T-17-1 (First of Two Interviews)
ABLE BIGBOW, KIOWA
INTERVIEWED BY: JULIA A. JORDAN
INTERVIEW DATE: JUNE 4, 1967
TRANSCRIBED BY: JULIA A. JORDAN

GENERAL SUBJECT: STORIES ABOUT HIS GRANDFATHERS AND REMINISCENCES OF OLD DAYS

PARTICULAR TOPICS DISCUSSED: THESE ARE MISCELLANEOUS STORIES, SOME FRAGMENTARY, AND ALL TOLD IN HARD-TO-UNDERSTAND ENGLISH. INDIVIDUAL STORIES NOT LISTED, BUT PERTAIN TO ABLE'S GRANDFATHER, BIG BOW, AND OTHER RELATIVES SUCH AS LITTLE BOW, DOHAUSON, AND CHOCTAW BILL

BACKGROUND OF INFORMANT:

Able Bigbow was born around 1883 and died in 1970. He was the son of Little Bow and the grandson of the famous Big Bow who was born at the time of the Cutthroat Gap Massacre in 1833, and who became one of the leading warriors and most prominent leaders of the Kiowa tribe in pre-reservation and early reservation period days. Able attended the Kiowa School (probably at Anadarko) very briefly. According to a "stepson", Charles Palmer, "He went in the front door and walked out the back, and that's all the schooling he got." At the time of this interview he was a spry, alert, slender old man with his long hair worn in this yarn-tied braids, and a sparse moustache of the type worn by several of the old time Kiowas. He was living with his daughter and son-in-law, Mary and Charles Tartsah, in the Hog Creek community west of Anadarko on Highway 9. He spoke English with a very thick accent, and was often difficult to understand. However Charles Tartsah or Charles Palmer or other members of the family would often help in talking to him. He loved to talk and tell stories. His stories in Kiowa were told with much expression and many hand gestures. In October of 1967 Able was the center of attention at ceremonies held at Ft. Sill, when a tipi was dedicated in memory of the old chief, Big Bow, and presented to the Post Museum.

CONDITIONS OF INTERVIEW: This interview took place in the evening in front of Charlie Palmer's trading post on Highway 9. Charlie sat with us and assisted in the interview by translating some of my questions, and explaining some of Able's stories. The transcription offered here is only approximately verbatim, as Able's English is very difficult to understand. However this tape does illustrate the story-telling style of a person of Able's generation, and exemplifies the kind of English spoken by the non-educated older Indians. Charlie Palmer's comments are included here, being set off in parentheses.

Note: The other interview on this tape is: Charlie Palmer, Kiowa