

Early in fall the leader, Wolf Eyes, said "I am going out eagle trapping." There are two ways of getting up a group, some volunteer, sometimes the leader will select his men and when he has his crew, he went to him and said, "We wish to go with you" and he said it would be alright. He told us to take certain kinds of corn, roast corn, raw yellow corn and white corn, squash dried, some of here at home made our own baits, most of baits were jackrabbits skinned and skin dried, those that did not have any baits made them after we were located and the tipis put up. Some would take a piece of deer hide cut up with ears on and two legs on the side.

In the party were the leader, Wolf Eyes; Big Walk, Little Crow, Lance Owner, Little Bull, Holding Eagle, Black Bear, Sitting Woman, White Body, Bear Arm, Luie Wolf or Red Horse, Many Birds, a boy Spotted Weasel, Little Crows wife Otter Woman and their daughter Comes Out, Big Walk's wife Plain Blossom and their grandson Jim Foot or Foot Prints, Plain Blossom's daughter, Too Dear or costly, Woman in Water wife of Charging Eagle and she had her son Richard Burr with her, Lanc Woner's wife Yellow Stalk, Holding Eagle's wife Bobcat Woman, Charging Eagle being a policeman could not get away and being Bear's Arms mo sister she went along to help with the work in the camp. Also my mo mo and Woman in Water were sisters. There were several women along because there was much to do for in bad weather we would go out and kill mt. sheep, elk and deer and the women would tend to the meat.

When everything was ready, the young women took the b-boats and crossed our stuff, tipis, poles, all the provisions, bedding, cooking utensils, and it took nearly all day to cross the stuff. The first camp was at Beaver Creek. They used tipi poles tied together as travois and the ponies(? p. 2) pulled the poles, horses also carried other poles with the tipi and bedding, several pack horses loaded down with bedding. We were all horseback and travelled very slowly.

The second day we travelled to End of World Buttes a little this side of there crossing Little Mo north of Killdeer on the fourth day, stopping ne of Killdeer the third night. After camping on the east side of Killdeer, we went around the north side of the Mts and camped on the north side and from there we went north because that was the best route and crossed the Little Mo there. After we left the Little Mo we went to the place called Wolf Pit. When we reached our destination, we commenced to put up our lodge for there was no lodge there before, and when the lodge was completed.

(Travelling, the leader went in the lead and the rest followed while the hunters went out ahead and the side and that was the way we travelled.)

The place was selected by the leader because of the prairie dogs there for there was a valley from the Yellowstone coming eastwards and hit the Little Missouri and all along the valley there were prairie dogs and the eagles travelling along this valley in order that they could catch these animals and then they would come to this site and he thought it was a good place to catch the birds.

As soon as the camp was selected they all set to work erecting the lodge, even the women helped by cutting the grass and packing it between the wood, digging dirt and putting it over the lodge. There was an opening at the top for the sparks and smoke. There were four posts and railing on top and the rest of the poles leaning against them. We were not allowed to shoot or throw stones at any kinds of birds and we were not allowed to sing outside of the songs that went with the trapping.

Then we did TIED, meaning, that is when we are ready to dig the pit so that they are square, and deep enough to be over one's head and on the side wall a hole is dug and a stone put in it and the stone is called Baby Stone for the eagles being considered sacred, the stone was used as a shield and when one catches an eagle and wishes to kill it in the pit, instead of using the

words 'kill it' we said 'put it to sleep' and takes the stone and places between the eagles wings, take the cord tied around its neck and pulls the cord back and that way breaks the neck.

The bears were the first ones to trap eagles; there are two different stories about eagle trapping. The leader goes in and blesses the lodge and prays to the spirits. When they first learned of eagle trapping, the bear was doing this, he had a cord and spread it opening it and said, "All are caught" then when the young man punched his wife's eyes out for the mistakes were because of her and his brother came back, found her sitting in the lodge and the two were married and they caught many eagles; it was because the bears prayed that prayers had to be offered.

Thinks there might have been a great difference in the ceremonies once since stone called Tied and also Sleep Stone

When the leader saw that all was ready, he said, "We must go in" and he named Little Bull, the Crack Shot, to go in first; then he named Holding Eagle to sit next to the Crack Shot, then Wolf Eye went in and took his place at the head of the lodge; then the helper, Big Walk went in; Whatever the leader does in singing and praying, the man sitting next to him assists, ie, we have a president of the U.S. and they work together. The leader and his helper are the ones to offer prayers and do the singing while the Crack Shot and the man next to him work together too and their duty is to torture the men; then the other men came in and both sides and took their places. Then there were two waiters selected by the leader and they were not named nor is anyone named until the lodge is completed and ready to move in.

There are no excuses to make; when the leader says, I select you as a waiter, he has no right to refuse. After this, we went in and took our places. The leader said to the waiter, "Waiter, burn some incense" and when the waiter burns it, the leader took his medicine out and held it in the smoke and he took the cord and while he was singing he made a motion of throwing the loop to catch something, doing that three times and the fourth time the Crack Shot jumped up and took the snare and said, "Leader, you have snared everything; you have roped everything north south, west, east" meaning that then he had all the people everywhere caught in his snare

There are many songs to be sung by the leader and his helper. After he sings these songs, there is a special song and it is for the Waiter who gets up and dances and he dances and takes the cord the makes the sign of throwing the loop to catch something and one of the men who is not married would say, "Waiter, I feel as if someone was at my back" and then the waiter looked and he said, "There is a very handsome woman back of you; it is a ha-ci-ra-wi-a, meaning really a bear woman for the origin was from the bears.

In early days when young men out this way, the single girls would marry some of them before they left and then get out there and get settled down and the women would prepare the meat from the mt. sheep and the women would work on the hides while the men trapped. To get these fine hides, women would marry a single man in order to get a chance to go out there.

The next thing we did, the pits being dug early the next morning we got up without having any breakfast, and went to our pits. Some of the pits were old ones but several new ones were made. Sometimes there would be two pits together and then they would fix the last pit up and go into it and for their baits they had blood stored away and it was rather dry and some had jackrabbits, others a hide fixed it up so it looked like some animal. Water was mixed with the dry blood and put it on the bait. In the evening each man came out and those who did not catch anything came home and those who caught eagles would come in crying. When they heard one come crying, the waiter would burn incense and the man with the eagle came in.

In this case, Eagle Trapping is called Tied, where a person catches an eagle, he kills it right in the pit and brings it to the lodge and the first man who came in that first day was Little Bull. He had two birds with black tips. White Body was burning the incense. In case both of the waiters had been away, the leader burns the incense himself. The next man who came in was Holding Eagle and he had two birds with black tips, Black Bear caught two. The saying is that where you catch two eagles, they are brother and sister, that is why they travel together. These birds were all killed in the pit. The birds were brought in and they placed them at the head of the lodge in a row, The tails were brought in and placed on the buffalo head, each man knows his own feathers.

The next day my brother, Little Bull took me along and we went into his pit. He caught four that day and the fifth had landed on the bait, he told me to catch it by the feet which I did and he helped me pull the bird down into the pit. He took me along to show me how to catch the birds. Next time he went he caught three more which made ten in all that he caught, three warbonnets could be made of them and he had one more tail over; the leader said to him, "That is enough; you must not go out any more or you will have bad luck." Black Bear did not go out any more.

The second time Holding Eagle went he caught three, the third time two so that he had seven altogether. Black Bear caught two the first, three the second, two the third making seven for him. Lance Owner did not have any luck in his pit so he was told to go into Little Bulls pit and he caught two there. Little Crow did not catch anything in his pit so he was also told to get into Little Bull's pit and he caught two there. Sitting Woman caught three White Body did not catch any. Wolf Eye and his helper did not trap.

All these birds were killed in the pit, each one having a Baby Stone in his hole, and facing east, they broke the birds' necks and in that way the spirits of the birds would go to the next world.

There are two ways of trapping eagles, this time we followed the rite called Tied which originated by the bear and that was the one I was in, the other was the real eagle trapping and in that one they had ways that were different from the one I was in. In the other one, if a trapper fell down and if he tells it his name changes and he gets a new name but this time we did not even get names. (See other page which shows that only Mandans changed names)

We were in the camp and someone woke up in the morning and said, "There is water coming down" so we had to stop trapping. The bodies of the eagles were taken to east side of the lodge and put on the ground. Then we all went back and ran towards the dead eagles and shot over them and struck them, the eagles representing the enemy was why we had to do that. Then we broke camp and started for home. Birds had been put about 200 yards from the medicine lodge. Then we cut the wings off, pull the light feathers out and leave the bodies there. When we got back to the village the leader takes the tails and went through a little ceremony to send the spirits of the eagles off; sometimes they do that in the camp but when we had to hurry as in this time, we did it at the village as the slush ice was coming. Sending the spirits was done by making a feast and pay the leader by getting up a sweat and lots of food and he offers prayers to the birds and bears and asking the spirits of the birds to go away and he takes a piece of a hide and pounds on it and each one in the village, especially men, would stand by their door making much noise and pounding on the hide covering of the door and then he took all those who were out trapping with him into the sweatlodge and we were cleansed by sprinkling water on us.