

who could participate. If the boy or man refused to take part for some reason, he or his family had to give a gift to refuse the honor bestowed upon them by the leader of the Sun Dance. The gift was a new blanket, horse or a beef given to the camp. Well, the preparation has been completed for the first day.

Early the next morning the town crier awakens the camp by telling everybody to get up as they are going to run for the tree. People come out at dawn rubbing their eyes and looking toward the Sun Dance Lodge. All the men who are to dance are all lined up. A chief, White Eagle, was talking to the men who were going to run for the sacred pole which is now ready. Old man White Eagle is telling the man from his horse that he is going to give four whoops and on the fourth whoop they must run with all their strength, never to look back, use all your powers, if you have any, think about the swiftness of hawks, eagles, deer, mountain lion, bear or anything that can help you. I call you all warriors because you are running to the foe. Look to the man who is pointing to the sacred tree, when he drops the blanket after I holler the fourth time. The men are like fast horses, ready and quivering. The last whoop and they are off. As the runners run over the slain sacred tree the judge calls out the winner's name, calls the man who came in second, third and fourth. These men have the honor of standing in their respective order as they came in the race. Any man who falls in this race must not get up until the leaders who have been running behind the runners come and take a piece of his flesh with an awl stuck through his arm and clipped off. Then he can get up and join the other runners in the rear. The sacred tree is taken to the sun dance lodge. The men stop four times before getting to the sun dance lodge, each time the pole is put down. A great applause and cheering is set up by both man and woman. When the pole is set up the dancers all go to their leaders sacred lodge. Ornaments are set up like sage weed placed to the four winds or directions, a painted buffalo skull is placed on these sages to remind the people that we will all go back to skull and eventually dust. Here is something for all to respect. Our Ponca peace pipe is placed in all its glory on top and leaning on the buffalo skull, with a bowl filled with tobacco. Bowl