

Price

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October 28, 1949

Mr. Gene Price
The Beacon
Ohio Oil Company
Findlay, Ohio

Dear Gene Price:

I was very happy to get your good letters and the fine photographs of the Shoshone Sun Dance.

I think you will find that each tribe has its own story of how the sun dance originated. Carl Sweezy, the old Arapaho Indian artist, called on me this week and gave me the Arapaho account. I believe there are some books published on the diffusion of traditions on the Plains and the spread of the sun dance. Judging from the many rituals of the Sioux I suspect they developed it first. It is obviously a ceremony built up after the Indians reached the Plains and found themselves faced by a new way of life. I wish I could give you the titles of these books. They are published, I think, by the Field Museum, Chicago; The American Museum of Natural History in New York; Bureau of American Ethnology in Washington; Peabody Museum in Boston or Cambridge, Massachusetts, etc. Your account is most interesting.

I do hope you will send me a copy of the Beacon when your story appears. I should treasure it.

One point: I am astonished that the Indians have carried off the walls and rafters of the sacred pole of which you sent me a photograph. Perhaps the magic is only in the center pole according to their view. The Arapaho and Cheyenne would never go near a dance lodge after the dance was over. That was holy ground. That is to say, all the objects used in the dance were charged with divine power. I know of one sun dance where an ancientist was given permission to carry these sacred objects away in his car. He offered a lift to the medicine man and his wife. They refused even to sit in the seat where these sacred objects had lain. They were as much afraid of them as if they had been live wires.

Cordially yours,

W. S. CAMPBELL

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