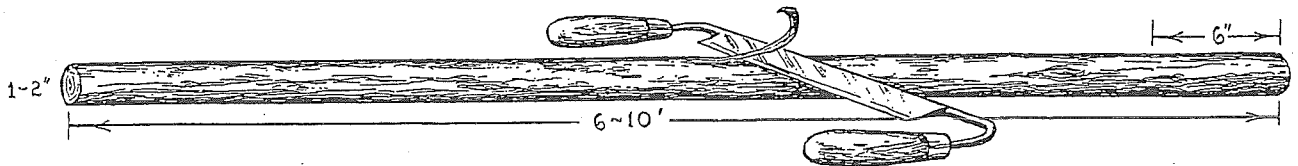


SNOW SNAKE

(2) Snow snake: This article is common to many tribes of Indians,⁴¹ and was made in different sizes by the Chippewa, according to the age of the boys who were to use it. Plate 25, *d*, shows one which is about 20 inches long and would be suitable for quite a small boy. The throwing of the snow snakes required sufficient skill to make it interesting for young men, and the sticks used by them were about 3 feet long. In the specimen illustrated the handle is decorated by burning or searing the wood, giving it a shaded brown color. Personal marks often were put on the sticks in this manner or with paint, so the owners could claim their sticks when many fell near together.

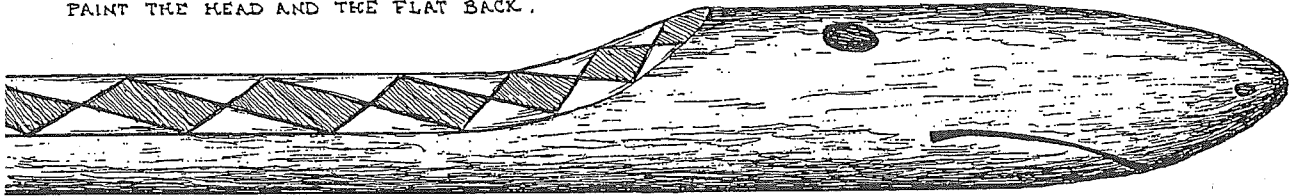
There were two designs for the tip of a snow snake. In one the tip was upturned and finished smoothly as in the illustration. These were thrown through soft snow or across hard crusted snow. The other type had its tip carved to represent the head of a snake and was thrown under and through the snow, the object being to have the stick travel a long distance and then reappear above the surface. The lower surface of either type could be flat or slightly convex. In throwing across the snow it was customary for several boys to stand in a row and throw their sticks, after which they would run forward, identify their sticks, and determine who had thrown farthest. It is said they threw the sticks several hundred feet if the conditions were favorable. Eastern Chippewa drew a log through the snow and allowed the sides of this trench to freeze, often sprinkling it with water. In this smooth, icy trench the snow snakes were thrown long distances.



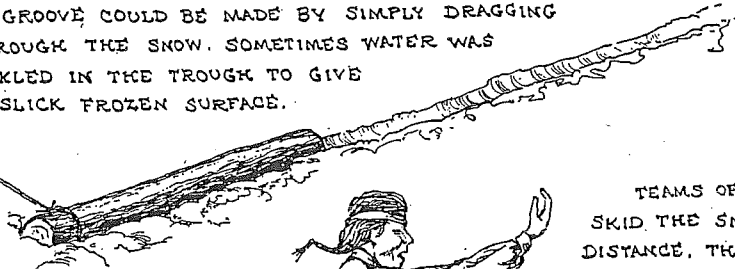
SELECT A SAPLING 1-2 INCHES IN DIAMETER, AND 6-10 FEET IN LENGTH. PLANE THE UPPER HALF FLAT, AVOIDING THE LAST 6 INCHES OF ONE END. THIS BECOMES THE HEAD. THE LOWER HALF MAY BE LEFT AS IS OR SLIGHTLY FLATTENED.



PAINT THE HEAD AND THE FLAT BACK.



A STRAIGHT RUNWAY-OR RATHER, SNAKEWAY-WAS NEEDED FOR THE THROW. A UNIFORM GROOVE COULD BE MADE BY SIMPLY DRAGGING A LOG THROUGH THE SNOW. SOMETIMES WATER WAS SPRINKLED IN THE TROUGH TO GIVE A SLICK FROZEN SURFACE.



TEAMS OF SIX COMPETED TO SKID THE SNAKE THE GREATEST DISTANCE. THE THROW WAS MADE BY HOLDING THE TAIL OF THE SNAKE WITH THE INDEX FINGER. THE THUMB AND OTHER FINGERS HOLD THE SNAKE PARALLEL TO THE GROUND. IN A CROUCHED POSITION, THE THROWER KURLED THE STICK FORWARD WITH AN UNDERHAND SWEEP, MUCH AS IN MODERN-DAY BOWLING. OR~THE SNOW SNAKE COULD BE THROWN DOWN THE TROUGH, MUCH LIKE SKIPPING A STONE ON THE WATER.

