Friday, July 11. Mid-morning, cutting of sod for altar by priests, assistants and a few dancers. At sunset, bringing in of the Sacred Pipe into Sun Dance lodge.

Saturday, July 12. Several specials during afternoon by families of dancers.

Sunday, July 13. More specials by families of dancers in afternoon. Just before sunset Sacred Pipe carried out of Sun Dance lodge back to Pipe Keeper's tipi. Quitting song and final dance at sunset. Four victory songs. Dancers break fast with taste of sacred drink made from choke cherries. Spectators and families have taste, too. Feast given by grandfathers for dancers and their families.

The Cutting of Sod for the Altar

On Friday morning, the morning after the dancers had come into the lodge, a small number of men came out of the Sun Dance lodge and proceeded single file to a spot some distance west of the lodge, almost at the western edge of the camps. Among these men were Adam Shakespeare, the Pipe Keeper, and Bennie Goggles, one of the ceremonial leaders. Several dancers were present. They wore their white paint, moccasins, and had their quilts wrapped closely about them. They sat down on the ground where the sod was being cut. People stayed a respectful distance away from them. I could see pipes being smoked. A hand ax was used to cut the sod. After a time they got up and proceeded back to the Sun Dance lodge, single file. George Dorsey, in his description of the 1902 and 1903 Sun Dances held in Oklahoma, says two pieces of sod are obtained. These sods are essential components of the altar which is completed after they are brought back into the lodge. According to Dorsey, they are trimmed and certain kind of plants stuck in them and are placed on the ground flanking the painted buffalo skull in the shallow trench. Cutting of the sods is attended with considerable ceremony, of which I could see almost nothing from where I watched. They are carried back to the lodge in a blanket.