

Captain Kemmerer

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April 18, 1941

The Indians were desperately afraid of the Thunderbird and a man who had been struck by lightning and survived was regarded as a powerful medicine man thereafter. Naturally, not many men could take the thunder stroke and live. This point will be of interest to your command.

The Thunderbird also had its humorous angle; it was regarded as being jealous, so that an Indian man would sit on the same side of the tent with his wife during a thunderstorm.

The flicker or yellow hammer woodpecker, which makes its nest in dead trees struck by lightning, was believed to be unafraid of the thunder, therefore, Indians who were afraid of being struck by lightning often wore the feathers of the flicker as a protection.

The following references will collaborate in all that I have told you.

Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico. Bulletin 30--  
Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution.  
Part 2, page 746.

Fourteenth Annual Report, Bureau of Ethnology 1892-'93,  
Part 2, page 968-969.

Both of these books are published by the Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

I hope this information will be of use and if so, I am happy to have been of service to the officers and men of the forty-fifth division.

Cordially yours,

W. S. Campbell  
Former Captain 330 fifth F.A.,  
A.E.F.