

ACCOUNT OF THE PIRASKANI CEREMONY OF THE ARIKARA

Before the three men, Little-Crow, White-Owl and Red-Tail, began their instruction of me in the Piraskani ceremony Red-Tail lighted his pipe and made smoke offering to God and we all smoked. Then he rose and made invocation as follows:

“Our Father in the Heaven we thank Thee for this ceremony of Piraskani which Thou gavest to our people in old time to teach us to follow in Thy way. We are come together here to hear and to explain this ceremony which Thou gavest command to Mother Corn to do. We ask Thee to help us and to lead us and teach Thy son Pahok and help him as he is trying to learn Thy way. Teach him that he may live a godly life. And we ask thee now that Thou wouldst come into our hearts at this time and lead us in the right way of carrying on this ceremony.” –*Nawa*.

At the close of the instruction Red-Tail again made invocation as follows:

“Our Father, as we have assembled here to teach our son Pahok we ask that what has learned may mean much to him in his work, and that Thou wilt help him wherever he may be and whatever he may do. We thank Thee, our Father, for this good day which Thou gavest us, and we ask that we may be made strong by going through this ceremony which Thou didst order through Mother Corn. Our Father, we ask pardon for any mistakes we may have made. And do Thou bless Pahok as He is trying to learn Thy way. We ask this for Mother Corn’s sake.” –*Nawa*.

Then as the pipes were to be delivered over to me the bundle containing them was laid out and opened, an incense fire was made and some sweetgrass from the bundle broken and sprinkled on the fire. We all incensed ourselves, and then the pipes were incensed in the ritualistic way and then wrapped up again and the bundle was ritualistically delivered to my keeping. Then Red-Tail again prayed again as follows:

“Our Father, who gavest command to Mother Corn to teach and to purify children of in the Piraskani ceremony, we ask that Thou bless these pipes which by Thy command are used in these ceremonies, and that we may gladly give them to our son Pahok, and that Thou wouldst guard and protect

him through life.” –*Nawa*.