Dis-US-Blackfoot-Pipe Bag

**Buckskin Calumet (Pipe) Bag**

This buckskin calumet (the correct name for the pipe) bag would hold a pipe bowl, stem, and tobacco. Calumet bags were often worn into battle by men as a badge of honor since the pipe when connected to the stem was believed to be energized with spiritual power. This bag is an elongated rectangular shape with an opening at one end and a fringe at the bottom. Decorative elements were selected by women according to tribal styles. The cross decoration is at the bottom of the bag, while the top is left plain to be tucked under the belt of the wearer. This bag is post-contact because beads are used for the design instead of quillwork: bright colors of the beads and their ease of application was the reason for the change in decoration.

The red cross within a black outline signifies the blood and life of the owner’s band, while its enclosing rectangle of black suggests both the bag carrying the sacred calumet and the bounds of the tribal area across which no enemy shall enter on pain of death. At the intersection of the arms of the cross is a black rectangle signifying the burial place of the honored dead.