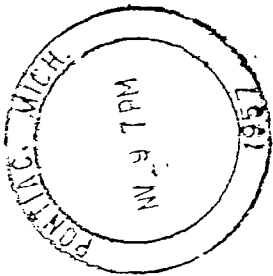


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IN
THIS ISSUE

THE STRAIGHT DANCER



C. Fells ^{Illustrations}

COSTUME OF THE OKLAHOMA STRAIGHT DANCER

As mentioned in the editorial of this issue, many of the details connected with the costume of the Oklahoma Straight dancer are not clear to the editor and so this article will have to be considered as a preliminary report. We hope to be able to give a more complete report in the near future.

The information presented in this issue was gathered primarily from three sources, thru the research of Glenn White (W), Issy Umscheid (U), and the editor (E). The letters in parenthesis will be used thruout the text to indicate the source where conflicts occur. Each of the three authors obtained their information from a number of Indian informants too numerous to mention here.

It should be well to point out from the start that several of the Indians consulted by the editor warned against using certain items of costume because of their religious nature. The use of some of these items, notably the white headband, they stated would be a form of sacrilege. Other informants, however, denied this or any religious significance. Mr. White in a letter to the editor following a request for information regarding religious items had this to say; "I wanted to be absolutely sure about several things so I asked several other persons here who are also familiar with straight dancers. One of them, an Osage originally from Henizy, Oklahoma, has been a straight dancer for many years and I value his opinions very highly on this subject.

It seems to me that the persons you consulted in your area know just about what they are talking about. The questions you asked are certainly some of the finer points to the costume. All the information I can give you deals with the costume as worn by the Oklahoma straight dancers as I have had no experience with the other tribes.

You mentioned that local Indians had advised you to stay away entirely from the idea because of the deep religious nature of the clothes. As far as publishing the article, I think it is something you must decide yourself, although you must be extremely careful to avoid wholesale criticism by Indians. I can well understand their view because much of the costume does have special significance which non-Indians tend to regard too lightly. Many of the seemingly minor parts of the costume have been given to the dancers and are recognized by such as personal honors. These things you can not make yourself. They must be given to you. I imagine that thousands of boys have access to your fine magazine in one way or another. Is it right that they should be given the information on how to make such articles? I sincerely hope you do not think that I am trying to tell you what to publish because I am not. I am more than glad to help you as much as I can but I also am uncertain as you how much detail you should include. May I offer the following as a suggestion: write the article to describe the clothes as they would be worn by a non-Peyote Indian. You would still have a complete costume and plenty of material to work with. Under this arrangement you would have to exclude the "Love Charms", and white kerchief." (W)

On the other hand, Mr. Umscheid in summing up his contribution to this article states; "As far as I know no religious significance now what so ever. Wear anything you want - - - dictated mostly by personal taste." (U) This the editor does not agree with.

The editor decided after weighing all the information at hand to present the article in as complete a form as possible, however, being careful to state very definitely those items which should be avoided because of their religious or other import. We trust the reader wanting to construct his own straight dance outfit will have enough consideration and respect to avoid these items.

It should also be worth mentioning that although the costume is fairly well standardized thruout most of Oklahoma, certain minor variations do occur. This is often due to substitution because of the lack of certain costume materials, or to individual likes and dislikes. It is also well to bear in mind that the costume has undergone constant change in the past and is still in the process of changing, certain items however, have become standard and should be copied. One other word of caution in regard to the straight dance costume is the Indian, generally removed from Oklahoma, who for some reason or other attempts to develop a straight dance costume without understanding all the details involved. We have seen non-Peyote Indians right here in Los Angeles wearing the white headband simply because he had seen other Indians wearing them and without any realization of its significance.

Straight dancing is the name now given to the old original style of war dancing. It does not indicate a straight position of the body as many people are prone to believe, but rather just plain good old style dancing without any of the modern fancy movements so common today.

To quote from the souvenir program booklet of the Pawnee Indian Homecoming pow-wow for 1956; "In war dancing there are two kinds of dancers—the straight dancer and the fancy dancer. The straight dancer is the original war dancer. There is dignity and poise in straight war dancing. Fancy dancing, as war dancing goes, is quite new. Great dexterity, speed and rhythm make this a special art."

Straight dancing is almost becoming a thing of the past, for in Oklahoma where there are always several straight dancers at any pow-wow very few pow-wows include a contest for the straight dancers. In Sheridan at their pow-wow this year a special straight dance contest was held although it was quite evident that most of the dancers who entered did not realize that this was an old style dance contest and introduced a lot of fancy footwork. Needless to say they did not win with their fancy dancing, but the master of ceremonies had to remind the dancers several times that this was a straight and not a fancy dance contest.

The article in this issue deals with the straight dance costume of the Oklahoma Indians and no other groups. This includes the Osage, Pawnee, Oto-Missouri, Ponca, Kaw, as well as some of the Petawatomi, Kickapoo, Shawnee and Sauk. Occasionally members of other tribes will use the same style of costume also, especially if they are able to obtain one.

Excellent demonstrations of straight dancing can be observed annually at Pawnee (if they start to resume their pow-wows, they did not hold one this year), Pawhuska, Kominy and Anadarko. Straight dancing utilizes a basic toe-heel type step in a basic erect position and with little variation if any. At certain phrases in the song the dancer bends over and to one side for several beats and then resumes his erect position. The dancers appear dignified but not stiff.

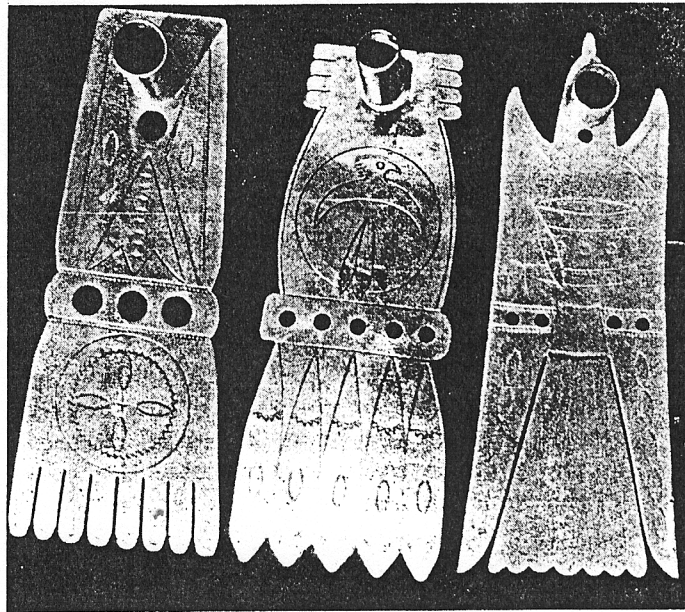
COSTUME

A description of the costume will follow starting from the top and working down. HEADRESS: Almost without exception, the hair roach is the universal headpiece among the straight dancers. A few of the chiefs wear war bennets or fur turbans, but they are by far the minority. Any fine hair roach will be suitable. Most dancers prefer the large deer tail and porcupine roaches such as are worn by the Sioux, Cheyenne etc. When porky roaches are used there seems to be no preference as to color, dancers just use whatever is available. The Osage however, seem to prefer the old style roach of jet black turkey beards and bright red deer hair. These are always much smaller than the porcupine roaches, but are preferred when available.

Only one feather is used in the roach as opposed to the two generally found in the North. This is generally a black and white eagle feather attached to a swivel base so that it can pivot around during the dance. This feather is almost always left in its natural state, but occasionally a feather can be seen with some porcupine quill ornament on the shaft. Do not use tip plumes on your roach feather.

The photo at right shows three exceptionally fine roach spreaders from Oklahoma. The one on the left belongs to Kieth Gilbert the other two are the editors. All are made of German silver with stamped designs. All three also show markings of the Peyote cult and as such could only be used by Peyote members. For a complete account of Peyote silver see the Material Culture Note #17 of the Denver Art Museum. A silver spreader is not necessary for your straight dance outfit, any spreader will do, likewise the three spreaders in the photo could be used by a Peyote fancy dancer as well.

German Silver contains no true silver but is an alloy of nickel and copper.



Still another item worn along with the roach are the "Scalp Feathers". These are generally tied to one of the roach strings in such a way that they dangle over the forehead. See the several photos and illustrations for examples of this. Feathers of this type seem to be popular with many tribes from other areas as well as Oklahoma but they are an essential part of the straight dance costume.

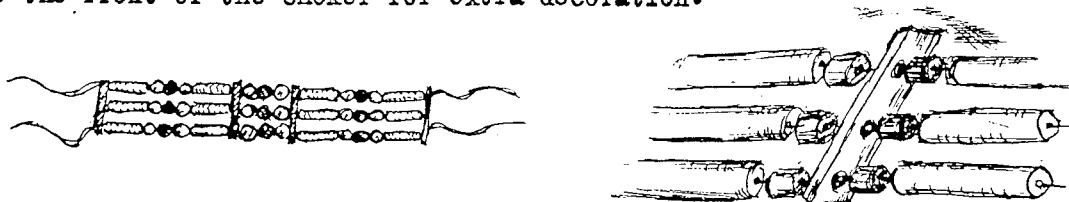
Mr. White says; "These can hang down on either side of the face. Can be made of any stiff cut-down feather. Most used are eagle, hawk, pheasant although this is not the limit. The feathers signify your family or clan ties. These are made by someone outside your immediate family and presented to you as an honor. The decoration is left up to the maker although he will know what type of feather and what color of feather to use according to whom the dancer is. There is no special way to decorate the feathers. It is considered quite an honor to "Earn your feathers"." (W) This information agrees with the editors findings.

Mr. Umscheid adds; "Feathers on the roach are of course a relatively new innovation as compared to feathers tied to the scalp. These feathers tied to the scalp were the original head apparel of the straight dancer. -- Scalp feathers are used as a means of tribal identification. For example: Pawnees wear two feathers, one worn on each side of the forehead. Supposedly this stemmed from the Pawnees ability as excellent thieves, unexcelled in this respect, resembling the sly fox, consequently the scalp feathers as ears like the fox. These feathers are often attached to a beaded rosette which is in turn attached to the scalp. Any type feather seems to be usable for this. -- I have seen eagle, pheasant, scissortail, and eagle major plumes. The quill end of the feather is decorated similar to a bonnet feather, sometimes wrapped with felt, sometimes with beads." (U) Sometimes these feathers are dyed red or some other color. Base and or tip fluffs can be added. If beads are used to wrap the feather bases this is often done by the Peyote bead method. A pink conch shell is sometimes used in place of a beaded rosette at the point of tying. The editor has also seen flicker tail feathers used for this purpose. Sometimes also bead strings are attached to hang down with these "Scalp feathers".

HEADBAND: Mr. Umscheid says; "Old style straight dancers did not wear the head band at all. The headband now used is generally a silk or silk like handkerchief tied in the middle of the forehead with any type of small knot. The adoption of the headband is credited to the use as a sweat band. White seems to be the most popular color (white because it symbolizes purity), but all colors are used. Have seen a beaded band but only on one instance."(U) We agree with Mr. Umscheid except in regards to the white headband. Mr. White supports our own findings and states; "Yes, it probably would be considered sacrilegious to wear the white headband unless you are a Peyote member. Non-members usually wear a beaded headband with rosette or none at all."(W) I can add that I have also only seen one beaded headband and suggest you either use a silk kerchief of any color other than white or none at all. For emphasis I'd like to repeat, do not use a white headband unless you are a Peyote member.

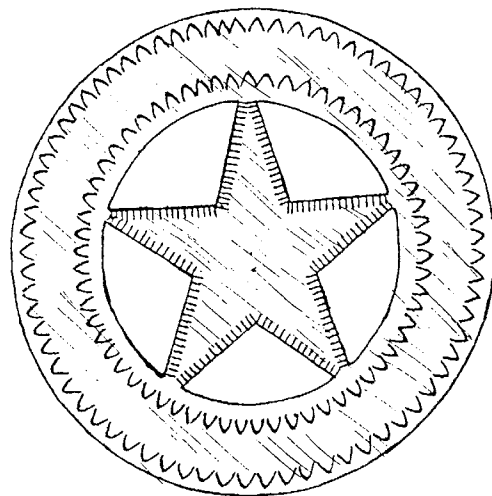
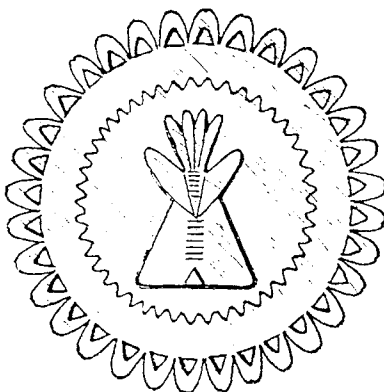
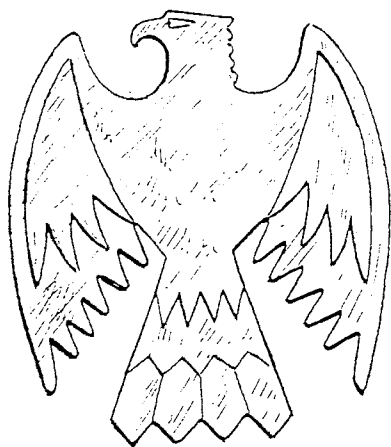
FACE PAINT: None is needed, nor it is too common, however, some straight dancers use a little paint around the eyes. Usually a small line from the edge of the eye out toward the ear, but other patterns are used also. When used it is always red.

CHOKER: "These are not entirely necessary as the neckerchief covers up most of the neck region. However, they are attractive when viewed from the front. They are of two general types; either solidly beaded or a combination of beads and hair pipes."(W) The small necklace hair pipes about one inch long are preferred, either alone or in combination with brass beads. The sketches below by Mr. White illustrate their method of manufacture. Sometimes a large conch shell is added to the front of the choker for extra decoration.



NECKERCHIEF: This is a very essential part of the costume. It is worn exactly as a Boy Scout might wear one and it is about the same size as a scout kerchief. The material is generally the large silk kerchief of the type sold in variety stores. These are imported from Japan and come in a number of solid colors. This same sort of kerchief in a smaller size is used for the headband and the two little charms tied to the back. All colors have been seen on straight dancers. White is common for both Peyote and non-Peyote members, also red, purple, blue, orange, green etc. Some dancers use kerchiefs of silk or satin with floral prints, but this is not as common as the solid colors.

A slide of some type is generally used to hold the neckerchief together. The most common type is of german silver like the three slides illustrated below. However, silver finger rings can be used or beaded cylinders or rosettes, or the kerchief may even be tied in place of using a slide. Never tie the loose ends, but rather leave them dangle. If a choker is worn the slide is worn low to expose the choker. If a choker is not worn then the slide is tied up tight to cover the neck.



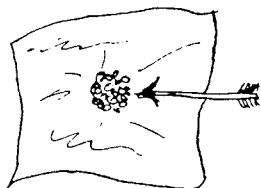
Of the three silver slides illustrated above the middle one is of a type that would be worn only by a Peyote member. The tipi (which in this case is a separate piece of silver soldered in place over the backing) is a definite Peyote symbol. More of this latter. The other two slides could be used with your straight dance outfit. The slide with the star is a very common type and seems to have derived from the old Texas ranger badge. All three are of German silver with the design punched rather than engraved. All three are also in the collection of the editor. I wanted to have photos made of them but could not avoid the glare

of the silver surface. German silver is inexpensive and easy to work so you might like to try your hand at some. Check the Material Culture Notes #17 of the Denver Art Museum on the "Metal Jewelry of the Peyote Cult" for additional information.

NECKLACES: "As you will notice in the photographs, bead strings are worn over one or both shoulders. Make them from large beads, or an assortment of beads and hair pipes. If you can obtain some old brass beads use them. Sashes consist of either two, three or four rows of beads and pipes separated by leather spacers. (Like the chokers) Make the strings long enough to hang approximately 3 inches below the waist line." (W) Generally when two are used one is a combination of beads and hair pipes and the other is of plain brass beads. Peyote members often substitute Mescal beans for the brass beads. (See the discussion of Peyote at the end of this article)

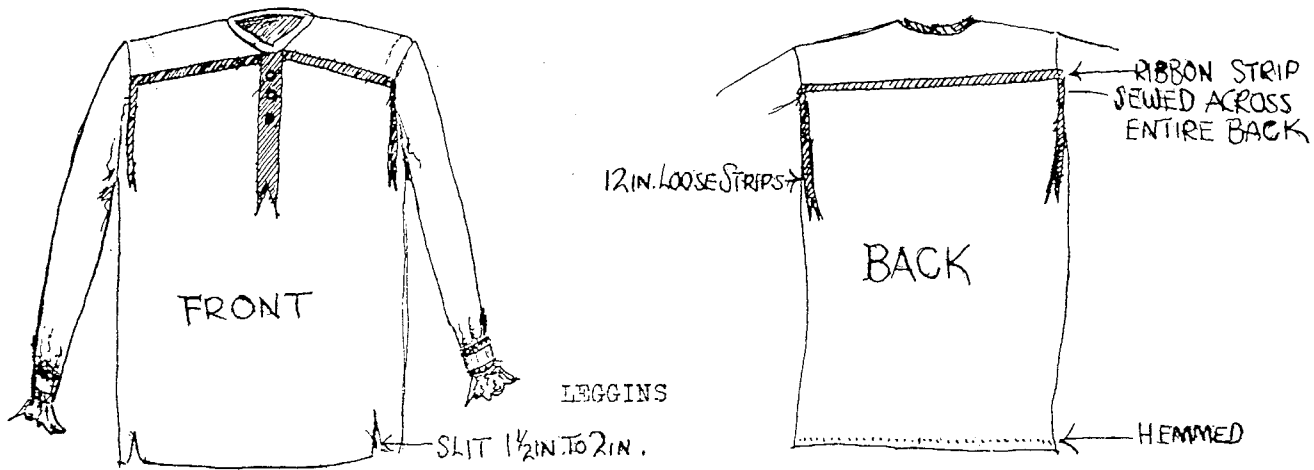
The bead strings can be worn either inside or outside the belt. We suggest you wear them inside as they are rather clumsy when dancing and this helps to hold them in place.

CHARMS: This is another item which is definitely Peyote as far as we can gather. They are made from small silk handkerchiefs of some solid color, filled with Peyote tobacco only, and either tied to the bead strings about 4 or 5" below the shoulder at the back or tied directly to the shirt back of the shoulder blades. Makes no difference if one or two are worn, but if two they should both be the same color.



Here again is an item we suggest you do not wear with your straight dance costume as it is a Peyote emblem and of a religious nature. It may however, be permissible if you do not use tobacco in your charms. Mr. Umscheid did not agree with the Peyote significance to these charms. He stated that they were filled with a sweet plant for use as a deodorant. One of my informants stated the same thing, but the weight of evidence points to a Peyote significance.

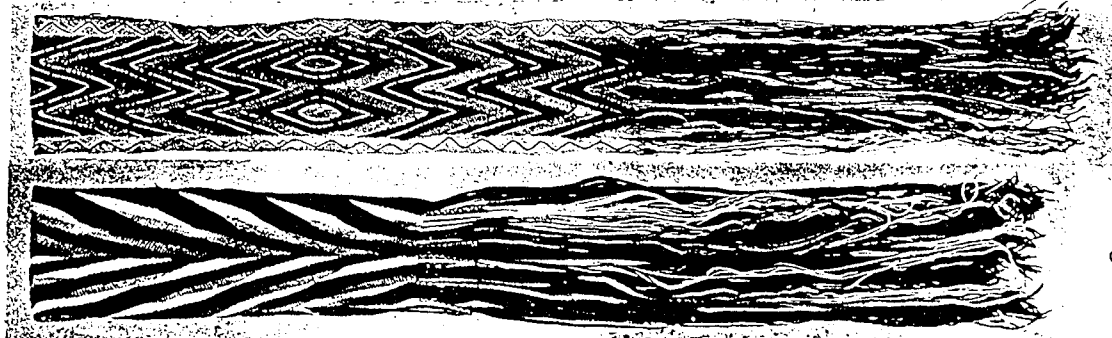
SHIRTS: These are generally made of any shiny material, satin, silk or rayon. Usually in a solid color from pink thru blue to purple seem most common, however, any color can be used. Knet dyed shirts or floral prints are also used but are not popular today. You can follow the pattern presented in our Oct. Nov. 1956 issue or make the simpler Osage type shirt shown below in the sketches by Mr. White. There is no beading on the shirt. It is decorated with strips of one-half inch ribbon front, back and cuffs. The shirt should fit very loosely and hang down about 7 or 8 inches below the waist line. Some dancers further decorate the shirt by the addition of small beaded rosettes or clusters of some small feather such as flicker tails at each shoulder. Sometimes both rosette and feathers are used.



ARM BANDS: German silver bands are most common and by far the preferred type. These usually have some simple stamped design such as flags or a floral design. They range in size from about 3/4" to 2" wide, but 1 or 1 1/2" seems most common. These are usually adjustable in size with a hook and a series of holes, a keeper such as is used on a belt holds it in place. They are worn slightly above the elbow rather than high on the arm. Very often they are decorated with dangling ribbons or small silk kerchiefs or even a feather. Sometimes a beaded rosette is used over the silver. Beaded arm bands are seldom worn.

BELTS: Beautiful wide beaded belts are generally used by straight dancers. These are always loom beaded in a geometric design. Any good Plains design will do however, they are usually very bright and bold. Four to five inches wide is usual and long enough to go almost around your waist. The beaded strip is mounted on a leather strap with one or more small buckles. The buckles can be worn either front or back, probably better in back as then they will be hidden by the other ornament. Sometimes brass spots are placed on either side of the beaded strip to give added width. The photos illustrate this belt rather well.

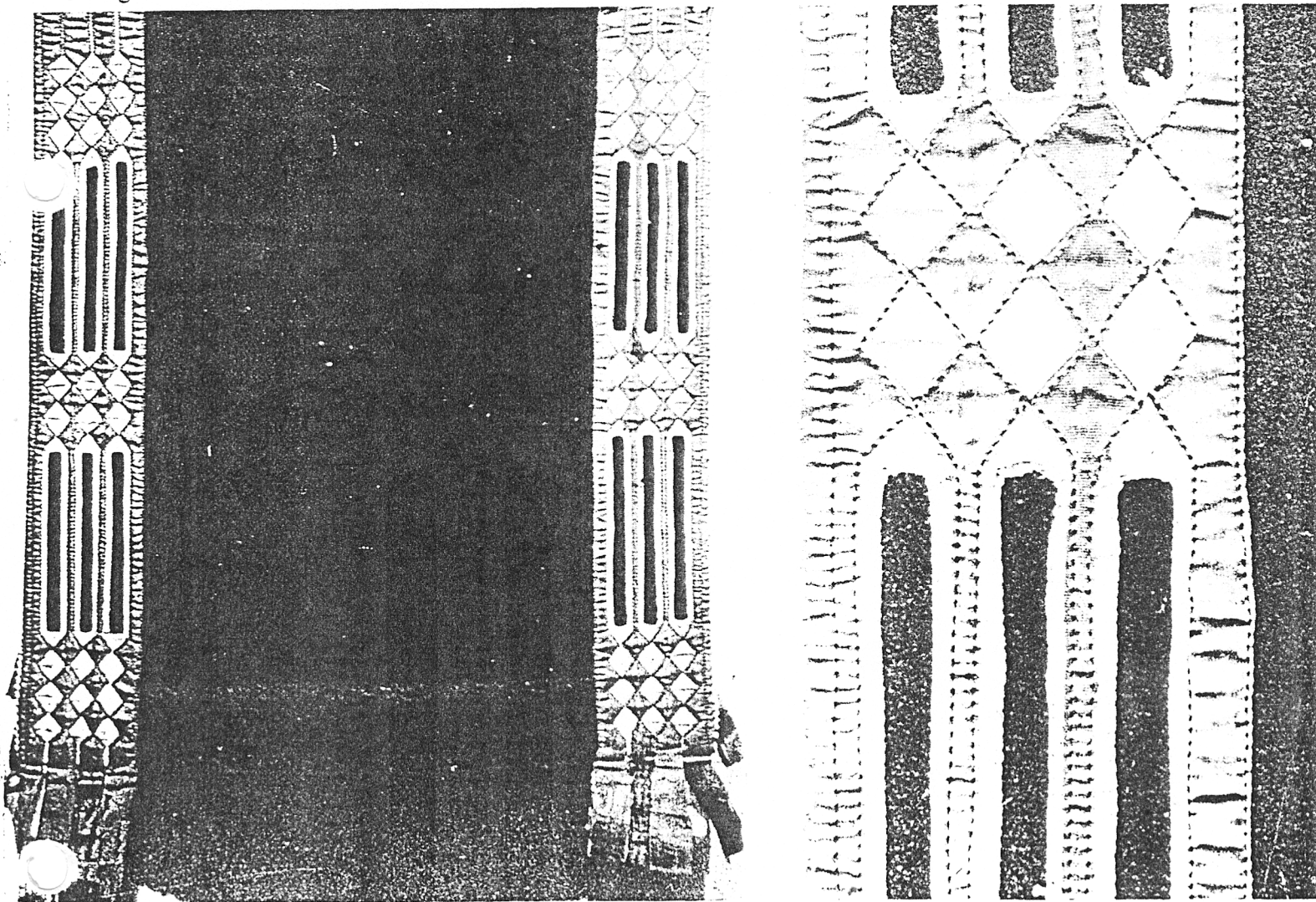
SASH: Most dances wear finger woven sashes of regular commercial wool yarn under the shirt. This finger weaving is quite difficult and if possible we will try to do an article on it in the magazine some time. Sashes of this type are illustrated in the Oct. Nov. 1956 issue on page 17. In Oklahoma these sashes are generally more elaborate than elsewhere (with the exception of the old French Canadian Assomption sashes) in that beads of pony size are usually woven right in with the yarn, and the fringe is usually woven just like the main body of the sash but in smaller sections. Generally the sash is tied on the right side using only the two top strands of fringe and left to hang down the side. Occasionally the sash is tied on the left and sometimes fringe can be seen on both sides. Some clever Indians today do not bother with the body of the sash at all since it does not show anyway, but just make the fringe section and tie it to a regular belt. The photos below show two old Sauk sashes with a plain fringe.



GARTERS: These are mentioned here because they are generally exactly like the sashes just described except that they are smaller. They are worn directly below the knees with the fringe to the outside and hold the legging flap in place. Tie the whole fringe together in one knot instead of just the two top strands. They are now covered by the bells and so serve no useful purpose except for the decorative fringe. Mr. Umscheid states that the garters are a carry over from the days when the bells were worn around the ankles.

BELLS: These are worn in only one position, just below the knees. Long straps of bells 30-36 inches are used. If you have brass bells use them as they are much preferred. Fold your leggings over, tie on your leg bands and wrap the bells over them. (W) You will note the dancer in the center page is wearing the large $2\frac{1}{2}$ " steel bell, however all the others illustrated have the small brass straps.

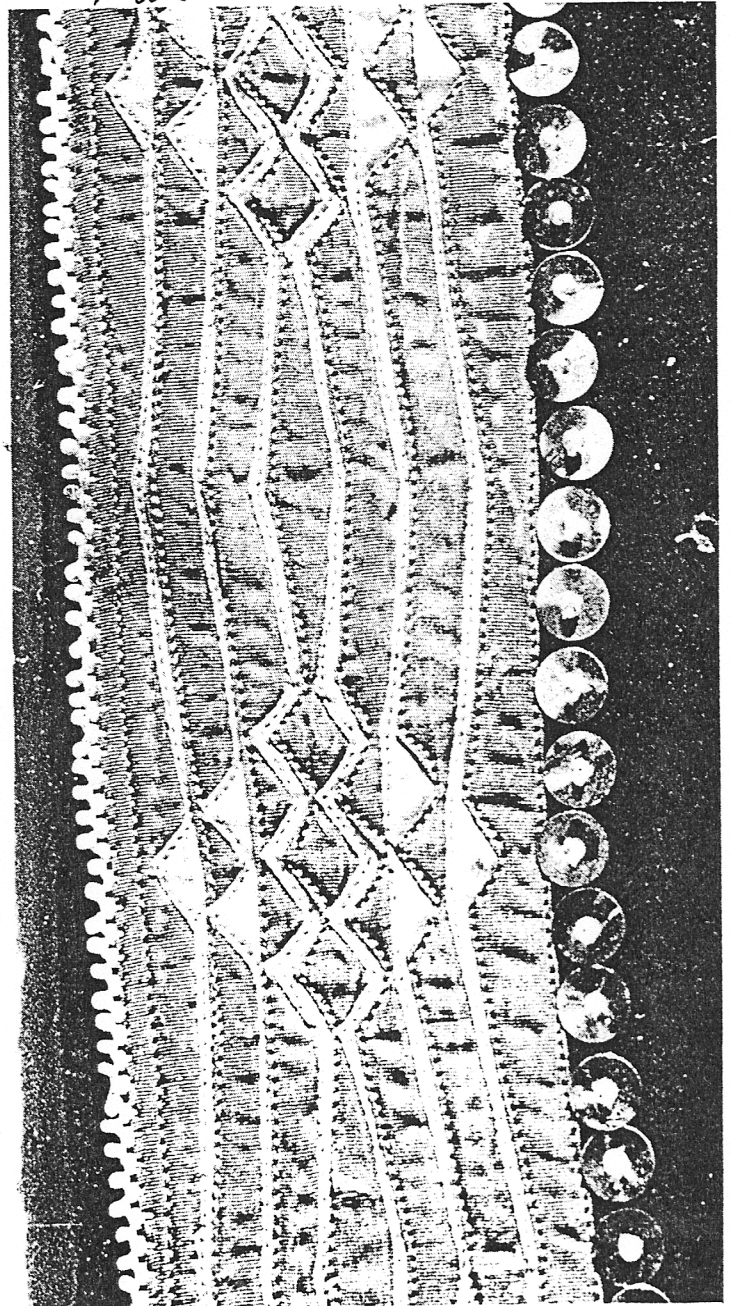
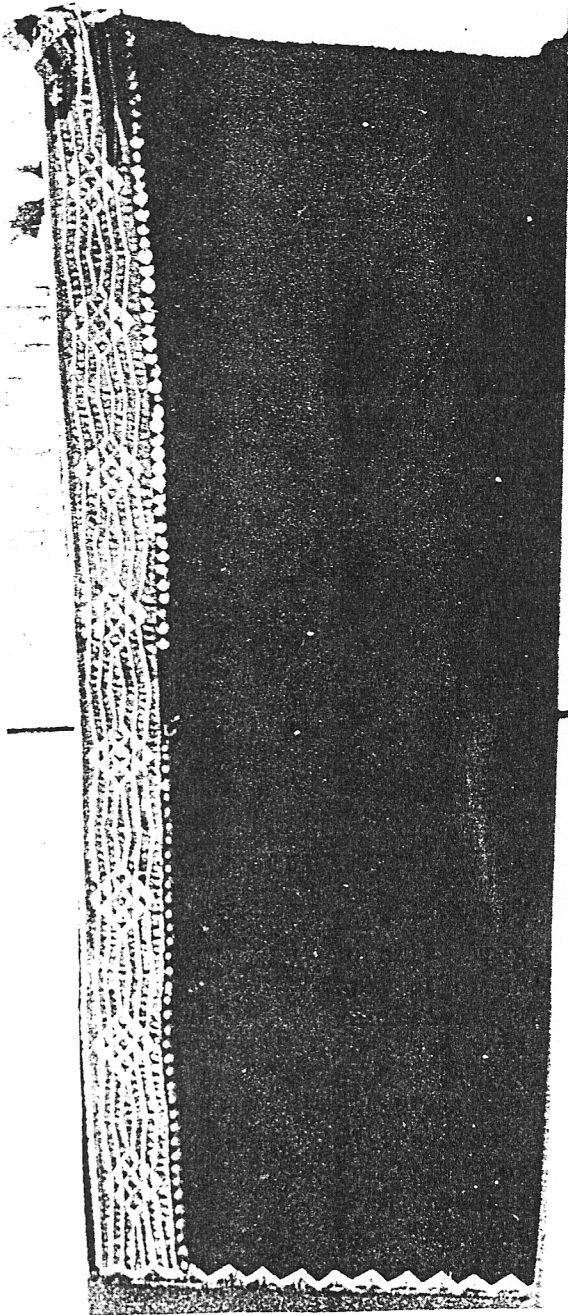
BREECHCLOUT: The clout, leggings and the dance trailer should all hang together in color and design. They are all made of one of the many types of "list cloth" usually with a rainbow type of selvage edge. This is a very fine grade of wool cloth in dark blue or black, with a colored selvage on both edges of the material. They are decorated with ribbon applique of the type shown on pages 21-23 of the Oct. Nov. 1956 issue. The clout shown below was the basis for the method on the top of Page 23 of that issue, although you will note they are somewhat different. The length of the clout is determined by the width of the material, in the example shown below this is 58". The width is generally about 13". An equal amount of the clout hangs both front and back and both front and back are decorated the same way. Notice that the loose ends of ribbon just hang over the bottom. The selvage on this particular clout is marked as follows; strips a little more than $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide in yellow, red, blue, red and yellow. The ribbon design has a white background with magenta boarder, the two inside strips are green to the outside and blue toward the center. White seed beads are used in a standard two bead edging all along the ribbon strip.



FRONT SIDE OF CLOUT IN THE EDITORS COLLECTION & DETAIL OF SAME

LEGGINGS: The leggings should be of the same material as the cleut and it should have the same design and colors of ribbons. Notice that the ribbon decoration goes completely up the outside edge of the legging and not inside the seam as on Plains leggings. The ribbons are also sewn directly to the leggings rather than as separate strips. Measure your inseam from crotch to just below your ankles, add about 4" and you will have the right length. The rainbow selvage runs up the full length of the back flap. There is usually a taper also, the leggings illustrated are 11" at the base and 14" across at the top. The sequins on this pair are the regular commercial plastic type with a metallic finish fastened in place with a clear glass seed bead. The bead edging is milk white seed beads in a standard two bead edging. 13 ribbons are used in the strips of the following colors; purple, cream, green, cream, purple, cream, green, cream, purple, cream, green, cream, and purple. The bottom boarder is of purple and cream. "Straight dancers wear their leggings on the opposite leg as would seem natural. Therefore a legging normally made for the right leg would be worn on the left. Once the legging is put on, the flaps are turned over toward the front of the leg. The ribbon work is now centered down the middle of the leg. The flaps are kept in place by the garters and bells."(W)

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G P G P G P G

LEGGING AND DETAIL OF RIBBON STRIP FROM EDITORS COLLECTION



The three views of the same dancer shown above will show clearly much of the details we talked about in the previous pages. Notice the small reach, probably turkey beard. The white headband. The two strings of beads worn like bandoleers in an "X" fashion. The two light streaks coming off his back are not a part of the costume but rather flaws in the photo.

Notice also how the belt is buckled in the back; how the ribbon trailer and the otter fur ornament come all the way to the ground. The large leg bells are not common on straight dancers. They prefer a long strap of small brass bells, wrapped about the leg.



THREE VIEWS OF THE SAME DANCER - PHOTOS BY ISSI UMSCHIED

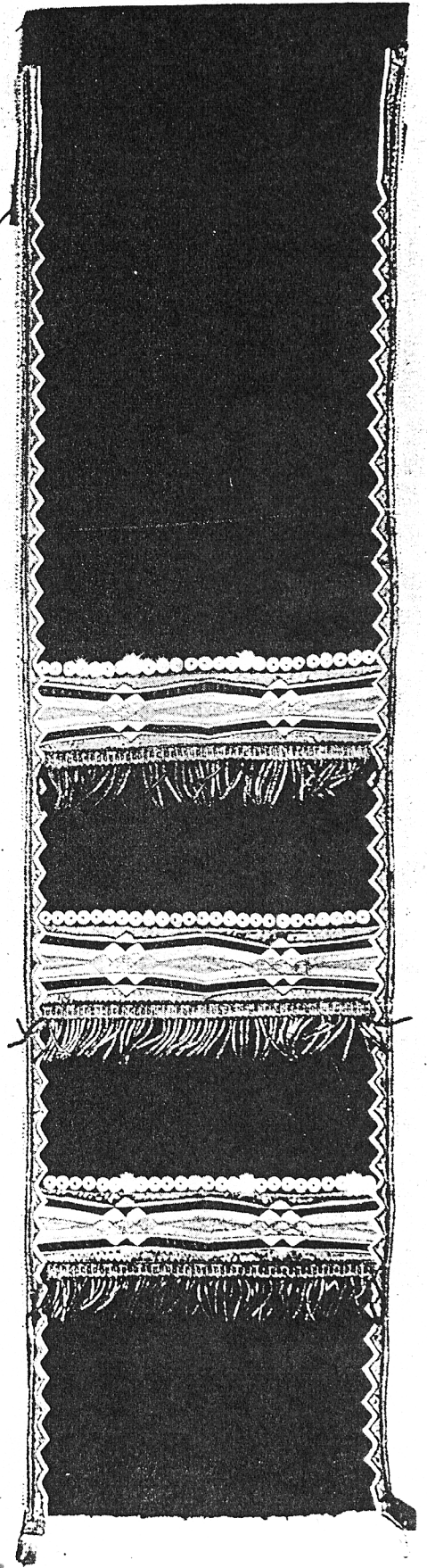
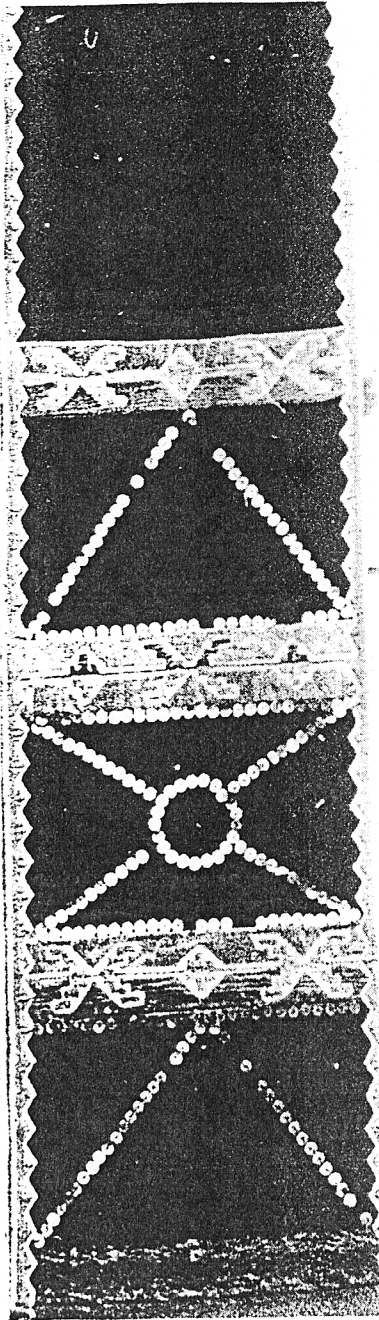
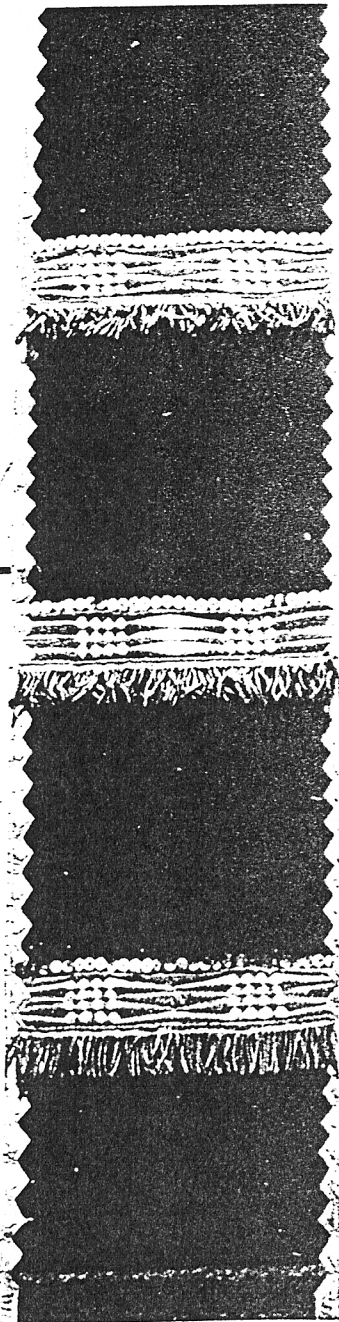
This rear view shows the otter ornament in good detail. This one appears rather modern, but this type of ornament shows quite a bit of individual variation. The little kerchief "Charms" tied to the bead strings are shown plainly. One of the bead strings is of mescal beans. Notice how the shirt all but covers the clout, only a small part of the clout is visible to the left of the dance trailer. Notice the long ribbon left dangling from the shirt shoulder.

This dancer has fringe from his yarn sash on both sides of his body, the white "V's" on the fringe are worked in with pony beads.

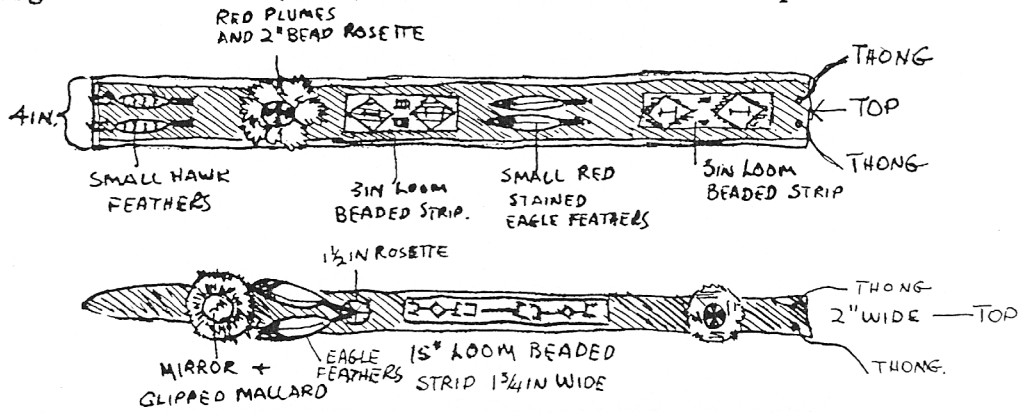


This front view shows plainly several additional features. Notice the "Scalp feather", this is cut and beaded not only at the base but also half way down the quill. Notice also the bead dangle from the "Scalp feather". He is wearing a typical choker of small hair pipes and beads with a large conch shell. The beaded rosette tie slide is not a common feature, in fact this is the only one of this type I've seen. A few inches of the bottom of the clout are visible under the shirt showing the selvage edge. Notice that the bead strings hang down well below the shirt bottom. He is carrying a Peyote fan and a blanket

DANCE TRAILERS: This is a strip of the same material as the cleut and leggings and again should match in ribbon design and colors. Size varies from about 35"-40" long and about 8"-10" wide. The selvage boarder is at the bottom. This hangs from the belt in back, over the cleut, and reaches to the ground. The three photos below will give you some idea as to their construction. See also the trailer illustrated on Page 14 of the Oct. Nov. 1956 issue. The trailer at left belongs to Kieth Gilbert, the center one is the editors and the one on the right is in the Denver Art Museum. Notice the use of sequins, metallic fringe and edge beading for added trim. Generally if three bands of ribbon trim are used the top and bottom strips are the same design and color and the middle strip has the colors reversed or altered some way. This change in design is evident in the middle photo below.



OTTER TRAILER: This is a necessary part of your straight dance outfit. The essential element is a strip of fur almost always otter, 2-4" wide and long enough to reach from your neck down to the ground. Unless you get a giant otter you will probably have to piece this to get it long enough. The decoration on these varies considerably. The finer older pieces have a beautiful ribbon applique trim down one or both sides. Newer ones have loom beaded strips, beaded rosettes sometimes with fluff, feather pendants etc. One such trailer seen by the editor had only a small piece of fur at the top and bottom with a big piece of loom beadwork in the middle. The sketches below by Mr. White will give you some ideas. See also the photos below on the left. The two figures on the left show front and back of the same person.



Photos by Issy Umscheid

CANES OR COUP STICKS: You will notice that the dancer on the cover as well as several in the photos are carrying decorated sticks approximately 18" long. These are decorated with Peyote beadwork and one or more strips of otter fur. They may or may not have a feather or fluff hanging off the end. Here again is an item you should not make yourself for your straight dance outfit. Mr. White says; "Your informant is correct. You cannot carry a coup stick or cane unless you are an appointed tail dancer. When you have danced satisfactorily for a period of time and demonstrated adequate dancing ability, then you may be appointed a tail dancer by some important tribal members, such as a chief or whip man. The coup stick will be presented to you in an appropriate manner and you would value it highly. (W) To quote from the Pawnee Homecoming booklet again; "When one war dance round has ended, a part of the same song is sung while the dancers retire. A chosen few, picked by the head chiefs, dance to complete the round. Usually the best of the straight dancers have this honor. This is known as the Tail dance." In other words the cane is a mark of honor and indicates excellent dancing ability, if you ever have occasion to dance at an Oklahoma pow-wow don't dance the tails unless asked to do so.



Left to right are the 1,2,3 winners in the straight dance contest at Pawnee, 1956. On the left is Harry Red Eagle Jr. who won the contest. Photo by Don Dalrymple.

FANS: A fan of some type is generally carried by all straight dancers. This is usually some type of Peyote fan. The feathers used can be most anything, eagle, hawk, pheasant, flycatcher, water turkey, macaw, magpie, to mention but a few of the common types used in Peyote fans. We are planning an article on this type of fan for a future issue, however, any type of fan will do. Perhaps the best type for a non-Peyote member is the type made from an entire eagle tail, add a beaded handle or just a couple of rosettes and a long fine twisted fringe.

BLANKETS: These are usually carried by straight dancers, especially Peyote members, but they are set down while dancing.

MOCCASINS: Any type of plains moccasin will do, however, there seems to be a preference for the partially beaded type which has one row of beading completely around the bottom and two rows from the toe to the flap. Full beaded moccasins are also quite common, in fact they use anything they can buy.

This about completes the costume. *One final word about the regalia; do not attempt to make a fancy dance costume from it by adding bustles, feather reaches, etc. The clothes described are universal and should be worn with the pride they justly deserve.(W)



You will notice thruout the discription of the straight dance costume frequent reference to Peyote(pay-yb-te), such as the white headband, silk charms on the back etc. It was quite difficult for the authers to get any specific information concerning the exact relation of this religion to the straight dance cestume. The reason is that the Peyote Church has been persecuted by both Indians and whites for many years with the result that members fear ridicule by unsympathetic outsiders. Also the identifying items of costume for peyote members are undergoing constant change with the result that not all peyote members wear the same items and non-Peyote members often wear peyote symbols without giving it any thought.

The information presented below was gathered mostly from Leaflets 105,106 and Material Culture Notes #17 of the Denver Art Museum.

2. HISTORY OF THE CULT. Peyote was used in religious ceremonies by Mexican Indians long before the coming of the Spaniards with Christianity about 1525-30. Indians of the United States have used peyote widely for only the past fifty years, though it was used earlier by a few tribes, notably the Lipan Apache, the Kiowa and Comanche. From these southern tribes the rite in various forms gradually traveled north and west. As it spread, many pagan forms were dropped and certain characteristics of Christianity were added from both Catholic and Protestant sources. Now it claims to be a Christian religion, and in some sections has been incorporated as "The Native American Church". Its native priests claim the right to administer the sacraments, some even to celebrate the marriage ceremony. However, both Roman Catholics and Protestants have worked against peyotism since it was first encountered. Despite this and other opposition the cult is today very active and continually growing.

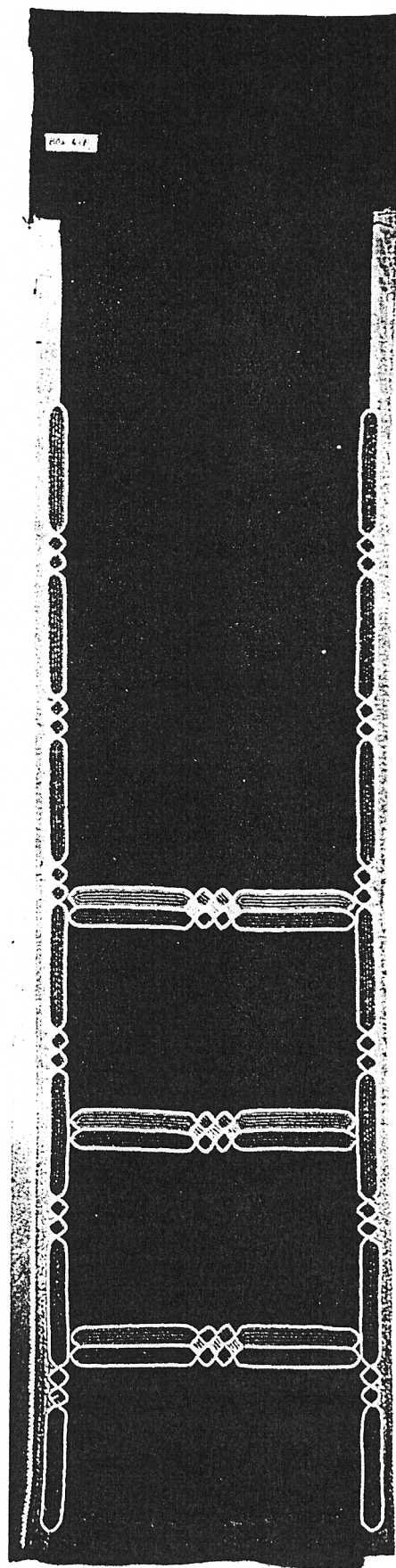
3. BELIEFS OF THE CULT. Only the most general statement can be made because of the wide variation among individuals and various regional divisions. A very high code of moral teaching is presented. There is a strong racial trend stressing the Indian as a being apart from the White man, and serving as a medium uniting all Indians. The cult has a wide appeal because of the sense of well-being and happiness induced by the use of the peyote. To a defeated and broken minority people these qualities offer a welcome relief from the difficulty and poverty of their lives. Their own great past is relived in romantic dreams, and there is a suggestion of promise that through peyotism this past may return. Tales of wild orgies are in absolute contradiction to the facts.

4. CHANGES IN EQUIPMENT. The Peyote Cult is a relatively new and loosely bound informal organization. Therefore the ritual equipment is not definitely standardized. The objects described are now in general use, but new types appear and old ones drop out of use; new designs and methods of applying them appear and disappear. Certain men become highly expert in making the various ritual objects, and their products are sold widely not only in their own tribes but also elsewhere. Well made fans, etc. are in great demand. This tends to standardize equipment.

"The custom of cult members wearing some distinguishing ornament or badge did not become established before 1900. Since 1920 it has become increasingly important. The insignia or badge does not necessarily take the form of a piece of jewelry. It may be a feather in a man's hat-band; the wearing of braids or earrings by men; or the knotting of a silk handkerchief instead of a necktie around the throat by younger men. -- The whole matter of wearing jewelry or other distinctive insignia is an outward and visible manifestation of the idea of "Indianness" as opposed to "Whitemanness" which is so prominent a part of the cult's beliefs."

The above quotes from Alice Marriett and Willena D. Cartwright will help give some insight into the problem.

The dance trailer illustrated at right shows a decided departure from the normal type in that it has bead decoration instead of the ribbon applique. This is certainly more modern but not uncommon. The clout and leggings should match.



Denver Art Museum photo