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GENERAL DISCUSSION OF SHAMANISTIC AND DANCING  
SOCIETIES

BY  
CLARK WISSLER

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## PREFACE.

In the preceding divisions of this volume have been presented such concrete data as came to hand on akicita societies, dancing associations, etc. The primary object in every case was to secure first hand information on organizations of the akicita type, but except where the cultures were very complex the inquiry was extended to all organizations and associations. In the main, the latter are of two kinds, general dancing associations and shamanistic performances.

Now, as we turn to a comparative résumé of these successive tribal studies, we may best begin with the minor organizations, leaving the akicita group to the last. We do not consider that this brief paper exhausts the subject, but offer it as a suggestion of the possibilities contained therein.

June, 1916.

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## INTRODUCTION.

In the concluding sections of this volume we shall consider some of the intertribal problems suggested by a comparative view of the data at hand. Our chief task is the analysis and interpretation of the societies closely resembling the akicita and political organizations described in the first paper of this volume, but before proceeding with them it seems advisable to discuss certain other organizations to which we have given minor consideration.

If the reader glances over the tables of contents for the preceding papers, he will note the frequent segregation of two kinds of associations: those whose chief function is entertainment and those of a serious character in so far as they are shamanistic. It will be noted that these minor topics are very unsymmetrically treated in the several papers. This is due in part to practical considerations and in part to the varying interests of the contributors. Yet, it will be seen that in cases where they have been reported upon, these social and shamanistic associations make clear the function and significance of the akicita group. Hence, as preliminary to the final discussion, and for the sake of defining a problem still demanding field-study, we shall review the data on these two groups of organizations.

## SHAMANISTIC ASSOCIATIONS.

The shamanistic organization of the Pawnee far surpasses that of any other tribe we have investigated (600). First, we have groups of organized shamans and then a general ceremony into which these are organized and which has a governing body controlling admission, etc. The dominant feature of these associations is shamanistic performances, an art in which the Pawnee take high rank.<sup>1</sup> While we have no positive data as to the former Mandan and Hidatsa shamanistic development, there are some indications that they once also ranked high. The late Joseph Kipp, a son by a Mandan woman of the Kipp who was in charge of Fort Clark when Maximilian spent the winter there, once gave the writer an account of the shamanistic feats he saw when a boy. If these are taken at their face value, it is fairly certain that the Mandan and Hidatsa also had a highly systematized shamanistic system, but since there are no other data, this can be no more than a conjecture.

While the Oglala (81) have no series of distinctly shamanistic associations, they do have in their dream cult system something strikingly like the Pawnee scheme. This is apparently less developed among the Eastern Dakota. Among the Crow and Assiniboine it is wanting, but in the fragmentary notes for the Ponca, we have a strong suggestion of the Pawnee type (792). While the Iowa and Omaha have some of these same cult-like associations, they seem much more divergent than those of the Ponca and Oglala. When we turn to the Algonkin and Shoshonean tribes of the Plains such organization is conspicuously absent, shamanism being less intense and entirely individual.

It is suggestive that the Ponca are more like the Pawnee than are the Oglala, but that all three are decidedly different from the other tribes of the area in that their shamanistic activities are systematized. The geographical continuity of these three tribes and the decline in intensity as we pass from the Pawnee through the Ponca to the Oglala, may be more than accidental, or due to diffusion.

In this connection we may examine certain specific features of Pawnee shamanism. One fundamental conception is the renewing ceremony at the first thunder in the spring (600) which prevails in all Pawnee organizations and rituals. In their societies it takes the form of lance renewals. These are prominent features of the akicita societies of the Oglala, as also

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<sup>1</sup> Grinnell, (b), 374-388.



of the Crow (160), while they occur in some Blackfoot societies. It should be noted, however, that some kind of a reorganization in the spring is the rule among all tribes having akicita societies; yet the significant point is, that so far, we find that it is only among the Pawnee that the renewal concept is fundamental. Among the Oglala it is a characteristic of lance-bearing societies. In the case of the Blackfoot (425) such renewal occurs in a few societies and again in the rituals of certain bundles. Thus as we leave the Pawnee, renewal activities rapidly dwindle away to the more general concept of a mere reorganization of the societies in the spring.

One specific shamanistic feat has a wide distribution, viz., the handling of fire and boiling liquids. The latter is most conspicuous in the heyoka cults of the Siouan tribes (85, 113, 789) but is also the prominent feature of a Pawnee shamanistic organization (608). Yet, one important difference appears in the conceptions underlying the two, for while the heyoka use of the trick is to exemplify the cult's anti-natural and absurd character, it is used by the Pawnee as symbolic. Thus, "the term *iruska* has a symbolic or double meaning. The idea is literally 'the fire is in me' and the symbolic meaning is that 'I can extinguish the life in the fire,' or can overcome the powers of other medicines" (608). Again among the Dakota the trick is definitely associated with the thunder, whereas this is not the case with the Pawnee. The fact that the trick is everywhere performed in the same way is a strong argument for a single origin and its distribution points clearly to either a Pawnee or Siouan tribe.

The other form the trick takes is fire-walking as seen in the Eastern Dakota ceremony (126) and also among the Arapaho, Gros Ventre, and Cheyenne. This again occurs without essential variation among the Oglala (29), the Hidatsa, and Mandan (252, 308). In the latter it occurs in association with the heyoka trick but in the two former is disassociated. Again, in the Pawnee *iruska* (609) the candidates were thrown on the fire as well as subjected to the heyoka test. Since the method of protecting the hands and feet is the same as in the heyoka test, it is fair to assume a common origin to all these tricks. This again raises the question as to the identity of the originators.

The Pawnee name for this shamanistic conception is *iruska*. The Omaha have *hethushka*, the Iowa *helocka* (Catlin spells it Eh-Ros-Ka), the Kansa, *helucka*, the Ponca, *helocka*, and the Dakota, *heyoka*. The similarity to the Pawnee term is obvious.

The study of the *iruska* will be no simple task for it is widely diffused and has passed through several transitions. Assuming that the Arikara were once a part of the Pawnee, we are not surprised to find their hot dance containing all the essential elements of the *iruska* (669). We also find good

evidence that the Hidatsa (252) got the same dance from the Arikara and the presumption is that the Mandan (308) did also. Thus the suggestion is for the Pawnee origin of the ceremony. So far as the data go the fire tricks were not a part of the Omaha, the Iowa (694), or the Kansa (755) ceremony of this name. Unfortunately, we lack good data for the older form of this ceremony among the Osage but it seems to have resembled the Omaha. Yet the Iowa had a separate dance in which the heyoka trick was performed (702), but this bears some resemblance to the helocka, from which it seems probable that this "fire dance" (702) is an old form corresponding to the iruska of the Pawnee. The Oglala have a form of the iruska which they claim came from the Pawnee through the Omaha not over fifty years ago (48). The heyoka trick is mentioned in the origin narrative (49), but does not seem to have figured in the ceremony. The Ponca claim to have taken the society from the Sioux (784), probably the Oglala, and passed it on to the Kansa (755). Now it should be noted that we have two forms of this iruska ceremony: the older represented by the Pawnee iruska, the Arikara, Hidatsa and Mandan hot dance, and the Iowa fire dance, in all of which the fire tricks occur; the more modern forms are generally known as grass dances which have practically all the other features of the older ceremony.

Our problem now narrows down to the question of historical connection between the heyoka and the iruska. In the first place we note a peculiar statement about the Arikara hot dance. They also danced an elk dance and "tried to mimic all the animals" (668).

Now the Oglala heyoka and elk cult usually appeared together (88) and in fact all the animal cults tended to dance together in one great fête (95) at which time they masqueraded according to their respective cult animals. Some supplementary unpublished data we have make this clear. The parallel is striking and at once suggests common origin. We have previously noted the similarity between the shamanistic organization of the Pawnee and the Dakota, but note that in the great shamanistic ceremony of the Skidi, "All medicinemen are supposed to derive their powers from living creatures and their booths are spoken of as animal lodges. In this procession each man costumes himself so as to represent his animal mentor, often in very realistic fashion" (603). Dr. Lowie has identified the Arikara hot dance with the Pawnee iruska (669). Then the Pawnee say that "Originally, the society consisted of leaders of various animal medicine societies" (608). Thus we have a very strong case for the diffusion of a specific shamanistic organization between the Dakota, Pawnee, and Arikara. Since this organization is very strong among the Pawnee and very weak among the Eastern Dakota (113) we must assume that the Pawnee were the originators.

Yet when we turn from the organization to the specific fire trick we find a somewhat different condition. In addition to the distribution previously noted, it is found among the shamanistic feats of some Central Algonkin tribes (505). Its geographical center thus rests with the Siouan tribes and particularly the Eastern Dakota.

At this point a digression may be made to express our conception of the method applicable to such problems of origin. It is well nigh hopeless to determine from whence the first suggestion as to the fire trick came. Suggestions rain in upon people everywhere, but only now and then do they find a footing in their culture complex. Under such conditions it is of little moment from where the suggestion came. What we are seeking in this case is to locate the group in which the fire trick was first used as the fundamental feature of a ceremonial complex. To this the Eastern Dakota can make a strong circumstantial claim.

For a better insight into this problem we must examine the data for the origin of the older form of Pawnee *iruska*. Two striking objective features of this ceremony are the well-known headdress of roached deer hair and the crow-belt. These come into the Omaha ceremony incidentally, because the headdress and the crow-belt were war honors and the participation of their owners would automatically bring them into the ceremony. A similar condition held for the Iowa (695) and presumably for the Osage. Among the Pawnee, on the other hand, these regalia distinctly belonged to the *iruska* ceremony. Further, among the Omaha the *hethuska* ceremony is decidedly like a war dance.<sup>1</sup> This war function is in keeping with the entrance of various warrior organizations with their insignia. These war associations occur in the Iowa, especially in Catlin's older account (696) and are also conspicuous in the Pawnee ceremony. One must therefore assume that the most probable thing is that the warlike features of the Pawnee *iruska* came from the Omaha, Iowa, or Osage. Again, it is clear that the fire trick is not a part of the Omaha ceremony and, except for the doubtful case of the older ceremony, not known to the Iowa. Our previous outline of the distribution of the *iruska* shows that the Pawnee stand out clearly as the group originally associating these warlike characters with the fire trick and animal guardians. Then the fact that these last conceptions are found strongly developed in the Dakota without the other associated concepts indicates that the Pawnee did not originate the fire trick.

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<sup>1</sup> Miss Fletcher, (g), states that the Omaha *hethuska* is supposed to be a derivative of the old Chiefs' society, entrance into which was by graded war honors. It was in this Chiefs' society that a special song of praise was given to each distinguished member. Thus, it appears that the Omaha war dance complex consisted of honor qualifications, individual songs, crow belts, and roached headdresses, all of which enter into the typical *iruska* ritual.

The serving of dog flesh is an important point in this connection. It is chiefly among the Dakota that a high ceremonial value is attached to the flesh of the dog. It was used in heyoka performances but also in all other serious affairs. It appears in the Skidi iruska feast but is otherwise not a feature of Pawnee ceremonies. This is an additional point in support of the Dakota origin for the fire trick in the iruska.

### THE GRASS DANCE.

At this point in our analysis we may profitably shift our attention to the modern forms of the iruska ceremony, generally known as the Omaha dance, or grass dance. A résumé of the preceding accounts will show it to be a ceremony of some complexity, possessing an organization justifying its classification as a society. At least it has a definite leadership, a variable number of special officers with particular duties and distinctive regalia, and a considerable number of lay members. Its function is everywhere chiefly social and its meetings are distinctly social gatherings. This should not be taken as denying the existence of serious ceremonial elements, but as asserting one of the striking characteristics of the grass dance, in contrast to the iruska.

The personnel of the organization is generally a leader and next in rank are the custodians of the crow-belts. Among other special officers are the pipe keepers, food servers, whip bearers, a whistle bearer, sword bearers, heralds, drummers, singers, and servants.

The most distinctive regalia are a crow-belt (feather bustle), a roached headdress of deer hair, a food stick or spoon, a large drum suspended horizontally, a whip, a sword, and a whistle. To this may be added a dancing house of definite form (200). The available data on the grass dance enable us to give the distribution and variants for the Sarsi, Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, Assiniboine, Crow, Teton (Dakota), Omaha, Iowa, Ponca, Kansa, Hidatsa, Pawnee, Arikara, Arapaho, Menomini, and Ojibway. There is fragmentary but unsatisfactory data for the Plains-Cree, Plains-Ojibway, Shoshone, Winnebago, Cheyenne, Flathead, Kiowa, Osage, and Oto. It is quite probable that some of the adjoining tribes can be added to this list, but this is sufficiently extensive for our purpose. Returning to the tribes for which we have full data, we find the crow-belt in all. The number of belts varies from two to eight but is fixed for each tribe and is relatively small when compared to the membership. These are everywhere the most important

parts of the regalia. Among the less known tribes we have vague but inferential suggestions of their use by the Kiowa, Oto, and Plains-Ojibway. These belts are worn in dancing, usually by particular individuals, but in some cases one or more of them are danced with by the members in rotation. Among the Sarsi and Blood (Blackfoot), and perhaps elsewhere, there is one crow-belt invested with special medicine attributes giving it a very sacred character. In fact, the tendency everywhere seems to have been toward investing these belts with medicine attributes. The vague data from the Plains-Ojibway suggest that in their grass dance, the belts were never used but merely hung up in the dancing house.

All members wore a peculiar roached headdress made of hair taken from the tails of deer. One or more standing eagle feathers was sometimes added. It was used by all except the Sarsi, Crow, Arapaho, Menomini, and Ojibway. Its distribution among the second group of less known tribes is not known.

A highly decorated pointed stick and a similarly conspicuous spoon, one or both, are the badges of the ceremonial food servers. The spoon is found among the Gros Ventre, Assiniboine, Teton, and Arapaho; the stick, or "fork," among the Sarsi, Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, Crow, and Omaha.

One large drum is used by all in the first group, without exception. In the second group, (the one with less data) it is reported for the Shoshone. Formerly, a section from the trunk of a cottonwood tree was taken for the body of the drum, which was double-headed; now, this drum is usually made by heading up a factory-made wooden wash tub. In use the drum is suspended in a horizontal position from four ornamented stakes. Among the Menomini and Ojibway this drum is invested with medicine attributes and generally regarded as the most sacred object of all. Also the Santee and Hidatsa consider the drumkeeper the ranking officer of the dance.

One or more officials bear ornamental whips for driving the dancers, among the Sarsi, Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, Assiniboine, Crow, Hidatsa, Arapaho, Kansa, Ponca, and Shoshone.

In recent years, at least, a United States Army sword or a saber is a part of the regalia, in some cases two of them are provided.<sup>1</sup> When the dancers are at rest, the swords are stuck into the ground in front of their bearers. They are used by the Teton, Sarsi, Gros Ventre, and Blackfoot.

A special whistle is found among the Sarsi, Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, Assiniboine, Teton, and Arapaho.

Among other objects may be mentioned a special ax or tomahawk (Sarsi, Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, and Teton); a shield (Sarsi and Gros Ventre); feather bonnets (Sarsi, Blackfoot, Crow, Omaha, and Plains-Cree), in some

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 630.

cases worn by women only; a bird-headed stick (Crow and Shoshone); a large hoop (Plains-Cree and Plains-Ojibway); and special pipes (Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, Assiniboiné, Omaha, Menomini, and Ojibway). A special dance house of a form resembling the framework of an earth-lodge was used by the Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, Assiniboiné, Crow, Iowa, and Teton. The Arapaho, Osage, Kansa, Ponca, and the Oto used a special house but no descriptions are at hand.

Of the more fundamental concepts and procedures of the ceremony may be mentioned the serving of dog flesh. In this there are several distinct performances:—

1. The scouting of the food kettle after it has been carried into the dance house and the counting of coup upon it as if it were an enemy.

2. The serving of small bits of dog flesh to a few distinguished men by the bearers of the pointed stick (the dog fork) or of the ceremonial spoon.

3. Presenting the dog heads to the most distinguished men present and the counting of coups by them over the skulls at the end of the feast.

4. Gathering all the other bones and passing them around to be prayed over; finally secreting them in some secure place.

Dog flesh is served by the Sarsi, Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, Assiniboiné, Crow, Santee, Teton, Skidi, Hidatsa,<sup>1</sup> Menomini, and the Omaha. Scouting the kettle is found among the Sarsi, Assiniboiné, Crow, Teton, and Arapaho. It is not mentioned for the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre but is implied. The Ojibway do not serve dog but have the scouting feature.<sup>2</sup>

Small bits of food are served by the Sarsi, Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, Assiniboiné, Crow, Hidatsa, Teton, Omaha, and Pawnee. The counting of coups over the dog skull are reported for the Sarsi, Assiniboiné, Teton, Hidatsa, and Omaha and the special ceremonies for the bones among the Sarsi, Blackfoot, Teton, and Omaha.

Another important feature is a sex taboo, or a requirement of restraint for a varying period before the ceremony, reported for the Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, Assiniboiné, Crow, Hidatsa, Teton, Arapaho, Pawnee, Menomini, and Plains-Ojibway.

Among the Omaha, Teton, and Sarsi each member may be assigned a special song. That the organization has distinct war functions is recog-

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<sup>1</sup> G. L. Wilson's unpublished field notes is a full account of the grass dance for the Hidatsa. It was introduced about 1871 by the Santee of Devil's Lake. It had all of the typical features. The members were mostly older men, but two years later a group of young men purchased the dance from the same source and so there were two rival organizations. The informant stated that this dance was a derivation of the older Hot dance, and that the two new dances were known as Day and Night Dances. Afterwards the Hidatsa passed both of these to the Crow (200).

<sup>2</sup> Miss Densmore reports that some divisions of the Ojibway have received the dog feast from the Dakota.

nized by the Omaha, Teton, Iowa, Kansa, and Ponca, and its mythical thunder origin by the Arapaho, Omaha, Osage, and Teton. The lavish giving away of presents is noted for the Sarsi, Blackfoot, Crow, Assiniboiné, Arapaho, Ponca, Iowa, Kansa, and Menomini. A special form of renouncing, or "throwing away" a wife is found among the Blackfoot, Crow, Assiniboiné, Potawatomi, Menomini, Sauk and Fox. Whipping up those declining to dance is noted among the Sarsi, Blackfoot, and Gros Ventre.

In such data on distribution it should be borne in mind that the mere failure to mention the existence of a feature in a ceremony is not of itself evidence of its non-existence, since it may have been overlooked by the observer. Hence, we cannot be so sure of our negative evidence.

Bearing this in mind, a tabulation of the preceding data suggests one older type of ceremony (iruska) and two modern ones, distributed as follows:

1. The Grass Dance, or Western type, Sarsi, Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, Assiniboiné, Crow, Hidatsa, Teton, and Arapaho. Perhaps the Cheyenne, Wind River Shoshone, Kiowa, and Comanche will fall into this group also.

2. The Dream Dance, or Northeastern type. Potawatomi, Menomini, Ojibway, Iowa, Winnebago, Sauk, Fox, Kickapoo, and possibly the Plains-Ojibway and Plains-Cree.

3. The Iruska, or old Southeastern type. Omaha, Ponca, Oto, Osage, Iowa, Kansa, and Pawnee.

The most striking aspect of this distribution is its general agreement with cultural and geographical distinctions. Our Western group comprises in the main the typical Plains tribes, our Southeastern group is a part of the intermediate Plains group, and our Northeastern, the typical Eastern Woodland group. The peculiarity of this correlation is that in each group we find a different form of the dance and that each form tends to completely cover its culture area. Of these types, the Western and Southeastern are much more alike than the Northeastern.

Thus the distinctive Central Algonkin culture seems to have modified the grass dance most. Hence, granting that the ceremony was distributed from a single center, we have what looks like pattern phenomena, for most surely the uniformity of type in each cultural group must be due to influences from within. We have, therefore, an analytic problem, to discover what specific influences were responsible for the differentiation of these types.

As previously noted, the historic status of the distribution for the grass dance can be established as beginning with the Dakota about 1860. Before this date the parent form seems to have been confined to the Omaha, Ponca, Osage, Iowa, and Pawnee. Among the Omaha, Iowa, and Pawnee, the only ones from which we have full data, this seems to be an old and serious affair.

The first member of the typical Plains group to take up the grass dance was the Teton division of the Dakota, though it may have been taken up by the Yankton division a little earlier. According to their own belief it was taught them by the Omaha about 1860. Among the Omaha only men with war records were admitted, or older men. Now the Teton had two groups of organizations for men, one largely made up of younger men and another composed in the main of older men. It is natural, therefore, to find the Teton classing this newly acquired organization with the older group. In the account of the first forms of the ceremony, the taking of dog flesh from the boiling kettle was performed preparatory to going to war, a feature not reported for the Omaha, but used by the Skidi.<sup>1</sup> If the Omaha did not perform this, it is easily accounted for among the Teton because it was already a regular feature of certain Dakota ceremonies: then since the Teton took over the Omaha idea of a thunder origin and this boiling kettle trick (heyoka) is among the Dakota also a thunder ceremony, we may have but another example of pattern phenomena, the thunder concept suggesting the procedure. Otherwise, there are no evidences of changes or additions by the Dakota, the ceremony having been taken over from the Omaha entire; except perhaps the addition of certain regalia as the whistle, ax, sword, and spoon. From the Omaha account we get no suggestion of these.

Because of geographical position the presumption is that the Dakota passed the ceremony on to most of the other typical Plains tribes. The Arapaho claim to have it from them direct, while the Blackfoot derived it in part from their relatives, the Crow and the Assiniboiné. Yet among the borrowing tribes we find certain additional features; for example, large ornamental whips and official whip bearers are found among the Sarsi, Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, Assiniboiné, Crow, Hidatsa, Kansa, Osage, Ponca and Shoshone. We failed to connect these with the Dakota grass dance, notwithstanding the fact that such whippers are found in almost every one of their organizations. Again the Teton seem not to have taken over the pipes of the Omaha but something like the Omaha feature appears among the Blackfoot and Assiniboiné. Finally, the Sarsi, Blackfoot, Crow, and Plains-Cree add a few feather headdresses with which men and sometimes women dance.

These are, however, but the minor exceptions and may represent errors

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<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that our Pawnee informants state that the Omaha did not learn how to take meat from the kettle with the bare hand, but used a stick. We have called attention to the Omaha having all the other features of the dog kettle. Then we note that "It is a custom in the Hae-thu-ska Society to serve the food with two sticks; if these were not provided, then the naked hand must be thrust in the boiling pot to take out the meat." (Fletcher, (g), 140). Since it is clear that the sticks are always at hand and the other method is known, we have confirmation of the Pawnee statement.



of observation, the general import of the preceding data being that there is very little in the way of objective modification. So far as we have gone there are no very marked changes in form conformatory to prevailing tribal patterns. On the other hand, we have clear cases of adjustment in the fundamental conceptions underlying the ceremony. Thus we have noted that the Dakota put the grass dance among the societies for older men and thus automatically fixed the requirements of admission.<sup>1</sup> The Blackfoot formerly treated all the important regalia as medicine bundles and transferred them in the customary tribal mode.

When, however, we leave the Plains Area and turn to the Central Algonkin group, the ceremony appears in an almost unrecognizable form. Here it is known as the dreamer's dance, but is believed by Barrett to have come from the Dakota about 1880.<sup>2</sup> According to our data a Potawatomi formerly living at St. Mary's mission was the founder of the dreamer's dance. He was the father of Samuel Bausell. Something more than twenty years ago he began to introduce this dance and made a strong effort to plant it among all the Oklahoma tribes. Little progress was made, but the Oto, Ponca, and possibly the Shawnee took it up. Later, Billy Fawfaw (Oto) dreamed a new form of this dance, but it also failed to materialize (p. 758). However, the founders had better success in proselyting among the Central Algonkin tribes, where it is now very popular.

There is no great difficulty in identifying this with the grass dance and it is clear from whence its Potawatomi founder got his ideas. Among the Menomini, Ojibway, Kickapoo, Sauk, Fox, Potawatomi, and Iowa the drum and pipe are given the attributes of medicine bundles. Into the ceremony is introduced the highly developed Central Algonkin tribal procedure of offering tobacco and also the calumet ceremony with its conceptions. Most of the regalia have been dropped. The explanation of this may be that among all the tribes of the Plains Area we have a series of societies with which the grass dance has something in common; at least, there is a similarity in the generalities of regalia. The Central Algonkin, on the other hand, do not have such societies or regalia. Hence, when they took over the grass dance they were probably out of sympathy with many of its spectacular features. For example, in Barrett's account of the Menomini ceremony, a visiting member undertook to dance in the semi-nude and painted manner of the Plains, but was vigorously censured by the leaders.

If we take a general view of the preceding we see that notwithstanding the great uniformity in the grass dance we have a geographical grouping of

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson's Hidatsa informants state that the grass dance was first purchased by the older men.

<sup>2</sup> This date is fixed by the Rev. Macauley. See Hoffman, 160.

minor differences and that when we look a little deeper, we find evidences of pattern phenomena in that some dominant ceremonial concepts of the respective localities have been incorporated in the grass dance and have inhibited the continuance of others. It is also suggested that very great differences in the culture of two groups of people will retard diffusion, or at least tend to modify and obscure the identity of borrowed traits. Finally, we may suspect that the preceding differences in the grass dance are due to cultural differences in the tribes concerned.

#### CONDITIONS FAVORING DIFFUSION.

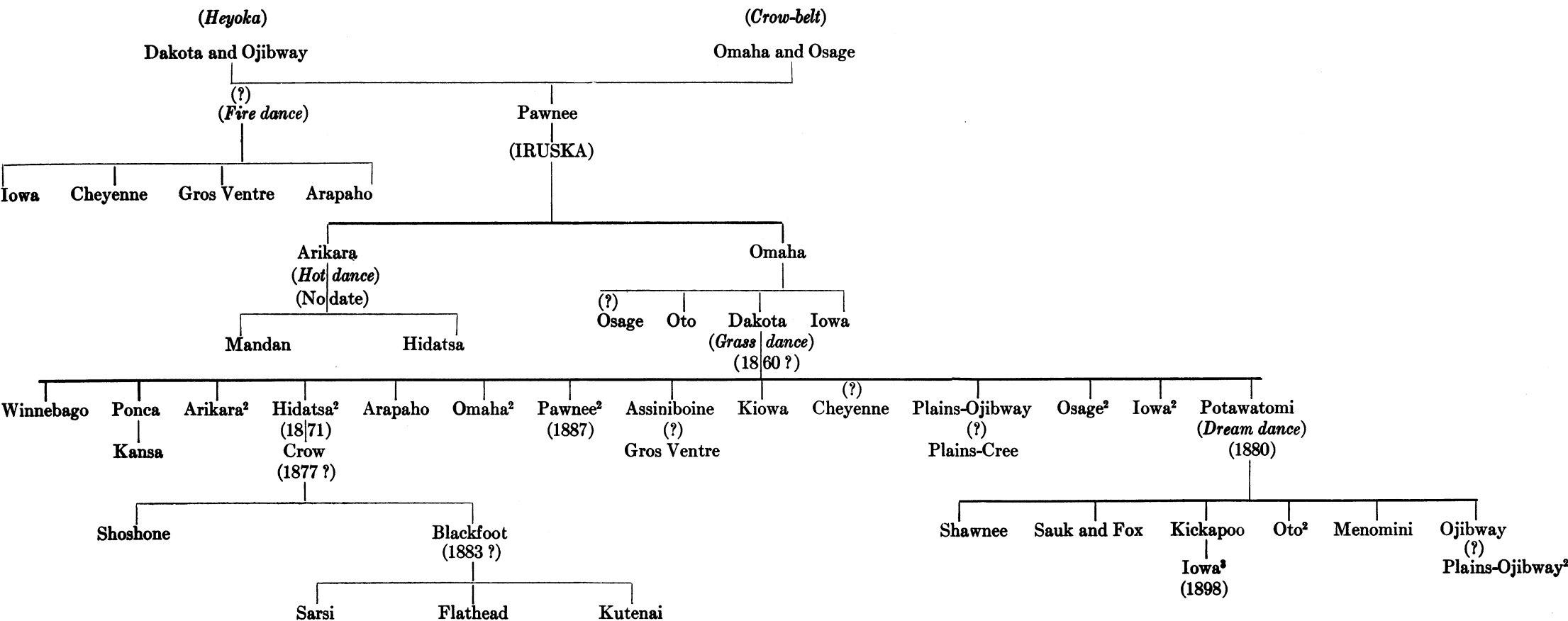
About 1890 a fundamental conception was introduced into the Plains Area which developed a ceremonial procedure containing familiar spiritualistic phenomena, giving us the name ghost dance. Owing to the intensity of devotion among the converts and the sudden appearance of a dangerous militant phase in the heart of the Plains Area, this ceremony was extensively investigated. The leading part in this was taken by one of our distinguished anthropologists, from whose pen we have one of the most notable contributions of that decade.<sup>1</sup> However, as soon as the militant spirit of the Indians was crushed, the phenomenon was ignored.

Our data for the first time make it clear that the ghost dance was but one of a group of modern ceremonies which have since become conspicuous because of their diffusion. Among the best known of these are the peyote, the hand game ceremonies, and the grass dance we are now discussing. Dr. Kroeber seems to have been the first to offer specific evidence of ghost dance influence in the grass dance and hand game ceremonies of the Arapaho and Gros Ventre. Quite recently Dr. Barrett described the Central Algonkin form of the grass dance, the "dream dance," and sought to connect it with the ghost dance. It is however, due to the work of Mr. Murie (630), that we get sight of the common elements in all these ceremonies.

In the first place we have historical data that the grass dance, peyote, and hand game ceremonies took on their most modern forms during the decades preceding and following the ghost dance troubles. With these should be grouped various ghost dance rituals and the crow-water ceremonies of the Blackfoot. The ghost dance itself first appeared in Nevada and thence found its way to the Arapaho and Cheyenne. Once introduced into Oklahoma, knowledge of it spread rapidly, the unnatural proximity of the several tribes offering the most favorable conditions for diffusion. It is also here that the present ghost dance religion is the most virile.

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<sup>1</sup> Mooney, (a).





At present our best concrete data are from the Pawnee who among their several divisions support a number of rituals for each of these modern ceremonies (630). Their origins are all similar; an individual begins to make revelations of visions respecting some one of these ceremonies and by accumulation forms a ritual with songs. The songs usually possess some individuality but the ceremonial procedures generally take forms already developed. At the opportune time the originator of this new ritual gathers in supporters and begins to demonstrate. Among other tribes whence we have data the conditions are similar. Recently the familiar stick game ceremonies reached the Blackfoot and here again the individual got his sanctions from dreams, but the objective procedure is of the usual form. In short, the intense suggestive character of the early ghost dance ceremonies seems to have stimulated dreams and visions from which came certain definite ceremonial forms.

It is important to note that a number of old ceremonies were revived in new forms and associations. As is well known, among the fundamental concepts in the ghost dance are the destruction of the present social status and the return of the old prehistoric régime with the resurrection of the dead. As a rule the prophets see Jesus in their visions and often receive commands from him. At the present time unmistakable biblical elements appear. As now practised by the Pawnee the ghost dance teaches Christian ideals and even uses the pictures of Jesus at the altar. The same is true of peyote, in one form of which water and food are passed in precisely the same manner as wine and bread in the sacrament. Dr. Radin has noted this presence of Christian elements in the Winnebago peyote and the writer observed them among the Dakota. In the grass dance ceremonies such concepts are less developed but traces of them do appear. The Blackfoot crow-water usually held its meetings on Sunday and at times offered prayers to God. It seems then that a good case is made out for the intrusion into Indian culture of certain religious ideas of European peoples.

Another important consideration is that this outburst of religious activity in 1890 came in a period of a great economic readjustment. The buffalo went out by 1880 and the Indians were closely confined, supported by rations and urged to become agriculturists. In many cases these unfortunate people set doggedly at their difficult task, presenting one of the most pathetic spectacles of modern times. With this new life their social ideals and machinery were decidedly out of joint. According to the testimony of one who came to manhood during this period, many young men were so overwhelmed by the vacuity of the new life that they took to suicide or other less direct ways of throwing their lives away. In our opinion this status afforded unusual conditions for the assimilation and diffusion of new traits, and the

somewhat abnormal character of the stimulus should be recognized in all theoretical discussions based upon this phenomenon.

Nevertheless, we do have bona fide examples of diffusion and, what is more, cases in which we can make direct application of the historical method. All that was introduced into Indian culture were the few conceptions of the ghost dance but that these concepts were the principal factors may be doubted. The economic and social conditions we have just enumerated seem the important factors, else why should there have been so many other new ceremonies springing into life? The important point for us is that there was a strong stimulus to the diffusion and modernization of ceremonies at the time the grass dance was in full swing and it was this that carried it along to its present development.

To return to our subject, it appears that one great impetus to the diffusion of the grass dance is to be found in the conditions forming the ghost dance and collateral movements. There is, however, an important accidental factor, generally acknowledged by the Indians themselves for to this modern revival of the grass dance the Dakota contributed some splendid songs and important social features. These songs make a strong appeal to Plains Indians and are said to have great individuality. They appeal particularly to young people and as we have noted, the great enthusiasm for new ceremonies came at the time when there were few outlets for the interests of young men.<sup>1</sup> It was these songs and social features that seem to have appealed to the Pawnee (624) and led to their borrowing from abroad a derivation of an older ceremony of their own. In like manner, the Iowa (720) later borrowed the dreamers' dance, as also did the Kansa (758). The Hidatsa and Mandan still held on to their old hot dance, but borrowed the grass dance from the Dakota. Thus, we have followed the devious path of diffusion back and forth over the Plains Area. We doubt if any ceremony presents so fine an opportunity for the discovery of the mechanism by which a ceremonial trait is produced and diffused. We have but touched upon a few points and, what is still more important, there is opportunity for more thorough investigation. Many field-workers are

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that in this, as in many other Plains ceremonies, the songs are the all important parts. Hence, it should follow that the Dakota would be the chief teachers. Our field notes show that even where the ceremony was introduced by an intermediary the tendency was sooner or later to go to the nearest division of the Dakota for further song instruction. Often in response to an invitation a Dakota delegation would arrive to assist in conducting the singing and dancing. That even the Ojibway dream dance enthusiasts recognized the leadership of the Dakota is clear from Miss Densmore's notes (Vol. 2, p. 173) where we find the songs and detailed procedures of the Dakota ceremony, said to have come directly from that tribe. Unfortunately, no comparative studies of these songs have been made, but the suggestion is that here is one of the most important research leads we have so far developed.

prejudiced against these modern ceremonies to such an extent that they do not gather data on them at all, but we hope this discussion will show the folly of such an attitude.

We have also the suggestion that the ghost dance itself was but one incident in a diffusion flux of which the *iruska* complex is the best index, because the most extended. The historic prominence of the ghost dance is due to the Dakota, whose strong reaction has so occupied our attention as to obscure the whole setting of the phenomenon. This sudden lifting of the ghost dance cult into view about 1890 is but the culmination of a general flux of trait-complexes, but it is still the same group, the Dakota, that gives it the stamp of individuality. The chart for the *iruska* trait-complex shows the leading part this group played in the diffusion of the grass dance and here again we see the touch of their native genius. The indications are that they also projected the ancient *heyoka* into this whirlpool of diffusion and when it came around to them again were able to send it forth with a new impetus.

#### CONCLUSION.

Aside from exposing the mechanism of a concrete case of culture trait diffusion, we have sought evidence for an historical understanding of these ceremonies. For one thing we have found historical connections between certain shamanistic practices and certain modern ceremonies and have made very probable certain chronological relations. Thus we have as fundamental to the present phenomena an old shamanistic organization among the Caddoan and Siouan tribes. From our analysis it seems fair to assume that preceding this was a highly organized series of animal mentor shamans among the Pawnee and, on the other hand, a very spectacular shamanistic trick with fire and a boiling kettle among the Dakota. These two traits fused among the Skidi and Teton divisions. Contemporaneously among the Omaha, Iowa, or Osage it was customary to designate certain military ranks by the headdress of roached deer hair and the crow-belt, which by accidental association came to be considered a part of the regalia for the shamanistic organization. Thus it appears that the Omaha and Osage in particular contributed some of the spectacular features to the Pawnee-Dakota ceremony and in this new form gave it back to the Dakota as a new organization. In the meantime, the Arikara, as a part of the Caddoan group, carried the older form of the ceremony to the Mandan and Hidatsa whence the name, if not the substance, reached the Crow. By the composition of some remarkable songs the Teton-Dakota gave the Omaha variant a new impetus and passed it back again to the Pawnee,

Omaha, and other tribes. The Omaha in the first instance did not take over the kettle and fire tricks but a somewhat empty procedure with a kettle; thus they passed over to the Teton a form which differentiated the ceremony from the older form and which with certain Dakota modifications enabled the Omaha, Pawnee, Hidatsa, etc., to take it back later without confusing it with the parent organization. Next in time came the impetus that led to the ghost dance and various revivals of old ceremonies. Under this influence the grass dance spread rapidly and the distinct form of the Potawatomi dreamer's dance came as a Central Algonkin contribution to the complex. The process of diffusion and transition is still in full swing and deserves close observation.

A retrospect of the history of this trait-complex shows that some tribes received it three times in as many different forms and in several instances maintained two of them simultaneously. That many individuals were conscious of the historic connections between them is clear from the statements of various informants. For the sake of clearness we have reduced our historical data to diagrammatic form. (See p. 876.)

At the outset we found that irrespective of chronology the different forms of the ceremony correlated in a remarkable way with the culture grouping of the constituent tribes. Our subsequent analysis of its diffusion has in the main not obscured this correlation. First, we have the gross fact that in the main, the ceremony is confined to the Plains Area. Almost every tribe took it. It is true that it has found its way over the border into the fringes of two areas in very recent years, but its failure to go farther is not due to lack of time for the older form of the ceremony followed about the same path. Why, for example, did the fire trick complex stick to the Upper Missouri-Mississippi Basin? It is quite probable that its distribution was governed by the flora, since a plant preparation was necessary to the trick. On this point, nothing definite can be stated until the identity of the plant has been established. Yet, this could not apply to the modern form of the ceremony from which the fire trick is absent. It must be admitted, therefore, that whatever the cause, we have here the work of the same factors that produce the familiar culture area phenomenon. And, as we have previously noted, the most diverse variants of the modern ceremony are found in the west among the Shoshone and in the east among the Central Algonkin intermediate group. Again, how comes it that the Central Algonkin variant, originated by a Potawatomi, is so far removed as to be almost unrecognizable? If a mere coincidence, it is truly remarkable. It is far more likely that we have here a concrete example of what may be expected, if a trait wanders over into a culture where its pattern is a true misfit.



Students of the functions of the individual within a culture group will find here some suggestive data. The Potawatomi dream dance we know to be the creation of a single individual and the highly original Dakota songs in the grass dance must have been the work of a single composer. We may also infer that the *iruska* was likewise conceived by a single Pawnee shaman, as the origin myth asserts. Hence, this whole series of ceremonies from the ancient *heyoka* to the latest social dance is little more than the successive work of four or five highly original minds.

## WAR PARTIES.

In addition to the preceding we have accumulated important data on the organization of war parties and their ceremonial accompaniments. We shall not attempt an exhaustive study of this trait-complex for the Plains Area but discuss such points as have a bearing upon our main problem. There is a large amount of literature upon Indian warfare but so far as we have examined, it is weak on the concrete data we need for an understanding of the relation between war customs and *akicita* activities. We are not now concerned so much with the manner of fighting an enemy as with the preliminaries to setting out on an expedition. In this and particularly in respect to the ceremonial procedures, the available literature is rather deficient.

As a beginning we may note that there is an almost universal association between a ceremonial wolf concept and a war party. It is not only that the wolf is simulated by scouts and wolf songs are sung by warriors, but there is back of it all a definite concept of a supernatural wolf, or wolf power that presides over the affairs of war. This is very prominent among the Pawnee (595), by whom a wolfskin was carried along and used in a wolf ritual. Also we find among the Oglala a dog (?) society with an unmistakable wolf ritual (52) and the definite use of the wolf in the general warpath ritual (58) while something of the kind is found among the Crow, Ponca, Sauk and Fox, Menomini, and Ojibway. In Volume 7, 267, we have discussed the wolf songs and for additional data see pp. 596 and 686.

Among the general features of the war trait-complex is the use of a war bundle. With the Central Algonkin <sup>1</sup> we have specific bundles for this, but as we have noted in this volume the Pawnee took particular objects from

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<sup>1</sup> Skinner, (a), 91, 96, 129.

bundles having general functions. It is not clear but the Iowa (686) may have done likewise, and the Ponca (797) Osage, Omaha, Oto, and Kansa (747) had war bundles. Among the Blackfoot there were certain bundles whose chief function was war. The use of individual war charms, or small bundles was highly developed among the Blackfoot (Vol. 7, 91 to 106, 268), the Gros Ventre, and the Plains-Ojibway (493).<sup>1</sup>

The significance of these differences cannot be profitably discussed until we have more data upon the medicine bundles of the area as a whole. It is clear, however, that the wolf concept deserves exhaustive study similar to the preceding section of this chapter. As the case now stands the Pawnee are the probable center of its development since it is among them that we find a fundamental mythological basis for the association between the wolf and warfare; yet, more data are necessary to establish the probability of this assumption.

### THE AKICITA OR POLICE.

We now pass to a subject directly bearing upon our main problem. Among the Central Algonkin (499) and many of the Plains tribes we find an institution having a similar name, *akicita*. Thus in the preceding papers we find the Dakota, *akicita*, Plains-Ojibway, *okitcita*, Plains-Cree, *okitcitanu*, Iowa, *waiakida*, Kansa, *akida*, Crow, *aki'sat'e*.

While it is true that the Ponca and Pawnee have different names for this institution, the identity in name we find here among languages of two different stocks is truly remarkable. This is certain evidence of a single origin. As to which language the word belongs we leave to the linguists.

As a preliminary we refer the reader to the paper on the Plains-Ojibway (482-499), and the Plains-Cree (518-528). Here the name applies to a group of men as the "strong-hearted" (482) who acquire their title after the performance of certain specific deeds of valor. Among the Plains-Ojibway they constituted the governing body of the tribe and had the symptoms of a society in that they had a special tipi of their own (487), they also had special songs and dances as well as ceremonial procedures. One is somewhat at a loss to distinguish between these *okitcita* and any one of the leading societies of the Oglala or Pawnee. The great difference is that there are no duplicates among the Plains-Ojibway and Cree; were there such duplicates, we should probably class them as societies analagous to those of other tribes.

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<sup>1</sup> In this connection see Vol. 4, 93-95, for reference to Keating.

When we look at the functions of these okitcita we find them to be police in all respects, but they had certain specialized duties, as managing the buffalo hunt and leading in battle. In either case they were the officers. These tribes followed two forms of hunting, a mass, or organized tribal hunt in summer by the surround method, and impounding in winter (See Vol. 5, 33-38). The important point here is that the akicita had charge of the summer hunt, but not of the winter one. In the latter a shaman, or pound maker, had charge and selected his own assistants. So it was only when the bands came together in the spring that the okitcita tipi was set up. This reminds one of the tiyotipi of the Dakota (135). In fact when we find a camp circle organization, we note an akicita tipi. Our akicita societies get their name from the fact that some one of them may be called upon to temporarily occupy this tipi and perform the functions connected therewith. If one but glances over the paragraphs on the akicita or police in this volume, it will become clear that the performing of police duties by a society is an accidental association and that such a factor can scarcely be considered as contributory to the formation of a tribal system of societies. It does not follow though, that the akicita of the Algonkin tribes could not have set the patterns for many of the societies in our lists.

The Plains-Ojibway okitcita are important factors in war. This naturally follows since their regalia qualifications are acquired in battle. We note that such as have attained a certain rank (487) carry feathered lances and eagle bone whistles.<sup>1</sup> Further, when going into battle they planted their lances in the earth and stood fast. All this is in keeping with their military functions as leaders, but we have here independent of a society system, two widely diffused concepts, the bearing of lances and the no-flight obligation.

From the footnote on page 488 it may be inferred that the system we have just outlined prevailed among the Ojibway and Cree. If we turn to the Dakota we find certain close similarities in the organization of a war party, but there is no definite body of men identical with the okitcita since their term akicita applies to an appointed police officer and only while he is serving in that capacity (67). Yet the bearing of lances is a prominent feature of akicita societies everywhere and is occasionally associated with the no-flight obligation. The significant point is that among the Oglala the lance-bearing societies exist alongside of a lance-bearing war party organization. When we turn to the Pawnee we find lances only as emblems of societies. They occur in pairs so as to give each division one. In battle,

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<sup>1</sup> In the Dakota collection there is a staff with alternate peeled sections. It was owned by Blue-horse and each section represents one of his deeds. Such staffs were used to record the deeds of okitcita among the Plains-Ojibway (485).

they carry the no-flight obligation. They are not a feature of the Pawnee war party and were not carried on the warpath, but used when the whole body was in action. We have now located three points in a very suggestive geographical distribution of these traits. In the north we have a system of military ranking by which a class of "braves" is created automatically and among them accredited lance bearers; in the south a system of official societies each having as its chief interest a pair of similar lances; and half way between, a dual system in which there are lance societies and also distinct war party lances. Hence, our problem is to account for this mixed condition at the center. Since the full discussion of this will take us into an analytic study of the societies we shall pass it on to the next paper in the series. Our chief result is the demonstration of a widely distributed system of policing the summer buffalo hunt and the more or less close association between this function and the control of war parties. We also have the suggestion of relations between this police system and organized societies, especially in the lance-bearing concept.