

east and west. I have been all those ways. This is the center. I live here. The red spot is my heart—everybody can see it. The yellow grass grows everywhere around this place. The green mountains are far away all around the world. There is only water beyond, salt water. The blue [referring to the blue cloth strip] is the sky, and the star is the north star. That star never changes; it is always in the same place. I keep my heart on that star. I never change."

There are frequent services, a sort of processional around the outside of the fence, the prophet and a small boy with a bell entering the inclosure, where, after hoisting the flag, he delivers a sort of sermon. Captains or class leaders give instructions to the people, who are arranged according to stature, the men and women in different classes marching in single file to the sound of drums. There seems to be a regular system of signals, at command of the prophet, by the boy with the bell, upon which the people chant loud or low, quick or slow, or remain silent. These outdoor services occurred several times each day.

Smohalla invited me to participate in what he considered a grand ceremonial service within the larger house. This house was built with a framework of stout logs placed upright in the ground and roofed over with brush, or with canvas in rainy

weather. The sides consisted of bark and rush matting. It was about 75 feet long by 25 feet wide. Singing and drumming had been going on for some time when I arrived. The air resounded with the voices of hundreds of Indians, male and female, and the banging of drums. Within, the room was dimly lighted. Smoke curled from a fire on the floor at the farther end and pervaded the atmosphere. The ceiling was hung with hundreds of salmon, split and drying in the smoke.

The scene was a strange one. On either side of the room was a row of twelve women standing erect with arms crossed and hands extended, with finger tips at the shoulders. They kept time to the drums and their voices by balancing on the balls of their feet and tapping with their heels on the floor, while they chanted with varying pitch and

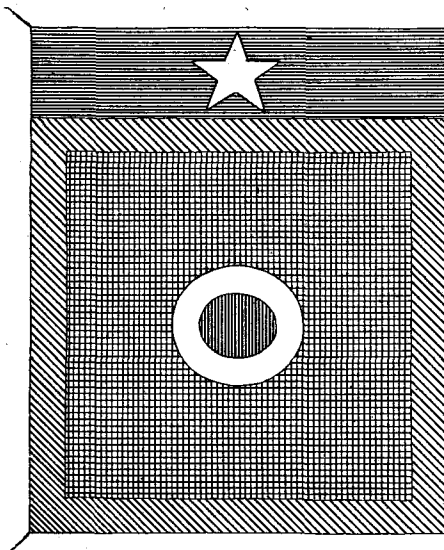


FIG. 64—Smohalla's flag (heraldic).

time. The excitement and persistent repetition wore them out, and I heard that others than Smohalla had seen visions in their trances, but I saw none who would admit it or explain anything of it. I fancied they feared their own action, and that real death might come to them in this simulated death.

Those on the right hand were dressed in garments of a red color with an attempt at uniformity. Those on the left wore costumes of white buckskin, said to be very ancient ceremonial costumes, with red and blue trimmings. All wore large round silver plates or such other glittering ornaments as they possessed. A canvas covered the floor and on it knelt the men and boys in lines of seven. Each seven, as a rule, had shirts of the same color. The tallest were in front, the size diminishing regularly to the rear. Children and ancient hags filled in any spare space. In front on a mattress knelt Smohalla, his left hand covering his heart. On his right was the boy bell ringer in similar posture. Smohalla wore a white garment which he was pleased to call a priest's gown, but it was simply a white cloth shirt with a colored stripe down the back.