

COLORADO INDIANS

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FOOD, CLOTHING AND SHELTER

FOOD

BUFFALO MEAT

“It took our women only a short time to cut up a buffalo..., using the wide knives they carried hung from their belts. The brains and the liver we ate raw.... The rest of the meat they cut into strips and hung from a pole set up between two forked sticks to dry.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 29.

PEMMICAN

“Some of this [dried beef] they pounded and mixed with dried fruits and covered with melted tallow. This we called pemmican. It made a fine food, and we never went hungry when we had it.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 29.

GATHERING FOOD

“Women and children are employed in gathering grasshoppers, crickets, ants, and various other insects, which are carefully preserved for food, together with roots, and grass seed. From the mountains, they bring the nuts, which are found in the cones of the pine, acorns from dwarf oaks, different kinds of berries, and the inner bark of the pine, which has a sweet acid taste, not unlike lemon syrup.”

Source: Warren Angus Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains* (Salt Lake City: Rocky Mountain Book Shop, 1940): 212.

PICKLES, HERBS AND PRESERVES

“Every season mother [a Cheyenne] used to gather prickly pears for sweet pickles. She would burn off the stickers, and cook up the pears in vinegar and sugar. They were delicious. She knew all the prairie herbs and their use by the Indians; she gathered mint to make medicine; sage leaves were dried and steeped into sage-tea, which she felt was just good for everything. We always had preserves made with the wild plum, choke-cherries, grapes, etc.”

Source: Mary Prowers Hudnall, "Early History of Bent County," *Colorado Magazine*, 22 (1945): 241.

CHOCKECHERRIES

“If you've seen a chokecherry tree, it's all filled with berries.... The upper part is for the birds. The middle part is ours, the human's, the rest, the bottom part is for the animals that cannot climb. That's why we were taught that we don't pick the whole thing. We leave some, because God gave us this wonderful food, not just for the human beings but for all of us. So we have to share with the little birds and little wild animals at the bottom.”

Source: Isabel Kent, quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing, 1990): 28.

INVITED TO A UTE FEAST

“Once we and some of the grownups were invited to a feast. My eyes still smart at the recollection of the smoke-filled tepee. The meal was cooked over an open fire in the center and the smoke was supposed to find an outlet in the aperture [opening] at the top. I well remember the look of the meat, dipped out of a pot and handed to each of us with great ceremony. We were bound to eat or be guilty of unendurable insult to our hosts. It looked the color of an elephant's hide and was just about as tough.”

Source: Elsie Palmer, quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing, 1990): 22.

CLOTHING

THE FINEST COSTUME

“The women’s finest costume was a fringed buckskin skirt, smoked or white, cut straight and long, and a straight buckskin jacket. These were trimmed in several ways: with rows of elks’ teeth, with beaded or painted designs, or with strings of beads or jingles added to the fringe.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 36.

MAKING MOCCASINS

“When the women were not busy with other things, they had handwork to do. The Cheyenne and the Arapaho women made the finest of moccasins. Whether they were made of strong, smoked elk skin or of soft, dressed buckskin, they always fitted the feet they were made for, and were decorated in designs that suited the line of the foot.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 29.

A BUFFALO HAD MANY USES

“As long as the buffalo roamed the plains, it supplied us with nearly everything we needed.... We had never wasted any part of the animal when we killed it: its hide made our lodge coverings, robes for our beds, and for clothing, and shields and parfleches; its paunch made pails and bowls; its tail and hooves made ornaments; its horns made spoons and tools; its sinews made stout cords....”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 28.

CHEYENNE WOMEN'S CLOTHING

“The young squaws take much care of their dress and horse equipments. . . Their dresses were made of buckskin, high at the neck, short sleeves, or rather none at all, fitting loosely, and reaching . . . to the knee . . . worked with beads and fringed. From the knee downward, the limb was encased in a tightly fitting leggin, [ending] in a neat moccasin—both handsomely worked with beads. On the arms were bracelets of brass, which glittered and reflected in the radiant morning sun, adding much to their attractions. In their pierced ears, shells from the Pacific shore were pendant [hanging].

Source: Lewis H. Garrard, [1847] *Wah-to-yah and the Taos Trail*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955): 54.

SHELTER

TEPEE LIVING

“One who has never lived in a lodge [tepee] would scarcely think it possible for seven or eight persons to pass a long winter agreeably in a circular room, ten feet in diameter, having a considerable portion of it occupied by the fire in the center. Indeed, they are as comfortable as they could wish to be. I moved from a lodge into a comfortable log house, but again returned to the lodge, which I found much more pleasant.”

Source: Warren Angus Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains* (Salt Lake City: Rocky Mountain Book Shop, 1940): 222.

THE TALLEST TEPEES

“The tipis of the Cheyenne and the Arapaho were taller than those of other Indians. Anyone traveling the prairies long ago knew one of our villages as soon as he saw it, even before he was near enough to recognize the people or the designs on the chief’s tent or the shields and trophies hanging outside.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 13.

CHEYENNE LODGES

“A lodge, generally, is composed of seventeen or more slender poles of pine, three inches in diameter at the butts, finely tapering to the small ends, and eighteen to twenty-three or four feet in length. These poles are tied together a few inches from the small ends, with the butts resting on the ground, so that the frame resembles a cone, over which a covering of buffalo skin is neatly fitted. . . . The [buffalo] skins [are softened and] are then cut and sewed together with awl and sinew, so that they fit neatly the pole frame. By rolling up the lower edge of this covering, it make a [large], airy habitation in summer, and, by closing all the [openings] a warm shelter in winter. At the apex [top] an opening is left, through which the ends of the poles protrude and by which the smoke finds its way out.”

Source: Lewis H. Garrard, [1847] *Wah-to-yah and the Taos Trail*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955): 49-50.

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

CHILDREN

MOVING CAMP

“As a little boy, I used to ride in a travois basket when the tribe moved camp. The long lodge poles were crossed over the shoulders or tied to the sides of a horse. Thus they were dragged over the country. Buffalo skins were used to stretch across between the widely gaping poles behind the horse.... I have fond recollections of this kind of traveling. Many an hour I have slept in that kind of gentle bed. Roads were not needed for this kind of vehicle. A travois can be taken anywhere a horse will go, and there is never any jolting. The spring of the poles and the skin takes up all the shock.”

Source: Thomas B. Marquis, Interpreter, *Wooden Leg: A Warrior Who Fought Custer* (Lincoln, 1931): 5.

PLAYING WITH STICK HORSES

“We all played at living in camp. In these camps we did the things that older people do. A boy and girl pretended to be husband and wife, and lived in the lodge; the girl cooked and the boy went out hunting. Sometimes some of the boys pretended that they were buffalo, and showed themselves on the prairie a little way off, and other boys were hunters, and went out to chase the buffalo. We were too little to have horses, but the boys rode sticks, which they held between their legs, and lashed with their quirts to make them go faster.”

Source: George Bird Grinnell, *When Buffalo Ran* (New Haven, 1920): 21-22. As remembered by Wikis, a Cheyenne boy.

PLAYING AT LIVING IN CAMP

“In these larger camps, we children had much fun, playing our different games. We had many of these.... Often the little girls caught some of the dogs, and harnessed them to little travois, and took their baby brothers and sisters, and others of the younger children, and moved off a little way from the camp, and there pitched their little lodges. The boys went too, and we all played at living in camp.”

Source: George Bird Grinnell, *When Buffalo Ran* (New Haven, 1920): 21-22. As remembered by Wikis, a Cheyenne boy.

INDIAN TOYS

“Fathers and mothers made fine toys for their children. For their little girls, Arapaho mothers made dolls dressed in perfect buckskin costumes, beaded and fringed just as our own costumes were. The tiny moccasins these dolls wore were made as carefully as moccasins for people.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 35.

BOYS' GAMES

“Fathers made bows and arrows for their sons, and made them so true that little boys could bring down squirrels or birds with them. Sometimes the boys dressed the squirrel they had shot, and cooked and ate it, and then sat around their fire telling their “buffalo story,” as if they were old hunters.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 35.

PLAYING AT STICKS

“Then we used to go out and watch the men and older boys playing at sticks; and we had little sticks of our own, and our older brothers and cousins made us wheels; and we, too, played the stick game among ourselves, rolling the wheel and chasing it as hard as we could; but, for the most part, we threw our sticks at marks, trying to learn how to throw them well, and how to slide them far over the ground.”

Source: George Bird Grinnell, *When Buffalo Ran* (New Haven, 1920): 14-15. As remembered by Wikis, a Cheyenne boy.

LEARNING WITHOUT SCHOOLS

“Because we have no schools, like the white people, we have to teach our children by telling them what to do; it is only in this way that they can learn... Their relations, therefore, talk to the children.... My grandfather was an old man, who long before this had given up the warpath. He spent most of his time in the camp, and he used to make speeches to the little and big boys, and give them much good advice.”

Source: George Bird Grinnell, *When Buffalo Ran* (New Haven, 1920): 29-30. As remembered by Wikis, a Cheyenne boy.

LEARNING BY LISTENING

“Because we have no schools, like the white people, we have to teach our children by telling them what to do; it is only in this way that they can learn... Their relations, therefore, talk to the children.... My grandfather was an old man, who long before this had given up the warpath. He spent most of his time in the camp, and he used to make speeches to the little and big boys, and give them much good advice.”

Source: George Bird Grinnell, *When Buffalo Ran* (New Haven, 1920): 29-30. As remembered by Wikis, a Cheyenne boy.

LEARNING TO HUNT

“My uncle made me a bow and some blunt-headed arrows, with which he told me I should hunt little birds, and should learn to kill food, to help support my mother and sisters, as a man ought to do. With these arrows I used to practice shooting, trying to see how far I could shoot, how near I could send the arrow to the mark I shot at; and afterwards, as I grew a little older, hunting in the brush along the river, or on the prairie not far from the camp with the other little boys. We hunted the blackbirds, or the larks, or the buffalo birds that fed among the horses' feet, or the other small birds that lived among the bushes and trees in the bottom. If I killed a little bird, as sometimes I did, my mother cooked it and we ate it.”

Source: George Bird Grinnell, *When Buffalo Ran* (New Haven, 1920): 14. As remembered by Wikis, a Cheyenne boy, whose father was killed in a battle.

INFANTS

CRADLE BOARDS

“Nearly every Arapaho mother had a carrier, or what white people call a cradle board, for her baby.... Usually the skin that covered the carrier was decorated with quill or bead designs. Sometimes a kind of veil was fastened over the top to let down as a cover for the baby’s face when he needed protection from wind or sun.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 30.

SAFE AND SNUG

“It kept the baby safe from falls or accidents, and comfortable when he traveled. Strapped in his cradle, he learned to look at and listen to everything that went on around him, and he grew straight and strong.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 30-31.

WORK AND TOOLS

HUNTING BUFFALO

A BUFFALO HERD

“From the top of Pawnee Rock, I could see from six to ten miles in almost every direction. The whole mass was covered with buffalo, looking at a distance like one compact mass.... I have seen such sights a number of times, but never on so large a scale.”

Source: Colonel Richard Irving Dodge, May 1871, quoted in Donald Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyenne* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963): 31.

A DANGEROUS JOB

“Heavy as they were, the buffalo were fast and hard to kill. When a herd was on the run, it was like thunder rolling over the ground too fast and furious to stop. If a man’s horse stumbled, he might be trampled to death by the running herd.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 342.

RIDING BAREBACK

“The Cheyenne and the Arapaho never needed saddles for their horses. When they rode for business, they rode bareback, lickety-split, controlling their horses with a rope in the mouth and guiding them with knee pressure.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 32.

A CHEYENNE FATHER’S PRIDE

“We were invited to Gray Eyes’ [a Cheyenne chief] lodge Gray Eyes has two wives and twelve children, two of whom—fine-looking boys of fifteen and thirteen summers, respectively—were in the lodge; their father’s eye beamed on them fondly when he spoke of their killing buffalo from horseback with bow and arrow.”

Source: Lewis H. Garrard, [1847] *Wah-to-yah and the Taos Trail*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955): 58.

HUNTING OTHER ANIMALS

HUNTING WOLVES

“Bands of us boys went out at times on horseback to hunt wolves. We had only bows and arrows. We killed many wolves with the arrows. My father had given me a good bow and a supply of arrows when I was nine or ten years old.”

Source: Thomas B. Marquis, Interpreter, *Wooden Leg: A Warrior Who Fought Custer* (Lincoln, 1931): 7.

HUNTING SMALL ANIMALS

“In the meantime, the men are actively employed in hunting small animals, such as prairie dogs, squirrels, field mice, and larger animals or birds. They take fish with simple instruments of their own invention.”

Source: Warren Angus Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains* (Salt Lake City: Rocky Mountain Book Shop, 1940): 212.

HUNTING DEER

“Our hunters made daily excursions in the mountains and always returned with the flesh of several black-tail deer...frequently killed seven or eight individually, in the course of a day, consequently our encampment or at least the trees within it were soon decorated with several thousand pounds of venison.”

Source: Warren Angus Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains* (Salt Lake City: Rocky Mountain Book Shop, 1940): 222.

HUNTING ELK

“The man who here [hesitates] is lost: [that is he] loses his shot;--there is not much use in running the Elk without [a strategy], either in heading them off, forcing them into the river, or waiting at some point hidden, and shooting them as they pass.

“Their speed outstrips that of the horse. When Buffalo are scarce, these are a desirable [prey] to the prairie larder, more from their weight than excellence of food. The meat is inferior to either Buffalo, Bear, Mountain Sheep, or Deer.

“The Indians manufacture a beautiful buckskin from their hides, very soft and strong, with which they make leggings, giving it a rich tint by a peculiar process of smoking;--they form of it also sacks to carry their pemmican and jerked meat, and from the horns they make their most efficient bows.”

Source: Alfred Jacob Miller, *The West of Alfred Jacob Miller* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955): Plate 140.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HORSES

UTES VALUE HORSES

"These people were well dressed in skins, had some guns, but armed generally with bows and arrows. Their horses were better than Indian horses generally are east of the mountains and more numerous in proportion to the number of persons.... Such is the value they set on them that I with difficulty purchased two."

Source: William Ashley, American trapper, quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing, 1990): 14.

HORSES WERE LIKE GOLD

"Horses were to Plains Indians what gold was to the whites, and when the Cheyennes, Arapahos, Gros Ventres and Blackfeet moved south of the Platte [River] their main object was to procure more horses. They caught large numbers of mustangs [wild horses], but not content with this they at once began sending war parties south of the Arkansas [River] to steal horse from the Kiowas, Comanches, and Prairie Apaches."

Source: George E. Hyde, *Life of George Bent: Written From His Letters*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968): 37.

HUNTING WILD MUSTANGS

"Scouts were kept out ahead the same as in a buffalo hunt, and when they signaled that a herd of mustangs had been sighted, the hunters prepared to surround the herd. The country down there near the Arkansas was rolling and it was not difficult to approach a herd unseen. . . . Each hunter picked out the mustang he liked best and ran it down. Running the animals down was not very difficult, as these hunts were usually made in the early spring while the mustangs were still weak from a winter passed in a state of semi-starvation."

Source: George E. Hyde, *Life of George Bent: Written From His Letters*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968): 35.

CONFLICT AMONG PLAINS TRIBES

"The fact that the Kiowas and Comanches were so rich in horses made them the mark for the raiding parties of the other Plains tribes, and they were constantly being plundered by the Cheyennes, Arapahos, Pawnees, Osages, and many other tribes. . . . While the Cheyennes were raiding the Comanches and Kiowas down near Red River, they were also having trouble with the Pawnees to the east and the Utes in the mountains to the west. With the Pawnees they had been at war from the time they crossed west of the Missouri [River] to live. . . ."

Source: George E. Hyde, *Life of George Bent: Written From His Letters*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968): 37, 47.

HORSE TRADING

"After they had been pressed south [by the Sioux], part of the Kiowas used to return north to the North Platte [River] nearly every year to meet the Crows, Arapahos, and sometimes the Cheyennes. The Kiowas brought horses and Mexican goods to this annual trading fair on the North Platte, and for these things they received . . . guns, ammunition, British goods, eagle feathers, ermine skins, and other articles. Our old people say that the Cheyenne were engaged in this intertribal trade for many years."

Source: George F. Hyde. 1968. *Life of George Bent: Written from His Letters*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968): 31-32.

CHEYENNE TRADERS

"The Cheyenne traders operated this way: they secured horses, some by trade from the Kiowas and other tribes, some by stealing from the Pawnees and other hostile tribes. They took part of these animals to the Mandan or Ree villages on the Missouri [River] and exchanged them for guns, ammunition, British goods, corn, dried pumpkins, and tobacco. They also gave the Mandans and Rees dried buffalo meat and robes for corn, pumpkins, and tobacco. They kept some of these articles for their own use and took the rest to the North Platte and exchanged them with Kiowas and other tribes for more horses."

Source: George F. Hyde. 1968. *Life of George Bent: Written from His Letters*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968): 32.

CHEYENNE CHIEF OLD WOLF AT BENT'S FORT

"[Indian Chief] 'Old Wolf' slept in the fort every night except one, and every time he did, his warriors aroused him during the night and compelled him to show himself on the walls to satisfy them of his safety.

"On the morning of the ninth day the chiefs met and told Bent they were going home and would send out hunting parties, collect more skins and furs and come to trade with him every two or three months. 'Old Wolf' told Bent that his goods were splendid . . . and he would furnish him with all the horses and mules he wanted by sending out parties and making raids into Mexico. Bent offered to give him the market price for all such stock. . ."

Source: James Hobbs. (1872) *Wild Life in the Far West*. Quoted in Stephen Hyslop. *Bound for Santa Fe*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002): 213.

WEAPONS

BOWS AND ARROWS

“Bows could be made of several kinds of wood, depending on how big they were to be and the kind of arrow they were to shoot, but the Osage orangewood was the kind most commonly used because it was tough and would bend without breaking.

“For arrows we preferred only one kind of wood. This was a dogwood...the Arapaho called it Pawnee wood. The grain is so fine and the wood so hard that it will not split or break off in shooting.... Even a crooked piece of Pawnee wood could be made straight when it was peeled and worked and dried.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 31.

SHIELDS

“Every warrior had his own specially decorated shield. The toughest part of the buffalo hide was used to make a shield; this when soaked in water and dried slowly, became so thick and hard that few arrows could go through it. In nearly every village, there was a painter who decorated the shields of the men in his village with the design and in the colors that were each man’s special protection and power.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 33.

WOMEN'S WORK

PREPARING A HIDE

“Then women had had a great deal to do when buffalo were killed. As soon as they had skinned the animal, they spread the skin on the ground and pegged it down to stretch and dry. They dressed it with bone and horn tools, to take off all the flesh and to soften it.... The women spent many hours down on their hands and knees working on a hide, but when at last it was fleshed and softened and dried it made the finest and warmest kind of robe.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 28-29.

INDUSTRIOUS SQUAWS

“The yellow, cone-shaped lodges looked like so many pyramids. Near them were industrious squaws; bringing, by dint of constant exertion, buffalo skins down to the required thinness by means of the *dubber*, which as it struck the hard and dry robe, sounded like [the escape] of steam from a small pipe.

“[The hair is removed from the buffalo skin] and rendered pliant [soft] by means of the *dubber*—an adze-shaped piece of iron fitted to an angular section of elk’s horn—which chips off pieces of the hard skin until it is reduced to the [proper] thinness. Brains are then rubbed on it, making it still softer.”

Source: Lewis H. Garrard, [1847] *Wah-to-yah and the Taos Trail*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955): 62-63, 50.

WATER CARRIERS

“Whenever we camped, they [the women] carried water from the nearest stream or spring, and wood for our fires. Mornings and evenings, it was a pleasant sight to see them going in groups for water, singing and laughing and talking.... Often they stopped to bathe in the stream before they came back.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 27.

GATHERING FOOD

“Women and children are employed in gathering grasshoppers, crickets, ants, and various other insects, which are carefully preserved for food, together with roots, and grass seed. From the mountains, they bring the nuts, which are found in the cones of the pine, acorns from dwarf oaks, different kinds of berries, and the inner bark of the pine, which has a sweet acid taste, not unlike lemon syrup.”

Source: Warren Angus Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains* (Denver: The Old West Publishing Co. 1940).

CHEYENNE GIRLS

“The girls do not receive much attention from the father; they are reared to implicit obedience, and which a feeling of inferiority to the males. What a heppy contrast does the state of society show in enlightened countries where woman is in her proper sphere, loved, and looked up to as an adviser and friend—here, a mere ‘hewer of wood and drawer of water’—a nonentity, a mere cipher—treated as a slave and unnoticed.”

Source: Lewis H. Garrard, [1847] *Wah-to-yah and the Taos Trail*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955): 57.

MOVING CAMP

USING HORSES TO MOVE CAMP

“The Utes were moving camp with 400 ponies, many superb animals. Tent poles, six on either side, were fastened to the ponies of the squaws, one end of each pole dragging on the ground behind. The squaws attend to loading and packing the animals. On the top of many of these packs were perched papooses, strapped securely on, but old enough to drive and guide their ponies.”

Source: An account from 1873 in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1990): 21.

CHEYENNES MOVE TO BIG TIMBER

“The Indians talked of moving to the ‘Big Timber.’ A few miles above, and soon the village was in commotion, the young men driving up their different bands of horses, the squaws catching them. Some took down the lodges, and tying the poles in two bundles, fastened them on either side of a mule or horse, like the shafts of a dray—the lower ends dragging on the ground; and, behind the horse, a tray-shaped basket or hoops, [tied] with hide thongs, was tied on these poles, in which were put children too young to ride alone, and other things not easily carried on a horse.”

Source: Lewis H. Garrard, [1847] *Wah-to-yah and the Taos Trail*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955): 52.

THE SUMMER HUNT

“[On May 4, 1846] our next camping place was the ‘big Timber,’ a large grove of cottonwoods on the left bank of the [Arkansas] river, and a favourite wintering place of the Cheyennes. Their camp was now broken up, and the village had removed to the Platte [River] for their summer hunt. The debris of their fires and lodges were plentifully scattered about, and some stray horses were running about the bottom.”

Source: LeRoy Hafen, *Ruxton of the Rockies*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950): 272.

SETTING UP TEPEES

BUILDING A TEPEE

“The woman of the family had built the lodge, and when we went to a new location she was the one that moved it.... Raising or striking a tepee...was women’s work, as it always had been, and they took great pride in it. The important thing, besides the know-how, was the lodge poles. These must be long and straight and slender.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 11-12.

THE FIRST POLES

“First, four of the best and longest poles were selected and then bound together by a rawhide rope.... Two of the women would take these poles and raise them to a vertical position.... A little at a time, one woman would open them out to full diameter excepting two of the poles would be left about two feet apart to form the entrance, facing east.”

Source: A step-by-step description by Horace S. Poley, quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1990): 19.

THE OTHER POLES

“Directly opposite these would be raised a pole to which the top of the canvas had been firmly fashioned. The rest of the poles were then placed in position, being supported by the crotches formed by the tied poles.”

Source: A step-by-step description by Horace S. Poley, quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1990): 19.

COVERING THE POLES

“The canvas was then deftly brought over the poles, being stretched from both sides toward the entrance; and fastened to the poles at the sides of the entrance so as to leave enough to overlap the opening when the tepee was closed. Just above the entrance are two triangular shaped flaps or wings used for ventilation and to let the smoke out. The size and direction of this opening being regulated by two long poles reaching the ground at the back of the tepee.”

Source: A step-by-step description by Horace S. Poley, quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1990): 20.

MAKING THE FLAPS

“Having adjusted the entrance to her satisfaction, she entered the tepee and moved the poles outward until the canvas was stretched tightly over them. The lower edge was next securely fastened to the ground with wooden pegs.”

Source: A step-by-step description by Horace S. Poley, quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1990): 19.

COMMUNITY LIFE

VILLAGE LIFE

ARAPAHO VILLAGES

“Our circle of lodges was open to the east, and each one of the lodges within the circle also opened eastward, to the dawn of light and to the sunrise. That was the way the Arapaho had been taught to build their lodges, at the beginning of time, and that was the way we had always built them.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 9.

AN ARAPAHO VILLAGE

“Dogs played around the doorways; ponies grazed in the open spaces; children romped with the dogs and climbed on the ponies; women sat on the ground sewing moccasins or beading pouches; men straightened arrowwood or strung bows or combed and dressed their long hair.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 26.

ARAPAHO VILLAGES

“Almost every act and custom among the Arapaho was part of their religion. The placing of our lodges in a circle open to the east, and the opening of each lodge on the eastern side, was religious. A man saw dawn when he woke, and prayed to the Man-Above and to Grandfather Sun and to the Four Old Men. He was thankful for the new day, and for the grass and the stream and the game that were outside his tipi.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 70.

A UTE VILLAGE

“Numbering some two hundred or more lodges...erected in parallel lines, [the village] covered a large space of the level prairie...Before each lodge a tripod of spears supported the arms and shields of the Yuta Chivalry [Ute warriors] and on many of them, smoke-dried scalps rattled in the wind.”

Source: George Frederick Ruxton, *Wild Life in the Rocky Mountains*, quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1990): 60.

A CHEYENNE VILLAGE

“On the seventh [of May, 1846] . . . I cam upon fresh Indian sign, where a village had just passed, with their lodge poles trailing on the ground; and presently, in a level bottom of the river, the white conical lodges of the village presented themselves a short distance on the right of the trail. . . . It was a Cheyenne village; and the young men were out, an old chief informed me, after buffalo, and that they would return an hour before sunset, measuring the hour with his hand on the western horizon. . . . The lodges, about fifty in number, were all regularly planted in rows of ten; the chief’s lodge being in the centre, and the skins of it being dyed a [bright] red. Before the lodges of each of the principal chiefs and warriors was a stack of spears, from which hung his shield and arms . . .”

Source: LeRoy Hafen, ed., *Ruxton of the Rockies*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950): 273.

CEREMONIES

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

“Our musical instruments—drums, rattles, and whistles—were all made by the men of the tribe.... Hand drums, the kind used at many of our dances, were small and were made by stretching a skin over a frame and fastening thongs at the back so the drum could be held in one hand and struck with the other.... Our whistles were made of eagle or wild turkey bones hollowed out and notched in such a way as to make different whistling sounds.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 34.

A TIME OF RENEWAL

“[The spring camp meeting was] a time for a new beginning, the starting of new friendships and renewal of old friendships. A time of remembrance of long ago days, and long ago friends and relatives. A time of giving thanks to the Creator for the time of survival during the harsh and cold winters.”

Source: Annabelle W. Eagle, quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing, 1990): 93.

SUN DANCE

“All through the long summer day I walked about the pole, praying to all the spirits, and crying aloud to the sun and the earth, and all the animals and birds to help me. Each time when I came to the end of the rope I threw myself back against it, and pulled hard. The skin of my breast stretched out as wide as your hand.... All day long I walked in this way. The sun blazed down like fire. I had no food, and did not drink; for so I had been instructed.”

Source: A young Cheyenne, quoted in Donald J. Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963): 44.

HORSE RACING

“After cattle are killed the Indians all go into horse racing, where there is quite a number of dollars and blankets and moneys exchange hands. They are very earnest in their races.”

Source: Dairy of Private Peter Tawse, may 17, 1880, quoted in Jan Petit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1990): 120.

ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORTS

STICK GAMES

“There are three parts: sticks like cards, counting sticks, and the round rock.... The card sticks are held in the hand and dropped on top of the rock. The number of lines showing on the fallen sticks is the count. You take a counter to keep track of your lines. We grew up playing this. All night long we used to play it.”

Source: Sunshine Smith, a Ute elder, quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1990): 96.

RESERVATION LIFE

MOVING TO RESERVATIONS

WHITE ANTELOPE'S DEATH SONG

“Nothing lives long. Except the earth and the mountains.”

Source: Death song sung by White Antelope, a 75-year-old Cheyenne, as he was shot down by the soldiers at Sand Creek.

A CHEYENNE REACTS TO SAND CREEK

“But what do we have to live for? The white man has taken our country, killed our game; was not satisfied with that, but killed our wives and children. Now no peace.... We have now raised the battle-axe until death.”

Source: Leg-in-the-Water, a Cheyenne warrior, quoted in Donald J. Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963): 224.

THE UTES MUST GO!

“My idea is that, unless removed by the government, they [the Utes] must necessarily be exterminated.... The state would be willing to settle the Indian trouble at its own expense. The advantages that would accrue from the throwing open of 12,000,000 acres of land to miners and settlers would more than compensate all expenses incurred.”

Source: Governor Frederick Pitkin, quoted in Richard K. Young, *The Ute Indians of Colorado in the Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997): 30.

LIVING ON RESERVATIONS

RESERVATION HOMES

“Most of the homes are supplied with tables, benches, chairs, and cooking stoves. The great majority have beds while the remaining sleep on the floors.... The homes have fireplaces and at least two windows.”

Source: A Southern Ute Agency report, quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing, 1990): 142.

LEARNING TO FARM

“Even the smallest of us children began to learn to do things, indoors and out, as well as to read and write and figure. We watched the Mission people plough and harrow the soil in the garden, and when it was ready for planting we helped put in the seeds—radishes and lettuce and onions close together in long rows, and melons and cucumbers and pumpkins in hills, far apart. After the seeds came up, we helped with the hoeing, and we learned what plants were crops, and what were weeds and how to pull them.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 65.

RAISING SHEEP

“The Ute Mountain people do no farming, their land being arid with little or no water. Consequently these folk roam over a vast area with their flocks, living in tents and wickiups.”

Source: G.E.E. Lindquist (1931), quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing, 1990): 148.

INDIAN SCHOOLS

RESERVATION SCHOOLS

“At first the Government schools were small and the attendance was poor, for schools were a new idea to us. Parents and grandparents and medicine men had always taught the children in the camps; we had never heard of a teacher whose only work was to teach.”

Source: Althea Bass, *The Arapaho Way: A Memoir of an Indian Boyhood* [by Carl Sweezy] (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1966): 64.

HEALTHY STUDENTS

“It has seldom been my pleasure to see a group of children so happy and contented and so well nourished and in such good physical condition as those of the Southern Ute Boarding School.”

Source: A visiting doctor, quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing, 1990): 143-45.

PERSONAL HYGENE

“The bed linen is changed once a week, aired every day, and sunned once a week. Toothbrush drill is held twice a day. Eyes are treated twice a day with Argyrol [an antiseptic], and twice a week with copper sulphate [to combat trachoma that practically all of the children suffered from]. Military and exercise drills were to be started.”

Source: A Southern Ute Agency report, quoted in Jan Pettit, *Utes: The Mountain People* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing, 1990): 145.