THE MEXICAN KICKAPOO INDIANS

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THE EXISTENCE of Kickapoo Indians living in northern Mexico has been known in a general way to many anthropologists, but the group's reputation for hostility has been such that few people have attempted visiting or studying them. Nevertheless, Mexican anthropologists have been aware of their existence and they have been the subject of a recent small book by Alfonso Fabila.¹ They were also given a chapter in a recent general survey of Mexican Indians.² Because of the unusual nature of these people and since virtually no data are available in the literature, a brief note for North American anthropologists on their present status and culture and on the outlook for intensive study seems desirable.³

HISTORY

The history of the Kickapoo removal to Mexico is a long and intricate story; only the main details can be reviewed here.⁴ From an original seventeenth century location in western Wisconsin the Kickapoo moved southward into northern Illinois during the eighteenth century, forcing southward the resident northern tribes of the Illinois Confederacy (Mascoutin, Miami, Peoria, Michigamea, Cahokia, Kaskaskia, and Tamaroa) with the aid of the Potawatomi, Sauk, and Fox. In Illinois the Kickapoo first settled around the present city of Peoria, but

¹ Alfonso Fabila, La Tribu Kikapoo de Coahuila (Biblioteca Enciclopédica Popular, no. 50, Secretaria de Educación Popular, Mexico, 1945).
² Carlos Basauri, La Población Indígena de México (3 vols., Secretaria de Educación Pública, Mexico, 1940), vol. 3, pp. 645-663.
³ Data secured from the Kickapoo were gathered incidental to a visit to the Seminole Negroes of nearby Nacimiento, Coahuila. This was a research project of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the University of Florida aided in part by a grant from the Viking Fund, Inc. The time spent with them was brief, and no formal attempt to secure ethnographic data was made. The visit included part of two days and a night in August, 1949. Two brief subsequent visits to the Kickapoo at Shawnee, Oklahoma (August, 1949 and May, 1950), and notes made on Kickapoo specimens exhibited in Mexico City at the Museo Nacional (June, 1941) have given some comparative data. Other Kickapoo specimens have been seen in the Museum of the American Indian and at the Oklahoma Historical Society.

Field work was facilitated by information and other aid generously given by Mr and Mrs D. S. McKellar, of La Mariposa Ranch, Coahuila and Eagle Pass, Texas; Kenneth Porter, Houston; and Dr Jacobo Chapa L., Muzquiz, Coahuila. Subsequent conversations with Walter Taylor and Donald D. Brand gave a broader perspective. Hollis Holbrook and Laymon Hardy accompanied the writer in the field.

⁴ Unless otherwise noted these data are derived from Grant Foreman, The Last Trek of the Indians (Chicago, 1946) and Fabila, La Tribu Kikapoo de Coahuila.

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some gradually moved southward and eastward into Indiana along the Wabash, forming two main groups.

Both groups relinquished their lands by treaty in 1819 in return for a tract in southwestern Missouri. Migration to the new land was slow, some groups going, others moving in with the Sauk and farming their land. Moreover, once in Missouri, trouble arose over hunting territories between the local Osage and the new Indians, Kickapoo among them. Gradual pressure from surrounding and trespassing Whites also combined to make this area generally untenable for the Kickapoo, so in 1830 they requested land in Kansas in exchange for the Missouri holdings. This was granted by treaty in 1832 and most of them moved to Kansas.

Apparently not all the Kickapoo moved to the Kansas reservation, for a number are reported in Texas. These were joined in 1837 by several hundred members of the Kansas group. However, shortly thereafter these Kickapoo, along with Shawnee and Delaware Indians, were forced out by the Texans, and in 1839 they came north of the Canadian River, mainly into Creek territory in the present state of Oklahoma. There several bands wandered independently.

Moving through the former Indian Territory, these Kickapoo came into contact with Coacoochee (Wild Cat), the celebrated Seminole war leader, who at that time was greatly dissatisfied with life under United States supervision. Under his leadership a substantial number of Kickapoo and Seminole made their way to Coahuila in 1848. Two years later a delegation from these Indians went to Mexico City endeavoring to obtain a gift of land. Here a treaty was signed granting their request in return for a promise of aid against the Apache and Comanche who raided northern Mexico. After considerable moving around, the group settled near its present location. Early in the United States Civil War, apparently in 1862, the Mexican group was reinforced by other Kickapoo from the Canadian River. Several years later some left Mexico, and eventually a small group reached the Kansas agency in 1870.

The Kickapoo in Coahuila apparently prospered, and not only successfully fought the Apache and Comanche but also raided across the Texas border for horses and cattle. Time and again they were hotly followed by irate Texans and United States troops, but they were safe from pursuit once they crossed the border. However, their safety and settlement was shattered in 1873 when Colonel

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5 Fabila (La Tribu Kickapoo de Coahuila, p. 25 et seq.) notes several previous contacts between the Kickapoo and Spanish authorities. In 1784, a Kickapoo chief was given a medal in New Orleans by order of the Viceroy of New Spain. Later in 1824 a group went to San Antonio (Texas) in a quest for land.
Ranald S. Mackenzie disregarded international law and followed the Indians deep into Mexico where he killed or captured all the Kickapoo present in their main village. Later in the same year a civilian commission also went to Mexico endeavoring to bring back to the United States the Potawatomi and Kickapoo.

Most of the former tribe removed, and some of the latter, leaving 280 Kickapoo in Coahuila. Those Kickapoo who returned to the United States were located in Indian Territory. Other groups from Chihuahua and elsewhere in Mexico returned to the United States in 1874 and 1875. Some communications were held with the Kansas Kickapoo and a few settled in Indian Territory.

In 1883, a permanent reservation of nearly 200,000 acres was established for the Kickapoo where they were then living on the north side of Deep Fork of the Canadian River in Oklahoma. The 420 Indians were apparently well settled and peaceful, although pressure was being put upon them to take more rapid advances towards “civilization.” The Kickapoo resisted change and were apparently relatively satisfied, although they spurned suggestions that their land be allotted individually. However, this was finally done in 1895 when 22,529 acres were distributed among the then 283 members of the tribe, the remainder being opened for sale to White settlers.

Subsequently, a few years later, a number moved south to Mexico where they attempted to obtain land near their brethren at Nacimiento. At the same time many sold their allotments or were defrauded of them. Great pressure was exerted by the United States Government for the return of these people: the Mexican Government refused them permission to join the Nacimiento group, although they were allowed to obtain other land if they wished. Some returned to Oklahoma while others apparently moved to Chihuahua. The Nacimiento people were apparently only indirectly affected by these troubles.

Throughout all the time from 1870’s to the present, there was constant intercourse between the Oklahoma and Coahuila groups, and people circulated freely from one group to the other. Contacts were also kept with their neighbors, the Seminole, but the latter gradually drifted back to Oklahoma, leaving only their Negro slaves and part-Negro descendants. These now live adjacent to the Kickapoo, occupying the village of Nacimiento.

6 Kickapoo history for the last years about the turn of the century is taken from the 1908 Senate hearings (Affairs of the Mexican Kickapoo Indians, 3 vols., Senate Document 215, Parts 1-3, 60th Congress, 1st Session, Washington, 1908). Although in some error for their earlier history, this account is probably more accurate for the late period when it is carefully utilized.

7 United States Senate hearings on these cases filled three volumes for a total of 2309 pages.
Although the Coahuila Kickapoo appear to be relatively isolated at the present time, in actuality they have extensive contacts with the outside world. No one is reported to own a car or truck, but an enterprising Oklahoma Kickapoo, with the aid of an old worn-out bus, maintains daily bus service to Musquiz (summer, 1949). From here contacts are made via usual transportation facilities to elsewhere in Mexico and north to the border.

Many individuals are quite familiar with parts of the United States, as they often work in migrant labor groups in Texas agricultural enterprises. Others visit their kin in Oklahoma. Every year some Oklahoma people visit the rancheria, usually for hunting, trading, or a social visit which lasts several weeks to a couple of months. At the time of our visit there, one Oklahoma man had been in residence for a considerable time. Apparently Oklahoma conservatives feel more at home here.

These contacts result in considerable trading and exchange of goods. The amount of material obtained from Oklahoma is probably considerable; in exchange local goods are traded. Mexican (Kickapoo) baskets were observed in Oklahoma houses, and one Oklahoma informant brought back numerous smoked tanned buckskins and beaded moccasins. Since he is a silversmith, it was probable that he traded some of his products for these goods.

PRESENT PICTURE

The center of Kickapoo population lies a few miles northwest of Nacimiento or about thirty miles northwest of Musquiz, Coahuila, Mexico, approximately one hundred miles below the international border. From this region, where they own some 7,000 hectares of land at the headwaters of the Rio Sabinas, hunting parties range considerable distances, particularly to the west.8

The Kickapoo territory lies in the foothills of a small mountain range, covered with a thick heavy scrub which is predominately mesquite with huisache and other xerophytic legumes. There is apparently a reasonable amount of precipitation in the area, for it has a certain lush appearance in the summer. In any case both irrigated and dry farming appears to be successful in the vicinity.

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8 A second group of Kickapoo are reported to live or have lived in the headwaters of the Rio Bavispe southeast of Huachineda, Chihuahua (personal communication, Donald D. Brand). An occasional early reference to a Chihuahua band is found in historical sources (Foreman, The Last Trek of the Indians, p. 211) but little is known of their present status. Perhaps those in Chihuahua at the present time (as above, and Helge Ingstad, Die Letzten Apachen, Berlin, 1940) are the settlers from Oklahoma who obtained land after the Oklahoma allotment and subsequent frauds in the first decade of this century (see United States Senate, Affairs of the Mexican Kickapoo Indians).
The settlement lies on a small, slightly dissected plateau at the base of some hills and directly on the south bank of the Rio Sabinas. This clear, fair sized stream emerges as a limestone spring a short distance away, furnishing abundant water for household purposes and irrigation. In this distinctive ecological region the Kickapoo appear to have made a satisfactory adjustment of a culture which developed in the contrasting Great Lakes region.

A visitor approaching the Kickapoo rancheria in the summer is immediately struck by the picture this settlement makes in contrast to the nearby Mexican towns he has just left. The settled area is one of small fenced plots, each surrounding two or three rectangular mat-covered houses. Although grass and other vegetation cover the soil almost everywhere, bare and carefully swept ground surrounds each house group, with a low ridge of trash and swept-up soil marking the limit of the green encroachment.9

It was difficult in the time available to gain an overall view of the community and to determine the number and spread of the houses, but they appear to be numerous.10 Wire-and-post fences surround the individual house groups, separated each from the other by a distance of fifty to one hundred yards. Roads lead between, and paths cut across, the plots.

The period we spent at the rancheria perhaps did not give us a normal picture of the camp. On our arrival we found preparations were underway for a dance to be held the next day and there was a general air of busyness. Through fortunate contacts we were cordially accepted on arrival and genially questioned as to the purpose of our visit. In front of every house is a porch-like arbor with a pair of beds or pole platforms. These serve as general lounging areas, and there we sat and conversed with the people. Some shyness was expressed, but after a short time children and adults of both sexes became very friendly. The distribution of several watermelons quickly helped to break down restraints.

Although we were pleasantly greeted, receiving lodging and fresh venison, formal ethnographic questioning was not attempted. The language barrier was

9 This yard area surrounded by a trash ridge should be kept in mind by archaeologists in the Great Lakes region. Under favorable conditions it could probably be recognized in excavations.

10 Fablas' figure of 63 dwellings in the vicinity in 1940 must be close to the present figure (La Tribu Kikapoo de Coahuila, p. 34). He also gives a population of 354 Indians (loc. cit.). These include two Comanches, but it is quite probable that individuals from other Algonkin groups are included in this total since Skinner noted the presence of Prairie Potawatomi (Alanson Skinner, The Mascoutens or Prairie Potawatomi Indians, Bulletin, Public Museum of the City of Milwaukee, vol. 6, no. 1, 1924, p. 12). Although we were present at an important dance the total number of people gathered was less than sixty; the whereabouts of the others was unknown.
a problem, and then too, we were such objects of curiosity that until almost the end of our stay we were surrounded by children and adults.

There seemed little reticence in answering questions, and people were quite willing to part with ethnographic specimens: in fact after a short time people came from far off houses with jewelry and baskets to sell. There was considerable bargaining for everything purchased, to the amusement of all the surrounding onlookers.

Direct questions, when understood, were generally answered with promptness and little hesitance. Permission was freely given to make photographs, except for the dance.

Physically the people are well developed and superficially appeared quite healthy. They carry themselves well, giving an impression of confidence and reserved pride not observed in any other Indian group of the writer's acquaintance. They make an impression on a visitor, because mingled with this pride is a genuine tolerance.

CULTURAL STATUS

In view of the time spent in the field this section is no more than a simple, uneven summary based on observation, reliable reports, and certain data from recent Mexican authorities. The basic subsistence pattern is apparently agriculture with an important quantity of meat derived from hunting and other foods from wild plant sources.

According to Fabila, in 1936 agriculture was limited to corn, beans, and squash grown in small fields near the houses. Following that year, through the encouragement of the Mexican Government, their agriculture was stepped up by the expansion of wheat planting. The acreage of this crop increased almost nine times between 1938 and 1940; apparently much of this was irrigated. During this period corn production decreased. Fruit trees were also planted in increased numbers at this time.

Small garden patches to furnish fresh vegetables are still found around the houses. Squash often springs up in the house yard just beyond the swept area and is then carefully tended. Peaches, the most important fruit, were a common sight spread out on canvas to dry for storage.

Hunting is now somewhat restricted due to Mexican pressure for game law observance, but deer are commonly taken, several being killed the day we arrived. Hunts may be extended affairs with the men traveling many miles. Deer drives were carried on by groups of men.

11 Fabila, La Tribu Kikapoo de Coahuila, p. 13.
Stock raising, increasing in importance, seems to appeal to the younger men. Riding and pack horses were in evidence everywhere.

In addition to utilizing wild plants for food, fire wood, and various manufactures, the sale of some is an important industry. Fabila\textsuperscript{12} notes that two hundred tons of walnuts were gathered for the Mexican market in one season. One informant who accompanied us when we left the rancheria took with him several hundred pounds, respectively, of \textit{chile piquin} and \textit{oregano} for sale in nearby Mexican towns. The gathering of these spices is apparently a not uncommon occupation.

Houses seen are rectangular structures with a timber framework, a mat roof, and an arbor in front. An average measurement is approximately twelve by eighteen feet. The sides are formed of small upright poles secured by a few cross poles. The peaked roof is covered with coarse cattail mats held in place by a ridge pole and a grid of other poles. On the inside, around the whole wall, excepting the door, a platform or bed encircles the room at a height of about three feet. This is used for sleeping, lounging, and sitting. A fire on the ground

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{Diagrams of dance and summer house. \textit{Left:} Dance: A, chanters, drummer in middle; B, chorus; C, shelter for dancers to rest under; D, three brass kettles; E, "shrine"; F, path of dancers. \textit{Right:} Summer house: A, interior platform; B, fireplace; C, beds under "porch."}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Idem}, p. 12.
Above: Summer house with swept yard; peaches drying on canvas in sun. Below: left: basket (15 inches wide); right: covered basket (7 1/2 inches wide).
Above: Moccasin (10 inches long) and hair ornament (8 inches long). Center: Finger-woven sash (3 inches wide). Below: Wooden spoons (collected in Oklahoma: left, 8 inches; right, 6½ inches).
in the center warms the house. Furnishings include woven mats, American commercial blankets, and American type trunks, all of which are piled on the platform.

A door is the only aperture in the house. This faces eastward, opening onto an arbor-like porch, almost equally as large as the house. This shelter may be variously covered with a thatch of leaves or grass tied on with strips of yucca. All the sides are open. On each side of a middle passageway leading to the house door are two platforms about three feet high, four feet wide, and eight feet long. The eight forked posts provided for each one supports a rough platform made of cane, sotol stems, other similar stalks, or sawed planks. Like the interior bench, these serve as work and lounging areas. Very commonly two of these houses, with a cook house, make up a dwelling unit.

The adjacent cook house is of similar construction, but smaller, and has a fire in the center and a table platform for working space across the far end. Utensils observed were all modern commercial metal vessels. Outside of the cook house, there is often found an upright hollow log mortar, with a double-ended pole pestle, which still serves to crush corn.

The winter house (not seen) is said to be a domed hut, completely covered with mats. A Mexican Kickapoo winter house is illustrated by Fabila¹³ and an Oklahoma example by Skinner.¹⁴

Present clothing is a mixture of purely aboriginal, early American styles, and modern garments. A few old men approximate former aboriginal style, wearing breechclouts, high fringed buckskin leggings, beaded buckskin moccasins, and a cotton shirt. Most of the men, though, wore modern work clothes—blue jeans and cotton shirt.

Women, however, commonly wear a dress of a type apparently derived from styles of American pioneer times, probably the early nineteenth century. It consists of one or more skirts reaching below the knees, an outside blouse, and an under blouse which is tucked into the skirt. The outer blouse hangs loose and often fails to meet the skirt. One old-style blouse with a well defined yoke covered with numerous small metal brooches was shown us but was not being worn.¹⁵ Dress material is all commercial cotton, both plain and print fabrics.

Similar moccasins are worn by both the women and men. They are made of

¹³ Idem, p. 19.
¹⁵ A woman’s dress in the Museo Nacional de Mexico has bead embroidered shoulders and front.
Fig. 2. Ornaments of German silver: a-d, f-n, brooches; e, ear pendant; o, section (1/3) of comb; p, neckerchief slide (a-f, approx. natural size; g-p, × 0.4).
smoked buckskin sewn with cotton thread, and are the type previously described for the Kickapoo, as being "one piece, with straight heel seam and toe seam."\(^\text{16}\) Some are decorated with a beaded strip covering the seam on top of the foot. No decorated ankle flaps were seen.

Hair styles were distinctive. Women wear theirs long and brought together in a single short braid in back. Young girls may make two braids, bringing them around to the front over the forehead. Many of the men wear their hair in usual Mexican style, but others have it bobbed with bangs over the forehead. In the center of the scalp the hair is left to grow long and is plaited, forming a pendant braid hanging down the back.

Jewelry is not common except for a few plain silver rings and stamped German silver bracelets worn by the women, and some large brooches seen on men's scarves during the dance.\(^\text{17}\) However, on learning of our interest in old native objects, many things were brought out which were once popular but not commonly worn now. Most numerous was the German silver bar-brooch (\textit{takahona}). These ranged in size from small plain ones 1.2 cm in diameter to pierced, stamped, and engraved specimens as large as 8.1 cm in diameter. Other jewelry included elaborately decorated metal combs, metal neckerchief slides, and several hourglass-shaped woman's hair ornaments. The last are made of black cloth ornamented with small German silver spangles. Remnants of ribbons on them indicate that once, like the Delaware and other specimens, they had long trailing ribbon streamers. A finger-woven (\textit{W}-design) and a plain knitted wool sash were the only other old style articles of clothing seen.

Mats used to cover the beds are plaited work very similar to Mexican petates and unlike the Central Algonkin type mat still made by the Oklahoma Kickapoo. Baskets are commonly used and apparently made for trade to the nearby Mexican population. They are rectangular, elongated and narrow, and quite deep. They have loop handles, and may be with or without covers.\(^\text{18}\) They are woven from cattail stems in a twined technique and have simple designs in bright commercial dyes.\(^\text{19}\)

Another article of native handicraft seen was a carved, large bowl, short-handled, wooden spoon. This was apparently an old specimen. Similar spoons


\(^{17}\) Mrs D. S. McKellar reports that silver was more typical in older times as a jewelry metal. Both silver and German silver are represented in the Museo Nacional collection.

\(^{18}\) Baskets of this type are not made in Oklahoma, although specimens obtained from Mexico are not uncommon.

\(^{19}\) Similar baskets in the Museo Nacional may have been dyed with vegetable colors.
are still occasionally made in Oklahoma. A recently made bow and arrow were examined, but these are not commonly used at present (McKellar Collection). The bow is short, of the “self” type.\(^{20}\) Most interesting was the bow case and attached quiver, which were made of twined basketry similar to the common baskets. No ribbon appliqué blankets were seen, but examples in the Museo Nacional indicate their use here.

The non-material side of Kickapoo culture was not easy to determine on a short visit of this nature, but from the few brief insights obtained of this area of culture there is every reason to believe that it is still rich and complex. Algonkian is spoken by everyone as the primary language. Many of the people speak a greater or less amount of Spanish, but only a few speak English.

A functioning political system seems still to exist, headed by an hereditary chief\(^{21}\) assisted by a council of elders. They are aided by a police group, who, among other things, patrol the fields and town at night. Our host held such a job during our stay. This may be retained from days when a war organization was active.

The religious aspect of Kickapoo culture is still strong, according to Fabila.\(^{22}\) A dance was performed during our stay but no data were obtained concerning its nature. It began, after preliminary preparations, early in the afternoon, and was held in a large yard in front of two houses.

In front of one house just inside of the arbor several older men sat on each side of a drummer facing out over the open area. Extending away from them in a row were three large, old style, brass kettles suspended over a fire. From time to time these were stirred with a large wooden spoon which hung on the pole from which the kettles were suspended.\(^{23}\) Beyond these in line were three short poles or stakes upright in the ground, and over them hung lengths of new cotton cloth and other wrapped offerings. This had the appearance of a shrine.

Eight young-to-old women danced around the fire and “shrine” in a clockwise movement. Their step was basically a shuffle, with little body movement. They were accompanied by the drum and a chorus of singers. After each period of

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\(^{20}\) A bow in the Museo Nacional de Mexico has carved ornamental projections on each side of the center.

\(^{21}\) Fabila, *La Tribu Kikapoo de Coahuila*, p. 69.

\(^{22}\) Idem.

\(^{23}\) The contents were apparently a venison stew prepared with the deer killed for this purpose the day before. It is not known if it contained dog meat as do most Kickapoo ceremonial dishes (personal communication, D. S. McKellar). The use of dog meat is a good Central Algonkian custom.
dancing the women would rest on the ground under a cloth shade especially raised for them. During this intermission the men flanking the drum chanted prayers.

A number of non-participants watched the dance, behaving with considerable decorum. Dance periods lasted for about fifteen minutes with intermissions of greater length. Unfortunately it necessary to leave before the end of the dance so the termination and feast was not observed.

KICKAPOO RESEARCH

No full research program has apparently ever been carried out among the Kickapoo either in Mexico or Oklahoma. Yet, many people who worked with other Central Algonkins had some contact with these people. For example, the most detailed work with the Oklahoma group was apparently done by William Jones but only a short ethnographic note and a posthumous collection of Kickapoo tales have appeared, while some comparative references are to be found in a paper on the Fox.24

About the same general period, in February, 1910, the Coahuila group was visited by M. R. Harrington. He reports25 that no ethnographic studies were made since the trip was a brief one made to collect museum specimens. A return trip was planned for more intensive work, but was never realized. Subsequently two brief notes were published.26

Alanson Skinner prepared monographs on many of the Kickapoo's neighbors. In the course of his field work he must have had extensive contact with the Oklahoma Kickapoo for comparative references to their culture are scattered throughout many of his works.27

One of the most recent workers with the Kickapoo and related Algonkins was


27 In addition to the two items cited in footnotes 9 and 13, there are the following, all published in the Bulletin, Public Museum of the City of Milwaukee: *Observations on the Ethnology of the Sauk Indians* (vol. 5, no. 1, 1923); idem: *Part II, War Customs* (vol. 5, no. 2, 1925); idem: *Part III, Notes on Material Culture* (vol. 5, no. 3, 1925); *Ethnology of the Ioway Indians* (vol. 5, no. 4, 1926); *The Mascoutens or Prairie Potawatomi Indians: Part III, Mythology and Folklore* (vol. 6, no. 3, 1927).
the late Truman Michelson. Early work in Oklahoma resulted in a short paper, but later field work in 1929 and 1930 is reported only in brief general statements. On these trips he met, and perhaps worked with, Mexican Kickapoo. He uses pictures of them to illustrate his reports.

At the present time the Oklahoma Kickapoo are being studied by students from the University of Oklahoma. This program will continue until completed.

No other American anthropologist is reported to have worked with the Mexican group. However, Kenneth Porter, an historian, has had some contact with them while studying the adjacent Seminole-Negroes of Nacimiento. In addition, while working with the same group Ethel Cutler Freeman also had contact with the Kickapoo. Walter Taylor, in progress of archaeological work, met some Kickapoo away from their camps. However, no accounts of Kickapoo culture have resulted from these contacts.

The net result to date, then, is very few attempts to study Kickapoo culture and very little result from work that has been done. They are the least known of any important remaining group of the Central Algonkins.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

With the amount of information available certain limited conclusions can be drawn. These will be incorporated in a brief summary.

A group of Kickapoo Indians have successfully existed in northern Mexico retaining significant amounts of their aboriginal culture. The subsistence complex, although apparently evolving in the direction of cash agriculture and migrant farm labor, is still close to the aboriginal pattern. This seems to be true of both agriculture and hunting. Material culture has, in many respects, changed only to a limited extent: housing, dress (in some cases), and other traits are not far from what they were one hundred years ago and even more distant in the past.

Data for social organization are not available, but it is inferred that this is not greatly changed, and the same is apparently true of political organization. War organization, kept intact through many years of Apache and Comanche


29 Truman Michelson, Studies of the Algonquian Tribes of Iowa and Oklahoma (Smithsonian Institution, Exploration and Field Work for 1929, pp. 207-212, 1930); Studies of the Cheyenne, Kickapoo and Fox (same series, [Report] for 1930, pp. 207-210, 1931); Anthropological Studies in Oklahoma and Iowa (same series, [Report] for 1932, pp. 89-92, 1933).

30 Communication, March 12, 1951, from Robert E. Bell.
warfare, may be still functioning in part as a mechanism against the local majority group, the Mexicans.

Throughout the hundred years these people have been in Mexico they have been subject to many influences but none seem to have caused significant changes. That of Mexican culture seems least important. Some minor changes in material culture may be due to this influence (the shift from twined to plaited matting is perhaps an example). However, there may be many more aspects of this acculturation not readily apparent.

Acculturation from other Indian tribes is probably more important but less easy to recognize. The side by side association of the Kickapoo with the Seminole and later Seminole-Negroes certainly may have led to the assimilation of some ideas. Then too, mutual visits with the Oklahoma Kickapoo exposed the Mexican group to many influences.\(^{31}\)

All of these factors, isolation and Mexican and Indian culture contacts, have made these people an ideal group for detailed anthropological study. It is not improbable that they retain more basic aboriginal culture elements than any other Central Algonkin tribe studied by anthropologists. Moreover, problems of culture resistance, change, and contact can ideally be examined here.

This group can be recommended, then, for future intensive study. It is probable that a serious student with the proper approach can easily gain the good will of the people and conduct detailed work effectively.

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\(^{31}\) For example my Oklahoma Kickapoo informant visits the Mexican groups for several weeks at a time. In Oklahoma he is a silversmith who attends major Indian gatherings, such as the fair at Anadarko, for purposes of trade. Some of his silver work (German silver) is definitely of Kiowa pattern created for that market. Because of these factors this man alone is in a position to receive and transmit much in the way of material culture or ideas to others, among them his Mexican friends.