

“Circles In The Snow”

OBJECTIVES



- To identify members of Black Kettle’s camp
- To analyze the reasons and causes behind Black Kettle and his band being at the Washita in 1868
- To examine the historic migrations of the Cheyenne tribe



Look at the names below – these are a few of the Cheyenne that were at the Washita – and among those mentioned in your program or school lessons. Inside the photograph at the top of the page, draw a small circle representing each one of these Cheyenne. (As an example, the first circle has been completed) When you finish there should be thirty circles in the snow.

Brave Bear	Roman Nose Thunder	Lone Wolf (Stacy Riggs)	Maggie
White Buffalo Woman	Measure Woman Standing Bird	Bird Chief	Blind Man
Afraid of Beavers	Moving Behind	Wooly Dog Woman	Big Man
Wolf Looking Back	Stands Silent Sandhill	Eagle Nest	
Blind Bear	Blue Horse	Bear Tongue	Tall Bear
Bear Feathers	Cornstalk Woman	Little Woman Curious Horn	
Crow Neck	Little Beaver	Red Bird	Red Teeth
Washa	Little Heart	Little Rock	Red Shin

The Story of Brave Bear



(From the Dec. 29, 1932 edition of the Thomas, OK. Tribune)

“Brave Bear, Cheyenne chieftain, died near Thomas Friday evening. Brave Bear, the last of the Southern Cheyennes to fight...against Gen. Custer on the Little Bighorn. He was elected a chief of the Cheyennes in the regular tribal council in 1894. Brave Bear was buried on a hill...near it are graves of three others – a son, a grandson, and a mother-in-law...Buried with the chief were many treasures of his long life, blankets, beaded wear, his large sombrero and cane...The chief was born up on Horse Creek in Wyoming...Some estimated his age a four score and ten [90], others more...Brave Bear was present at the **Battle of the Washita** and...was present at Custer’s last fight and saw the long-haired general fall...He came to this country by way of...the Upper Arkansas in Colorado...For the past several years he had forsaken the horse for the back seat of a fine motor car ...Brave Bear has been a good citizen and neighbor to the pioneers who lived in the country since it was opened to settlement...his influence with his people in recent years has been for them to take up the peaceful ways...”

Very few if any of the adult Cheyenne at the Washita were born in the area. Chances are, like Brave Bear, most came from the plains of the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming, and Colorado.

Previous to the year 1880, ...Cheyenne traditions bearing on the earliest tribal wanderings were gathered at Fort Reno, Oklahoma, from a number of the oldest Southern Cheyenne...and the country described in these accounts as the primitive home of the Cheyennes seems to suggest the region lying north of the Great Lakes and toward Hudson Bay..." **George B. Grinnell, "The Cheyenne Indians"**

"Our old people say that the Cheyennes were formerly a part of the Cree tribe and that we separated from the Crees long ago and wandered off toward the south and west. The oldest people now living say that the earliest home of the Cheyennes was on the shore of the Great Lakes in the far north." **George Hyde, "The Life of George Bent."**

The Cheyenne Tribe, for many generations, has been made up of two groups, the Northern and Southern Cheyennes. Today, many Northern Cheyenne live in southeastern Montana, near the community of Lama Deer; many Southern Cheyenne live in western Oklahoma, near the communities of Clinton, Hammon, Kingfisher, Seiling, and Watonga.

"...part of the Cheyennes...began to move south of the Platte [river] to live. This new migration was led by the *Hevhaitanio* clan or Hairy Men. This was a large Cheyenne clan and had many famous warriors in its camp. With the Hairy Clan went some Arapahos and other camps of Cheyennes...in this way the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes each became divided into two tribes..." **George Hyde, "The Life of George Bent"**

"All the oldest Southern Cheyenne men and women declare positively that no Cheyenne ever lived south of the Platte prior to 1826, and that it was in that year that the Cheyennes...began to move south...Left Hand Bull, who was eighty-four years of age in 1900, and so was born about 1816, said that when he was...just a little boy, the Cheyennes ...were living the Black Hills..." **George B. Grinnell, "The Cheyenne Indians"**

The Cheyenne moved across the plains for a number of reasons. The quest for horses and food, especially buffalo; the unpredictable environment of the Great Plains; the chance to trade/barter with other tribes and with white men; and treaties with the U.S. Government, whose citizens wanted land for railroads and settlement. By November 1868 this mix of social, cultural, economic and political conditions had resulted in many Southern Cheyenne, including Black Kettle's *Wotapio*, to locate themselves along the Washita River.

"This [Wotapio] was a small division of the Cheyennes, and is called the Cheyenne-Sioux band by the old people... When Black Kettle married into the Wotapio he went to live with his wife's people, as was the old custom...The Wotapio were famed for... their fine lodges. Everything they had was clean and of the best quality..." **George Hyde, "The Life of George Bent"**

The Southern Cheyenne Journey

Based on information from your program or school lessons about Cheyenne migrations, draw a line from the TREATY to the correct RESERVATION AREA; from the RIVER to the correct YEAR, and from the GEOGRAPHIC FEATURE to the correct STATE.

TREATY

Medicine Lodge
Fort Wise
Little Arkansas

RIVER

Missouri
Arkansas
Platte

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURE

Black Hills
Republican River
Antelope Hills

RESERVATION AREA

Southern Kansas
Indian Territory (Oklahoma)
Eastern Colorado

DECADE

1800
1820
1840

STATE

Nebraska
South Dakota
Oklahoma