

FORT BELKNAP NOTES, ATSINA INDIANS. 1909.

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NOTES TAKEN ON THE GROS VENTRE OF THE PRAIRIE (ATSINA) NEAR HAYS, MONTANA, FORT BELKNAP INDIAN RESERVATION, JULY, 1909. (See p. 320.)

Informant: Running Fisher, also called Jerry Fisher. Interpreter: John Buckman. Notes by: John G. Carter. Time: July 26 to August 10, 1909. Place: St. Paul's Mission and near Hays, Montana. John Buckman also acted as Informant, as did Bernard Striker and James Matt.

FORT BELKNAP RESERVATION: 1906, 1907 and 1909. People on Reservation.

Before transcribing the notes taken in 1909, a description of some of the people on the Reservation is given by way of introduction.

The Superintendent, or Agent, as he was called in those days, was "Major" William R. Logan. He was the son of Captain Logan, who was killed in General Howard's fight with Joseph's Nez Perces at the Big Hole in 1877. Major Logan was a scout with General John Gibbon in the Sioux campaign of 1876, and was one of the first men on the Custer battle field, going forward in advance as a scout ahead of Terry and Gibbon's commands. The Major had a favorite speech at the annual Fourth of July gathering of the Gros ventre and Assiniboin at the Agency. It went about as follows: "I give to the Gros ventres three head of beef and ten sacks of flour for a feast." Loud and entheusiastic "Hows". Second sentence of the speech: "I give to the Assiniboin three head of beef and ten sacks of flour for a feast." Loud and entheusiastic "Hows."

Peroration of the speech: "You Gros Ventres and Assiniboins should work hard, and cut hay, and get jobs on the new irrigation ditch being built, so you will have something laid aside for the winter, and should see that your children get to school." A whole lot of silence, and a few half hearted grunts. The Gros ventres and Assiniboins being old enemies the Major delighted in bringing up past fights when the chiefs and headmen of both tribes assembled at the Agency. This generally made it certain that the council broke up in a row.

The Gros ventre Interpreter at the Agency. I think his name was Pete. His father was a Chinaman from around Canton, who ran an eating place at the Agency, and his mother was a Gros Ventre. He spoke Gros Ventre with a Cantonese lilt that was very attractive. The prisoners at the guard house ate at the Chinaman's, slept in the guard house, and wandered about and did as they pleased, pretty much, the rest of the time.

Powder Face was an Arapaho married to a Gros ventre, an Indian policeman, at one time Chief of Indian Police, and very much respected. His boy had a job at the Indian Bureau in Washington.

Nozey, or The Male, was the heap big medicine man of the Assiniboin. He had two tipis and two wives. His power was said to be in his hair, which was long, and made longer by additional hair tied onto his braids. In one tipi, decorated with very conventionalized buffalo, he transacted his sacred business, and in the other he lived with his wives. He was a rainmaker also. In 1906, after the Fourth of July camp, there was a drouth. The Major jacked Nozey up about the lack of rain, and the result was a bet by the Major of a sack of Ration House flour that Nozey couldn't produce a rain storm. The storm broke the night of the bet, blew down the chimney of Major Logan's house, and flooded the country. The storm refused to stop, although the Indians tried to induce Nozey to turn off the water. Somehow Nozey had lost the combination, and there was talk in Indian circles, after presents had failed to get results, of shooting him. Nozey moved up to the Agency, where Janet, the Major's daughter bet him another sack of flour he couldn't make it stop raining. It stopped that night. The Major paid off two sacks of flour to Nozey, who set his women to work turning them into bannocks, with which he

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put on a great feed, all by himself. He did not survive the feast, and the Agency Doctor certified that death was due to acute indigestion. In July, 1907, there being a vacancy for the position of director of the Assiniboin Sun Dance, one Eyes in the Water sought to qualify himself to take Nozey's place. When the camp formed at the Agency in 1907 old Eyes in the Water sat in his tipi all night, drumming and tooting an eagle bone whistle. He did this for several nights, and then a wind storm came up and blew down half the camp, and Eyes in the Water's wife was killed by a falling tipi pole. Some Indian who did not like Eyes in the Water reported that he had seen the dead Nozey, on horseback, riding in the storm. This made Eyes in the Water's chances of running the Sun Dance about as good as those of a Republican candidate for the Senate running in North Carolina. Besides, if the old boy could start that much hell in running off the preliminary heat, what would happen in the finals, if he were handed over a Sun Dance lodge to conduct? The conduct of the Sun Dance in 1907 was handed over to a Cree, and Eyes in the Water showed up and attempted to do Nozey's favorite trick of bringing water down the center pole of the Sun Dance lodge. Major Logan and Captain Ryan of the British Embassy put up money that he couldn't. A slight shower thereafter, lost them the bet. I was present and saw it lost. But enough of Holy Things.

Bill Berry was also Chief of Police in Logan's time. He is an Assiniboin and well up on matters pertaining to the Sun Dance.

A white man, in the Gros Ventre camp in 1907 was said to be only able to speak Gros ventre. I saw his child blessed by the old men in the Sun Dance Lodge. The Gros Ventres say he wandered into their camp when only a child, and was raised by them. He lived as a Gros ventre, and was a Gros ventre. He did not know who his people were. His child was named in the Sun Dance lodge. His mother wanted to name him "Returns Flying" because the day before she had carried him out when the people brought in brush for the lodge, and he had widden into camp with her on horseback, when she helped to drag the brush. But an old woman rose up in the lodge and said she had dreamed of the child the night before, and that she say in the dream the child returning with a pipe, that is, the stem of a pipe. So the old men called the child "Returns with the Pipe." I do not know the white man-Gros Ventre's name.

Paddy, an Irishman, who lived near St. Paul's Mission. His brother had married a Gros ventre woman, and they had some children. The children were orphaned by the death of both parents, and Paddy came over to this country from Ireland to support them, and bring them up.

Guiseppi and his fellow Sicilians. They worked as laborers at the Mission, and sang Sicilian street songs for us back of the church in the evenings. There was a long bench along the back wall of the church, and the Fathers and their guests sat there after supper, and the Sicilians stood up before the bench and sang for us, while the Indians listened from a distance. These Sicilians had formerly worked on a Great Northern section gang, but left that work for the Mission. Guiseppi said that the section gang was too tough. That shows how tough a Great Northern section gang can be. Too tough for six Sicilians.

Father Piet. A Frenchman, and superior of St. Paul's Mission. He was fond of dogs, horses and guns. He was a crazy and reckless driver, and drove a wild pair of horses. Going driving with the Father behind his two mustangs, the back of the wagon having a rifle and a shot gun for

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ballast, and some ammunition, and surrounded by yelping houn' dawgs, was a hair raising experience. He never used roads, and took steep hillsides and ditches in stride. One day he got thrown from his seat crossing an irrigation ditch, and lost the reins, the Father landing on the ground. The team ran away, and I jumped out over the wheel, not being able to get the lines and control the horses, and not caring to ride behind that pair in a runaway. Horses in panic will sometimes kick the wagon or cart to pieces to free themselves, and that is tough on whoever holds down the front seat.

Father Siam. Phonetic spelling. He was a Swiss with a heavy black beard. He had a reputation for preaching a sizzling sermon on hell, and hell was his main stock in trade in preaching to Indians. It got results. When, as occasionally happened, a missionary from a rival creed would get on the reservation, have a beef slaughtered, give a feast, and convert a large number of the Father's flock by means of broiled steaks and tracts, Father Siam would descend on the renegades of the flock before they had time to digest their meal or get acclimated to their new religion, and hand out the old fire and brimstone, so that they could hear the cries of the damned in their sleep. Next day the beef Christians would all be back in the bosom of Holy Mother Church. But they were one square meal to the good, notwithstanding.

Brother Gallegos. From Barcelona Spain. A large, broad shouldered, patient man, with a most pleasant smile, who could do the work of any three men in that country, and seemed to work all the time. He had a very tough black beard, and so shaved once a week. On Sunday he showed up in honor of the day clean shaved, but much cut up from the operation, which must have been a painful one. He caught the horses the day Father Piet and I lost control in crossing the irrigation ditch. In August, 1909, he was transferred from St. Paul's to Family Mission among the Blackfeet. He worked like a pack horse.

Bernard Striker. Was a Gros Ventre, educated. Had a farm near Hays. When I first met Bernard he was doing thirty days in clink up at the Agency. The cause of his doing thirty days was curiosity. One night Bernard, according to the Major, looked in at the window of another Indian's cabin, and seeing the Indians wife inside undressing, became interested, and kept on looking. The owner of the cabin spotted him and rushed out, and in the following excitement, Bernard stabbed him, giving him a flesh wound, of no great consequence. For this breach of the peace the Indian Offense Court, in other words the Indian Judge, gave Oscar thirty days in the Agency Hoosgow, which is a high price for a free peep show. Oscar only slept in the bastille at night, ate up at the Chinaman's, and did odd jobs about the Agency in the day time. The first night I met him was on Major Logan's front porch, July, 1909. He wanted a night permission from the jail to go to Harlem, four miles across the river and off the reservation, to see a Moving Picture show. The Major gave him a pass, and told him to be back at the jail house by midnight, and lock himself in. Which he did. Bernard was my first Indian informant. The Major gave him a leave of absence from the jail to drive me forty five miles to St. Paul's Mission, and while there to gather his hay crop. He was to spend a week at the Mission, and then return to the Agency and complete his sentence. The Major also instructed him to give me all the information he could about the Gros ventres. Major Logan told me that these Indians did not know the reasons for the things they did. "They have forgotten" said the Major, "if they ever knew." About the best size up I have ever heard. Bernard became a Councilman later on.

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John Buckman. He acted as my interpreter and was interpreter to the Mission. He was also Mission carpenter, and that meant he also made coffins when required. On Sundays John stood beside Father Piet on the altar and translated the Gospel and the sermon. All the men sat on one side of the vchurch, and the women with babies on the other. The babies were fed graham crackers during Mass to keep them quiet. I suspect they also got milk, right from headquarters, when they were thirsty. In fact, am sure of it. This insured quiet in the church. John could knock together a coffin in jig time, and his coffins were useful in other ways. Word came up that Mouse, a Gros Ventre and a Catholic was on his way to the sandhills. The family wanted Father Piet to see him off properly, and a coffin to get him fixed up before he died. The Gros ventres in those days dressed the dying man up for burial before he died. This has two advantages: A live man is easier to dress than a dead one. He can co-operate in the dressing up. Also he can tell the family what he would like to wear, and make suggestions. AThe dying man likewise has the satisfaction of knowing how well he is going to look when he kicks off, and this is pleasing to him. Anything he would like to take with him to the grave he can suggest, and the coffins were built on generous lines, to accomodate a great many articles, useful and ornamental. John knocked together a very generous sized coffin for Mr. Mouse. It looked like a packing box when he got through. The coffin was loaded on the wagon, John driving, and Father Piet sitting up beside him on the driver's seat, and they went down the road in a cloud of dust to give Mouse a good send off. We all felt pleased that Mouse would die so happy. The Father would Absolve him and anoint him, he would be all dressed up and painted, and he had a whale of a coffin, which would be ample to hold all the things he would like to be burried with him. Pretty soon the Father and John drove back without the coffin, but when they left, old Mouse was all dressed up to go places, but still alive. He was still alive a good many years after that, and his wife put the coffin up in a corner of the cabin, nailed some shelves in it, and it made a fine cupboard. I attended my first Council meeting with John Buckman, in 1909. I was then eighteen. I also did my first work with informants that year, but had already written up my notes of the Assiniboin Sun Dance observed by me in 1906 and 1907, and had also observed the cree Sun Dance at Helena in 1908.

Running Fisher. There will be more of Running Fisher in the notes taken from information furnished largely by him, John Buckman interpreting. He was supposed by John Buckman, Bernard Striker, Father Piet and the others around the Mission to be the best informant there. He had been a fighting man all of his life. One day he got excited in telling about it, and pulled aside his shirt, revealing a very much scarred torso. He proceeded then to tell the story of his life, checking from the scars on his body. It was all written out there in scar tissue. A grizzely bear had carressed him on one arm, leaving a beauty. He killed the grizzely just before the grizaaly got him. He had bullet, arrow and knife scars which were souvenirs of encounters with Crows, Blackfoot, Sioux and Assiniboin. He had three sets of Sun Dance teats on the breasts. He had been tortured in that dance three times, having made the vow that many times in order to get out of some tight place with his enemias. A short hand reporter could have taken down a good story. He was highly regarded by the Indians, and the whites as well.

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Running Fisher once fasted for a vision on the top of Mission Peak in the little Rocky Mountains. The peak is easily reached as the road from St. Pauls Mission after leaving the upper end of Mission canyon, passes close to the peak on the way to Zortman and Landusky. At the head of the canyon the road turns east for a distance, then south again across a divide near the mouth of a tunnel into the Zortman gold mine. At this divide, turning west from the road and up a slope you come to the peak, which at this point is only a short, easy climb. There are traces on the peak that someone was there at one time. Running Fisher while fasting received callers in the shape of some supernatural bears, who dropped in and gave him some good advice on a number of things.

Bushy Head. He was an old headman of the Gros Ventres, had bushy grey hair, and a very determined look. He had been the leader of many war parties. He had two wives, and the three old people lived together in complete harmony, on the theory that what old Bushy Head said was the law and the prophets. Major Logan, the Indian Agent, told me a story which Bushy Head told him about the untimely end of a third wife of his. These Indians did not buy their wives, as most white's suppose. The plains Indian woman was valuable and useful. She made robes, clothing, lodge coverings and lining, and preserved the meat, cooked it, and made pemmican. She was extremely useful. There was no hired labor or servant class in an Indian camp. A man's wife, or wives, and daughters did all of this useful work, while he hunted the meat, and protected them against enemies, which was a considerable labor in itself. Thus when a man took a wife, the father of the girl lost a valuable worker from his lodge, and the man gained a valuable worker. He who gained paid he who lost. Indemnity, not purchase, was the basis of giving the father or mother of a girls presents when taking the girl in marriage. In Europe, where the woman of gentle birth was just a consumer, not a producer, the girl's father gave the man who married his daughter money or property. The father in that case was getting rid of a liability, while the man who married the daughter was acquiring a liability. Again, he who took the loss was paid the indemnity, by he who took the gain. For this third wife Bushy Head paid her family horses and goods. He needed her because he was like Nimrod, a mighty hunter, and two wives were not enough to handle what he brought home in meat and hides. Romance did not enter into the transaction. Bushy Head's business was expanding, which was hunting and horse stealing, and he had to take on a new hand to handle the output. Only very outstanding and successful Indians could afford more than one wife, so that a polygamous Indian was just as rare as is the owner of 5,000 shares of Standard Oil or Bethlehem Steel Preferred stock with us. Bushy Head installed his new wife in his lodge, but soon found out he had made a bad deal for himself. Purchasers of stocks that do not pan out according to expectation, or of horses that turn out spavined, will undersand his feelings on the matter. Instead of diligently cleaning and tanning robes, dressing hides, making moccasins, jerking meat, making clothes, chopping wood, preparing pemmican, hauling water from the spring, cooking this lady spent her time in dressing up and painting her face and visiting and gossiping with the neighbors. She stayed out afternoons and evenings as well, and left no word as to her whereabouts. Bushy Head told the Major that he warned her to get busy and do her work and that if she did not stay around more and let him know where she was he would fix it "so that I will know where you are, and can find you when I want you." Little Feather Brain was not in the market for good advice just then, and gave no heed.

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Shortly thereafter Bushy Head returned from the wars, or the hunt, and found the giddy member of his household away on the Indian Social Whirl as usual. He primed his rifle, and sat down outside the door of his lodge and waited. After a time the young wife appeared, making her way toward the lodge. She was dressed in her best, and painted. Bushy Head raised his rifle and shot her through the forehead. He wrapped up the body, and laid it out on a hill top, as was the custom of the Gros Ventres in disposing of their dead. He had to pay the girl's father in presents and horses "to wipe the tears away." "I told her," said Bushy Head to the Major, in recounting this episode of his youth, "that if she did not stop running around I would fix her so I would know where she was nights. I did that, and now I know where she is all the time." Thus did Bushy Head increase the respect due to the head of the household among his people. One look at his face would be enough to convince anyone that he was a bad man to start a disagreement with. Father Piet described Bushy Head's yearnings for Christianity. They hit the old boy about mid-winter, when the rations began to run low in the Indian community. He would then be suddenly struck with a desire to hear and be instructed about the Word of God, and would move in on St. Paul's Mission with his two wives. He timed his visits each day, so that his instruction would run on into dinner time. Of course such a promising brand snatched from heathendom rated a bid to dinner, and Bushy Head always got it, despite the fact that the Fathers considered that his conversion would be more a matter of bull luck than anything else. Father Piet said that what that old polygamous, murdering heathen could do to a large platter of beef was incredible and amazing. The wives stood by while the lord and master filled up, and they got what was left. Toward spring old Bushy Head would develop doubts in matters of Faith, and would postpone the day of his regeneration until sometime next year, and move back to his old camping ground. Grub by spring would be getting more plentiful. The chief hitch in getting Bushy Head routed to a Christian Paradise instead of the Sand Hills of his fathers was the two wives. The Church insisted on a Monogamous Bushy Head, and Bushy Head held fast to the proposition that after living with his two women for half a century he had no intention of turning one of them away in her old age. I think the Church should have turned its head and winked the other eye in this case. Especially, considering that as between three old battle axes, with over seventy five winters behind them, there could be little else but relations of the most calm, Platonic and proper nature.

Bill Jones Son of a Bitch. An aged Gros ventre whose real name was Ice. The cowboys gave him the name of Son of a Bitch as a joke, and he was very proud of his white name, and would repeat it on all occasions with pleasure regardless of the company he was in. Bill was reputed to be very old, and said he remembered seeing the first steamboat come up the Missouri River when he was a young man. But he said he felt young again when he mounted a horse. The first steamboat into Fort Benton, from Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone was in 1859, which was fifty years before. (1909). That would not make Bill any Centenarian by any means, and many of these Indians look much older than they really are, and none of the old time Indians have a very good head when it comes to remembering time. Charlie Russell, the cowboy artist, who punched cows (he was really a night wrangler, or night herd), for Kaufman in this part of the country told me of an incident with Bill Jones. One day Charlie said he was riding across the Reservation, and a rain came up.

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He saw a lodge ahead of him, down a small valley, so he rode up to it, dismounted, announced himself at the door by a couple of coughs, and when told to enter, went in and took the seat that the owner seated in the rear of the lodge pointed out to him. He said how, and the owner, Bill Jones, said how. The rain continued for some time, and Charlie took out his paint box and brushes, and did a water color of Bill Jones to pass the time. When he finished the water color Bill reached out, and Charlie handed it to him. Bill examined the work closely, and then pointed to some brass beads on a braid of hair on the left side of the painting, and to the same braid on the left side of his head, and explained by signs to Charlie that he had only three beads there in the painting, whereas Bill actually had five beads in that braid of hair. Charlie corrected the error at once, and gave the painting to Bill as a present. As it had stopped raining, Bill and Charlie shook hands, and Charlie mounted his horse and went on his way. A year later, Charlie continued, he was again passing over the reservation, and passed a lodge. Out of the lodge stepped Bill Jones Son of a Bitch and beckoned to Charlie, making signs for him to dismount and come into his lodge. Charlie had forgotten all about the painting he had made of Bill. When seated Bill signed to one of the women, who brought out a large bundle, that looked like a medicine bundle to Charlie. It was carefully unwrapped by Bill. The wrappings were fur, pieces of felt cloth, and other wrappings valued by Indians. The final wrapping revealed a board on which was tacked Charlie's water color of Bill. Bill solemnly pointed at it, and said to Charlie all the English he knew: "Son of a Bitch, Big Man." They then shook hands cordially, and Charlie departed. It is my guess that when Bill died and original Russell painting, now of value, was buried with him.

Otter Robe. In 1909 Otter Robe was custodian of one of the Gros Ventre medicine pipes, the Feather Pipe, also called Turtle, and also called Cord. In 1909 Otter Robe was going to give the ceremony of the Feather pipe. One very large sweat lodge was erected, or, at least the frame work went up, and it was mostly covered, and to the north of that sweat lodge a second sweat lodge of standard size. The larger lodge looked capable of holding thirty or forty people. Then Otter Robe was taken sick. Some say he became suddenly blind. The ceremony could not be held. Bernard Striker and John Buckman told me they thought it was because Otter Robe had broken one of the rules imposed on the keeper of the Feather Pipe. That rule, according to Running Fisher forbade the pipe keeper to either eat or to own a dog. Otter Robe owned a whole lot of dogs. Bernard asked me what I thought of it. I told him that the Black Robes taught that even if an act were not wrong, but a man thought it was wrong, and deliberately did that act, he did wrong. Bernard grunted. But there was no pipe ceremony. Otter Robe had a hunch backed daughter, who wore a very valuable dress well garnished with elk teeth. It was wild life conservation, plus the desire of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks to have elk teeth for watch charms that sent the price of elk teeth skyrocketing. Major Logan says that Otter Robe had a talent for hiding dead bodies, and his professional services in that line were much esteemed by such as had committed murder, and wished to avoid the usual penalties. Dr. Otter Robe could take a corpus delicti and make it vanish into thin air. If no one saw the killing, there would be no direct evidence of death, because no corpse, or any vestige thereof, could be found after Otter Robe took charge of matters. A very useful accomplishment, indeed.

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Major Logan gave the opinion that such bodies were hidden in Indian grave yards. These burial places consisted of sites on the hilltops, where bodies were placed in large boxes, or else, wrapped in blankets on the ground. There were also some charnel huts on the reservation. Sometimes a wickiup of willow branches covered with blanket was placed over the body, and rarely a tipi, a ghost lodge, was erected over the body. A search of all these places would arouse the countryside, and bloodshed might be the result. They could not be approached in the day times, because they were on high ground, and against the sky line, and any movement in and about them could be observed for miles around. But these cemeteries could be approached at night, although the average Indian would steer pretty clear of them in the daytime, and most especially at night. It is doubted if Otter Robe had very many clients, or an extended practice in his chosen vocation. But it was a peculiar one, to say the least.

Jim Matt. Was a Gros Ventre Indian, and a hunch back. He had a brother, named Matt, who was interpreter at the Flathead Agency. His brother could speak English, French, Selish and Cree. Jim Matt had been a scout for General Miles. One day a large party of Gros ventre rode out from Hays and St. Paul's to a point west of St. Pauls. There were about two hundred Indians in all. They had a favorite horse to be matched in a race against a Crow horse. I was the only white man in the party, and rode with John Buckman and Jim Matt. The horses were not shod, and made no noise passing over the prairie. The conversation of the Indians was sign talk. Those two hundred Indians passed over the prairie like the shadow of a cloud. Occasionally a bridle would jingle as a horse tossed his head, or a horse would snort, or an Indian would scratch a match, as the young men smoked cigarettes which they rolled themselves. The old time Indians smoked a pipe, and only smoked when at rest, and never while travelling. Over a hill from the northeast came three horsemen, Indians, about a half a mile distant. They were on their way to join the main party of Gros ventre Indians moving west, and would have to increase their speed to overtake them. Jim Matt pointed out the horsemen as they rode down the hillside. "Do you notice anything about those horsemen?" he asked. "You want to find out things, so look closely." There was nothing unusual about the horsemen or their surroundings. "That is because you see something but do not think about it," said Jim. "Do you notice a dark streak behind them?" The streak was there all right. "The dark streak is because the grass bends in our direction, which is the direction those three horses are traveling in," said Jim. "That bend of the grass makes a shadow." "If the horses were going in the opposite direction, the streak would be lighter than the other streak. That is because the grass would be bent away from us, and the light would be shining on the side of the grass. In that way you can tell from a distance the trail of horsement, and the direction they are going. If the grass is dry, the horses going through it might break the stems, and the trail will last a longer time. If the grass is wet, it will not break, and will straighten up pretty soon, so the trail will not last as long." We rode on to the horse race. It was a good race, and the bets were all piled up at the finish line, the Crow bets on one side and the Gros Ventre bets on the other. Not only money, but clothes, saddles, bridles, blankets, and anything of value was bet. The Gros Ventre pony won the race. The riders, two boys, rode with only a hackamore, and no saddle or blanket. They had a circingle around each horse for the boys to hold on by. So much for Jim Matt.

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Gros ventre and Assiniboin. These Indians used to fight each other, and the old time Indians have not forgotten that fact. The Gros Ventres were long allied with the Piegan, but that broke off in a row about 1865. The Assiniboin had always been neighbors and enemies of the Gros ventre, and were steadily pushed west by the Sioux after the Minnesota massacre. The westward movement of the Sioux was also due to settlement of their lands in Minnesota, and scarcity of buffalo and other game. For a time, about 1868 to 1874, or thereabouts, the Gros ventre and River Crows threw together, and the situation about the Gros ventre agency at Milk River was complicated. The Gros Ventres were then friendly, for the time being, with the Assiniboin and the River Crow, and the River Crow and Assiniboin were hostile to each other. The Gros Ventres and the Piegan, Blood and Blackfoot were on an uncertain footing. The Gros ventre around 1868 were sometimes friendly with one or all of these tribes of the Blackfoot Nation, and at other times friendly with one tribe, but hostile to the other two. The Gros ventre claim the Assiniboin were trespassers in the Gros ventre country. They also claim that they took some of the Assiniboin in from compassion, when they were hard pressed by their enemies the Sioux, Crows, Blackfoot, and every other tribe in that region. The Gros ventres claim that the Assiniboin then sent for all their friends, the Canadian Assiniboin, to come and live with them in Gros Ventre country. Every once in a while feeling flares up on this Fort Belknap Reservation. A snap judgement is that the Assiniboin are the smarter politicians of the two tribes, but the Gros Ventres are tougher fighters. This applies to the old timers at least. When the tribal roll for the Reservation was published at first, it showed a majority of Assiniboin. The Gros Ventre tell that there was war threatened the night the roll was announced at the race track near Hays, which is a few miles north of St. Paul's Mission. The young Gros Ventres, who had not been brought up on a daily diet of battle, murder and sudden death, as had their elders, say they ducked out. The old fighting men, Bushy Head, Running Fisher, Otter Robe, Sleeps Above, Sits in the Middle, War Bonnet, and others, loaded their rifles, stuck butcher knives in the belts of their trousers (they wore trousers then, except at the 4th of July encampment), and wandered about all night trying to provoke the Assiniboin into making attack upon them. They could then kill some Assiniboin in "self defense." But the old time Assiniboin were too smart to fall into that kind of a trap, and stood their ground and kept their tempers down, because they were wise as to what the Gros ventre were trying to get them to do. The night passed with lots of tension, but no bloodshed. There has been intermarriage between the two tribes, and this feeling only flares up periodically. The tribes generally group separately on the reservation. The Gros ventres mainly center around Hays and St. Paul's Mission and the Assiniboin at Lodge Pole, White Bear Coulee, and along the northern border of the Reservation. In the annual encampment at the Agency the Gros Ventres camp in a group in the Assiniboin camp, but take part in the Sun Dance as dancers. They also take part in the other dances of the camp. Major Logan used to bring these matters up in the joint council meetings, and the council would break up in a fight. He opened once when old Nozey, or the Male, the head Assiniboin "Medicine Man" was there. He said: "Nozy, I hear that you killed your brother. How did it happen?" The Assiniboin assumed their best dead pan expressions, and the Gros Ventres all doubled up with laughter. An Assiniboin would then make the sign for "No good" to the Gros Ventres, and the fight was on. Council adjourned for that day.

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Once the Assiniboin scouts reported that there was a Gros ventre camp south of the Bear Paw mountains, that looked like easy picking. It had a pretty attractive horse herd. An Assiniboin war party, to whom these scouts reported, proceeded to the camp. Their plan was to leave their horses, and go on foot into the Gros Ventre pony herd, mount some of the horses, and run off the herd. The camp was stronger in fighting men than they thought, and their scouts had spotted the Assiniboin, and kept in touch with them. The Gros Ventre camp knew what was coming, and prepared for it. The Assiniboin dismounted at some distance from the camp, left their horses under guard and advanced on foot to the horse herd. When they got among the horses they were jumped by a party of Gros Ventres concealed in the herd. Meantime another party of Gros Ventres had circled to the position of the Assiniboin horses, overpowered the guard, and taken the horses. The Assiniboin found themselves afoot, outnumbered, and being chased to the Bear Paw mountains. Their course was through the mountains where rough going would slow up the pursuit of the mounted Gros Ventres, and they could find cover and positions from which to make a stand from time to time, when, too closely pressed. The flight of the Assiniboin through the mountains became a rout. They threw away their robes, and even their breech clothes and moccasins. A Gros Ventre said "you could go clear through the Bear Paws, walking on robes, breech clothes and moccasins." Nozy's brother was struck with a bullet, and badly hurt during the retreat. At nightfall it was evident that he could not keep up with the others. If they attempted to carry him, it would slow down the retreat, and they would all be killed. Nozy told his brother: "If we carry you, none of us will return. If we leave you as you are, you will be scalped and mutilated by the Gros Ventres. It might be wise to kill you and hide your body, so the Gros ventres will not get your scalp." To this his brother agreed, so Nozy shot him, and the Assiniboin hid his body, and made good their escape through the mountains. The Gros ventres always enjoyed that story as a good joke on Nozy.

Father Fuesi. He was never at the Mission when I was there. The Gros ventres said that he could speak their language like a native, and could speak Assiniboin just as well. The former is an achievement. Few Indians have learned to speak Gros Ventre, unless they were born in the tribe, and a white man who knew the language perfectly was never heard of before Father Fuesi. It is said that some of Father Fuesi's notes on the language are at St. Paul's Mission. They should be worth while looking into.

Father Mackin. An old time Superior of St. Paul's Mission. They were still talking of him. He built a log cabin across Mission Creek, directly in front of the church, to the west of it, for the Carter family to live in when they visited there. It was a good cabin. We lived there two summers. They said the Father could swear as well as any man in that country, which is saying a whole lot for him. And he was always willing to put up his fists and fight anybody. If they had scruples about the Roman collar, he would take it off and then fight. They still talk of a fight he had with a teamster up in Mission canyon. The swearing on that occasion is said to have been top notch. The Father must have been a whole lot like Thangbrand, the priest sent by Olaf, king of Norway, to convert the Icelanders. Thangbrand was as good with a sword or a battle axe as with a blessing. He could kill a man in a duel before Mass in the morning, and in shorter time than it took him to say Mass. What a man.

St. Paul's Mission church on Sunday. (1907 and 1909)

At Mass the women sat on the right side of the church, as one faced the altar, and the men on the left side. The men were thus seated on the Gospel side of the altar, and the women the Epistle side. The women had their babies with them, and fed the children crackers and milk or water from bottles during Mass. They also nursed them from the breast. There were dogs in the back of the church, but only a few, and those occasionally. Once in a while one would sneak up the center aisle. The men went to communion first, and then the women and children. Once an old Indian man on the way up to the communion rail encountered a dog in the aisle. The old fellow had his hands clasped, and looked very devout. But he turned aside a second, administered to the dog a good kick on the rump with his moccasinéd foot, and the dog let out a yelp and streaked down the aisle, while the Indian with head bowed and hands clasped proceeded up the aisle to receive communion. At the gospel and sermon Father Piet had John Buckman stand at his right and interpret as he went along. The Father would read a passage of the gospel, and then stop while John Buckman put it into Gros Ventre. While not attempting to give Gros ventre, here is the sound effect to a person who did not know the language: Father Piet: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and he was accused to him of wasting his goods." Pause, while John thought over that one for a moment. Then John began, and it sounded like this: "Ah-ha-hu-tits-blits-eh-ha-wuh-hu! Na-na-na-na-bts-lts-ts-he-uh! Wuh-huh-hu!" "Huh!" To which some of the older Gros ventre men in the congregation responded "Huh" or "How!" Father Piet, continuing after a brief pause to let that one sink in: "And he called him, and said to him, 'what is this I hear of thee?'" Pause. John Buckman: "Whoo-eee-he-uh-huh-tits-lts-bats-wha-huh! Wuh-ah-hah-ha-nts-cts-ney-huh! Huh!" And so on and so on. It took quite a while. Amid polite and subdued "Hows" from some of the old men in the congregation. Sometimes Benediction followed Mass, and a choir of girls from the school sang the Latin hymns in a Gros Ventre soprano. Some of the old Indians were very devout. An old man named Mouse went to communion every Sunday. He had a very sick daughter, and used to fast on her behalf. I think the daughter eventually recovered.

Fort Belknap Notes.

St. Paul's Mission church. Is on the east bank of Mission creek, a small stream flowing north from Mission Canyon in the Little Rocky Mountains. The door of the church faces west. The church is built of sandstone or limestone, which is procured in the vicinity. On the ceiling of the church is a painting. Toward the east or altar is God the Father, on a very pink cloud. He has whiskers like the old family Doctor who drove the horse and buggy. Five or six white men are seated near Him on both sides. The white men wear black stetson hats, black coats, and have black whiskers. They look like whiskey peddlers who were "saved" perhaps in the nick of time, but not before they had cleaned up on the profits of the trade. Below God and the white men, and to the east, or door of the church is Hell. It is full of Indians, presumably Gros Ventres and Assiniboins, who are looking most unhappy and are gazing up to God and the happy booze runners who are enjoying the cool weather aloft. The flames of Hell, and there are a whole lot of them, are brown instead of red. Red is a sacred color among these Indians, and if the flames were red, or yellow even, there might be some mistaken ideas among the Indians as to which place was which. A hell with red or yellow flames would be taken for heaven, and thus the whole force of the painting would be lost. The only lesson I could get from the picture was that all Indians went to Hell and all white men went to Heaven. If so, then why bother about it. They should have, at least, put a quarter breed near the Heavenly Throne, even if they had to fix a special Jim Crow pink cloud for him, and they might have put at least one white man, a very wicked one, down in hell with the Gros Ventres and Assiniboin, just to show that God played no favorites.

The Reservation. Is bounded on the north by Milk river, which flows from west to east, and has fairly steep banks of friable dobe clay. It is narrow, shallow and muddy, and in better watered country would be called a creek. Its great length, it rises in the Rocky Mountains on the Blackfoot Reservation, flows into Canada, north of the Sweet Grass Hills, then flows through Montana, past the Fort Belknap Reservation, and enters the Missouri near the Fort Peck reservation, makes it almost a river. The south boundary of the Reservation is a line drawn through the northern end of the Little Rocky Mountains, from east to west, and following certain landmarks. This line is forty five to fifty miles south of the north boundary. The west boundary is a straight line drawn from a point on Milk River near Snake Butte to a point at the west end of the Little Rocky Mountains. The Little Rockies run east and west. The east boundary is a straight line drawn from the junction of People's Creek and Milk river to a point at the east end of the Little Rockies. The Reservation is a parallelogram, roughly, the north boundary being longer than the south boundary. The railroad station is at Harlem, on the Great Northern Railroad. Harlem is north of the Milk River, off the reservation and about four miles from the Agency. It is a town of about two or three hundred population, and is a flag stop for through trains. It is a two street town. The main street facing the railroad tracks, running east and west, and a street back of that, or south of it, and running parallel to it, and several streets, running north and south and connecting up the two main parallel streets. It has a hotel and restaurant, a bank, a catholic Church, a school, some general stores, and a moving picture theatre. The white farmers from up and down Milk River come in there to do their buying, selling and shipping, as do the neighboring Indians and whites from the Agency. This country is hell in summer and Siberia in winter.

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The Reservation covers 537,600 acres. It is mostly benchland covered with bunch grass. There is some alluvial land good for growing in the creek bottoms, and along Milk River. Rainfall is scanty, and the growing season is short. Summers are short and hot, and winters long and cold. The bench land is good for grazing, but Buckman tells that it takes twenty acres of it to sustain one head of beef for one year on grazing only. Water is scarce. There are some artesian wells on the reservation but not many. In addition to the Milk River, and its irrigation ditch which waters the southern half of the Milk river valley, which is on the northern edge of the reservation, there are the valleys of People's and Lodge Pole Creeks. The head of Lodge Pole creek at the south east corner of the Reservation forms a valley with good agricultural land. This is also true of the valley of Mission Creek, a branch of the south branch of People's creek at the south west corner of the Reservation. Except at their heads, these creeks dry up during a drouth. There is a spring of good drinking water at Snake Butte at the northwest corner of the Reservation, and one at Horse Butte, about twenty miles north of St. Pauls Mission, which is at the southwest corner of the Reservation. There is another spring on Peoples Creek at the old stage crossing, about fifteen miles east of the Horse Butte spring. There are traces of an old spring at Three Buttes, about ten miles north west of St. Pauls Mission. The Horse Butte, or Wild Horse Butte spring is on the north face of the Butte. The Three Buttes site of a spring is on the south east fact of Three Buttes. There is artesian water at Hays, and a well on the Stevens ranch which is in the south central part of the Reservation. In this country about every fifth or sixth year is a good year for rain fall, and prairie grass. The rest are not so good. Grasshoppers often accompany drouth, as do Mormon Beetles, and destroy whatever crops there are. Even in good years sudden summer hailstorms may blow up and destroy a crop in a very few minutes. There are also unseasonable frosts. And there may be floods, in the bottom lands. Those who live here do so by the grace of God, and lots of luck. Timber is scarce. There is pine on the Little Rocky Mountains, and some cottonwood and williw in the canyons and near the creeks. There is cotton wood and willow on the Milk River. Between Milk River and the Little Rockies there is about enough wood to furnish toothpicks for a family of gophers. There is some choke cherry bush in the creek bottoms. In summer the great pest is mosquitoes. This is prevalent along Milk River, but not in the Little Rockies. The mosquitoes do not like the heat, and remain in the grass during the heat of the day, and come out to feed upon men and animals in the cool of the evening. They take to white men, Assiniboins, Gros Ventres, full bloods and mixed bloods, tourists and natives, Christians and Pagans with equal relish. Most of the time they are bad, and some of the time they are worse. Neither citronella nor smudges hold any terrors for them. They do not appear to annoy the dogs. Perhaps when they land on an Assiniboin dog the fleas bite the mosquitoes. There is some good land along the northern face of the Little Rockies. Small creeks, draws, and snow water from the winter make the land fertile. But most of the northern face of these mountains consists of a limestone cliff. At one time it was thought that there was coal back of St. Pauls, but it turned out to be sandstone colored by iron. There are gold mines in the Zortman-Landusky district of the Little Rockies. The gold is found in porphyry, but not in the sandstone or limestone. It is believed that there was an old volcano here, and the porphyry is the lava. That has the gold, and it is found nowhere else.

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Some of the Gros ventre think there is gold on the Reservation. But unless there are outcroppings there of porphyry, they will find no gold. So far, there is only limestone and sandstone that has been discovered. An oil company has drilled and capped a well half way between the Little Rockies and the Bear Paw Mountains, about forty miles due west of the Little Rockies. No word has yet leaked out as to what they found in the well. The Reservation has no trace of Two Medicine shale, or Caspar shale. It is doubted of there is oil. In the Mission canyon, up which the road runs to the south of the St. Pauls Mission to Zortman and Landusky, there is a natural bridge, just above the entrance of the canyon, and in its west wall. The canyon is very narrow, the walls perpendicular, and running up about three to five hundred feet. At places, above the limestone, can be seen the red strata of the porphyry. In the limestone is fossil seaweed and shells. The sea weed resembles kelp, and the shells, some of them, are small clam shells. There are small caves in the cliffs. It is said that the Little Rockies were once a volcanic island. The lava spread out from the volcano, and shells and kelp, fossilized, can be dug from the old sand of the beach beneath the ancient lava stream. There is not much wild life. There may be some deer, and possibly a bear or two. And mountain lion has been heard of. There are some coyotes out on the plains. There are plenty of gopher villages in places, and the Indians find them good eating. Like squirrel. There are curlews, with long bills who have a piping cry, that sounds like the blowing of the willow whistles by the dancers in the Assiniboin Fool dance. The curlew is good eating. In shooting into a flock of them, if any fall, the rest circle around the spot where their comrades fell, and there is time to reload and get some more. Once we shot a mess of curlew and took them back to the Mission. We had curlew pot pie for supper, but the cook left the bills on, and the long, reed like, curlew bills stuck up at all angles from the crust of the pot pie when it was brought on the table in the Father's refectory. It was a good pot pie, anyhow. The country and the people would be a disappointment to the casual tourist, or traveller. The country appears bleak and barren. The cabins of the Indians are of logs, and are small, poor, and have small windows. They are generally roofed with sod and dirt. The cabins must be small and have small windows, as this makes them easier to heat in a country where the winters are cold and long, and wood is scarce. But there is not much sunlight in the cabins, and this leads to rickets, and some say tuberculosis. The people appear poor. But they are cheerful, when you get to know them, but reserved when they do not know you. To their friends, and those they know, they are cheerful, open, generous and hospitable. To strangers they appear shy or sullen, or reserved. The mixed bloods and educated full bloods dress as well, when they are "dressed up" as white men in Chicago, New York or Washington. Indeed, they have a rather dapper appearance. The old time full bloods, when dressed up for the fourth of July encampment and other festal occasions wear old time Indian costumes and regalia. At other times they appear in overalls, or old trousers, plain moccasins, a khaki or blue shirt, and the usual "cowboy" hat. Sometimes they wear a neckkerchief of some color, and the braided hair may be woven with red cloth or red string. They sometimes carry a blanket. The old women wear plain calico, and plain moccasins. The younger men try to dress and look as much as possible like cowboys, and have their horses trained to buck and rare.

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There is not much trachoma in evidence, nor much coughing and spitting. Saw one Indian broken out with copper colored body eruptions, but they are generally clean skinned, both men and women. No lip sores apparent. In person they are clean, and have no offensive body odor. Many used the blossom of a small prairie flower, which has a pleasant but pungent odor, as perfume. The flower has a yellow blossom. Bernard Striker first showed it to me and called it "Indian perfume." There is no vermin or body lice upon them, nor was any noticed in their cabins, which are clean as circumstances permit. The latrines are ill smelling, and not so well kept, or cleaned out. The only places I have ever contracted crabs, or body lice and food poisoning were in Washington, D.C. Never in Indian country. Did get mal du vache or cow sickness once at St. Pauls, and that was from a hearty breakfast of very fresh beef. Bossy had been peacefully grazing in the corral at 8 P.M. the night before, and chunks of her, friend, were devoured by me, washed down by coffee, at a 4 A.M. breakfast the next morning. After which I undertook to ride a fairly rough horse from St. Pauls to Wild Horse Butte. The belly ache and dysentery resulting are both something to remember. John Buckman said that once he had to drink alkali water, because very thirsty. What happened to John was along the same line, only a whole lot more so. But cattle seem to have no ill effects, nor do sheep, from drinking the highly impregnated water from the storage reservoirs. It is recorded that Custer's men at their last breakfast before stacking up against the Sioux on the Little Big Horn, had water that was so strongly alkaline that not even boiling coffee in it would allay its taste. If it did to them what it did to John Buckman, no wonder they were whipped to a standstill by the Sioux. The Gros Ventre and Assiniboin are about equal in number. This varies a little from time to time, but not much. There are between fourteen and fifteen hundred Indians on the Fort Belknap reservation. They are either Gros ventres or Assiniboins.

Snake Butte. Back of Snake Butte occurred the fight between Chief Joseph and General Miles in September, 1877. The old time Indians of Fort Belknap believed that the people killed in that fight used to loiter around the eastern edge of Snake Butte, enjoying the cool of the evening, and looking over the country. The place was not popular among the old time Indians of the Reservation, and once when some strangers camped on Snake Butte, the Indians seeing movement up there, were very much upset about it. Major Logan used to tell the Gros ventre and Assiniboin council in their joint meetings with him that he would be buried on the top of Snake Butte when he died, and would thus be able to keep an eye on the Reservation. He told them he could run the Reservation better that way after he was dead, than he could when he was living. He told them "from my grave on Snake Butte I will look out over the Reservation, and if anyone of you are not working, or are doing something you shouldn't, I will come down that night and pay you a visit, and you won't like that visit when I make it." There is a good quarry at Snake Butte, and the water in the spring is good and abundant. Rattlesnakes like the pring also, and go there in numbers, it is said. The butte from a distance looks flat, and diamond shaped, like the head of a rattler. The water on this reservation comes from limestone formation. It irritates the bladder, and does not quench the thirst. The drinking water at the agency is hauled there thirteen miles from the Snake Butte spring, in barrels. The river water, used for washing at the agency, is heavily chlorinated, and is not fit to drink, in any state.

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As before said, Sanke Butte lies thirteen miles west of the agency, and about at the north west corner of the Reservation. About half way between the Agency and the Mission at St. Pauls is Wild Horse Butte. The Indians say that wild horses come out of that butte, and hence the name. Next, about ten miles north west of St. Pauls is Three Buttes, or Three Persons, or Peoples, Buttes. There are three buttes close together. A branch of People's creek rises close to these buttes. Next in line, and west of the Mission is Haystack butte. These buttes are all west of the road between the Agency and the Mission. Near Three Buttes, on a ridge southeast of them, is an old camp site. There are a number of lodge circles, of stones. These stones in the old days were used to hold down the inner cover or lining of the lodge. It is noted these lodges were not pitched in a circle, and were pitched on a ridge, and hence were on the skyline. Hendry in 1754 noted that the Piegan lodges were pitched in a parallel line, and not in a camp circle. Before the advent of the horse there would be no need of the circle. The circle was useful to impound a horse herd for safety. Dogs could be kept around the lodges without that precaution. The lodge circles before the horse are smaller. The lodges were smaller, because dogs could not pack as large a load as could horses. Again, the camp was on the skyline. A good view could be had from the old camp site of the surrounding country. Thus enemies, on foot, could be seen from a distance by the whole camp. After horses were acquired it was safer to keep the camp out of sight, because mounted men can close in more rapidly. Hence scouts were sent out, and the camp pitched in the valleys, instead of on the ridges, as many camp sites are found, which were pitched in the days before the advent of the horse. On Lodge Pole creek, about five or six miles below, and north of Lodge Pole sub Agency, in the bank of the creek that is to say, the east bank, is a large deposit of buffalo bones. The strata is about six to twelve inches thick, and below the prairie level about six to seven feet. There are charcoal remains deposited, and some of the bones are reduced to meal. One fire charred round boulder was found under a skull, which it appeared to have propped up. No artifacts were found. The Indians questioned about this place do not recall having ever used it, and do not know why it is there. From the height of the headgates of the irrigation flumes installed by Army Officers at the mouth of Lodge Pole canyon in the Eighties, it is judged that Lodge Pole creek must have had much more volume then, than it has now. Much timber has since been cut in the Little Rockies for timbering the Zortman-Landusky gold mines. This may have made the difference. Also, agriculture will shrink streams. This bone deposit is a puzzler.

Labor. Some Indians get work in the Zortman mines, but not many. The Indian likes to quit work when he has a little money ahead, and will quit without notice, or so says the white man. They do not take kindly to rough language or harsh orders from straw bosses, and if they think their dignity or feelings or pride are hurt, they will quit right off, and not even go back for their pay. But handled in the right way they are good workers. There is seasonal labor in Milk River valley in sugar beet picking. Mexican seasonal labor has taken up those jobs. There has been an attempt to have the Indian women revive their handicraft. But where to market it? Trains do not make regular stops at Harlem, and again, the white man says that the Indian market in that line is not reliable. At Glacier Park "Indian goods" made in Massachusetts are sold to tourists, although the genuine article is next door and available

Blind; Plenty Dirty; Poor or Bad Grey; Good Grey; Black Horn; Black Travois; Water Once a Day; Freezes; Bloods. Informant states that each clan had special taboos but he forgets just what they were. The clan members could not marry within the respective clans.

Societies. There were ten societies and each one had its own particular dance. A man could belong to one society, and only one, at a time, but there was nothing to prevent him from leaving one society and going into another. Again, some societies were for young men, others for middle aged men, and still others for old men, when one was a boy, for instance, he would belong to the Fly Dancers (so called because the dancers made an imitation of the gad fly). On growing older he would leave the Fly Dancers and join some other society, and thus succeed the social of societies as he grew older and more powerful. Each society was governed by four Chiefs or Governors. Each society had its turn in keeping order in the camp. While keeping order they were known as Soldiers. As soldiers they enjoyed the commands of the chiefs and "soldier killed" those who disobeyed them. The soldiers regulated the buffalo hunting, and saw that camp was moved when those in power so ordered it. There were twelve societies (informant previously stated ten) (probably there were twelve societies but informant could only remember ten, as in the case of the clans). The societies were: (written in notes, and this list then scratched out)

The Fly Dancers; The Grass Dancers; The Green Dancers; The Crazy Dancers, so called because they always did things the opposite to what they meant. In the old days they were feared because they would kill a man on the slightest provocation. The Buffalo Dancers, a society for younger men. The Buffalo Dancers, a society for older men. The Star Dancers; The Dog Man; The Pony Man; The Drummer, a very powerful society. (End of list scratched out of notes not scratched out.)

Working was known by informants, they said, about the ritual, regulations, foundation, imitation or position of any of these societies. They were sometimes named after the dances they gave. The only dance described was the Buffalo Dance. This dance was supposed to be very potent in bringing buffalo. (Following list of societies): Crazy people; Buffalo Dancers; Fly Dancers; Fool Dancers. Buffalo Dance. Duration. Four days. Origin. A man dreamed of the Buffalo Dance. He had some connection with the buffalo and organized the dance. The dancers were painted red with bands of charcoal around their wrists and ankles. Each dancer carried a stick three feet long tipped with buffalo hair, on which there hung the bow class of the buffalo. His painting had to be done by an old man. When the person wanted to enter this dance he must go to some old man, bearing a pipe. The old man signified assent by smoking the pipe. It cost the young man a great deal because afterwards the old man would charge heavy prices for the lessons. The old man always carried their weapons.

Feather Pipe or Turtle: The Boy also said that the path of sage and buffalo chips was to lead from the place he sat and through the camp, and through three large sweat lodges prepared in advance to the fourth large sweat lodge, into which this trail was to enter. When all was prepared, the man carrying his pipe, and his wife and child advanced along this trail and through the three sweat lodges and into the fourth lodge. At this point Superintendent Elliott or Boling interrupted with a question, and the story remained unfinished.)

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were attacked by enemies during a buffalo dance, the dancers must go out and fight with their dance sticks, only. They must fight bravely, and no cowardice was allowed in the Society. After the dance the camp always moved a short distance from where the dance was held, and on the march the dancers went first, They chose some poor man from the camp and sent him on ahead, and after he had gone some ways, all the dancers would rush up to overtake him, and on coming up to him would strike him and then give him whatever they happened to have; a gun, a blanket, or anything. Afterwards this society with its leaders governed the camp for four months. They were, during this time, above the chiefs. The camp was governed by one or other of the societies in turn, and by the four chiefs of that society. They could "soldier kill" and had almost absolute sway. The Buffalo Dance was held once a year, and when a person looked at it, or came near the place it was going on, he was always still and solemn, for this ceremony came from above.

The Fool Dance. Observed. Assiniboin gave it in 1907. Medicine Robe was chief of the society.

Fly Dance. Observed. Given by either Gros ventre or Assiniboin in 1907. believe it was Assiniboin, however. It broke up in a fight, when one of the spectators who was stuck by a gad of one of the dancers, pulled a gun. Major Logan and Powder Face took the gun. It was said that it was the Major that they were laying for, the plan being to have him accidentally shot during the fracas. The Major and Powder Face worked too fast for them, and the plan did not go through, if the report was correct.

✓ These societies were for different ages. Some societies were for young people; others for middle aged people; and still others for old people.

For instance when a boy, one would belong to the Fly Dancers, but as one grew older he would switch from society to society. There was a woman's buffalo society, its membership restricted to old men and women. The nature of their ceremonies is unknown.

Clan list already made up. See above.

Feather Pipe. Priesthood of. Myth. A long time ago there was a rich man who had two wives and a child. One night he dreamed that a pipe would come down to him from the sky. So the next day he told the people of the camp to tie their horses tight and stake down their lodges, as there was going to be a big storm. They did as he said. That evening, about sun set, a great storm came upon the camp. Thunder, lightning, hail and rain. In the morning the people went out and found that the tent of the rich man had disappeared, together with his horses and all his property. He sat on the ground with his family. They were painted red, and their hair was done up in a knot on the top of their heads. Around the head of each was tied a strip of white buffalo hide in which was stuck a plume. The man held in his two hands a very pretty stone pipe, made in four parts. (Note: Insert by The Boy, 1936: The son of Lame Bull, former keeper of the Turtle Pipe, has the following to add: When the man knew the storm was coming, he had his lodge pitched outside the camp. In the morning when the people came out and saw him sitting with his two wives and child, his lodge and all his property gone, he came toward him, but he warned them to keep at a distance. Then he told the people to make a path of sage and buffalo chips from his place to a lodge prepared in the camp, and he told them how to prepare the lodge, and when all was ready, he, with his two wives and child following, walked to the lodge in the camp on the buffalo chips. The man carried the pipe, the Feather Pipe, and brought it to the lodge.)

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The man was not poor very long because all the people brought him presents and soon he was richer than before. He was the first Pipe keeper, and as he had only received the Pipe, and no instructions went with it, he made up the rules that should govern the conduct of the Pipe keeper. The Pipe is called the Feather Pipe. (Also Thunder Pipe), and it has as many different names as it has parts, namely four. The other two names not known to informants. The order of four likewise plays an important part in the Feather Pipe ritual. When a man wants to build a sweat lodge for the Pipe keeper, there must be forty four sticks and forty four stones in the construction of the lodge. There are regulations governing the manner of life of the Pipe Keeper. He must paint his face red as a sign of his high position. He must not brush or comb his hair. He cannot own, use or eat a dog in any way. He cannot scold anybody, trail a person, or hold unlawful intercourse with any woman. He must observe frequent and rigid fasts. On mornings which the Pipe Keeper has decided that the camp is to be moved, the Pipe is slung on its tripod before the door of his lodge. In whatever direction the tripod faced, that was the direction in which the camp must move that day. This command was above that of the four Soldier Chiefs, and could not be changed. Ordinarily the Feather Pipe in its bundle was slung on a tripod before the door of the Keeper's lodge later in the morning. At night the Pipe was taken in the lodge and laid on a bed in the back of the lodge. The first Keeper, on receiving the Pipe, sent young men out to kill all kinds of birds, and of their skins the first wrapping of the Pipe was made. The second wrapping was of bear skin, and the third of elk skin. So it is today. There were, of course, many rites in honor of the Pipe, as well as songs. These songs the Pipe Keeper had to know, and he learned them from his predecessor, to whom they had been handed down. If at any time during the custodianship of the Pipe Keeper a white buffalo was killed, the skin of that buffalo went to the Keeper. Runnin Fisher said he had killed a white buffalo, once upon a time, and sold its skin to white men at Fort Buford. If a man wished to build a sweat lodge to the Keeper of the Pipe he must first obtain information from the Keeper as to how to go about it. He would be told to make its dimensions so and so, and to dig the fire hole in such a way, and to face it in such a direction, and that it must contain forty four sticks, and forty four stones. The stones were for heating in the sweat lodge. The order of four was strictly adhered to. The Feather Pipe could both be smoked and danced with. A man who was sick or suffering from some misfortune would vow, for instance, to smoke or dance with the Feather Pipe. This would cost him a great deal, as he must build a large lodge in the middle of the camp and give a feast of all the provisions he had. Further, he must make many gifts to the Pipe Keeper, as well as to others. The Pipe was always handled with the greatest care, and was seldom exposed. When carried it was held at present arms, in front of the body, with both hands, the right hand above the left. If a man was dancing with the Pipe, upon completing his dance, he would pass the Pipe carefully to the man next to him, and getting up pass around behind and sit on the other side of the man. In the dance the stem of the Pipe only was handled. The bowl, covered by its wrappings, reposed in the back of the lodge. If smoked, another expensive but healing rite, a man smoking could take but four puffs. This rule was rigidly adhered to. This Pipe was also used in part of the Sun Dance. When the center pole of the Sun Dance lodge is about to

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be lifted, a man is sent for the Feather Pipe. Only two men can lift the center pole of the Sun Dance lodge, but by the power of the Pipe this task is made easy. The two men selected stand ready by the pole. The pole, raised to an angle on supports, is ready to be lifted into place, and the Pipe carrier stands under it. A fourth man stands behind the Pipe carrier. The Pipe carrier makes four feints with the Pipe to the center pole. Both pipe stem and bowl are joined and the Pipe is not covered. It is carried in both hands in the ceremonial manner. At each feint the man behind the Pipe carrier cries out. Then the Pipe carrier touches the center pole with the Pipe, and the two men push the center pole into an upright position. The term of office of the Pipe Keeper was four years. He could not keep the Pipe longer. When his term of office was about to expire, he gathered his relatives together, and with their aid chose a successor. Outside of his relatives and himself no man knew who this successor was going to be. The position of Pipe Keeper involved such restraints, although otherwise honorable and lucrative, that no one wanted it. But a Pipe when offered may never be refused. If a man knew in advance that so difficult a task as Pipe Keeper was to fall to his lot, he might leave the camp and hide out. So no one knew, outside of the Pipe Keeper and his relatives, the name of the person chosen as successor. When it was decided that the time had arrived to hand over the Pipe to the successor, the Keeper, accompanied by his near relatives and family, repaired in the night, or very early in the morning, to the lodge of the one chosen as successor. The family and relatives of the Keeper surrounded this lodge, and the Keeper going inside awoke the man chosen and gave him the Pipe. This was usually the first intimation of the successor that the honor of being Keeper of the Feather Pipe had been thrust upon him. But, as he dare not refuse a Pipe, he was Keeper for the next four years. The ex-Keeper remained with the new Keeper for some days, teaching him the ritual of the Pipe. Also he gave the new Keeper some valuable presents. The Keeper of a medicine Pipe was undoubtedly a powerful man in the camp. He could lead out war parties at any time, but could not himself trail an enemy. His voice was powerful in council. But still it was an irksome position, so severe were its restrictions, and few men desired it. The present Pipe Keeper (1909) is Sleeping Bear. The last Pipe ceremony was given about six years before (1903), by a blind man who wished to be cured. The blind man was cured. (In 1936 the Keeper of the Feather or Thunder Pipe was Curly Head. On Sunday, July 5, 1936 he gave the ceremony in which the Pipe was exposed at his cabin, which is east of Hays, on the Hays-Lodge Pole road. Some weeks ago, it was said, Curly Head exposed the Feather or Thunder Pipe, but it rained so hard that no one could come to the ceremony. Curly Head died in 1937, leaving no successor as Pipe Keeper. In 1936 the Flat Pipe, also known as Turtle Pipe, and also known as Cord, was likewise without a Keeper. Further information on these Pipes will be given at the conclusion of the notes taken in 1909.)

The Flat Pipe. Present keeper (1909), Otter Robe. The Boy says that his father, Lame Bull, was a keeper of the Flat Pipe. The father of Lame Bull was Crow Moccasin, known to the whites as Eagle Chief. The regulations governing the keeper of the Flat, or Turtle Pipe, were about the same as those of the Feather, or Thunder Pipe. The Flat Pipe has three parts and three names. The three names are: Flat Pipe, Turtle, and Cord. The order of three was observed in the ceremonies of this Pipe.