

## A COLLECTION FROM THE CROW INDIANS

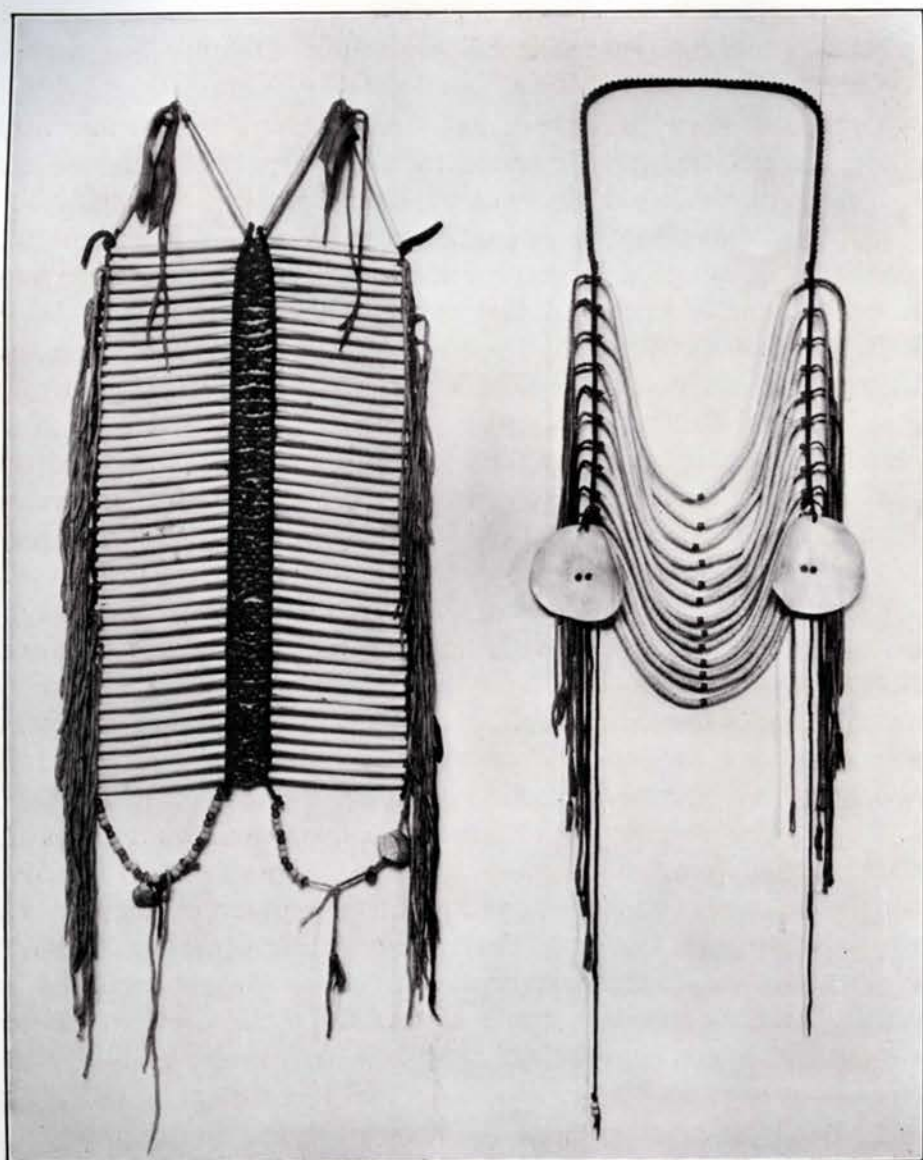
BY J. ALDEN MASON

AMONG the Indian tribes of our Great Plains, those buffalo hunting, tipi inhabiting, feather bedecked, upstanding warriors who to us have always represented their race, none ranked higher than the Crow, or, as they termed themselves, the Absaroke, a native word of the same signification.

Although numerically not a large tribe, probably at no time exceeding four thousand persons, they held by dint of their warlike prowess an immense territory against the attacks of the larger hostile tribes which ringed them about. They claimed as theirs and roamed over a tract east of the Rockies which included most of the state of Montana and a part of Wyoming, a vast stretch for so few people, and one which teemed with bison and elk.

The Crow were therefore a proud and wealthy people, reveling in hunting and warfare and despising the sedentary life. Although native legend, corroborated by scientific research, indicates that the Crow broke away from the Hidatsa, a sedentary, partly agricultural people living in permanent villages further to the east, not more than two centuries ago, the Crow became a typical buffalo hunting tribe of the Great Plains. At the present time they number no more than eighteen hundred and are confined to the relatively small area of the Crow Reservation, where they retain memories of the time when buffalo and elk swarmed over the country and the Dakota, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Shoshoni warriors gave the young brave his chance to win the honors of battle. The Crow developed no bitter animosity toward the whites as the result of barbarous treatment and broken treaties. Their territory lay rather out of the main channels of transcontinental migration and their land was not especially adapted to agriculture and therefore not speedily overrun and appropriated. Beyond stealing horses and other equipment from emigrants—always a laudable deed in Indian eyes—no massacres of settlers are reported against them and only one trivial difficulty with federal soldiers. There was never any attempt to move them far from their ancestral home and they now occupy a reservation within the bounds of their former hunting grounds.

The old culture of the Crow is rapidly disappearing, the wooden house is taking the place of the tipi and the tractor that of the horse.



Bone Breast Ornaments worn by Crow Indian Men.

The younger generation takes little interest in the costumes, the ceremonial objects and the other material evidences of the older culture, objects which are gradually disappearing and will never again be made. These old properties of the tribe are represented in a collection recently secured by the Museum from Mr. Ernest E. Murray of Billings, Montana.

Physically the Crow were and are magnificent specimens of humanity, ranking among the tallest people in the world. The average height for the men is not far from six feet and some reach a height of six feet four inches and even more. They are for the greater part slim but powerfully built and consider a straight nose and small hands and feet essential to physical perfection.

In earlier days the clothing was made entirely of skins, generally of elk hide, though hides of buffalo and mountain sheep were also utilized and all apparel was profusely decorated, so that the Crow, especially the men, became noted among the prairie tribes for the beauty of their trappings. Breechclout, leggings, shirt, moccasins and buffalo robe were the primary elements of man's apparel, but these only served as a base for the profuse ornamentation which was applied to them and worn over them, consisting of bead and porcupine quill embroidery, feathers, dyed horsehair, and objects of bone, teeth, claws and many other materials. The employment of porcupine quill embroidery is, of course, the elder art, work in glass beads being, despite their great present vogue, a development of hardly more than the last century, although the designs employed are taken over from the older technique. Both arts were practised exclusively by the women. Beadwork embroidery was formerly accomplished by the use of sinew, but today thread and needle are employed, the beads being strung on thread and then attached to the background with many stitches. Solid areas of beading are typical, in which geometric and normally rectilinear designs are placed.

According to tradition, Crow moccasins were originally made of one piece of tanned hide, according to the technique of the woodland tribes, but the modern Crow have evidently been greatly influenced by the other tribes of the prairies in their moccasin technique. The typical Plains moccasin is made in two parts, with a separate rawhide sole and uppers of soft tanned skin. The Crow moccasins illustrated on page 401 are made with a separate sole, but this is of soft tanned elkskin instead of the typical rawhide. The upper part is made of four separate pieces of tanned elkhide, the

upper and the flap being each of one piece with a small piece inserted at the back and another small piece for the tongue. Thongs of thin strips of elkskin are attached with which to bind the flaps around the ankle.

Crow moccasins are profusely decorated on the vamp and along the border of the sole with beadwork. The designs employed are most commonly rectilinear and geometric, but of recent years the curvilinear floral designs, which are more typical of the woodland tribes such as the Ojibway and Cree, are becoming increasingly popular among the Crow. Such is the design on the moccasins here figured.

Apparently the most typical and popular ornament of the Crow man, if one may judge from photographs of warriors of the tribe in full regalia, is a breast ornament such as that illustrated on page 394. This consists of a number—in the present specimen, thirteen—of pendent loops of thin discoidal bone beads strung on buckskin thongs carefully twisted to a circular section. These bone disks are so numerous and of such uniform size and thickness that it seems probable that they are or were made in large quantities by machinery in some city and sent to the Indian reservations for sale, just as is the case with the glass beads which are regarded as so typically Indian. In all such cases the modern product replaces an older one which the Indians in earlier days manufactured laboriously. Occasional large green glass beads are interspersed among the bone disks of this specimen. The buckskin thongs on which the disks and beads are strung pass through the vertical side pieces, which are of commercial leather, and hang down on either side as tassels, the neckband being also of a thin strip of leather. The ensemble is completed by two large concave disks of pink seashell.

Another breast ornament which is very popular among certain tribes of the Great Plains, though not especially so among the Crow, is the other specimen figured on page 394. It is possible that it may have drifted to the Crows from another Plains tribe. This is practically a breastplate made of many parallel and closely set long tubular beads of bone. These are always arranged in two parallel columns, the present specimen having forty-one beads to each column. As in the case of the preceding specimen, these bone beads are so uniform and carefully finished and drilled as to suggest that they also are of commercial manufacture, sold to the Indians, although in earlier days they doubtless had an aboriginal prototype.



Dress of Crow Indian Girl, Decorated with Imitation Elk Teeth.

In the central column between the bone beads, large glass beads are found and all, as in the case of the preceding specimen, are strung on parallel horizontal buckskin thongs which perforate the leather supports to the sides and hang down outside as pendent fringes. To one end, twin loops made of large strung glass beads are found, their place being taken at the other end by the angles made by two of the long bone beads to either side.

In former days the woman's dress was made, according to various informants, of deer, mountain sheep or mountain goat skins, two entire hides being used for the dress, one to front and one to back, with the yoke made of a third smaller piece. These dresses were profusely decorated with elk teeth until they became extremely heavy, much too heavy for comfort, and were, of course, worn only on occasions of ceremony. Indeed, one of the indices of a man's wealth and importance was the number of elk teeth on his wife's and daughters' dresses. These attested his prowess as a hunter, and the great abundance of elk in the Crow region may be realized from the fact that although each elk affords only two tusks, dresses with over a thousand elk teeth have been known among the Crow. They passed also as a species of currency, a hundred of them purchasing a good horse. Yet no young Crow dared to think of marriage until he possessed enough elk teeth to decorate his bride's best dress.

Of later years, with the diminution of the Crow territory and the consequent practical disappearance of elk and other game upon the reservation, the elkskin and elk teeth dresses were necessarily superseded. Dresses of a cloth material known as stroud or strouding became popular on the reservation, and most of the modern women's dresses are made of this cloth, either blue or red. The specimen secured with the Murray Collection and illustrated on page 397 is a child's dress of red stroud lined with muslin, the cuffs, hem and yoke being made of several varieties of blue cloth and edged with pink ribbon. The yoke is further decorated with beads. The dress is covered with imitation elk teeth, made of bone cut to the proper shape and sewed to the red stroud with string. These imitation elk teeth are used today on all women's dresses, and very closely resemble the genuine; in fact, many of them need close inspection to distinguish them from the genuine. Others, however, are rather rude. Owing to the irregular shape of the elk tusk, these cannot be turned out in bulk by machinery and are apparently cut

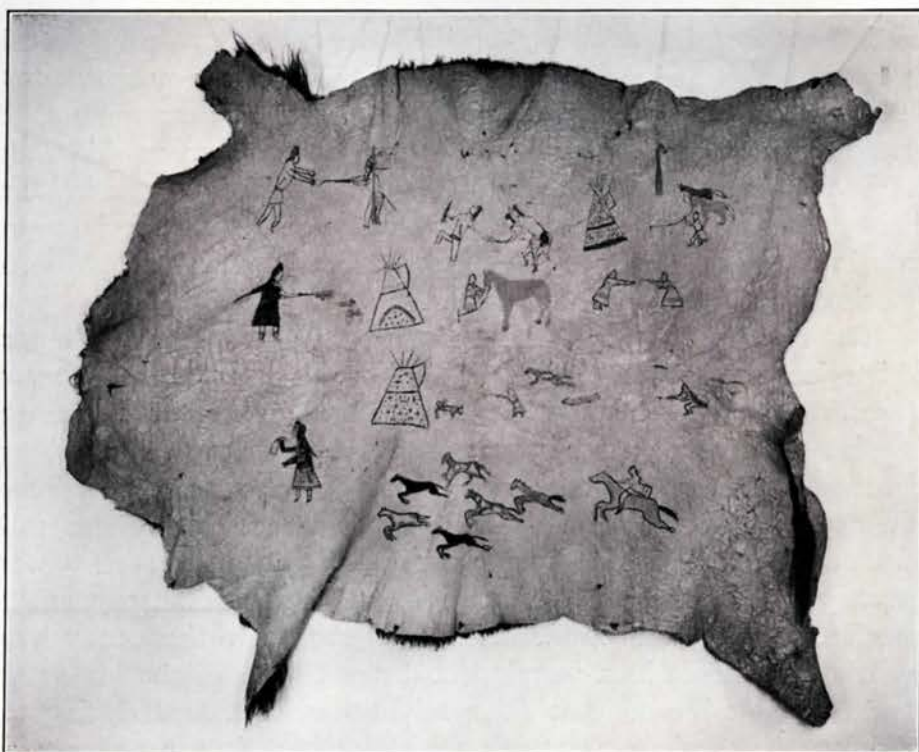
by hand, but whether this is done by the Indians themselves or by outside labor is not reported.

Robes made of buffalo hide, generally from a cow on account of the greater softness of the skin, were prized articles of apparel and of ornament among the Indians of the Great Plains, not only because of their warmth in the glacial winter days, but because their large expanse of even surface presented a medium for the expression of art such as was afforded by no other material within their knowledge. Buffalo robes were nearly always decorated to the full extent of the ability of the owner, and are consequently always valuable and prized articles, not alone to the native, but to the Museum. Often they are but highly developed examples of the same technique and artistic style which is found on rawhide bags and such smaller objects, but more frequently advantage is taken of the more extensive surface to elaborate a series of pictorial representations which serves as a portrayal, pictographic or mnemonic, historical or biographical, of events.

The majority of painted buffalo robes fall into the two classes of historical and biographical. To the former class belong the very interesting "Winter Counts" of the Dakota Indians, in which the historian records the most important event of the year. The symbols themselves are most interesting for students of the origins of systems of writing. The autobiographical records are generally more purely pictorial and less symbolically mnemonic; they were probably painted for self glorification, which to Indian psychology is perfectly proper and laudable, though even here there may have been the mnemonic idea in mind, a desire to record the important events of one's life so that none might be overlooked during the recitation of heroic adventures which was a feature of certain ceremonies.

A robe, apparently of the autobiographical type, was secured with the Murray Crow collection and is reproduced on page 400. While inferior in practically every respect to the admirable robe which was described in a recent issue of this JOURNAL, it is of considerable interest. The robe itself is evidently quite old, with thick brown wool, but the paintings on the interior are relatively recent. They are in bright unfaded colors and seem to have been made of aniline dyes mixed to a thick paste and applied thickly with a stick. The usual painting instrument on the Plains was a piece of spongy bone from the knee joint of a buffalo or ox. The colors employed

are dark blue, yellow, red, green and light blue. The scenes depicted are all martial and apparently all of intertribal warfare, there being no certain representations of soldiers or white civilians. Firearms are the sole weapons displayed, indicating that the period pictured is quite recent. The delineation of the human figure is not especially creditable, but the spirited portrayal of running horses indicates a keen observation and a thorough acquaintance with horseflesh. The assumption that the events pictured are autobiographical is based



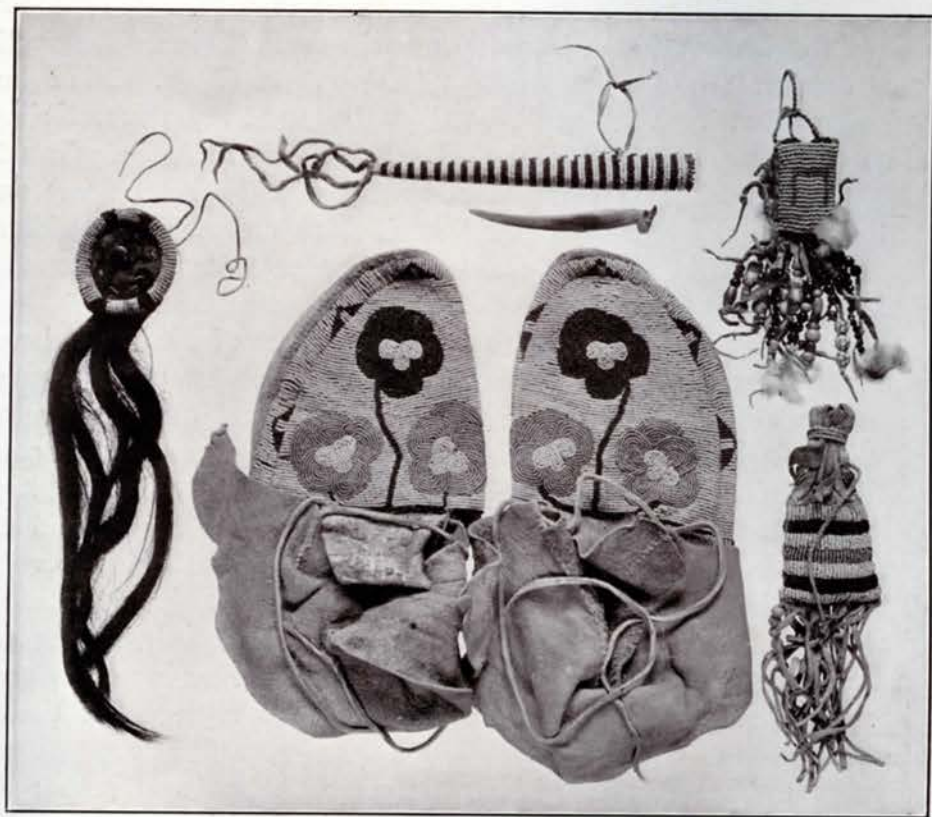
Crow Buffalo Robe Painted with Biographical Records.

on analogy with similar robes, it being by no means certain that the robe does not illustrate certain incidents of one or more battles or raids. Distinguishing individual characteristics of person or equipment are so few that it is impossible to distinguish the hero, if such there be, in even a majority of the adventures pictured. In four of the events a man dressed in a robe edged with red, yellow and light blue appears to play the prominent role, but in one of these incidents two men attired in this identical costume are shown shooting at each other. Apparently there is a primary division of the



paintings into superior and inferior halves and a less certain division of each of these into similar halves, making four rather indefinite tiers in which one may distinguish some ten different adventures.

Beginning at the upper left, the first two incidents pictured are in an artistic and technical style slightly different from the others, but probably done by the same hand. The figures shown here are generally clothed only in breech cloths and drawn only in outline.



Crow Indian Beaded Objects. Scalp, Pair of Moccasins, Paint-bag, Horse-stealing Medicine and Bone Painting Instrument.

In most of the other illustrations the figures are robed, horses and tipis play a prominent part, and many of the figures are filled in with color.

In the first group, a figure with a tailless war bonnet, red breech cloth and decorated blue leggings and with red paint on his face is seen shooting an unarmed Indian without distinguishing characteristics who advances with outstretched arms. Red paint on the forehead is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Crow

according to accepted Plains symbolism. In the second group two semi-nude natives with blue breech cloths and red face paint, one of them armed with a lance or a coup stick with flying feather, shoot an armed native who displays yellow face paint. This yellow face paint is doubtless the distinguishing characteristic of a definite enemy tribe, the identity of which I have been unable to ascertain.

The third group portrays a figure whose long robe or gown gives him a feminine air, who cuts the rope of a picketed yellow horse while a red picketed horse stands nearby. This, as we shall see, is one of the feats most honored among the Crow. His robe is edged with red, yellow and blue, but the details of this coloring differ markedly from those of the other five figures. A tipi painted with daubs of red and yellow stands nearby. The smoke flap on this tipi has a different shape and setting from those of the other tipis and both this and the painted decoration may indicate the tribal affiliations which I have not been able to ascertain.

A large figure in blue begins the second row of drawings, here considered as group four. Although with the superficial appearance of a woman, with solid dark blue robe, leggings edged with red, green and yellow, and red paint on the forehead, the figure shoots a gun toward a tipi of a slightly different aspect. The top is slightly flatter, the base broader, and the smoke ear triangular instead of rectangular as in the preceding case. It is painted with a red, yellow and blue semicircle and some dots, and probably indicates a tipi of a different tribal pattern from the preceding. A small figure in a red dress, probably that of a child, is seen running from the tipi toward the large blue figure which obviously represents a Crow Indian.

In group five a man with an ornate robe bordered with red, yellow and light blue, a robe seen frequently in the following pictures, cuts a picketed yellow horse, thereby winning one of the four great war honors. But in the next incident two men, apparently both dressed in the same robe as that seen in the last group, shoot at each other at close range with no evident casualty.

The next group, the seventh, pictures the same varicolored robe shooting at a figure of unidentified sex dressed in blue, close to a tipi of the type of that last described, although the top is broader and only four poles are seen. It is decorated with horse tracks and crosses in blue, and yellow dots. The eighth group may be a second part of the preceding. Here a man with a red cloak has shot a man

entirely covered with yellow paint. The latter's red horse, apparently bearing a saddle of civilized manufacture, is running away.

The next figure, at the left of the last tier, may be a part of the final group, but is of disproportionate size. The individual is dressed entirely in blue with a solid red face, and may possibly represent a woman, inasmuch as she is not engaged in combat but walks away from the final scene, carrying an object of uncertain nature in her hand. This is outlined in dark blue with red bands at one end.

The tenth and last group, occupying the greater part of the lower tier of pictures, is a spirited scene of horse stealing. A man in the varicolored robe before mentioned and mounted on a yellow horse, possibly the same yellow horse which was stolen in group three, stampedes six horses, doubtless those of the enemy. Of these, two are solid dark blue, one solid red, two light blue and white and one red and white, surely an impressionist cavalcade.

The Murray Crow collection contains a large number of implements and personal possessions of Crow men and women, such as grinding stones, bone mashers, berry mashers, spoons and cups of buffalo horn, flint and steel, awls, fleshing tools, wooden bowls, gambling games, ice tops, saddles, whips, ropes, parfleches, saddle bags, knife sheaths, and other rawhide bags, quivers, bow cases, combs, sprinklers, pipe bags, fans, belts, armlets, roaches, rattles, whistles, necklaces and other objects. The more utilitarian objects are plain and unornamented, but all in any degree susceptible of embellishment are decorated, the rawhide objects with painting, the others with beadwork and quillwork, ribbons and such adornment.

Typical of these miscellaneous objects are two illustrated on page 401. One is a paint bag, a small pouch of buckskin with decorative fringe, ornamented with parallel horizontal bands of beads. It contains red ocher with which much of Indian painting was done. The other dainty object is a stick for painting the parting in a woman's hair, with its conical beaded sheath. The end of the handle is carved with a really excellent and most naturalistic head of an animal, apparently a mountain goat.

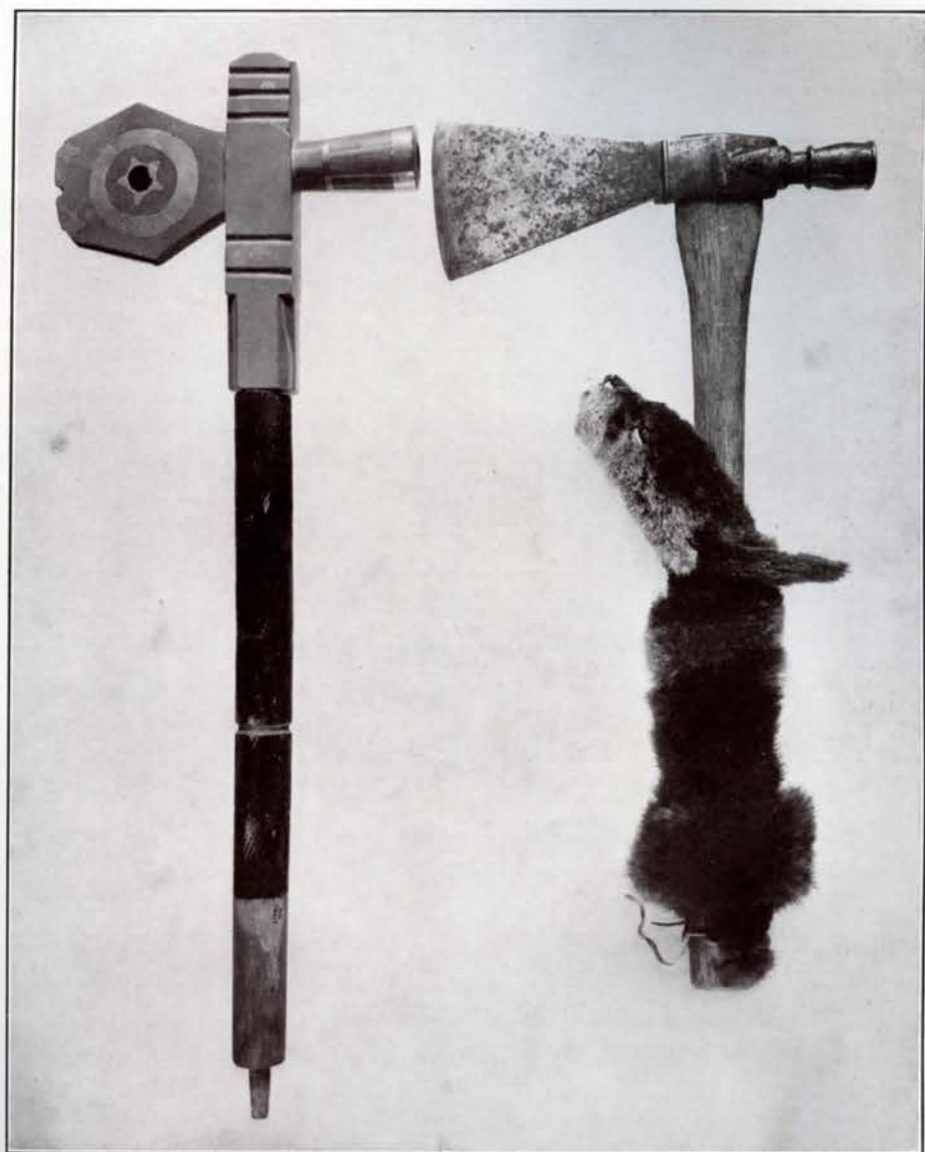
Large tobacco pipes with bowls made of the stone known as catlinite are typical of practically all the Plains tribes, although the stone is found in only one place, which takes its name from that fact—Pipestone, in Pipestone County, southwestern Minnesota. The name catlinite was given to it in honor of one of the first artists to visit, describe and paint our western Indians, George Catlin. It

was he who first brought the stone to the attention of mineralogists who pronounce it a fine grained, reddish, argillaceous sediment. It is soft when first quarried, and easily worked with primitive tools, but later hardens to a requisite firmness. The ledge in which it occurs is found in a stream bed and the stratum is only ten to twenty inches in thickness, the finest grade of the stone being found only in the medial three to four inches, conditions which made aboriginal quarrying quite difficult. Tradition holds that this quarry was neutral ground to which all tribes might come, but since definite knowledge on the topic has been possible, it has always been in the possession of the Sioux, who guarded it strictly. Naturally, as soon as the region became settled and the demand for the material was realized, exploitation began on a large scale and the manufacture, not only of tobacco pipe bowls, but of trinkets and ornaments of all kinds from catlinite began. Probably very few pipes have been made of catlinite by the Indians in the last sixty years.

The tobacco pipe secured in the Crow collection and reproduced on page 405 answers this description. While used by the Crow, it was probably manufactured by whites for Indian trade, that is to say, the bowl at least. This is carved in the rude form of a hatchet and inlaid with lead in simple geometric designs. The stem is of cylindrical shape, made of wood and probably of native manufacture, the surface decorated with burnt impressions from a red hot file.

The tomahawk pipe is another article which, while most popular among the Indians, to whom its use was restricted, was made, the steel head at least, in factories for the Indian trade. The primitive warrior carried a heavy stone club and, on occasions, an equally heavy stone pipe. He therefore jumped at the opportunity to secure an implement which combined the virtues of both and was lighter and more wieldy than either. Tomahawk pipes were supplied in quantities by the European colonizing nations, Spain, France and England, to their Indian allies. The bowl or poll is small and acorn shaped, with a hole in the base which normally is connected with a tube drilled through the length of the wooden handle. The Crow specimen figured on page 405, however, was utilized solely as a tomahawk; the handle is a typical hatchet handle, probably factory made, and not drilled, so that it cannot be used as a pipe. It is decorated with a long strip of mink fur wound spirally around it.

Warfare, as with most of the Prairie Indians, was the primary interest of the Crow man. Like the crusaders and knights of old,

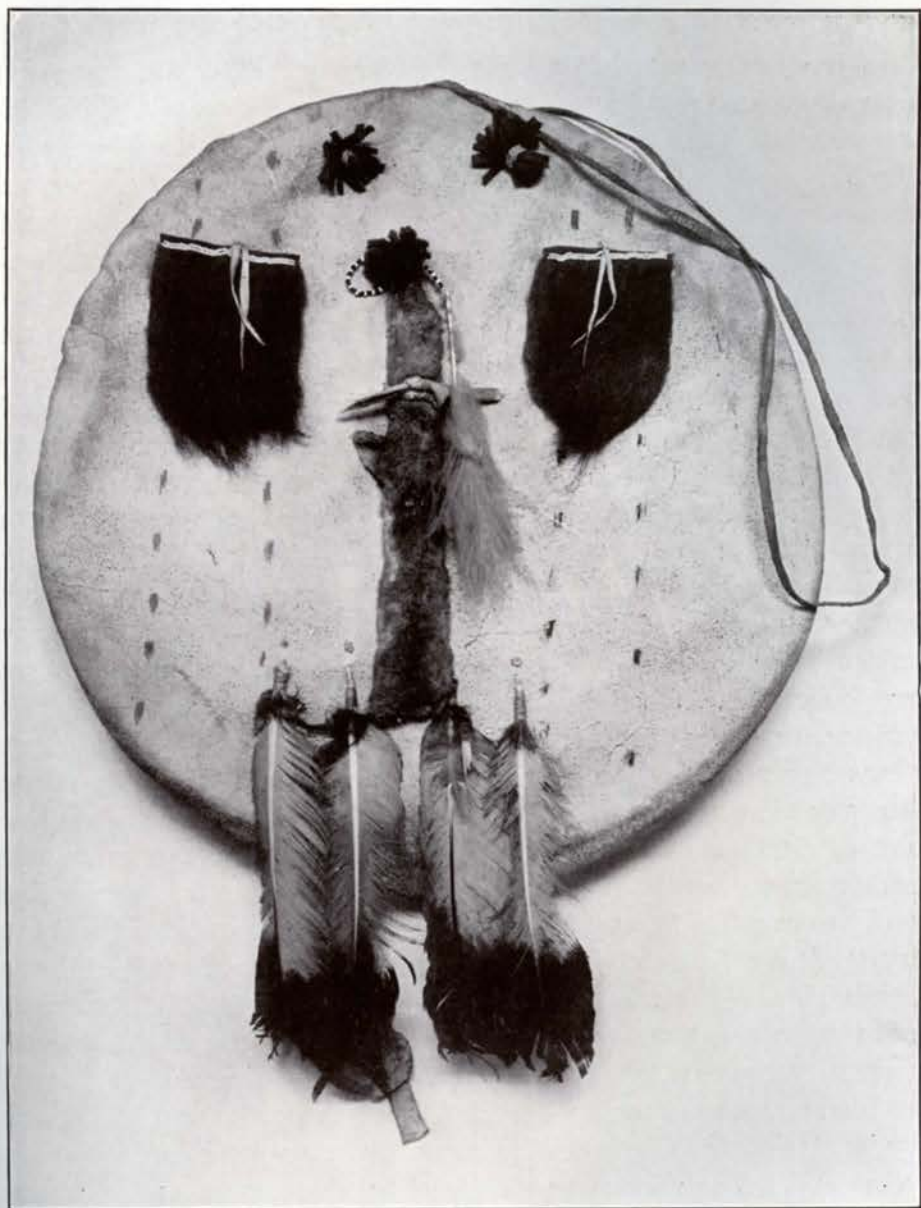


Catlinite Tobacco Pipe and Pipe Tomahawk of Crow Indians.

war supplied him with the opportunity for competition with and honors from his fellow tribesmen. As in all such communities, a complicated system of orders, honors and insignia grew up, based on prowess in battle. Four primary honors were essential to full rank and recognition—capturing a tethered horse, taking a gun from an enemy, striking or “counting coup” on an enemy, and finally, as a climax to all, leading a successful war party. A man who had taken an honor was known as a “Good Young Man,” but no matter how many honors of one or more kinds he had taken, he could not be known as a “Good Man” until he had at least one honor of each kind. Various insignia were worn with varying details which indicated something of the circumstances of the act. The chief, naturally, was the one who could lay claim to the most honors or to those performed under the most dangerous conditions.

Scalping, regarded by most of us as probably the most typical and widespread of all Indian customs, appears, according to historical research, to have been originally characteristic of only a small portion of the country here in the east and southeast, the more typical Indian custom having been to sever the head of the fallen foe. The custom of scalping appears to have spread throughout the country, due to its encouragement by colonial and federal authorities who frequently offered bounties to friendly tribes for scalps of hostile Indians, just as western states today pay bounties for scalps of wolves, coyotes and other such “vermin.” For instance, in 1764, Governor John Penn, of this state, the grandson of “Miquon,” the Friend, proclaimed the following bounties: For every male Indian (enemy ?) above the age of ten years captured, \$150; killed and scalped, \$134; for every Indian female enemy and every male under the age of ten years captured, \$130; for every female above the age of ten years killed and scalped, \$50. Such bounties for Indian scalps I understand to have been officially offered as late as 1860.

The scalp, of course, was a trophy, the emblem of victory, and as such was treated ceremonially. While the number of scalps taken naturally increased a man's prestige, the taking of one was not considered an honor, as were the four deeds mentioned above. Nevertheless, scalps were ordinarily taken, paraded on victorious occasions and attached as ornaments to the victor's garments. Several scalps were secured in the present Crow collection, one of which is figured on page 401. It has been fastened to a base of cloth and decorated with small metal disks and a wheel from the works of a watch, and surrounded by a beaded circle.



Crow Indian Shield with "Medicine" Decoration.

The question of shields has been thoroughly considered and discussed by Mr. Hall in a recent article in this JOURNAL and need be treated only in its special aspects here. The Crow shield was, as everywhere on the Plains, a circular target made of buffalo hide, taken from the ventral-thoracic part of an old bull. It was cut to twice the necessary size and smoked and shrunk over a fire in the ground while glue made from boiled hoofs and hides was poured over it. As the shield was a most sacred and magical object, this process of shrinking was accompanied by appropriate ceremonies. The covers for the shield were then prepared of soft tanned buckskin, frequently an outer and an inner cover. The true potency of the shield was ascribed, however, not so much to the protection secured by the thickness of the hide as to that afforded by the emblem painted on the shield. This was occasionally done on the shield itself, but more often on one or both of the covers. The design was the personal "medicine" of the owner which was revealed to him in a vision, and this "medicine" was the powerful emblem which protected him in battle. So deeply was this sentiment ingrained that, when the warpath was a long and arduous one, miniature shields with the same "medicine" were carried which, it was believed, afforded equal protection. One of these miniature shields was secured in the present Crow collection. On the warpath the shield—the actual shield, not the miniature—was carried by a younger man who bore no arms. It was never allowed to touch the ground, but hung on a branch whenever the party halted. If the shield was never captured, on point of death its owner would bequeath it to his son or another young man and so it would be inherited through several generations.

The Crow shield acquired with the Murray collection is probably very typical of such objects. It is a circular piece of thick heavy buffalo hide with twin buckskin covers, the outer one decorated. As it was received, the face of the shield, that is, the side completely covered by the envelop, is concave, but it may be assumed that this has been reversed since it left its native owner, for such shields are always carried with their convex sides to the enemy in order to cause arrows and other missiles to glance off. The covers are perforated in many places around their peripheries and thongs have been passed through these to serve as draw strings so that the covers may be pulled taut across the face and puckered in the back, leaving a small circular hole in the center where the thong which passes through the shield is held by the warrior.





Fossil Ammonite Decorated and Venerated as "Medicine" by Crow Indians.

The outer cover is decorated, as may be seen on page 407, with four eagle feathers at the bottom, to the base of each of which is attached a small dyed down feather, three of them red and one blue. Down the center of the shield hangs a stuffed weasel, probably the primary feature of the owner's "medicine." A short commercial woolen tassel is attached to its mouth, from which hangs a light white feather on the end of a string of beads. To either side are pocket shaped flaps of brown bison hide edged at the top with scalloped red cloth and twin parallel strings of white glass beads. At the top, symmetrically placed, are two small bunches or balls made of folded red strouding tied with wound strings of blue beads, the centers of which may possibly contain potent "medicines." To either side of the cover are two vertical lines of intermittent painted dashes, those to the right blue, those to the left red. Probably each of these apparently decorative elements has a deep esoteric signification connected with the owner's personal "medicine."

"Medicine" is the essence of the religion of the Crow, as of practically all the tribes of the Great Plains, if not of most of America. "Medicine" involves the belief in the potent magical power of certain tangible objects or of portrayals or representations, real or fanciful, of these objects. Every man possesses his own individual medicine, by help of which he is able to accomplish deeds and secure advantages which would otherwise be denied him. Naturally medicines differ greatly in potency and it is the great desire and aim of every man to secure a strong medicine. Medicines are almost always granted as a result of visions, dreams, in which the medicine is either presented to the dreamer or else plays a prominent and happy role in the vision. Such visions occasionally are vouchsafed to men unsought and under normal conditions, but more often they come as a result of great physical exhaustion or emotional strain. To the modern physician or psychologist this is a perfectly natural result of the physical or mental condition, but to the Indian the vision is granted as the recompense for the fasting, thirsting, self mortification, or other travail which he has sought and endured in order to secure it. A painting or other representation of the medicine is, as we have seen, generally placed upon the shield and other quasi-ceremonial possessions.

Another class of "medicine" to which great magical power is ascribed consists of objects, generally encountered quite by accident—although popular belief has it that they can be traced by a peculiar

odor they emit—of peculiar appearance or shape, most frequently displaying a resemblance, more or less vague, to some animal or other natural phenomenon. Most of these objects, naturally, are of stone. The Indian is not much more naive in this belief than many educated persons today. Every museum worker is constantly offered petrified horses' hoofs, impressions of hands or feet, Brobdignagian stone axes and a thousand and one other extraordinary objects which, much to the owner's disgust and disbelief, the expert is obliged to pronounce nothing more than stones or concretions which have formed or weathered to a peculiar form resembling something animate or artificial. The Indian, however, ascribes to it the same magical powers with which he endows the object which he believes it to represent. He carefully takes it, decorates it with ornaments, greases it, wraps it up with offerings to it and protects it carefully, unwrapping it and praying to it on certain occasions. In return, the medicine protects him and secures him long life, health, wealth, honors and whatever favors he may seek.

Certain medicines are supposed to be specifics for certain purposes.—Thus one figured on page 401 illustrates a "horse-stealing medicine." It is a baglike object of buckskin, completely sewn up so that it is impossible to ascertain what is inside. On the beaded exterior, however, is shown a rectangular conventionalized horse track. Tassels to which large glass beads are attached hang from the lower margin. The medicine, of course, is carried on the expedition to steal the enemy's horses and, if properly cared for and manipulated, brings success to the party. Medicines of many different types for many purposes were acquired with the Crow collection.

The medicines which are in most general use, however, are those known as rock medicines, the central feature of which is one of these peculiar stones to which various decorations have been attached. These ornaments range from few and simple to most elaborate. The entire ensemble is carefully bound up in several thicknesses of fine cloth or buckskin and kept in a large rawhide bag. They are taken out, displayed and prayed to at certain ceremonies and the popular belief is that they multiply and produce offspring. The rock medicines are never sold to other members of the tribe but are always inherited.

A large number of rock medicines was secured in the Murray Crow Collection, two of the largest of which are reproduced on pages 409 and 412. Each was kept in a large painted bag, one being



Large "Rock Medicine" of Crow Indians.

bound in a large piece of soft tanned buckskin, the other in several pieces of silk or other soft cloth. Each is about twenty two inches in length.

In each of the medicines, as in a large number if not the majority of Crow rock medicines secured, the central figure is a fossil, apparently an ammonite, though of different species. It is perfectly natural that these fossils, stones of regular and symmetrical shapes, often with the iridescence of the shell still remaining, should appeal as magical objects of the greatest potency to the uneducated Crow who, of course, never dreamed that they were the remains of animals of bygone ages. The lower part of both of these fossils has been encased in an envelope of matted or felted wool, probably brown buffalo calf hair, to which the many decorations are attached by means of buckskin thongs. These are of varied natures, some purely decorative, others probably partly at least in the nature of offerings to the medicine, while yet others are probably themselves medicines of minor nature, possibly also revealed in visions or found under peculiar conditions.

The larger rock medicine is chipped in several places and is entirely covered with a coating of red ocher so that its nature is somewhat obscure, but it is apparently a fragment of a large ammonite. Around the base is a strip of mink skin to which, and to the felted bison wool, are attached the following objects: small colored glass beads, large old painted beads, dentalium shells, small univalve mollusc shells, buttons, bits of abalone shell, two large shell disks, beans and seeds, sections of cane, strips of red flannel, feathers, wings and tails of eagles, hawks and other birds, eagle claws, foot of hawk, hollow bird bone, stuffed weasel, feet of small mammal, crumpled cow's horn, strand of hair from horse's mane, deer dew-claws, rabbit's feet, kid's hoof and many strips of fur and rabbit's skin.

The fundamental feature of the smaller rock medicine is a beautiful and unusually perfect small ammonite with iridescent exterior, thin and discoidal, with a small natural perforation in the center through which the felted covering is held on. The decorative ornaments and auxiliary medicines which are attached to it are, on the whole, quite similar to those of the preceding and differ so slightly in detail that but little comment need be made on them. The absence of the large shell disks and the presence of several stuffed birds account for the larger part of the variation.

The illustration on the opposite page shows an old carved ivory object, now in this Museum, from Great Benin, the famous Negro city and kingdom in West Africa. The entire height of the carving is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches and it represents a group of five figures supporting on their heads an ornamented cup or holder. In the front of the picture is seen the principal personage in the group of five. He is the King of Benin, wearing a headdress with a conventional catfish depending on each side. This device identifies the King with Olokun, the Water God and principal deity of Benin. Suspended from his neck the Olokun King wears a cross, the meaning of which is uncertain, but which recalls a legend current in Benin in the 16th century to the effect that the King was invested with a cross and staff by a Suzerain whose realm was situated at a distance in northeastern Africa. He stands between two officials whose duty it was to support the arms of the King of Benin on the rare occasions when he appeared in public. Of the other two attendants of the King, one is a warrior and the other evidently a court official.

The accompanying article gives a detailed account of the characters and the design of the carving on this remarkable standing cup. An expansion of this design is shown in the coloured drawing reproduced herewith.