



THE INDIANS OF COLORADO

THE STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
COLORADO, DENVER



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The Indians of Colorado



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Editor's Note:

This booklet was first published by the State Historical Society of Colorado in 1952, bearing the by-line of LeRoy R. Hafen, then Colorado state historian, now state historian emeritus. This revised edition incorporates much of Dr. Hafen's original text. In the light of later information, some changes and additions have been made, especially in the first part, pertaining to Prehistoric Peoples. The new material in that part was compiled by Willena D. Cartwright, curator of state museums, State Historical Society of Colorado, in consultation with H. M. Wormington, curator, department of archaeology, Denver Museum of Natural History.



DESIGN FROM INTERIOR OF PUEBLO FOOD BOWL

I—*Prehistoric Peoples*

*B*EFORE THE SPANISH arrived in 1541 in what is now the southwestern United States, many different kinds of people with varying ways of life lived, over a period of thousands of years, on the land now known as Colorado. These are called prehistoric peoples, because they lived during the time before their history was put in written form. Archaeologists learn about these peoples from the things they made and left behind them—their artifacts.



EXCAVATION FOR FOLSOM MAN ARTIFACTS AT LINDENMEIER
SITE, NORTHERN COLORADO



FOLSOM POINTS AND KNIVES

Some of these groups left more artifacts than did other groups. Many of the earlier peoples made fewer things than did some of the later, more highly developed, groups.

Archaeologists believe the Western Hemisphere was populated by people who came from Asia, over the Bering Strait. These people, over many hundreds of years, moved slowly down both sides of the western mountain ranges, eventually reaching eastern North America, Central America and even the tip of South America.

These early migrants found much game and good living conditions in the New World. They were hunters, and no doubt they came here in search of food. As the years went on, more and more people followed them. The latest of these probably were the Eskimos of Alaska and northern Canada, who are similar in build and culture to their neighbors in Asia.

A time of more than 20,000 years ago is given by archaeologists as an estimate for the coming to our continent of the first people from Asia. About all that is left of their culture is the stone tools they made. The earliest type of stone tools found in Colorado are known as Sandia points and may have been made as long ago as 20,000 years. The next earliest type of point found in Colorado is the Clovis fluted point, which probably is more than 13,000 years old. Two Clovis points were found at Dent, Colorado, in a site associated with mammoth bones. Next in time are the famous Folsom fluted points, found throughout Colorado, including the Lindenmeier site near Fort Collins. These are dated as having been made about 10,000 years ago. Plainview points, which resemble them but are ungrooved, are slightly younger. They are followed in

MESA DE MAYO DISTRICT

Pecked Petroglyphs

Highway 100

9W25 Jim Kim

Site R 105

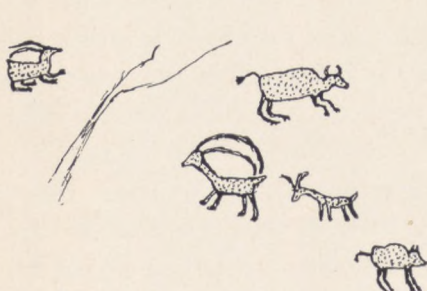


Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

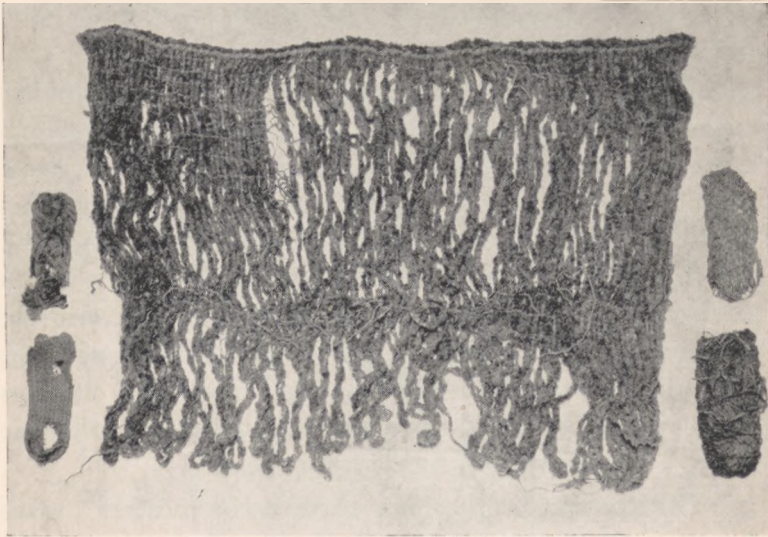
INDIAN PETROGLYPHS

time by Eden and Scottsbluff points, made between 7,000 and 9,000 years ago.

It was about 7,000 years ago that many of the animals hunted by these early people became extinct—the prehistoric horse, camel, antelope, giant ground sloth, tapir, giant bison, wolf, and others. No one knows why they became extinct, leaving only the animals we know today, but there seems to be a connection with the retreat of the glaciers from northern North America. Hunting continued because there still was game, but it was of the type existing today. The early hunters had not developed the bow and arrow; they used the spear, and a device, called an atlatl, with which they hurled the spear.

For thousands of years, these early hunters moved about, meeting other people who had learned new and different ways of doing and making things, so that gradually groups developed in Colorado with differing ways of life, whereas formerly they had all been hunters with much the same mode of living. People living in what we know today as eastern Colorado were influenced by and developed cultures similar to those of the people living east of them; those who lived in northwest and west central Colorado had relationships with the people still farther west as well as to the south; and the cultures of southwest Colorado developed traits akin to those of the cultures to the south.

Some of these later groups of dwellers in eastern Colorado are now called Woodland. They were here by at least 600 A.D. The Upper Republican people (so-called because they lived along the upper reaches of the river we call the Republican) are known to have been there about



YUCCA SANDALS AND FEATHER ROBE

1250 to 1400 A.D. And the Dismal River people apparently lived in Colorado for a limited time after 1650 A.D. These groups had learned to plant crops, although they still depended on hunting for part of their food supply. They made tools of bone and stone, and fashioned simple gray-black pottery. They lived in villages along rivers.

On the Uncompahgre Plateau in West Central Colorado from 2000 to 1000 B.C. lived people who did not make pottery or practice agriculture. Later groups of this area did practice agriculture and made pottery with small indentations which does not resemble Pueblo type ware.

In the northwest corner of the state from 1500 to 1000 B.C. also lived non-farming and non-pottery-making peoples. Later the area was occupied by farming groups subsequently called Fremont People. These people grew



PUEBLO POTTERY FROM SOUTHWESTERN COLORADO

1. Canteen. 2. Double Mug. 3. Mugs from Burial Mounds

corn, beans, and squash. They lived in permanent houses. They made plain gray to black pottery and wove baskets and matting. For clothing they used moccasins, fur cloth and woven materials. Headdresses of feathers and deerskin

have been found, and these people may have worn masks in religious ceremonies. Tools were made from stone and bone, and the bow and arrow were used in hunting.

The inhabitants of southwestern Colorado belonged to what has been named the Anasazi culture of the greater Southwest. The Anasazi culture lasted in Colorado from about the time of Christ to about 1300 A.D. The earliest Anasazi people are known as Basketmakers and the later people as Pueblo.

The Basketmaker culture lasted from about the time of Christ to 700 A.D. Formerly nomad hunters, about 1 A.D. they learned how to grow corn and squash. This knowledge came from the south, from what is now Mexico, and as agriculture was adopted the roving tribes took to a sedentary life. The practice of agriculture marks the beginning of Basketmaker culture, which takes its name from the many baskets made by these people and later found with their burials. It is from Basketmaker burials in dry caves that we learn of the life of these people. They were skilled makers of baskets, woven bags, ropes and game snares. For clothing they made fur robes, blankets woven of yucca fibre and rabbit fur, cord skirts, and yucca

PUEBLO WOMEN BAKING CORN BREAD
Model in State Museum, Denver





sandals. They wore necklaces and bracelets of seeds, shells, animal and bird claws, turquoise and other polished stones. Weapons consisted of a short stone-tipped javelin or dart thrown by an atlatl, knives of stone, daggers of bone, and clubs of wood or of elk antlers. Implements for peaceful purposes included planting sticks, bone and wooden tools, stone scrapers for dressing skins, and metates or milling stones for grinding corn. The farming of the Basketmakers was crude. They built cists or caches to hold and preserve their corn. Some of these storage bins were holes dug in the floor of caves and lined with flat stones. Meat obtained in the hunt they roasted over coals or on spits before the fire. Stews were cooked in waterproof basket-pots. The mixture was not put over an open fire, but was cooked by placing hot stones in the soup to make it boil. About 400 A.D., better types of corn and squash were introduced, making possible a greater dependence on agriculture and a more settled life. About this time the Basketmakers learned to make true pottery. Between 400 and 700 A.D., beans were introduced. The people began to enlarge their storage bins into dwellings by walling them higher with slabs and providing them with pole-and-brush roofs. These two great advances—pottery and improved houses—are



CLIFF PALACE, MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

the chief features of the late Basketmaker period. Products of the Basketmaker culture have been found buried beneath Pueblo remains, at various sites in the Mesa Verde region.

About 700 A.D. round-headed people occur with the earlier long-headed people of Basketmaker times. The cause of this is not clear; possibly a new group was moving into the area, intermarrying with the Basketmakers, or perhaps a new fashion brought this about—a change to a hard cradleboard which flattened the heads of the children. This introduced the later Pueblo culture. However, these two cultures show a definite continuity and the constant change and development of Pueblo times was based on the earlier Basketmaker culture.

New features that appeared during the Pueblo period were the bow and arrow, cotton, turkeys and better pottery with improved decorations. Also, there were changes in the dwellings. The earlier pit houses were first used as dwellings, and then, becoming more highly specialized, were used as ceremonial structures or kivas. Surface granaries gave rise to above-ground houses. Large communal houses, sometimes containing a hundred rooms, were constructed. Some were built in the cliffs, as was Cliff Palace of Mesa Verde. Others, such as Far View House, were erected on the wooded mesa tops.

Danger from enemies was doubtless the cause that induced the Pueblos to build these large communal houses. In these they could defend themselves; and thus protected they were able to improve their living conditions and reach the Classic Period of their culture.

For years scientists were unable to determine dates in the development of the Pueblos. These people could not read or write, and so left no written records. They had forsaken their homes and disappeared before the white man came. So modern scientists had only the buildings and handiwork left by these people as clues to their age and history. Where relics were found in successive layers of earth, separated by layers of dirt and ashes, it was apparent that the artifacts in the deeper layers were older than those at the surface. Also, archaeologists in studying the pottery could note the development in craftsmanship and design to determine a sequence in pottery making.

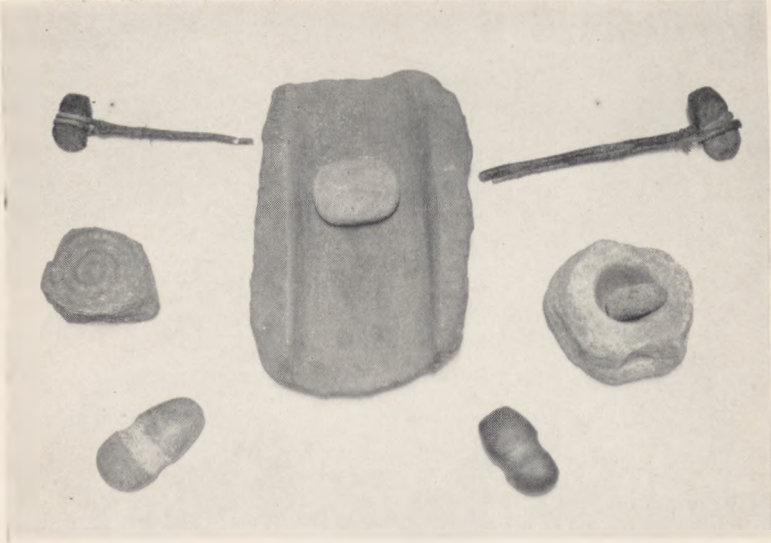
But not until a tree ring chronology was worked out could an absolute dating be made. Dry and wet years leave their respective records in the thickness of each year's ring



SPRUCE TREE HOUSE, MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

of growth on a living tree. By taking cross sections of logs from a prehistoric ruin and comparing the ring sequence with that of logs of known dates, scientists can date a log of unknown origin. By this method it has been determined that Cliff Palace was built in 1073 A.D.

Similarly it is found that the Classic Period of the Pueblos was from about 1000 to 1300 A.D. In Europe this period included the Norman Conquest of England (1066) and the famous Crusades to rescue Jerusalem (1096-1212). This was before the invention of printing; the world was still thought to be flat; and four-fifths of the earth's surface was as yet unknown to Europeans.



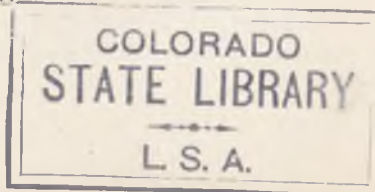
METATE AND MANO (CENTER); MORTAR AND PESTLE (RIGHT);
STONE HAMMERS AND AXES

The Pueblo people were industrious and peaceful. They were primarily farmers, growing crops on the high mesas and in the narrow valleys. They understood and practiced flood-water irrigation, as the remains of their ditches testify. Corn was their principal crop but they also raised squashes, beans, and melons. They hunted deer and other wild game, using bow and arrows, and gathered wild berries, fruits and seeds. They domesticated turkeys and dogs, but horses, cattle and sheep were unknown to them until the Spanish came.

Their communal houses, built of stone, were often three or four stories high. Although they had only stone axes and hammers, they were able to cut down trees and hew stones. Their masonry was excellent.

Dances and ceremonies were held in honor of the sun, springtime, harvest, and in petition for rain and for the favor of spirits inhabiting the unseen world.

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The most interesting rooms were round underground kivas, which were ceremonial and club rooms for the men and boys. Apparently each clan had its own kiva, for there was one for every five to fifteen living rooms. In the center of the kiva's flat roof was a small opening by which the men descended into the room by a ladder and through which the smoke escaped from the fire pit in the middle of the floor. In the wall was the ventilator shaft, which ran to the surface. A bench extended around the circular wall of the kiva.

The living rooms were small, with doorways of two types—rectangular and T-shaped. No chairs, tables, or bedsteads were in the rooms; mats, baskets, and pottery were the chief furnishings. No doubt much time was spent in the open. Usually the women's grinding bins were outside the house, as were the fires over which they cooked their meals.

The houses in the cliffs could be reached only by crude steps pecked into the canyon walls, or by wooden ladders. Over these were carried supplies of food, wood, and water.

When home from the fields and the hunt the men mended their weapons and tools, chipped new arrow and spear heads, wove mats, and held ceremonial dances and councils. While the women were grinding corn, cooking meals, and decorating pottery they had opportunity to enjoy social life.

Brown-skinned children clambered up and down canyon trails, and ran among the cedar and pinon trees on the mesa tops. The little girls dressed wooden dolls while the boys practiced shooting with bows and arrows.



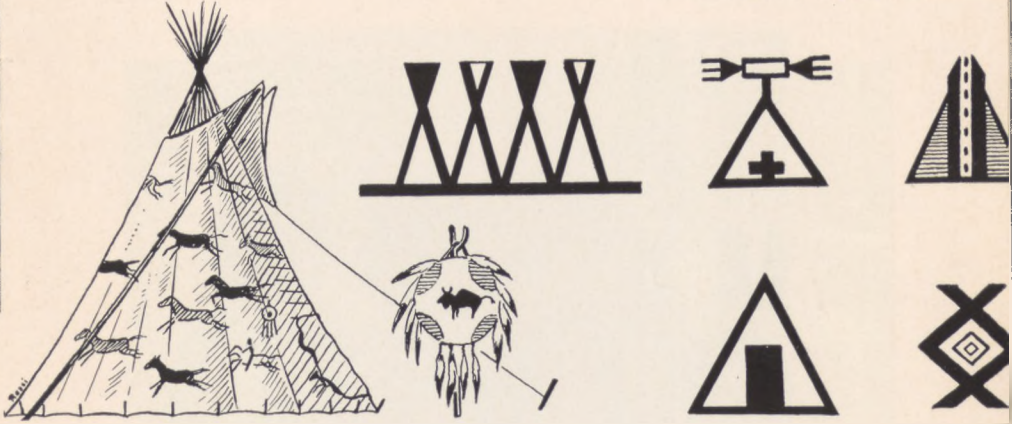
MUGS FROM BURIAL MOUNDS, MONTEZUMA COUNTY, COLORADO

Perhaps the highest art of the Pueblo people was expressed in their pottery. Although they did not have the potter's wheel, they produced excellent ware. The primi-

tive potter would roll out a long rope of clay and coil it into a disc, pressing and pinching each layer firmly onto the preceding one. As the disc grew he built it outward and upward into the shape desired.

The earliest pottery was rough. Some pieces were decorated and some left undecorated. Black lines were the first simple decorations. Then unique designs of geometric figures and simplified animal forms were devised. These characterize the typical Mesa Verde pottery, examples of which, in the form of bowls, mugs, and jars, may be seen in the Colorado State Museum in Denver.

There has been considerable speculation as to what became of these Pueblo Cliff Dwellers of southwest Colorado. Were they destroyed by famine, disease, or enemies? The most likely explanation is that there were many reasons. Certainly the long continued drouth, the one shown by the narrowed tree rings of the years 1276 to 1299, was the culminating influence which caused these people to move south. Contributing factors may have been the difficulty of practicing agriculture in this area of cold winters and little rain, the threat of encroachment by nomadic Navahos and Apaches, intervillage strife and social difficulties. They undoubtedly moved south into New Mexico and Arizona and were absorbed by other Pueblo people in that area. Some present-day Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and the Hopis of Arizona tell of forefathers who lived in cliffs to the north. Similarities in house structure, in religious customs, and in manner of life suggest a relationship between the prehistoric people of Mesa Verde and the Indians we know today, whose era, being within the time of written history, is called the historic period.



II — *Indians*

BY LEROY R. HAFEN

*W*ITHIN FIFTY YEARS after the discovery of the New World by Columbus, a Spanish expedition was penetrating the far interior of western America, to the borders of Colorado. Fresh from conquests over the Indian empires of the Aztecs and the Incas, the gold-hungry Spaniards were hoping for another rich Mexico or Peru to exploit in the mysterious land to the north. This was the lure that brought Coronado and his splendidly equipped cavalcade to New Mexico and to the high plains east of the upper Rio Grande in 1541.

In writing to the king of Spain, Coronado thus described the Indians of the plains and their country: "After nine days' march [from the Rio Grande in New Mexico]



CHILDREN OF SEVERO, CHIEF OF THE CAPOTE UTES



BUCKSKIN CHARLIE, SOUTHERN UTE

From painting by Charles Craig in 1893. Presented by Mrs. Verner Z. Reed to the State Historical Society of Colorado.

I reached some plains, so vast that I did not find their limit anywhere that I went, although I traveled over them for more than three hundred leagues [a Spanish league is 2.63 miles]. And I found such a quantity of cows [buffalo]

in these, of the kind that I wrote Your Majesty about, which they have in this country, that it is impossible to number them. . . . And after seventeen days' march I came to a settlement of Indians who are called *Querechos* [herdsmen], who travel around with these cows, who do not plant, and who eat the raw flesh and drink the blood of the cows they kill, and they tan the skins of the cows, with which all the people of this country dress themselves here. They have little field tents [lodges] made of the hides of the cows, tanned and greased, very well made, in which they live while they travel near the cows, moving with these. They have dogs which they load, which carry their tents and poles and belongings."

During the long years from the first Spanish contact with the Indians until Anglo-Americans reached Colorado (about 1800) shifts occurred in the Indian population. The Apaches, who inhabited the plains in early Spanish days, were crowded from the region by the Comanches at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Then the Arapahoes and Cheyennes came to the plains country, having been pushed westward by the Sioux.

During the same centuries the New Mexico Spaniards had as neighbors in the mountains to the north the people they called the *Yutabs*—our Utes of today.

Contact with the whites revolutionized the Indian manner of life. From the white man the Indian obtained horses, metals, and firearms. Mounted on the horse, the Indian could easily kill plenty of buffalo and could range farther in raiding his enemies. Metal knives, axes, and arrow points were superior to those fashioned of stone. Guns had advantages over the bow and arrow.



CRAZY BULL AND FRIDAY, NORTHERN ARAPAHOES

White men also brought bright cloth and warm blankets; colored glass beads to decorate dresses and moccasins; looking glasses, brass finger rings, tinkling bells, and numerous gewgaws. For these attractive articles the Indians bartered buckskins, buffalo robes, jerked meat, and enemy captives.

PRINCIPAL TRIBES OF COLORADO

When the first white settlers made homes in Colorado, about the middle of the nineteenth century, they found this picture of Indian occupancy: the Utes claimed the mountain region; the Arapahoes and Cheyennes occupied the eastern plains. On the borders were occasional visitors: the Crows and Sioux on the north, Pawnees on the east, Kiowas and Comanches in the southeast, Navahos and Apaches in the south, Shoshones in the northwest.

The Utes, a branch of the Shoshonean family, were the oldest of these inhabitants. They claimed the whole mountain area, the Western Slope, and most of present Utah. They were short, stocky, and so dark-skinned that other tribes referred to them as the "black Indians." As hunters and as marksmen, with bow and arrow or with guns, they were justly famous.

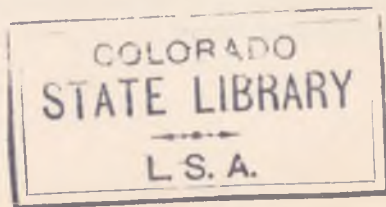
The Arapahoes, of the Algonquian family, came next. They had a copper-colored skin and were taller than the Utes. In earlier years they had lived near the Great Lakes and had engaged in agriculture. Driven from that region, they forsook the settled life and became nomads, wandering over the high plains between the Arkansas and the Platte. One of their customs gave the tribe its name, *Arapaho*, meaning "tattooed on the breast."



PHOTO BY ROSE AND HOPKINS. DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY WESTERN COLLECTION

SOUTHERN UTES

The Cheyennes, another branch of the Algonquian family, were the newest comers to Colorado. They, too, had once grown crops, on the Cheyenne River of North Dakota. About 1800 this tribe moved southwestward onto the plains, where they quickly adopted the horse and the roving life. They were well received by the Arapahoes, and a warm friendship developed, even though their dialects were so different that communication was largely through the sign language. The friendship has persisted to the present day.



Quite different were the relations of the Plains Indians with the mountain Utes. Both made frequent sallies into enemy territory for scalps and plunder. The conflicts continued even after the white settlers came to Colorado, and Ute war parties occasionally held scalp dances in the streets of pioneer Denver.

MANNER OF LIFE

The Indian manner of life was in striking contrast with ours of today. None of the Colorado Indians lived in fixed towns; their villages were moved from place to place, as game and as grass for their horses were available. No agriculture was practiced. The very existence of the Plains Indians depended upon the buffalo. This animal was the principal source of their food, shelter, and clothing. Little wonder that the Indians honored him in their ceremonies.

Women provided the meals, made the clothing, tended the children, helped in procuring and preserving food, and did most of the labor involved in moving camp. Men devoted themselves to the hunt and war, fashioned weapons and ceremonial implements, and conducted the religious ceremonies.

Free-handed hospitality was a part of daily life in an Indian village. Food was always placed before a visitor. In contrast to conditions among the whites, there was never feasting in one lodge and starving in another.

In the family circle there was love and kindness. Children were almost never given physical punishment, lest their spirit be broken. The Indian endured hunger, privation, and misfortune without complaining. Murder and suicide were rare. Drunkenness came only after white men introduced liquor.



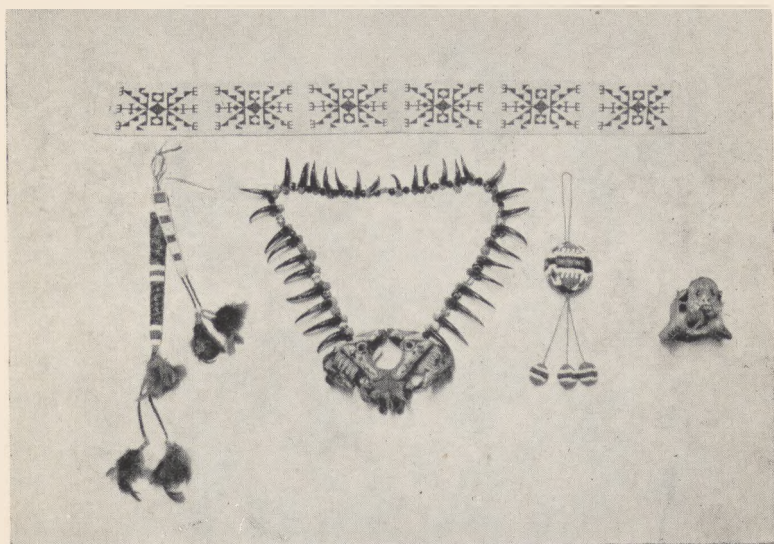
COURTESY DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY WESTERN COLLECTION
PHOTO BY T. M. MCKEE

UTE CHIEF SHAVANO (Center)

Left: Monk Shavano (the Chief's Son). Right: Mountain Sheep (Shavano's Brother)

FOOD, SHELTER, AND CLOTHING

Food. Meat was the principal food of the Colorado aborigines. The Plains Indian relied primarily on the buffalo and antelope; the mountain Indians, upon the deer and buffalo. Rabbits, birds, and other small game were also hunted. Wild berries, fruits, and edible roots were gathered. These were not only used while fresh, but were dried and stored for future use. Dried fruits and dried meat were pounded fine, mixed, and heated in buffalo fat. This rich food, known as *pemmican*, when poured into skin bags



ARTICLES OF SIOUX ADORNMENT
EAGLE CLAW NECKLACE (CENTER)

could be preserved for months. Dog meat was a common food, especially among the Cheyennes and Arapahoes.

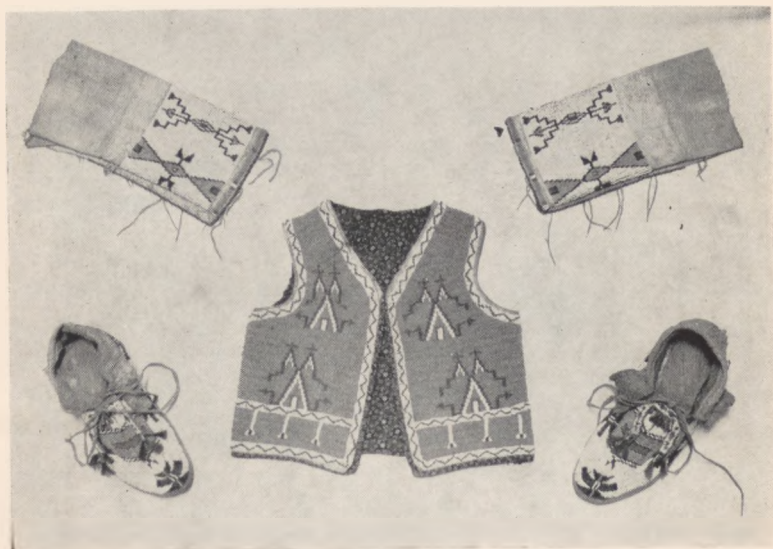
Indians were more provident than they are usually credited with being. While they did gorge themselves when on the hunt, they also saved much meat for future needs. This was done by cutting the meat into long slices and hanging it on lines or rocks to dry in the sun, or be smoked over slow fires.

The Tepee. The shelter of the Indians was adapted to their roving life on the treeless plains. The lodge, or tepee, was made of dressed buffalo skins sewed together with sinew to fit over a cone-shaped framework of slender poles. The edges were staked down to the ground. These skin houses were light, easy to erect and to transport, strong

to resist the wind, and capable of shedding rain and snow. The tepees were made of from eleven to twenty-one buffalo skins and formed a room ten to twenty feet in diameter. There was a flap door in the front of the lodge, a fireplace in the center, and a smoke vent at the top. Some lodges had an inner lining of buffalo skins hung to the lodgepoles as an added protection against severe weather.

Clothing. In the early years clothing was made principally from the dressed skins of buffalo, deer, antelope, elk, mountain sheep, and rabbits. The sewing was done with sinew thread.

Women usually wore leggings, moccasins and a gown that reached below the knees. Dresses of older women often were patched, and dark brown with dirt and grease. Those



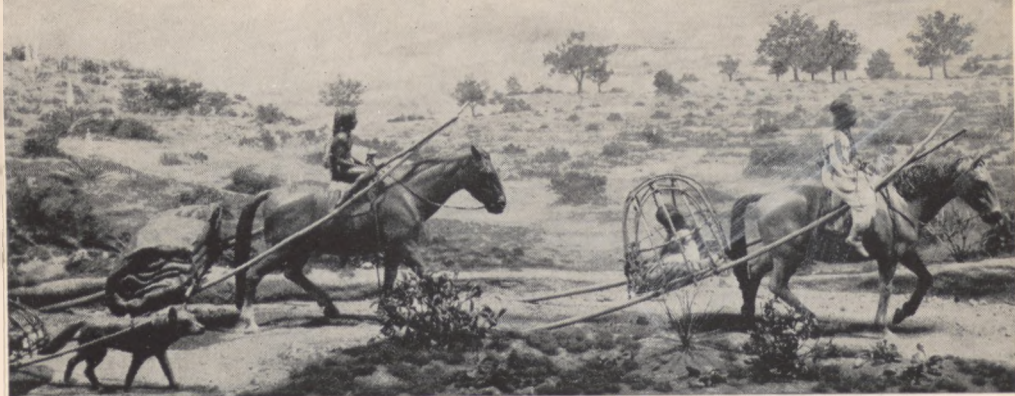
BEADED VEST, MOCCASINS, AND LEGGINGS

of young women and wives of prominent men were white, clean, and handsome.

Men dressed in shirts, robes, breech clouts, leggings, and moccasins. Feathered head-dresses were worn in ceremonies and dances. Fringes of buckskin, strings of elk's teeth, and bear and eagle claws were favorite decorations. Designs worked in dyed porcupine quills and colored glass beads brightened moccasins, leggings, shirts, and dresses. From white traders the Indians obtained bracelets, spangles, looking glasses, brass finger rings, and various baubles. Men and women both used much paint, bought from the traders or made from fruit and plant juices, and colored clays.



PARFLECHES, WATER BOTTLE, WOMAN'S SADDLE



INDIAN TRAVOIS

Transportation Series, State Museum, Denver

EQUIPMENT AND UTENSILS

Articles of horse equipment were important. Ropes were made of twisted hair from the horse's mane and tail, or from rawhide. The bridle was merely a piece of rope tied about the horse's jaw and extending to the rider's hand. One type of Indian saddle was high-peaked front and back, the pommel and cantle being made from elkhorn prongs or from forked sticks covered with rawhide. Common saddles or riding pads consisted of a flat buffalo skin bag filled with grass or buffalo hair. On the buffalo hunt or in war the men rode bareback.

The Indians had no wheeled vehicles. Instead, they used the *travois*. This "prairie buggy" consisted of two long poles with the small ends crossed above the horse's shoulders and the large ends dragging on the ground. Two braces at the rear of the horse held the poles apart, and helped support the load. On this carrier were transported small children, old folks, or the sick, and camp equipment and utensils. In the days before the Indian obtained the horse, he used a similar travois for the dog.



SIOUAN CEREMONIAL WAR CLUBS, TOMAHAWK, EAGLE-BONE WHISTLE,
ARM BANDS, KNIFE SHEATH, SCALP (IN CENTER)

Camp utensils were primitive. Bags and containers were made from the paunch or intestines of the buffalo, or from skins. Platters and bowls were fashioned of wood; spoons of horn or wood. Water jugs were made of closely woven willow withes, waterproofed with pine pitch. The *parfleche* was a small rawhide trunk or carryall. Willow shoots strung together with cords and padded with layers of grass formed mattresses. Buffalo robes and blankets obtained from the traders served as bedding.

After contact with the whites, the Indians obtained iron pots, tin cups, brass kettles, and steel axes, knives, awls and needles. Pipe bowls were carved from red, black, or green pipestone; the long wooden stems frequently were painted and decorated with horsehair and feathers.

WEAPONS, HUNTING, AND WAR

The bow and arrow was the original Indian weapon. The bow, from three to five feet long, was generally made of hickory or juniper wood, or of straight pieces of horn, that were spliced, glued together, and wrapped with sinew. The bow string was twisted sinew.

The making of good arrows required great skill. Shoots of cherry and tough willows were peeled, straightened, scraped, and dried. With sinew string and glue, the split and trimmed feathers of turkeys or buzzards were fastened to the shaft. The arrow's flight depended largely on its feathers.

In the early times the arrowheads were made of flint or bone. After the coming of the white man, metal points



INDIAN WAR EQUIPMENT
Quiver and Arrows; War Shield; Bow and Arrows



INDIAN BUFFALO HUNT
Diorama in State Museum, Denver

were used because they were sharper, did not break, and were more easily fashioned. Barrel hoops were used in making these sheet-iron points, which were given a sharp edge by filing and whetting. Arrows generally bore the mark of the owner. The arrow had the great advantage of being a silent weapon. It did not make a loud report like the gun to warn the game or the enemy. Up to seventy yards it was deadly. The Indian could shoot arrows much more rapidly than a white man could fire and load a muzzle-loading rifle.

For the buffalo chase and war the lance was a useful weapon. It consisted of a shaft six or seven feet long, tipped with a sharp point of flint or iron. In battle the warriors frequently carried circular shields made of several thicknesses of dried, tough bullhide. Some shields, painted with religious signs and ornamented with medicine bundles, were thought to exert a magic protection. Early battle axes had stone heads, grooved for attachment of handles. Later, steel tomahawks were obtained from the whites.

The Hunt. In the days before the introduction of those wonderful hunting aids—the horse, metal knives, and firearms—the Indians must have had a real struggle for existence. An early method of getting buffalo was to build a V-shaped chute or fence with arms extending far out on the prairie. The angle of the fence was at the edge of a cliff or a cut bank, over which the buffalo were driven. If the cliff was high, the fall would kill or cripple the animals; if low, a corral at the foot was built to halt them after their plunge. With preparations completed, the hunters made a long tour around a small buffalo herd and drove it gradually toward the trap. After the drive the men killed the crippled and trapped animals with stone axes, spears, and arrows.

Antelope also were led or driven through similar chutes to pits or pens on the prairie, their well-known

INDIAN HORSE STEALING RAID
Model in State Museum, Denver



curiosity being utilized for luring them in. In a somewhat similar way game was caught in pens or narrow valleys in the mountains.

After acquiring the horse, the Indians adopted an entirely different method for the buffalo hunt. With fleet mounts, hunters could overtake the buffaloes and shoot or spear them as they ran. The hunt was planned and carried out by the tribe as a whole, no individual hunting being permitted.

After runners had located a buffalo herd, ceremonies to insure a successful hunt were performed. Then at break of day the hunters, stripped to breechclout and moccasins and carrying bows and arrows, rode off bareback on their swiftest horses. When they overtook the herd the charge began. Passing the old bulls in the rear, the horsemen pushed on to the cows and young animals in the lead. While horses and buffaloes were racing side by side, the hunters drew their arrows to the head and drove them to the feather into the fleeing animals. It was exciting and dangerous, this racing in the midst of the sea of brown humps and tossing horns. But ponies and riders alike were nimble and skillful, avoiding the badger holes, leaping the gullies, and escaping the thrusts of maddened buffaloes.

After the rushing mass of animals had passed and the dust had cleared, the prairie was dotted with brown carcasses. Presently the women and children came up to skin the buffalo, cut up the meat, and haul it back to camp.

War. Since earliest times conflicts had occurred among Indian tribes. The introduction of the horse increased war raids and extended their range. The desire for more horses, the craving for glory, eagerness for revenge, and the love



WAR PARTY SCALP DANCE

From R. I. Dodge, "Our Wild Indians" (1882)

of fighting, urged on the warrior in his career. Death in battle was looked upon as glorious. A young man had little opportunity to take part in a feast, sit in council, or marry until he had demonstrated his courage and ability by touching or killing an enemy in battle. War was thus as necessary to their culture as markets are to ours.

Before going on the warpath an Indian tribe consulted its medicine man to learn if the omens were favorable. Then ceremonies were observed and prayers offered to the spirits for success and protection. Upon setting forth, each man carried his personal belongings—arms, food, and clothing. Scouts went ahead to locate the enemy. Stealing of horses usually was accomplished stealthily at night; attack upon an enemy camp came at dawn.

A war party would take careful precautions for its own safety, preferring to fight from cover rather than in



UTE CHIEFS OURAY AND IGNACIO



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UTES AT MANITOU SPRINGS, 1912

the open. A common trick, especially when fighting white soldiers, was to send a small party on swift horses to charge the enemy and then flee, hoping thus to lead the pursuers into an ambush. Indians were usually cautious, refraining from attack until they had a distinct advantage over the foe.

High honors went to the braves who were first to "count coup" on an enemy; that is, to touch or strike him. Scalps were taken as trophies, to exhibit in the victory celebration. Stealing of horses from an enemy was considered a noble achievement, worthy of great honor.

Return of a victorious war party brought hilarious rejoicing in the home camp. Dancing, singing, and the beating of drums honored the warriors. The scalp dance often lasted through several nights of wild celebration.

In war the Indian neither gave nor asked mercy. He was cruel, revengeful, and frequently tortured a captured enemy.

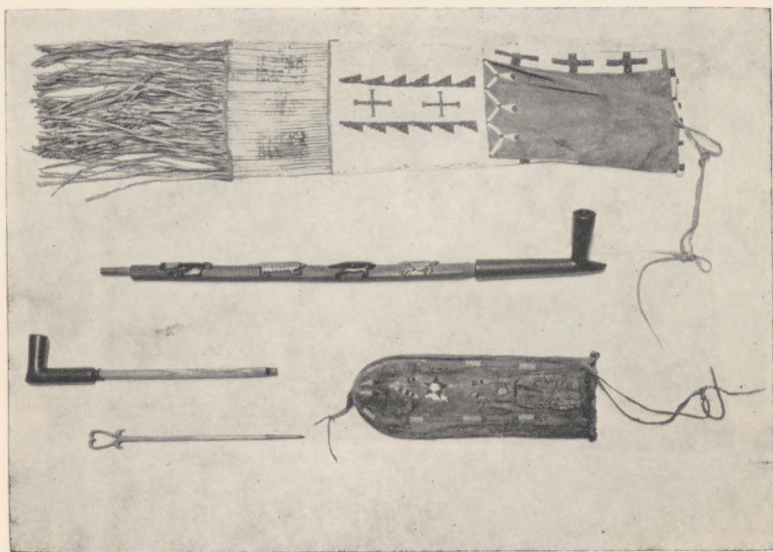
GOVERNMENT AND RELIGION

Indian government was democratic, the will of the tribe being the controlling power. Rules and custom had the force of law. Tribes and bands were usually independent of each other, but occasionally joined forces for a special purpose. Such united action did not last long, and this unwillingness to unite helps to account for Indian failure to offer a more successful resistance to the white conquest of their land.

The chief of the tribe usually won his place by exceptional ability; he did not inherit the position. The extent of his power depended largely upon his force of character. Some chiefs were absolute rulers; others exerted little control. The great chief was the one who was wise as well as brave, kind, and liberal. Among the Cheyennes the chief was elected for a ten-year period, with right of re-election. Among the Utes and Arapahoes he retained his position for life, and frequently chose his successor.

A council of sub-chiefs or leading men usually decided policy matters. At a council meeting each man was given opportunity to speak fully and was paid respectful attention. Soldier groups, fraternal societies, and important women exerted great influence.

Religion. The Indian was deeply religious. He strove through prayer and deed to win favor of the many unseen spirits that peopled his universe. He looked upon the sun, moon, animals, trees, and rivers as persons possessing intelligence and power. Strongly aware of mighty forces about him—thunder, lightning, earthquake, storms, disease—he prayed often and earnestly to the gods and spirits for protection and guidance.



UPPER: PIPE BAG. MIDDLE: SITTING BULL'S PIPE.
 LOWER: PIPE AND CLEANER: TOBACCO POUCH

Medicine men, or priests, were supposed to understand the mysteries and have some control or influence with them; they could read the signs and forecast the fortunes of hunting and war parties, could drive away evil spirits and heal the sick.

The Wise One Above was the chief god of the Cheyennes. Another god lived under the ground and four powerful spirits dwelt at the four points of the compass. In ceremonial smoking, the pipe was pointed in these six directions out of respect for these powers. The Arapahoes and Utes had similar gods, beliefs, and practices.

Animals were believed to exert good or evil influences over man. The buffalo typified power; the coyote and spider, wisdom. The bear, eagle, owl, and beaver each had his peculiar magic.



INDIAN SELF TORTURE IN THE SUN DANCE

From R. I. Dodge, "Our Wild Indians" (1882)

Treatment for disease was a mixture of natural and spiritual methods. Healing herbs and certain roots were administered with beneficial results. Evil spirits were the principal cause of sickness, so the medicine man's chief concern was to drive away such spirits. This he did by chanting incantations, and other ceremonial performances.

When a person died, his close relatives cut off their hair, and gashed their bodies. For burial, the Cheyennes wrapped their dead in blankets and robes, and laid them upon a pole scaffold or in a tree. The Arapahoes commonly buried theirs in the ground. The Utes placed their dead in caves in cliffs. A man's war equipment and personal effects were laid beside him. One or more of his horses were killed to accompany him to the happy hunting grounds.

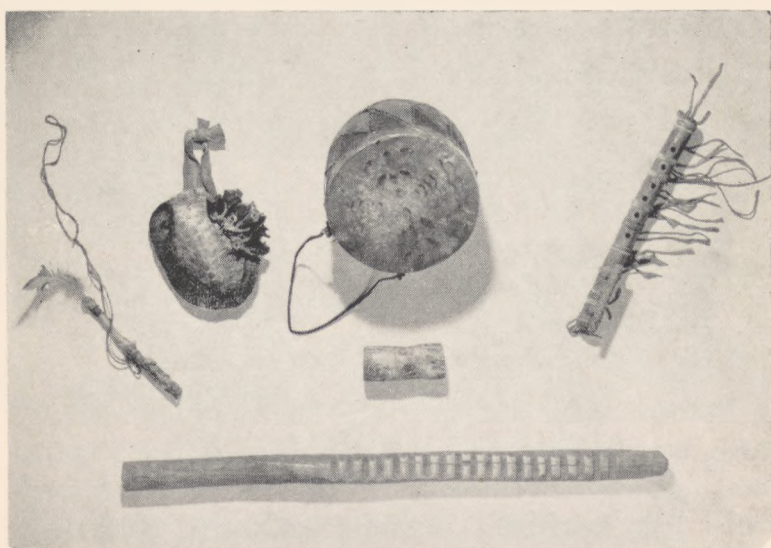
DANCES, MUSIC, AND ART

Most Indian dances were partly religious ceremonies. The Sun Dance was the most elaborate and important. It was performed to ward off evil and win the good will of the spirits. Modified in many ways, it has persisted to the present.

The performance was divided into the secret rites of preparation and the public show, each part lasting four days. The secret ceremony consisted of smoking, praying, and cleansing of those who were to perform. The public performance took place in a large specially-built medicine lodge, circular in form and about sixty to one hundred feet in diameter. This lodge contained an altar and a tall center pole carrying a "thunder bird nest." Performers remained without food, dancing and resting at alternate periods. Facing the center pole, which represented the "Man Above," they danced forward and back while musicians seated near the entrance chanted songs and beat a big drum.

UTE INDIAN BEAR DANCE





BEAR GROWLER, LOVE FLUTE, DRUM,
TURTLE SHELL RATTLE, BONE WHISTLE

In early years the performers underwent various forms of torture to win the favors of the gods. Sometimes dancers would drag buffalo skulls tied to a stick thrust through flesh in the man's back. Sometimes they inserted in the muscles of the breast two skewers and attached them by a rope to the tall center pole of the lodge; then the dancer jerked backward until the skewer tore through the skin. In recent years fasting and continuous dancing are the forms of sacrifice that have supplanted the earlier torture methods. On the last day of the dance all members of the tribe place articles of clothing or other gifts in the medicine lodge as a form of personal sacrifice.

Music. The drum was the favorite musical instrument. Its deep throbs announced religious ceremonies and dances.

Drums, varying in size, were made of horse hide or buffalo skin stretched over a willow framework. Rattles, shaken in dances, were made of rawhide shaped into a sphere and enclosing a number of pebbles. A notched stick resting on a sounding board, when rubbed with another stick, produced weird music which was accompanied by the accented chant of the musicians.

Whistles were fashioned from the leg bones of eagles, sandhill cranes, and other birds. The flute, about eighteen inches long, was made of wood, the finger holes being burned out with a hot iron. Flutes were supposed to have peculiar powers that could charm a girl into loving the serenader. On summer evenings the plaintive flute call quickened the pulse of Indian maidens.



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UTE HORSEMEN CROSSING LOS PINOS, 1899



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UTE CAMP NEAR IGNACIO, 1890

The music of the Indians was chiefly vocal. Unwearyed singers, they chanted of love, war, religion, joy, and sorrow. The singing frequently was in unison, the high, falsetto tones of the women being an octave above those of the men.

VILLAGE LIFE

Let us look at a typical village of Cheyennes or Arapahoes located beside the Arkansas or Platte. Cone-shaped lodges, arranged roughly in a circle, stand in the bottom-land beside the river. Most of the tepees are weather-stained and smoke-browned at their tops. Figures of men and animals are painted on the sides. Suspended from slender pole tripods outside the lodges and decorated with feathers, fringes, and scalps are medicine bundles, arms, and equipment of the braves.

Plumes of blue smoke spangled with bright sparks rise from the lodges at break of day. Women hurry down to the stream for water. Men untie the valuable horses that

have been staked near the lodge and free them to graze on the prairie. The noise and bustle of the camp increases. Tousle-headed children shout, dogs yelp, women chatter and scold, colts whinny and are answered by the neighs of their mothers.

Wrapped in robes, the men come from the lodges and, followed by trotting boys, move down to the river for their morning swim. After splashing, ducking, and shouting is over, they return to the lodges, comb their hair, put on their leggings, and wrap their robes or blankets about them.

Breakfast is now served. A sharp stick or a big spoon made of wood or buffalo horn is used to dish out the food onto wooden platters. Fingers serve instead of forks. There is a pause in the eating as the voice of the old crier is heard



INDIAN WOMEN PLAYING THE GAME OF SHINNY
AT NAVAHO SPRINGS IN 1906

chanting the news and shouting the commands of the chief.

The meal over, everyone turns to the duties or pleasures of the day. While some men set out on a hunt for deer, antelope, or elk, and some make or repair hunting or war equipment, others plan a sacred ceremony or a raid against their enemies. A number of half-grown boys ride off to tend the horse herd. Some young men lounge in the sun braiding their black hair, plucking eyebrows and whiskers, and painting their faces. White-haired old men sit together to recount past adventures, while little boys crowd close to hear the thrilling tales.

Upon the women falls most of the work about camp. Some scrape and tan hides and robes, some dry meat, others make pemmican—pounding up jerked meat and dried fruit with a stone hammer. Here a group is patching lodge covers or sewing hides together to make new ones. There a number are making moccasins, leggings, and dresses, and decorating them with dyed porcupine quills or gay-colored glass beads. One party departs to gather berries and choke cherries; another, equipped with sharpened sticks, sets out to dig roots for food; a third goes in search of wood.

Though hard at work the women have fun. They tell stories and play jokes, keeping up a continuous chatter. At times they indulge in various gambling games, on which they wager their beads, moccasins, and buckskins.

Babies are tied to their cradleboards, with only their heads left free. Little youngsters toddle after the dogs or play in the dirt. Older children imitate their elders. Little girls, in dresses that reach to the knees, clothe and care for dolls and puppies. They sing their babies to sleep and play at moving camp, using the dog travois for carriers.



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UTE WOMEN AND THEIR BABIES

The boys, dressed with a string of beads, or a charm around the neck, or a buckskin thong about the waist, practice the hunt and war. With bow and arrows they shoot at birds, prairie dogs, and rabbits. They ride stick

horses on buffalo hunts, engage in sham battles, and scalp the fallen enemy.

In late afternoon the appearance of the camp changes. Women put their work aside to turn to recreation. As the sun nears the horizon they re-kindle their fires and start to prepare the evening meal. Berry-pickers come in with their stained bags bulging with fruit. Squaws, staggering under their large bundles of wood, deposit their burdens by the lodges. Men ride in from the hunt, their horses laden with red meat. Soon the camp is bristling with activity. Feasts are arranged and everyone appears hospitable and happy.

As darkness settles over the camp the noises increase. Laughter, drumming and singing mingle with shouts at the feasts. Boys chase each other through the camp, yelling and wrestling. Dogs bark, horses whinny. Fires in the tepees turn the lodges into yellow cones.

As the night wears on the noises grow less. One by one the fires go out and the lodges grow dark. The quiet of night covers the village.

OUR HERITAGE FROM THE INDIAN

Most of the Indians have gone from Colorado. The remnant of the Northern Araphoes are farming on the Wind River of Wyoming. The Northern Cheyennes raise cattle in Montana. The Southern Cheyennes and Southern Arapahoes have some oil lands in Oklahoma. The Uncompahgre and the White River Utes were removed to a reservation in eastern Utah. Only the Southern Utes and the Ute Mountain Utes remain in Colorado. In the southwest corner of the state they are engaged in farming and stockraising.



COURTESY DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY WESTERN COLLECTION
CHIPETA, WIFE OF UTE CHIEF OURAY

Although the wild Indian is gone, he has left an impression upon the state. Indian names dot our map. The Saguache, Uncompahgre, Yampa, Arikaree, and Apishapa are Colorado streams that have retained their Indian names. Seven Colorado counties and a number of towns, mountains, mesas, and springs have names of Indian origin.

Many Indian foods are on the white man's table today—potatoes, corn, squash, and turkeys. Tobacco, also, came from the Indian. Valuable lessons in hunting, fishing, and frontier crafts were taught the white man by the American Indian.

In the realms of art, music, and literature the Indian made a contribution. His unusual designs and color com-

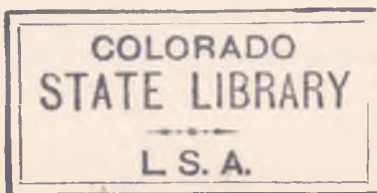
binations, his arrowheads, baskets, quill and beadwork on buckskin are creations of beauty.

Plaintive native music has a charm of its own. It has found embodiment in solos, orchestration, and the opera. Not only in music, but also in the dance there is expression of the Indian's rhythm and grace.

Creation myths, adventure tales, and Indian legends enrich our literature. The Indian was poetic; his speech abounds in symbols and metaphors. Note the poetry of some of his concepts and expressions: "The Never Summer Range," "May the Giver of all Good make ever Sunrise in your Heart," the cowslip "that opens the swamps by blossoming in the spring." Many names are poetic, for example: Alights on the Clouds, Laughing Water, Grass Singing (the name of Kit Carson's Indian wife), Face to the Storm (incorrectly rendered Rain in the Face).

The Indian was a natural orator. He practiced speech making at the councils and in the counting coups ceremony. He was eloquent, sincere; he made effective use of figures of speech.

The Indian has long influenced our literature and art. Though often unfaithfully and sometimes grotesquely portrayed in "Western" movies and magazines, he is nonetheless a figure of true literary, dramatic, and artistic achievement. In painting, in sculpture, on the printed page he has a lasting place. The Indian has not yet received his just due.



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