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Indian
calls
culture

Las Cruces, N.M.
2 September, 1945.

Dear Mr. Campbell;

I was very sorry to have missed you on my last visit to Norman, and on your - I understand - visit to Santa Fe. I have several things to thank you for, and more than that, I should have enjoyed a little general conversation with you.

However, I expect to be back in Oklahoma the middle of the month and am planning a visit to Norman then. Maybe this time I won't be running like mad to stay in one place, and we can do a little talking.

You ask about the women's buffalo call. I have heard it twice; once on the occasion described in "Buffalo Grass," and once when one of the old women greeted a buffalo head that was hanging on the wall of a house. It is almost indescribable, and, for me, quite irreproduceable. It is high-pitched and clear, without the quaver of the woman's war cry, and it seems to have a magnetic quality. Like most such calls, it can't be described as musical, but it certainly has great attraction.

Without my notes, I can't be sure of details. As nearly as I remember, women went with themen on the big, policed drives in late summer and early fall, and the call was used then. On other occasions, when men were hunting individually, their wives or sisters accompanied them, and the call might have been used, but I have no specific recollection that it was.

Since I started with the Kiowa, I have been very much interested in the variety and tonal quality of calls used. Unfortunately, I have no musical or linguistic training, and not at all a good ear. So I am not the person to do much with this material. I have suggested to Mary Haas that she collect calls and cries - she is better qualified for such work than anyone I know - but so far as I know, she has never been especially interested in them. So, so far, the field is untouched, and I wish someone would do something about it.

This isn't much, but may give you a little to go on. When I get home, I'll check my notes and see if I have anything else you could use.

With all best regards, sincerely,

Alice Marriott

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