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NAA MS 2776, folder 8
Truman Michelson field notes from the Munsee in Kansas
and the Delaware in Oklahoma, 1912-1913
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p. 2.

division of attendants

localization of people?

division the father

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who dips the grease of soup

'fur domps?'

6 do the different divisions have definite locations

7 localization of division at eating.

1
Doctoring - Otter skin dance
ritualistic origin

A child had a pet otter. When the otter grew the old folks decided to turn him loose, let him go back to where his home was or where ever he wanted. The old man took the otter and took him far from their home. He cut off a piece of tobacco + tied it round the otter's neck in a little bag. So he talked to the otter, "Well I am going to turn you loose. You will be at your own liberty hereafter." So the little child didn't like it because his pet had been freed. The old folks had turned it loose on their own account. The child would not spare it. It was simply against the child's will. So in a short time the child took sick. They had men who were powerful + could tell the cause of things. So they doctored this sick child. So they found it was the otter that was the cause of the child being sick. So these men with power, gifted men, told this child's parents they must get an otter and get the hide and skin & whole. Then they cut the

other hide on the back, splitting it.
 Then these men with the fork told
 the folks, "Likewise Kill a Bear +
 cook the bear meat." Long in
 the evening they cleaned up the
 ground in circle. They cleaned
 it off good. So there were 2 men
 to do the work. And they built a
 fire in the centre where it was
 cleaned. They set a fork at the
 East end of the fire + one at the
 West end. They put a pole whose
 bark had been peeled off across
 the forks. The East fork was about 4-5
 steps from the limit of cleared
 ground. There were many forks
 in it. It was peeled off. The haunches
 were sharpened. The bear was to
 be hung there over night. So all
 the fair cifted old men + women
 were all together there that night.
 During the night when they first
 begin, the man supposed to be
 the relation of the sick child gets
 up, tells why they are there, and
 what their intention are, etc. He
 tells them that "we have found

cut by following these instructions
 given us by the people that doctored
 on the child, that we were told
 our child would get well by following
 those instructions that were given
 to us by those men that doctored on
 the little child. So then the father
 of the child when they started in,
 got up & started the performance they
 had planned out. He went on the other
 side. The head was stuffed and hung
 down over his breast, & the tail
 hung down his back. He told them that
 he was going to take a hand in the
 doings. He has a turtle shell in his
 hands with beads inside. He
 will tell what he saw in his boyhood
 (some as in Delaware meeting house) - Then
 he sings. Instead of dancing he walks on
 a very slow walk. He walks round
 the fire in a circle East to West
 He keeps that up continually,
 singing & talking & shaking the
 turtle shell. While he is going around
 the two workers (who take care
 of fire, cooking), one of them goes
 to where the meat hangs on the wall

From her description of ceremonies

origin - end of ritualistic

pole with many forks (on the East)
 He picks out the fat taken from
 the inside of the Bear, + throws it
 into the fire while the man is walking
 round & round the fire on a
 slow walk. So when the man
 gets through telling what he has
 seen as a boy, he sits down
 on his proper place on the North side of
 the fire. Then he takes the other skin
 off his neck, lays it down, and
 it is the only one to wear that other skin.
 The turtle-shell goes to the next man
 on the right. He sings + talks a
 while as he walks along. When
 he gets through singing + talking,
 the turtle goes round until it gets
 back to where it started from. When
 the turtle shell reaches the head
 of the dancer - the father of the child -
 he repeats his performance. Puts the
 other skin on his neck, shakes the
 turtle shell, sings, talks, walks
 around as many times as he
 wants to. When he gets through
 that ends that part of it. That
 will be about daylight. They start

in the evening a little after dark -)
 Then the two attendants take down
 the bear off the forks of the pole.
 They cut it up, and get the kettles
 ready. They put the meat in
 the kettles. They are to have this
 meat all cooked and done
 before noon. At noon generally
 there will be a big crowd, young
 & old. They dip off the grease
 off this soup into 2 buckets.
 Then those helpers, one stands at
 the east with a little cup in his
 hand, & one at the west with
 a little cup in his hand. The atten-
 dants get a big pan & put
 the bear's head in the pan &
 some ribs. That pan will be
 taken in front of the father of
 the child. "Well here's the head
 right at you." So then he picks
 up the skin, slips it on over
 his head around his neck. He
 then slips a yard of wampum
 around his neck. He picks up
 the pan & says "Well men, I'm
 going to commence the things

special song

As I go now, you must all
 answer ~~me~~. He carries that
 pan. The people are all sitting
 in a ring. He walks along, dashes
 the pan back & forth singing. Those
 seated will cry "yu^e, yu^e." He goes
 in ~~the~~ a circle. He has one located
 there who belongs to his band. No one
 else knows who he is. So he goes
 around ^{with the pan} till he gets to him, gives him
 the pan & tells him "I want you
 to eat all of this." And he takes
 the yard of beads off his own
 neck & places them around
 the man's neck. So then he goes
 around once more with the
 other skin around his neck, singing.
 When he gets back to his seat he
 sits down. He takes the other
 skin off from around his neck,
 lays ~~the~~ other skin down. And
 it is used no more. So that
 other skin is not used that way
 for 1 year or ^{maybe} 2 years. The
 man that received the head
 and ribs, he takes the ribs out
 & lays them to one side.

So these attendants build a large fire. This man takes the pan with the head in it; & gets up & says "Well Men I am going to proceed in the same performance as the rest of them. And he goes along talking & singing. The other cry "yu² yu²" as he dashes the pan as if to throw the head on them. When he goes around once he dashes the head & pan into this big blaze of fire. Then these attendants pick up the pan right quick; they let the head burn up in that fire. The man (given the beads) goes around again. As he gets to the west side the attendants give him a cup of grease. He drinks it all up. When he gets to the east side the other attendant gives him another cup of grease. He has the privilege of drinking all of the 2d cup or only taking a sip & throwing the rest on the fire. But he must drink all of the cup on

the west side. So after this man
 has done this he sits down where
 he started from. The turtle shell
 will not be used any more in
 this ceremony. Any other person in
 their turn can take part. Every
 time they get to the attendants they
 have to take the cup of grease. This
 keeps up till the last one goes round
 the ring. After the singing is over,
 those two attendants have the bear
 meat all cooked and cut up
 in baskets on the west side of the
 fire (the sticks are laid East & West).
 That meat will be divided, ^{by the attendants}
 one starts in from the East & one
 on the west with a basket full
 of cooked bear meat. They begin
 to distribute this meat as they
 go around. Every body gets a
 share of this bear meat except
 the child's parents. One ^{attendant} follows
 the other till the meat is all
 distributed. After this is done this
 child gradually improves and
 gets well. So after that, this must
 be kept up every two years.

When the parents of the child die, the nearest relatives must take it up, and so on, till today - The last man that kept it up was Jim John, a full-blood Delaware - When he died the other skin was given to a lady, his nearest relative. Sally Thompson is her name. She kept the other skin a while. She didn't believe in it. So she sold that other skin to the New York Curio Company for \$50.00 dollars. Since that she lost her boy, + she lays the blame on selling the other skin. The boy took a peculiar sickness and died about 1 year ago. Every body believes this too.

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



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