

and tell it later to his own circle of friends and relatives. Eventually this story from an alien source might become incorporated into the folklore of the tribe.

As a whole I feel that the story-telling session was a success, though it was not quite what I had anticipated or hoped for. I had wanted more spontaneity, more of a relaxed atmosphere, more joking and laughter and general animation than was achieved. I don't think any of the ladies ever really "let go" as far as telling the stories with spirit and expression. Even Birdie's recital was not as forceful as when I had interviewed her alone previously. However, looking back, I suppose my original goals were impossible goals--I had wanted to tape a real story-telling session to record the atmosphere and flavor of the situation, as well as to get the stories. But the situation was contrived and artificial, and the microphone in the center of the room glaringly conspicuous the entire evening. Nevertheless I did get two hours of tape, including about sixteen or seventeen stories of various kinds, as well as conversation and discussion about stories and story telling by the women participating. I also learned that the Cheyennes make a definite distinction between "true stories", which relate to the history of the tribe and have, therefore, a special meaning to the Cheyennes, and just plain "stories", which may be on any subject and are often humorous and risqué. There are different terms in Cheyenne for these two categories: "true stories" are called hidomhosto, which, liberally translated means "something related to you that's true." The other stories are called ho'ta'heyo' and are comparable to "fairy tales". (These linguistic transcriptions are approximate and need to be checked.) The English term, "true story", should not, however, be taken to mean that the Cheyennes conceive of these stories as being literally true or as corresponding what we could call "history". The meaning of the Cheyenne term must be investigated further for its significance.

In addition to the stories recorded, I also obtained hints of other kinds of stories and some specific references to certain long stories--"true stories"--which seem to be core items in Cheyenne tradition, and which I would like to record some other time. I have decided, however, to work with just one person at a time when I want to collect a story in its full-length form. I believe I can achieve a more relaxed and informal atmosphere with just one person than with several, for purposes of recording the stories in greatest detail. However the possibilities of taping a story-telling session or other group activity, whether bona fide or rigged, should be kept in mind and explored further whenever circumstances warrant this. Certain cultural attitudes and patterns come to light best in a group situation. Here the field worker can observe members of the tribe interacting with each other. Even offhand comments and questions can reveal much about the significance of the materials, and be suggestive of possible interpretations.