New Mexico Anthropologist

Volume 3 | Issue 2

Article 7

11-1-1938

A Note on Cheyenne Peyote

John Goggin

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nm_anthropologist

Recommended Citation

Goggin, John. "A Note on Cheyenne Peyote." *New Mexico Anthropologist* 3, 2 (1938): 26-30. https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nm_anthropologist/vol3/iss2/7

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Anthropology at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in New Mexico Anthropologist by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.

Site² (fig. 2d and 2e) and one specimen from the Bennett Site. (So far as is known these two sites have only Late components.)

The eighth specimen, found at the Windmiller Site, cannot be chronologically placed since the line of stratigraphic demarcation between Transitional and Late is not clearly marked at this site. No adzes have been found at sites of the Post-Contact Period. This is to be expected as the elk antler adze would become obsolete shortly after the advent of the Caucasians.

Of the eight adzes found, one, the Bennett specimen, was associated with a burial. The other seven specimens occurred unassociated in kitchen middens indicating that they had been either discarded or lost.

No use is suggested for these tools. The poll never shows hammering, eliminating the possibility that it was a handled wedge. The appearance of the blade argues against its use as a hacking tool. The lack of wear, and the polish are such as would result from use in the working of hides, but if this were its use, we know of no parallel tool.

Sacramento Junior College.

ഗ

A NOTE ON CHEYENNE PEYOTE

JOHN M. GOGGIN

This is an account of the peyote meeting as it has been conducted for 25 or 30 years by Richard Goodbear, a Cheyenne of El Reno, Oklahoma. It was related by his son, Paul Goodbear. When Paul was a small child he was very ill and his father made a vow that if the peyote ceremony cured his son he would conduct it for 20 years. This ceremony is similar to the original form in which the Cheyenne tribe first received it. Other peyote leaders have added innovations in recent times.

There are four officers in this meeting. The leader is called the Peyote Chief. He is a man of great personality, and often people will come a long way to attend a meeting held by some particular Chief. He picks three assistants. The Chief Drummer is picked for his excellence in drumming. He drums for the Chief and whomever else asks him. The Keeper of the Fire watches the fire and replenishes it whenever necessary. The Keeper of the Incense puts the incense

^{2.} Lillard and Purves, 1936, "Archaeology of the Deer Creek-Cosumnes Area, Sacramento Co., Calif." The three Booth specimens are illustrated in plate 13 or this bulletin.

on the fire at the beginning, at midnight, at the end, and whenever someone asks for it. The participants are usually men, rarely women attend. When they do, they never sing, always passing the drum. As many men may attend as the lodge can accomodate, often up to 40.

A large number of articles are used. A waterdrum is used. It consists of a partially filled iron kettle covered with a chamois skin. The size is about eight to ten inches in diameter. A small pin hole is in one side of the cover. Through this the participants can suck out a small amount of this sacred water. The wand is of polished walnut three and a half to four feet long and three eighths of an inch in diameter. There is a horse hair tuft on the end of the staff and the staff is beaded for about six inches below the tuft. A Plains type fan with a beaded handle and buckskin fringes is used. The rattle is made of a small hemispherical gourd. The handle is beaded and fringed with buckskin at the end. The Peyote Chief uses a whistle, made of an Eagle wing bone, that has only one hole. A smooth stick about fourteen inches long is used to beat the drum. It has no head. The peyote is kept in a bag made of cloth with buckskin fringes on the bottom. It is about one and a half feet long. The cigarettes are made with corn husk wrappers and a Bull Durham filling. Some old men mix sumac leaves (picked when red) with the tobacco by rubbing the two together between the palms of the hands. Placed on the moon near the center is an exceptionally large and fine specimen of a peyote button that is called the Chief Peyote. The incense thrown on the fire is short dried cedar needles. Sticks of neatly trimmed fire wood about four feet long are used. The surplus wood is stacked outside.

The meeting is held in a large tipi. The door faces the east. Around the interior are mats and blankets where the participants will sit. A little west of the center is a large crescent shaped moon made of earth. Between the horns is the fire. It is laid in a chevron fashion with the open end towards the door (see fig. 4).

The ceremony is usually performed that some one may be cured, have a safe journey, or as thanks for a safe return. The principle prayers of the participants are for this intention.

In the evening (about 7:00 in the winter and 8:00 in summer) the participants line up single file outside the entrance of the tipi. The leader is the Chief, second is the Chief Drummer, and third is the Keeper of the Incense. Then follow all the other participants with the Keeper of the Fire closing the file.

When everyone is ready the Chief offers a prayer and all walk around the tipi (clockwise) and enter, passing to the left. The Chief sits down behind the moon with the Chief Drummer on his right and the Keeper of the Incense on his left. The others seat themselves where they wish except that the Keeper of the Fire sits to the right of the door without circuiting the tipi to the left. The Chief presents four peyote buttons and one cigarette to each person (passing the peyote bag around). The peyote is placed behind each person until he eats it. After everyone has offered a prayer for the intention of the meeting the Chief says—"You have all the prayers of those who are in this ceremony," and then offers his own prayer. Every one eats his peyote taking one to four buttons. One cigarette is

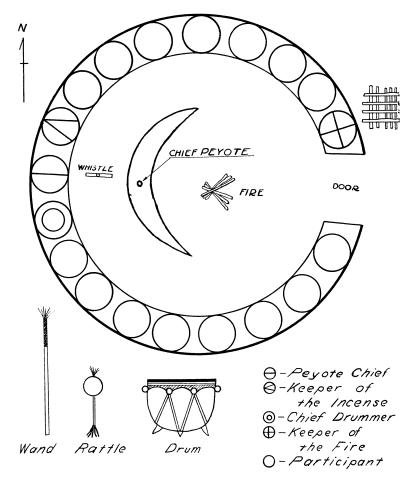


FIG. 4--Plan of Peyote Lodge and Some of the Articles Used in the Ceremony

smoked with the first four buttons taken and one with each button after that. The participant takes his peyote by chewing the button after cleaning it. He then spits the pulp out in his hand, rolls it into a little ball and holds it in front of him in his extended left hand, says a short prayer, swallows the pulp, and passes his hands back on each side of his head and down the opposite arms and over his breast.

After the peyote is eaten, the Chief starts the singing by taking the staff and fan in his left hand, giving the Chief Drummer the drum, and singing four songs to the drum, while shaking the rattle in his right hand. The tempo of the drumming is fast at first and then slows down to accomodate the singer. Next the Chief exchanges with his Chief Drummer, who sings while the Chief drums. Then the drum, wand, fan and rattle are given to the pair on the left of the Chief and thus pass around the lodge. If a person does not wish to sing he can pass them on. However, if he does sing he must sing four songs unless he forgets some—as often happens. After this, if anyone wishes to take peyote again, he must wait until a song is finished and then ask the Chief if he can eat peyote. The Chief gives him the peyote and the Keeper of the Incense gives him a cigarette.

Just before midnite the wife of the man giving the ceremony brings in a bucket of water, offers a prayer and everyone takes a drink. She leaves after everyone drinks.

At midnite the Chief calls the drum from where ever it is, and after singing three songs and his midnite song, picks up the whistle and blows four blasts. He then goes out about fifty yards to the East and blows four more blasts, then to the South, West, and North doing the same at each place. After this he returns to the lodge and sings four more songs. The Chief Drummer returns the drum to the previous drummer and the wand, fan, and rattle to the partner of the drummer. Then the singing continues around as before. Permission to leave may be had at any time unless a number (three or four) are absent at one time, in which case he must wait. The ashes of the fire are never removed. The people spit in front of themselves. Many of the participants use their own drum stick and fan after the first round of singing.

About dawn the same woman who came in before midnite returns with another bucket of water, and food. She says a prayer very similar to the one she said at midnite, then everyone drinks, and the woman leaves. When she goes the food is passed around, the meat and corn first.

After eating the Chief goes out, blows one blast in each direction, returns and blows once inside. Then the Chief Drummer starts untying the drum, everybody keeping very quiet until he finishes. The wand, fan, and incense are laid next to the moon (in back of the Chief Peyote) beside the rattle and drum top. The drum kettle still containing water and charcoal is passed to the left around the tipi. This water is considered holy and the participants put it on themselves by means of their drumsticks. When it gets back to the Chief the ceremony is finished, and he pours out the water between the moon and the fire. Then the people sit around a while discussing the dreams that they had during the night, as well as any mistakes one of their comrades made.

After they leave, the tipi is taken down immediately. The moon is not destroyed, but left to weather away. At noon there is a big feast preceded by the Chief arising and asking some particular person to give the last prayer.

Peyote is also considered to be beneficial outside the ceremony. On one occasion while driving through Oklahoma on a long trip, the author stopped at Concho (Cheyenne Agency) to procure some peyote. His Indian friends there advised him to take one button while driving as it would keep him awake. It is a good stimulant in small quantities and is often taken in the form of a tea.

At the present time most peyote is bought from dealers in southern Texas, but according to my informants a few years ago the Cheyenne would go down into Mexico to collect it themselves.

University of New Mexico.

ഗ

NOTES ON SOME 1938-1939 PUEBLO DANCES

JOHN M. GOGGIN

Due to requests it has been decided to list several of the dances and their 1938-1939 dates. Only some of those which have not set dates are on the list.

September 15, Jemez, Hopi dance.

September 21, Jemez, Circle dance.

September 27, Jemez, Ka'tsina dance.

October 2, Jemez, Hopi dance.

October 9, Jemez, Ka'tsina dance.

On comparing the dates of the above dances with those recorded last year (NEW MEXICO ANTHROPOLOGIST, vol. 2, no. 1) it will be seen that a twelve day period exists between the Ka'tsina dances at Jemez.

December 15, Zuñi Shalako. An uneventful dance. The weather was the warmest that it had been in several years. It rained so