

At the time of recording the batteries were weak and this tape sounds too fast when played on a recorder with full strength batteries. However the tape is intelligible when played on a machine which can be slowed down--such as one of the transcribing machines used on this project.--J. Jordan.

SIGN FOR "ARAPAHO" AND MANNER OF TATTOOING THE BREAST

--it made a circle.

(Go ahead.)

Before we were known as Arapahoes we were Algonkian stock. Both Cheyennes and Arapahoes are. But in them days the men--they usually went stripped, you know, from the waist up--they took and made a round circle mark three places (tattoos on the breast). And they take this here yucca, this soapweed. They take and bundle it. They didn't want to use metal or anything else. I don't know why they knew it might be poisonous, but they knew. They take...even off these brittle point, tie them tight, warm them up so they'd be brittle. And within that circle they'd pierce their skin until the whole thing was a round bloody. Three places. And then they'd take charcoal--ordinary wood charcoal--and pulverize it, and then they'd smooth that over. Put no medicine or nothing. Just let it heal up. When it heals up, it turns blue. That's why they call us "putting on"--three times. One, two, three. That's the sign for Arapaho.

(Note: In sign language the sign for "Arapaho" was made by tapping the breast--referring to custom of tattooing the breast. This sign was sometimes confused with the sign for "mother" made as if drawing something out of the breast. See Clark's Indian Sign Language.--J. Jordan)

That's what he's got on his chest (referring to drawing of Black Coyote, by Mary Irwin Wright, from a photograph taken by James Mooney. Black Coyote is naked from the waist up and there circular marks on his chest and some crosses and lines on his arms.--JJ)

(And the old time sign for Arapaho is made by pointing to your left side of your chest, like that?)

Yeah. But the sign for "mother" is made like for "nursing"--this way--taking (something) out (of the breast). That's the