

rafter-poles looked like very long, slender pine trees. They looked to me to be somewhat longer and more slender than the average telephone pole, and larger and longer than tipi poles. The large ends were positioned on the left side of each upright post fork, resting on the stringers (horizontal poles connecting the wall uprights). A few of them had some small branches and tufts of greenery at their upper ends.

Each rafter-pole was lifted into place by several men. First the small end was raised and the pole was leaned against a stringer pole, close to an upright. Then the poles were shoved forward and the small ends angled toward the fork of the center post. A set of lifting poles operated by a team of two men was used to further elevate the small ends of the rafter poles and advance them through the center post fork. The four rafter poles at each cardinal direction were decorated with handkerchiefs, silk scarfs, and strips of brightly colored cloth tied to them. These decorated poles were all hoisted into place before the undecorated rafters were added. The rafter-pole on the east side was the first to be set on, and then the ones on the south, west, and north were added in that order. As soon as the small end of each rafter had been guided through the center post fork, the base of the rafter was lashed into position where it rested on a stringer next to the fork of an upright. A lightly-built young man climbed up astraddle of each stringer and tied each rafter in place as it was added. Then the undecorated rafters were added, one by one. When all were set, there were sixteen rafters extending from the sixteen upright wall posts to the center of the Sun Dance lodge where their ends interlocked through the center post fork. Thus in position the rafters formed the roof of the Sun Dance lodge, a roof which was mostly open to the sky. There was a slight pitch to the roof due to the fact that the center post was somewhat higher than the surrounding uprights. This pitched roofs, with the ends of the rafter-poles extending some distance beyond their point of intersection at the center post, gave to the completed lodge its characteristic silhouette when viewed from a distance.