

# Nine Indian Songs

with

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES

by

# THURLOW LIEURANCE

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AN INDIAN VILLAGE.\*

### INDIAN SONGS

THE San Geronimo feast is over. It was an interesting ceremony, beyond our understanding and my descriptive ability.

Leaving the railroad at Ute Park we staged to Taos, through a beautiful cañon, and across the Merino Valley. Going through the canon, four Indian hunters spied us, broke camp, and followed us for miles. They knew we were not plainsmen, nor the freighter who crosses so often, as we had trunks and strange apparatus piled high on the wagons. They rode up, and we talked to them, and finally took a picture. They kept close to our party, and again one of them rode up and wanted us to take another picture of them at the top of the mountain we were nearing. We knew this was a cunning trick to be with us at dinner and feeding time. We, of course, consented. Reaching the place mentioned we passed them something to eat and smoke, after which we bade them goodbye and told them to meet us San Geronimo's Day at the Pueblo. In the evening we passed out of Taos Canon into a beautiful valley, irrigated by the native Mexicans. After passing Penitent Hill, we passed through long rows of adobe houses and the studios of some of our famous Indian painters into the plaza. Here stands the home of Kit Carson, who lived prior to his death when agent of the Indians here at the Pueblo. Here stands the home of Padro Martinez, the first priest, who established the first newspaper west of the Mississippi river, "El Crepusculo" (The Dawn), published just four weeks and printed in capital letters. Strolling through Taos you think you are at a moving picture show. Winding down the narrow streets, you come across burros heavily loaded with wood and other packs, Spanish speaking people on all sides, Indians lounging about, tourists, farmers, and ranchers.

### THE LEGEND OF SAN GERONIMO

The following is the legend of San Geronimo, as told by the Red Willow Indians at the Taos Pueblo. The birthday is celebrated on the 30th of September every year. When the earth was new a great chief ruled over his people. He came from the clouds and taught his subjects to live and work. On one evening at sunset he left them, and said that none could follow him over the mountain, but that he would return some day and bring them bountiful harvests. The legend goes on to say, that one evening in the long ago they heard a voice calling them at sunset, calling each by name. They all went to find it, and there beheld a man of large stature and handsome. He demanded to know why the valleys were barren, and why the people did not till the soil. They answered they knew nothing about tilling the soil and raising food stuffs. He answered them that he was their god, and that he had come to teach them to till the soil and be prosperous. After ruling his people many prosperous moons he departed one evening at sunset. When the Indians became Catholics their priests gave them a patron saint in the form of San Geronimo, their departed God. His wooden image is kept in the adobe chapel at the pueblo.

<sup>\*</sup> The pictures in this volume, used by permission, are from photographs by the noted Indian artist Richard Throssel, Billings, Montana, owner of the copyright.

### THE SUNDOWN CEREMONY AND DANCE

This ceremony is in honor of the departure of their god of long ago. It takes place the eve before San Geronimo's Day, and begins with a vesper service in the chapel. Communicants take their candles with them into the church, light them at the altar, kneel, and pray, after which they station themselves on the highest points of the pueblo to await the coming of the dance ceremony. Just at sundown the bell is sounded, then the waiting dancers, clad in white blankets and decorated with aspen boughs, make their way to the church. There the drums sound a tatoo and the mournful song is started. Leaving the church they dance, a slow movement, singing all the time, through the streets of the pueblo.

#### SAN GERONIMO'S DAY

Bright red shawls, waved from the topmost pinacles of the pueblos, invite the blessings of the rising sun, also

signaling for the return of their god of the harvest. This is kept up until the sun is in full view. Then, at the sound of the bell, a procession starts from the church escorting the image of San Geronimo, which is carried by a beautiful maiden to the chapel of aspen and cottonwood. Here are the races. Runners from the two clans are started from the stand which holds the image, in a relay race, over a 400 yard course, to run ten miles. At the start two medicine men stand behind the runners who are chosen to run next. With magic feathers they brush the runner, spitting "Good Medicine" on the runner all the time, encouraging him to run and save the race for his clan, who, if winners, will have a voice in electing the coming governor of the pueblo. Each runner is nude, painted over in colors. Small feathers are stuck over his person to give him lightness and to act as "Good Medicine." These he believes will make him run faster and give him good luck for his side.

The time is recorded in the Estufas with other history. Later in the afternoon the Chiffoneti made their appearance, their pranks amusing the bystanders all the time. This is the origin of the Chiffoneti. Once the tribe had a long famine, and the chiefs appointed certain members of the tribe to create fun to take their minds off their misery. They are dressed with just a head gear of corn shucks, their bodies painted over with black and white. Finally, the Chiffoneti find a long pole, and on the tip they see good things to eat—a sheep, bread, cakes. This means to them that the famine is broken. One fellow climbs the pole and lowers the good things to eat. They believe that San Geronimo placed them there for his people.

### A WEDDING CEREMONY OF THE RED WILLOW INDIANS

The bride and her people are seated on one side of the room, when the bridegroom and his party enter with the

Indian priest of the tribe, an exponent of their religion of the Sun God. The priest comes to the center and asks questions of the bride and all her people. Everyone has to give consent, and they answer in a soft low voice, saying the syllables: "Um'n." He then instructs the bridegroom how to live and how to provide for his bride. In this he goes into the remotest detail—how a man should treat his wife, how to raise the corn, how to hunt. They both come to the center of the room, kneel, and the priest exchanges their rosaries. After this a wedding breakfast is served. Then, in about three weeks, the Catholic priest marries them again.

#### DANCES

The sundown dance, danced on the eve of San Geronimo's Day, is of slow *tempo*, without drums, a ceremonial dance, mourning the departure of their god. It is a three pulse to the measure rhythm. The dancers move in two lines and

carry the boughs of the aspen, moving through the streets of the two principal pueblos.

### DANCE FOR THE VICTORS

This dance takes place after the races on San Geronimo's day. It is a joyful one, as they believe the saint is pleased with the race and the winners. It is danced to the same melody as the sundown dance song, only much quicker. The dance formation is the same.

### THE BUFFALO DANCE

A dance celebrated at the Christmas time, or the Twelfth night, which portrays the actions and movements of the buffalo. The drums produce a low, rumbling sound imitating the sound of a large herd when grazing. The dancers sway to and fro, imitating the movements of the buffalo when grazing, from one side to the other. The chiefs are dressed in the skins of the buffalo, and are stationed so

that they will be guardians against the bad spirits or people who kill off their herds.



Two Indians emerge from an estufa, dressed in eagle feathers, their movements representing movements of an eagle hopping around on the ground. At times they raise their arms to represent the wings, high, then low, the music of the song rising and falling with their movements. This dance is a severe muscular test. After the dance they return to their nest, the estufa.

### THE DEER DANCE

This is their Thanksgiving. The dancers represent all the animals in the mountains. The leaders represent the deer, as it is the best meat and the skins are used for manypurposes. They wear the deer horns and heads and carry long sticks



JOHN TURKEY LEGS.

in their hands to represent the forelegs of the deer. In the line all animals are represented, the dancers portraying the movements of the animal they represent. No sound of song or drum is heard at this time. As the dancers approach, the girls, with their rattles and magic wands, advance, then retreat, until they have ensnared the animals. Then the slaughter takes place and the song and sound of the drum is heard.

#### WAR DANCES

The war dances are similar to those of other tribes and many are borrowed from the neighboring ones. All are devoid of much melody. The rhythm is a 2-4 allegro, used to excite. The Owl or Squaw dance songs and the songs and dances for ordinary pleasure are danced any time. They are not ceremonial in any respect. Some are very pretty and tuneful when harmonized. The Pony Dance is a dance for exhibition purposes only, the dancers imitating the

ponies in characteristic poses and movements. The Turtle Dance is a slow grotesque movement, and represents the tribe hunting for water. The Matchina Dance is to represent the coming of Cortez. The dancers are massed in close formation, going through intricate figures.

### MUSIC

The music of the Red Willow Indians is similar in nature to all tribes, with the exception of the ceremonies, and many songs are used for all of them. For their Owl and Squaw dances they have many songs. Songs of other tribes are heard here. Probably the love songs are the more tuneful. They are sung at night by members of different clans from the bridge which spans the Taos river and separates the two large pueblos. You hear a flute occasionally. The love songs are composed and owned by individuals when wooing. Words of love, which the girls say to their lovers, are

introduced. For the rest the ordinary vowel-syllable is

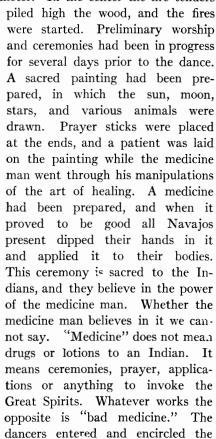
### TAKING SONG RECORDS AT PUEBLO

Upon entering a room, or abode, in the pueblo, the first thing you note is the neatness of the arrangement—the whitewashed walls, the appropriate burlap on the floor, bedding rolled up next the wall. This serves as a lounging place. A modern cupboard and table are the only modern pieces you recognize. The singers, with their drums and flutes, are arranged about six feet in front of the recording machines. The leader and timer of the songs sits in front, rehearses the singers, humming low, before each record is made. The war chief, with his interpreter, is there, inviting himself to find out what it is all about, to sanction or prohibit the recording of songs he wants or does not want sung. After recording a song we produce it for the singers, also to know if it is properly recorded. Near the operator is an educated Indian boy, who acts as an interpreter, who tells

the operator the different songs used in this particular tribe, also to keep him posted as to how they are pleased, and what they are objecting to. The Red Willow singers had an idea that the records were poisoned and bad medicine. After convincing them that they were not, and that we were preserving their voices and songs so their children could hear them when they were gone, it was different, and they are now "good medicine." The records making ends with a feast and playing over all of the songs recorded. The principal singers of this tribe are: Deer-Yellow Willows, Standing Buffalo, Beaver, War Bonnet, Hang-a Deer, Sun Deer, Buckskin Star, Mountain Arrow, Black Bird.

### NAVAJO INDIANS PAY TRIBUTE TO THE SUN

On the day appointed, at sunrise, cedar boughs were cut and hauled in from the mountains to construct a corral about 200 feet in diameter. In the center the fire tenders





A Crow Chief.

fire, holding their prayer sticks close to the blaze. Soon two principal dancers came in. Holding their prayer sticks in their mouths, they threw their heads back and pointed the prayer sticks to the heavens, offering prayers. Other dancers, representing male and female spirits, encircled the fire. A basket containing medicine was placed with crossed feathers on top and they danced around it. Soon there entered almost nude dancers, their bodies painted with white and brown earth, each carrying long braided whips of cedar bark. They lit the ends of these whips, then ran to the north, south east, and west, with the burning brands, whipping themselves and other Navajos. This was followed by a rush of Indians to gather pieces of the demolished fire whips. The dance continued all the night. The Navajos worship the sun with fire to invoke its blessings. Thousands of dollars worth of blankets, jewelry, and precious stones were on display for the visitors, and products of agriculture were also exhibited. The

Navajo reservation is as large as the state of Pennsylvania. The Indians own great herds of ponies and sheep. They weave the Navajo blankets, using native wool and their own dyes. In every blanket they weave some figures that represent an event in their lives or some symbol of ceremony. No two blankets are alike. If, when weaving, they have trouble with certain lines or figures, they will run the line in one color to the edge of the blanket to let the devil out.

### CHARACTERISTICS AND GAMES OF THE CROW INDIANS

#### MOURNERS

When an Indian dies, he is prepared for burial before he has taken his last breath, his weapons and provisions are placed with him, as he will need them on the journey to the "Land of Ghosts." If he possesses much wealth, there will be many who come to mourn, and they will be given something for the act of mourning, relatives or not. The squaws will not dance when in mourning, and you can mark them by the black handkerchief worn on the head and dark dress.

#### PRIDE

An Indian is proud that he is an Indian, and does not want to be anything else, even when educated to the highest degree. The visitors admire his finery, and dress, and manners and this pleases the Indian. In the dance lodges the men are so vain that they carry small mirrors, and are continually primping. The mirror and cigarette go hand in hand. They wear the ordinary trousers of the white men, but they are made out of bright red, with beaded stripes down the outer seams, and beaded mocassins of buckskin or calf. Their shirts are beaded with flower designs usually. They wear necklaces made of bone, supposed to be a kind of shield. They carry pipe and tobacco bags which are artistically beaded. The hair is hung in two braids, coming around in front, with a high pompadour.

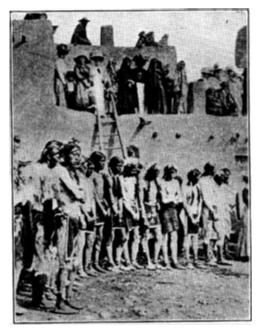
#### GAMES

Throwing the arrow is played at any time of the year. The arrow is about three feet long. An Indian will throw an arrow about 80 yards, and then they will bet and all throw toward the same arrow. Their throwing is marvellously accurate.

The hand game is a gambling game: ten sticks laid on the ground, five on a side. One takes an elk tooth, and holds his two hands together, passes the tooth from one to the other, and the first one on the opposite side guesses which hand the tooth is in. If he guesses right the party retires. The game is a scientific juggling of the elk tooth. The game of shinny is played in the summer. Horse racing is the greatest sport and gamble. An Indian will pay \$600 for a horse to win a \$10 bet and race. Foot racing is another sport, and no people in the world are as fleet as the Indians. There are many on this reservation who can run 100 yards in ten seconds.

#### NATIVE ABILITY

The Indian possesses ability in the extreme. As a trader he is never beaten out of anything, unless he is



RELAY RACE.

hungry and his family starving. He lives in his own primitive way, with his own surgery, with his grandmother for nurse, and historian and matchmaker. When an Indian school girl wants to finish at Carlisle or some other school, she must have the agent's permission, her parents' and grandmother's. The grandmother usually stops the proceedings, and in a short time the girl is wearing a blanket, with a papoose strapped upon her back. The Indian woman is the power that moves the tribe; she is the machine. The warrior is the person to be admired.

On July 25, 1876, there were camped about 2000 lodges of Indians that took part in the Battle of the Little Horn. Each lodge averaged five persons. About morning, Major Reno attacked them and was made to retreat. Custer marched over the bridge towards the East, threw out his skirmish line and opened fire. By three o'clock the battle was over, Custer and his followers all slain, his Indian scouts in flight. During this time the squaws had packed the camp and moved into the hills, and the Indian dead was buried as soon as the battle was over. On the morning of the next day they were making for their several reservations, Sitting Bull going into Canada, not to return until after his peace treaty a few years later. At the time of the Battle of the Little Horn, the Indians were equipped with better rifles than the United States soldiers. Chief Gaul rode with his warriors right through the middle of Custers' command, then rode in circles about the two bodies of soldiers, firing all the time. This kept General Custer from sending for reinforcements, and for his ammunition packs. Hence the cause of defeat. The Indian is an adept in his own realm, knowing and worshipping nature alone. She gave him birth and life, and she will take him when he dies. He does not fear death.

The reservation is policed with Indians appointed by the agent. The chief of police is an old Indian, by the name of Big Medicine. He is the best politician in the tribe. The Indians are very cleanly in person, but they do not seem to care how soiled their clothes are. An Indian would rather buy a new dress than wash an old one.

Our guide was a Carlisle graduate, very intelligent, liking to talk of his school days, and trips with the Indian band. He plays slide trombone and mandolin, and seems to be the chief musician on the reservation. One would think that he would prefer to remain in the East. He does the opposite, comes back to his people, and allotment, marries an Indian girl, who was educated at Haskell. She goes back to her blanket, and primitive dress, while he wears the white man's clothes but wears his hair long and in braids, likes the big, tall crowned hat, with a feather in it, elaborate hat band, and plenty of jewelry. He doesn't farm his own land, but leases it. All Indians speak English but the very old ones. Each tribe has a different language, and the only way all can talk is with the sign language, which is universal among the tribes. They are great socialists, live in villages together, divide with one another, and a chief is not a rich man, but a leader. The only grafter among them is the medicine man. He has the right to claim anything for a cure. The Indians are worshippers of the sun, and invoke its blessing by hanging a red cloth on the end of a long pole, pointing toward it. They do this in all ceremonies. They are good listeners, but poor demonstrators. Some have exceptionally good voices, and like to sing, but they prefer to have a drum or something to beat upon. It is strange that the drums are used very seldom to beat the tempo of the song they sing, but to mark the dance step. They will beat a straight 4-4 tempo, then sing the song in an entirely different tempo. Parts of their songs have words, and for the balance they will use a "Hi, hi, hi." For a lullaby an Indian woman will sing "We, we, " all through the song, excepting where she sings a direct sentence to the papoose. Many of the songs have no words at all and represent the feeling, imitation, etc. They dance all the Xmas week, in different camps over the reservation, in large barn like halls built by the government.

The best characters among the Indians are the old fellows who are yet alive, and who help make the treaties, and were also the real warriors. They are very kind, and you feel a real true friendship when you shake their hands. At the dances and festivities, they will lead their warriors to the center of the lodge, the announcer will pay them tribute, by telling of their bravery, and daring deeds; all visiting Indians are brought before the assemblage and introduced, and many times an old squaw will share in some of the honors. At one dance there was an old Sioux warrior who was led before the assemblage, who said he had never been there since many moons, when he fought "Long Hair" Custer under his old chief Gaul. It is the most wonderful deed of bravery a Crow can boast of when he tells that he killed a Sioux. Most of them lie when they

tell it, as it is said that two Sioux can whip twenty Crows.

### XMAS FESTIVITIES AT AN INDIAN DANCE, LODGE GRASS, MONTANA

No carnival or bazaar you can imagine can compare with the scene. The squaws were seated on the ground against the wall of the big lodge, clad in all the variety of colors known to that race. The younger ones in many instances wore a loose yellow or red silk or satin dress covered over with a gorgeous blanket, and a large silk handkerchief covering the head. The old and young crowded together on the ground, papooses laughing and most of the time squalling with all their might. Everything was ablaze with color. Warriors decked and decorated with war paint, feathers, ornaments, and beads. One who seemed to be the clown and leader in the dance was dressed to represent a rooster. In the center of the lodge the musicians sat around one huge drum supported and braced with stakes driven around it and roped. Five persons beat this one drum, and no modern band drum of any six can compare in depth of sound or in carrying qualities. The war dance varied in dance steps, and they changed the rhythm of the beats between the different intervals of rest. The first step was a 6-8 tempo. After one dance the drums would summon a number of the old warriors in the center, and the interpreter would explain: Old chief "Medicine Crow" would drop his blanket, and tell of his war experience, he told of killing a Sioux, and at different intervals of his story the drums would beat an applause. Then the next warrior stepped forth and in the same fashion told how many horses he had stolen. The next told how many buffaloes he killed, and also about killing a Sioux. These experiences of the old time warriors seemed to be thrilling to the younger Indians, and then the old chief would implore the young men to go and get a scalp. While this is going on the squaws and the younger ones prepare to participate in the "Squaw dance." When this is announced, some old Indian woman takes a whip, and all those that don't get up to dance are whipped or made pay; the very old ones usually are in the center, and they form a big circle, face toward the inside, arms around each other, then they dance to the left, moving very slowly, edging around inch by inch, the drums beating a three-four waltz tempo, with their song accompaniment. Finally, the announcer called for the little boys, who danced for a prize. A visiting Cree Indian from Canada tried to make all laugh, and went through some grotesque motions. They made him a present of a pony and saddle, leading the animal into the hall. Most Indian songs start pitched high, and finally end pitched low, just the opposite to our songs, with the climax first.

THURLOW LIEURANCE.



### INDIAN SONGS

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### LULLABY

### THURLOW LIEURANCE

While the Indian woman croons her lullaby, her returning warrior signals his coming with the flute, playing the love song he wooed his sweetheart with. It is her flute call.

The syllable "Wi" is pronounced We.







### LOVE SONG

### From the Red Willow Pueblos

The melody is one of the Red Willow ceremonial songs and the text is from an Omaha Legend. The young Indian, when he feels the spring of love dawn, mounts the hill overlooking the valley where the camp is located, and calls upon his flute to his love. The love songs are played upon the Indian flute, which is made of two pieces of cedar, glued together with the pitch

from the pine tree, wound around with sinew. It is blown into from the end. A partition about four inches from the end, causes the air to circulate through a resonance chamber, then again into the remaining length of the flute. Some have four tones and others six. They blow so as to cause the tone to ascend to higher registers.





### THE WEAVER

### The Blanket-Her Rosary

The poem is after the "Rosary," only Indian in nature. The melody is a Crow tobacco dance melody. The planting of the tobacco in the spring is a religious ceremony. The melody was sung by "Felix Bear," "In the Cloud," Wm Felter

"Sitting Eagle" "Thos. Gardener" and recorded by the author in January 1912 on the Crow Reservation, near the Custer Battlefield.





# MY SILVER THROATED FAWN SIOUX LOVE SONG

KARL JONES

### THURLOW LIEURANCE

Melody sung by Frank Double-the-Horse. The Sioux Indians have music of perfect intervals and their love songs are the most melodious of all.





## A CROW MAIDEN'S PRAYER SONG

Red Bird prays for the God to send her a sweetheart who will bring her many elk teeth for her bridal dress. The melody of this song is one of the Tobacco Planting ceremonial songs of the Crow Indians.





## AOOAH

### Love Song from the Red Willow Pueblos

The melody is from the Sioux; a melody so beautiful that one can scarce believe it to be Indian. It is known among many tribes and is played on the Indian flute.

"Aooah" is a pretty little Red Willow Indian girl. She can be found at the Pueblo near Taos, New Mexico.

### THURLOW, LIEURANCE





# PAKOBLE THE ROSE

KARL JONES

### THURLOW LIEURANCE

An Arctides text, from the book by Chas. Eugene Banks, entitled "The Child of the Sun". The melody is a flute song, played by John Turkey Legs, a Cheyenne. Recorded on the Cheyenne Reservation in April 1912.





# PA-PUP-OOH

### **DEER-FLOWER**

Translated means "Deer-Flower." The melody is a flute song of the Red Willow Pueblo Indians. The text is a farewell. Pu-pup-ooh, must not marry away from her own tribe. The song of the lover was confided to the author, and recorded with the promise his identity

should never be made public. Pu-pup-ooh, Deer-Flower) is one of the beautiful daughters of the present chief of the Red Willow Pueblo Indians, whose name is "Whet-ta-cah" meaning "Bow Hawk."





### HER BLANKET

### From the Navajo

The text is translated from the Indians' expressions. The Indian woman weaves the events of her life in figures. Her sorrow and her hopes are pictured in the

blanket. It is the only history and the only manner in which the Navajo can write his or her life's history.







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