

*Indian Institute
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T-275

DESCRIPTION OF PEYOTE MEETING HELD AT HOME OF JOHN PEDRO, ARAPAHO, JUNE 14, 1968, BASED ON TAPES MADE OF THE MEETING BY JULIA A. JORDAN.

NOTE: Almost the entire peyote meeting is recorded on Tapes 275 and 276. The music along has been copied, in order, and is on Tapes T-277 and T-278. The following is a description of the meeting and includes partial transcriptions of the verbal portions of the meeting. J. Jordan

Background

I was invited to a peyote meeting at the home of John Pedro, Arapaho, five miles north and three miles west of Calumet, Oklahoma. John asked me to come and bring my tape recorder. I decided to go on the possibility that I might be able to record the whole meeting. I purchased 5-inch reel tapes of extra length (1800') which would go for three hours on one side at the slow (1-7/8 ips) speed on my battery-operated Sony recorder. I got alkaline energized batteries which have much longer life than the regular batteries, hoping they would permit up to twelve hours of continuous recording. I was thinking the meeting might go from 9:00 p.m. the night of June 14 to about 9:00 a.m. the morning of June 15, and I wanted to be prepared for the entire session. As it turned out, the meeting was somewhat shorter. We went into the tipi about 10:00 p.m. June 14 and came out about 7:30 or 8:00 a.m. June 15. I place the recorder and the extra tapes in a canvas sack so they would not be too conspicuous. I had anticipated dissatisfaction from the participants if they knew I had a recorder, and perhaps even some overt hostility, despite the fact that John had told me to bring it. At least I didn't want it to be out in plain sight. I planned to set the microphone down by my side and set the controls to automatic record level so I would not have to be adjusting the recorder any more than absolutely necessary.

As it turned out, the plan in general worked very well, but somehow the switch, which had been placed on "automatic record level" had gotten pushed back into the "manual record" position, possibly in the jostling around of the recorder, etc. in the canvas sack. I did not have an opportunity to check on this early in the meeting, and as a result, the first hour and a half of the first tape is almost inaudible since the recording level was not high enough to get anything. I realize now I could have checked this detail and gotten the entire meeting recorded, but at the time I was nervous and apprehensive--I did not know many of the participants--and as I was almost sure everything was positioned correctly, I did not examine the machine until the meeting was well underway. Then I noticed the switch in the "manual" position and immediately changed it to "automatic" and from then on got most of the rest of the meeting.

The quality of these tapes is, I think, satisfactory, though of course some portions are much finer than others. In a situation of this kind it is impossible to give a great deal of attention to the mechanics of recording, and certainly impossible to have the microphone positioned at the ideal distance from every person who is singing, talking, praying, or making comments. I even felt it would be a breach of etiquette to place the microphone in front of me so I kept it by my side where it was more or less hidden from view of most of the people present. I think by the end of the first two hours everyone there knew I had the recorder there, but often they forgot or ignored it. On these tapes, therefore, some conversation is fairly clear and plain, and some is low and difficult to understand. Some of the participants spoke clearly and with some volume--others did not. Often people in