ARAPAHO
GOSPEL SONGS
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INTRODUCTION

The songs included here largely come from the Southern Arapaho of Oklahoma, although some of them are performed by Alonzo Moss, Sr., a noted Northern Arapaho singer who passed away in 2015. The songs are all part of the Arapaho Christian tradition.

There are two basic genres of songs here. The first are gospel songs, based on English. The melodies of these songs are retained in the Arapaho versions, and then some of the English words are translated into Arapaho. Not all of the English words are translated, however: traditional Arapaho songs tend to have relatively short word sequences, which are repeated multiple times in the song. The same thing is done with translation of the gospel songs: usually the first verse is translated from English, then that verse is repeated multiple times. Examples of these songs include tracks 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 11, 17, 18.

The other genre of songs could be called true Arapaho Hymns. These are songs with words and melody both composed by Arapaho worshippers themselves. These songs have melodies that are much closer to traditional Arapaho musical style, although they lack the "vocables" (words without translatable meaning) that are common in traditional Arapaho music. The words used in these songs tend to be prayer words, very similar to the words used in traditional Arapaho prayers. Some of these songs have quite simple lyrics, while others are more complex. Examples of these songs include tracks 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

In both genres of these songs, but especially in the true Arapaho hymns, sounds are often added to the end of a word to fill out the melodic line. Following most consonants, -ii is added, while -uu is added following h or ‘ (if they are preceded by o or u) as well as following k, w, and x. Following vowels, -hii is added following e and i, while -huu is added following o and u. These do not change the meaning of the word – they are just used for the sake of rhythm. These endings have been italicized in the texts. This same procedure takes place in traditional Arapaho songs. You will also note the presence of ‘oh at the beginning of many lines. This is used when addressing someone (in songs, but not in everyday speech), somewhat like “O God” or “O Jesus” in English. The word occurs in traditional Arapaho songs as well, such as the Northern Arapaho Flag Song (‘oh neito’eino’....), so it is not borrowed from English. It could be translated as ‘now hear me...’ or ‘now listen...’ perhaps, or just ‘well...’

Many of these songs contain the word neixoo, which means ‘father’ or ‘my father.’ It is used specifically when talking to one's father (if talking about ‘my father’ you say neisonoo). It just means ‘Dad!’ in everyday Arapaho, but always means ‘God’ or ‘Jesus’ in these songs.
NOTE ON THE ARAPAHO ALPHABET

The Arapaho writing system is quite different from English. Each letter in the Arapaho alphabet corresponds to a single sound. Use the following description of the letters in Arapaho alphabet to guide proper reading. For more information on the Arapaho sounds and language, visit the Arapaho Language Project on the web: www.colorado.edu/csilw/alp/index.html

b  Is similar to English “p” at the end of a word, as in “stop”
c  This sound is more like English “g” or like in “Jesus”
e  This vowel is similar to the one in English word “pet.” And when you see it long (-ee-) it sounds the same but long. It will never sound like in English “meet.”
ei This combination sounds like “ay” in English “say.”
h  Same as English “h.”
i  This vowel is the same as in English “sit.” When it’s double (-ii-), it sounds as in English “feet.”
k  This letter is pronounced similarly to English “g” in “good.”
n  Pronounced the same as in English
o  This vowel is pronounced like in English word “hot.” When it’s long (-oo-) it sounds long like in the English word “God.” It will never sound like in “book”
oe This combined vowel sounds just like the vowel in English word “pie.”
s  This consonant is pronounced the same as in English.
t  Pronounced more like English “d” as in “do.”
3 This letter represents sound “th” as in English “thanks.”
u  This letter sounds just like in English word “book.” When you see it doubled, it sounds longer, like in “boom.”
ou This combination sounds like “oa” in English “float” or “boat”
w  This letter is pronounced the same as in English
x  This sound is pronounced like you’re clearing your throat and sounds like “kh.”
y  Pronounces the same as in English, for example, like in the word “yes.”
‘  This letter represents a glottal stop—complete closure of your throat as in “uh-oh.”
AMAZING GRACE (NORTHERN ARAPAHO VERSION)

Track 1
Performed by Alonzo Moss, Sr.

Neixoo     neniiitowootowo
Father!     I have heard now.
heesoohk   heettiine’etiin
how it is   where you live.
Tiheece’inowoo heesii3etehk
Since I did not know   how good it is,
Hohou      nee’eihinoo
Thank you   I say now.

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

Track 2
Performed by Alonzo Moss, Sr.

Neheicoo’ neniteeno’, neheicoo’ neniteeno’
Come       people!    Come       people!
Heetnoohowoonee tei’yoonche’ beeteet.
You’re going to see    the child    who is holy.
Nuhu’ hiisi’ cenoonoo’ nooxuto’owu’.
This    day    is coming [for us]    down here on the Earth.
Neheicoo’ neniteeno’, neheicoo’ neniteeno’
Come       people!    Come       people!
Heetnoohowoonee tei’yoonche’ beeteet.
You’re going to see    the child    who is holy.

HERE IS THE GOOD ROAD MY CHILDREN

Track 3
Recorded in Oklahoma, performers unknown

neniisoono’-uu
My children
Niïyou booo huu3eti’-ii
Here is the good road

Nuhu’ Heetoonoo huu3eti’-ii
This place where I am is good

neneeninoo Jesus-ii
I am Jesus

HEISONOONIN  HIIH’O  JESUS – OUR FATHER'S  SON  JESUS
Track 4
Recorded in Oklahoma, performers unknown, 1956

‘oh heisonoonin          hiïh’o  Jesus-ii,
Our father               his son Jesus,

Niïch’owouunoneinooJesus,
his son on me Jesus

Niïciteoneinoo          heini3ooyooni’.
He brings to me what is clean and pure.

Neniiseti’           noh          huu3eti’.
There is one thing and it is good.

Noh    hoonobee’        heisonoonin    hitiine’eit.
And it is joyful our father’s life

‘oh hohou              neisonoo
Thank you my father.

HOHOU, NEIXOO - THANK YOU, FATHER
Track 5
Recorded in Denver, CO, Performed by Belva Hicks

Hohou    neixoo,
Thank you, father,

Beeteen    Jesus.
Holy           Jesus.
Neneeninoo nii'elhii.
I am a bird/eagle.

Heetcih'owouunonin,
You will take pity on me,

Beeteen.
holy one.

Hihcebe' nih'oo3oo.
God above.

Neixoo  beeteen,
Father  holy

Howouunoni.
Have mercy on me.

hii3et'i'ehk  tohuunee'eetoot.
It is good  because that is where [the Lord] is.

Niibeetyihoonoo.
I want to go there.

Heetcih'owouunonin
You will take pity on me.

Hohou  neixoo.
Thank you,  father.

Beeteen Jesus.
Holy Jesus.

Neneeninoo nii'elhii,
I am a bird/eagle.

Heetcih'owouunonin,  beeteen.
You will take pity on me,  holy one.

Hihcebe' nih'oo3oo.
God above.

Neixoo beeteen, Father holy

Howouunoni. Have mercy on me.

Hii3eti'ehk tohuunee'eetoot. It is good because that is where he is.

Niibeetyihoonoo. I want to go there.

Heetchi'owouunonin, You will take pity on me,

Neixoo beeteen. Father holy

Howouunoni. Have mercy on me.

Hii3eti' tohuunee'eetoot. It is good because that is where he is.

Niibeetyihoonoo. I want to go there.

Heetchi'owouunonin, You will take pity on me,

HOHOU JESUS – THANK YOU, JESUS

Track 6
Recorded in Denver, CO, Performed by Belva Hicks

Hohou Jesus. Thank you Jesus.

Neixoo beeteen howouunoni-heiyei Father holy have mercy on me.
Hohou Jesus.
Thank you Jesus.

Neixoo beeteen howoumoni-heiyei.
Father holy have mercy on me.

Neneeninoo nii'eihii.
I am an eagle/bird.

hoomyoohobe' nuhu' neito'cino'-uuheiyei.
Watch over my relatives.

hohou Jesus.
Thank you Jesus.

neixoo beeteen howoumoni-heiyei.
Holy Father have mercy on me.

Hohou Jesus.
Thank you Jesus.

neixoo beeteen howoumoni-heiyei.
Holy Father have mercy on me.

hohou Jesus.
Thank you Jesus.

neixoo beeteen howoumoni-heiyei.
Holy Father have mercy on me.

neneeninoo nii'eihii
I am a bird/eagle.

Hoonoyoohobe' nuhu' neito'cino'-uuheiyei.
Watch over my relatives.

Hohou Jesus.
Thank you Jesus.

neixoo beeteen howoumoni-heiyei.
Holy Father have mercy on me.

I AM GLAD BECAUSE I'M HERE
Track 7
Performed by Alonzo Moss, Sr.

Nuhu’ biito’oowuu’ 3ii’ookutowoo.
On this earth  I stand.

Nii’i3ecoonooh toh’entoonoo.
I am glad  because I’m here.

Nuhu’ biito’oowuu’, niiteescebiseenoo.
On this earth,  I walk.

Nii’i3ecoonooh toh’entoonoo.
I am glad  because I’m here.

Nuhu’ biito’oowuu’, niiteesiniibei’inoo
On this earth,  I sing.

Nii’i3ecoonooh toh’entoonoo.
I am glad  because I’m here.

Nuhu’ biito’oowuu’, niiteesiine’etiinoo.
On this earth,  I live.

Nii’i3ecoonooh toh’entoonoo.
I am glad  because I’m here.

Hohou beeteen, heeyouhuu hii3eti’.
Thank you Creator,  everything  is good.

Nii’i3ecoonooh toh’entoonoo.
I am glad  because I’m here

SWEET BYE AND BYE

Track 8
Recorded in Oklahoma, performers unknown.

Hii3eti’(ehk)  hoonobee’ hiine’etiit,
It is good  it is joyous  life,

Heisonoonin hitiine’etiit.
Our Father  his life.

Heito’einin nee’etoo3i’ hiine’etiit.
Our relations,  that is where they are  [their] life.
Heisonoonin hitiine’etiit,  
Our Father his life,

Hii3eti’(chk) hoonobee’.  
It is good it is joyous.

Heisonoonin hitiine’etiit,  
Our Father his life,

Hii3eti’(chk) hoonobee’.  
It is good it is joyous.

Nee’eetoot neito’ei hiine’etiit.  
That is where they are my relative [his/her] life.

Hii3eti’(chk) hoonobee’ hiine’etiit,  
It is good it is joyous life,

Heisonoonin hitiine’etiit.  
Our Father his life.

Neito’einin nee’eetoot hiine’etiit.  
My relation, that is where s/he is [his/her] life.

Heisonoonin hitiine’etiit,  
Our Father his life,

Hii3eti’(chk) hoonobee’.  
It is good it is joyous.

Heisonoonin hitiine’etiit,  
Our Father his life,

Hii3eti’(chk) hoonobee’.  
It is good it is joyous.

Nee’eetoo3i’ heito’einin hiine’etiit.  
That is where they are our relatives [their] life.

Nearer My God to Thee  
Track 9  
Recorded in Oklahoma, performers unknown.
Hihebe’ neixoo heetoon.
Above my father! where you are at.

Yiihoonoo heetoon.
I am going where you are at.

Howouunoni neixoo beeteen.
Pity me my father! you are holy.

Yiihoonoo heetoon,
I am going where you are at,

Hihebe’ neixoo heetoon,
Above my father! where you are at,

Hihebe’ neixoo heetoon.
Above my father! where you are at.

Howouunoni neixoo,
Pity me my father!

Yiihoonoo heetoon.
I am going where you are at.

NEITO’EINO’ CIHWOTEESSEE’ – I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS
Track 10
Recorded in Oklahoma, performers unknown.

Neito’eino’ cihwoteessee’,
My relatives come forward and join us

Neito’eino’ cihwoteessee’,
My relatives come forward and join us

Neito’eino’ cihwoteessee’,
My relatives come forward and join us

Noh huu3eti’ noh hoonobee’.
And it is good and it is joyous

NEIXOO BEETEEN – HOLY FATHER, WHEN I HEARD IT
Track 11
Recorded in Oklahoma, performers unknown.

Neixoo beeteen,
My father who art holy

Tihniitowootowoo,
When I heard about it,

Hinee Hihcebe’ toh’onobee’ehk-uu,
That up above that it is happy,

Nihnotitowo Neixoo.
I longed for it My father

Niitowooni yiiisihi’ hinee hihcebe’ hiine’etitiit,
Show me the way towards that Heavenly life,

NEIXOO BEETEEN – HOLY FATHER, I HAVE HEARD IT
Track 12
Recorded in Oklahoma, performers unknown.

Neixoo beeteen.
My father who art holy.

Neixoo beeteen
My father who art holy.

Woowuh neniitowootowoo,
Now I have heard about it,

Woowuh neniitowootowoo,
Now I have heard about it,

Hii3eti’ hinee heeoton.
It is good that place where you are.

Woowuh neniitowootowoo,
Now I have heard about it,

Woowuh neniitowootowoo,
Now I have heard about it,

Hii3eti’ hinee heeoton.
It is good that place where you are.

13
NEIXOO HOWOUUNONEI’EE - FATHER, HAVE MERCY

Track 13
Recorded in Oklahoma, performers unknown.

[previous recording ends: neixoo howouunoni, ‘father take pity on me’]

‘oh Neixoo  howouunonei’ee-hii.
My father  have mercy on us

‘oh Neixoo  howouunonei’ee-hii.
My father  have mercy on us

Yiihoono’  hinee  heetoot-ii.
We are going there [to]  that [place]  where he is.

Yiihoono’  hinee  heetoot-ii.
We are going there [to]  that [place]  where he is.

NEIXOO JESUS - FATHER JESUS, COME CLOSE TO US

Track 14
Recorded in Oklahoma, performers unknown.

‘oh Neixoo  Jesus.
My father  Jesus

‘oh Neixoo  Jesus.
My father  Jesus

Nehcih’ii’oxonei’ee.
You should come close to us.

Nehcih’ii’oxonei’ee  neixoo beeten  Jesus.
You should come close to us  Father Holy  Jesus

NEECISEE’ NENIIISOONO’ – GO FORWARD, MY CHILDREN

Track 15
Recorded in Oklahoma, performers unknown.

‘oh Heisonoonini’ii  Jesus-ii,  (heihiit-iihee)
Our Father  Jesus,  he says
Neecisee’ neniisoono’.
Go forward my children.

hoo3itootowo’-uu, notowuuyoo-huu,
tell the story about it, my mercy/forgiveness,

heetihiitobee3i’, heito’eininoo-huu-huu,
so that they will know/hear about it your relations

heiheit-ii beeteet.
[thus] says the holy one.

SILENT NIGHT
Track 16
Recorded in Oklahoma, performers unknown.

Beeetenoo’ tece’-ii, ho3o’-uu [en]eitoobeet
Holy night star is calm

Ceenisi’ tei’yoonhe’-ii
He is born the child

Beeteet tei’yoonhe’ neneenit
Holy child he is the one

Beeteet tei’yoonhe’
Holy child

Beeteet noo’useet
The holy one he has arrived.

WHEN THE ROLL IS CALLED UP YONDER
Track 17
Recorded in Oklahoma, performers unknown.

nee’eehii3etehk heene3e’inoo’-uu
That’s how good it is all that is known of

heisonoonin Jesus hitoo3itoo,
Our Father Jesus his story,
Neixoo Howouunoni – Take the Name of Jesus With You

Track 18

Neixoo howouunoni.
Father have mercy on me.

Yiihoonoo heetoon,
I am going to where you are,

Nokhuuhu’ neito’eino’-uuhu.
with my relatives.

Neixoo howouunoni.
My father have mercy on me.

Hii3eti’ heetoon.
It is good where you are at.

Hihcebe’ hiine’etiit-ii.[note actually says hiinootit-ii]
In Heaven he lives

Hii3eti’ heetoon.
It is good where you are at.

Neixoo howouunoni.
My father have mercy on me.

Amazing Grace (Southern Arapaho Version)

Track 19

Performers Unknown.

Neixoo tohniitowootwoo
Father! Because I have heard
Hotoo3itoo neixoo.

your story my father,

Tihcee ‘inowoo hee’sii3oobee’.

[And] Since I did not know how true it is,

Hohou nee ‘cihinoo

Thank you I say now.

GOSPEL HYMN

Track 20

Recorded in Oklahoma, performers unknown, 1956

No transcription or translation of this hymn is available yet, but it is
Included for reference. It seems to be about the Resurrection, and to
Talk about “the rock is rolled away.” It also contains words saying “I am happy
When I pray to Jesus.”

NEIXOO JESUS – FATHER JESUS NOW I SEE IT

Track 21

Performers Unknown.

‘oh Neixoo Jesus-ii,

Father Jesus,

‘oh Neixoo Jesus-ii,

Father Jesus

Woowuh nonoohootowooh-huu,

Now I see it,

Heetohnoh’oesitee’ hiine’etiit-ii.

where it is illuminated/glorious life

Hetchhiitowoonei’ee beeten-ii.

You lead must lead us here holy one.
This booklet was created with the support from Northern and Southern Arapaho Tribes in Wyoming and Oklahoma. The materials have been gathered for the Arapaho language documentation project at the University of Colorado Boulder by Andrew Cowell.

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