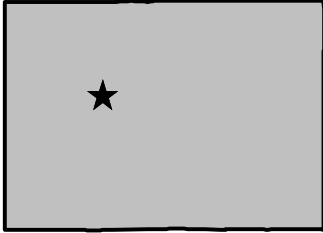


CHAPTER 9 — Wind River Reservation, Arapaho Tribe



Fort Washakie, Wyoming
(Area: 2.268 million acres)

Chief Black Spot (born c. 1824, also known as “Friday”) was a daring Arapaho chief and warrior who had learned American ways as a boy. Accidentally left behind when his family moved camp in 1831, he was found by a white trapper and trader, Thomas Fitzpatrick, who adopted him and renamed him Friday. Friday was educated in St. Louis.

On a trip west in 1838, Black Spot was recognized by relatives and brought back into the Arapaho tribe. Friday was known as a great friend of settlers in the area and was called “the Arapaho American” by Rufus Sage. Thanks to his familiarity with white culture, Black Spot acted as a negotiator and interpreter during treaty negotiations and was part of the group that secured the Wind River Reservation for his people.



History

The Arapaho are members of the Algonquin and likely originated in the Great Lakes area. Their name for themselves is *Inuna-ina* or “Our People.” By the end of the eighteenth century, the Arapaho had moved to the Great Plains. Although it is believed that they were originally agricultural people, they became nomadic buffalo hunters and close neighbors of the Cheyenne. After initial and nearly constant warfare, the Arapaho tribes lived peacefully with the Shoshoni, Ute, Pawnee, and Navaho tribes.

After they migrated to the plains, the Arapaho divided into the Southern and Northern Arapaho tribes. The Northern Arapaho settled at the edge of the Rocky Mountains, near the North Platte River, in present-day Wyoming. The Southern Arapaho settled near the Arkansas River in Colorado.

The Arapaho tried to coexist with the whites. Like other plains tribes, however, they were pushed further west and their food supply was destroyed by white buffalo hunters. The Treaty of 1851 guaranteed hunting grounds for the Arapaho and Cheyenne in return for allowing the government to build forts along the Oregon Trail. This treaty and others were broken as soon as the whites needed more land. In 1858, a gold rush increased the white population in the Rockies.

After the Sand Creek Massacre (1864) of Arapaho and Cheyenne people, the Northern Arapaho bands moved into Wyoming. Chief Medicine Man and Chief Black Spot (Friday) of the Arapaho and Chief Washakie of the Shoshone gained permission for the Arapaho to stay on the Wind River Reservation.

After a conflict with U.S. government soldiers the Arapaho went to the Red Cloud Agency with the Lakota Sioux, with whom some Arapaho warriors participated in the Battle of Little Big Horn.

In 1878, the Northern Arapaho permanently settled on Wind River Reservation where they live with the Shoshone. For many years the relationship between the two former enemies was tense. Since 1938, the Shoshone have lived in the eastern part of the reservation and the Arapaho in the western. Each tribe maintains its own identity, culture, and tribal government, but they jointly manage the reservation.



Culture

In the summer, like other plains Indians, the Arapaho tribe came together and followed the buffalo across the prairies. Preceding the summer hunts, the Arapaho participated in the Sun Dance. They arranged their tipis in circles with the opening flaps facing east. The dancers would paint their bodies in a particular way and follow specific dance patterns.

Part of the dance included staring into the sun and driving tiny stakes into their skin. Those who could endure the pain were rewarded with a vision from the Great Spirit.

During the hunt, the Arapaho lived in portable tipis that the women could quickly assemble and take apart. Besides meat, the buffalo proved virtually everything for the tribe. Arapaho women gathered roots and berries to eat fresh, make into a soup or combine with buffalo meat and fat to make pemmican. In winter, the tribe would scatter into the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

Clothing was made of deer or elk hides and decorated with paint or embroidery. The Arapaho adorned themselves with tattoos.

The Arapaho believe in a creator whom they call *Be He Teiht*. They also believe in a close relationship among themselves, the animals, and the land. They deeply respect and appreciate the wisdom of their elders.



Government

Today, the Arapaho and Shoshone tribes jointly govern the Wind River Reservation. Separately they govern their part of the reservation with business councils made up of tribal members. Six members are elected to serve 2-year terms, and these members elect the chairperson. The headquarters of the reservation is Fort Washakie, Wyoming, and the reservation comprises 2.268 million acres.

Game: Hoop and Dart

Although different groups play the hoop and dart game differently, in all variations of the game a person tosses a dart at a circular hoop.

The hoop be laid on the ground or hung from a tree.

Players take turns throwing their darts at the hoop. Often the hoop is rolled along the ground, sometimes set into motion by a third player.

Two other players then toss their darts as the hoop rolls in front of them. Scores depend on whether and how the dart falls on or through the hoop.

Hoops are made in several ways. A branch is bent into a circle, and the ends are tied with rawhide. Bundled cornhusks, cedar bark, or other plants and are wrapped with rawhide or colored yarn, and some with beads attached to the inside to divide the hoop. Rawhide lacing can be stretched across the hoop to divide it into halves or quarters.

Many hoops have a web of string woven onto them, dividing the hoop into different sections and shapes like squares, rectangles, and triangles. The shape determines the score for the players when their darts land inside it.