

Chapter 14

Landscape as a Resource for Cultural Identity

14.1 Introduction

In the spring of 2006 initial oral interviews were conducted at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site and the Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site. The purpose of the ethnographic research is to document cultural practices and beliefs that are rooted in the history and cultural traditions of five indigenous societies and, document the importance of known plants at these sites. The effort, combined with the ethnohistorical and ethnological data, places plant beliefs and uses to each park's cultural landscape.¹

To achieve that end, a series of semi-structured questions were designed with the assistance and approval of National Park Service personnel. The questions were designed to solicit not only ethnobotanical information, but also data concerning the significance of the larger cultural landscape. The oral history interviews with knowledgeable tribal members also would be used for purposes of documentation, public education, and interpretative purposes, with tribal permission.

Appropriate representatives from each tribe were contacted by a series of phone contacts and letters. Initially each tribe, the Southern Arapaho and Northern Arapaho, Southern Cheyenne and Northern Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, and Southern Ute, agreed to send appropriate cultural experts to the designated site locations. Arapaho and Cheyenne consultants would be interviewed at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site and Comanche, Kiowa, and Southern Ute cultural experts were to be consulted concerning resources at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site. Although circumstances prevented some tribes from sending cultural experts to the respective sites,

all the tribal representatives expressed a willingness to participate in the project. Interviews were conducted with several Northern and Southern Arapaho, Southern Cheyenne, and Kiowa cultural representatives.

14.2 Native American Cultural and Religious Principles: An Overview

Indigenous societies establish a variety of bonds with landscapes, including ethnic and emotional ties. Indigenous people develop a consciousness of place, whereby general and specific landmarks and resources ground ethnic identity in relation to history. Thus, place consciousness is the same as historical consciousness; together they are “a way of constructing social traditions and, in the process, personal and social identities.”²

Cultural and sacred geography is a universal feature of indigenous religious practices across Native North America.³ For over a century conflicts have developed between Native North Americans over various land and resource issues. The contentious situations often come down to Indian peoples struggling to reassert their cultural rights within an environment of non-indigenous land ownership or the “...due process, federal and state statutes, and administrative policies.”⁴ Underlying legal assertions and issues over sovereignty, is the problem of weighing a value system based on inextricably associating a cultural and spiritual world with a physical geography against a system that inherently separates the two.

To fully comprehend indigenous beliefs and practices associated with cultural landscapes, it is necessary to examine Native North American conceptions of the sacred.⁵ The traditional indigenous religions under consideration, similar to other indigenous religions of Native North America, are cosmotheistic. Within such a worldview, humans, animals, plants, natural objects, and natural phenomena are animated by spiritual power. These animated beings are interrelated through kinship and reciprocal obligations. Through reciprocal kin relations, spirit beings interact with each other, including human beings. Those interactions involve the transfer of power and establishing a dialogue that must be maintained by ritual prescriptions and ceremonial performances.⁶

These cosmotheistic principles extend themselves as an integral part of the landscape. For traditionalists there exists a complex web of relationships, if not a unity between the ecology, humanity, and supernatural beings. Those relationships require sustained reciprocity and moral acknowledgment by prayer and sacrifice. Thus spirit-beings "...are fully integrated into all aspects of social, cultural, and environmental activity."⁷ A cosmotheistic view of the universe encompasses the entire landscape, including all the conceptual levels and elements of that ecological system.⁸

Within the religious ideologies, a basic frame of reference is sacred power. Traditional religions, as articulated and practiced, conceive of sacred power as a quality that pervades the Universe and all the beings that inhabit the world. That sacred power, among all five tribal religious systems, is a force that gives life and movement to the universe and the "beings" that inhabit it. Thus a central expression of sacred power is animation. Anything within the landscape that embodies animation, defined by movement or speech, are living entities, imbued with power. Power therefore is necessary not only for life, but action.

In their creations and placements on the landscape, all "beings" are endowed with a specific sacred power. All animals and animated natural objects, including plants, possess potential power. "Humans" also can acknowledge and acquire power through participation in ceremony, ritual, prayer, and sacrifice. These religious actions often require interaction with specific aspects of a landscape, as it is the source of those powers or "medicines." "Medicines" therefore requires a landscape that is intact, alive, and filled with animation. These qualities are as important today as they were in the past.

Traditional Indian people trace the origins of their current cultural and religious beliefs and practices back to their distant past. Scholars of Native American religions have noted the differences among religious beliefs, but also the underlying common symbols in Indian religions and worldviews. Enrico Comba observed for example that "the ceremonies of the Plains Indians which engender a ritual representation of the

cosmos...[share] a number of features which recur in each of the cultures..."⁹ Comba then cites how some cultural and sacred sites found on the Great Plains provide a symbolic arena of recurring qualities of cultural and religious beliefs and practices that connect "the idea of a compliance between the human world and the cosmic cycles, which seems to be fairly ancient."¹⁰ Harold Harrod echoes the above assertion suggesting ideological continuities between ancient and historical Plains ways of life. "The revelatory power of nature and animal life in the experience of the people in historic times, [he writes], may have quite ancient roots and may have been reflected as well in the experience of their predecessors...These institutions and life ways surely arose as a consequence of a long evolutionary process."¹¹ That is, each tribal-nation integrates "institutions and life ways present among the more ancient residents" including the recognition of certain geographical locations and cultural features as sacred sources of spiritual power.¹²

Each indigenous society embedded culturally significant locales and resources within the unique context of their own worldviews--the symbolic and social processes that structure an interpretation about a particular society's identity. A society's worldview organizes the conceptualization and expression of time, space, causation, as well as cultural being. For Native Americans, especially among those still practicing aspects of their indigenous religions and aspects of traditional life ways, there exists a dynamic relationship between their society's worldview and the social construction as a people.¹³

14.3 Cultural Landscapes as Cultural Identity

Native Americans perceive aspects of land and resources as critical to the maintenance as a distinct people. The cultural landscape therefore remains a vital link to their past as well as the provider for many of the values, traditions, and materials that are necessary for the continuation of cultural practices traditions. Traditionalists of all five tribes imbue the cultural landscape as a well-spring of spiritual knowledge and cultural vitality. Philosophically, the identification of geographical arenas and cultural resources as sources of power is a deeply ingrained principle of cultural and religious life among the five tribes. Specific geographical provinces are understood as places of origin, home of ancestors and relatives, as well as the loci of other culturally significant matters. The

Ute creation tradition, as told by Ute elder Alden B. Naranjo and Monica Lujan, for example simultaneously grounds their political and geographical position on the landscape:

In the days even before the ancient times, only Sinawav, the creator and Coyote inhabited the earth. They had come out of the light so long ago, that no one remembered when or how. The earth was young and the time had not come to increase the people. Sinawav gave a bag of sticks to Coyote and said, "Carry these over the far hills to the valleys beyond." He gave specific directions Coyote was to follow and told him what to do when he got there. "You must remember this great responsibility. The bag must not be opened under any circumstances until you reach the sacred grounds," he said...

Coyote was young and foolish, consumed with curiosity...As soon as he was over the first hill and out of sight he stopped. He was just going to peak in the bag. "That could hurt nothing," he thought. Just as he untied the bag and opened a small slit, they rushed for the opening. They were people. These people yelled and hollered in strange languages of all kinds. He tried to catch them and get them back into the bag. But they ran away in all different directions. From how full the bag was after he had gotten it closed, he could tell there was only a fraction of what he had started out with. He went to the sacred valley and dumped them out there. There was a small number of these people. But those few ones were the Utes, the real Utes from around here...

Coyote then returned and told Sinawav that he had done everything he instructed, but the Creator knew he was untruthful. Coyote finally confessed and Sinawav replied: "Those you let escape will forever war with the chosen ones. They will be the tribes which will always be the thorns in the sides of the Utes," said Sinawav. "The Utes, even though they are few in number, will be the mightiest and most valiant of heart." The Creator then doomed Coyote to wander the earth on all fours as a night crawler.¹⁴ As the worldview reveals and Goss observed, the Ute were "part of environment, part of the landscape."¹⁵



Alonzo Sankey, Southern Arapaho consultant at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site (Photo: Gregory R. Campbell, 2006)

A review of the literature reveals that numerous Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, and Ute oral traditions are location oriented concerning the cultural centrality and sacred qualities of the landscape. In oral account after account, "spirit-beings" reveal themselves at locations to individuals. During sacred encounters, a person may receive a "gift" from a "spirit-being." Ceremonies, rituals, religious and cultural objects, and events of cultural significance have their origins in a cultural landscape in forested foothill areas of the Rocky Mountains or locales on the Great Plains. A Southern Arapaho Traditional Chief member spoke directly to the material and spiritual sustenance drawn from the Sand Creek site and the surrounding region:

To me it seemed like...a summer campground because of the land they way it laid, the trees, the lay of the land. To me it seemed more of a summer resort than winter because the wintertime they used the hills for

protection, and...they used the trees right now for their ceremonials. So that is the reason why the ceremonials have to play an important role in the preservation of the land.¹⁶

The landscape remains a focal point for religious and cultural activities. Below are contemporary ethnographic accounts from tribal consultants about their continuing interaction with the study area.

14.4 Ethnobotanical Resources

Ethnographic and ethnobotanical studies verify the centrality of a variety of flora. Ethnobotanical resources play a prominent role in defining cultural beliefs and practices. As part of Cheyenne creation for example, sweet grass is critical in the creation of the earth:

Maheo held out his left hand, and his power being such that he got five strings of sinew. He laid them down, and he next put down sweetgrass, this being laid down the same way as he had sinew. Then he produced buffalo tallow. Then he produced red paint. He put that on there. Then he started to put these things together. He rolled that into a ball. Then he blew on it four times. The fourth time he let it go. And it grew and grew. This is the earth. There was water on it, grass, trees, everything that grows. Maheo had the power to do that.¹⁷

As indicated in previous chapters, ethnobotanical resources located in or near the two National Historical Landmark sites were used extensively for food, medicines, religious, and constructing material items. Ethnobotanical resources also served to demarcate important events across the landscape. In the summer of 1856 for example, Kiowa calendars record that at the junction of Caddo Creek and the Arkansas River about 10 miles below Bent's Fort they held a sun dance called "Prickly-pear Sun Dance" (*Sen-alo K'ado*). The ceremony was unique because it was held in fall, rather than mid-summer and women gathered a large quantity of prickly-pear fruit. Several other sun dance ceremonies recorded in the Kiowa calendars also prominently feature plants.¹⁸



Joe Big Medicine, Southern Cheyenne consultant examining a plant resource at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site (Photo: Gregory R. Campbell, 2006)

14.5 Spiritual and Medicinal Ethnobotanical Resources

As in the past, contemporary medicine practices require a variety of herbs, roots, animal parts, along with their associated prayers and ceremonies, to continue their traditional religious practices. One Northern Arapaho consultant while visiting Sand Creek noted that the holes in cottonwood trees where the branches broke off and beginning to heal were used to make thunder cedar for ceremonies. They scrape the interior of the holes to obtain wood scrapings and mix it with other plant materials, particularly cedar. He considered the cottonwood scrapings an essential ingredient. Various types of cedar medicines were made. Further cottonwood trees are considered culturally significant and sacred because the use of the tree trunks as the center pole for

sun dance. Cottonwoods also carry, according to Northern Arapaho tradition, the quality of having a long life.¹⁹

Several other consultants identified cottonwood trees as culturally and spiritually significant. The Kiowa consultant noted that they use dry cottonwood branches for fuel in Native American Church ceremonies.²⁰ A Southern Cheyenne consultant agreed that the tree is significant commenting: “All I know is cottonwood... A lot of the good cottonwood trees need to be in place, not to be removed.”²¹ Cottonwood trees, according to the Southern Arapaho consultant, “...need to be preserved to a certain extent because they were really important for our ceremonial uses, especially our Sun Dance.”²²

The “witness tree” graphically symbolizes the cultural and sacred significance of cottonwood. Standing at the northwest end of the Sand Creek Massacre site, the living tree has been dated scientifically by National Park Service officials to be standing at the moment of the massacre. Traditional people designated the tree as the “witness tree,” a living being that not only witnessed the tragedies inflicted at Sand Creek, but survived, similar to the current Cheyenne and Arapaho descendants, whose families keep the memories of their ancestors.²³

Another tree identified by cultural experts as spiritually significant is willow. The Kiowa consultant said:

Willows we use in the ceremonial lodges, use for the construction of arbors, build a summer lodge out of the willows it is cool and huh they used to throw water on the top it is like our air conditioning and now we still we use it for our arbors when have the warriors society dance. They cut the willows and bring them up so they can have a little bit of shade to sit around between the dances and they use them at the sweat lodge also to build the lodges...²⁴

The Southern Cheyenne consultant acknowledged that willow and cedar are important plant resources but observed “we do not have the willow or the cedar that is important to us up here [along Sand Creek].”²⁵ However willow is native to Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site.

Another ethnobotanical resource identified by tribal consultants as being significant is sage. Growing underneath several cottonwood trees, two Northern Arapaho consultants discovered white sage. White sage is used in various capacities for religious as well as medicinal purposes.²⁶ White sage, according to a consultant, was also important to the Cheyenne. “I found sage here before, some white sage...When ceremonies are held on the Sand Creek site,” he said, “we harvest the plant and use it to smudge the participants in the ceremonial event.”²⁷

On walking Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site, sage also was selected out as a significant plant resource. The Kiowa cultural expert relayed the following:

They used sage. They used sage, yes.

The used sage for both. Well now, our main use is for ceremony, the sage, it smells good. They use it with our cedar you know to bless. They pray over it and take it with them. Its part of our message to the Creator. He gave that to us.

Not all the sages are used just certain ones because not all of them have the scent that we want.²⁸

A consultant at the Sand Creek site identified another type of sage. It is found in spot locations in the floodplain. He referred to the plant as man sage. Man sage is usually found in conjunction with woman sage. It also is used in ceremonies and for medicinal purposes.²⁹

Aside from several stands of sweet grass, the Northern Arapaho consultants found a plant that grows in abundance at the Sand Creek site. It smells similar to sage, but it not a sage. The Northern Arapaho refer to it as “snake bush.” It is another plant that is used in ceremonies.

They also noted a plant resource that is scattered intermittently across the landscape, especially on the higher elevation outside of the creek bed area. Although they did not know the English term for the plant, it has several yellow flowers. The plant was identified as one they use for cold medicine.³⁰

They also pointed to a plant species used as medicine for goiter.³¹ One consultant noted:

...that's a medicine for people who get goiter, for people who swell up. That is what they use. I do not know what they call it in English. There is an Indian name. It is a medicine. You can smell it. They do not grow too tall. I do not know what they call it in English. People who come down with that use it.³²

In walking further along the area near the creek bed, he said "Once you see it you see it all over the place. Its like peyote once you find one, you find it all over the place."³³

Several other plants were identified as medicines. The Kiowa cultural expert while walking in a field near the Arkansas River stated that the sap of milkweed was used as a poultice and prickly pear cactus was used for your skin.³⁴

Some cultural experts identified several other plant species that they had seen previously at the site and noted them as culturally significant, but could not locate them. Below are their descriptions:

The first plant that we are looking for has a blue flower on it and it grows about five inches off the ground.

The other plant grows about a foot to a foot and one half tall, a yellow flower with a green bulb.

Another is a light blue plant with petals on it. This is a very important plant that we use in our everyday lives and also we use that when we do a

Cheyenne gathering not more of a ceremonial but a gathering. We wear it. We wear it to define our self. Its got a sweet perfume. It is Indian perfume. It is up here I seen it. I've seen it growing here. In certain ceremonies it is also used...in ceremonies I can't explain.

The wallflower, the yellow wallflower. It is growing out there on top. That is the one we need to dry.³⁵

14.6 Gathering of Subsistence and Material Resources

The region, in and adjacent to the two National Historical sites, was an important source of subsistence resources. Resource availability and use is a fundamental foundation in traditional perceptions of the landscape. Contemporary recollections of resource use in or near the parks, testify to its continuing significance. The Kiowa cultural expert while standing near the Arkansas River at Bent's Old Fort recalled:

My grandmother told me stories about when they had the cattails to eat-- the stalk, the sweet potatoes, the wild onions, and the berries and sand plums, the blackberries, the little purple berries I am not sure there is a name for them. They use them in the ceremonies. It is delicacy. And they dry them pound them up and mix them with meat. And use that. They are purple, little purple berries.

The sand plums they dried those also. And those were a delicacy. All of the berries when they found them coming through. The women and children, it was there job to collect and bring them.³⁶

Cottonwood trees were not only important for ceremonial purposes, but were recognized as important for other uses. "Cottonwood," the Kiowa consultant confirmed, "were used for fuel, but do not camp close to them, as they are dry and break...It is good for light, but not heat. It is not a winter wood."³⁷



Tomie Doyebi, Kiowa consultant with National Park Service representatives examining a plant resource at Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site (Photo: Gregory R. Campbell, 2006).

Another consultant considered sagebrush a source of firewood. “They used what they had,” he said. “They used the sagebrush. They used it dried up for firewood, for cooking, and for heating.”³⁸

Willows also are used as a material resource. The Kiowa consultant noted that willow is;

... easily bendable and you can use them for anything. They used to use them to make baskets to carry things. To string things up. Put their dry meat on. Some people still do that but not very many.³⁹

Narrow Leaf Yucca are utilized as fans and switches:

They used that for a switch for going in the sweat lodge, or just to shoo away the flies, mosquitoes and the knats. You pick it. You pull it out by the root and cut it. You get a little bunch of what you need, its not gigantic, and hit it against the cottonwood to get all the thistle part off, the sharp part and then you use it in the sweat lodge or use as a personal fan.⁴⁰

Prickly pear cactus, she continued was eaten as starvation food.⁴¹

Aside from flora resources, several consultants independently referenced materials, animals, and animal by-products as significant. A Northern Arapaho traditionalist told the ethnographer that anthills are important as medicines can be made from them.⁴² Similarly, the Kiowa consultant at Bent's Fort pointed out anthills as source of small rocks, which are brought up from the earth.

The little, tiny rocks that the ants pull up out of the ground I know that my people use them inside their gourds, the ceremonial gourds that they use for their societies...

Plus they used to put the turtle shells on them and they would clean the turtle shells out for you. The Kiowa ate the turtles too, put them in a fire pit with rocks on top. Cook the turtles and put the shells on the anthills.⁴³

Standing on the banks of the Arkansas River, the consultant pointed to the opposite bank and noted: "The round rocks I was telling you, they are across the river. We use those for the sweat lodge and they did use them for the tipi rings before they got their staves."⁴⁴

The harvesting of resources, is considered by most interviewees to not only be an inherent right, but remains an important linkage with past cultural traditions and religious practices that are carried into the present-day. Those values and traditions are expressed

in the following quote. "...When they held ceremonies on the Sand Creek site we harvest the plant and use it to smudge the participants..."⁴⁵

14.7 Cultural and Religious Activities

When asked whether ceremonials were done at or near the Sand Creek site, one consultant replied, "To a certain extent yes; they used a lot of plant life in the ceremonials ways..."⁴⁶ Another cultural expert echoed the belief that the Sun Dance was held near Sand Creek. "They had sun dances, everywhere, everywhere," he said. "Yes this would be a good place for a Sun Dance."⁴⁷ The consultant continued, directly linking major Southern Cheyenne ceremonials to the season and ethnobotanical resources:

In Oklahoma we hold our ceremonies, our arrow ceremony our sun dance, our new life lodge, in the springtime and the reason for the springtime is because of the beginning of new grasses, plants, new leaves, It's a renewal, the renewal of mother earth being created again. And that's the time our sun dance begins, the new Life lodge—new life with the plants. The plants play a major role in our ceremonies because we use what comes out of the ground inside our ceremonies.⁴⁸

Ethnohistorical and ethnographic accounts note that several Sun Dance ceremonies were held near various rivers and streams that are associated with the cultural landscape of southeastern Colorado. The Kiowa for example held a Sun Dance ceremony in the summer of 1848 on the Arkansas River near Bent's Fort. The ceremony was referred to as *Opan K'ado* (*Ka'itsenko* Initiation Sun Dance).⁴⁹

A number of individuals mentioned sweat lodge ceremonies. Sweat lodge ceremonies are an integral aspect to prepare for major religious undertakings. Other sweats are done for cleansing the body of sickness, physically or spiritually. Sweat lodges most often are constructed near water sources as many of the materials are found in the vicinity of water.⁵⁰

14.8 Landscape Features

At the Sand creek site there is a spring. Most consultants, using cultural logic and traditional knowledge, connected the water source to locating the campsite, contrary to the archaeological evidence. The Southern Cheyenne cultural expert noted:

This is our water for survival. Everyone wants to move the actual site further north away from the water. That is not what our ancestors thought at that time. Our ancestors wanted to be close to spring water so they did not want to walk that far and use it.⁵¹

While visiting the spring, the Southern Arapaho consultant reinforced the above statement, emphasizing the importance of water resources in selecting camping locations. He said:

Yes, really important water, water resources that what the Indian depended on the water because they always moved where they could find accessible water.

Like I said it is essential that we have water. Whichever way we went or whatever we done we had to have water for our own consumption, our animal life, horses, and what not.

Well you know the spring is significant part of our culture, our way of life. And water is really essential because that is where people moved to. Where water was easily accessible so that is why I say this spring here meant a lot to our people.⁵²

However when he was asked about the role water plays in cultural and religious activities, he replied:

Yes water was essential because they used a lot of water in the sweat lodge, like what the white man calls today sauna, because they used the sweat lodge for cleansing, healing, and very different things, sickness, health. They used it for a lot of things.

So, water and spring meant a lot to our people. And forefathers.⁵³

Traditionally, the Arapaho believed that springs, along with lakes and rivers, were the dwelling places of under water spirits. They left offerings near springs and steep riverbanks to show respect for these beings to ensure safe crossing and good drinking water.⁵⁴ While traveling through Colorado in 1846, George Ruxton noted that the Arapaho regarded Manitou Springs as a sacred site, often leaving offerings. He wrote that "...at the time of my visit the basin of the spring was filled with beads and wampum, and pieces of red cloth and knives, whilst the surrounding trees were hung with strips of deerskin, cloth, and moccasins..."⁵⁵

Ethnologically, many other tribes recognized springs as powerful locations, either as sacred or dangerous locations. The Cheyenne for example believed that water monsters inhabited many springs and left offerings where these monsters were believed to dwell.⁵⁶ When the ethnologist asked whether the Cheyenne believed the springs held special significance, the cultural expert responded;

It was a source of water. And also spirits are there. A lot of spirits are there. No one person should be at a spring by themselves.⁵⁷

Other consultants mentioned that the majority of the materials that are used today as in the past in constructing and running sweat lodges and other religious activities have their origins in the region.

14.9 Principles of Environmental Integrity and Purity

An essential quality mentioned by several individuals is the purity of the items collected and used by them. Interviewees independently emphasized the need to keep or return the sites to as pristine or intact as possible. One Southern Cheyenne cultural expert, when asked whether plants are more powerful when they are fresh, quickly responded “Yes, when they are more abundant and we use them a lot. Yes the tall sage, the male sage that we use are taken into the Sun Dance and is used by everybody in there.”⁵⁸ A Northern Arapaho consultant concurred, noting that the best time to come back to gather flora resources for a variety of purposes “would be in June when the plants are higher and in full bloom.”⁵⁹ The belief that plants have to be grown sufficiently to reach their religious or medicinal potential was reinforced by a Northern Arapaho consultant who observed that the white sage “were not ready for harvesting, as they were relatively new growth.”⁶⁰ Maintaining the environmental quality of resources and sites for gathering resources or using locales for ceremonial or cultural purposes, or retaining the integrity of the landscape is integral in grounding a person’s heritage through maintaining an ongoing relationship with the landscape.

14.10 Merging the Present with Past Traditions: Bent’s Fort and Sand Creek as Identity Markers

The cultural landscape that encompasses Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site and the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site are a source of cultural traditions and cultural identity. Numerous cultural traditions and beliefs have their birth in each park’s boundaries or the surrounding landscape. Many important social, political, and economic events occurred at the two sites.

Several consultants mentioned that bands camped at these locations and the surrounding area for lengthy periods for a variety of reasons. A cultural expert recalled the Kiowa relationship to the Bent’s Fort and the surrounding landscape. She said:

The Kiowa historically moved through here, camped here, and hunted here. On their way down to Mexico to raid. I know they stopped here to visit with other bands of Apache, and Kiowa and Comanches. Because the Kiowa had a lot of bands that camped at different places and at

different times of the year. I know they did stop here to trade, to re-supply, and hunt buffalo.

A little further south of here I heard them talk about the water that was there where they all stopped to hunt buffalo.

And I do know that they camped along this river.⁶¹

Her assertions are supported by recorded Kiowa traditions. Kiowa tradition for example recounts that in the winter of 1848 they organized and conducted an *at'a'kagua* or antelope drive near Bent's Fort.⁶² During the winter of 1856-1857 while the Arapaho, Kiowa, and Cheyenne were camped near Bent's Fort, the Kiowa leader Lone Wolf led a portion of his band on a buffalo hunt. They left their lodges rolled up and in the care of Bent. On their return they discovered that Bent had given the Kiowa lodges to the Cheyenne. Despite Kiowa protests, Bent replied that he had "given them to his people." Conflict ensued between the Kiowa and Cheyenne, resulting in the killing of Lone Wolf's horse, the wounding of one Kiowa, and the Cheyenne driving the Kiowa away from the fort. The event was the most serious outbreak of violence since concluding their alliance in 1840.⁶³

During the growing hostilities between the Plains tribes and non-Indian settlers, the Kiowa leader *To-Hosen* or Little Mountain attended a council held in 1858 at Bent's Fort. During the council, he responded to Agent Robert C. Miller's request to halt raiding:

To-Hosen, or 'Little-Mountain,' a Kiowa chief, sprang to his feet, pointing to the Kiowa and Comanche lodges in the valley below, called my attention to their vast number, and said, 'The white chief is a fool; he is a coward; his heart is small—not larger than a pebble stone; his men are not strong—too few to contend against my warriors; they are women. There are three chiefs—the white chief, the Spanish chief, and myself. The Spanish and myself are men; we do bad toward each other sometimes, stealing horses and taking scalps, but we do not get mad, and act the fool. The white chief is a child, and like a child gets mad quick. When my

young men, to keep their women and children from starving, take from the white man passing our country, for killing and driving away our buffalo a cup of sugar or coffee, the white chief is angry and threatens to send his soldiers. I have looked for them a long time, but they have not come; he is a coward; his heart is a woman's. I have spoken. Tell the great chief what I have said.⁶⁴

Other historical events are recounted that provide attachments to the landscape. The Kiowa consultant recalled that not only did the Kiowa historically travel "...through here all the time... They were enemies, the Ute and the Comanche and they all fought one another, but they all came through here all the time."⁶⁵ All five tribes historically continually interacted with each other and the greater regional cultural landscape. The Arapaho for example call the hills south of the Colorado River, west of present Granby, Colorado, "Square Forts" or *Beines toh-kokoyoo*. It was the approximate location where the Ute built a fort to repel the attacks of Arapaho and Cheyenne warriors.⁶⁶

With regard to camping locations, several Elders and consultants identified these sites as arenas to carry out various cultural activities. Specifically, one consultant stated:

At that time it was just the area. They hunted here. They stored food. Dried meat; dried fruit for their food supply.⁶⁷

Further, one cultural expert standing where he thought the main camp was located at Sand Creek said:

This is sort of like the center of Sand Creek right here... This is farthest point that we should let the American public or anybody, right here! This area right here. The walkway down that hill to help them experience what happened a long time ago.⁶⁸

Although the Sand Creek site is a source for medicines and resources, it is also a place that commands a great deal of reverence and respect. As in the past, many traditionalists and some non-traditionalists believe the site is a crucial identity resource for their people. One illustration of its importance is the "flag" offerings. Locations of cultural and religious significance are honored with tobacco and prayer flag. The Southern Cheyenne consultant escorted the ethnographer to a locale near the Sand Creek

memorial plaque on the hill directly overlooking the massacre site. In front of the plaque, on the edge of the hill was a red cloth prayer flag held down with four rocks. He explained that in the Southern Cheyenne tradition that they did not hang the prayer flags in trees that was primarily a Lakota or Northern Cheyenne tradition. “Southern Cheyenne,” he reiterated, “place their offering flags on the ground.”⁶⁹ Ethnographic research observed that indigenous people still make offerings by tying strips of colored cloth to trees at the Sand Creek site, near the summits of foothills.

The Sand Creek Massacre site remains living resource of cultural memory and heritage. A Southern Cheyenne Bowstring Headsman relayed the following, illustrating the sacredness of the landscape:

On the first day when we came out here we did a pipe ceremony conducted by Steve Brady Northern Cheyenne, Laird Cometsevah, Southern Cheyenne Chief, and myself Joe Big Medicine, Southern Cheyenne Bowstring Headsmen. As we were doing the prayer cloth, everybody was standing back here in the back, all the metal detector people, when we did the pipe smoking ceremony to the east. We heard women and children crying out here in the middle. All three of us heard it at the same time. The rest of the group was noisy, talking, laughing, and I had to motion my hand tell them to be quiet. Then when I did that everybody was quiet and we heard it better we hear them crying out there. This was not the first time. On the last day of the field project we heard them again, on the Sunday. So this is where we started the project, the Dick Ellis project, the metal detector project.⁷⁰

14.11 Conclusion

For the indigenous people environmental features and resources remain the religious and cultural fulcrum of the traditional landscape. They are places that are acknowledged and respected as essential for the continuance of cultural traditions. Most of the cultural practices that are conducted at these locations transcend individual concerns because the landscape is central to connecting with the past. It is a communal

feature that creates as well as reinforces the cultural identity of a people. As one consultant eloquently stated about Sand Creek:

It is important today to keep the memory of our lost ancestors known to the American public, and to other tribal members, and the younger generations coming up. This has to be remembered that we did have ancestors here, where we came from. I came here myself. I am a direct descendent, fifth generation of Broken Shoulder, Broken Bow, who was killed here as an old man. He was slaughtered here. But his ancestors escaped to Kansas, to Cherry Creek with the northern Dog Soldiers Society and they survived.⁷¹

Cultural landscapes remember, bearing living traces of cultural and historical events that connect the past and present with social significance. Several consultants expressed the above premise. When an elder and traditional Southern Arapaho Chief was asked how do you feel about this land, he replied:

There are many, many stories that Sand Creek, that the Cheyenne and Arapaho, that our ancestors, have told us that this is quite a battlefield, when it did take place with a few of them. We just do not know what to do right now, but go ahead and try to preserve everything that was left so we can maintain it.

To me it is quite significant to our Arapaho people, for the Cheyenne and Arapaho people because this is where they once lived. This where they were protected, but when they were attacked they had to move out. That is why we are all scattered today.⁷²

For him and others, the Sand Creek Massacre serves as living reminder of the forced changes his people and the Cheyenne had to endure into the present-day. On arriving at Bent's Old Fort National Historic site, a similar feeling was expressed by the Kiowa consultant. She said:

I am in Colorado by the Arkansas River at the park, at the fort, and I am here... Not many current Kiowa come back this way because we are mainstreamed in to the major society. First time I have been here. But I feel at home here.⁷³

Knowing that the Kiowa historically occupied the land, the place evoked a sense of belonging to the place. Cultural landscapes resonate with heritage, connecting the past with the present. The land offers a cultural continuity of living traditions.

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- ¹. The identification and evaluation of ethnographic values were guided using the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes, see, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/standards/>; http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/hli/landscape_guidlines/index.htm; <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/TPS/briefs/brief36.htm>.
- ². Keith H. Basso, Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 7.
- ³. Deward Walker, "American Indian Sacred Geography," American Indian Religious Freedom, Special Supplement. (New York: Association on American Indian Affairs, Inc., 1988), ii.
- ⁴. Kari Forbes-Boyte, "Litigation, Mitigation, and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act: The Bear Butte Example," Great Plains Quarterly. 19(1999), 33.
- ⁵. Walker, "American Indian Sacred Geography," vi.
- ⁶. Howard L. Harrod, Becoming and Remaining a People. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995); The Animals Came Dancing: Native American Sacred Ecology and Animal Kinship. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000).
- ⁷. Howard L. Harrod, Renewing the World: Plains Indian Religion and Morality. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987), 38-41.
- ⁸. Refer to, Keith H. Basso, "Stalking with Stories": Names, Places, and Moral Narratives Among the Western Apache. In. On Nature: Nature, Landscape, and Natural History, Daniel Halpern, editor. (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987), 95-116; Joseph E. Brown, The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian. (New York: Crossroad Press, 1982); Catherine L. Albanese, Nature Religion in America: From the Algonkian Indians to the New Age. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Donald J. Hughes, "A Native American Environmental Ethic," In. Religion and the Environmental Crisis. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986).
- ⁹. Enrico Comba, "Inside a Circle: The Structure of the Cosmos among the Plains Indians," Temenos. 23(1987), 92.
- ¹⁰. See also, Kurt Almqvist, "The Three Circles of Existence," Studies in Comparative Religion. 17(1987), pp. 24-29; Brown, The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian, 35-38; Comba, "Inside a Circle: The Structure of the Cosmos among the Plains Indians," 92.
- ¹¹. Harrod, Renewing the World: Plains Indian Religion and Morality, 20.
- ¹². Harrod, Renewing the World: Plains Indian Religion and Morality, 18-20.
- ¹³. Alfonso Ortiz, The Tewa World: Space, Time, Being, and Becoming in Pueblo Society, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); Walker, "American Indian Sacred Geography," vi.
- ¹⁴. Alden B. Narajano and Monica Lujan, "The Creation Story," In. Ute Indian Arts and Culture: From Prehistory to the New Millennium. William Wroth, editor. (Colorado Springs: Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 2000), 7-8.
- ¹⁵. James A. Goss, "Traditional Cosmology, Ecology, and Language of the Ute Indians," In. Ute Indian Arts and Culture: From Prehistory to the New Millennium. William Wroth, editor. Colorado Springs: Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 2000), 52.

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- ¹⁶. Gregory R. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interview with the Southern Arapaho Consultant, May 15, 2006," (Missoula: Department of Anthropology, The University of Montana, 2006).
- ¹⁷. William Tallbull, Plant Lore of the Northern Cheyenne. (Lame Deer: Dull Knife Memorial College, n.d.), 62.
- ¹⁸. James Mooney, Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians. Reprint. (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), 269, 292, 297-299, 301-306, 311-314, 320-322, 327, 333-335, 355.
- ¹⁹. Gregory R. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interviews with the Northern Arapaho Consultants, May 16, 2006," (Missoula: Department of Anthropology, The University of Montana, 2006).
- ²⁰. Gregory R. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interviews with the Kiowa Consultant, May 17, 2006," (Missoula: Department of Anthropology, The University of Montana, 2006).
- ²¹. Gregory R. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interview with the Southern Cheyenne Consultant, May 15, 2006," (Missoula: Department of Anthropology, The University of Montana, 2006).
- ²². Campbell, "Ethnographic Interview with the Southern Arapaho Consultant, May 15, 2006."
- ²³. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interviews with the Northern Arapaho Consultants, May 16, 2006;" Campbell, "Ethnographic Interview with the Southern Cheyenne Consultant, May 15, 2006."
- ²⁴. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interviews with a Kiowa Consultant, May 17, 2006."
- ²⁵. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interview with the Southern Cheyenne Consultant, May 15, 2006."
- ²⁶. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interviews with the Northern Arapaho Consultants, May 16, 2006." Similar to other societies, Coyote in Arapaho traditions can not only be a trickster figure, but also a helpful figure. In one tradition, Coyote teaches the Arapaho to hunt rabbits to avoid starvation and cook them by starting a fire by jumping back and forth over sagebrush. The Arapaho refer to the north fork of the Colorado River as *Kooh'ohwu-niicii-hehe* or "Coyote Creek." According to Cowell and Moss Sr., the river's name evokes a sympathetic connotation toward the landscape. See, Andrew Cowell and Alonzo Moss Sr., "Arapaho Place Names in Colorado: Form and Function, Language and Culture," Anthropological Linguistics. 45(2003)4:357.
- ²⁷. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interview with the Southern Cheyenne Consultant, May 15, 2006."
- ²⁸. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interviews with a Kiowa Consultant, May 17, 2006."
- ²⁹. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interviews with the Northern Arapaho Consultants, May 16, 2006."
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- ³³. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interviews with the Northern Arapaho Consultants, May 16, 2006."
- ³⁴. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interviews with a Kiowa Consultant, May 17, 2006."
- ³⁵. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interview with the Southern Cheyenne Consultant, May 15, 2006." Indian perfume also was identified as important by the Kiowa consultant, see, Campbell, "Ethnographic Interviews with the Kiowa Consultant, May 17, 2006."
- ³⁶. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interviews with the Kiowa Consultant, May 17, 2006."
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- ⁴⁹. Mooney, Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians, 287.
- ⁵⁰. Campbell, "Ethnographic Interview with the Southern Arapaho Consultant, May 15, 2006."
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- ⁶³. Mooney, Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians, 275, 301.
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