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NAA MS 2776, folder 7
Truman Michelson field notes from the Munsee in Kansas
and the Delaware in Oklahoma, 1912-1913
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1
Long ago when the white man first
came to this America, there was a
river back East, Big River (the white
name is unknown). The tribe was living
there at that time & had planted
their crops. They knew the white's
were East of them. They elected
20 warriors. The chief instructed them
to go find where the white people
were, how far east they were. "You
go & see where they are. Do not molest
them. All we want to know is how
far they are from here. So they travelled
a good many days. Finally they
got to a big river. They looked across
it and saw lights. They said to
each other "That's where the white
people are now." So they decided to return
in the morning. The 20 braves had 3 young
men with them. That night the 3 young
men walked off a piece & talked. It
looks very queer that these braves
are simply to return & say they saw
the white people, not bring any scalps
or nothing." But 2 were foolish
fellows. The 3d was a brave but it
wasn't known. So the 3d told

the 20 what the 2 had said.

The old men got riled: "Yes, it's all true enough," they said. So they built a big fire, ready for war. They had a way of dancing around the fire.

Each sang a song, saying he will fight now till he dies. So then the 2 other young who had encouraged the war next morning at day break, the warriors said "Well go over and fight with the Big Knives. The young fellows escaped, ran off. Next was I with the 20. They started in the morning to kill all the Big Knives (Moxaici) ^{ran} They hit into war with them. The one young fellow was a warrior himself, went with them but did not join in the war. So the 20 fought from sun rise to sun down & all 20 were killed.

About sundown the young men went back to the tribe. On his arrival saw the 2 young men who had been with him - so he told them "all our warriors are all killed off by these 2 young men's talk. They encouraged the old men to fight the people." They all counselled together. The tribe

decided to battle with the Big Knives
 for losing their men. So the whole tribe
 started towards the Big Knives home -
 So then when they got there war began
 between the Big Knives & the Delawares -
 So they fought for a good many days,
 because there were a powerful
 tribe of white people & a powerful
 tribe of Delawares - So a good many
 graves among the whites were found
 to be as hard to kill as there were
 among the Delawares. So one day
 one of the brave men of the white
 people had a feeling the Delawares
 were going to whip them out, so he
 sent for another white man who
 was on the waters, told him to
 come at once. They needed him -
 So this man sent word he could
 not fight on dry land but could
 fight on the waters. So he sent
 word again that if he did not
 come he would lose his neck.
 So he finally came. And the Dela-
 ware for several days could
 not kill any of the Big Knives, though
 they shot at them, the bullets would

and hit them. So they got to talking +
 motivated all the warriors to look
 why they could not hit any of the
 white warriors. There was something
 wrong. So they all began to look
 up in the clouds who were able. They
 saw a big fish lying between
 themselves and the Big Knives;
 Then they discovered every time
 they shot they'd hit that fish.
 The bullets would glance up. It
 was a powerful fish. So they dis-
 covered right away that the white
 brave from the water was gifted
 by the fish so he could pro-
 tect in danger. So at night the
 war stopped. They cancelled. They knew
 it was the brave from the water
 that was the trouble. "That big fish
 is his friend." There was a Shawnee
 with the Delaware. Shawnees always
 are with Delawares. He said "There
 a medicine that will get him"
 (the navy man: the fish was too
 powerful, but when the navy
 man was gone, his power would
 go -) at the late part of the

night this medicine was completed.
 They made a little bow and arrow.
 They made a stick representing
 a club. That ^{as long as match} white warrior went
 to sleep. These Indians with the
 medicine in front of them were
 in a ring. So while they were singing
 when that warrior went to sleep.
 They were singing for that warrior
 to come. A little man came to that
 medicine it was that warrior's
 spirit. They all said "now, there he is".
 One of the men picked up the
 little bow & arrow and he dipped the
 spear head of the arrow in the
 medicine, & he shot that little man.
 He shot him to kill him. When he shot
 at him the arrow bounced back as
 it did with the first before. So ~~the~~ another
 said "Pick up that club (the one
 the size of a match)". So they
 picked that club up & dipped
 it in that medicine. They held
 the club over the little man's head
 and dropped it. That stick killed
 him. So they said "Tomorrow at
 noon there be a big limb of

a tree fall on him (that Big Knife
navy man). "So it happened the
war stopped before noon, & this
warrior from the waters sat in the
shade of a big tree, & the limb
dropped off from above &
broke his neck, killed him.

After they knew the time that fellow
was dead, the Delawares began to
whoop & went after the Big Knives
again. Where this war was, was
in a deep canon, rough rocks, &
cedar clumps. So then they had a
general war; there was a powerful
tribe of whites & a powerful band
of Delawares. They killed so many
that the blood on both sides in the
ditches ran like water. So there
were some women who were
brave on both sides. So they counselled
together and said that it was
too bad they were fighting one
another that way they were.
The white women called the white
people their children; so the
Indian women called the Indian
men their children. "So we

"I'll just stop this war between our
 children! So each one of those
 women went around notify their
 children to quit fighting. The war
 then stopped. So the white men
 camped on the East side, & the
 Delaware on the West. So the brave
 from the Big Knife gang and
 the Indian Delaware brave met
 half way between the camps. And
 they shook hands & said "Well
 well quit fighting now. We will
 be in peace hereafter, friends."
 The Delaware said "Tomorrow at
 noon I want you to come with
 your men & eat dinner with me,
 and I will show you how I
 eat, what I have to live on." He
 went back home to the camp;
 and he told his young men to go
 out on a hunt. The hunters
 brought in several bears. So
 early in the morning they became
 busily busied with this bear meat.
 It was stuck up on sharp sticks.
 This meat was strung out
 North and South for a long time

The Chief Threw Knives along there
 & eat with. Then he sent for the
 head warrior among those
 Big Knives. So the Big Knife
 warrior brought his men with
 him + ~~those~~ red women that stopped
 the war brought some bread
 there. So they all sat down &
 went to eating. After they ate dinner
 the Delaware warrior asked the
 white ^{head man} warrior "What shall we do?
 We have been fighting a good
 many days. We've lost lots of our
 young men here on both sides
 without any cause?" The Delaware
 asked the white warrior "How can
 we fix our treaty, Because there
 is a big pile of bones here on the
 frame. Whenever you whites
 will see them, you will think
 of this war. And when any of
 my tribe comes and sees the
 bones, they will remember
 this war." So the white warrior
 told the Delaware warrior "I know
 what we can do so these bones
 will never be seen. We'll

dig a big hole in the ground,
 We will gather up all the bodies,
 throw them right in that deep
 hole & cover them up." So the
 Indian warrior said "Look here,
 you white people is very great to
 be always digging round
 for something. Don't you think
 in future times they will dig
 in here & find these bones and
 will be bound to know there
 was a war here?" The white
 man told the Indian that it was
 so. The Indian was trying to figure
 out a treaty or if the bones were
 seen it would not hurt feelings
 as it was all contracted in place.
 "I know of a scheme we can
 do. We will make a treaty
 that long as the sun shows and
 as long as the water runs & as long
 as the grass grows we are to
 be friends & never have any
 war again, friends the same as
 brothers." The white warrior said to
 the Indian "That is certainly an
 everlasting binding treaty."

So now I will shake hands with
 you for the reason there is but
 one god "who created me & you."
 So ~~(then)~~ ^{when} clasp^{ing} hands I
 will never molest you or harm
 you any way shape or form ^{as} long
 as the sun shines, as the rivers flow
 & the grass grows. And so I further
 agree that I will protect you every
 way I can so you will not
 be molested by anyone. [Clasp^{ing}
 this hands ~~in~~ front of him with
 fingers fitting in fingers]. If anyone
 hits you, he will hit me first.
 At the time when the Delawares and the
 whites made that treaty, the Delaware to
 this day has never violated the treaty.
 He does everything his brother white man
 tells him. So now the Delawares have come
 to be civilized at this day, and now they're
 the same as the white people.

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MICHELSON, TRUMAN

MUNSEE

&

Delaware

Ethnological and linguistic field notes from the Munsee in
Kansas and the Delaware in Oklahoma. [1912]. 170 pp.
185

This field work is referred to in 34th Ann. Rept.,
B. A. E. (Washington, 1922), p. 16.



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