

Schoolcraft, Henry Rowe

1853-1857 Information Respecting the

History, Condition & Prospects of the ~~United~~ Indian Tribes of the United States: Collected & Prepared Under the Direction of

the Bureau of Indian Affairs Per Act of Congress of March 3rd 1847

Schoolcraft Pt III 1853

6 vols.

Philadelphia. Lippincott, Grambo.

306

TRIBAL ORGANIZATION,

Between those Casas Grande inhabit the Pimas on one and the other margin of the Gila: the towns of that people, which occupy ten leagues of the mild vale along it, with some islands, abound in wheat, maize, &c., and yield so much cotton, to whom also is referred the fabrication of the finest kind of pottery, which is found at one of the archæological indications of the Gila valley.

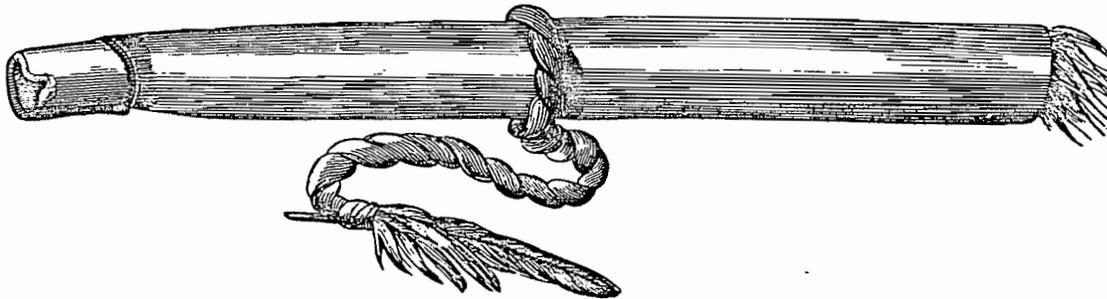
vol 3, pp 306-309

12. MOQUI TRIBE OF NEW MEXICO.

IN the month of August, 1852, a message reached the President of the United States, by a delegation of the Pueblos of Tesuque in New Mexico, offering him friendship and intercommunication; and opening, symbolically, a road from the Moqui country to Washington. This message, of which the leading points were communicated by figures or symbols, having fulfilled its object, and being gazed at as a curiosity in saloons, where ambassadors from higher courts are received, was referred to me, as falling more specifically within the cognizance of my inquiries.

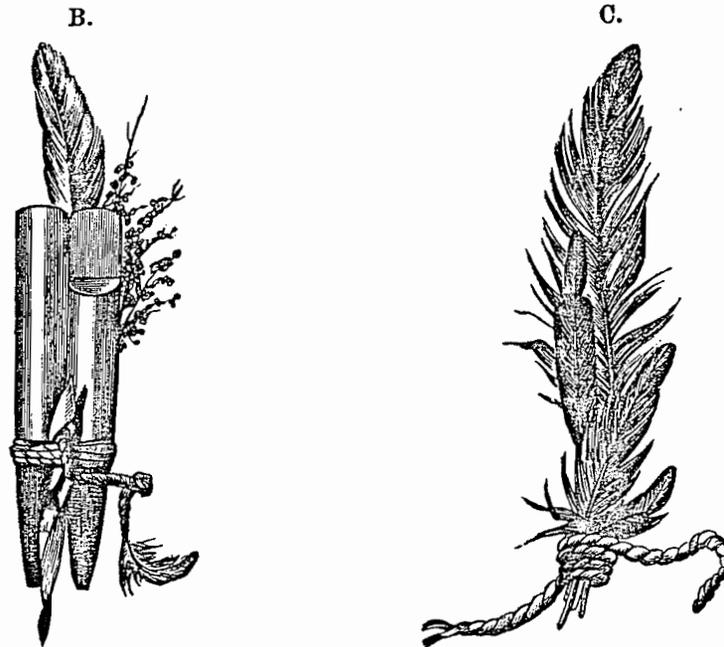
This unique diplomatic packet consists of several articles of symbolic import. The first is the official and ceremonial offer of the peace-pipe. This is symbolized by a joint of the maize, five and a half inches long, and half an inch in diameter. The hollow of the tube is filled by leaves of a plant which represents tobacco. It is stopped, to secure the weed from falling out, by the downy yellow under plumage of some small bird. Externally, around the centre of the stalk, is a tie of white cotton twisted string of four strands, (not twisted by the distaff,) holding, at its end, a small tuft of the before-mentioned downy yellow feathers, and a small wiry feather of the same species. The interpreter has written on this, "The pipe to be smoked by the President." The object is represented in the following cut, (A.)

A.



The second symbol consists of two small columnar round pieces of wood, four and a half inches long, and four-tenths in diameter, terminating in a cone. The cone is one and a half inches long, and colored black; the rest of the pieces are blue; a peace color among the Indians south, it seems, as well as north. This color has the appearance

of being produced by the carbonate of copper mixed with aluminous earth; and reminds one strongly of the blue clays of the Dacotahs. The wood, when cut, is white, compact, and of a peculiar species. A notch is cut at one end of one of the pieces, and colored yellow. A shuck of the maize, one end of which, rolled in the shape of a cone, is bound up by cotton strings, with a small bird's feather, in the manner of the symbolic pipe. There is also tied up with the symbolic sticks, one of the secondary feathers and bits of down of a bird of dingy color. The feather is naturally tipped with white. Together with this, the tie holds a couple of sticks of a native plant, or small seed of the prairie grass, perhaps. It may, together with the husk of the maize, be emblematic of their cultivation. The whole of the tie represents the Moquis. The following cut (B) represents this symbol.



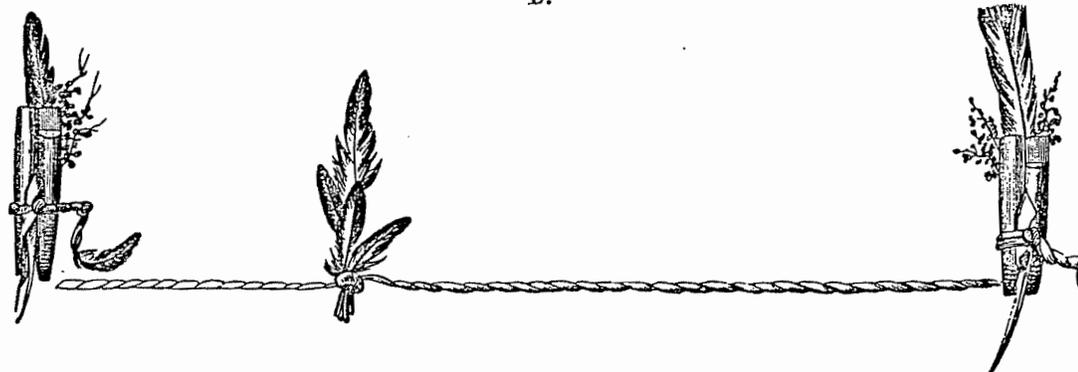
The third object is, in every respect, like Fig. B, and symbolizes the President of the United States. A colored cotton cord, four feet long, unites these symbols. Six inches of this cord is small and white. At the point of its being tied to the long colored cord there is a bunch of small bird's feathers. This bunch, which symbolizes the geographical position of the Navajoes, with respect to Washington, consists of the feathers of six species, the colors of which are pure white, blue, brown, mottled, yellow, and dark, like the pigeon-hawk, and white, tipped with brown. (See the preceding cut, C.)

The interpreter appends to these material effigies, or devices, the following remarks.

These two figures represent the Moqui people and the President; the cord is the road which separates them; the feather tied to the cord is the meeting point; that

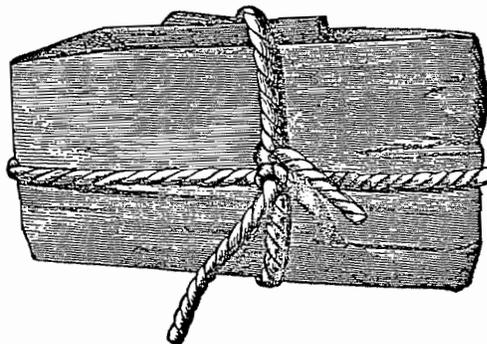
part of the cord which is white is intended to signify the distance between the President and the place of meeting; and that part which is stained is the distance between the Moqui and the same point. Your Excellency will perceive that the distance between the Moqui and place of meeting is short, while the other is very long.

D.



The last object of this communication from the high plains of New Mexico, is the most curious, and the most strongly indicative of the wild, superstitious notions of the Moqui mind. It consists of a small quantity of wild honey, wrapped up in a wrapper or inner fold of the husk of the maize, as represented in Figure E. It is accompanied by these remarks :

E.



“A charm to call down rain from heaven.—To produce the effect desired, the President must take a piece of the shuck which contains wild honey, chew it, and spit it upon the ground which needs rain; and the Moquis assure him that it will come.”

It is thus perceived that the superstitions of the Moquis are identified with those of the erratic hunter tribes who occupy the continent north of their position on the elevated heights of New Mexico—a position which they have apparently occupied since the earliest discoveries of the Spaniards.

In 1540, Coronada, with 150 horsemen, and 200 footmen, having united his forces at Compostella, set out by the order of Mendoza, the viceroy of Mexico, to verify the

wild stories of cities and towns, silver and gold, and a high civilization, which had reached him, by runners, as existing in the region north of the Gila, which now bears the name of New Mexico. They were accompanied by 800 Indians, and took with them 150 European cows, and a large flock of sheep, to serve as food. This fact is alluded to for the purpose of adding, that the latter were probably the origin of the immense flocks of sheep at present possessed by the Moquis and Navajoes. Three hundred and twelve years have served greatly to multiply this species; and every year has probably only further convinced them of the importance and value of this animal, which is easily raised, in supplying them with sustenance. It has also given them the material for the manufacture of blankets; an article which they make, as we are informed, without the use of the distaff, but by a peculiar application of their native ingenuity.

But neither the raising of sheep, nor the making of blankets, have lifted from their minds the dark veil of ignorance and superstition, nor divested them of a belief in the degrading doctrines of magic, which mark the unreclaimed savage, wherever he dwells.