

THE MOCCASIN GAME.

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The Moccasin game is an Apache nocturnal game. It is played by the men only. The players and spectators gather in a circle around a fire, which serves both for warmth and light. The players divide themselves into two groups, one of these groups occupies the west, the other the east part of the circle, which now assumes the form of an ellipse. Then the sides begin to bet. One side puts up a saddle that it will win the game. The other puts up a horse. So the betting goes on till the members of each side have staked on the game practically all they have. Then the game begins. It is on the same principle as the "chuck luck" game of the English walnut hulls and the pea, except that it is more complicated. It is a straight game of guess.

There are two ways of playing this game. In the one (that used by El Sa Say's band) each side has seven round holes dug in the earth to the depth of about six inches. These holes are filled with leaves or fine bark; and the ground in the immediate vicinity is covered with the same material till the holes are practically hid from view, and instead of a pea a round pebble about the size of an egg is used. In the other style of playing, mounds of earth and variously arranged ridges are used instead of holes; the pebble being used as in the first case. Should mounds of earth be used, linear marks are made on them to show the possible places that the ball (pebble) may be hid.

In playing the game, if it is the first one of the season, the sides draw by lot to see which will get the pebble, that is, which will get to play first. At all other times the winner in the previous game gets to play first.

The lots having been cast, a member of the lucky side, while he and his game ground are obscured from view with a blanket, puts the mystic* pebble in the bottom of one of the holes; or, in case mounds or ridges of earth are being used, buries it in the dirt beneath one of the linear lines. Then he carefully covers and smoothes everything all over so that the location of the pebble can not be detected at all. This being done, a

* So called "mystic" because each set of players pray over their respective stick and pebble that they will have power to favor them in the game.

member of the opposing clan with divining stick (a small club-like stick) in hand goes over to the other's game ground, so to speak; and, after making six false motions with his stick while he argues and jokes with his opponents to see if he can decide from their actions where the valuable pebble is, he strikes the hole or spot, in case a mound or ridge of earth is used, with vigorous force in which he has decided the stone is. Then there is a lull, a death silence, while he removes the leaves or earth, etc., to see if he has won. If the pebble is not in that place of deposit the players who occupy that ground have won the tally and immediately begin the song of triumph.

Yah e yi,
 Yah e yi,
 Ain-nee ah,
 Ain-nee ah,
 Hay hay ah hay ah ah ah a.

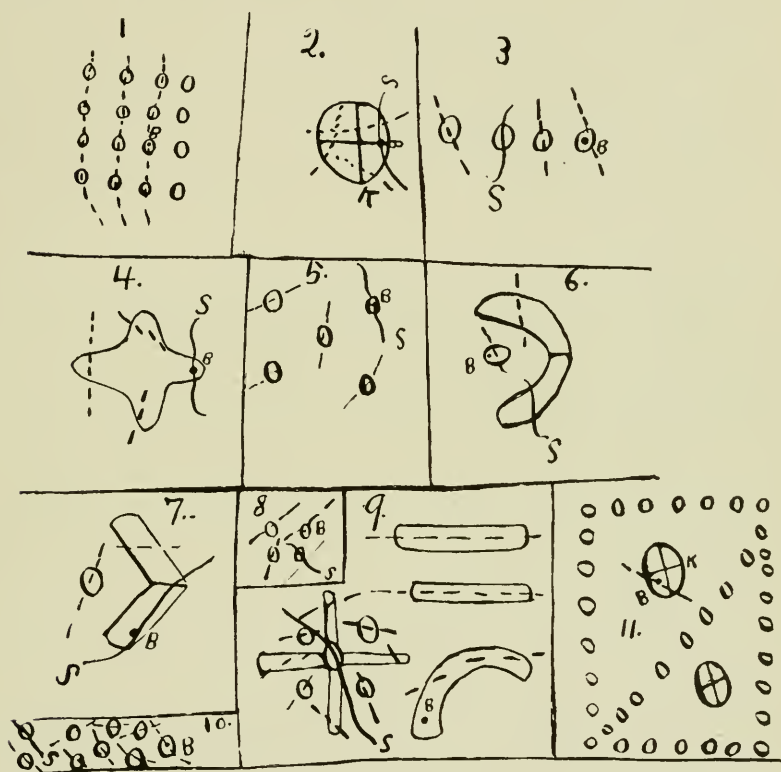
The player with the mystic stick goes back to his clan, and the holders of the pebble hide it again. Then another one from the opposing side tries his luck in finding it; but usually with no better success. In this way the game continues for hours. At last a member of the losing side locates the mystic stone, and, amid the shouts and song of triumph of his clan, he takes it to his side of the great ellipse. The other side then begins to guess. This sort of performance is kept up till one side receives the number of tallies previously decided upon to constitute a game. That side consequently wins the game and sweeps in the stakes.

RULES FOR PLAYING THE GAME.

1. If in the preliminary or false motion movement the pebble is uncovered, it counts one tally for the side which has the pebble, that is, for the side which has buried it.
2. If the pebble is located at the final stroke, not the preliminary strokes, of the mystic stick, it counts one tally for the side which has the stick, and that side takes the pebble to its own game field. The other side then begins to guess.
3. If the pebble is not located in the final stroke, nor the preliminary strokes of the mystic stick, it counts one tally for the side which has hid it. And that side retains it and hides it again.

4. There is always one less false motion of the mystic stick than there are possible places for the pebble to be hid; for example, in case there are seven holes in any one of which the stone may be hid, six preliminary strokes of the mystic stick are always made.

5. There are always two tally keepers, one representing each opposing party. At the beginning of the game each of these has a number of



Map showing the various arrangements of the moccasin game field of the dirt type, used in playing one game at the camp of Chief R6 the night of February 24, 1902.

The broken lines indicate the false or preliminary motions.

K shows lines where the pebble should be hid.

S shows the final stroke. It is represented by a continuous line.

In 1 and 11 the pebble was uncovered in the preliminary motion. In 3, 6, 8 and 10 it was passed over in the preliminary strokes, but not uncovered. In 2, 4, 5 and 7 the pebble was uncovered in the final stroke. And in 9 it was missed both in the preliminary and final strokes. 2, 4, 5 and 7 are the only ones which counted points for the searchers for the pebble. In each of these four cases they got the pebble and took it to their own game field.

bear grass blades, "Indian shoe strings," corresponding to the number of tallies decided upon to constitute the game. When a side loses, the tally keeper of that side gives a blade of grass to his opponent tally keeper. When all the "Indian shoe strings" have passed to the possession of any one side, that side has won the game. It is sun up by that time and all go home, one half paupers, the other half as rich as the Indian generally gets.

Words used in the moccasin game:

Ako. There (used when making a false motion as if to grab the ball).

Don-dee. It is well.

Kod-da. It is ready, the ball is hid.

Tah-al. It is finished.

Oa-kog-go. That is all.

Ah-ko. Here, it is here.

Doh. Play.

Yah-lan-nee. Good-bye, you have lost, you are left, etc.

Ken-not-tah-hah. The moccasin game (so called because originally the pebble was hid in a moccasin).*

* Taken from the Apaches, their manners, customs, etc., furnished to the Bureau of American Ethnology by the writer.