

Native Indian

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The origin of the Indian and his transition to the American continent are matters of considerable conjecture. One line of authorities hold that the American Indians are one of the ten tribes of Israel and migrated across Asia collecting in the extreme northeastern portion of Siberia near Behring Strait from which position the American continent is easily discernable thence crossing by means of boats to the Aleutian Islands and from here to the American continent proper. The other authorities conceding the probability of their origin maintain that their migration was westward as has been the prevailing tendency of the majority of European and middle European peoples: that the tribe congregated in the Scandinavian peninsula, transported themselves from there to Iceland and from the latter place are presumed to have crossed the Atlantic Ocean by way of a peninsula, which has since subsided, to America. Those who adhere to the latter theory of transition account for not finding Indians elsewhere along their course by the fact that this peninsula was soon after submerged thus cutting off their regress. They further contend in support of their theory that the Indian could not have come to this continent through northeastern Asia and the Behring Straights from the fact that they are known to be averse at all times to cross to the Asiatic shores: that had they immigrated hither by Asiatic incursions they would have been constantly crossing and recrossing and mingling with the population of Asia. In this manner their own people in time would have become somewhat amalgamated with the Asiatics sufficiently at least to have left indelible traces in character, features, and stature.

But such is not the judgement of those who are familiar with the Indian except in very recent times and that too along the Pacific shores especially in California and southward where they seem to bear characteristics of the mongoloid races particularly from the shape of their features and the oblique position of the eyes.

Concerning the habitation of America it is established beyond controversy from excavations and geological surveys that man has dwelt here from remote antiquity. His occupancy precedes the Glacial Period of the Ice Age. Relics have been found which prove conclusively that Alaska has been inhabited earlier than 1000 A.D.

The principle tribes of the Alaskan Indians are the Innuits. In appearance they are of medium height, dark in color, nose and cheek bones prominent, hair very black, with dolichocephalic skulls. They are characterized by their unity of language, their unusual intelligence, and industrious habits. They build their boats from skins and walrus bones - the perfection of a canoe. They carved ornaments from wood, ivory, and bone and they alone of all the inhabitants of this continent before their intercourse with civilized countries knew the use of lamps. These lamps were made of stone ground out for the bowl with a wick of dried moss. They also knew the architectural strength of the arch and construct all of their snow houses upon that principle. Their weapons are the lance and the bow and arrow. And in spite of the hardships and the rigors of climatic conditions and the frequent suffering from intense hunger they are singularly of a placid temperament - much given to mirth and laughter.

By "nith songs" are tribal and individual feuds allayed. If two members of their own tribe become involved in difficulty an evening is appointed when all the tribe will gather to hear them sing.

After the singing the tribe decides who is victorious. If a tribal feud all the tribes far and near are invited to be present. Two members of the respective tribes are chosen to sing and when the singing has ended the verdict is rendered by those present in favor of him who sings the better and that decision puts an end to all feeling.

Few linguistic tongues exceed the Athabascans in geographical distribution. The entire group presents a remarkable resemblance. They are low in culture and intellectually below most other tribes. Their temperament is gloomy and morose and are exceedingly liable to panic terrors. They have no form of government: their chiefs are chosen either for his daring or his generosity of presents but without formality. They are skilled hunters and bold warriors, are possessed with an untamable savage ferocity and their brutality is unsurpassed. The laws of consanguinity run in the female line only. Father has no kinship with the son who often marries his father's sister. Wives are obtained by purchase or exchange and likewise disposed of. Marriages are polygamous and dissolved at will and the existence of marital affection is wholly unknown. The women spin clothing from yarn made from the hair of the mountain goat and manufacture utensils of coarse pottery, wood, horn, and stone while the men make the tents of neatly dressed skins and construct their boats of bark.

The Algonquin stock is the best type of the American race. They are of average stature with superior muscular development when compared with European nations. They occupy fixed residences and live largely in towns constructing small wattled huts with rounded tops, and thatched with leaves of maize and sweet flags. These huts are usually built in groups and surrounded for purposes of defense by palisades which are built around the settlement, by driving stakes into the ground and completing the structure with an embankment of earth and stone. Upon the walls of earth at intervals were placed great masses of stone to be used in warding off the enemy.

The Algonquin people are intellectually strong and extremely agricultural. The process of preparing the ground for cultivation was in many instances quite irksome. It was sometimes accomplished by piling brushwood around the trunks of trees and burning them, after that was finished the squaws with their bone and wooden hoes toiled among the stumps to raise sufficient products for subsistence. Their principle products were maize, squash, and tobacco. They took great delight in manufacturing clay pipes and carving upon them all sorts of figures. Indian corn was their staple article of food. They were not improvident and always sought to avoid the season of want. In times of bountiful harvests the surplus is buried in deep holes in the ground where it remains until needed for food. Wild game was an occasional diet except that of the bear. The flesh of the dog is their common and usual fare and venison is regarded too precious to eat only at feasts. They are also skilled in making utensils from wood by alternate burning and scraping and from stone by grinding—all of which are well polished. The women weave mats of bark and rushes and make garments of the skins of animals which are made suitable for clothing with no little degree of skill. They also weave nets from hemp and manufacture medicine, obtain oil from the fish and the sunflower seed. The master piece of all their skill is centered in canoes which are hewn from the trunks of trees. They excel those of other groups who construct canoes principally from oak and elm on account of the lightness or weight, durability, and strength. The weapons used are the lance, tomahawk, and the bow and arrow: their shields were made from bison hide stretched upon frames of wood over-

laid with plaited and twisted thongs of skin. They observed curious customs in trading with other tribes or peoples. He who first enters into negotiations with a stranger has the right to trade with them by priority. In other words he has a monopoly on all trading relations with such strangers: the fruits of which the owner may be deprived if taken before he reaches home but after that it is a breach of the peace to molest him in its enjoyment.

The Algonquins are notorious thieves and inveterate gamblers. The gambling is carried on by means of pebbles. The two sides of each are white and black respectively. They are placed in a bowl which is beat upon the ground and the gamblers wager on the white or black side being uppermost when the bowl is stopped. Villages challenge neighboring villages to gambling feasts. Individuals become intensely interested in the outcome of the affair so much so in fact that they stake all their property - their clothing, canoes, ornaments, wives, and children and oftentimes naked and forsaken wander from hut to hut begging to be received and to be provided for.

They indulge in navish decorations of the body. Copper is to be found among them in the form of ornaments, knives, and chisels occasionally in the form of arrowheads and spearheads though the latter are made chiefly from quartz, jasper, chert or hard sandstone. In summer the men are scantily clothed while in winter they wear tunics and leggins of skins. They have a special dress made from the furs of the beaver and otter and upon ceremonious occasions are wrapped in these from head to foot. The long black hair is worn in a variety of fashions and the face is painted with ochre, white clay, soot or the juice of berries. They also indulge in a tattooing process which is very painful and the victim in many cases dies from its effects. However severe the process no murmur is heard from the unfortunate sufferer though death ensue. Pain must be endured in order to keep himself ingratiated with his fellows and he bears the almost intolerable suffering with fortitude.

There is no bright side to female life. She has only a life of drudgery. Champlain is said to have remarked: "Their women are their mules!" The dress of the women is likewise that of the skins of animals but according to statements of missionaries is as modest as that of the most pious lady.

Polygamous marriages exist among them but such might be more accurately denominated temporary or experimental. They last only for a time - as a day, a week or more and divorce is secured by the consent of either party. In the matters of government the women have more than ordinary respect. They were represented in the councils of the tribes. They elect the chiefs of the gens and those persons who will represent them and their interests in the councils of the tribes. No war is ever waged against neighboring tribes without their consent. Personal property descends in the female line and there is no personal ownership of land. Each family takes as much land as it sees fit to cultivate besides a sufficient parcel of ground is reserved to each clan for its burial grounds.

Their most mysterious fabric is wampum. It is their currency, pen, ink, and paper or parchment. No compact, no speech, or clause of a speech to the representatives of another nation had any force unless confirmed by the delivery of a string or belt of wampum. It is designed to serve as an aid to the memory. The old men of the tribe were the keepers of the wampum and it was their duty to interpret the meaning of these belts. That this duty was faithfully performed there can be no doubt. Many persons are reported to have heard the tribal compacts of this kind, the memory of which these belts are supposed to commemorate and also heard the recitals of the same through a per-

language. By the same means they preserve the memory of their songs and chants. At stated intervals feasts and dances too various to describe take place, the chief of which may be said to be the social, medical, mystical, and religious. At the social feasts when the food is prepared a crier goes out and proclaims in a loud voice inviting all to attend. Each individual who desires to accept the invitation seizes his bowl and spoon and makes haste to arrive upon the scene as soon as possible lest some neighbor more fortunately situated might envelope the larger part of his apportionment.

At the medical feasts the guests were under obligations to eat the whole of that given him regardless of the quantity. A failure to do so was considered an outrage upon the hostess, the spirits were aroused to vengeance, a calamity was certain to follow and the tribe would be destroyed. Prizes of large quantities of tobacco were given to that one who could devour his portion the most rapaciously or in other words to the most rapid feeder. In the instance of the remaining two it seems to be a fast rather than a feast. The members of the tribe collect into one body as nearly as possible and lie upon the ground face downward for days at a time without food. He who has the greatest endurance is said to have appeased the wrath of the spirits and saved the tribe from future disaster.

The medicine man is worshiped by all. He is the chief advisory and is most influential. Sickness is regarded by him as being brought about by the agency of spirits and when called to attend a patient he begins to pinch, bite, and jerk the patient around and shout at the top of his voice hoping that he may frighten the demon away and rid his patient of the trouble.

Murder among them is of infrequent occurrence. When one is murdered his next of kin are held responsible for his death and they must take the life of the assailant unless the death is atoned by paying a stipulated sum. If the price be not paid then the relatives of the deceased are enemies of the murderer and under penalty of death must slay him.

The tribal settlement of the Algonquins was changed from place to place at the expiration of periods from fifteen to thirty years or as soon as the land enclosed will no longer furnish subsistence for the tribe. When a change of location was resolved upon extreme precaution was always taken to pitch camp in the most secure and naturally fortified place regard also being had for the fertility of the soil and water supply.

Among the subdivisions of the Algonquin stock are the Iroquois who observe the customs of their ancestors with marked exactness. The Muskokis living in well constructed wooden dwellings who are of Algonquin origin are supposed to be the artificial mound builders near Natchez, Mississippi. They made fine pottery and their clothing was made by weaving fabrics from the inner filaments of bark of the mulberry trees. They sacrifice captives to their gods and the wives of their chiefs at his death that he might not go unaccompanied to his future abode.

The Dakotahs though descendants of the Algonquins vary considerable in customs and communal life. They enjoy the celebrity for hardihood and daring. Their association is strictly by clans and retain practically the form of government of their ancestors save that of woman being represented in affairs, and the chieftainship is made hereditary. No power or property passes to the female and widows deprived of everything are left in destitution. Marriage is a commercial transaction - the bride being purchased directly from the parents. Each family has its own fields for agricultural purposes and

dwell mostly in permanent abodes constructed of poles and bark covered with sod. The hunters seek buffaloes upon the prairie and along the streams busy themselves at snaring fish.

The Pueblos till the soil for food supply and cultivate cotton. The women make pottery of fine temper and symmetrical form. They make clothing from fibers of bark and grass and from cotton weaving in feathers and otherwise decorating with shells and beads. Their knowledge of metals is confined to ornaments but the distinctive characteristics of the Pueblos are their architectural ability. They are the famous cliff dwellers and construct their houses of stone and adobe. In this their culture is a mark of local and independent growth.

The Aztecs are of a different ancestry yet dwell east of the Rocky Mountains and build houses of sun dried bricks. They are diligent agriculturalists and irrigate the soil to increase its productivity. They are apiaries of considerable distinction and domesticate wild bees for their honey. Their tools, chisels, scrapers, ornaments, beads, and bells are made of an alloy of tin and copper - a crescent shaped piece of which is used as a circulating medium. The weapons of the Aztecs which are the bow, long lance, blowpipe, sling, war club, and tomahawk and most of the utensils are of stone such as obsidian, jade, agate, and chert. An intoxicating beverage is manufactured from the juice of the agave. Its use however is limited and drunkenness is severely punished. They take much pleasure in writing both phonetically and ideographically and specimens of such have been secured which relate back as early as 750 A.D.

The Toltecs are supposed to be the remote ancestors of the Aztecs. Their government is the same together with descents and distributions in so far as they relate to property but the dignities of the parent descend like personality to the male heirs. These people are agricultural and use cotton in the manufacture of clothing which is neatly woven and dyed in brilliant colors. Gold, silver, lead, and copper were deftly worked by pounding into ornaments and vases which would confer honor upon modern jewelers to equal. They are the only Americans who educated their children. Their boys were taught to dance, to sing the chants, forms of salutation, history of the tribe, and the art of writing besides they were drilled in martial exercises and in the use of instruments of war. They had reached the bronze age and their weapons and utensils and implements were made of this alloy of copper and tin. The girls were instructed in the preparation of food, the making of garments, morals of domestic life, and household duties. Their paper was made from the fibrous leaves of the maguey and upon this peculiar material by ideographic and rebus like writing have amassed considerable literature. The chronometer indicated 365 days as a calendar year. Their dwellings were edifices of stone and artificial pyramids and structures were built as a means of ornamentation.

Among the South American Indians there is no linguistic classification. In fact in many instances even in the same tribe women and men speak different tongues. The only reliable classification is confined to physical characteristics. These Indians are extremely warlike. To the Columbian and Peruvian groups belong the distinction of first using poisoned arrowheads that the wound which they inflict might not heal and the victim die in consequence. The Peruvians are not surpassed in agriculture by any of the inhabitants of the New Hemisphere. They also devote much of their time to the domestication of animals which not only serve for food but for beasts of burden and for wool. This is manufactured into mats and articles of clothing

and beautifully dyed. Metals of many kinds are known to them which are wrought into various shapes imitating fruits, animals, butterflies, birds, heads of men, and idols. They also make jars and vases in imitation of objects around them such as fish, birds, reptiles, fruits, men, and houses. They had a curious ingenuity which is displayed in making whistling and trick jars. The whistling jars emit a certain note when the fluid is poured into them while the trick jars are so constructed that they can not be emptied unless they are turned in a certain direction.

In their manufacture of pottery and cooking utensils they know nothing about the art of glazing or tempering the substance so as to make it durable. Their houses in the arid regions are made of sun dried bricks and in the mountains are built of stone. These stones are fitted together with extraordinary nicety and are placed in mortar or a cement which makes them firm and secure. The Inca palaces are doubtless equal in many respects to those in any other part of the world. The bodies of their dead are placed in sepulchral tombs in which they remain undisturbed.

The Aramanian stock are the most important tribes of southern South America. They are described as robust and tall, face round, nose short and flattened. Their favorite residing place is in or near the present state of Chili, are uncivilized, and depend upon the chase for subsistence.

The Caribs are the principal tribes of the inhabitants of Terra del Fuego. They are an anthropophagous race - the much feared cannibals of South America, and have no form of government. In their marriage ceremonies they are required to acquiesce to certain formalities but observe no laws of consanguinity. The son may marry his mother if he so desires; the father his daughter; and a brother his sister. The only distinctive characteristic which reflects in the least degree their intelligence is the use of a sail to propel their boats.

The religious worship and the conception of a feity among the Indians are remarkably similar in all kindreds and tribes. Their idea of the material world is sentient and almost unintelligible. There is a mysterious power in all animate and inanimate things. All living beings have souls. Birds, beasts, and reptiles have ears for human prayers and influence human destiny. Lakes, rivers, and waterfalls are the dwelling places of spirits. Men and animals are closely akin. Human beings are created from carcasses of beasts, birds, and the like and the reflection of this idea is to be found in the fact that the totemic names of the clans are borrowed in nearly every case from animals. They have a belief in supernatural things called manitous but probably because of their poverty of imagination these supernatural things take the form of beasts, reptiles, and birds in all sorts of unusual shapes.

Each Indian has a guardian manitou to whom he looks for guidance, counsel and protection. These guiding spirits are acquired at about the age of fourteen or fifteen years. The person who desires to have the benefit of the aid and comfort of this individual spirit smears his face with soot and hies away to some solitary place where he remains without food groping in superstitious expectancy. The exhaustion of famine never fails to bring about the desired result. The sleep of the individual thus emaciated is haunted with visions and hideous apparitions. The first animal form that appearsⁿ that dream is that of his guardian manitou; if an eagle or a bear, he is destined to be a warrior; if that of a wolf, a successful hunter; if a serpent a medicine man or it may forebode disaster. He wears a portion of

that animal which he has seen in his dream upon his person - as a bone a tuft of hair, or a part of the skin and propitiates this with tobacco smoke. He adores it in solitude, thanks it in prosperity, and upbraids it in adversity. All this applies equally as well to women as to men.

The spirits of whatever animals are killed by the hunter are propitiated with tobacco smoke. They have been known also to address dead or wounded animals in a long harangue of apology and take extreme precaution not to neglect the bones of such animals lest their surviving brethren take offense and thereafter escape them in the chase.

The chief of all these manitous is variously named among the different tribes yet all refer to one and the same, - The Great Spirit. They have in their religious belief a deluge of the earth with water. This deluge was caused by the evil spirits in the lakes and rivers. They have an idea of the existence of a devil but think that he is married. His wife is feared more than himself since they believe that she is the cause of death.

Their Supreme Manitou is the Sun which brings about the changes of seasons. They worship the four winds for they make the rain to fall upon their fields and increase their harvests. Some tribes worship idols but this is rare and is known in very few cases. Many Indians have a sort of undefined and indescribable belief in immortality. This includes things animate and inanimate as well as of the soul of each of them. They have no belief in future rewards or punishments save that many think the skilful warriors, hunters, and dignitaries of the tribe sojourn in death to the happy hunting ground while the slothful and cowardly are predestined to abodes of darkness and mist. The way of each and every object to its future state of existence is different and distinct though beset with perils and difficulties. Man is said to journey over the Milky Way. Beasts, birds and reptiles go by the way of the stars separate and distinct of each.

Upon the whole the religious worship of the Indian may be summarized in part in the statement that they are confounded by the generative power of nature and in their adoration of such they attempt to pay obeisance to these spirits. In short it is a chaos of degrading, ridiculous, and incoherent superstitions.

