PRIESTS & CHIEFS: LITTLE RAVEN

(One of the things I'm interested in learning more about is, back in the old days, how the Arapahoes kept track of their own history. Now we've got history books and things written. But back in those days, before the reservation--how did the Arapahoes keep track of their history?)

Well, I wouldn't know. I wouldn't know that far back. But as long as I can remember they had men, they would see. When they want to do anything they go see this man and if he's willing, they'd go on. They never did have their way about everything. They respected the head man, they used to say. They used to call him "priest." He was the priest among the people. Whatever he says, it have to be that way.

(What was the Arapaho word for priest?)

nae·čae·

(What would the word be for "head man."?)

Well, the one that's leader, like you'd say, "he's the leader," he was the leader.

(Would you call him nae·čae· ?)

nae·čae· --yeah.

(Back in those days did these people--these leaders or priests--did they keep track of the history of the Arapahoes in any way?)

Well, I don't know that part. The way it was, they had to do what this man tells them. They have to go see him. They have to go ask him. And this man's name was Little Raven. That was the priest of the Arapahoes. And I guess I know him little bit--I seen him in person. Yeah. He was getting old.

(What did he look like?)

Maybe you seen him in pictures--his hair is this long.

(Did you ever hear him talk?)

Oh, I didn't even have sense enough to remember--I just used to play around all the time. He'd get out in the morning and talk to people to be good to one another and all that. In the morning he used to get up and talk that way. Help one another, and all that. That sort of good talk. And take care of your children and all that. You know he used to advise people--advise his people. And they went the way he wanted them to live.

(Was this Little Raven the same one that signed that Medicine Lodge Treaty?)

Yeah, that's him. That's the same man. Same man that signed the treaty.

(Did he have anything to do with the Sun Dance, too?)

I don't know. I don't think so. I never did hear about that.

MEDICINE BUNDLES

(I was just wondering because you said they called these people "priest," too. I just wondered what kind of duties he had.)