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***Truman Michelson field notes on Piegan Blackfoot,***  
***1910 June-July***  
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I would like to hear  
Mountain Chief informant June 22  
Why we die forever ~~or live again~~  
Story about Nafuwa

The Old Man told an old woman that he throw a buffalo chip into the river; that if it sank we would die forever; but if it floated we'd come to in 4 days. When he threw it in, it floated. The woman spoke up ~~that~~ that if we did not die forever, we would not mourn for each other. So the woman said to try a rock; if that floated we'd live forever, but if it sank we'd die forever. She threw a rock in the river and it sank. ~~After they went~~ along a little after a while the woman had child and it died. The old woman asked the old man then after the



2  
Child was dead if they  
could it have their say over  
again, but he said "~~that~~  
let it be as it is; its too late."

That's why we die forever -  
If the old man had his say,  
we would only die for a  
little while and then come to

~~same fortune~~ <sup>another story</sup> June 22

Old Man had a friend who  
was a small fox. ~~He~~ They were  
travelling around. ~~It was going~~  
~~to rain~~ He was going along  
with his little brother till they  
came to a big rock. Old Man  
took off his robe and covered  
the rock up with it, saying:  
"This robe I make to you as  
present." Then they went on again  
after they had left the rock  
and gone some distance,  
the clouds began to gather



3

as if there was going to be  
a heavy rain down. So as he  
noticed it looked very much  
like rain, he told his little brother  
"Go back to the rock; and ask  
him to loan me the robe  
again till after the rain is  
over". When the ~~fox~~ fox got to the  
rock and told the rock what  
~~the~~ Old Man had said ~~the~~ the  
rock said. When you give a  
rock anything, you can't take  
it back. The fox got back  
+ told Old Man what the Rock  
had said. The Old Man told  
the fox to go back and ask  
for robe again. The rock  
answered him the same as  
before (3) ~~the~~. This made  
Old Man angry. So he went  
back himself to the rock.  
~~He said~~ He said to the rock



as he jerked the robe off of it. 4  
"You've been here a long time  
without any robe; why is ~~not~~ that  
you are so particular about  
having the robe on this now  
when you've been so long  
without during so many  
storms." So he started off with  
it in the direction he was going.  
After he had gone some distance  
over the hill he heard a very  
loud buzzing sound. He  
told his little brother (i.e. the fox)  
to go over the hill and see  
what it was. The fox went back  
over the hill and came to  
Old Man. "The big rock is  
rolling after us". They started  
to run, Old Man in the lead.  
As the rock was about to overtake  
the fox, the fox ran into a den.  
The rock ran ~~over~~ over the  
den and smashed it and



closed the hole. There was  
some bear ~~in front~~ ahead  
of ~~the~~ Old Man in the direction  
he was running. The Old  
Man called aloud to the  
bears to help him as the  
rock was after him. The  
bears showed fight by rearing  
up on their hind feet. They  
were going help Old Man.  
Old Man passed by them,  
but they still showed fight,  
~~and~~ But the rock passed  
over them and smashed  
them to the earth as it rolled  
over them. ~~The~~ Old Man  
was still running ~~way~~ and ~~the~~ Rock  
was still after him. He saw  
some buffalo bulls ahead of  
him. He called on them for



help as he passed by &  
them. They showed fight by  
pawing the earth, and waving  
their tails over their backs.  
But the rock rolled over  
them and smashed them  
to the earth. While Old Man  
was still running he saw  
two Night-hawks (<sup>Indians</sup> Farsters)  
flying; he called them to help  
him; the rock was after him.  
The Night-hawks began to  
fast ~~on~~ the rock. Every  
time they fasted they broke  
a piece off it off. It kept  
on rolling; but they kept  
on fasting till they broke it  
pieces and it stopped i.e.  
was killed. Old Man stalked  
up. He came to some



7  
young hawks in a nest.  
He stopped there. He asked  
them "Where your father and  
mother" They answered him  
"They are out flying some-  
where". He said to them "  
your father & mother must  
have been the very same  
hawks that spoilt all my  
fun; I had was having  
lots of fun with a hawk  
that was chasing <sup>me</sup> they  
had to break it all up (not  
enlighten!) , I'll get  
even on you young ones."  
So he split their mouths by  
tearing them wide apart.  
That's why the birds today  
have such a wide mouth.  
When the old hawks come



back to the nest they  
 found the mouths of the  
 young birds were all bloody.  
 They asked them "How is ~~it that~~  
 your mouths are so bloody?  
 You must have had insects  
 (i.e. guts, liver and innards).  
 The <sup>great</sup> young hunters said that  
 Napi had been there and to  
 their mouths for them. The  
 mother + father asked  
 which way he went on.  
 They followed him. They  
 overtook him, darted ~~to~~  
 down to him + shot on his  
 robe. So he stopped and cut  
 that part away and threw it  
 away. They did it again. As he  
 cut that part away he said  
 that everything was coming



9  
was coming his way  
it was too heavy any way.  
They kept on repeating this  
till nothing was left, and  
he went on naked. The pot  
has boiled over

---



George Pable July 1910

patch of buffalo wood to convey 1910  
wars.

pipe made of flint + inside of  
rotten cotton-wood tree.

arrows, stone knives, stone war club,  
stone axes all used as weapons  
in war.

---

The medicine pipe  
was supposed to be used only  
in the spring of the year when  
it first thundered and then they  
had their dance with it. Certain  
steps go with that dance. They imi-  
tate the step the dream about, each  
according to his dream, when the pipe  
is sold, membership in the society  
does not cease. Great recognition  
after the pipe is sold. No officers  
at all. Apparently no exogamy  
in this society.



For all those mother authority Janez

arigt Rupsats. Vns. M. H. White Swan  
leggen 85.

5a 2 no

to 2 makōkitcie Thumb.

at ~~Eni~~<sup>Eni</sup> ~~Eni~~<sup>Eni</sup> needle

su k'āzpi good

imm<sup>o</sup> <sup>2</sup>te<sup>2</sup>kan little dog

immoyan Buffalo robe

imagistic fuzz on the face

immortal on the hand

imohikinst " " " "

~~myxotaxis~~ ~~Myxotaxis~~

~~1885~~ ~~1886~~

~~unlike~~ im mitotokis dog robe.

unim \*for denious from  
invisible

umim no kō ai my ~~tent~~  
over there in visible

quinn no Rō'ai my tent  
over there which can be seen



Norah Thomas Mrs. Julie June 21  
mother Anthony. White Swan

2

~~F 3 m um in meta<sup>(u)</sup>~~

The dog are there invisible

[no use!]

nitsirai taiyika<sup>u</sup>psats

I Touch my leggings with my  
hand



Grass dance.

Jan 26 1881

Mountain

Mr Mountain Chief

Mr Masup Horse

Mr Big Snake

Grass dance

W. H. Bonnet & several mts in the  
in two. Mountain says the costumes of  
most mean nothing.

The pictures on the lodge represent

~~Little Plums deed~~

one you carried long stick with  
feathers. Bundle on his back  
Blanch took to off 2 feathers in  
the bundle

Man with white of a white

with molasses in the wood

roused people from sitting down

ask of hiding the stick and gun with feathers right  
means

anything when only 3 dance round  
the drummer

war bonnets on left shoulder, resting  
in the left arm



The fellow with the stick between <sup>2</sup>  
his legs takes it also in her <sup>right</sup> <sup>hand</sup>  
right hand and takes war bonnet  
in left. Some little boy ran out  
and gave him a ~~five~~ dollar.

---

Summers up when women  
joined. The women mostly all  
together. Fur in between the men  
after noting. Movement like the  
hands of a clock - man with single  
feather on a stick inside ~~outside~~ the  
circle.



Half breed

1910

July 13

George Pablo

Societies that he knows: Grass Dancers,  
Crazy Dogs, Braves, Bees, Fly, Fox,  
Black Soldiers, Medicine Pipe, Beaver,  
Crow Beaver, Pidgeon, Deer Dance

Medicine Pipe, Beaver, Crow Beaver <sup>deer dance</sup> all  
for men & women.

Medicine Lodge belongs  
to them

Women's Society mottobitiks  
originated from dream about buffaloes.  
mostly old women.

In early days lodges & chiefs of  
societies were in interior of circle.

Every Society painted differently

Grass Dancers paint & dance to suit  
themselves. Only recently have the  
women joined in the dancing. This  
taken from Assiniboines.



2

The Chief of the Crazy Dogs  
is not elected. He bought his place  
from some body who had bought it  
from somebody else etc. & with all  
officers.

1 Head Chief

2 on horse back to keep dancers together

2 Bear Crazy Dogs sit way back  
from the bunch try them selves.

Supposed to take grub from  
any lodge whatever if short  
of Food.

---

The Bundles of all the societies  
different.

Crazy Dog Bundles.

Rattle & dancing clothes.

The Chief has a coyote  
Bear Crazy Dogs have claws on  
arms and head.

The clothes not fixed.

When a man sells out he paints  
The buying party properly. Songs some



way.

3

The leaders have special seats,  
others where they please  
Chief + leaders at back of lodge.

The chief or leaders appoints  
the men to distribute the present  
& speak.

The leaders appoint the eric to  
for the All Crazy Dogs to  
gather together.

When a man sells out to another  
he does in the lodge of the chief of  
the Crazy Dogs.

If any body died his wife would  
sell his title. If no wife, then  
a relation (couldn't get out of any  
preference of which relation, whether  
wife's side or man's side).

---

Wife of man got little of the  
property at man's death. Divided  
among children + relatives.



Nose cut off of unfaithful <sup>4</sup>  
wife or she was killed. If her  
brother found it out he would  
kill her but not cut her nose off.  
Husband or his brother ordinarily  
the punisher. Generally then if  
nose cut off the woman goes back  
to her family who don't object to her  
having her nose cut off. If she  
has children they remain with  
the husband. She could only see  
them again on the sly.

---

Levirate custom. If no  
brothers, woman goes back to her  
family. She could marry uncle  
if no brother (on second thoughts);  
cousin also.

---

A man had a right to kill  
a man who fornicated with his (1<sup>st</sup>  
man's) wife. As a rule the guilty man's  
relatives had no objection -



List of nation Pablo knows 5  
Assiniboins, Gros Ventres, Sioux,  
Cheyennes, Crows, Bannocks,  
Snakes, Pont ? Rouse; Nez  
Perces, Flatheads, Kootenay, Shoshones,  
Stonies, Crees, Chippeways (Great  
Pigeons)

---

games.

Stick game. wheel game. arrow game.  
Horn racing.

Stick game a gambling game  
15 to 20 or more on a side, guessing  
bones in hands.



D. P. D wall

July 6<sup>th</sup> 1910

on camp & paying for it in  
Sun Dance Lodge.

The narrator ~~gives~~ makes presents,  
even horses for the privilege telling his  
exploits. His relations also help  
him up. The cloths, blankets, etc are  
used in a way a for carpet which  
is an honor. He tells one ~~and~~ man  
to do this, another another thing, etc.  
His story is acted out. Then he tells  
in words the story. The goods are  
given to visitors or in lieu of  
these old men and old women.

Even if a man invented his story  
he would not be punished physically  
but looked down on as a contemptible  
fellow.



Gros Ventres

June 24

Chippewas; the <sup>{ Small</sup> Grass { Eagle Child  
Cree halfbreeds. Northern Assiniboines &  
1 + 1/2 hours 275 es -

1.18 + 1/2 hours 175 c<sub>3</sub>



Sun & moon June 25/1910

at night after sun-set - If the 28  
should drink during the day, there  
would be rain throughout the  
evening.

---

The medicine lodge must be  
within the circle; not necessarily the  
center.

---

### Little Dog

Long ago, people dreamed about  
medicine. When awake made lodge  
like them - That's how we get them  
today.

The paint used to be of earth.  
Painted lodge as in dream.

Another fellow brought with robes,  
horses, etc the lodge from another,  
and the songs that went with them.

Rockers foot is a little pyramid  
to show how to form circle in  
camping.

Head of each society could put  
his lodge inside. Grinnell, diagram  
not worked out. The horses put in the center.

A horse-trail always on west side of  
the medicine-lodge.



Dawall June 29. 1910

{Chief Crow, head of all Crazy Dogs<sup>11</sup> had his lodge with in the circle. All Crazy Dogs will have their dance. ~~the~~ 2 legs of the sacred trifolds must face the East.

Formerly the <sup>all</sup> Crazy Dog they used to dance day & night at frequent intervals.

The costumes different in <sup>all</sup> Crazy Dogs from other dancers. They have special dance.

All Crazy Dogs something like policemen today.

Chippaway & Cree Sin dance  
As the riders came, they made a wild rush for the the little pile of branches in center, springing on top of each.

Gifts to Piegan part in little Dog & Mountain. The woman giving the Sin Dance provided them.

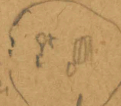


2006 102 inside July 3<sup>rd</sup> 4.5 in. in air of lodge showing

6 crabs  
about 1000 wing away  
leaves 3 beaten with rattles. i lodge edge of rocky  
Dug

dull red. Beat with eyes shut. | July 3

pile of can dung back of stove  
in center red + white cloth to right  
of this blue cloth on top of this with  
white <sup>thin</sup> lines

entrance  3 buffalo rocks in  
it. Mountain chief took one, wrapped  
blanket over himself and spoke to  
it in low tone. passed to chief on right  
who did likewise. a small smudge

in front of cloth. dressed skin back  
of cloth. Smudge stick.

put <sup>up</sup> an bundle of sweat grass on the hinged hide back  
in top of dung pile. Buffalo

rock passed to me. Told to pass

it over my right shoulder, then  
kiss it. then pass it over my breast,  
then pass it over left shoulder, and  
then pass it on to neighbor on left.  
The buffalo rock places on the cloth  
with other two.

Song to Mountain Chief. Takes chief's right  
hand who is on his right. has him take a  
buffalo rock holding his hand with  
his (M Chief's) left. Song. Puts the rock  
He man



2  
back in the leather bag with  
fringes which in left hand corner  
of the leather hide. Woman 2  
from chief who put back the rock  
takes with his right hand the  
right hand of woman on her left  
who is next to man who put back  
the rock. Moves it near the  
2 other rocks. He then folds arms  
over breast. song all. Places it  
on the leather skin. Two others  
added I must have been one which  
I did not see. Man & woman men-  
tioned before guided by Mountain  
Chief & woman mentioned before,  
hands grasped as before take this  
skin off which has been tied and  
put in the bag. 3 rollers put in  
skin <sup>drawn</sup> over one. The bag then tied up.  
Another smudge stick smaller laid  
beside the other one. The Woman  
& man mentioned <sup>above</sup> guided as above  
each take one up & hold it in  
perpendicular position; then  
lay them down together to the left right




3

of the bag, or rather barely touching  
it. The man then placed a little  
further to the right. Two other  
dung piles now exposed. The  
leaves of cotton-wood on it.

~~Mountain~~

Woman guided as above  
takes the bag out which has  
had reddish cloth wrapped  
around it, passing between  
the stone & dung piles, ~~other woman~~  
guiding woman accompanying  
her. The two smudge-sticks lifted  
up as they pass the dung piles.  
They passed from left to right.  
They hung the bag on the tripod;  
come back passing to the  
left of entrance (which faces East).  
Singing all the while. Note the dung  
pile on extreme right twice size  
of others & no leaves on it.

The mentioned man ~~was~~ <sup>near</sup>  
had big circle of black on center  
of forehead; <sup>women square</sup> not  <sup>clucks also</sup> ~~on nose~~ <sup>on nose</sup>



S in dance June 28

1910

Little Dog. Small

<sup>the</sup> Painted Lodge & Elk Lodge

Little Dog does not know why the  
camp is changed in a circle. P. & O. have  
done it for generations.  
Horns says same.

The Sun not borrowed from Sioux  
Signs & Assin bones do not do  
the <sup>same</sup> Blackfoot borrowed nothing from  
them. So Little Dog.

Prayer. when sick or dying, a  
woman makes a vow she will  
have a medicine lodge. She  
must buy or borrow turn it -  
cannot. Pay out horses etc. When  
they teach her the songs she says  
[those who have been before, in Small;  
not regular priests]

The woman used to fast 4 days  
in Small. They drink before the  
sun comes up, covering their  
head with a robe. They put a  
little bit of dirt and into the water  
before they drink it. Next drink



Crazy Dogs about 5 into  
Sun Lodge. July 4

The two leaders keep in the  
Sun Lodge all day. Whistling &  
dancing to keep away the train.  
The others were merely an escort.

Roll 9. 1 warrior on right  
2 " " left.

Guns in hands of all except  
2 leaders in back.

man with horns on head. who  
had bows & arrows + Mountain  
Chief who had flute & mouth  
tambourine in left hand. + man  
guns constantly fired forward.

3 <sup>roll</sup> I. in left hand back. Chief seated  
on knees.

Old men use rattles on hide.


4 The two who keep away the train in  
the little lodges in back.



lined up in back are  
people facing the little lodge.  
with cloths in hand, leaves of  
of cottonwood - tied fastened on their  
blankets around the bottom of  
the center tree - 3 cloths wrapped  
around trunk of the center tree  
red on top & bottom with design  
of dove in red. rest black, except  
border which is red. - center & sides  
plaid.

Cloths put on top of smaller  
lodge at end.

Mountain Chief puts down tambourine  
& takes up lance & shield.

In front of center tree a sunudge  
in hole 

Mountain Chief takes tambourine out  
& beats in it.

One had a revolver I did not notice.

Warriors

They advance towards each other  
with shouts & go back in unison  
Shout of rattles -

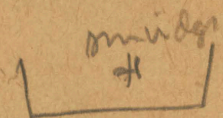


Little Dog stands unarmed at  
right of center tree, painted and  
in Indian costume.

Tall Mountain Chief pretends  
to be shot; falls; an Indian  
comes up and pretends to  
scalp him. Gets up + beats  
Tambourine.

Repeat except no attempt  
to scalp him; and is pulled  
up by his side.

Blankets, comforters, flannels -



Mountain Chief leads in a horse  
with speech, + song. Blanket on

top of horse 2 Feathers tied to his

tail. <sup>yellow</sup> ochre on top of tail + eyes

Half way down. Smear away.

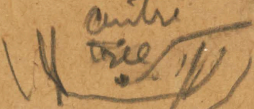


Little Dog strides <sup>sticks</sup> about, tells  
about sticks, pretends to kill 4,  
takes their gun -  
takes a couple of women then -

---

Chief at first on both sides  
now nearly all seem to be  
on left side -

---

distribution of money  
more blankets and comforters  
brought in; also clothes  
arranged & chairs  smudge

---

distribution of tobacco. I run in  
now.

2 children walk straddling, one a  
long slender stick with feather on  
end, other a long whip with  
feather on end. Do not pass  
behind center but around smudge.  
Hunt. Upon dis. of tobacco continues -

smudge of cooking pot in front of  
little lodge at back; half of it taken to  
smudge in front of center pole.



chiefs arranged <sup>but spoke directly in</sup> now in circle around  
smudge, before center pole 2 pass  
around, ~~then~~ <sup>elder</sup> straddling a  
long stick with feather at end  
gun in in hand: another upright  
stick also in this hand with feather  
at the end. Chiefs go around  
smudge in circle. breaks  
up. one pretends to be killed by  
the man astride stick. 2 women  
join circle which reforms, walking  
as before - <sup>man</sup> one pretends to be killed etc.

Clothes, blankets, etc gathered  
more brought in. Old woman at  
entrance sings. joined by one  
chief who quits intermittently. Chant.  
then song by her. Chant, then song  
warrior <sup>center line</sup> straddles stick.

singing. woman sings. Mock fight  
warrior falls gets up & chases other warriors  
etc. More clothes etc. ~~that~~ silver money  
put in smudge. The fight pretends to  
be in wood 2 have against a lot of



4

ask about the head supports  
A near little lodge in rear. with  
war bonnet on top.

---

food distributed. Crackers,  
Canned goods. ~~as bears~~ Sugar.  
Flour. Ginger snaps. fancy cakes.  
or rather man jumps up  
Ask why one apparently always  
stays in the little lodge  
goes up to near center. He  
gestures with both hands  
up. Face west. comes  
back and puts both  
arms around the center  
tree and retires to little lodge.



2827

BLACKFOOT

MICHELSON, TRUMAN.

Field notes concerning Piegan Blackfoot ethnography, including ceremonials and societies, with some linguistic notes. June-July, 1910. A. D. Approx. 150 pp. and slips.





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