

William Meadows: Kiowa Warrior Society

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the Mountain Sheep Society, Henry Tsoodle Sr. joined the Black Legs for two years to replace one of his older brothers.⁴⁰ Tsoodle provided a membership roster for the society at the time of his membership. Judging from the members' ages he provided and their birth dates in agency census records, this was around 1880.⁴¹

Gilbert McAllister's account of the Plains Apache medicine man Daveko (1970:53-54) indicated that Kiowa societies were still meeting in the early 1880s. In 1881 the Kiowa were camped for their annual Sun Dance and were awaiting the return of a party that had gone in search of a buffalo for the ceremony. After the party's lengthy absence, the Kiowa became concerned, and the Black Legs Society, led by Poor Buffalo, took a pipe to Daveko and asked him to divine or "look for" the missing men. Daveko, whom the Kiowa called "Hand Game Medicine Man" (Jòáudâuqì), was a well-known medicine man with the power to divine, heal, and perform magical feats. Accepting the request, he briefly exited his lodge and then returned to prophesy that the party would return in the morning. With this forecast, the Kiowa societies began to hold their dances. The party returned just as Daveko predicted, and preparations for the Sun Dance continued.⁴² Mooney stated that the Black Legs Society ceased to function after the 1885 Sun Dance, but because all the societies were declining at this time, it is likely that the Black Legs still functioned to some degree in 1887, as indicated by the gift of a lance from the Dog Society and the 1890 Sun Dance.⁴³

The society maintained two leaders, two whipmen, two male youth positions, and two female youth positions. Because of sparse records, the succession of society leaders and whipmen is difficult to reconstruct and is assuredly incomplete. It is also difficult to determine exact succession, which leaders were head society leaders versus whipmen, and when officers changed. In 1935, HeapoBears stated that it was difficult to name society leaders because they changed so rapidly.⁴⁴

The earliest known Black Legs Society leader was Qáunkíkògài (Black Turtle). A man named Black Turtle was recorded as having been an elder brother to Mammedate, Hovakah, Chaddlekongai, and Spotted Bird, all born between 1843 and 1863, but because the society was documented as early as 1834, before the births of these men, earlier, unrecorded society leaders and an earlier Black Turtle must have existed.⁴⁵

Black Turtle was reportedly followed by Gúlhèì (Gool-hay-ee, or Mustang Colt) (Boyd 1981:71; Auchiah n.d.). Although Kiowa oral tradition has preserved much data about this man, conflicting data exist concerning his position as a Black Legs Society member and leader. Nevertheless, because he plays a large role in the current society, he merits discussion. Ethnohistorical and linguistic analysis clarifies much of the mystery surrounding him. Of Hispanic descent, he was captured as a baby in a thicket near a creek by Thépòl (Taybodle, or Packing A Lower Quarter [Thigh] of Meat, also known as Old Colt, 1809-Sept. 15, 1901), who was part of a Kiowa raiding party in Texas. He was reportedly named and trained by Packing A Lower Quarter Of Meat's brother Bohee (Bòhì).⁴⁶ One version of the story states that the boy frequently turned red in the face when angry and so was named Gúlhèì, which some Kiowa today translate as "Turning Red When Angry." Yet some family traditions, referring to his

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Hispanic origin, say that he was very dark complected, contradicting the former assertions. A linguistic examination of the name demonstrates that it is based on the Kiowa name for a domestic mustang colt that is yet unbroken and still semi-wild (*gúl-hè* [s/d]; *gúl-hè-gâu* [t]; also known by the modified term *gú-hà-lê* [s/d]; *gú-hà-lê-gâu* [t]). The Kiowa referred to the Quahada Comanche residing near the wild horse herds in the Texas Panhandle as *Gúhàlêgâu*, or Wild Mustang People, in a Kiowa pronunciation of the Comanche name (Mooney 1898:405). A small band of Kiowa residing in this area of Texas later became known as *Gúhàlê* or *Gúhàlêgâu*, Wild Mustang or Quahada People. In the personal name *Gúlhèi*, the terminal syllable *i* is a contraction of *iyòi*, a common suffix in Kiowa names denoting "offspring," "son" or "sons," or "baby of." Hence the name can be read as wild horse + offspring or "colt," and thus as "Young Mustang" or "Mustang Colt" in translation.⁴⁷

Although Boyd (1983:155–158) gave a different account in which HeapoBears was the youth's captor, the data presented here came from family descendants, James Mooney, who personally interviewed Thépòl about Young Mustang, current tribal elders, and the late James Two Hatchet, a grandson of Thépòl. Thépòl's other name, Old Colt—probably a reference to his membership in the Dog Society—and the translation "Young Colt" for *Gúlhèi* further link Thépòl to the role of *Gúlhèi*'s captor-father.

On his second war expedition, Young Mustang distinguished himself in a battle against Mexican troops, killing an officer and capturing his clothes, sword, and red cape. During the battle Young Mustang reportedly donned the cape in celebration and was later known for wearing it.⁴⁸ Some Kiowa elders have identified the red cape and lance worn by Charley White Horse in a photograph (Boyd 1981:68) as those of Young Mustang.⁴⁹ Several Kiowa elders recall White Horse's borrowing these items to wear in parades during the 1920s and 1930s. The Ananthy Odlepaugh Kiowa calendar also depicts White Horse wearing a red cape during the 1929 Fourth of July parade.⁵⁰

Young Mustang is believed to have been born in 1837 or 1839.⁵¹ He was reportedly killed during his fourth war expedition, in a fight with Texans, while still fairly young. Although the exact battle is unrecorded, the date of his death is recorded in the Silverhorn calendar, which was commissioned by James Mooney around 1904.⁵² The spring 1872 entry depicts a small horse with a line connected to an owl (a common glyph in some Kiowa calendars, denoting death), beside a larger horse with the caption "Guale-i killed = Wild Horse Son. Killed by Texans." The connection of these images to a tree with leaves indicates that the event happened in the spring or summer of that year. Mooney provides another entry that states, "Guale-i 'Wild Horse Colt' killed by Texans in spring of 1872. Lonewolf Delegation [war party?]. Was Teybodle's adopted son. Shield captured with him. Mexican Captive . . . Teybodle had no son and so adopted Guale-i. He was a Mexican captive but was a great favorite."⁵³

Family oral history says that Young Mustang's children, George Mopope (*Mâupóp*, Freckled Nose) and Sendehmah (*Sédémâ*, Sainday Woman), or Sindy Keahbone, were small children at the time of his death.⁵⁴ Tribal censuses confirm that both Mopope

(1868–1927) and Sendehmah (b. 1869) were young children when their father died. The Silverhorn calendar also records the birth of George Mopope in the fall of 1868. The entry “First son of Gual-heu-i = Wild Horse Colt” is accompanied by a picture of an adult horse above a smaller one. The birth is indicated by a line running from the name glyph of the colt to a drawing of a cradleboard with a child’s face in it, a common stylistic technique denoting births in some of Silverhorn’s work.⁵⁵ Robert Donnelley (2000:167) and Barbara Hail (2000:31) have both published this page of the Silverhorn calendar. Thus Mooney’s fieldnotes, the Silverhorn calendar, and Kiowa census records indicate that Young Mustang died in the summer of 1872 at around the age of thirty-three, confirming family oral history.

After Young Mustang’s death, Bôhî, a brother of Thépòl, composed two songs in his memory, one of which survives. In many Plains Indian societies, family songs, like personal names and oral history, preserve historical accounts of significant events. The following family song, known as Gûlhèijèdâugâ (Young Mustang’s Song or the Song of Young Mustang), was introduced to the Black Legs Society by James Two Hatchet in 1984. Now sung in contemporary society ceremonies, the song recounts how Young Mustang killed a Mexican military officer and captured his possessions, including his red cape.

- 1 Gûl-hè-î dâu-dè só-lè-qâ-jâi-qî hól-hèl-gâu
(Mustang-colt-offspring / it was / soldier-chief or officer / killed-reportedly-and)
Young Mustang Colt it was, I’ve heard he killed a soldier officer and
- 2 Gû-fèl jè án háu-hèl gâu
(Possessions / all / he / took / and)
Took all of his possessions and
- 3 Gûl-kâu-dâu è dâu-gâu é gó-bâu
(Red-cape / it / was-and / he / captured)
The red cape it was, he captured that.⁵⁶

Oral history, song, and the fieldnotes of James Mooney and Jane Richardson confirm that Young Mustang was a captive of Thépòl and was a *qâjâiqî*, a man holding war accomplishments. In Richardson’s fieldnotes, Young Mustang is identified by elder Kiowa in a list of Kiowa captives taken during raids. The names of the captors are correlated with the names of their captives, all of whom were *qâjâi* and members of the Mountain Sheep Society who had never changed society membership during their lifetimes. “Guelheie” is listed as a Mountain Sheep Society member, and his captor is listed as “T’ebodl,” a “Koitsenko” Society member. Because Young Mustang was killed at around the age of thirty-three, his membership in the Mountain Sheep is likely. And because most society leaders were inducted after reaching the age of fifty, and whipmen were only somewhat younger than society leaders, his position as an officer is unlikely.⁵⁷

In the Kiowa military society system, a Mountain Sheep Society member who

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achieved a battle deed was usually recruited by a higher-ranking society shortly afterward. Whether Young Mustang was briefly a Black Legs member before his death in 1872, and whether his song was later introduced to the Black Legs by Bôhî, by Thépôl, or only by James Two Hatchet in 1984 is unclear. Perhaps the larger matter is not whether Young Mustang was a Black Legs Society member—because Kiowa societies often adopt and carry forward the songs of other societies and individuals—but that his cape and, more recently, his song and martial spirit became prominent symbols after the society's revival in 1958. In recent years, interest in and knowledge about Young Mustang has rapidly increased. In the mid-1990s a Goule-Hae-Ee Descendants organization was formed and created a distinct emblem containing a feathered bonnet, a red cape, and a shield with crossed arrows and a painted hand on either side. This emblem is sewn on the dance shawls of female members of the organization and is a logo on the organization's monthly newsletters. Although all descendants' organizations celebrate and praise the memory of their respective ancestor, this organization is more aggressive than most in promoting the history of Young Mustang, who has recently emerged as an important apical ancestor.⁵⁸

Sitting Bear, the Dog Society leader who was killed on May 28, 1871, while leaving Fort Sill under guard, is reported to have once been a Black Legs member. His son and namesake, Sitting Bear II, was a Black Legs member at the time of his death in 1870. A Black Legs song composed by Sitting Bear for his son demonstrates the father's affection for his namesake:⁵⁹

- 1 Sét-â-gái-dâu-gà gà hâ-fê-jâu-nàu
(Sitting Bear's-song / it [sing] / sing it [pick it up] / shall / and)
I am going to sing a song about Sitting Bear.
- 2 Repeat.
- 3 Repeat.
- 4 Qá-jái-qĩ à dàu
(Chief / he / is in a state of being)
He is a chief.
- 1 Sét-â-gái-dâu-gà gà hâ-fê-jâu-nàu
- 2 Repeat.
- 3 Repeat.
- 4 Háp-vè-qĩ è dàu
(Cute / he / is in a state of being)
He is cute.⁶⁰

Sitting Bear II was killed while on a war party in Texas in the spring of 1870. Piatonma recounted his death to Marriott in 1935, and its aftermath, as Piatonma described it, stands out as one of the most unusual incidents in Kiowa history. Sometime in 1870, Sitting Bear set out to recover the body of his son. He was grieving so deeply that the other men became concerned that he would commit suicide. One of them asked to borrow his knife, under the pretense that he had lost his own. Under-