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THE INFLUENCE OF THE HORSE  
ON THE LIFE OF THE  
GREAT PLAINS INDIANS

by

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E.S. in Ed.,  
Northern Illinois State Teachers College, 1947

Presented in partial fulfillment of the  
requirement for the degree of Mas-  
ter of Arts.

Montana State University

1948

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## INTRODUCTION

This study does not purport to be more than a modest attempt to understand and explain the extent of the modification of Plains Indian culture due to the horse-complex.

It has led the writer to examine, albeit vicariously: the Spanish-Indian mission life of the Southwest; the struggle for the Indian trade and accompanying machinations of French, Spanish, English, and Americans, interwoven with tales of incessant Indian raids for slaves and horses; the relentless southward drive of the Apache by the Comanche; the Uto-Aztekan trade chain to the far Northwest; and the activities and observations of explorers, missionaries, and ciboleros in the Missouri River country.

In addition to gathering supporting historical data (to establish dates and centers of the diffusion), it was necessary to scrutinize archeological and proto-historical evidences as well. They include the Nebraska and Casa Grande diggings, the Mandan artifacts, the evidence in the Great Lakes region, Iowa, and the Southwest.

It was necessary to weigh various hypotheses of east-west migrations by Plains tribes previous to the coming of the horse, of south-north drifting by Caddoan peoples, of north-south Athapascan movements, and of more recent geographical and socio-economic shiftings by Plains border tribes.

Borrowing the horse-complex resulted in drastic cultural re-alignments in many instances. A careful analysis can be

made only through the reading of: tribal and individual studies; quantitative data such as population figures; various general anthropological descriptions which show changes in tribal and band organization; the hunting pattern; etc.

A culturological analysis of the problem may be finally arrived at by an eclectic approach, it would appear to this writer. One does not wish to be unduly swayed by previous conclusions, so only through broad reading in the fields of Indian anthropology and history may one safely formulate an interpretation.

## CHAPTER I

### DIFFUSION AND ACCULTURATION

In diffusion we are interested in the movement of a trait or a complex over a given region at a given time. In acculturation we are concerned with the reception of a particular trait or complex in a given culture in this area.<sup>1</sup> Thus Haines in his article, "The Northward Spread of Horses among the Plains Indians," deals with the diffusion of the horse-complex throughout the Plains. In Opler's "The Southern Ute of Colorado," the effect of the complex on the whole culture of a given tribe is studied.

Acculturation may be defined in another way. Ralph Linton quotes the sub-committee on Acculturation appointed by the Social Science Research Council in 1935. The definition set forth was the following:

"Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. Under this definition, acculturation is to be distinguished from culture change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation. It is also to be differentiated from diffusion, which, while occurring in all instances of acculturation, is not only a phenomena (sic) which frequently takes

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<sup>1</sup> Betty J. Meggers, "Recent Trends in American Ethnology," American Anthropologist, 48, 1946, pp. 188-189.



place without the occurrence of the types of contact between peoples specified in the definition above, but also constitutes only one aspect of the process of acculturation."<sup>1</sup>

He points out that "cultures are adaptive mechanisms" designed to meet the needs of a societal group.<sup>2</sup> When there are inadequate adaptations, these are reflected on the individual, who expresses his dissatisfactions by furthering social change.

A potent example of the revolutionary effects which follow lack of adequate adjustment to new conditions is that of the Plains Indian. The disappearance of the bison inevitably produced wide-spread cultural disintegration followed by a period of readjustment to meet the new conditions.<sup>3</sup>

Acculturation study is based on an analysis of determinants. One must inquire further as to the particular situation under which phenomena are present, and limit the field to those phenomena which seem to have resulted from the particular situation.<sup>4</sup>

At the risk of being labelled a narrow particularist,

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph Linton, "Acculturation and the Process of Culture Change," p. 46<sup>4</sup>, cited by Ralph Linton, ed., Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes, (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1940).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 466.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 467.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 464.

we should like to defend the scientific validity of an anthropological acculturation study which involves a changing subsistence economy. Varying environmental adjustments such as a shift from sedentary agriculturalism to a nomadic life necessarily affects the whole social structure. There is, after all, a direct relationship of foodways, of planting, hunting, transporting, and eating of food to other basic culture complexes.<sup>1</sup>

Since food-getting is a major necessity, it follows that it will assume much social value, manifested by symbolic rituals, etc., and that it will achieve complex integration with every other aspect of the culture.<sup>2</sup> In larger groups, the seeking of food becomes an extra-individual function. Organized action occurs in order to provide adequate nourishment for all members of the society. This is accomplished through a division of labor.<sup>3</sup>

The adoption of the horse by Plains tribes led to major social transformations; the band organization was formalized, there were extensive sporadic or seasonal, and even permanent, migrations, there was an abandonment of agriculture by many groups, and predatory and competitive habits resulted in continual warfare.

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<sup>1</sup> John W. Bennett, "An Interpretation of the Scope and Implications of Social Scientific Research in Human Subsistence," American Anthropologist, 48, 1946, p. 555.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 555.

<sup>3</sup> Idem.

In this study of the horse-complex, we were led to do considerable reading on the bison hunt. The acquisition of the horse made possible much greater use of bison meat and by-products for tribal and trade activity. The horse became an integral part of the economy. Horses provided the Indian with the technological means of increasing the mobility of labor, and transporting of the food supply allowed population concentration. Therefore, the social organization became more complex, inter-tribal mobility and communication increased (hastening the diffusion process, as in the case of the Sun dance, e.g.),<sup>1</sup> rapidly transforming social values.

#### A DESCRIPTION OF THE GREAT PLAINS

A. Geographical Description: The High Plains extend from Texas to Nebraska and are flanked by the Prairie Plains on the east and the arid mountain Plains on the west. Together, these three areas constitute the Great Plains of the United States.<sup>2</sup> The area is in the main level, timberless, and semi-arid. The climate is typically continental, with extremes of temperature. Few streams are found because of scanty rainfall. The vegetation is characteristically scrubby. The few trees which

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<sup>1</sup> Roland B. Dixon, The Building of Cultures, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), "...the spread...was due in part, at least, to actual migration rather than normal continuous diffusion." (p. 167)

<sup>2</sup> Walter Prescott Webb, The Great Plains, (New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1936), p. 8.

grow in the area are found growing on the river banks, while the native prairie grass provides short, fairly good grazing pasturage to livestock. Except in Yellowstone Park, the area is lacking in sculptural stone.<sup>1</sup>

B. Tribes: The culture area includes marginal regions as well as the central Plains area because certain tribes from those regions became true Plains tribes, or at least had radically modified traits. Instead of almost wholly depending on seeds and roots, some Great Basin tribes took to the Plains and became real buffalo-hunters. Such Uto-Aztekan as the Ute and the Comanche became the most spectacular of all Plains tribes.<sup>2</sup>

Then, too, the eastern Siouans and Caddoans became less agricultural with the coming of the horse. Each year after harvesting their maize and squash crops, they left for their winter hunting grounds farther west. They abandoned their pottery for the more quickly fashioned containers made from buffalo products. Some of the tribes abandoned their permanent villages altogether, taking their belongings and moving into the Plains with their newly-adopted tipis and horses. However,

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Holbert Farney-High, General Anthropology, (Missoula, Montana: Montana State University, 1941), p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Webb, op. cit., p. 65.

several Siouan sub-groups of the eastern border area were sedentary, quasi-agricultural, in their way of life.

C. Food: The staple food was bison meat, dried, pulverized, and stored ("pemmican").<sup>1</sup>

D. Transportation: Dogs, and later horses (from about 1725), were very important to the nomadic tribes. They were hitched to the travois, an inverted "V"-shaped contrivance, often fashioned of tipi poles.<sup>2</sup> Water transportation was also important to such tribes as the Mandan and Hidatsa, who navigated the Missouri in "bull-boats." Fresh meat or wood might be hauled, or the family, the dogs riding or swimming along behind.<sup>3</sup>

E. Dress: Materials used were of soft tanned buffalo or deer skin. Men always wore the breech clout,<sup>4</sup> never donned war bonnet headdresses unless they had earned them.<sup>5</sup> Women rarely wore head coverings of any kind.<sup>6</sup> Both sexes wore

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<sup>1</sup> Turney-High, op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Gilbert L. Wilson, "The Horse and the Dog in Hidatsa Culture," American Anthropologist, 15, 1924, pp. 209-210. War parties floated down the Missouri in bull-boats, abandoned them, and rode stolen horses back home. (Footnote, p. 285)

<sup>4</sup> Turney-High, op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick H. Douglas, "Plains Indian Clothing," Denver Art Museum, Department of Indian Art Leaflets, No. 24, 1945. Use of the war bonnet reached its full development only after the acquisition of the horse. The beginning of this development was about 1800. (p. 2)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

leggings and robes in cold weather.<sup>1</sup> Moccasins of northern Plains Indians were frequently soft-soled, but the type generally worn throughout the Plains was the hard-soled type.<sup>2</sup> Beaded decorations are characteristic of northern tribes, while southern groups used much leather-fringe trimming.<sup>3</sup> Stylized geometric design and semi-poncho-cut garments show textile-making Mexican influence among the southern tribes,<sup>4</sup> while realistic art is found among the central and northern Plains Indians.<sup>5</sup> The latter also adopted more quickly the true-sleeved garment, which apparently has always been found among the Eskimos.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Clark Wissler, "Plains Costume," Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, XVII, 1915, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> Douglas, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Wissler, op. cit., p. 86. Or see Wissler, "Costumes of the Plains Indians," p. 331, cited by A. L. Kroeber and T. T. Waterman, Source Book in Anthropology. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1920). The characteristic style of the garments was suggested by the natural contours of the materials which were used. "The general concept was probably the result of diffusion from the textile ponchos of the south to the skin-wearers."

<sup>5</sup> Douglas, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Wissler, op. cit., p. 86.

F. Shelter: The Plains area is the region of the tipi,<sup>1</sup> a conically-shaped skin tent supported by spreading poles.<sup>2</sup> The earth lodge of the eastern tribes was the finest in the world, and with proper care would last a generation.<sup>3</sup> The western Plateau tribes lived in brush or mat shelters.<sup>4</sup>

G. Tools and Utensils: Agricultural peoples characteristically have pottery.<sup>5</sup> Fringe tribes, such as the Pawnee and Mandan, used earthenware utensils, while more migratory tribes made receptacles of buffalo bladders and hide primarily.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas, "The Plains Indian Tipi," Denver Art Museum, Department of Indian Art Leaflets, 19, 1931, p. 1. Tipi is of Siouan derivation: "ti" means "dwelling" and "pi" means "fer" (idem.).

<sup>2</sup> Turney-High, op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>3</sup> Douglas, "Plains Indian Earth Lodge," Denver Art Museum, Department of Indian Art Leaflets, 20, 1931, p. 1. The Cheyenne gave up the lodge in the eighteenth century, but other permanently eastern-border tribes kept it until fifty years ago.

<sup>4</sup> Harrington, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> H. J. Spinden, "The Origin and Distribution of Pottery in America," pp. 253, 255, cited by A. L. Kroeber, et. al., op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Douglas, "The Buffalo and the Indian," Denver Art Museum, Department of Indian Art Leaflets, 7, 1942, pp. 2-8.

CHAPTER II  
MIGRATION OF TRIBES

ALGONQUIAN

The Algonquian-speaking tribes which became Plains Indians, adapting themselves to a nomadic buffalo-hunting economy, left the northeastern Woodlands area. The Blackfoot and the Atsina (Gros Ventre, an offshoot of the Arapaho) lived together in Canada, whereas the Arapaho left the Black Hills, South Dakota, moved out into the Plains of Montana and Wyoming, then south into Colorado. Another Algonquian tribe, the Cheyenne, came to the Cheyenne River, South Dakota, where they became friendly with the Arapaho, then went on west to the Missouri River by 1675, and eventually to Colorado. They first cultivated the indigenous crops--corn, beans, and squash. They did not become true Plains Indians until about 1800.<sup>1</sup> The alliance of the Cheyenne and the Arapaho was not the only evidence of social intercourse which existed. The Sun dances of the two tribes had striking similarities.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the Sun dance correlations point out migratory movements of the tribes, since it is believed that the Wind River Shoshoni and the Ute received their Sun dances in contact with the Cheyenne or the Arapaho as they migrated southward.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Clark Wissler, Indians of the United States, (New York: Doubleday, Doran, and Company, 1940), p. 42. Cf. Appendix I.

<sup>2</sup> Forrest Clements, "Plains Indian Tribal Correlations With Sun Dance Data," American Anthropologist, 35, 1931, pp. 225-226.

<sup>3</sup> Idem. Also cf. E. A. Hoebel, "Sun Dance of Hekandika Shoshone," American Anthropologist, 37, 1935, p. 580.



Shortly after the Cree and Ojibway tribes migrated to the Plains, they adopted horses--then procured guns<sup>1</sup> from the Hudson's Bay Company, after which they made raids into the Rockies.<sup>2</sup>

#### KIOWAN UTO - AZTEKAN

In the seventeenth century, the Kiowa were west of the Black Hills, the Shoshoni to the west of them, and the Comanche to the south of them.<sup>3</sup> By the eighteenth century, the Kiowa were between Denver and Amarillo, the Comanche southeast of Amarillo, and the Shoshoni stayed farther north. These three tribes formed a line from Montana to Mexico, carrying on horse-trading with other tribes. They formed a strong alliance, were excellent horsemen and well able to defend themselves. The total population was around 12,000.<sup>4</sup>

#### SIOUAN

The Hidatsa<sup>5</sup> went from Devil's Lake, South Dakota,

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<sup>1</sup> John R. Swanton and Roland B. Dixon, "Primitive American History," American Anthropologist, 16, 1914, state that the Assiniboiné, a northern branch of the Dakota (same speech and culture) separated from the Yanktonai in order to effect an alliance with the Cree who had obtained Hudson Bay Company firearms. (p. 388)

<sup>2</sup> Wissler, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>4</sup> Idem.

<sup>5</sup> Hidatsa and Apsinon are both designated "Gros Ventre." However, the latter are more frequently called by this descriptive French title ("Big Belly").

southwest to the Missouri River at the Heart River, where the Mandan then lived. Part of the tribe moved out to the Plains, above the upper Missouri River, and were called the Crow.<sup>1</sup>

The Mandan came from the Ohio Valley in the fifteenth century, stopped at the Heart River.<sup>2</sup> They were seen at their present site in 1738 by the French trader, Verendryes.<sup>3</sup>

Swanton writes that the first time the Dakota were seen by whites they ranged from Mille Laes to the mouth of the Minnesota. They were later pushed westward, about 1800,<sup>4</sup> to the states named for them by the gun-carrying Chippewa.<sup>5</sup>

He traces the northern Algonquian to the area between the Ottawa River and Georgian Bay, the Cheyenne to the Minnesota,<sup>6</sup> and the Arapaho and Atsina to the Red River.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Swanton, op. cit., p. 387.

<sup>2</sup> G. F. Will and H. J. Spinden, "The Mandans," Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Vol. III, No. 4, 1906, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> Clark Wissler, "Plains Indian Population," Yale Anthropological Studies, 1, 1936, p. 18. Cf. J. Owen Dorsey, "Migrations of Siouan Tribes," The American Naturalist, XX, No. 3, March, 1886, p. 215. In 1766, the Dakota and Assiniboine were near Green Bay, Wisconsin. There were migrations by the Siouan tribes previous to 1670.

<sup>5</sup> Swanton, op. cit., p. 387.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 394.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 395.

## CADDOAN

The Wichita were first seen on the Arkansas in the late eighteenth-early nineteenth centuries, but they were expelled by tribes to the north and to the east, so that they drifted to the southwest, first to settle on the North Canadian River, finally to retreat to the Wichita Mountains.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 397.

CHAPTER III  
PRE-HORSE CULTURE

THE BUFFALO HUNT

The forebear<sub>s</sub> of the typical Plains tribes hunted buffalo on foot, of course in a much more limited fashion.<sup>1</sup> Even with the aid of the horse, the strength of a man could not compare to the strength of the bison.<sup>2</sup> How much more at a disadvantage the puny pedestrian hunter must have found himself!

Before he hunted with gun and horse, the Indian was likely to employ one of the following methods in getting buffalo: (1) a group drove them into corrals and then killed them; (2) a herd was surrounded with prairie fires,<sup>3</sup> then was easily attacked; (3) the buffalo herd was encircled by a great number of beaters; (4) they were killed by hunters on snowshoes as they floundered in drifts; (5) fresh grass on the opposite bank of a river was exposed in the early spring by lighting a fire to melt off ice and snow--then the river ice would break off in chunks under the weight of the hungry buffalo, whereupon they could be easily killed by the hunters running out on these

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<sup>1</sup> M. R. Harrington, "Indians of the Plains," Southwest Museum Leaflets, No. 15, 1942, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Robert M. Denhardt, The Horse of the Americas, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947), p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> Loren C. Riseley, "The Fire-Drive and Extinction of Fauna," American Anthropologist, 48, 1946, p. 57. a reference to the use of the fire-surround by prehistoric and more recent tribes. "The fire-drive was a basic hunting practice among modern Indians....this method employed...did not lead to its disappearance in spite of vast kills." (p. 58)

ice cakes;<sup>1</sup> (6) herds were either driven over a cliff, or led over by an Indian disguised as a buffalo!<sup>2</sup>

#### GARDENS AND LODGES

Since the tribes were obliged to wait for the appearance of a buffalo herd in their vicinity, undoubtedly they must have subsisted to a greater degree on rabbits, antelopes, fish, roots, and berries than in later times.<sup>3</sup> Their garden cornfields were carefully cultivated. They lived in permanent dwellings, such as the brush shelter on the west fringe and the earth and bark lodge on the east.<sup>4</sup> The northeastern tribes, such as the Algonquian, lived in bark wigwams and subsisted on small game, wild rice, etc., before they took to the Plains.

#### THE GREAT PANNER IN 1600

Caddoans practiced agriculture, raising maize and tobacco.<sup>5</sup> They made excellent pottery, and lived in rectangular

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick H. Douglas, "The Buffalo and the Indian," Denver Art Museum Leaflet, No. 7, 1930.

<sup>2</sup> Idem. See also Walter McClintock, "The Blackfoot Beaver Bundle," Southwest Museum Leaflets, Pt. I, No. 2, 1935, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Harrington, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> A. C. Haddon, The Wanderings of Peoples, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), p. 88.

earth lodges. There is evidence of a general cultural decline, "at least insofar as the material culture can be relied on... the great period...came about 1600 rather than...from 1700 - 1800 as indicated by Wissler."<sup>1</sup>

#### MEXICAN INFLUENCES

Many evidences point to a movement of Indians from Northern Mexico into the southern states. The desert province pottery (Hohokam) of the Kansas-Nebraska area and the rectangular earth lodges of the former suggest early connections.<sup>2</sup> The culture traits of suttee<sup>3</sup> and child sacrifice<sup>4</sup> are Central American phenomena,<sup>5</sup> but they were practiced among the Pawnee until fairly recent times.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> W. D. Strong, "The Plains Culture Area in the Light of Archeology," American Anthropologist, 35, 1933, p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> Frank H. H. Roberts, "A Survey of Southwest Archeology," American Anthropologist, 37, 1935, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> William Christie MacLeod, "The Distribution of Suttee in North America," American Anthropologist, 33, 1931, p. 213.

<sup>4</sup> Father Pierre Jean de Smet, "Oregon Missions and Travels over the Rocky Mountains in 1845-1846," from Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Travels in the Far Northwest, 1839-1846, Vol. II, Sec. 11, (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1906), pp. 385-388, for his description of the Pawnee sacrifice to the Morning Star, related to him by a reliable eye-witness. The victim was a young Sioux girl captive.

<sup>5</sup> MacLeod, op. cit., p. 214.

<sup>6</sup> Shoshoni and Comanche practiced widow emulation, also. (MacLeod, op. cit., p. 210) As late as 1861 a Utah traveler, Remy, saw the murder of a woman by her brother-in-law. Under sororate-levirate regulation, the new widow belonged to him (p. 210). Incidentally, double suttee was practiced only among the Natchez (p. 213).

## SUMMARY

Generalizing, we may observe that there was an early east-west migration of Algonquian and Siouan peoples, a southward drift of Plains Athapascans (Kiowa-Apache), and a prehistoric northward movement of Caddoan tribes (notably the Pawnee) from Mexico or Central America. There was a migration to the Plains by border-region tribes from every direction in proto- and recent historic times.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRE-HORSE CULTURE (cont'd)

#### THE SOUTHERN UTE

The southern Ute offer an interesting study in contrasting culture patterns before and after the advent of the horse.

Previous to the horse era, there was in the tribe no political cohesiveness.<sup>1</sup> Defensive warfare occasionally represented the consolidation of several groups in a locality.<sup>2</sup> But the band did not exist as a "sharply delineated political structure."<sup>3</sup> There was no ownership of land and the rigors of the hunting economy led to a scattering of the population.<sup>4</sup> There existed only a general feeling of cultural similarity.<sup>5</sup>

The only time there was a gathering of the people into a "camp circle" was during the brief period of the annual spring festival at which the bear dance, gambling, visiting, and courtship were carried on.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Marvin K. Opler, "The Southern Ute of Colorado," pp. 127-128, cited by Ralph Linton, ed., op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 128.



The couvade practice of the Ute is one indication of a transition from the matriarchal to the patriarchal type of family relationship.<sup>1</sup>

There were no communal hunts except for sporadic antelope drives.<sup>2</sup> There was a scattering of consanguineous family groups.<sup>3</sup> Authority rested with older members of the family.<sup>4</sup> The services of the shaman were directed to families, and were paid for by them.<sup>5</sup>

The character of the life was peaceful, not predatory.<sup>6</sup> Limited trade was carried on with Pueblo tribes, with whom they exchanged meat and hides for corn, beans, squash,<sup>7</sup> and salt.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 123-124.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>8</sup> Herbert B. Battle, "The Domestic Use of Oil Among the Southern Aborigines," American Anthropologist, 24, 1922, p. 136. Read for an interesting account of the methods of making salt by the Cayas Indians as related by DeSoto in his Narrations, Vol. IV, 181 Extract. Salt was used by buffalo tanners to constrict the hair follicles, thus preventing the hair from falling out (p. 180).

## THE EARLY MANDAN

The Siouans of the eastern Plains areas lived in well-fortified villages. The Mandan in 1804 were visited by Lewis and Clark.<sup>1</sup> Cultivated crops such as corn and squash, which they dried on platforms in the front of the dwelling, formed a large part of the diet. There is an account by an earlier French trapper which indicates a population exceedingly prosperous.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it appears to have been the peak point of expansion for the Mandan. Successive epidemics of smallpox (1837-8) and massacres by their Sioux and Arikara enemies reduced them to small numbers.<sup>3</sup> By 1850, they were mostly half-breeds, the old culture was lost, including the original language.<sup>4</sup>

## KIOWA-APACHE

The Kiowa-Apache offer another frame of reference for the comparative study of pre-horse and post-horse cultures.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> G. F. Will and H. J. Spinden, "The Mandans," Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Vol. III, No. 4, 1906, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 86. Sieur de la Verendrye, agent of a Canadian fur company, made a trip from Portage du Prairie to the Mandan in 1738. He cites the existence of six villages, with a population of about 15,000.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 100-101.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> J. Gilbert McAllister, "Kiowa-Apache Social Organization," from Social Anthropology of North American Tribes, ed. by Frederick Eggan, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), pp. 99-155.

Before the horse era,

"these Indians were much less nomadic. Their only domesticated animal had been the dog, which was chiefly used as a beast of burden, either carrying loads on its back or hauling a travois, on which was lashed a small tipi or a baby. At that time, all who were strong enough to carry a burden on the shoulders bore loads suited to their strength. Sometimes when an enemy attack was feared, the men carried only their weapons, prepared to fight. In those days, the people had little property, and did not make long marches when they moved. There was probably less warfare. Also without the horse hunting the buffalo was more difficult."<sup>1</sup>

In 1541, Coronado saw Querecho Apaches travelling on the Plains. These people, nomadic buffalo hunters, were moving with their "shaggy, well-trained troops of dogs loaded with poles and tents, wearing moresco pack-saddles with wide girths."<sup>2</sup> They relied on Pueblo trade, in which they obtained Pueblo corn, cotton blankets, and pottery in exchange for salt, buffalo hides, and dried meat.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> McAllister, op. cit., p. 102. Cf. Gilbert L. Wilson, "The Horse and the Dog in Hidatsa Culture," Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, 15, 1924, p. 225, for details. Ibid., p. 216, "We never put small children tied in their cradles on the travois because the dogs lie down often, indeed, every time the march stops."

<sup>2</sup> Donald E. Worcester, "Early Spanish Accounts of the Apache Indians," American Anthropologist, 43, 1941, p. 310.

<sup>3</sup> Idem. Worcester says, "Salt was a universal article of trade and regular food eaten like candy by these people."

AN HIDATSA STUDY<sup>1</sup>

In 1906 an anthropologist and his artist brother spent the summer with the Hidatsa. Gilbert L. Wilson, the anthropologist, subsequently returned for three months each year until 1918, living with the people and gathering data for an American Museum report.

The section on horses in "Dogs and Horses among the Hidatsa" was done by Wolf-chief, born in 1849, a warrior in his youth, later a student in the first Fort Berthold Reservation school, and still later a storekeeper.

Wolf-chief's sister, Buffalo-bird-woman, born in 1840, gave the account on dog culture,<sup>2</sup> translated by Edward Goodbird, an early mission school pupil who became the reservation Congregationalist minister. He was a linguist and an Indian artist.

The work was done in order to gather comparative data on the dog- and horse-culture complexes among the Hidatsa. The reference offers excellent opportunities for an exhaustive piece of comparative research, an analysis of the adjustment of the dog complex to the horse complex. Modifications made in the Spanish horse traits might also be studied in detail.

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

<sup>2</sup> Quite naturally, since women owned, cared for, and managed the dogs of the household.

## A HUNT MADE AFOOT WITH DOGS<sup>1</sup>

Buffalo-bird-woman told Wilson about a hunting trip afoot with dogs and travois about 1870. Although guns were used, most of the details may be assumed to resemble those of the pre-horse hunting complex.

The party consisted of six men, their wives, and fifteen dogs. The dogs carried bull-beats on their travois. The sole woman in the party without a dog was forced to carry her baggage on her back.<sup>2</sup> The group travelled in single file, except for the three leaders who led the train. Each family "followed in line just ahead of the family dogs."<sup>3</sup>

While the women set up the tent (made of pieces of skins tied together) the men hunted an elk, which they cut up and brought back to camp on their backs.<sup>4</sup> The meat was roasted on long sticks<sup>5</sup> and was the only food eaten at the evening meal.<sup>6</sup>

The second camp supper and breakfast the following day consisted of buffalo meat (freshly killed) and a blood broth. The broth was made of fat, leg marrow, and dried squash,<sup>7</sup> and became brown when it was fully cooked.<sup>8</sup> The men ate first (even

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, op. cit., p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 237.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 235.

<sup>5</sup> Idem.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 236.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 237.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

though, according to Buffalo-bird-woman, "the meat and skins belonged to the women, never to the men. We might share these with our parents and relatives or friends, or do with them... as we pleased, since they belonged to us."<sup>1</sup>). Serving the men first was justified on the grounds that "they were guests."<sup>2</sup>

The dogs were fed at lunch time when the party stopped to eat. They were helped across streams by the men, who grasped the travois poles in wheel-barrow fashion, thus keeping the travois basket dry.<sup>3</sup>

The fifth day out, the men killed five buffalo cows at the Missouri River as they came up the bank after fording the river.<sup>4</sup> After setting the meat on a stage and stretching the hides over the limbs of a tree, the men returned to camp with bundles of the choicer cuts.<sup>5</sup>

On the following day, they crossed the Missouri in the three bull-boats. Apparently the women had the privilege not only of owning the bull-boats (she speaks of "my bull-boat" and those of two other women) but also of paddling them, while their respective husbands sat in back, and the dogs swam after the boat.<sup>6</sup> Not finding buffalo, the party returned to their

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> Idem.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

former site and set up stages to dry and smoke the remaining meat.<sup>1</sup>

The next successful kill occurred on hilly ground where knolls and ravines enabled the hunters to quietly steal up on their prey.<sup>2</sup> The noise of the guns soon put the herd to flight, but not before a number of buffalo had been killed.<sup>3</sup> The hunters brought back choice parts, like the tongues, kidneys, and hambones (crushed for their marrow). The rest of the meat was cached in a pile covered with skin, from which protruded a piece of white sheeting (a hunter's head-band) on the end of a stick, to serve as a scare-crow device.<sup>4</sup>

After eleven days, the camp broke up, with seven more bull-boats which the women had made during this period, many bundles of dried meat and skins.<sup>5</sup> Buffalo-bird-woman now had two bull-boats, one for freight, the other for passengers and dogs.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 248-249.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>3</sup> Idem.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 251. However, the Indians wished to repel wolves, coyotes, and kit-foxes instead of birds.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 253.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 254. See Goodbird's sketch, Fig. 84.

They floated down the river to Independence where the remainder waited while one of the men went on to their own village, Like-a-fish-hook (fifteen miles beyond). The relatives of the hunters returned with four horses with horn-framed pack saddles for each of the couples to transport their baggage. The dogs carried the bull-boats on travois. The party returned home at sunset the following day.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 261-262. As late as 1869 the Hidatsa used horse travois infrequently, seeming to prefer to load horses with saddle bags or to have them drag tent poles without travois (p. 272).



## CHAPTER V

### DIFFUSION OF THE HORSE-COMPLEX

The rate of diffusion was considerably slowed because the Spaniards did not wish the Indians to have the horse, realizing the tremendous advantage of the horse in maintaining and extending the Spanish position as conquerors.<sup>1</sup>

However, they were forced to utilize natives in the mission settlements as herdsmen<sup>2</sup> to tend the large herds of stock.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the fact that the missions were veritable fortresses surrounded by walls and that they were reinforced by the presence of presidio soldiers,<sup>4</sup> making escape difficult, many vagueros, trained in animal husbandry by the native overseers (the mayor domos) did escape to their tribes.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently they would lead their people back in raids on the mission herds.<sup>6</sup> In these instances, the borrowers gained the

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<sup>1</sup> Robert M. Denhardt, The Horse of the Americas, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947), pp. 235-36.

<sup>2</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, California Pastoral (1769-1848), Vol. LXXIV, in his collected Works, (San Francisco: The History Company, 1888), p. 232. "None but the vagueros might ride...." (Idem.)

<sup>3</sup> Opler, op. cit., p. 158. Ute children became herders for the Spanish until recent times.

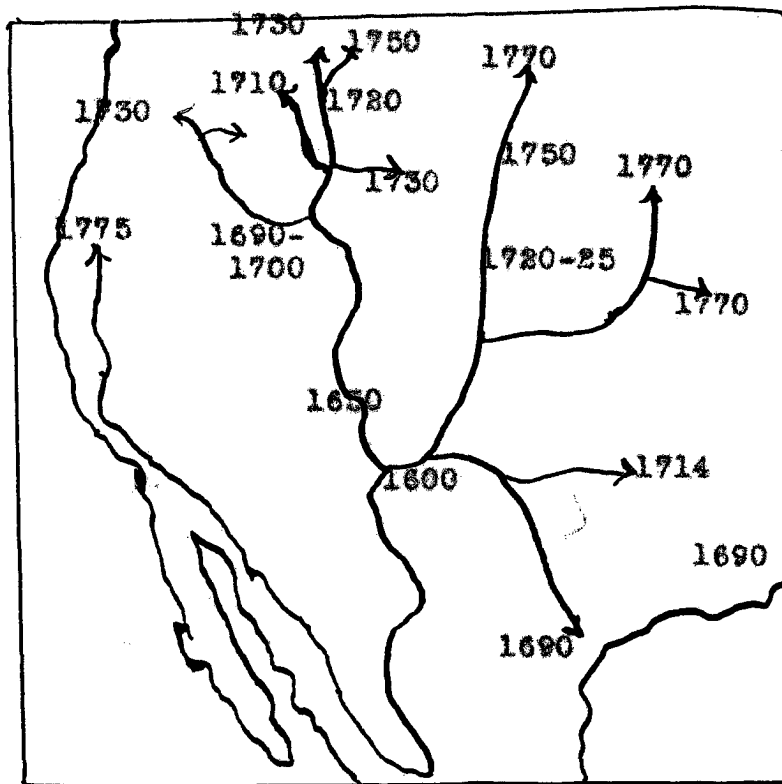
<sup>4</sup> Herbert Eugene Bolton, Rim of Christendom, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 9. Acculturation in new mission centers was hastened by contact with several families of Christianized Indians brought from older missions. (Idem.) For a description of the way the Indians were locked up at night to prevent their escape, cf., Bancroft, op. cit., pp. 230-33.

<sup>5</sup> Bancroft, op. cit., p. 230.

<sup>6</sup> Idem.

FIGURE I

Spread to Plains  
about 1630;  
reached northern  
limits by 1770.



Map Showing the Northwest Spread of the Horse in the Western United States. Lines indicate the approximate routes followed by the horse, the dates, the approximate time the horse reached each area. Adapted from Fig. 1, p. 430, American Anthropologist, Vol. 40, 1938, from Haines, Francis, "Horses among Plains Indians."

- p. 117: Santa Fe: center of distribution of horse to Plains, 1600. First horse Indians, 1630-50.
- p. 436: Two routes from Santa Fe: (1) by way of the Great Plains; (2) west of the Continental Divide from Santa Fe to the Snake, by way of Colorado, the Grand, and the Green Rivers. Navaho Apaches, the Ute, and the Shoshoni took horses to the Pacific Northwest.
- p. 436: Shoshoni traded horses to Cayuse, Walla Walla, Yakima, Palouse, Nez Perce, Coeur d'Alene, Flathead, Blackfoot, Crow, before horses were common among Sioux and north-eastern Assiniboine.

whole horse-complex in spite of the unwillingness of the Spaniards. However, in the case of the Ute child herders, the colonists bartered horses for the slave labor they were able to acquire.<sup>1</sup>

In turn, the new horse tribes (the Apache and Comanche), unacquainted with metallurgy and horse-raising, often absconded not only with stock, but also with skilled Mexicans who then were kept as slaves.<sup>2</sup> Among the Comanche, for instance, there was a two-way slave trade: Lipan Apache were sold as slaves to the French and Spanish traders at Taovayas in exchange for horses,<sup>3</sup> but Mexicans they took north with them. These captives served as a connecting link in the chain of the process of diffusion of the non-material horse traits to the Indians.<sup>4</sup>

The eagerness of the Indians to accept the horse-complex is demonstrated by their almost wholesale borrowing of traits. The saddle, lariat, short-handled quirt, stirrup, crupper, and

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<sup>1</sup> Opler, *op. cit.*, p. 158. Cf. Denhardt, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-108, for a discussion of the Comanchero, half-breed renegade traders who also supplied the Texas markets and the Southwest Plains tribes with horses.

<sup>2</sup> Wissler, *op. cit.*, 1915, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Herbert Eugene Bolton, ed., Athenase de Mezieres, Expedition of 1779, Vols. I and II, (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1914), Vol. I, pp. 47, 61, 65; Vol. II, pp. 174, 181, 209.

<sup>4</sup> Wissler, *op. cit.*, 1915, p. 32.

shield were directly taken over.<sup>1</sup> Only spurs and bits were discarded.

Modifications in the saddle were effected later. Bone replaced the wooden frame,<sup>2</sup> and pad riding saddles were substituted for the Spanish-style high-pommel one among tribes like the Dakota,<sup>3</sup> farther from the center of diffusion. Among the tribes who received the horse directly, we find everything but the bit and bridle, the spur,<sup>4</sup> and infrequently, the horseshoe.<sup>5</sup>

Primary diffusion is well illustrated by the spread of the horse-complex among the Indians. It is certain that it extended far beyond the confines of the original culture area in the New World, i. e., the Southwest Spanish settlements.

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<sup>1</sup> Clark Wissler, "Riding Gear," Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, XVII, 1915, p. 38. Also Wissler, Man and Culture, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, 1923), p. 118. However, the lance was a native pre-historic weapon (cf. Eiseley, op. cit., p. 57), not borrowed from the Spaniard as Wissler suggests (Wissler, op. cit., 1923, p. 119).

<sup>2</sup> Wissler, op. cit., 1915, p. 31. The Plains tribes were unskilled in the use of wood (p. 36). Also, wood was scarce on the Plains (Turney-High, op. cit., p. 189)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 31. Highly decorated, high-pommelled saddles were used by the women of all the tribes.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Dixon, op. cit., p. 158. Cf. for a list and explanation of essential traits of the horse complex which as "logical complexes," continued to be used together, and of others discarded by the Indians.

When one examines Haines' and Denhardt's maps defining the historic spread of the horse,<sup>1</sup> one can observe that the movement is asymmetrical, but leaves the nucleus fairly centered.<sup>2</sup>

Because of the real need that existed for horses and due to inter-tribal trade, communications, and raids, there was continuous diffusion. One need but consider the vast area of the Plains, the wide range of the buffalo herds,<sup>3</sup> and the inadequacy of dogs as pack animals<sup>4</sup> to appreciate how valuable horses were to the Plains tribes. Indeed, until the coming of the horse, we may almost say that the Plains Indian as such did not exist.<sup>5</sup> He was in the main a quasi-plainman, hampered by a lack of good transportation for himself, his family, his food and his dwelling.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Haines, "Horses among the Plains Indians," American Anthropologist, 40, 1938, Fig. 1, p. 430. Cf. adaptation in this paper, Appendix V. Also Denhardt, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Dixon, op. cit., pp. 72-100, for a general discussion of diffusion.

<sup>3</sup> E. Douglas Branch, The Hunting of the Buffalo, (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1929). He says that summer herds went west from Saskatchewan to the Plains below Lake Winnipeg, those of Saskatchewan went into Montana for the winter, and those which summered in Montana and North Dakota went into Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado (p. 4).

<sup>4</sup> Wilson, op. cit., p. 207. The load of a dog was less than that which a woman bore on her shoulders. (Idem.)

<sup>5</sup> Harrington, op. cit., "...the great transformation, which can be compared only to the vast change in our own life brought about by the automobile." (p. 1)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

With the adoption of the horse-complex, the Indian subjected it to changes, modifications not only of structure, but also of status. Structural changes were due (1) to the difference in the physical environment, and (2) to the difference in the total cultural pattern. The dearth of iron and metallurgy and the easily traversed grassy Plains made horse-shoes unnecessary among the Indians. Scarcity of wood led to the substitution of horn and frame saddles. Lack of metal and the innovations of a new mode of riding made the bit and bridle of the Spaniard unnecessary.<sup>1</sup> Simply by knee pressure and a shifting of the horseman's weight, his mount was guided in the desired direction. With the freeing of his hands thus gained, the rider became an unsurpassed hunter and fighter.<sup>2</sup> As he gained in dexterity, he eventually discarded the saddle entirely in order to ride in the shifting, facile way for which he became famous.<sup>3</sup>

Another modification was in the method of mounting. Indians mounted from the right, whereas the European style had been from the left.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wissler, *op. cit.*, 1915, p. 27. Bridles were discarded for a cord twisted around the lower jaw.

<sup>2</sup> Denhardt, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>3</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-165. The sweat of the horse's body made it "much easier to stick on a pony." (p. 164)

<sup>4</sup> Wissler, *op. cit.*, 1915, p. 35. This allowed him freedom of the left hand in order to hold the reins and manage the horse while the right grasps the mane or pommel.

## OTHER CHANGES

The economy of the wandering tribes was centered around the buffalo hunt. It was natural that the smaller dog travois should be modified soon to accommodate the much more powerful horse. So one observes that, whereas Spaniards used only mules and donkeys as dray animals and rode their horses, the Indians sometimes packed their mounts rather than riding them. Such an arrangement was utilitarian and the modification of the trait was perfectly natural.

Among Spaniards, horses traditionally had held considerable prestige value. The word for "gentleman" was synonymous with "horseman" (caballero). The European tradition of knighthood demanded that the privileged ride on horseback and that only the plebes walk. In the case of native Americans, then, status value of the horse was often sacrificed in the interest of practicality.

That is not to imply that the horse suffered a loss of status with its use by the Indians. Indeed, since its economic role was of the utmost importance, it became far more exalted in relation to the total culture than it had in the earlier European environment.

The use of the horse among Plains Indians was immediate because of its tremendous utility. Tribes living on the Mississippi, for instance, which had employed canoes as their principle means of travel, were slower to adopt the horse because their need for it was less. Whereas among Plains tribes

the diffusion was uninhibited by competition with an older and more established complex, the same did not hold true among the river Indians who found water travel easier and less expensive than travel by land.

Either the horse was ridden (a completely novel experience for Plains people) or it was fitted to an improved travois or larger pack-load. Since in any event the condition of the Indians was thereby improved, continuous diffusion resulted in wide-spread use of the horse even up into Canada by 1770. Such an example of the borrowing of a complex is extremely unusual.

We spoke of the substitution of a new complex for an older one. In the Plains, though, it is noticeable that a number of tribes, indeed almost all of them, employed dogs as well as horses as pack animals until recently. In this instance, therefore, the old complex was not completely discarded but actually only reinforced and complemented by the addition of the newer one.

In regard to the diffusion of non-material traits, it is obvious that modification is likely to be much greater where the gap between the cultures is wide. When the Indians took over the European culture complex of the horse, therefore, several traits were lost or changed.

Methods of horse-breaking altered from the Spanish, and varied widely among tribes. Whereas many of the early Horse Indians used exceedingly skillful means of taming animals to



the saddle,<sup>1</sup> other tribes used crude, spirit-breaking methods.<sup>2</sup>

Unless it were a matter of starvation, of course, the Spaniards did not kill their horses for food. There is ample evidence, however, of traffic in horse flesh merely as a means of increasing the food supply among the early borrowers of the horse-complex among the Southwest tribes. Indeed, Athanase de Mexieres stated in a letter written in 1778 that all the Indians except the Lipanes ate mules and horses.<sup>3</sup>

Besides eating horse meat, the Indians drank melted horse fat and shampooed their heads in horse blood, seeking thereby to gain strength. They twisted horsehair into rope; horse hide was fashioned into couch coverings, clothing, tents, saddles, leggings, and moccasins.<sup>4</sup>

Thus they ably utilized the horse to the utmost. Evidently the modifications they made in the process of borrowing helped them admirably in an economic way.

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<sup>1</sup> Denhardt, op. cit., pp. 245-247. "...not an inch of the horse's body escaped being touched or rubbed..." (p. 247) When the trainer finally mounted, it was not against the wishes of the animal. (Idem.)

<sup>2</sup> Wilson, op. cit., p. 151. Horses were swum (while being ridden) in the Missouri until they grew very tired, then were ridden on the muddy river banks until they became "gentle." Also cf. Thomas James, "Three Years among the Indians and Mexicans," cited by J. Frank Dobie, ed., op. cit., p. 145, for an example of "choking down" horses to break them.

<sup>3</sup> Bolton, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> Denhardt, op. cit., p. 34.

## BACK TO THE HIDATSA<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to make comparisons in the dog- and horse-complex of the Hidatsa. Customs dating from the early days of the horse diffusion are cited by the Indian narrators in Wilson's work, which was the basis of the section called "Hidatsa Hunting Afoot" in this paper. Newly arisen customs may be traced to the gradual shifting of the role and status of the dog among this tribe because of the presence of the horse. Although modifications may well vary from tribe to tribe, in all likelihood a general picture of the process in most Plains tribes may be obtained.

### NAMING

Dogs might be named for their peculiarities by the woman owners.<sup>2</sup> Usually, though, they were given their names by a male relative of the woman, to commemorate his honor marks (gained by striking coup in a battle or raid). "No-hand" was the name of one dog, in reference to the namer's having struck coup on an enemy with a withered hand.<sup>3</sup>

Horses are given only descriptive names, such as "Split-ears," "Dark-face," and the like, or age names like "Year-second-youngling" for a two-year-old horse.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson, op. cit., pp. 141-311.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 225. "Short-tail" or "Four-eyes," e.g. The last born of a litter of pups was always called "Nakaka," just as was the smallest child. (p. 201)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 194-195.

## CASTRATION

Among the Hidatsa, the techniques of castrating dogs and horses have been very similar. It would appear that the trait in the dog-complex was transferred with little modification to that of the horse.<sup>1</sup>

Dogs were castrated to prevent excessive reproduction, when they were about a year old. The Indians wished to make them gentle and keep them fat. Moreover, uncastrated males became surly and would run away with other dogs. Castration was carried out by a male member of the family, usually. If an outsider performed the operation, he was given a big dinner in payment.

Horses might be castrated any time between the fifth and forty-eighth month (i.e., again, just before they reached sexual maturity). This required the services of a specialist who had bought the art from someone who possessed it. Ten articles were given in payment for the operation. Three of them consisted of the knife, rawhide rope, and a decorated skin, all symbolic of the castrator's specialty.

The ritualization which elaborated the operation points out the greater status of the horse in the society.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201 (of the dog); pp. 146-147 (of the horse). The Indians performed a very skillful, clean operation.

## FOALS AND PUPS

The birth of a colt was a significant event. In the old days, when the birth of a colt was anticipated, everyone went off and left the mare alone, since it was believed this made the birth easier. After the mare had dropped the foal, she was carefully watched for ten days in order to prevent deprivations by wolves. Then the colt and mare were turned out to the herd. Occasionally an account is told of a colt being born in an earth lodge.<sup>1</sup>

A whelping kennel was fashioned for the female dog at the village outskirts. Four puppies were kept, the rest given away or destroyed.

## FEEDING

Feeding the horses was an important concern in the wintertime. Cottonwood bark was fed them, as well as dried grass and maize on occasion. Dogs and women hauled in the feed for the horses.<sup>3</sup>

Dogs were fed almost anything. The puppies were given cooked meat to prevent their getting worms<sup>4</sup> (sic) but as they grew up, they ate meat scraps, corn mush, the food rejected by the family because it was spoiled or sour, and raw buffalo

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 199. The first litter was destroyed because those of the first litter were never large, they believed.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 200.

meat from left-overs.<sup>1</sup>

After a hunt dogs were brought to drag in meat and skins to camp. Each dog load consisted of an Indian quarter of buffalo, from eighty to a hundred pounds in weight. If the dogs ate at the hunting camp, they were likely to become ill and so heavy on their feet that they would break through the crust of snow. So they were fed sparingly, but when home camp was reached, the dogs were given all they could eat.<sup>2</sup>

Buffalo-bird-woman, in discussing the eating of dog meat, said that the flesh was not good because dogs fed on carrion and human ordure, so ordinarily they were not eaten.<sup>3</sup> However, about 1814, when the Hidatsa got the grass dance from the Sioux, they followed the custom of eating dog flesh in the ceremony.<sup>4</sup>

#### WATER

The springs nearby were used as watering places for the ponies in the winter, while in the summer the animals were

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 230. "...partly because the dog was a sacred animal." Cf. Walter McClintock, "Dances of the Blackfoot Indian," Southwest Museum Leaflets, 7, 1937, p. 15. They, too, feasted on dog at the grass dance.

<sup>4</sup> Idem.

frequently driven to the Missouri for water. This was the preferred source of human water supply as well.<sup>1</sup> At no season were horses watered while they were on long, fast marches or raids until the following day. The Indians feared that they would die of a "burned heart" if they were given water while they were over-heated.<sup>2</sup>

However, while the dogs were on the march, many owners provided them with water which was carried in buffalo paunches. Two dogs were required to haul a supply sufficient for a train of five or six.<sup>3</sup> In the wintertime, snow was melted for the dogs to drink at the noon-day stop.<sup>4</sup>

#### SHELTER

Dogs ordinarily were excluded from the lodge, although they were allowed inside during severe weather, unless there was a ceremony being conducted, at which time all dogs were shooed out of the ledge.<sup>5</sup> They slept on the lee side of the ledge entrance as a rule. Puppy kennels were made for the mother and young puppies, as was mentioned before.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 181

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 225. "Dogs dragging heavy loads could not go very far without water...(therefore)...they were not used so frequently for bringing in meat in the summer months..." (p. 226)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 230.

Because of the danger of losing horses in raids, the riding horses were stabled inside the lodge both summer and winter. During especially dangerous periods, a second corral was constructed in the lodge for all the horses. Usually the less valuable animals were stabled under the drying stage outside the lodge<sup>1</sup> or were hobbled in the nearby woods.<sup>2</sup>

#### OWNERSHIP

Nothing is said about the ownership of horses being limited to men and boys among the Hidatsa, but no mention is made, either, to their being owned by women. It was true that women rode them on occasion, but throughout the section on horses in Wilson's article, the whole emphasis is on "my horses" (Wolf-chief's, i.e.) or on "my father's horses."

On the other hand, specific mention is made of the fact that dogs belong to all the women of the household in common.<sup>3</sup>

#### NUMBER OF ANIMALS

Wolf-chief estimated that there were about two hundred ponies in his village,<sup>4</sup> of which his father owned a dozen. There were three mares, six geldings, one stallion, and two fillies. Of these twelve, two were fine hunters and four were

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 206.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

good work horses. The fast runners were not ridden except in the actual chase.<sup>1</sup> They were saddled for the hunt (with a flat pad saddle) and trotted along loose next to their owner who was riding a pack horse in order to keep his racer fresh for the hunt. The pack saddle or woman's saddle was high-pommed.<sup>2</sup>

There were about four or five dogs per family. Care was taken to see that there were always young dogs growing up to replace old ones whenever they were needed.<sup>3</sup>

#### LOADING

Dogs could pack about eighty pounds of meat or skin,<sup>4</sup> while horses were able to carry not only a whole buffalo carcass, but their owner as well.<sup>5</sup>

Travois poles<sup>6</sup> hitched to dogs were eight feet long,<sup>7</sup> joined at the front, and they carried a basket measuring thirty-six inches by twenty-five inches.<sup>8</sup> The horse travois

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Fig. 51, p. 222, with Fig. 57, p. 226, for two styles of tipi frames made from dog travois. Smaller travois were the rule in days before the horse.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 221.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 220.



was over thirteen feet long,<sup>1</sup> and the basket was three feet by ten feet.<sup>2</sup>

Bull-boats of cow buffalo could be carried by the dogs,<sup>3</sup> while the heavy bull buffalo boats were hauled only by horses.<sup>4</sup> The advantage of using the dog-hauled bull-boats was that the wind was less buffeting to the dog because of its closeness to the ground.<sup>5</sup> There were also occasions on which wood was gathered at the river, then loaded into a bull-boat and paddled down to camp by the woman, in which case the dog was dispensed with.<sup>6</sup>

#### SUPERNATURAL

Dogs were regarded as sacred, as possessing some amount of magic for those who considered dogs as their "medicine."<sup>7</sup>

The legend surrounding the dog was that Yellow-dog, an ancient Hidatsa, was fathered by a red-cheated wolf and an

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 210. A solitary deer hunter would take a dog with a bull-boat on his travois upstream, then float downstream in the boat which carried the hunter, the game, and dog. (p. 211)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 188. Dog societies were important in tribal life.

Hidatsa mother. So Yellow-dog's "medicine" was a dog.<sup>1</sup>

The Indian squashes were supposed to have got their colors from the dogs. The association is easily understood, since the coloration and markings were quite similar.<sup>2</sup>

Horses were prayed to, and when men wanted wealth (which was measured by the number of horses he might possess<sup>3</sup>), they were likely to say, weeping and praying, "You are my gods. I take good care of you. I want to own many horses in my lifetime."<sup>4</sup>

It is evident that the dog maintained an important place in the scheme of things because of its utility. It required more care on marches, however, and was able to produce far less than the horse so far as transportation power was concerned. We must remember that the Hidatsa got the horse late and that they used the dog travois in the main long after the horse came in. Early Southwest Indians discarded dog trains much more rapidly. They were more nomadic and depended to a much larger extent on the horse than did the Hidatsa, for example, who never gave up agriculture altogether, and who

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<sup>1</sup> Probably this legend is the result of a fasting or torture vision of the aforesaid Yellow-dog.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Oscar Lewis, "Manly-Hearted Women among the Northern Piegan," American Anthropologist, 43, 1941, p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson, op. cit., p. 179.

even in their winter camps built lodges rather than tipis. Because they never became a completely nomadic people, a comparison based on observation and knowledge of their horse- and dog-complexes is less likely to be typical of the Plains than would a similar study carried on among the Sioux, the Arapaho, etc.

## CHAPTER VI

### ACCULTURATION TO THE HORSE-COMPLEX

A semi-sedentary horticultural culture seems to have typified the dominant Plains tribes of the pre-horse period. Archeological evidence substantiates the hypothesis that there were two main hunting ages in the central Plains. The first of these eras ended with the extinction of the prehistoric bison. It was followed by an agricultural period which lasted until the introduction of the horse, when the tribes again became hunters. This time the configuration which evolved was greatly modified by a distinctly new cultural influence--that of the northeast Woodlands forest-hunting cultures.<sup>1</sup>

The position taken by another writer was that the horse served merely to intensify the development of certain pre-existing traits and to inhibit others. Through the horse medium, such factors of acculturation as predatory warfare and inter-tribal trade helped to develop a new culture.<sup>2</sup>

If we take these two divergent views, we still can reach but one conclusion--the horse was responsible for the development of the typical Plains culture.

### TRANSITION

Any people prefer to improve their lot. So in the case

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. D. Strong, "The Plains Culture Area in the Light of Archeology," American Anthropologist, 35, 1933, pp. 271-287.

<sup>2</sup> Clark Wissler, "The Influence of the Horse in the Development of Plains Culture," American Anthropologist, 16, 1914, p. 17.

of the recent arrivals from the East hovering on the edges of the northern Plains, the ancient Southeast agriculturists, the Great Basin diggers, the many quasi-agricultural peoples who hunted when the opportunity presented itself--all these tribes and the original vaqueros (the Apaches of the Southwest) became intensive hunters, traders, and warriors.<sup>1</sup>

The Mandan and Arikara of the northeastern border region became part-time hunters.<sup>2</sup> In the fall, after their crops were harvested, they went buffalo hunting. They lived in tipis as they hunted the bison herds passing on their annual migratory trek,

To the southeast, the Caddoan tribes, which had been semi-sedentary, became more active as they adopted the horse. Such peoples as the Pawnee and Wichita gradually lost their agricultural way of life, and as they continued to hunt the bison and engage in horse-trading and stealing.

It became more profitable for these tribes to barter horses than to engage in other economic activities as the trans-Mississippi trade grew.<sup>3</sup> The Pawnee sent horses to the Indians of the upper Missouri.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M. R. Harrington, "Indians of the Plains," Southwest Museum Leaflets, 15, 1942, p. 6. Cf. Jean Baptiste Truteau, "Journal on the Upper Missouri, Premiere Partie, June 7, 1794-March 26, 1795," cited by American Historical Review, 19, 1913-1914. Read this for a first-hand reference to the transition of the Ponca from an agrarian to a hunting economy.

<sup>2</sup> Idem.

<sup>3</sup> Robert M. Denhardt, The Horse of the Americas, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947), pp. 132-133.

<sup>4</sup> Truteau, op. cit., p. 326.

It does not seem too strange that coup counting never assumed the importance among some of the Southwestern tribes which this and other symbols of prowess obtained among other Plains tribes. It was true that the soldier societies became the important regulatory instruments of social control here as in the north, but it was perfectly possible for a Southwestern tribe to abandon a fight if that eventuated in economic gain.<sup>1</sup> Among the Ute, for instance, a common trick was dismounting the enemy and then running off with his horse without bothering to kill the foe.<sup>2</sup> From 1727 to 1786 the Ute fought constantly with the Comanche, trying to obtain the best buffalo grounds.<sup>3</sup>

Domesticated horses were much sought after by tribes farther north, but because of a mere completely hunting economy based on procurement of the buffalo, not primarily on the horse-trade, the emphasis was different. Horses and raiding became means of extending one's military reputation, of having coup struck in one's honor at public ceremonies. However, the economic advantage of horse ownership was always important.

The war bonnet became institutionalized only after the coming of the horse, and was characteristic only of northern Plains tribes. It became the stereotyped Indian headdress, so

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<sup>1</sup> Opler, op. cit., p. 162. "Standing fights were avoided whenever possible."

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> F. H. Douglas, "Plains Indian Clothing," Denver Art Museum, Indian Leaflets, 24.

The economic base of these cultures widened and leisure developed to an unprecedented degree. One need but consider the tremendous advantage of the mounted hunter in seeking, slaying, and transporting the buffalo to realize that the release of energy formerly spent on eking out a mere subsistence could be directed into activities which served to elaborate the culture pattern.

#### BAND ORGANIZATION

The development of the buffalo-hunting band organization resulted in a shifting of values. Familial respect was based less on awe of parental authority and the counsel of the elders of the community.<sup>1</sup> The warriors became the ascendant individuals as success in battle and bravery became important virtues. The changing attitudes of whole tribes were reflected in this newly aggressive, competitive spirit.<sup>2</sup>

Now that transportation for a larger food supply was afforded, population could be concentrated into bands. Thus it is "an empirical fact that the western limit of the horse also was the western limit of true bands."<sup>3</sup>

The tribe was not economically feasible as a hunting unit, whereas the family was too small for protection--therefore, the band evolved.

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<sup>1</sup> Opler, op. cit., p. 156. Cf. ibid., p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 123, 125.

<sup>3</sup> Julian Steward, "Linguistic Distributions and Political Groups of the Great Basin Shoshoneans," American Anthropologist, 39, 1937, p. 632.

With the coming of the Comanche, it was no longer necessary for the Ute to barter their children to the Spanish settlements in return for horses. Instead, they raided the large herds maintained by the Comanche, who sometimes raised their herds but frequently stole them.<sup>1</sup>

#### WARRIOR SOCIETIES

Graded warrior societies were the dominating factor in tribal organization among the Blackfoot and among many other Plains tribes. They consisted of the Doves, or inexperienced youths; the Mosquitoes, the active young fighters; the Braves, tried warriors; the Brave-Dogs (also called Crazy or Mad-Dogs); the Kit-Foxes, a medicine society; and the Bulls, the elders of the tribe. Several of these societies were assigned police duty by the headman at the same time.<sup>2</sup>

The Braves were the most important of all the Blackfoot regulatory groups. They were the guardians of the bison herds, the soldier-policemen who punished solitary hunters. They scouted for buffalo, called the tribe to the hunt, and were pledged to bravery in war. A special custom of this society was to ride down enemies afoot with their horses. They acted as policemen in camp, regulators of tribal conduct who epitomized

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Walter McClintock, "Blackfoot Warrior Societies," Southwest Museum Leaflets, 8, 1937, p. 11.



the Plains virtue of bravery.<sup>1</sup> Parallel societies were the Akieta or Police of the central Algonquians, the Teton, and the Crows. Among all the tribes, one of the functions of this class of warriors was to act as war leaders. Honorary feathered lances were planted on the battlefield, their owners pledged to defend them to the death.<sup>2</sup>

#### WARFARE

Both horses and guns were important European influences which "rocketed the Plains area to a 'cultural intoxication' which is hardly preceded in anthropological annals."<sup>3</sup>

Gift-giving of horses was an important stimulus to commerce, but the economic value of horses was not so characteristically the cause of horse stealing among the northern tribes as it was in the Southwest,<sup>4</sup> as has been mentioned before.

Primarily, warfare was practiced as a means of self-glorification.<sup>5</sup> Counting coup was only one aspect of this war-honors complex, which included the taking of horse, scalp,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 13, 14, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Clark Wissler, "Shamanistic and Dancing Societies," Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, XI, 1916, p. 874.

<sup>3</sup> Marian W. Smith, "War Complex of the Plains Indians," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 78, 1938, p. 432.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 433.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 434.

the gun, or the life of an enemy.<sup>1</sup>

Counting coup consisted of touching with one's hand or coup stick some portion of the enemy's body. He might be wounded, dead, or uninjured. Of course, the greatest honor came with striking coup on an enemy who was able-bodied, since by doing so, one exposed himself to the utmost danger.<sup>2</sup>

Defense warfare often occurred in order to recover stolen horses or to avenge the taking of scalps among the home tribe. The avenging party might consist of relatives of an injured party, or the warrior society which was currently on duty.<sup>3</sup>

Every warrior carried good luck tokens with him as he went into battle. He felt that he was defenseless without such supernatural aids. Then, too, a ceremony of magical singing, face-painting, or the like would strengthen the man for battle. Without particularly elaborate preparation, it was possible to carry out such raiding parties.<sup>4</sup>

However, when aggressive war was carried on, it was necessary that mana be furnished the whole party by a military leader who possessed it.<sup>5</sup> Otherwise, in case the warrior-leader

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<sup>1</sup> Idem.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 427.

<sup>3</sup> Idem.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 439.

<sup>5</sup> Idem. He was called the "partisan."

had no magical powers, it was deemed a matter of vital importance to have a mediator accompany the warriors to battle. If the leader was a "partisan," his assistants or "kettle-bearers," were often assigned ceremonial tasks, such as caring for the medicine bundle, having charge of drinking water practices, etc. The military leader had "lieutenants" who were assigned the same tasks as the "kettle-bearers" if the warrior possessed *mana* in his own right (not by transfer). Neither the partisan, his kettle-bearers or the leader's lieutenants ever went into battle. They held purely ceremonial offices.<sup>1</sup>

The "warpath" sometimes was construed to designate the route taken by the war party from the time it left camp until it returned. It had ceremonial significance in determining the order of march.<sup>2-5</sup>

An important adjunct of the war-complex was the medicine bundle which aided the vision-seeker in determining what the omens were, and thus to regulate the conduct of the party, or it might be used mainly as a protective device, depending on the tribe.<sup>4</sup>

The performing of acts in battle or on a raid which might be later celebrated by ceremonial striking of coup,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 440.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 441.

<sup>3</sup> All parties, whether or not they were successful, started from the home camp.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 446-447.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. George Bird Grinnell, "Coup and Scalp among the Plains Indians," American Anthropologist, 12, 1910.

usually occurred in the war dance dramatization, which was a post-war celebration to enable every man to re-enact his battle role for the rest of the tribe.<sup>1</sup> Such dances helped to enhance the socializing value of the battle-complex.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, there was heated competition between warriors for coup counts, which led to intense rivalry.

Plains tribes were often characterized as blood-thirsty and cruel because of such phenomena as the scalp dance. If one understands the strange escapist psychology involved, the taking of scalps and holding dances over them seem much less sadistic.

The social form of the Indians demanded stoical acceptance of all conditions without an expression of disgust or grief at the loss of one's horse or beloved relative. The only institutions which allowed an escape for the violent emotions or a release from the rigid social controls of the group were the warpath and its attendant ceremonies. So-called "mourning war" was the safety-valve for the repressed emotions. Grief could be displayed by going to war, then, which in turn re-instated ego-importance.<sup>3</sup>

"Dancing the scalp" was done in order to send the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 428.

<sup>2</sup> Many of the dances included women and old men.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 454.

soul of a departed relative to a happy hereafter. The scalp was placed on the fresh grave after a ceremonial dance throughout the village had been completed.<sup>1</sup>

However, the war-complex cannot be explained only in terms of the "mourning war." The stealing of horses had carried social prestige and economic gain.<sup>2</sup> Thus, all warfare may be attributed among the Plains tribes to one of several causes: (1) to obtain scalps; (2) to obtain horses; (3) to settle disputes over hunting territory.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE DICHOTOMY OF SEXES<sup>4</sup>

In a society in which the militaristic spirit was so strong, where bravery was considered a prime attribute of manliness, where there was a rigid insistence on a dichotomy between the sexes with regard to emotional make-up, ideals, and activities, men less suited to the acceptable male role were often driven to proclaim themselves as women. Only by taking on the dress, the occupation, and the responsibilities of women were they able to escape the harsh role forced on men in such a society.<sup>5</sup> The berdache was considered a social

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<sup>1</sup> Idem.

<sup>2</sup> Not until the coming of the horse did the Blackfoot, for example, begin a systematic raiding campaign against their neighbors. (p. 432)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 433, 452.

<sup>4</sup> ~~Mead, op. cit., p. 324.~~ Social specialization of certain human traits is dichotomy of the sexes.

<sup>5</sup> Mead, ~~op. cit.~~, xiii, xiv, xx, xxi.

<sup>4</sup> This section was suggested by the reading of Margaret Mead's Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies, (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1935), p. 294.

failure. It was such a disgrace to be a deviant that children were not allowed to don the costumes or attitudes of the other sex for fear that they might fall into this undesired role.

#### THE MANLY-HEARTED WOMAN

Mead points out that the woman deviate is never in so unfavorable a position as the man who cannot fill his role as a male.

Among the Blackfoot (the North Piegan), the emphasis on the ownership of bundles and horses as personal, inheritable property sets them apart from the other Plains tribes. They had a materialistic, economically determined, society of the classes in which upper-class, middle-aged women were able to gain a great deal of prestige.<sup>1</sup>

Not only bundles, but visions, medicine pipes, painted tipis, war charms and bonnets, songs, and private ritual were transferred as real property.<sup>2</sup>

Bravery and coup counts were not so exalted among the Blackfoot as were generosity and wealth. The ownership of horses was a major index of social status. Since women could own and inherit property, it follows that they frequently played

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<sup>1</sup> Oscar Lewis, "Manly-Hearted Women among the North Piegan," American Anthropologist, 43, 1941, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

an important role in such tribal ceremonies as the Sun dance, which could be "vowed" by a woman of easy virtue more easily than by one of low socio-economic position.<sup>1</sup> There was a fear of falling under the evil spell of a "manly-hearted" woman, who was supposed to be a sorceress.<sup>2</sup>

The manly-hearted traits were those of a warrior: aggressiveness, independence, ambition, boldness, passionate sexuality, and property.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the woman was usually at least fifty years old,<sup>4</sup> and was frequently the favorite or "sit-by" wife of a chief.<sup>5</sup> She could remarry when she pleased, and she carried the dominant role in marriage.<sup>6</sup>

Inheritance was limited by the continual depletion of horses by raiding, a lack of primogeniture, destruction of property at death, and the custom of lateral inheritance.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 178. Virtue had to be publicly avowed.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 175. She possessed her own stock brands, for example.

<sup>4</sup> Idem.

<sup>5</sup> The favorite wife ("Ninauake") was regarded as a sexual object. Tipi responsibilities fell more heavily on the other wives.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

It is easy to understand how women could become rich property owners. The aforementioned limitations on inheritance helped to make it possible. Then, too, such women often did work suited to both men and women without suffering from social disapproval. They might be given property by relatives. Oftentimes the favorite child was a marriageable daughter who got gifts from her father.<sup>1</sup>

In the days when tribal warfare was at its height, women warriors often went into battle. Instances of such occurrences are found among the Ute<sup>2</sup> and the Flathead, among others. DeSmet recorded the activities of a Flathead woman who led her seven sons into battle.<sup>3</sup>

Other tribes surrendered certain male prerogatives, such as dancing with articles symbolic of their male relatives' battle honors, etc.<sup>4</sup> In these cases, however, the initial coup ceremony honored the male, who then participated. In the successive dances, the woman merely represented the warrior.

#### THE SUN DANCE

Without the impetus furnished by the horse, it is

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<sup>1</sup> A bride price in horses was customary among the Blackfeet. (p. 166)

<sup>2</sup> Opler, *op. cit.*, p. 166. Older women went to war and scalped and stripped fallen enemies.

<sup>3</sup> Oregon Missions and Travels over the Rocky Mountains in 1845-46, II, pp. 329-335, cited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Travels in the Far Northwest, 1839-46, (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1908).

<sup>4</sup> Opler, *op. cit.*, p. 166.



unlikely that essential Sun dance traits would have been retained. Diffusion of traits was facilitated by the actual migration of the innovating tribes.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of this dance-complex, "the most important ceremony of the Plains tribes,"<sup>2</sup> which coincided with the annual summer buffalo hunt,<sup>3</sup> is dramatic evidence of the status of the war- and hunting-complexes of the tribes.

The center pole was symbolic of the collective enemy. According to Spier, they scouted for a tree, counted coup on it, and felled it as if it were an enemy.<sup>4</sup> Oftentimes there was a sham battle which centered around the tree.<sup>5</sup>

#### MESSIANIC OUTBREAKS

The Plains Indians had built up unprecedented power and prestige with the technological advantage of the horse. Then with the passing of the bison, the economy collapsed and the culture suffered a serious decline.

Manifestation of the consequent frustration and groping for emotional security and release found expression in the

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<sup>1</sup> Roland B. Dixon, The Building of Cultures, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> Dixon, op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Lealie Spier, "Plains Indian Sun Dance," Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, XVI, 1921, p. 461.

<sup>4</sup> Spier, op. cit., p. 461.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 465-467.

various messianic cults.

Because the southern herds of bison disappeared first, the Southwestern Plains tribes suffered first. Therefore, the first escapist cult was developed among them long before the Ghost Dance arose among the northern Plains tribes. It contained all of the basic elements of a prophetic cult, and was incorporated in their Sun dance.

Because of the crushing defeat the Comanche suffered at the hands of the troops at Adobe Walls, Texas, the cult leader was discredited. When the hysteria of the later Ghost Dance cult came, the Comanche were immune to it as a result of their earlier experience.<sup>1</sup>

The later Ghost Dance was based on the belief that it would lead to the downfall of the white usurpers and bring back the buffalo and the departed Indian ancestors. All the tribes would cooperate and warfare would cease between tribes.<sup>2</sup> Smohalla, a Nez Perce, was the innovator.

The old hunting and war societies which had become meaningless since they had lost their vital functions connected with the food quest, the protection of the tribal camp and warfare, and the invocation of the supernatural<sup>3</sup> were now discarded.

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<sup>1</sup> E. Adamson Hoebel, "The Comanche Sun Dance and Messianic Outbreak of 1873," American Anthropologist, 43, 1941, pp. 302-303.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Lesser, "Cultural Significance of the Ghost Dance," American Anthropologist, 35, 1933, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Norman D. Humphrey, "A Characterization of Certain Plains Associations," American Anthropologist, 43, 1941, p. 435.

The declining significance of the role of the Indian men has been accompanied by a rise in the status of women. The men have been drifting from the center of tribal culture. Whereas formerly the chief interest of the tribe centered on the glories of the hunt and warfare with the men playing the chief roles, now both military and provider roles have been taken away.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the women have been less disturbed by the disintegration of the old culture than have the men, who are turning more and more to the smoking of peyote and its accompanying religious cult, in order to escape from the inglorious present.<sup>2</sup>

#### SUMMARY

In the pre-horse Plains era the ascendant tribes on the north were sedentary village Siouans, such as the Mandan, Crow, and Hidatsa. In recent historical times the nomadic Blackfoot spread Algonquian traits, as did the Arapaho and Cheyenne of the Central Plains after they became buffalo-hunters. Formerly, in the middle Plains area the village Siouans (Missouri, Quapaw, Oto, Omaha, etc.), the Caddoan Pawnee and Wichita, had been the important tribes. Another group of tribes were driven out of

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Mead, The Changing Culture of an Indian Tribe, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), pp. 26, 134, 138.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 27. Cf. LaBarre Weston, "The Peyote Cult," Yale University Publications in Anthropology, IXX, 1938.

the territory of the Southwest Plains by new horsemen warriors, the Comanche and Ute, who had been Great Basin pre-horse peoples. The Lipan Apache were expelled from the Southwest Plains of the United States, as were many allied tribes, into the Mexican mountains and refuges to the south.

The buffalo-horse complex with its attendant travois, tipi, lance, and shield are Plains culture traits. Others are institutionalized horse-raiding, the Sun dance, and superb horsemanship.

Among these people, social values became more materialistic; spoliation through raiding, pillaging, and slaving led to culture waste, and did much to dissipate the energy derived from the improved technology. Concentration of the food supply in a small area made possible the clustering of the population and increased tribal cohesion. The evolution of the tribal society from a loosely-knit informal group to a highly coordinate body marked the beginning of a congruent political organization. There was a rising autocracy, a decline in democratic procedure as military leadership became the rule in the warring tribes.

Life became more circumscribed. Less freedom of expression to the individual in his intra-tribal contacts manifested itself through an interminable conquest against other tribes and through various institutionalized perversions such as the

Sun dance tortures.

In the last analysis, the typical Plains culture was unique because of the assimilation of various traits brought into the area by the many culture groups.

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## APPENDIX I

The Medicine Wheel

A very old and worn travois trail which is visible several miles away leads to a broad shoulder on the west side of the Big Horn.<sup>1</sup> The Indians call the formation of stones found there the "Medicine Wheel" because of the mystery which surrounds it. There are twenty-eight spokes leading out from the center of the wheel-shaped formation. The space at the hub appears to be the space left for the Sun lodge center pole.

The whole scheme--including the "lonely" lodge (where the medicine lodge-makers received instructions), the "altar", and a bleached buffalo skull--resembles the old Cheyenne Sun lodge.<sup>2</sup> Older Cheyennes know it well as a traditional Arapaho-Cheyenne ceremonial site of around 1860. Tradition says that one-half the group sat on the south of the ledge, the other half on the north. The two peoples had been friendly ever since their meeting west of the Black Hills some time before.<sup>3</sup>

Wheels have been found also in Big Horn Canyon below Fort C. F. Smith and in northern Wyoming near the Cheyenne trail used by Tongue River Indians when they visit the Shoshoni near Fort Washaki.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> George Bird Grinnell, "The Medicine Wheel," American Anthropologist, 24, 1922, p. 305.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 300.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 308. Cf. Ruth Fulton Benedict, "The Vision in Plains Culture," American Anthropologist, 24, 1922. The Cheyenne were still near the Dakota and Hidatsa in 1850. (p. 6).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 310.

## APPENDIX II

Origin of the Earth Lodge

The Muskogean and Cherokee "hot house" was similar to the Mandan earth lodge, except that the latter had a smoke hole and a wattle and daub top dressing, whereas the former had a dressing of earth.<sup>1</sup>

The Navajo circular earth "hogan" resembles that found among Carolinian tribes and peoples to the North.<sup>2</sup>

The Mandan earth lodge was carried north from the lower Mississippi Valley.<sup>3</sup> Linton says that "... (the) earth lodge was a feature of a very old North American cultural stratum and its ultimate origin may have been Asiatic."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph Linton, "The Origin of the Earth Lodge," American Anthropologist, 26, 1924, pp. 249-251.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 254.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 256-257.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 257.

A Population Study

Expansions in power and territory were accompanied by expansions in population. A period of economic prosperity concomitant with the increased trade due to the introduction of the horse and the gun seems to have stimulated geographical expansion and quickened fertility rates. When diminishing returns in buffalo and fur began about 1850, the population also seemed to shrink.

However, the severe epidemics of smallpox in 1780, 1838, and 1856 drastically decimated all tribes. Wissler considers smallpox effects less serious than the culture shock which followed collapse of the buffalo-hunting economy (in the late 1800's). He also mentions that the Gros Ventre were ruined by the epidemic of 1780. Subsequently they were dominated by the Assiniboine (whose maximum total population was reached in 1830), who in turn were broken by the disastrous pox, which gave ascendancy to the Cree (whose peak population was reached about 1880.<sup>1</sup>

Wissler believes that the population optimum of the

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<sup>1</sup> Clark Wissler, "Plains Indian Population," Yale University Publications in Anthropology, 1, 1936, p. 19.

Wissler, Indians of the United States, (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1940), p. 90. He says, "Smallpox made the advance of the frontier easy. It was the white man's most deadly weapon."

Plains tribes was reached in 1809, with a density of 15.5 per square mile achieved, "under the older economy."<sup>1-2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 10. It was in an area of 220,000 sq. mi.

<sup>3</sup> Weak tribes were destroyed in older days when predatory warfare was practiced. Reservation life has saved them from probable extinction. (p. 19)