supplemented with livestock. It was necessary, as well as traditional, for them to hunt

buffalo during one season of the year, dig for camas roots on the prairies at another season, and fish for salmon at the falls in a third period. All of this took them away from the mission environment and at the same time placed a strain on Jesuit manpower requirements. The result was slow progress by the missionaries to eradicate such persistent problems as gambling, superstition, and revenge. By 1880, the Natives were fenced in on the reservation and no longer free to travel by the seasons, but the damage was done to the reduction experiment. Acceptance of the Jesuits doctrine was thought to bring protection of tribal life, certainly not the end of their freedom.

Later, Fathers Point and De Smet tried a conversion of the Blackfeet and found them apparently eager for instruction. Instead, these Natives wanted to gain the Christian powers they had seen demonstrated among their enemies, the Salish. The Salish warriors had bent their knee and prayed before a successful battle with the Crows, and they had not lost a single life in the fight. The Blackfeet had suffered recent defeats from the Salish, and small pox had spread in some of their communities; they looked to the medicine of the Jesuits as a panacea.

The Blackfoot regarded Point as a medicine man, whose baptismal potency rivaled the power of the sweat lodge. They called him, "Thunder Chief," and represented his likeness among the thunderbirds, snakes, antelopes, the sun, and the moon (Vecsey, 1997). Point regarded such attitudes as superstition and he refused to baptize many warriors who sought to be inducted into his mysteries.

Since De Smet's first encounters with the Salish, their Christian learning was already imbued with the same sense of God's power in warfare. When they defeated a

large party of Blackfoot after praying in a manner taught them by the Catholic Iroquois, they became convinced of the military efficacy of the new religion (Shea, 1969). In the winter following De Smet's first visit in 1840, they carried his church ornaments like an ark when they went on a hunt, according to De Smet's observations. Like the Blackfoot, they thought of Catholicism as a source of earthly success, particularly in warfare (Vecsey, 1997).

The mission to the Blackfeet was ill-fated. The Salish became angry that De Smet, their Black Robe father, extended to their traditional foes the spiritual power they believed belonged to them and them alone. For the Jesuits to do such a thing, in their estimation amounted to a betrayal, the moral equivalent of an arms merchant supplying both sides in a war. The Salish turned against the missionaries leading Father Point to abandon his post in 1847. By 1850, St. Mary's closed due to the Natives disinterest and even hostility. The Jesuits sold their property to a fur trader, and when they renewed their missionary effort in 1854, they chose another site, known as the St. Ignatius Mission (Evans, 1975).

In 1848, Father De Smet's missionary career came to an end as he was called back to St. Louis for administrative duties. He would eventually travel back to Europe in search for more missionaries and the money needed to support their Catholic endeavors out West. By now the opportunity to Christianize the Natives in a pristine, unsoiled environment had come and gone. Fur traders, miners, homesteaders, the military, and political pressures associated with all these new arrivals were to take their toll.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Mission Work of the Sisters of Charity of Providence and Ursuline Nuns**

The establishment of mission schools began in 1864, when the Jesuits invited the Sisters of Charity, from Montreal, to open a school for Native American girls at the St. Ignatius Mission, located on the Salish Reservation, in western Montana. Their work in Montreal was to provide medical assistance to the underprivileged and destitute. The Sisters expanded their role to include being educators at St. Ignatius as well.

In establishing their foundation at St. Ignatius Mission, the Sisters of Charity expected to uphold the mandate of their Order, which emphasized caring for the sick and needy. The Jesuits, however, viewed the Sisters' work in a different manner. Details of the working relationship between the Sisters and the Jesuits can provide insight into how the male clergy of the Catholic Church perceived the vocation of the female religious in the early West (Chronicle, 1865).

Catholic culture was patriarchal. Religious women were taught that instead of obedience to father and husband, they owe their vow of obedience to an Ecclesiastical superior. They should revere the priesthood and assume a subordinate role within the Church. Church law and the male hierarchy long prevented women from attempting community work. Contemplation of spiritual matters and seclusion from society typified both men's and women's religious communities up to the founding of the Sisters of Charity, the Ursuline Nuns, and the Jesuits in the sixteenth and early seventeenth

centuries. The women of these societies sought a chance to improve their role in their religious life and the missionary work in the West provided this opportunity. In a broader sense, the Catholic Sisters were nineteenth century women who helped to pioneer the American West (Thompson, 1989).

In 1864, the United States government allocated \$1,800 towards the education of Native children in St. Ignatius. Politicians back east, however, withheld government aid until 1874. Without federal funds, the Sisters had to rely on the Jesuits for their food, as well as board and room for the children and patients. In repayment, the Sisters became responsible for the care of the Church, milk-house, bakery, and laundry work, including ironing, mending, and sewing (Schrems, 1992).

A conflict developed concerning the Sisters' responsibilities and duties of the mission. The Sisters resented doing the Fathers' work, especially their laundry, sewing and mending. Mother Joseph, Superior of the Sisters of Providence, in Vancouver, arrived at St. Ignatius in 1866, and confronted Father Grassi concerning the contractual agreement between the Sisters and the Jesuits. Since nothing satisfactory came of this meeting, Mother Philomene, the Superior General of Sisters of Providence in Montreal, wrote to Father Grassi with intention of withdrawing from the mission. The Father's reply was to have them stay, even though he considered them uncooperative and wished later that he had accepted the offer of withdrawal (Schrems, 1992).

The Sisters needed to raise revenue to become independent of the Jesuits, so they took up traveling to nearby mining towns and started soliciting their own donations. Evidently, a Sister of Charity was hard to turn down because between 1867 and 1872

they collect \$9,200., a sum they turned over to the Jesuits for the expense of the convent and school.

Payments from the donations helped the Sisters to establish their autonomy at the missions. A new contract was signed, in 1872, purchasing the buildings occupied by them, including furniture and grounds (Chronicle, 1872). Negotiating a new contract between the two parties left residual antagonism. The Jesuits could flex their authority by belatedly providing the means to practice their faith, that being the priestly ministrations of Mass and Holy Communion given once a month to the Sisters.

This animosity would surface again when the Catholics devised a trial educational program in 1890, supplementing the boarding school experience. The Jesuits instituted a kindergarten at the mission to board Native children as young as two years old. The mission kindergarten would possibly accelerate Indian acculturation, since the children were taken from their parents at a young age. It also caused renewed conflict between the Sisters of Providence and the Jesuits. The Jesuits asked the Ursuline Nuns, who had established Indian Mission Schools on Reservations in Central and Eastern Montana, to run the kindergarten at St. Ignatius. The contract drawn up by Father Cataldo, stipulated the washing and mending of the clothes of the Fathers, as well as the boys of the boarding school, as the duty of the nuns. The Ursulines agreed to the conditions set forth, the very ones the Sisters of Providence had worked so hard to undo. Furthermore, the Sisters of Providence believed the Jesuits were trying to destroy their school at the mission when they accommodated the Ursulines in starting a kindergarten (Chronicle, 1890).

The Ursuline Order, founded in 1535 by St. Angela Merici of France, sent six brave nuns from Toledo, Ohio, to the frozen eastern lands of Montana, at Miles City, in 1844. Chided by Bishop Gilmore, “to found whatever houses you may in Montana and make whatever you can of them.” Mother Amadeus of the Ursuline set out for the Western Frontier to save souls for the Catholic Church (Ursuline Nun, 1923).

Their convent and school in Miles City, were successes only as long as they could generate income. They taught piano lessons to their Sunday School children. They also taught French. Besides French and music, there was also a demand for embroidery teachers. The Sisters taught school and managed the convent, but could not raise enough money to build a boarding school so they could charge a tuition. Little support came from their Toledo superiors in getting established in Miles City, so Bishop Brondel offered them a place at St. Peter’s Mission, in Central Montana (Ursuline Nun, 1923).

In 1844, Mother Amadeus and two nuns arrived at St. Peter’s Mission to establish a school for girls. She left behind three sisters in Miles City to complete plans for a boarding school for girls of white settlers who lived in and around town. Three other sisters were delivered to the Cheyenne Natives, north of Miles City, to establish a mission school at St. Labres. This left Mother Amadeus at St. Peter’s to establish a third mission to serve the Blackfeet, Crow, Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Natives (McBride, 1992).

The strain of planning and building at St. Peter’s, plus the bitter cold of the Montana winter weakened Mother Amadeus and she caught pneumonia. Once Mother Amadeus’ condition was known back in Toledo, Mary Fields, a black woman who



worked at the Toledo convent, arrived at St. Peter's to watch over her beloved Mother Amadeus. Unfortunately, Mary Fields had a temper that did not always demonstrate the qualities of refined womanhood. It was said she could take on any two men. For this reason, Bishop Brondel did not believe that Mary was a desirable mission employee and instructed Mother Amadeus to send her away.

Mother Amadeus' concern for Mary overruled the bishop's wishes and her vow of obedience to her superiors. In the Catholic hierarchy, the bishop was superior to all in his diocese. The sisters at St. Peter's, as well as the Jesuits, obeyed the instructions of the bishop. Nevertheless, Mother Amadeus worked her way around the bishop's request by financing Mary in the restaurant business in nearby Cascade (Schrems, 1992). It would appear the nuns of the Ursuline order also had their issues with the male authority figures of the Catholic Church, especially when it stood for preserving a woman's rights.

The mission experiment among the Cheyenne at St. Labres Mission, north of Miles City, perhaps typifies the dilemma for the missionaries in their encounters with the Natives. The Cheyenne steadfastly held to their traditional beliefs and only sought from the priests, or nuns, material goods. The women particularly showed disdain for the Jesuits, especially if the priests could not produce food before teaching classes. "We do not want your prayers, they do not fill our stomachs," was more than once spoken (Schrems, 1992). Cheyenne women even kept the men from going to church services by taking away their socks and moccasins, forcing them to walk barefooted over frozen ground, if they wished to attend to services.

The Jesuits had to contend with the traditional status of the Native women. The

Native women had a considerable amount of control and authority in their society because of their economic status. Their tribal position arose from their acceptance into women's guilds. This was especially true of the Cheyenne women as compared to the women of the other Plains tribes.

Traditional Native American guilds controlled the making of tepee covers, quill and bead designs for parfeches, dresses, and moccasins. In order for a woman to be accepted into a particular guild, she had to prepare elaborate feasts and bestow presents on the guild leader. Once in the guild, she learned the details of the art, the technical terms, and the symbolism of the designs. Women's economic status depended on their acceptance into a guild (Schrems, 1969). Status activities, such as beading and quill work, and introduced embroidery by the Nuns, became a common ground for the Sisters and the tribal women to share.

The Sisters of Charity of Providence viewed their role in bringing souls to God in a fundamental, educational perspective that was much more intimate in nature between the Natives, in comparison with the priests. The Jesuit priest would become discouraged because they tended to judge success by conversions from traditional beliefs to Catholicism. The Sisters saw the opportunity to start with the new generation of children that could be acculturated in a boarding school environment, away from the influence of their parents. Consequently, they viewed success in the long term generational changes in bringing the Natives into the white culture. In most cases, it was the Sisters who outlasted the Jesuits in their tenacity to educate the Natives.

## Chapter 7

### Native Women

From the beginning of puberty, until marriage, a girl was instructed by her mother, guardian and other women of the tribe, in the art of women's work. These skills were important to the tribes economic survival and defined women's place within Native culture as one of power and authority. Men hunted and provided game to be prepared by their women. They believed that women owned that for which they labored. For example, the lodges belonged to women, because they not only tanned the hides, but also designed, cut and toiled over the lodges' construction. Women owned most of the possessions in the tepee, even the clothes that their men wore. These traditions were handed down for many generations and kept intact through the roles of women in tribal society (Hill, 1994).

There was a clear division of responsibility for artistic rendering by gender in Plains culture. Women enriched the world embellishing clothing and household objects, while men painted the religious symbols that appeared on the outside of tepees and produced objects for war, hunting, and ceremonial use. Robes were painted by both men and women. Women produced abstract designs, created for ritual use, or as expressions of personal spirituality. The status of women in Native society was perplexing to the missionaries. They found it difficult to accept a culture where women assumed economic responsibility. The Jesuits believed that women's economic status gave them too much authority and that they held a despotic position in the tribe. They viewed this as an obstacle to Native conversion (Schrems, 1992).

The Native American woman was a powerful force in the preservation of her peoples culture, a force greatly misunderstood by the Jesuits, who sought contact primarily with the male element in seeking to influence the leadership role of the tribes. This selective interaction by the Jesuits only brought more suspicion and distrust from the female membership. It was strange enough not to have a wife, or conjugal relations with the opposite sex, but the obvious disdain for the women's role in the tribal life was reason enough to undermine the efforts of the missionary conversions.

Among the numerous offending changes sought by the priests, was the rehabilitation of marriage. The marriage contract was an agreement between families, not just between couples. It was the beginning of an extended relationship that included sharing of hunting, camping, and economic resources. In the event that a man, or woman died, it was common for the husband to marry one of his wife's younger sisters. The brother of a deceased husband married his brother's wife. This marriage relationship often resulted in polygamy, where some men, in order to accommodate more than one family, had two or more separate lodges.

Finding few contracted marriages valid, the Jesuits conferred the sacrament of marriage only on the couples they baptized. Where polygamy existed, the husband had to renounce one wife for him to be baptized, and thus saved according to Christian dogma. This demand tore apart the very social fabric of the kinship based tribe, leaving children without mothers, and wives without husbands. Nothing could be imagined more horrible to the women of these households trying to maintain families. Polygamy was a socially accepted practice to insure there were enough husbands to go around. In this

way, the missionaries unwittingly, or not, undermined the traditional family structure of kin based relationships (Schaeffer, 1935).

In the beginning of contact between the Natives and the Black Robes, the women of these tribes were just as excited and curious as the men about the arrival of the Black Robes. After all, they too had heard the prophecies of Shining Shirt concerning the bounty to be brought by the priests. Certainly the low number of the Jesuits, and the lack of hostility demonstrated by the clerics, presented little in the way of alarm. Women embarked on spiritual quests the same as men, their desire to know the divine was in every way as strong as the males. As time elapsed, however, the women perceived the threats internally from the Jesuits, as well as externally from encroaching white settlers and displaced Native tribes searching for sanctuary.

The Black Robes seemed oblivious to female roles in religion. During early contact, no important ancestral female spirits were recognized, or recorded by the Jesuits in their field notes (Vecsey, 1990). A second effect of Christian domination was that female rituals became more esoteric than those of the males. When the practice of Native religion was made illegal in Canada and the United States, female rituals went further underground than the better known, mixed-gender rituals. Female fasting, puberty rituals, full moon ceremonies, and menstrual rites are virtually undocumented in the ethnographic literature, yet continue today (Ridington, 1983).

The missionaries insisted that all Native religious practices were the work of the devil. For example, the owl, whose feathers were an important symbol on a number of sacred pipes prior to the twentieth century, a creature that mediated between the living

and dead, became understood as a negative symbol of death (Vecsey, 1990). These teachings enhanced the tendency to power destructively inward on oppressed cultures and specifically the role of the female spirit. Christian doctrine's portrayal of Eve as a negative spirit, contradicted the Native spiritual belief that the female spirit was positive in nature. Healing spirits were often female in tribal life prior to the Jesuits arrival, only afterwards to become unrecognized as such in a reversal of traditional values.

Women had the right to have medicine bundles, containing items made from dreams, or visions, where a spirit would show an individual how to make a totem for spiritual protection. She acquired an eagle feather, or a coyote pelt, or whatever the spirit had told her to find. These articles were placed in a medicine bundle intended for personal protection. This long standing traditional object of sacred power for the Natives was viewed by the missionaries as magic and evil. Thus, it must be thrown away if one converted to Christianity (Vecsey, 1990). The decline of female spiritual roles was paralleled by a rapid decline in the social-political role and status of women. A strong resentment and resistance grew for everything represented by the Jesuits.

Indeed, if it was perceived that the Jesuits were trying to institute a belief system that appeared to disintegrate tribal life as it had been known, clearly the threat from the Jesuits inside their midst was much more immediate and potentially devastating than the external threats still on the periphery of tribal life.

## Chapter 8

### Artifact Collection

This study is an ethnographic and an ethnohistoric depiction of a period dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most data concerning this period have most likely been recovered, recorded and distributed many times throughout the world. This means numerous parties have had access to the artifacts, dating to this period.

An artifact, photographed in, *Sacred Encounters* (Peterson and Peers, 1993), of a crucifix labeled, “(Northeast) Iroquois, 1776, wood,” (Figure 2) was exactly the type of artifact of interest here. Located at the Snite Museum, on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, an inquiry with the director revealed some interesting facts. He explained that after *Sacred Encounters* was published, he received a new crucifix, identical to the one pictured, from an individual who had also observed the “Iroquois Crucifix,” in Peterson and Peers book. This person recognized it as an Irish crucifix. The cross was fashioned as such, so it could be slipped up their long sleeved shirts, when they were being taken into custody by the British during colonial rule (Bradley, 1997). Significant as the iconographic carvings on the side of the crucifix may be, the crucifix was most likely not carved by an Iroquois in 1776.

This brought to light important features that were going to be hard, if not impossible, to document. The authenticity of an artifact, even when viewed by a professional, is subject to some uncertainty. Tribal affiliation is a function of style, more so than its geographic location. Even so, many items were traded and styles shared throughout the Plains culture. Historical iconography, for the most part, is not subject to

excavation recovery. Rather, we are dealing with historical artifacts that were traded, shared, sold, or collected by numerous parties and have remained as parts of the extant social system to today.

Missionaries showed interest in collecting Native artifacts (Figure 3), yet it appears that the collections, over time, may have been sold to offset the financial problems of the missions (Bradley, 1997).

The petroglyph images found throughout North America have many direct relationships to eighteenth and nineteenth century paintings on shields, shirts, tepees, or amulets (Mauer, 1992). These powerful sacred images had strong visual ties to the older, more permanent petroglyphs. Ceremonial arts of the historical period were icons of power, depicting human forms, ranging from stick figures to elaborate shield-bearing warriors, as well as animals, plants and numerous abstract designs (Francis & Loendorf, 2000).

### **CATHOLIC ICONOGRAPHY:**

The iconography of the Catholic faith is well documented in its sacramentalism (Figures 4, 5, and 6) and it is recognizable in syncretic Native art. The cross, or Maltese cross, is one of the most controversial images (Figure 7), and is often mistaken for a crucifix. The square symmetrical cross represented the four seasons, or the elements of nature (sky, water, earth and fire), or the morning star, among other interpretations. The elongated southern portion of the crucifix is in stark contrast to the Native cross.

The depiction of a cross atop a tepee (Figure 8) is an example of what might be



construed as syncretic, but really represents traditional designs elements of the Lakota. The time frame of circa 1900, is contemporary with the study period, but the Lakota tribe is not of Montana.

There are Native artifacts that contain Christian and Native images, such as the American flag (Figure 9), and the Catholic crucifix (Figure 2). A bandolier bag (Figure 9) from the Winnebago tribe, circa 1875 to 1900, demonstrates a definitive incorporation of American iconography using the American flag in the embroidery. The above three examples, are out of area artifacts, utilizing iconography that is not as obvious in the tepee and cross (Figure 8). A fourth example, from the Museum of Arts and Culture, in Spokane, Washington, is a beaded bag (Figure 10) from the plateau area, with no tribal designation, or date. Although the floral patterns and color may give a tribal affiliation, the sacred heart with the crucifix on top, is an obvious reference to Catholic iconography.

A fifth example, shows the adoption of European material goods and Catholic symbols, in a U.S. Springfield rifle (Figure 11) of 1863, taken from an Indian near Priest Lake, Idaho. The date when this artifact was procured is unknown. The silver inlaid cross, or crucifix, on the rifle stock, is believed to be Native. Furthermore, along the stock are inlaid silver circles representing the number of scalps taken by the owner of the rifle. These last two items come from the Museum of Arts and Culture, in Spokane, Washington.

The Ursuline convent in Great Falls, Montana, has a room displaying artifacts from Montana and the Alaska Missions. These artifacts present some of the best

controlled in terms of geography, history, and tribal affiliation in my area of interest. Important as the articles are, it's their relationship to an artistic floral design originating from the St. Lawrence River area, that makes the Ursuline collection special.

Artifacts displayed at the Ursuline Convent, in Great Falls, Montana, provide a few examples of Native and European art fusion. Synchronism is the borrowing of European design, but using Native medium. A pipe bag (Figure 12-A), attributed to a Sioux in the early nineteenth century, uses traditional hide, porcupine quills and dyed feathers. The glass beadwork depicts two American flags, as well as tepees and crosses. Also in Figure 12-B, shows another pipe bag from a Cheyenne Indian, circa 1900, with four crosses of traditional Native design. Although we know the Ursulines had missions among the Cheyenne, the archival record of when and how they arrived at the Ursuline Convent is not recorded.

### **FLORAL DESIGNS:**

Numerous artifacts of beadwork depicting floral patterns are found on articles of clothing, utility bags, horse tack, baby cradles, ceremonial items, and just about anything in the Native culture that could be adorned with beadwork (Figure 13). Floral motifs were not present on the Plains prior to contact with the Europeans. In traditional times, clothing designs were usually completed with porcupine quills dyed with mineral and plant colors and embroidered directly on to clothing. Geometric patterns were the most commonly used designs, but with the arrival of trade beads on the plains during the nineteenth century, curvilinear patterns began to appear. It appears

these were borrowed from eastern woodland floral motifs that were quilled (Peterson, 1985).

Woodland peoples' contact with the fur traders in the Hudson Bay area, was originally thought to have started the floral designs, since it appeared to flourish along the fur trade line. However, there is no evidence that the traders were instrumental in the introduction of this European folk art derivative. Instead, it has been demonstrated that the correct affiliation is the Roman Catholic Mission, beginning on the St. Lawrence River and moving west throughout the Great Lakes region (Peterson & Peers, 1993).

Small and stylized, semi-floral designs were used by the French Metis who came from these Great Lake Missions. Increasingly naturalistic and flamboyant designs became prominent on the Metis products in the 1830s, shortly after the establishment of Catholic Mission Schools in the Red River country of Canada. From the time of early contact with Christian nuns and Catholic missionaries, Metis women often received intensive instruction in mission schools set up around trading posts. Nuns instructed young girls and women in arts, such as needlework, that not only influenced the type of work done, but the nature of the designs to be used and the colors selected (Harrison, 1985).

Due to the fluid nature of Metis society, they produced a wide distribution of Metis crafts through trade. The subsequent migration of the Red River Metis groups into the most remote corners of the northwest, saw the Metis art style put its stamp on the art of practically every tribal group in the Northwest Territories (Brasser, 1985). More pronounced than any of its formal characteristics, Metis art was strictly decorative

ignoring the symbolism that was so frequently present in tribal art. This departure from traditional designs, to an almost universally accepted design, led to a wide and popular acceptance by the Northern Plains and Northwest Natives.

### **JESUIT ART:**

The influences of cultural contact reflect a symbiotic exchange of cultural influences. The Jesuits showed adaptation in their teaching styles for a cultural very different than what they were used to instructing. Primarily they sought new ways to be effective in successfully Christianizing the nomadic Natives of the Plains. To their credit, they did not resort to the end of a gun barrel, but genuinely tried to communicate through spirit and intellect.

Father Nicholas Point accompanied Father De Smet and was designated journalist for recording their trip out west. His skills as an artist must have helped him gain the friendship and confidence of the Natives. So his art and missionary endeavors were often combined activities. In the winter of 1842, he endured the nomadic lifestyle of the Salish to go on a buffalo hunt east of the Rockies. This was so he could continue his Christian instructions at the request of the Natives. Father Point discovered that Natives, “learned more quickly through their eyes than their ears, where I made a great effort to speak to them through pictures.” Of all the means employed for conversion, Father Point stated, “The most efficacious were certainly those that appealed to the sense of sight,” (Point, 1967).

Employing the natural artistic curiosity of the Natives, Father Point encouraged

an unnamed Blackfoot male to do eleven drawings, from 1846 to 1847. The drawings seemed to show a break with old traditions (Figure 14). Keyser (2000) believes that Point's own artistic style was influenced considerably by the conventions of the Natives biographic art tradition (Figure 15). Rocheford (1996) shows how Point adopted the Native concept of space, time and composition in his western European concepts of art structure. Point arrived at a hybridized art form that can only be explained by reference to aboriginal biographic art concepts.

The visualization techniques used by Father Blanchet in developing the Catholic Ladder (Figure 1), to depict major events of the Catholic doctrine, demonstrates the attraction of sight specific teaching tools (Shea, 1969). Since the Ladder was embraced by the Salish, they made their own ladders by carving notches on a stick (Evans, 1975).

## Chapter 9

### Conclusion

The mid 1800s was a liminal period for Montana Natives. The Natives found themselves adrift, with their traditional, economic, political, and military worlds turned upside down. They wavered between adherence to their family traditions and hopeful examinations of uncertain religious claims of the Jesuits.

The basis of what syncretic action did take place, was the willingness to accept that the other culture had access to some mysterious power through the use of esoteric, perhaps emotionally charged mnemonic words and icons. More importantly, the Natives choose to accept certain foreign forms and then to make them their own. For the Catholic missionaries accustomed to using the Latin Liturgy, this might be exactly what was desired and expected (Preston, 1988). The administration of sacraments held a mystic sense about their power and ritual, and appealed to traditional tribal functions.

Yet, Natives apprehended religious, cultural, and historical meaning, not in some abstract notion of cosmic order, but in the emergent purposeful, intersecting, and in these times conflicting actions of persons and events. The Natives judged the priest's claim of religious power by the integrity of the missionaries social behavior and in their political relevance in meeting the religious needs of everyday life, in curing disease, in hunting, in diplomatic and military relations. In these pragmatic ways, the Natives construed the missionaries claims of superior religious truth in the everyday events of their own world.

These first insurgent Jesuits were at a distinct disadvantage where it mattered

most, that being in the arena of power. Their power was based on persuasion, world views and theology. Introduction of new technology, outside of farming and medicine, was not the tool of missionaries. The access to trading and military posts, or settlements, for their support was none existent. The Natives may have been adrift, but they were floating in their own sea, while the Jesuits were on an island by themselves. Their power consisted of the words and symbols they brought with them. Often in an environment of unequal power, the withholding of symbolic meaning becomes a tactical move in an effort to preserve ones own power and identity (Hoyer, 1998). Synchronicity implies a unity of psyche and matter, meaning the sacred-mentalism has to mirror the image. The Catholic icon had no meaning for the Native in this sense. The icons had not been witnessed in dreams, or visions.

Icons were the very means by which both the Jesuits and the Natives adapted to their changing environment. Historical documentation about the use of the Catholic Ladder as a teaching tool designed by the priests is a syncretic use of Native materials in describing church history. Records, furthermore, indicate the Flathead even carved their own ladders adopting the priests teaching tool for their own education and conversion. Here we see syncretic use of both ideas and materials employed by both parties.

The use of prayer before battle with an enemy tribe sometimes produced remarkable results showing no loss of life for those doing the praying. This was exactly the results desired by the Natives. Yet, these miracles were short lived, especially in the face of advancing European settlers. After all, the Natives had hoped for preservation of their lifeways, but the promise of access to a higher power was not always able to

preserve them.

Instead, we see disappointment on both sides, the Jesuits thwarted by lack of conversions and the Natives losing their freedom and land. We also see the introduction of innovative craft materials, such as beads, silk, cloth, and floral designs brought by the nuns. These provided outlets for expression in a time of despair. The explosion of the floral bead patterns, all across the Northern Plains, represented an expression of kinship through craft guilds, solidifying tribal identity and solidarity. They sought to reaffirm and revitalize the tribal structure that had dominated for so many generations. A significant means of communicating throughout those generations was done through symbols, as a way of maintaining and changing behavior.

Native Americans have been in conversation with each other for thousands of years, and their tribal traditions express negotiated agreements about the pluralistic nature of reality (Morrison, 2002). In such conversations, in the mythological and ritual adaptations they engendered, do we discover only one way in which Native traditions have always had a collective and changing character. In essence, the Natives entered into negotiation with the Jesuits about the nature of reality, even as that reality was fading away.

The Jesuits viewed conversion as an end goal in their missionary work. Yet, even like the Jesuits, the Natives themselves failed to appreciate both the powerful hold traditional religious fears had on them and the ways in which the priests amplified these fears. The integration of Native and Catholic symbolism did not completely work. Instead of viewing conversion as a radical ideological change from one religion to



another, we start to understand the syncretic direction of the mission process that took place in Montana, in the mid 1800s. Natives assessed missionaries for attributes that characterized their own religious practitioners, or shaman. They borrowed theological ideas and ritual practices selectively, and always followed practical solutions of their own (Morrison, 2002). As a result of the Natives contact with Catholic religious powers, and their limited ritual use of Catholic iconography, they came to re-examine and re-experience their beliefs, and thereby revitalize the basic religious truths of their traditional life.

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Figure 1. The Catholic Ladder used by the Jesuits for instructing Natives in church history. Peterson, J. and Peers, L. (1993).



Figure 2. A Catholic Iroquois carving on a crucifix dated 1776. Peterson, J. and Peers, L. (1993).



Figure 3. Ursuline Nun enjoying Native collection. From the collection of the Museum of the Ursuline Convent, Great Falls, MT.



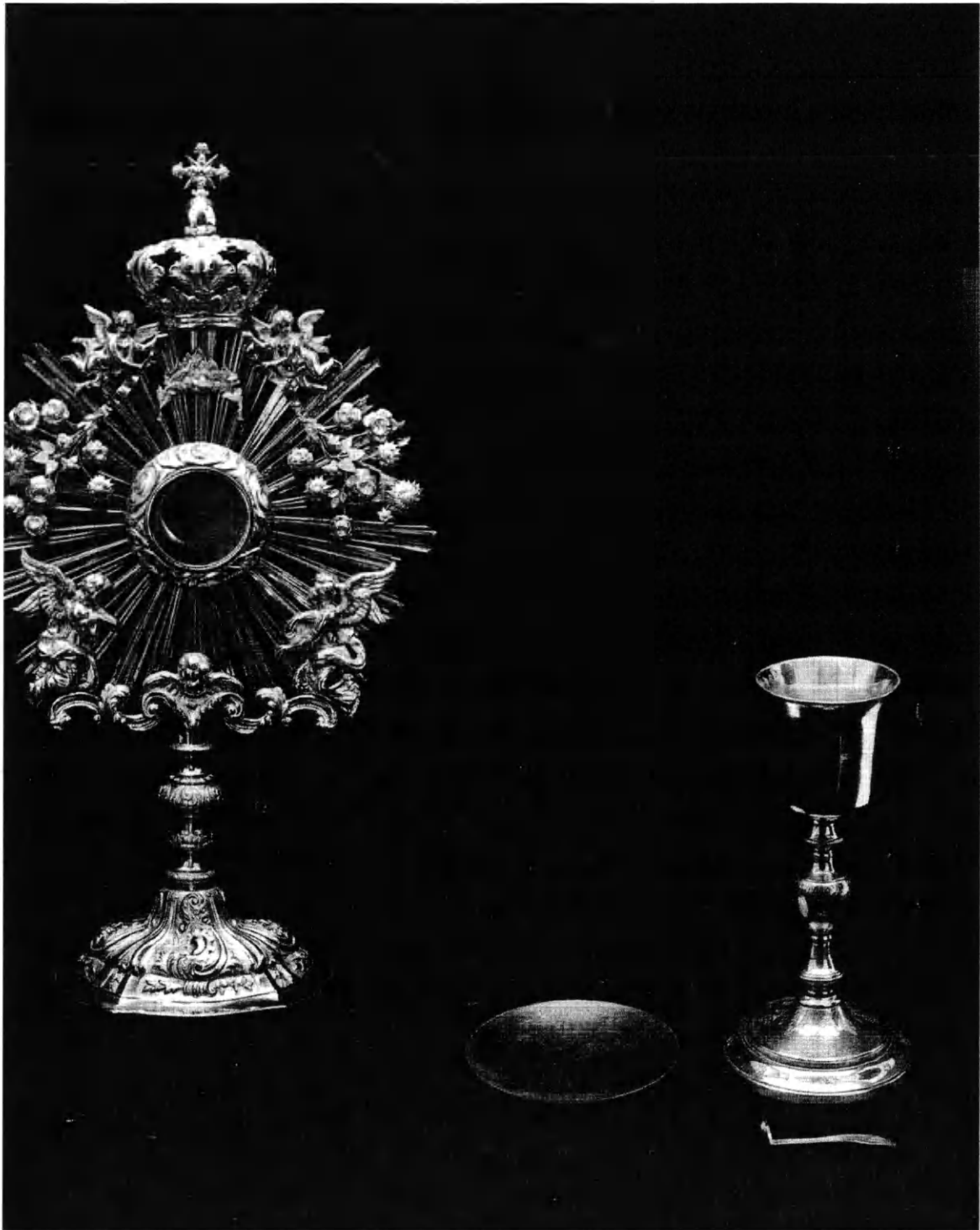


Figure 4. Monstrane, patent and chalice, sacramental items used to carry the Eucharist. Peterson, J. and Peers, L. (1993).



Figure 5. Sensor, sacred text and altar cross used in Catholic Church ritual. Peterson, J. and Peers, L. (1993).



Figure 6. Holy water fount used to protect and bless oneself, and rosary used in devotional prayer. Peterson, J. and Peers, L. (1993).

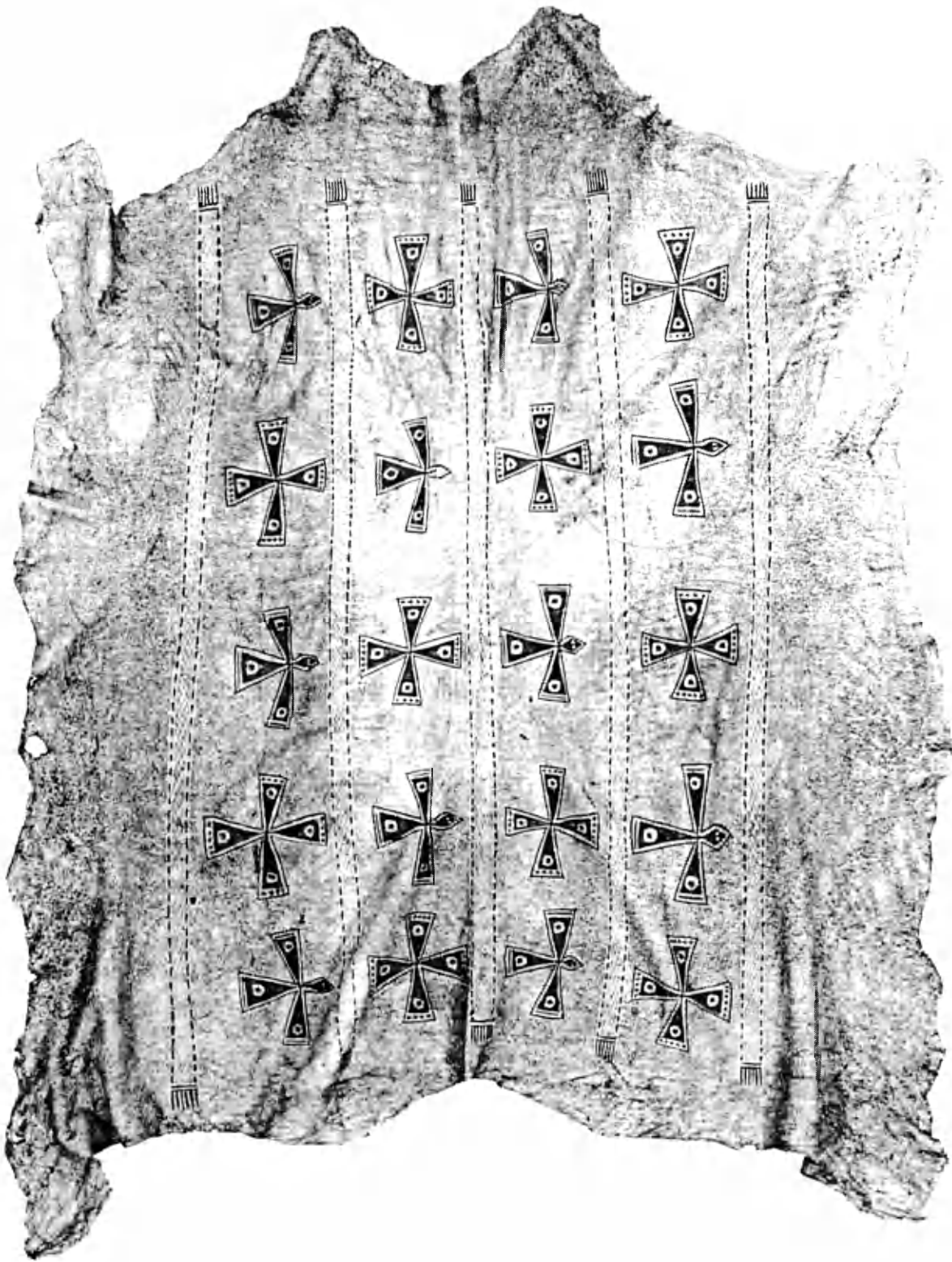


Figure 7. Four rows of Maltese crosses on a hide showing traditional symbols from the Blackfoot Nation. Brassler, T.J. (1988).



Figure 8. Crosses on a teepee decorating a Lakota boys vest, circa 1900. Hill, T. (1994).

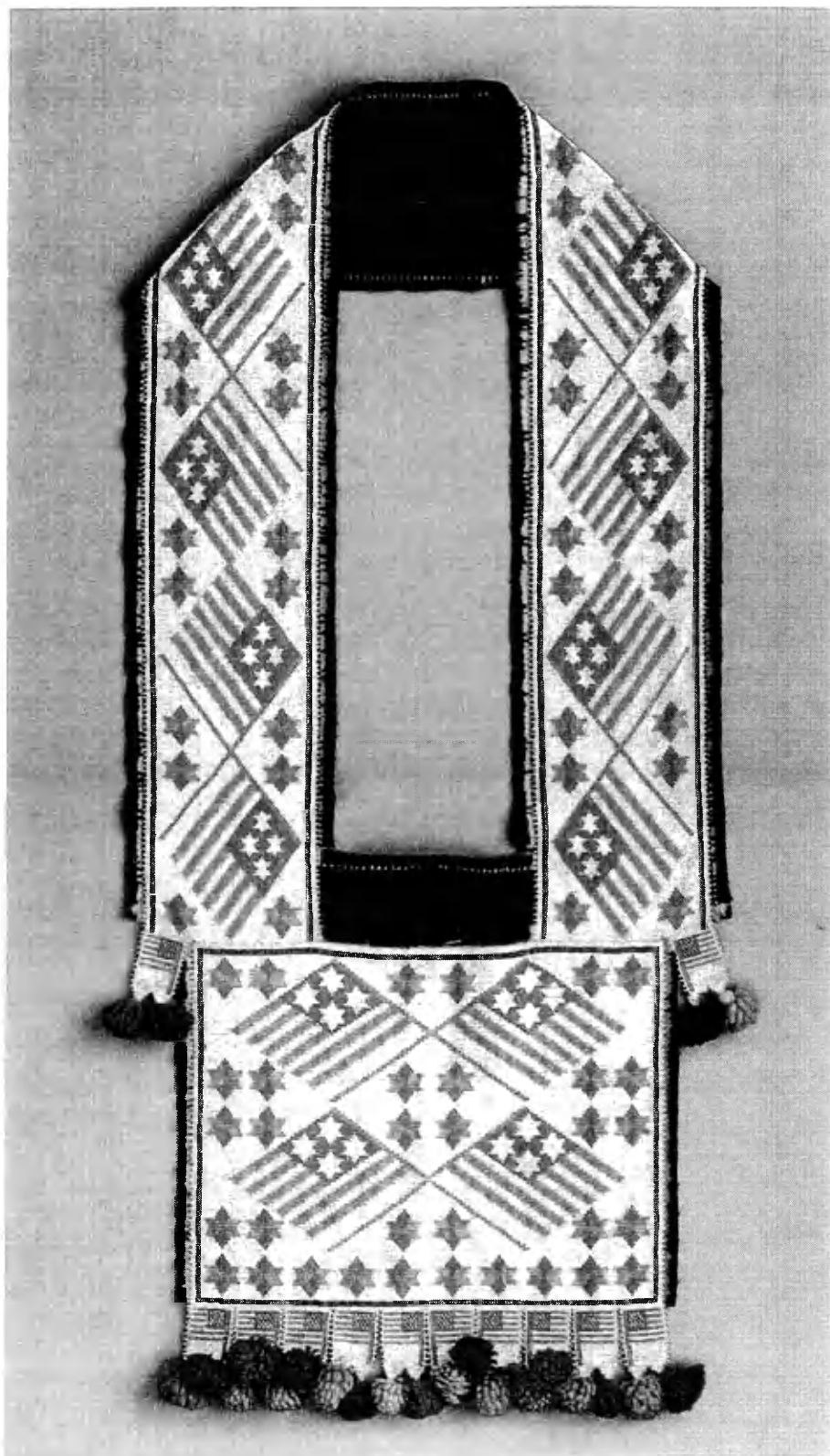


Figure 9. A beaded bandolier bag from the Winnebago Nation using flags for decoration, circa 1875 to 1900. Mercer, B. (1997).

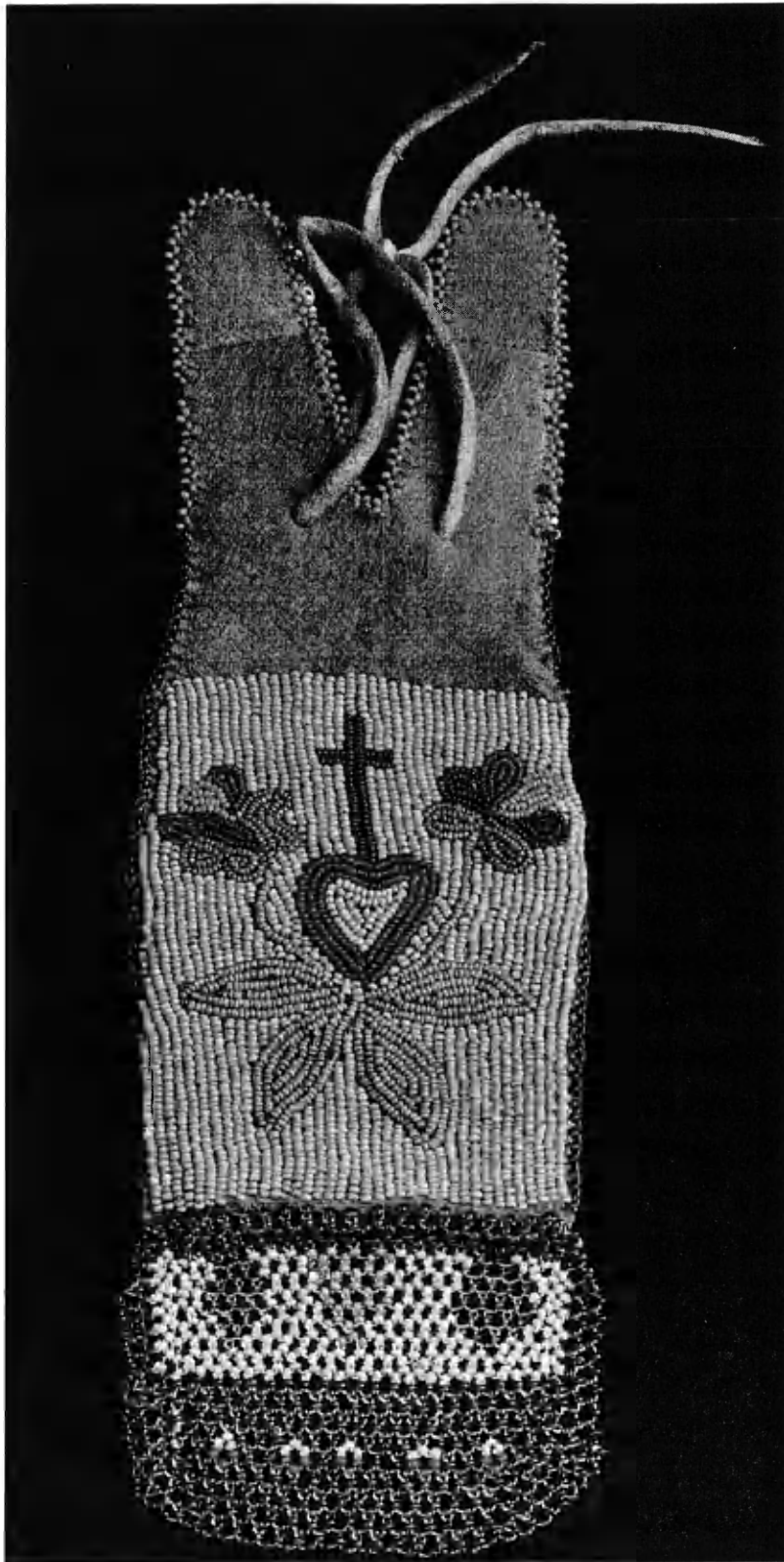


Figure 10. A flat beaded bag from the Plateau area (Coeur d'Alene), using a floral pattern with a sacred heart symbol, circa 1900. Peterson, J. and Peers, L. (1993).



Figure 11. U. S. Springfield rifle, 1863, with an inlaid silver cross belonging to a Native near Priest Lake, Idaho. From the collection of the Museum of Arts and Culture, Spokane, WA.



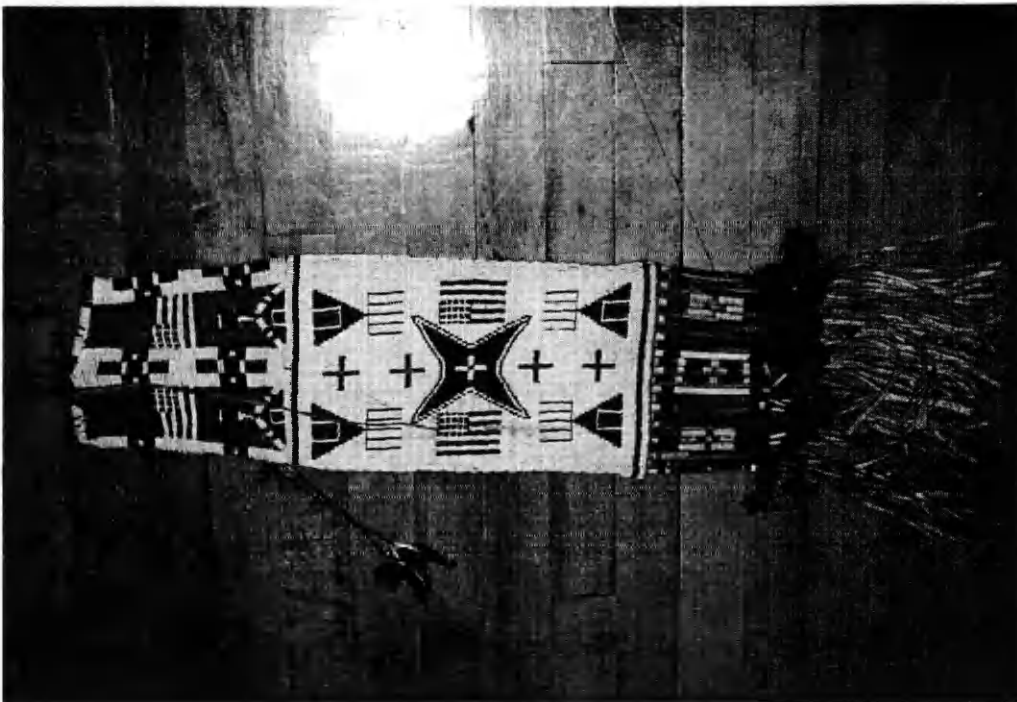
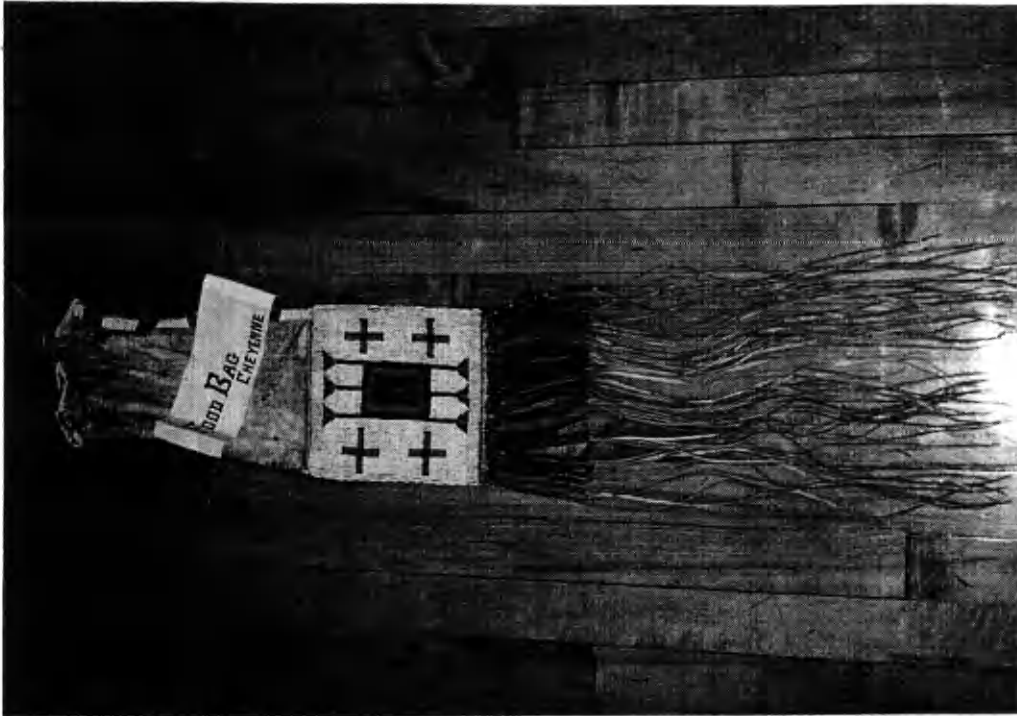


Figure 12-A. A beaded bag using the American flag emblem, date and origin unknown. From the collection of the Museum of the Ursuline Convent, Great Falls, MT.

Figure 12-B. A traditional Maltese cross design on a beaded bag. From the collection of the Museum of the Ursuline Convent, Great Falls, MT.



Figure 13. A Salish beaded man's vest showing floral designs, circa 1900. Peterson, J. and Peers, L. (1993).



Figure 14. A drawing from an unknown Flathead Native, circa 1846 to 1847, collected by Nicholas Point S. J., depicting religion and superstition. Point, N., S. J. (1967).

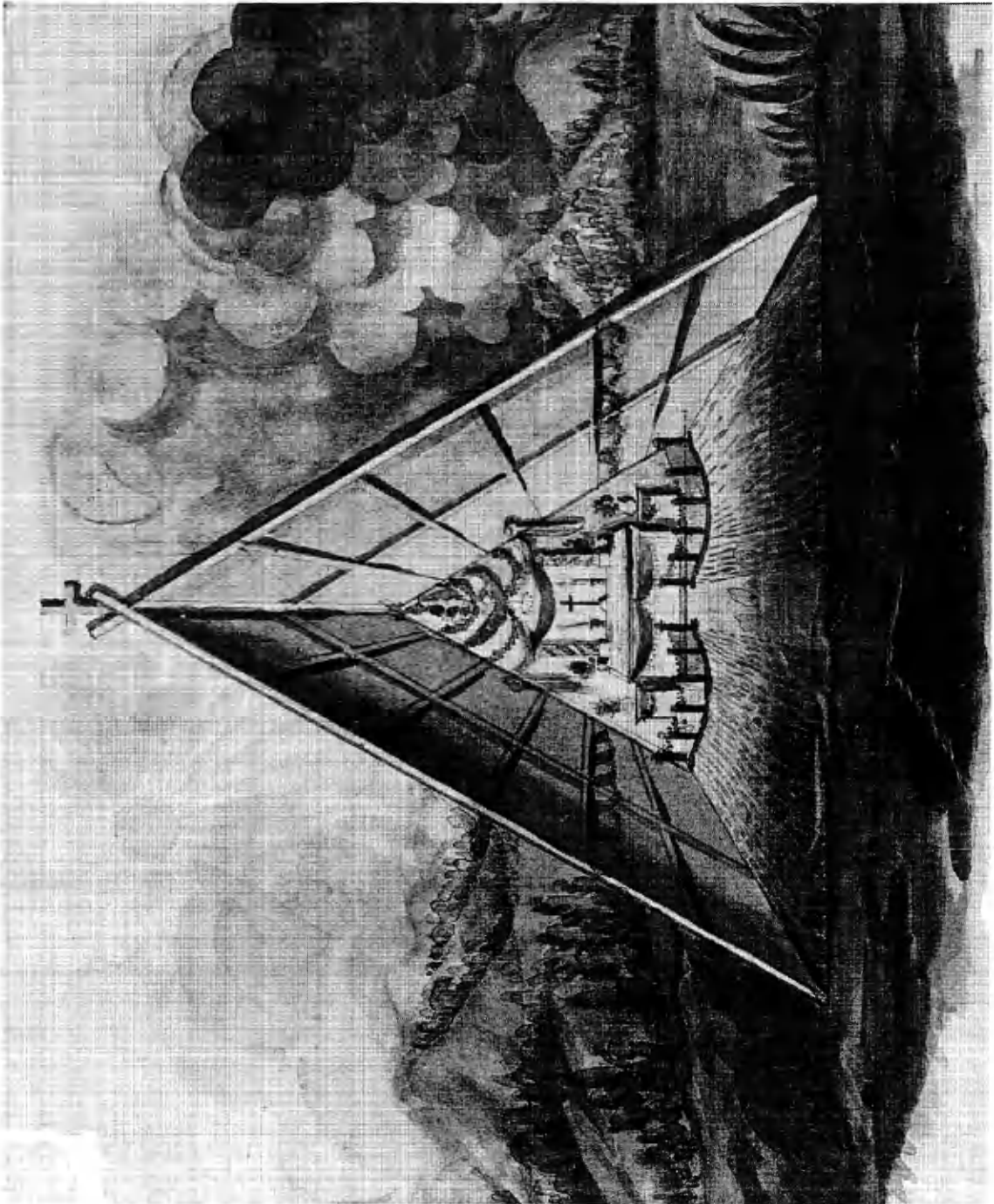


Figure 15. A watercolor on paper, by Nicholas Point, S. J., depicting an altar and a teepee, circa 1841 to 1847. Peterson, J. and Peers, L. (1993).