"Nothing lives long, Except the earth and the mountains"

White Antelope's death song, Cheyenne.
Sand Creek, Colo., Nov. 1864

The lamp of knowledge adopted as the emblem of this lodge is probably the most appropriate representation for a lodge of Freemasonry and especially for the purpose of a lodge of research, for the symbolism of Masonic Light is knowledge. Rene Descartes immortalized the phrase "knowledge is power" and Freemasonry, developing during the Enlightenment in the Age of Reason, proposed that it is incumbent upon an enlightened people to encourage the development of education on a personal as well as societal level. It is for this reason that the world's first free and public school system was developed in this country. The more enlightened a people, the better enabled they are to self government and freedom. John J. Murchison wrote in the Oregon Scottish Rite Freemason (reprinted in the August PHILALETHES magazine) "We must ever remember that the purpose of Masonic writings is to cause Masons to think..." Knowledge is the antithesis of Ignorance, and if knowledge is power, ignorance is manifest of fear, and fear is the breeding ground of intolerance, bigotry and hatred. Light and knowledge dispel that ignorance which in turn promotes understanding, compatibility and progress.

The Native American culture was viewed by Western
civilization from a standpoint that could not have been more polar. American Indians were basically stone age people living within the bounds of their natural surroundings and lived life in the round so to speak. Their homes were round, their camps were circles within circles and their lives were governed by the cycles of the seasons. The "People of the Hoop", as they are called, had a considerably personal and abstract view of life that is often considered foreign to us. The Navaho refer to the Grand Canyon as "the inside out mountain", and one of the Cheyenne's names for the white race translates loosely as "the people who make everything square". It is only understandable considering this conjunction of views that conflict would arise. Throughout history it has been the case that when advanced cultures meet with underdeveloped societies a natural displacement takes place. "What happened to the Native Americans was inevitable, the way it happened was unconscionable. We owe them a tremendous debt. They gave us romance, myth and legends. They gave us a history, in reality they shaped the character of our entire nation." (from the screenplay of The Last of the Dogmen.) It is in this endeavor and with that understanding that I present this paper.

Fraternal organizations as we all know have been around throughout cultural history from time immemorable. The Amerindian cultures of North America likewise maintained their fraternal clubs and secret sodalities, or brotherhoods, and even to this day; unique to their culture but relative to the human condition shared by men around the world.

There were three basic types of fraternal societies among the Native American people; Dancing, Religious and Warrior
societies. All native tribes had dancing societies as their dancing is ritualized prayer. Likewise, every tribal community across the continent had religious societies usually male dominated. Dancing was as well part of the religious fraternities as was drumming and singing. Unlike the prevalence of dancing and religious societies, the same was not the case with the warrior fraternities. Pacific Coast tribes were blessed by an abundance of food stuffs and could live basically undisturbed by neighboring tribes and while there were hostilities among tribes throughout the continent, the warrior societies were almost uniquely the invention of the Plains Indians and for this reason and for brevity's sake I will concentrate this work on those peoples that inhabited the prairies and plains of the mid-west.

The Great Plains extend some 2500 miles from Canada nearly to the Rio Grande valley and from the Missouri-Mississippi rivers almost 600 miles west to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Colonial expansion of the French and English and raiding by bands of Iroquois pushed the Chippewa (Ojibwa) west from their territory in the upper Great Lakes region in present day Canada around 1660. The Chippewa were forced to invade Sioux territory in what is now Northern Minnesota and after years of fighting, the Sioux, who were at this time a semi-horticultural society, were forced to migrate further west to the Plains, where they adopted the buffalo-hunting horse culture for which they are most well known. I might mention at this point that the name Sioux was given the confederation of Lakotas, Nakotas and Dakotas by rival tribes and simply meant "the enemy".

Several recent authors have declared, "that all of the tribes spilled onto the Plains as the more powerful Eastern
Woodland tribes forced them out. The forcing part is accurate, but the action was more that of steam escaping through a pressure valve, with each puff of steam pushing those emerging before it further and further away. Thus about A.D 1700 the Sioux moved from the Woodlands to Minnesota, and then to the Black Hills - forcing the Crow and the Cheyenne on just ahead of them. Once horses were obtained, each migrant tribe began to stand its own ground, and although contested, well-boundaried tribal areas were established. Soon, even the great Woodland tribes decided it was best to leave them alone." (Thomas Mails; MYSTIC WARRIORS OF THE PLAINS.)

As the Sioux "migrated west they broke into three groups with distinct but mutually intelligible dialects of the Sioux language: the Santee, Yankton, and Teton. The Santee stayed in Minnesota as agricultural people. The Yankton moved west to the Dakotas, but combined agriculture with hunting. The Teton Sioux moved into the Upper Plains of Montana and the Dakotas and were renowned as great fighters, wanderers, and buffalo hunters. The Teton Sioux were of seven subgroups: Hunkpapa, Two Kettle, Sans Arc, Blackfoot, Miniconjou, Oglala and Brule. Of these the Oglala and the Brule were the most formidable and were at the center of the wars on the northern Plains in the 1800's."

The Cheyenne had also ranged onto the northern plains from southwestern Minnesota, pushed on by that same steam valve. They were once farmers and small game hunters but on the plains they tracked the buffalo and established themselves in the southern Dakotas. There they shared amenity with the Sioux tribes and together they battled for supremacy of the northern plains with the Crow and Pawnee.
"The Plains Indians, although their societies and social organizations varied from plains to prairies, north to south, and one ethnic group to another, exhibited ... significant homogeneity in lifestyles." Particular to this was the common landscape shared by the various tribal groups. The societal structure of Amerindian culture was highly developed and intricate well before the advent of the European; however, the most pertinent factor in the social development of the plains tribes was directly related to the advent of western man. In the late 16th Century Spanish horses had made their appearance ranging onto the North American Plains. The people were at this time semisedentary, regularly ranging between seasonal hunting grounds, and the chief mode of transport at this time was walking and carrying or packing their belongings on small travois dragged by a number of camp dogs. The Indians referred to this time as the "Dog Days", but once they had learned to tame and utilize the horse the range of the plains tribes was greatly extended. The adaptation of the travois to the horse brought about a new ease of transport. A horse could drag a load four or five times heavier than a man or dog could. This extended range and mobility understandably increased their food supply and thus their population, but as can be expected, it also consequently caused territorial infringement with neighboring tribes. An interesting sidelight to the equine age was the use of longer poles with the horse travois resulting in the adoption of larger homes and they advanced from the small round wigwam to the familiar conical teepee typical of the Plains tribes.

Within a generation of the appearance of the first horses on the plains, the availability of what they called their "sacred
dog", transformed the plains warrior into a formidable mobile strike force. The mounted warrior became the centerpiece in every plains tribe and the dominant factor in the plains way of life. This new development reflected itself in the established social system and over some years the men of each tribe began to facilitate a social scheme of Warrior Societies, with special costumes, rites, customs, and particular purposes. These societies formed a significant part of plains social organization and played a vital role in tribal life. The Warrior Societies were not in any real sense religious societies; however, like Freemasonry, they robed themselves in religious trappings. They were rather strictly social and military, serving to perpetuate the male's responsibility as providers and defenders of the tribe. They strengthened the tribal structure and kinship's sense of belonging as well as afforded occasions for feasting, dancing and camaraderie, but above all provided a forum for recording and recognizing significant events and particularly feats of bravery and war. Much of the societies' meetings were reserved for recounting individual deeds of prowess, but while a great deal of time was spent on relating "war stories" culture and honor prohibited lying. Although absorbed in matters of war their informal importance to the tribe was in the civil realm. In the absence of a written law, the tribal elders exercised civil control by the use of established customs, public opinion, and respected taboos. It was from the warrior societies, usually in rotation, that the tribe's chiefs, councils or elders appointed the "Akicita", or the tribal police. The "Akicita" enforced the rules and regulations laid down by the leadership. In there position as tribal police the Akicita were distinguished by
characteristic insignia. The insignia of an Akicita of the Lakota Sioux was a black stripe painted on the right cheek from the corner of the eye to the jaw line, this designated him a marshall of the camp. A red parallel stripe indicated a marshall of a ceremonial encampment and the marshall of a war party would have two black stripes on the right cheek. Though military or other societies are often associated with this police duty the selection process varied from tribe to tribe. "Among the Crow, police duties were associated in irregular order with one or another of the tribal military societies; among the Blackfoot two or three of the military societies were selected to act; likewise, among the Teton-Dakota it appears that an entire society was chosen each year by the chief "akicita" to act as the policing unit. The practice differed somewhat among the eastern Dakota groups where the police officials were chosen without regard to society affiliation."  

Further variations include that among the Hidatsa and Mandan where the same society, the Black Mouths, were selected year after year. The "akicita" wielded decisive powers in policing and organizing the activities of the community during group hunts, ceremonies and camp moves; and had the authority to impose strict and costly punishment. Those punishments were relatively uniform throughout the plains area. "Whipping or clubbing was the most frequent measure resorted to, followed up in more serious cases by destruction of the culprit's personal property - his tipi, blankets, gun, bow, horses, etc. Infrequently, in the case of a particularly stubborn individual, the death penalty was inflicted"  

A member of the tribe who disobeyed orders and went out alone after buffalo during the communal hunt - an action that could frighten off the
herds—might be severely whipped, have his kill confiscated or have his tipi and weapons destroyed by the policing society. In a large war party the Akicita functioned as marshals and their role was particularly important in closing in on the enemy. If a warrior broke formation, for warriors eager for distinction could be prone to do so, a carefully planned operation could be jeopardized. Plains justice was arranged to preserve order and conformity rather than punish for the sake of social vengeance. "This is most clearly brought out by the attitude of the society toward the offender after punishment had been inflicted upon him. ...immediately after a promise to conform was secured from the delinquent, steps were taken to reincorporate him into the society. For example, among the Assiniboine, the police, after inflicting punishment on an offender, waited four days without further action. If during this time the criminal had made no display of resistance or unruliness, they assembled to discuss the case and usually gave presents to the man and reinstalled him in a new lodge." No single society was given a monopoly on police duty. One or more of the societies could be called upon to guard the camp for a particular period and then were replaced by random selection after a time.

While membership in some societies was open to both sexes, and most tribes maintained women's societies, the warrior societies were almost strictly the realm of the men. Sometimes a society had honorary female members who took care of the cooking and other duties or woman's work for the society. Among some of the soldier bands there were maintained four young women members, usually girls—though some might be married. The position was an honorable one, If the soldiers made a dance, or went from one
place to another, feasting, the women were with them, but if the
camp was moving the girls traveled with their families. Their
duties were chiefly social; that is to say, they were present at
meetings of the band, took part in the singing and dancing, and
sometimes cooked for the soldiers, but never took part in the
secret work of the order. Such a girl was spoken of as "nut uhk e
a", female soldiers. Usually a good-looking girl was chosen from
a good family who devoted herself to the position in much the
same spirit that a nun gives herself up to the vocation. Unlike
the spiritual calling of a nun, the soldier girl was
not compelled to retain this position; if she wished to marry,
she might resign, and often did so. If one of them resigned, or
for any reason fell out, another was selected to fill her place
by the soldier chiefs.

Women, who formed auxiliary units to many male
organizations, had their own clubs. Among the Kiowas there
occurred an association known as Old Women to whom warriors went
to seek council and prayers both before and after raids against
an enemy. The Pawnees maintained an association of single women
and widows who wore shabby dress and tortured prisoners and some
tribes’ women’s societies partook in the mutilation of the dead
on the battlefield, as at the Little Big Horn. The horticultural
groups of the upper Missouri had several female societies, many
of which carried out important tribal ceremonies; Mandan Goose
Society members, for example, performed special rituals to
encourage the corn to grow, In many plains groups the female
clubs existed as guildlike associations of skilled quill and
beadworkers; Cheyenne women, for instance, could join a society
of tipi decorators. In some communities women joined military
Military fraternities were numerous, with particular tribes maintaining varying numbers of the clubs. The Cheyenne maintained six military or soldier societies, the most famous of which were the Crazy Dogs of the Northern Cheyenne and the Dog Soldiers of the Southern Cheyenne. The people known as the Sioux had six to ten Warrior Societies per band; the Oglala Sioux itself having seven which were the Kit Fox Society, the Badgers, the Brave Hearts, White Badges, Crow Carriers, the Silent Eaters and the Wand Carriers also known as the Bare Lance Owners. The Crow held no fewer than eight societies, such as the Bulls, Kit-foxes, Ravens and Big Dogs. The Mandan also counted eight as did the Arapaho, while the Plains Cree maintained only one military society and the Comanches had no special military clubs.

The meeting places of these societies were held in lodges within the Indian encampment. Plains Indian tipis were by tradition mostly plain with only simple decoration and painted door flaps, but established warrior societies maintained their own ceremonial tipis and were richly decorated for that purpose. The regalia of the warrior societies were especially decorated to regard attention; intricate headdresses, crooked otter wrapped coup sticks, feathered lances and painted shields distinguished the ceremonial warrior. Paramount to the society regalia was the dress of the ceremonial member. "Not incidentally, it was the Warrior Societies which fostered the creation of the most marvelous and enthralling of the Plains costumes." While there were some variations on basic costume design, the ceremonial regalia was an elaboration of everyday wear. Trade with neighboring tribes allowed the use of shell, bear claws and the
odd pelt not available on the plains. Paint; mainly yellow, green, red and blue was used throughout the whole area with solid colors rubbed into the surface of the buckskin predominantly in the southern plains while central and northern tribes tended to utilize pictographic motifs. Picture motifs mostly painted but sometimes worked in dyed quill or beads decorated their shirts and leggings. Typical designs might include bars of horizontal lines marking the number of coups of the wearer and hoof marks designating successful pony raids. Their painted shirts were especially prized and even today are held in great museums around the world. "Society members usually employed designs which emphasized the nature of their society, although their symbols could include depictions of their own vision helpers and war exploits." "A warrior often painted his favorite war horse with the same pattern and colors he used for his own face and body."

"The total effect of a painted warrior and horse upon those who saw them was often stunning, and many Indian accounts mention the striking impression they made. One aged Crow warrior still carried the picture of a Sioux rider he had encountered a half century before, whose entire body and horse were covered with bright blue paint and white dots."  

Sometimes a society might be adopted from another tribe but most societies began as a vision or a dream of a man who thereafter became its founder. The Sioux called vision seeking "crying" or "lamenting" and it was a ritualistic way of praying, and stood at the center of their religious tradition. Vision seeking, was an attitude cultivated among the Plains Indians. There was continual emotional impulse given the child from his parents as they goaded him about the need for a vision. A boy
grew up hearing constantly that all success in life had its beginnings in visions. In respect to the warrior societies, the vision would entail the special purpose of the society, its particular colors, dances, songs, regalia and symbols. Then, once the dream was accepted as legitimate by a council of tribal elders, other members were invited to join and the society was born. Every society had its own sacred medicine bundle in which were contained those special articles that the founder was directed in his vision to be the magic objects of that society. The Brave Dog Society of the Piegan Blackfoot contained a war bridle and a whip as its symbols of power and the members carried it into battle for its protective power much as the Ark of the Covenant of the Hebrew tribes. Subsequent visions might detail information which expanded on the costume, rituals and concepts of the society. The regalia, colors, etc. of a certain society was respected by other societies and exact duplicates avoided, although some societies were sometimes borrowed from another tribe. The status, or position in the rank of societies was most often determined by the age of the order's beginning, the most ancient being accorded the highest rank and after it the next oldest. Therefore a Kit Fox Society in one tribe might be of a higher rank in the community than the Kit Foxes of another tribe.

Plains Warrior Societies could be classified in two basic types, age-graded and non-graded societies. Affiliation into either of these was based on age, in the case of the former; or, on initiation at the society's invitation, in the non-graded version. Five tribes of the plains peoples employed the age-graded system, they were the Arapaho, Blackfeet, Gros Ventre, Hidatsa and Mandan. Typical of the "age-graded", were those of
the Blackfoot, where a candidate gave property to the owner of society prerogatives in exchange for membership. "In this scheme it was customary for young Indian braves to buy the right of their immediate elders to their sets of regalia, dances and songs, the purchase of which gave them access to the total privileges of the club." The bartering exchange involved in the purchasing of a retiring society member's membership revealed the Indian's thorough enjoyment of life. Among the Hidatsa and Mandan groups when the "sons" sought to enter or advance in subsequent societies of their "fathers", the elders remembering their own youthful desires, made the most of their advantage and professed the greatest reluctance to part with their beloved dances, regalia, songs and rituals. "Hence, the young buyers were obliged to arrive at the sellers' lodge with a great profusion of gifts and a smoking pipe, which would be accepted, but only as a token of the sellers' agreement to discuss the offer. Irrespective of the substance of the discussion, the seniors were sure to declare in the end that the initial offer was insufficient; so the buyers, as they knew they would need to do, held back a reserve supply of gifts, and in addition scurried around to coax more property from their relatives. The older men continued to act as if they were doing their juniors a great favor, until at last a proper tension was reached and began to show itself in the long faces of the sons. Finally the sellers smoked the pipe again, ordering the buyers to bring food to feast their "fathers" for four or more successive evenings. Once more the relatives helped the purchasers to collect the food; then, on the appointed evenings, the sellers received their feasts and began to teach the buyers the songs and dances unique to their society. ... As
the final evening of instructions came to an end, the insignia were turned over to the new members with proper pomp and circumstance, and a public procession and dance followed in which they advertised the fact that they were now the proud representatives of the grade just entered.\textsuperscript{3} This system enabled a boy who had reached his early teens to join a society of like aged youngsters and every four or five years, he and his fellows would again purchase the regalia of their elders and move up to the next level, selling their memberships to the younger generation. This process was repeated until the original group of boys had reached the highest and oldest existing grade. After they had sold their final possessions, they retired from the associational scheme, usually in their mid forties and often opted to enter into the number of organizations for retired warriors.

Indians recognized that children must be taught, "or they will not know anything; if they did not know anything, they will have no sense; and if they have no sense they will not know how to act." Moral lessons were taught utilizing the legends and myths of their culture. Children were encouraged to follow the moral values that the legends explained, to heed their warnings against greed, avarice and irresponsibility and to show respect for their elders. They were expected to and did participate in cub scout style organizations such as the Blackfeet Pigeon Society, or the Rabbit Society of the Kiowa-Apache. The Rabbits were one of the Kiowa-Apache's four dancing societies. Within these youth groups the youngsters were painstakingly instructed in every matter necessary to a fruitful life. Every Kiowa-Apache child belonged to the "Rabbits", or "Kasowe". Every child was
called a "Rabbit", and even today, when the older men become
disgruntled with the behavior of some of the younger men, they
say "They are just Rabbits, they don't know anything." The Rabbit
Society was founded, legend has it, by a reclusive old man
banished from the tribe by his fellow tribesmen. Alone and nearly
perishing in the wild the rabbits took pity on him, they gathered
food for him and taught him their language. When he had learned
all that they could teach him they told him that he should return
to the Kiowa and teach the boys how to become men. This he did
and was celebrated by young Kiowas thereafter as "Grandfather
Rabbit". The role of Grandfather Rabbit was enacted by a retired
member of the tribe as a kind of scoutmaster, often for years.

In this group the child had contact with all other Kiowa-
Apache children – practically all the people with whom they would
be most intimately associated for the rest of their lives. A
close bond was thus established with like aged children as well
as with those both slightly younger and older in the tribe. Since
it included every child, boy or girl, and influenced them during
the formative years it was part of the most important social
forces in Kiowa-Apache life. "All young Rabbits in the society
wore a small headdress made of elk skin and feathers and attended
classes taught by their elders in horse care, hunting, and
warfare; on special occasions, they feasted and danced, hopping
about in imitation of their namesakes."¹⁰ "Though all Kiowa-
Apache were Rabbits, some could go through life without ever
being asked to join one of the adult groups. However, an
important person could hardly escape them."¹¹ There were always
some young and active men who belonged to no soldier society, but
a young warrior wishing to make a name for himself had to become
active in one or more of the warrior societies, usually his father's or that of some other close male relative.

Young plains Indian boys idolized their tribe's warrior societies, they were their sports heroes of the culture, they memorized each society's rules, copied their regalia and formed imitation organizations dreaming of the day when they would join their favorite clubs. Some child's play as in the case of the Crow Act like Dogs, had no counterpart in the older men's groups. These young pre-teen boys dressed in loincloths and moccasins would meet outside camp and smear their bodies with mud or preferably white clay. Then, sneaking up to the edge of the camp, they would at a given signal, scatter and run through the camp barking and howling like dogs while they snatched choice pieces of meat hung out to dry. The villagers joined in the game with equal enthusiasm, old men fell back in supposed fear and although the women would try to hide their choicest pieces of meat if they could, they cried out in mock alarm and ran after the "dogs" with sticks and yelled harassments at them. When the young "dogs" had collected enough meat, they would run back to the woods, wash up in a nearby stream and cook the stolen meat, feast and animately recollect their happy adventure.

Societies which were not graded in any way existed among the Sioux, Assiniboines, Cheyenne, Crows, Pawnee, Arikara and the Wind River Shoshones. The Crow and Cheyenne societies can serve as typical of the non-graded style society. "In the Crow and Cheyenne tribes, membership in the warrior societies depended not on age level but on similar interests and achievements. Men joined voluntarily, attracted by the organization's reputation and regalia. New members, particularly those who had
distinguished themselves in battle, were actively solicited." If a member of a society died, it was not uncommon for the society to try filling the vacancy by offering gifts to one of his male relatives. As in the graded societies membership into the non-graded societies was also accomplished with gifts of some sort. It was a great honor to belong to any of the warrior societies and a man might give his favorite horse to get in (this maybe his conception of the initiation fees). Charity was greatly recognized among Indians and that is shown by the prerequisites for entrance into the "Honhewachi Society" of the Omahas. They demanded that 100 charitable acts that benefited the tribe be performed before the candidate could be admitted into this particularly high ranking society.

The success of individual clubs exhibited sundry ups and downs in their history's. There was keen rivalry among the soldier bands and the relations of the societies to one another were a mixture of rivalry and co-operation each declaring that their society was the best. If one society had had bad luck in a raid, then the other societies would strongly ridicule them and they are therefore always on their guard. Among the Northern Cheyenne The Kit Fox Soldiers always claimed superiority over the others.

Most of these societal groups were relatively small, numbering from 10-20 individuals, although a powerful society might have as many as 60 members. Usually the society had a charmed maximum number which was revealed to the founder in one of his visions. This meant that recruits were invited in only at those times when the group had sustained losses due to deaths or retirement. Officers were elected to serve in the several
stations but the real power of the clubs was held by the elder members. At one time a man might belong to only one society, and must leave it before he could join another, but as the clubs' importance increased, many men would enter several of the available options. "Owing to the element of rivalry a man normally belonged to a single club." ...but "it was conceivable to belong simultaneously to one of the old and one of the new clubs."  

The Crow warrior Bear-gets-up had, like his older brothers, joined the Lumpwoods and did not renounce his affiliation when he also joined the Crazy Dogs. "Except for some special occurrence, a man would thus remain loyal to his first club. For instance, Lone-tree accepted a Crazy Dog invitation when this society offered him property on the death of his uncle; and he never joined another club. On the other hand, there were often adequate reasons for shifting one's allegiance. Notwithstanding the tendency to affiliate oneself with a brother's club, by no means all brothers were fellow members. A particular young man might thus be summoned first to succeed a kinsman in one club and later another in a different society. This is precisely what happened to Sharphorn, who had first lost a Fox brother, and later one who had been in the Lumpwood organization. ...Bull-chief had one maternal uncle among the Big Dogs, another among the Foxes; first he joined the former society, but when the second uncle was killed, the Foxes lured him into their ranks by presents. Occasionally a man left his club in a huff. Sioux raiders once stole all of Fireweasel's horses; his fellow-Foxes refused to help him, while the Big Dogs offered him horses and property, so he joined their numbers and never left them."
The Native American concept and performance of war was pervasive of the plains tribal culture and social standing and chieftainship were dependent upon military prowess. Chieftainship denoted the standing that goes with military achievement and there were many chiefs per tribe but the title did not imply any governmental functions. A key component of Native warfare was what was called "counting coup" and "There were four normal types of creditable exploit: leadership of a successful raid; capturing a horse picketed within a hostile camp; being first to touch an enemy; and snatching a foeman's bow or gun." 15

The Cheyenne Country Ones, the Crow Crazy Dogs, and the Lakota Strong Hearts, to name a few, wore long cloths of varied lengths as a "no retreat" sash. The sash bearers carried a picket pin and rope and in battle were expected to stake themselves to the ground and stand until released by a comrade or killed by the enemy. Individuals of other tribes had similiar sacrificial warriors, and in like manner would tether a rawhide thong, or "dog rope", to a tent stake or lance to hold their ground. Once so tethered he could order a retreat but the only way he could be freed was if another member of his society would run in pull out his stake and slap the thong across the man's back. Bravery is always stressed and is one of the greatest virtues of all Plains Tribes, but with the introduction of firearms a man's physical powers and boldness were of little avail and older braves thought that requiring a man to stand his ground in such times might be "expecting too much."

Many of the tribes maintained societies for older or retired braves. "Among the Sioux there was a society called the Silent Eaters or the Big Bellies organized about 1869. Thus named
because they were often older or retired warriors who were usually corpulent men. Their name in Lakota is "Ahinila wota," which means those who have matured. They had by virtue of their status won the right to a seat in every council and the privilege of speaking up at any time. Their prestige was held in high regard and their word was rarely unheeded. They were distinguished by a waist length sash of white skin worn over the left shoulder. It was the *Silent Eaters* who considered the politics of the camp and they dedicated themselves to the welfare of the tribe rather than the benefit of the individual members of the society. Rarely did more than 20 men belong, and while they came from the sagest and bravest segments of the warrior fraternities, they no longer went on war parties unless there was a general war. They would fight if the camp was attacked but were mostly reserved to defend the camp its women and children. The *Silent Eaters* were a secret order in the respect that unlike several of the societies they had no particular lodge tent designated as theirs but met in the middle of the night. A meeting was announced by a herald silently going from member to member gathering them to rendezvous at one of the member's lodges. There they feasted on the finest cuts of buffalo and dog, recounted war deeds and talked about the problems of concern to the entire tribe, but never sang or danced as in other societies, hence the name *Silent Eaters*.

Besides the vision inspired warrior clubs, "men who had experienced similiar dreams united in dream societies. They performed certain functions in tribal ceremonies and had their own special songs, dances, rituals, and regalia. Dream societies
brought together men who had dreamed of the buffalo, elk, bear, wolf, deer and other animals." Sitting Bull's rise in the esteem of his people owed much to his leadership in the men's societies. “Not surprisingly in light of his name and his skill as a hunter, Sitting Bull had dreamed of the buffalo and thus belonged to the Buffalo Society.”17 Sitting Bull also held membership in several other Sioux societies and as a young warrior had dreamed of the thunderbird; a very potent dream. Those who had dreamed of the thunderbird belonged to an exclusive fraternity called Heyoka. WAKANTONKA, The Great Spirit, conferred no greater honor on a man than a thunderbird dream nor a more fearsome obligation. The Heyoka were a society of those individuals common throughout the Plains tribes and known as "Contraries". In fact the word Heyoka means "opposite of nature". Among the Arapahos and Crows, the Contraries were called "Crazy Dogs Wishing to Die", and the Cheyenne word for them was Hohnuhk'ë, a word, like Heyoka, which conveys the idea of doing precisely the reverse of what is said. These Contraries were groups of sacred clowns in a way, in that their reverse antics delighted the people and provided comic relief in an otherwise serious situation, but in battle they were the bravest of warriors. A contrary might measure the depth of a water puddle by laying an arrow horizontally in the water and claim it to be over his head; at which he would splash around in it claiming to be drowning and another member would come to rescue him. They rode their horses while facing the tail, they shivered from cold on a hot summer day and dressed for summer in the winter. If they meant to say "Yes", they said "No." If he called out to his woman, "Do not bring any more wood, we have plenty," she knew that the wood in the lodge was exhausted and
that more should be gathered. When he said he was heading in one
direction, he meant to go in the opposite. If he was told to go
away, he came nearer. Unlike the Heyoka society of the Lakota or
the Assiniboine *Fool Society*, there was no band or guild of the
Cheyenne Contraries; they were merely individuals, usually only
two or three in the tribe, bound by certain beliefs. The thunder-
bird dreamers likewise had to abase themselves publicly through
dress and behavior, inviting ridicule by acting the fool and
conducting himself in ways the opposite of normal. Heyoka members
might walk or ride backward, cry amid humor or laugh amid
sadness. A regular feature of the ceremony against the backdrop
of special dances and songs, was to thrust hands and arms in a
kettle of boiling soup and retrieve choice pieces of meat. A man
performed the *Heyoka* ceremony but once, after he had dreamed of
the Thunder Bird but he participated in all the subsequent
ceremonies of others. Among the Cheyenne version of the
Contraries, no one became one by choice, the brave who felt he
must become a Contrary, might ask a Contrary for his sacred
lance, the symbol of his power. Until someone did this, the
Contrary could not escape from his office and might be a Contrary
for a long time. Though carrying with it much hardship and many
responsibilities, the office was one of great power and
importance and they were entrusted with serious duties—even with
leadership—in battle. They did not associate on equal terms with
the rest of the camp. He did not joke, nor participate in the
social activities of the tribe, but was obliged to be alone and
apart, often on a distant hill by himself. If there were two
Contraries in the camp, they might be together, but no one else
might associate with them.
Especially impressive obsequies were held in a slain man's honor by his military club. When a member died, permission had to be obtained from his closest male relative, to whom the whole organization brought gifts. Child-in-the-mouth thus describes the mourning over a Fox Society member: "If either a Fox officer or a private was killed, the people laid his body on the ground. We put on all his regalia and painted his face. Crying very much, we moved toward him. we sang, some of us cried all the way, half of us sang. There was beating of drums as they sang and walked."

When the mourning had subdued the family distributed the clothing and property of the deceased and when this was done, the party went home. The family then packed the corpse away on his favorite horse to bury him.

The fraternal societies of the Native Americans began their slow decay at the end of the 19th Century with the loss of their lifestyle, restriction to reservations and the forbidance of native culture. Today new versions of cultural societies are being reorganized while older associations are still active. Dance groups are major parts of the pow-wow circuit. Now as I have mentioned, Northwest Coast people also had and or maintain their secret societies. The fierce Clallam people of the Olympic Peninsula had their Black Society whose members painted their faces with charcoal, and some members of the Chehalis, Nisqually and Suquamish tribes are affiliated with a secret society that practices the traditional native religion and who blacken their faces as part of their ritual. I mention this because an acquaintance of mine told me the story of a Tulalip artist who some years ago painted a representation of a secret ceremony of the local society called the Black Paint Dancers, and then later
sold it with several others to the City of Seattle. When this was found out by the Society, the artist was in effect kidnapped by members of the society and secreted away to a small island off the coast of British Columbia where he was held for several months in punishment for violating their sacred traditions. The painting of "The Black Paint Dancers" was when I last saw it hanging upstairs in the Food Court building at the Seattle Center.
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