THE SOUTHERN UTE INDIANS OF PINE RIVER VALLEY, COLORADO.

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The Southern Ute Indians of Pine River Valley, Colorado, are the Moache and Capote divisions of the great Ute family. They were once very numerous and occupied portions of Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico, and possibly even a portion of Arizona, for in 1775 Father Escalante visited them in the region north of the Hopi villages in Arizona. They now number only 352.

Since 1863 they have occupied their present reserve and are now making rapid strides toward civilization, though they were slow in making the start. Today they live in modern houses and every family has its little farm on which grain, corn, fruit and garden truck are raised. They have done so well in recent years that in the Dry Farming Congress at El Paso in 1916, they carried off the Silver Cup Prize in competition with all the other Indians in the United States.

They still practice a few ceremonies and perform a few dances. Among the latter is the "Bear Dance", so-called because the Utes assert that the bear originated the ceremony in the long ago. It is performed in the early spring or the first days of summer and usually lasts four days. It is a big event and the Apaches, Navajos, Mexicans, and whites join with the Utes and all have an enjoyable time. Below is a description of one of these dances as given near Ignacio, Colorado, in June, 1917.

Preparatory to the dance, a level plot of ground was selected in a pasture near town, and a dancing field some 300 yards in diameter was laid off and inclosed in an artificial, upright hedge fence. Benches were placed within the inclosure along the northwest half of the fence for the men to sit on, the ground within the inclosure along the southeast sector being reserved for the women to squat. Within the inclosure on the west side a deep hole was dug over which an inverted tub was placed. This was then inclosed in a square-bench enclosure on which the musicians were to sit. Heavy oak sticks, two and one-half feet in length were notched in "washboard style"; some also had carved heads with eyes and mouth for the sounding end of the stick. Bones of suitable length and thickness were also secured for the rubbing process in the "music-making".

The dance was given only of afternoons until the fourth day when it lasted the whole day, followed by a feast.

When all was ready, the musicians, seven in number, seated themselves on the benches around the tub-drum and leaning their notched sticks so as to place the end farthest from them on the inverted tub-bottom with notches up, they began to sing a chant in the minor key. As soon as the song "had warmed up to a sufficient pitch", the musicians began to keep time by rubbing the bones up and down over the notched sticks producing a reinforced, ear-grating sound.

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After the first song, a speech-prayer service was conducted by the chief of ceremonies. Then the women chose male partners by approaching and waving their hands toward the one of their choice. If a white man was chosen he was expected to pay for the privilege of dancing, and any one chosen was obliged to accept or get out of the enclosure. Preparatory to the dance the men and women lined up facing each other in column abreast, the women in one column, the men in the other. The members of each column held hands, one column taking two steps forward and the other two steps backward to the time of the music, then *vice versa*. Thus was the dancing kept up in a set and continued in each succeeding set till the closing dance the fourth day, the Indian women choosing a new partner for each set.

The closing set was an endurance test. It began the same as the others, but soon changed to a single couple's partner dance in which the partners held each other in a position similar to that taken in our waltzes; the step, however, was the same as before. This dance was kept up till the participants quit of exhaustion. One participant fell down in the dance and the medicine man used one of the drum sticks as a wand and collected the evil spirits on it and then sent them to the four winds; he laid the stick first on her feet, then across her hips, then across her breast, then across her back, and lastly on her head. Unless this was done, it was believed some misfortune would befall her.

After the close of the endurance fête, the chief medicine man took a cup and as he danced, he held it upward as an offering of thanks to the gods and as a prayer for rain. His dance was followed by two speeches by two leading men. Then a feast was set out for all, after which they returned to their respective homes, believing that the gods would bless them and give them a bountiful crop.

An interesting account of the habits of the Southern Ute Indians is given by Dr. Alex Hrdlika in bulletin 2, part 2, pp. 619-620, of the Bureau of American Ethnology.