

## RACCOONS AND NURSING MOTHERS

(What kind of dogs did the Indians have?)

Jess: Well, they had mostly these ~~little~~--like terriers, you know. Just something they can pack around, so much moving around, in their travois. But they didn't have no large dogs, because they'd always have meat drying here and they didn't want to be bothered with dogs. But, they did have lots of--The Arapahoes, especially--they kept a lot of coons. Like if I got married and my first child's expected, the first thing my folks undertake to do is get a young coon (raccoon). Why? Well, they said they purified the child's milk. And that coon nursed with my kid--boy or girl. Yeah.

Bob: Yeah, the coon would nurse right along with the baby.

## CROWS KEPT AS PETS.

Jess: And they get fat and they just live with them, and they just sleep with the kid and the family. And when they move camp, they know when camp's moved and they get on--they know they're going to be riding. Then they also raised crows, and they cut this cord under the crow's tongue and then that crow could talk Arapaho or Cheyenne. Yeah. Just exactly--plainer than a parrot. But they steal--anything shiny. Oh, they're great for that--scissor or knife or for or a awl. They'd steal it and go behind the tent and bury it somewhere, and when you chase them they'd go over there and dig it up.

## ARAPAHO DOGS

(Back in the old days before the Arapahoes came to this reservation, did they ever have dogs that they used for work? Like for packing loads or anything?)

Jess: No, no. Not that I know. Might have been earlier before they got the horse from Spanish, but I remember stories up north in Montana when they still had pack dogs. But they were mostly Canadian Indians--the Blackfeet lived in Canada, you know, before they were known as Blackfeet. They called them Piegans. They used dogs--pack dogs--learned from those Alaskans and those Indians up there. Other than that, they got their ponies quite early.