



How the Maiden Brought the Pipe

Moses Big Crow's Story — July 1984 as Told to Him by His Grandfather

“Well, there’s different versions, but I tell the way... This one is about how the Siouxs—Lakota—‘L’ speaking people—got this Pipe that we have today. It’s called the *Ptehinc’ala Hu C’annunpa*—Calf Leg Pipe. Since then different versions have been told, down the line. I’m 66 years old and I was raised by a medicine man, my mother’s dad. She died when I was 18 months old. And my grandfather, Zuya Hiyaya—Goes to War—was a great warrior and hunter in his day, and a great Sundancer. So this is the way *I* heard it from *him*.

“It seems like—the people followed the buffalo herd—for food. They followed them a certain distance. In other words they stayed close to them or they trailed. The buffalo was always traveling. They traveled, they moved—all the time. So this camp—sent out two hunters. Food was getting low. So they sent two hunters out. Each day they go out. They go up on the highest hill and look in all directions, looking for the buffalo. They’d be up there all day—looking on them high hills. Buffalo herd wasn’t coming. They’d come back in the evening—all—tired.

“Well, one day two of ’em went again, and they was setting up there looking, in all directions. Way off in the dis-

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tance they seen something moving, this was in daytime. And it was coming towards them so they set there looking. And by the time they could see it, it was a person, walking. Something on her back. They didn't know it was a her then. It was a person, carrying something—on his back. They waited and it came up to them.



Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society

Zuya Hiyaya.

“Here it was, a young maiden. In them days—was war days—everything was—women stayed close to camp, and here was a beautiful young maiden, *very* beautiful. She carried a bundle on her back. In the old days women were pretty hard to get to—see, women were respected and they were protected, so this was a surprise to these two young hunters. Well, when this maiden came she said, ‘I have brought something for your people in this bundle. So I want you two to go back. Tell your chief to have a tipi ready, and I’ll bring it in there and I’ll tell them.’

“But while she was telling this, one of these young men was looking at her, admiring a beautiful woman. And as I said, women are pretty hard to get and here’s one ri-i-ight out in the wilderness. And this young man had thoughts—bad thoughts—about this young lady. And the young maiden looked at him. She knew. She told him—‘I know what you’re thinking—what your intentions. Go ahead and—try it.’

“So this young hunter, he made a grab for her. When he grabbed for her a cloud enveloped them—around them. They don’t see anything but they heard a whirring sound. When that cleared away, the maiden was standing there, and the young man was laying underneath, picked clean. Just his bones was laying there. And naturally, this other young one was really scared, but he didn’t have no thoughts like that. So she turned round and—‘You go and tell your people—do as I tell you.’

“So he took off. Got back to camp and went to the chiefs and told them. Immediately they set up a tipi. And the big chief and his sub-chiefs was all setting there—waiting, watching. Here comes that maiden into camp. She came in, went straight to the tipi. She went in the center, and she unfolded this bundle, and inside was this Pipe-Calf Leg Pipe.

“Now—as I’ve mentioned, I’m 66 years years old. That Pipe is still laying north of here at what is called Green Grass. But I was up there, after I was blind, I went with a bunch of people, and they gave it to me to—hold. I could *feel* it. The

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Pipes we have today — the bowl — that Pipe's kinda — wider. (The angle between bowl and stem.) It's *open* — like, kind of a 'Y'. The Pipe stem was longer. I felt like it had — coarse fiber on the back — seems like hair. Like I mentioned, I'm blind, so this is what I felt.

“Well anyway, she laid this Pipe, showin' it, ‘ — Now *this* Pipe — you must use it, and hand it down from generation to generation. It's for your protection. And the first thing, it's for good health. So the tribe, the people, have good health — no sickness — it'll stop these things, and then you must use it to pray: for food, for small problems. But use it for good intentions.’ This is the way that we have been told.

“So it's still there, there's lot of stories been told how in the old days it was stolen, got back, and so on, but it's still laying up there. The Pipes we have today — the versions — it comes from there. And there's all kind of stories on this. They say after the maiden told them she went out and started leaving the camp, turned into a white buffalo and ran but I didn't hear that. My grandfather didn't tell me that. Told me she just went back out. Some say she went back out singing but I haven't heard — this is just the way *I* was told. This is the way I'm telling *you*.”

This is word for word what he told me in July 1984, a month before he died.