Traditional Games Model Lesson Plan

Hoop and Arrow Games (Blackfeet, Crow, Gros Ventre, Sioux) – Grade Ten

Stage 1 Desired Results

Established Goals

The health education content standards for Ninth through Twelfth grade are that each student will:

2. analyze the interrelationships of physical, mental, emotional, family, and social health on personal health, including those of American Indian cultures and practices.

The physical education content standards for Ninth through Twelfth grade are that each student will:

4. identify and discuss the historical and cultural roles of games, sports, and dance, including those of traditional and contemporary American Indian cultures.
6. use spatial concepts of locomotor and nonlocomotor movements in outdoor pursuits.

Essential Understanding 1: There is great diversity among the twelve sovereign tribes of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories, and governments. Each tribe has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

Essential Understanding 3: The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs.

Understandings

- In every age, across time, in every country, the youth were taught the means to survival in their climate, with the resources and through the customs of the people.

Essential Questions

- What does it take to survive in today's culture?
- How were the old-time hoop games among different tribes of Montana linked to survival?

Students will be able to…

- demonstrate some physical and mental skills in hoop and arrow games.

Students will know…

- at least two variations of Montana hoop and arrow game rules.
- the differences in hoops of Montana tribal hoop and arrow games.
- what the use of the old time games was and how the games are used now.

Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks

1. Practicing at four hoop and arrow stations.
2. Reviewing variations of hoop and arrow rules with a partner.

Stage 3 Learning Plan

Teaching Area

Indoors: 100’ x 50’ for 26 students in four teams, one in each area of across court 10’ x 50’. Outdoors: four areas of 10’ x 50’ each.

Equipment Needed

Station 1: Blackfeet Hoop and Long Arrow “It-se’-wah.” The ring or hoop is 3” in diameter, covered with buckskin, painted red, with eight spokes attached inside the rim at equidistant points, four being spirals of brass wire and four alternate ones of beads. Another variation of Blackfeet hoops have five to seven spokes. The spokes represent the types of horses acquired by Blackfeet with each different color representing a different colored horse. Generally, a red bead symbolized a sorrel, white a white horse, black a black horse, copper beads for a bay, yellow for a buckskin, blue for the blue pony (mustang coloring), etc. This game was played with long arrows, at least 36” long (longer than shooting arrows). A version of this game was also played by shooting regular arrows from bows.

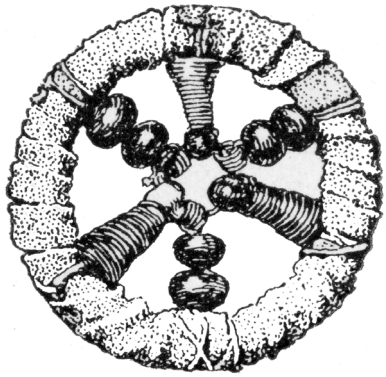

FIG. 577. Gaming ring; diameter, 2⅞ inches; Blackfoot Indians, Montana; cat. no. 22768, Free Museum of Science and Art, University of Pennsylvania.

US. 305.8 SI 11 BAE, Vol. 24 (1902---1903). Holmes, W.H., *Twenty---Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1902---1903,* Washington Government Printing Office, 1907. Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives.

Station 2: Crow: "A-ba-tsink'-i-sha" is a netted hoop game played with two darts that have trident ends Hoop is 11" in diameter with the lacing or thongs attached over the hoop 34 times. Darts for the netted hoop game are 44" to 57" long with three forks (trident) at one end.

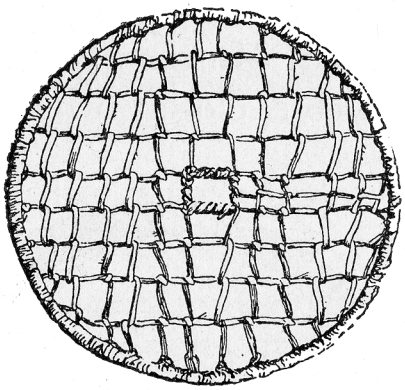

Fig. 661.

FIG. 661. Netted game hoop; diameter, 11 inches; Crow Indians, Montana; cat. no. 69651, Field Columbian Museum.

US. 305.8 SI 11 BAE, Vol. 24 (1902--1903). Holmes, W.H., *Twenty--Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1902--1903,* Washington Government Printing Office, 1907. Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives.

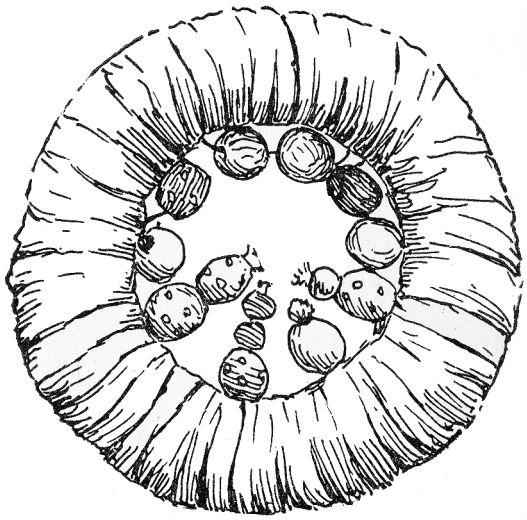

Fig. 663.

FIG. 663. Beaded ring; diameter, 2½ inches; Crow Indians, Montana; cat. no. 69650, Field Columbian Museum.

US. 305.8 SI 11 BAE, Vol. 24 (1902--1903). Holmes, W.H., *Twenty--Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1902--1903,* Washington Government Printing Office, 1907. Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives.

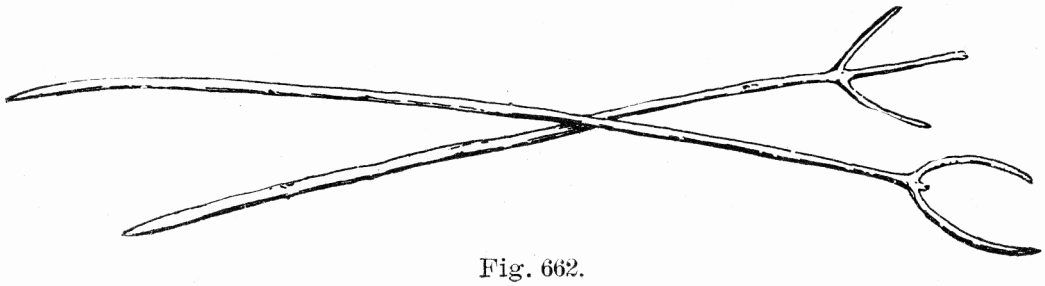

Fig. 662.

FIG. 662. Darts for netted hoop; length, 44⅛ and 57 inches; Crow Indians, Montana; cat. no. 69651, Field Columbian Museum.

US. 305.8 SI 11 BAE, Vol. 24 (1902--1903). Holmes, W.H., *Twenty--Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1902--1903,* Washington Government Printing Office, 1907. Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives.

Station 3: White Clay (Gros Ventre) "Hatchieb." Netted Hoop, diameter 10". This is a bent sapling netted with hide, which passes over the ring 34 times in a pattern shown in figure 581. The slender darts are made of willow about 28" to 36" long.

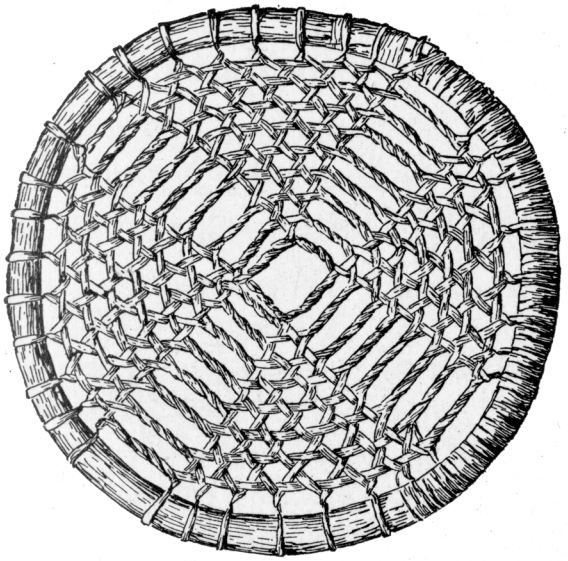

Fig. 581.

FIG. 581. Netted hoop; diameter, 10 inches; Grosventre Indians, Montana; cat. no. 60350, Field Columbian Museum.

US. 305.8 SI 11 BAE, Vol. 24 (1902--1903). Holmes, W.H., *Twenty--Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1902--1903,* Washington Government Printing Office, 1907. Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives

Station 4: Sioux "Painyanka ichute" (see Culin pages 508, 509 with clearer references and pictures on pages 503, 504). Hoop is a sapling, 25" in diameter, with incised marks on both sides (See figures 664, 665, 666). The incised marks, first, a, nearest the junction, consists of three incised rings painted red; the next, b, is cut on both sides for about 1 1/4" and marked with black, burnt scratches; the third, c,

has a cut on both sides, marked on one with a cross and on the other with a single notch in the middle, faces being painted red; the fourth, d, is cut with a similar flat face on both sides, 1 1/4" in length, with five notches in the middle painted red and two on the outside of red ones, painted blue (seven altogether). The four rounded sticks, 38' to 39' in length, are slightly larger at the butt, wrapped with thongs, as shown in figure 666, and held in pairs by thongs 11" in length. One pair has the butts painted red and a small strip of red flannel tied to the connecting thong, and the other has black butts with a blue flag of flannel.

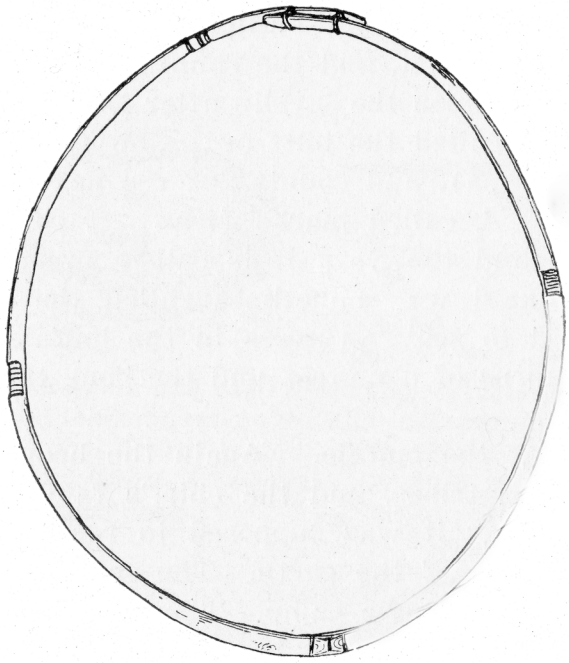

Fig. 664.

FIG. 664. Game hoop; diameter, 25 inches; Oglala Dakota Indians, Pine Ridge reservation, South Dakota; cat. no. 21945, Free Museum of Science and Art, University of Pennsylvania.

US. 305.8 SI 11 BAE, Vol. 24 (1902--1903). Holmes, W.H., *Twenty--Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1902--1903,* Washington Government Printing Office, 1907. Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives.

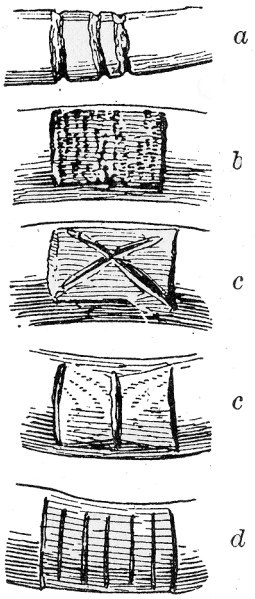

Fig. 665.

FIG. 665. Marks on game hoop; Oglala Dakota Indians, Pine Ridge reservation, South Dakota; cat. no. 21945, Free Museum of Science and Art, University of Pennsylvania.

US. 305.8 SI 11 BAE, Vol. 24 (1902--1903). Holmes, W.H., *Twenty--Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1902--1903,* Washington Government Printing Office, 1907. Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives.

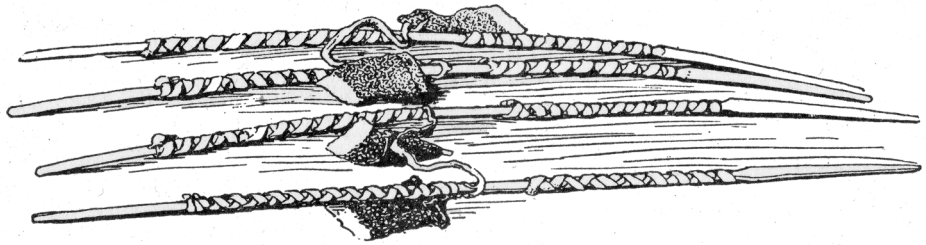

Fig. 666.

FIG. 666. Darts for hoop game; length, 39½ inches; Oglala Dakota Indians, Pine Ridge reservation, South Dakota; cat. no. 21945, Free Museum of Science and Art, University of Pennsylvania.

US. 305.8 SI 11 BAE, Vol. 24 (1902--1903). Holmes, W.H., *Twenty--Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1902--1903,* Washington Government Printing Office, 1907. Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives.

Game Rules

Station 1: "It-se'-wah" (wheel) was played even before the horse culture; however, the horse was so important an addition to the "Way of Life" that this favorite "Dog Days" game quickly transitioned to represent the power of the horses in the color and scoring by the beads in the wheel.

Dr. George Bird Grinnell says “It-se’-wah” game was played on a level, smooth piece of ground where a log was placed at both ends. Two men are at each end of the course. “A crowd always surrounded them, betting on the sides” (competitors bet against each other). “The wheel was rolled along the course, and each man at the whence it started, darted an arrow at it. The cast was made just before the wheel reached the log at the opposite end of the track, and points were counted according as the arrow passed between the spokes, or when the wheel, stopped by the log, was in contact with the arrow, the position and nearness of the different beads to the arrow representing a certain number of points. The player who first scored ten points won.” (Grinnell 183-184)

Rev. John MacLean of Southern Alberta (Culin 444) describes the same game being played by the North Peigan with two additions to the rules above: 1. The arrow falling nearest to the ring gains a point (if the wheel is not touching either arrow), and 2. Counting sticks are used to track the score. (These can be two sets of sticks with different markings to be laid on the ground at each side of the one end log.)

Station 2: Crow: “A-ba-tsink’-i-sha” is a netted hoop game played with two darts that have trident ends. The game is played by rolling the hoop toward an end log as two players attempt to throw the dart through the netted hoop center to win the game. If the dart passes into the net and stays as the hoop falls, thereby trapping the dart, a score of one point is given. The game is played until a certain score is achieved or one player gets a “bulls’ eye.” (Lowie 102)

Station 3: “Hatchieb” is the White Clay game of hoop and dart. The wheel is rolled forward on the ground for the players to throw the darts at the hoop with the object being to pierce one of the holes formed in the buckskin lacing of the wheel. These holes vary in size, and each has its own proper name and value as described: the hole in the center is the heart (ita) 6 points; the holes of the parallel lines crossing at right angles are the buffalo bulls (anatayan) 5 points; the holes outside the parallel lines are the buffalo cows (behe) 4 points; the places where lacing crosses the “cow” holes are buffalo calves (wuuha) 3 points; the large holes next to the wooden ring are wolves (chadjitha) 2 points; the small crossing the thongs next to the wooden ring are coyotes (caawu) 1 point. This game was played formerly by men but now all people can play. The points are kept in modern times by the length of the game playing time. In the past the game was won by achieving a certain number of points as agreed upon by the players before starting the event. (Flannery, *The Gros Ventres*, Part 1, 151)

Station 4: “Painyanka ichute” Yankton Sioux Fort Peck. The game is played with two players representing two sides, who throw one set of sticks each at the hoop as it rolls past. When the hoop falls, hopefully on the sticks, the scores are counted thusly:

- If the hoop junction (a), 3 incised rings painted red and called the stump (can huta), falls upon the dart or javelin, the score is 10 points.
- If the hoop junction (b) flatted black spot on both sides and called sapa, falls upon the dart, the score is 20 points.
- If the hoop junction (c), cross on one side and single notch on the other that are painted red (okaja or fork), falls on the dart, the score is 10 points.
- If the hoop junction (d) cut on both sides with 5 red marks in the middle of 2 blue marks (icazopi), falls on the dart, the score is 20.
- If the hoop falls exactly on both the can juta (stump) and the okaja (fork), it is a sweepstakes.

The game is for 40 points. Painyanka is sometimes called "shooting the buffalo." The hoop represents camps of all the Dakota tribes, and the chief's family locate different tribes upon it. It was also supposed to represent the rim of the horizon and the four quarters of the earth. The spaces marked are the openings or passes into the camp are marked by the spaces, which also represent the four winds. These are invoked before the person throws.

This same equipment, but made in a sacred way, was used for Sun Dances, healing the sick, and for the Ghost Dance. (Culin 438)

When we judge others, it is from our own cultural context.
"***There is no "right or wrong" way to play Indian racket games, just different ways.***"
International Traditional Games Society

Vocabulary

It-se'-wah - The Blackfeet word for wheel.

A-ba-tsink-i-sha - Crow word for the hoop.

Hatchieb - Sun/power

Painyanka ichute - Shooting the Buffalo

Resources

Bucko, Raymond A., S.J., "Traditional Games of the Lakotas," *Montana Magazine of Western History*, Spring, 2007. Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society, 2007.

Cajete, Gregory. *Spirit of the Game: An Indigenous Wellspring,* Skyand, NC: Kivaki Press, 2005. P. 23.

Culin, Stewart*, Games of the North American Indians*, New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1975.

Ewers, John C., *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture,* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 159. P. 239.

Grinnell, George Bird. *Blackfoot Lodge Tales.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1962. Pp. 183-184.

Holmes, W.H., *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1902-1903,* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1907.

Flannery, Regina. *The Gros Ventre of Montana: Part I, Social Life*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1953.

Lowie, Robert, *The Crow Indians,* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. P. 102 (First Irvington Edition, 1980).

Stands in the Timber, John, *Cheyenne Memories.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1976. Pp. 28 – 30.

Traditional Games Video – see the games being played!