



WING DING 31 NEWS

Cruising to the Pow-Wow...

What is a Pow-Wow?

Pow-Wow time is Aboriginal Peoples getting together to join in dancing, visiting, renewing, sleeping-over, renewing old friendships and making new ones. This is a time to renew thoughts of the old ways and to preserve a rich heritage.

Eventually, songs and dances evolved around the imitation of animals and the natural forces that were held sacred. Many of these sacred dances, because of their religious significance and spirituality, are not performed in public. The Sun, Eagle, Buffalo, and Medicine dances are just a few of the many sacred dances that are still practiced. Any sacred object of ceremony of power should not be brought into the public or even discussed in open conversation. War, medicine and protection can also be included here, with the consequences being grave if respect is not kept.

Historically, each Nation maintained a uniqueness and power geographically, which resulted in conflicts over hunting territories. Indian wars were controlled by medicine people and spiritual leaders. One simply could not go out and fight his enemy on his terms. There were ceremonies of preparation to protect and guide the warrior. Inspiring songs, warrior speeches, and war dances were preformed.

When going into war, the leaders were distinguished by the paint they wore, and the numbers and color markings on their feathers. There was mutual honor and respect even for the enemy in battle.

It is said that in taking the life of the enemy, one captures his spirit. It is still believed that this spirit belongs to the victor along with his power. In the "Physical

World" the victor gives and feeds the spirit of the victim until he enters the "Spirit World." Then the victor guides the victim into the "Spirit World" of our ancestors. That is why, even today, Elders warn against arguing or fighting with a distinguished warrior.

Upon the return of the warriors, feasts for the captured and mourned spirits were held, and victory dances were performed. In the dance, re-enactments of brave deeds during battle were performed in a stately manner reminiscent (recall to memory) of the tracking of the enemy.

From this early interpretation came the origin of the war dance in its spiritual form of expression, demonstrated through footwork, smoothness, and agility. There are many beliefs and customs that are still practiced today that were and are still an integral part of the Pow-Wow.

Many of the old war dance songs are still being sung, but are considered honor songs. In some traditional communities, new songs honoring the veterans and their deeds of valor are still being composed. Through these songs, and the spirit of the drum, are communicated ancestral values, cultural integrity, solidarity, and personal relationships for future generations. Our youth is our future, and our elders are our guide.

With this, GWRRA members, young and old alike will gather together in Tulsa, Oklahoma for what will be our 31st Pow-Wow of sorts - Wing Ding. A chance to visit, renew old friendships and make new ones. A time to, dance and renew our heritage! A time to honor our veterans and celebrate our independence and freedom!

We hope to see you there!

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