

SAN XAVIER DEL BAC MISSION

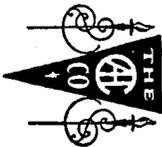
The finest Spanish mission in North America. Photograph taken by author before restoration

# Missions and Pueblos of the Old Southwest

Their Myths, Legends, Fiestas, and Ceremonies, with some accounts of the Indian Tribes and their Dances; and of the Penitentes

by

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two days are usually taken for the round trip. They have seen a few half naked, gayly painted indians dance around the plaza with wriggling rattlesnakes dangling from their mouths, and they are satisfied. They have seen Navajos from the surrounding desert and Hopis from the other pueblos, resplendent in native jewelry of silver and turquoise, and they are convinced that they have seen the last of the old West, not realizing that it was an attraction staged for their benefit and the money they bring.

The Snake dance alternates with the Flute ceremony, each being held once in two years at each pueblo. During the odd years (1927, 1929, etc.) the Snake dance occurs at Walpi and Mishongnovi, and the Flute dance at Shipaulovi, Shongopovi, and Hotevilla; while in the even years such as 1928, 1930, etc., the Snake dance takes place at Hotevilla, Shipaulovi, and Shongopovi, and the Flute dance at Walpi and Mishongnovi. No Snake ceremony was held at Hotevilla prior to 1908, as that pueblo was not founded until the fall of 1906, and the dance took place at old Oraibi, which is now almost deserted and in ruins.

The last of the old-time Snake dances ever held at ancient Oraibi was in 1906, the first year the author visited Hopiland. The Snake ritual had been held at that village since long before that October day in 1492 when Columbus sighted the first land in the western world; for old Oraibi was the only one of the Hopi pueblos occupying the same site as in the days when Tovar and Cardenas, first of the conquistadores, marched across the unknown deserts from ancient Hawikuh of the Zunis.

I had ridden the cattle ranges of northern Arizona

for several years prior to 1906, but had never attended a Snake dance, as I was generally at some far distant point at that time. In August, 1906, while returning from Mexico I heard that the Snake dance had been postponed until September on account of factional differences at Oraibi, and so I decided to go. At Flagstaff, Arizona, I learned that it would take place on September 5; and after spending several days with some cowboy friends I set out on horseback from Canyon Diablo with Fred Volz, the indian trader at that point and an old acquaintance. Mr. Volz, who has been dead these many years, was one of the pioneer indian traders of northern Arizona, and for more than a quarter of a century he conducted trading posts at Canyon Diablo, the Fields, halfway to Hopiland, and at old Oraibi. His store at Canyon Diablo was burned several years ago, and nothing but ruined stone walls are left to mark the site of one of the best known indian trading posts of old Arizona.

In those days Canyon Diablo, sixty-five miles from Oraibi, was the nearest railroad point; and we covered the distance in two days, arriving on the evening of September 4. As we approached Oraibi we passed an occasional cornfield in the bottom of the wash, guarded from wandering burros by a half naked indian; for there are no fences in Hopiland. Hopi farming generally consists of planting the seed and then waiting for nature to do the rest; but fortunately not many weeds grow on the desert, for the corn is cultivated very little. After the planting, the Hopi farmer erects a brush wickiup where he will retire from the fierce rays of the Arizona sun and watch his crop grow, and incidentally guard it from predatory burros.

ed behind the far distant San Francisco peaks the last Snake priest climbed up the trail from his mission of returning the reptiles to their desert home to carry the Hopi prayers for rain to the great plumed water serpent.

THE ORAIBI FLUTE DANCE OF 1907. The next morning, August 19, we went to Oraibi to see the Flute dance that would take place late that afternoon. This is another interesting ceremony for rain; and, as in the Snake dance, two societies take part, the Cakwalenya, or Blue Flute, and the Macilenya, or Drab Flute. Its origin is unknown, but the Flute clans are believed to have come from the south. For the first time in the history of Oraibi only the Blue Flutes took part in the ceremony of 1907, as the Drab Flute people had gone to Hotevilla with the hostiles.

By the time we reached Oraibi early in the afternoon the clan had gone to the Flute spring at the foot of the mesa and about half a mile from the village, where we saw the priests dressing and preparing for the ceremony as we climbed down the trail; but when I attempted to take photographs I found, much to my surprise, that they resented this intrusion. During two years' experience at Snake dances no objections had been made to a kodak; nor did I ever again have this experience among the Hopis, although the next year I entered the house of the chief of the Blue Flute Society at Mishongnovi when their secret ceremonies were in progress, and photographed the altar. However, I stood by my guns, or rather kodak, and in spite of orders from the chief priest, who was also the ruler of Oraibi, I secured a number of good pictures.

There were eighteen performers in addition to the three Flute children. Twelve were dressed in white



kilts with long sashes embroidered at the ends in red, green and black, while eagle feathers were braided in their hair, and necklaces of silver and turquoise beads hung around their necks. On the back of each was a sun emblem, or shield, an important symbol to the sun god, painted in the Hopi colors of yellow, green, red, white, and black, on buckskin stretched over a hoop with a border of eagle feathers and dyed horsehair entirely around the rim. This symbol is also used in the Soyal held during the last days of December. During the entire ceremony each man played a primitive reed flute, which produced a weird sound hardly music but with some melody. The chief priest wore nothing but a blanket around his shoulders.

The colors of the sun emblem have a symbolic meaning, and represent the entire Hopi universe; yellow for the north, the west in green, the south in red, the east, white, and the heavens in black. The asperger was attired in a kilt around his loins.

Instead of singing traditional songs at the spring as in most other ceremonies, the Flute men played their strange tunes for almost an hour, and then marched to the village plaza, where the Flute procession was formed with the chief priest in the lead. Three Flute children were flanked on each side by six flute players, and behind them came the asperger, while the bearer of the sacred Flute standard brought up the rear. The chief made the rain cloud symbol on the ground with sacred meal, the children cast small offerings upon it, and the Flute men played their strange music, while the asperger chanted and dipped a small brush resembling a whisk broom into a bowl he carried and threw water to the four cardinal points, then up to the heavens and down to the underworld. This perform-

ance was continued at intervals as the clan slowly crossed the plaza to the kisi, where the procession paused for a few minutes and then marched to the house of the chief priest where the offerings of the Flute children were left at the altar.

A VISIT TO HOTEVILLA. The next day we decided to visit the new village of Hotevilla, where Akin had several friends among the hostiles; but before starting we purchased some groceries at the trading store, for we heard that these people were in destitute circumstances. A hostile at the post volunteered to guide us. Near the village a number of children were playing, but the instant they saw us they scampered through the sage brush like scared rabbits, crying "bahana, bahana," (white man). They were afraid we were soldiers coming to take them back to the school which had closed for the summer; and even after our guide had assured them that we came as friends they gazed at us with fear in their eyes as we rode into Hotevilla. Most of the hostiles welcomed us, but a few held aloof, even refusing our presents of coffee and canned corn and peaches. We soon found some of Louis' old friends who greeted us with open arms, and when we left we did not carry back a single thing we had taken with us.

Hotevilla at that time consisted of a few stone houses, and a large number of brush wickiups, pleasant enough in summer but a poor shelter from the long desert winter. The courage of those indians won our admiration; for they were in such destitute circumstances that we did not see how they could last. Their crops had been burned out, and many of their sheep had died from scab; but they absolutely refused to return to Oraibi. For the sake of their religion and their ancient customs they had gone off to themselves, something man

theory advanced by geologists that a great inland sea once covered the Painted Desert and practically all of northern Arizona. And high up on the San Francisco peaks is a large spring which now supplies the town of Flagstaff.

The public Flute ceremonies at Toreva started about the middle of the afternoon, and when we went to the spring we found a few of the clan already there. The others came in a short time, some absolutely nude except for the customary "G" string. One of the Blue Flute men was a pure albino with pinkish-white skin, light blue eyes, and blond hair.

Dressing and painting the two Flute girls of each society required considerable time; for it had to be done with great care, and they presented a picturesque appearance when this was completed. A white blanket of native weave with a black border across each end was draped around the shoulders, and each wore a white skirt, also of native manufacture, with a long girdle and white pendants around the waist; while their chins were painted black with a white stripe across the face from ear to ear. These were the maidens represented at the altars by the effigies already described. Each Flute boy, who represented the ancestral heroes of the Flute societies, had a feather fastened in his hair, and a white kilt girdled the loins; but the rest of the body was nude. During the ceremony at the spring a white kilt was the only attire worn by the priests; but before the march to the village was started they fastened white blankets around the shoulders. These had wide black borders at the top and bottom. When all arrangements had been completed the two societies took positions on opposite sides of the spring, which has walled sides and is about twenty-five feet in



diameter by three feet deep. No objections were made to the presence of white people, and we not only observed every movement closely but I was permitted to take photographs. Five men from each fraternity sat on opposite sides of the pool with their feet in the water, chanting Flute songs and keeping time with gourd rattles until a Blue Flute priest entered the spring, and after feeling around the edge brought forth a small gourd. This was repeated until six had been found when the chanting ceased.

Both societies then formed in line, the Blue Flutes first with their chief priest in the lead. Next came the three Flute children, the boy in the center, with a platoon of men behind them. The sun emblem worn by all of the Flute men at Oraibi was absent; but one of the Blue Flutes carried on his back a moisture tablet made of a piece of buckskin stretched over a rectangular frame and painted in the Hopi colors of the sun shield. At the top were eagle feathers, and the sides and bottom were adorned with horsehair stained red. This man played upon a reed flute during the march from the spring to the kisi; and another from each society carried the Flute standard. A warrior dressed in buckskin, with a quiver of arrows slung over his back, and carrying a bow and bull roarer, brought up the rear of the Blue Flutes.

The Drab Flutes formed in the same order, and their attire was similar with the exception of the bearer of the Flute standard who carried green corn stalks and wore a fox skin hanging from his waist in the rear. There was no moisture tablet carrier, or warrior, but the man who brought up the rear wore a fox skin, with green corn stalks fastened in his belt and feathers in his hair, and he played a flute, making only two flute

players in the entire procession. Each of the Flute children in both societies carried one of the gourds filled with water from the spring.

With sacred meal the chief of the Blue Flutes made three rain cloud symbols joined together with long parallel lines representing rain, and upon this primitive picture the children threw their offerings, a piece of wood by the boy and a ring of twisted flag leaves by each girl. After several minutes of chanting the chief made another rain cloud picture a few feet in advance of the first and the offerings were transferred to it, the Drab Flutes using the first symbol made. This was kept up until the trail leading to the first terrace of the mesa was reached, when the ceremony was stopped and all marched up the steep path in single file. On the first terrace the same order of procession was formed, and the rites continued to the foot of the trail to the village. Across the plaza they marched in the same order, making the rain cloud symbols to the kisi, where the Blue Flutes deposited the three gourds and offerings to the gods and then went to their council chamber, followed by the Drab Flutes; and the public Flute ceremony was over.

While this performance lacked the spectacular features of the Snake dance it was equally as interesting and impressive. Each detail was carried out in the most orderly manner; and the buildings surrounding the plaza, crowded with indian spectators, added that picturesque touch characteristic of the old Southwest.

That night we sat around our campfire before the little desert mission until quite late, talking over the interesting events of the day. The brilliant Arizona moon made the night beautiful, and we could see out across the desert for miles and miles, the soft, silvery