

Torrey

Heisler

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January 6, 1949

Mrs. Bert E. Heisler  
Verden, Oklahoma

Dear Mrs. Heisler:

Thanks for your kind praise of my new book. I am happy that you find it enjoyable.

Most of the questions you ask you will find answered in the two volume book by George Bird Grinnell entitled The Cheyenne Indians. I believe it is published by the Yale University Press.

In brush country the Indians ran wild horses into corrals, closed the gate and roped them. On the prairie they tried to separate the stallion from his herd, then it was no great trick to catch the mares. Sometimes they pursued a band of wild horses in relays, chasing them in circles. When a wild horse is roped they choke him down and tie him to the tail of a gentle mare, bringing the rope forward around her shoulders so that no wild horse could injure her. The wild one had enough halter rope to graze and drink but had to follow the mare. After four or five days of this he formed the habit of following her, wherever she went and could be released. Meanwhile the Indians would handle the wild one gently, place a blanket on his back, hop on and off quickly and finally sit on his back.

If a horse bucked, they would put him on a sand bar in the river where the deep sand made bucking difficult and where a fall would not hurt the rider. Plains Indians were daring horsemen and experts, willing to ride anything on four legs. It used to be said that a white man would use a horse up and abandon it, then a Mexican would ride it and leave it for dead, after which the Indian would come along and ride it the rest of his life. When I was a boy you could always tell an Indian rider from a distance by the continual rise and fall of his quirt arm.

Their saddles were wooden frames covered with rawhide. To make them comfortable they commonly spread a blanket over the saddle.

Generally they stole horses or raised them -- partly for reasons of prestige, partly because such horses were better than the wild brush tails. Often the

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