

## VALOR BADGE AWARDED TO A WOMAN IN THE ARIKARA NATION

A young woman of the Arikara nation went out to gather buffaloberries. Her younger sister accompanied her. The girls crossed the Missouri River in a buffalo-hide boat to a place where they knew the berries were abundant. While they were busy gathering the fruit they were surprised by an attack of a war party of five Dakota warriors who tried to take them captive. The young woman fiercely resisted the enemy. In the beginning of the struggle, the upper part of her robe fell down over her belt so she was unable to get her hands on either her knife or her hatchet, which she was carrying as usual in scabbards attached to her belt. As she could not get at her own weapons she grabbed one of the enemy when his gun missed fire as he tried to shoot her. She snatched his gun away from him, when he tried to draw his knife she knocked it out of his hand. One struck her with his hatchet and her blood streamed down from the wound, but she was not overcome. She snatched his shield from one; from another a powder horn; she ripped the leggings off from another; from still another she snatched his quiver of arrows. Thus in the fight she had laid hands on all five of the enemy, vanquished them and chased them away.

At the first onset she had called out to her little sister to hide in the thick bushes. Now, having driven off the enemy, she called and searched for her sister to bring her away and try to reach home. She was weak from her exertions and loss of blood, which streamed from the wound she had sustained. When she found her sister, they went down to the shore where they had tied up their boat. They embarked in the boat and, weak as she was, she had the greatest difficulty to make way across the swift current. A flock of crows circled about and cawed loudly and repeatedly flew across in front of her face as if to impede her progress, but she kept on. The weather had been calm when they had first crossed over, and the calm had still continued when they had set out to return, but now her difficulties were still further increased, for when they had reached midstream the wind suddenly rose and blew furiously. But in spite of all she persisted and finally succeeded in reaching the home shore. She was just able to step out on shore when she fainted from weakness and exhaustion. After a time she recovered consciousness

and she and her little sister made their way to their home in the village.

It may well be understood that she was a great heroine as soon as the news of her exploit spread among the people. Feasts were made in her honor and the Council awarded to her the right to have ever after five red hands painted on her robe in token of the five armed enemies whom she had vanquished and disarmed in the fight when they had tried to seize her and her sister. The Council also conferred upon her the honor of a new name as a token of her valorous deed. The name which was conferred upon her was *Párihna*, the meaning of which is Carries-the-horn, from the word *párih*, (horn), referring to the buffalo horn powder flask which she had snatched from one of the enemy.

Another instance of a woman in the Arikara nation performing a valorous deed for which she was awarded the right to a token of distinction was the following. A war party of Arikaras was out on an expedition. One member of the party was accompanied by his wife. A war party of Dakotas made an attack upon the Arikaras but was beaten off. The woman was mounted upon a very swift horse. In pursuit of the fleeing Dakotas her horse outdistanced all the others of the Arikara party and so she overtook the enemy first. She dismounted and struck a fallen enemy, jumped upon his body and stamped her feet upon his abdomen. The proper badge for the exploit of striking a prostrate enemy was an eagle feather worn affixed in the hair in horizontal position, but because it was so unusual for a woman to perform an exploit of any degree signaled by a feather, the Council decreed that she should have the right to wear a feather in vertical position, the token which would customarily indicate that the wearer had struck an enemy who was upon his feet. This woman was also awarded the additional distinction of having the right to wear a legging colored red to signify the blood of the slain enemy on whose body she had stamped her feet.

An instance is given of a man of the Arikara nation who was awarded for valor a mark of distinction other than the wearing of a feather. The name of this man was Twobulls. He was a member of an Arikara war party, which was engaged in action with a Dakota war party near where Washburn, North Dakota, is now. Twobulls charged upon the enemy and rode through their line and then wheeled and charged back to return to his own party. But in the meantime another party of the Dakotas,

who had not been in the first part of the fight, arrived for the re-enforcement of their tribesmen who had been put to flight by the Arikaras. Twobulls now encountered this new force in his line of retreat so he was obliged to charge through this party also in order to rejoin his comrades. He succeeded in doing this and the Council awarded him the right thereafter, when a certain song was sung at the public dances, to dance in the opposite direction facing the other dancers. This was to signify his having charged through in face of the opposition of an onrushing force of the enemy.