



"Mánkayía departs for the sky." This illustration was computer enhanced after being scanned from a xerox copy of the original drawing in the James Mooney Collection, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. Some variation from the original may be expected. It is being reproduced at 60% of its original size.

## MANKAYLA AND THE KIOWA INDIANS: SURVIVAL, MYTH AND THE TORNADO

by Michael J. Marchand

Challenges to human survival on the Great Plains, as so effectively described by Walter Prescott Webb, often traveled in tandem with an appeal to unusual methods of protection.<sup>1</sup> This was especially the case for those leery of the region's harsh, indeed deadly, climactic and meteorological extremes. Many members of the area's Indian tribes sought to increase their chances for survival by obtaining some mastery over manifestly dangerous natural elements. They frequently did so by petitioning mysterious and powerful sources for aid.<sup>2</sup> The Kiowas of the central and southern plains exhibited a special regard for the enigmatic and terrible wind they called *Mankayla*—the tornado.<sup>3</sup>

### Perils of the Plains

The Great Plains bristles with natural perils. Blizzard, drought and flood are common.<sup>4</sup> The basic need to secure sufficient food, drinking water and shelter in an often hostile and unforgiving environment cuts across cultures and geography. The possibility of bear attack or deadly snake bite were real concerns for prairie Indians. Human enemies also posed ever-present threats to life. Probably the most significant killer, in numbers of lives lost, took the form of diseases imported from Europe. Fear was also borne on the powerful prairie wind.

Wind fanned the fires that devoured large portions of open plains. One of the earliest recorded Great Plains incidents of death by grass fire is recorded by Lewis and Clark, who, while surveying the northern plains in 1804, made this observation:

In the evening the prairie took fire, either by accident or design, and burned with great fury, the whole plain being enveloped in flames. So rapid was its progress that a man and a woman were burnt to death before they could reach a place of safety; another man with his wife and child were much burnt, and several other persons narrowly escaped destruction. Among the rest a boy of the half-white breed escaped unhurt in the midst of the flames; his safety was ascribed to the great medicine spirit, who had preserved him on account of his being white. But a much more natural cause was the presence of mind of his mother, who, seeing no hopes of

carrying off her son, threw him on the ground and, covering him with the fresh hide of a buffalo, escaped herself from the flames. As soon as the fire had passed, she returned and found him untouched, the skin having prevented the flame from reaching the grass on which he lay.<sup>5</sup>

Nearly seventy years later, Thomas Battey, a Quaker school teacher among the Kiowas, discovered the hazard of prairie grass fire first hand. On February 23, 1873, he revealed in his diary:

I had been in the way of taking up my ashes in the morning, and pouring them out upon the ground in one place, not foreseeing danger therefrom, though the prairie is not burned off. But this morning, while sitting along in my tent, I heard the crackling of fire, and ran out quickly to see what it meant, when, to my consternation, the flames were rushing before a hard wind directly towards the tent, and were then but a few feet from it. In spite of my efforts, had not the Indians rushed to the rescue, it would have been consumed in a few minutes. Their blankets, vigorously applied, soon subdued the flames, which were higher than our heads, and burned the grass within a foot of my tent, and at one time rolled up its canvas sides in a very threatening manner.<sup>6</sup>

Great Plains wind, even without the added terror of fire, figured prominently in Native American struggles with the environment. Whirlwinds, tornados and wind storms made significant impressions on Plains Indians, whose perceptions and reactions to these weather phenomena provide a fascinating insight into cultures vastly different from those reflecting the traditional Euroamerican experience.

### Whirlwinds

Although the words are sometimes used interchangeable, Kiowas and other Plains Indian tribes differentiated between whirlwinds—the small wispy wind currents also called dust devils—and the towering, violent tornado or cyclone. The Lakotas, for instance, saw *Yum*, "Whirlwind," as a subordinate, message-carrying spirit associated with dancing, games and love.<sup>7</sup> As ethnologist Clark Wissler observed, "The whirlwind to which they [the Lakota] refer is always the harmless little whirl that one sees upon the plains every clear day."<sup>8</sup> Moreover, as Wissler put matters, "In the whirlwind somehow and somewhere resides the power to produce confusion of the mind," and "when a man loses his presence of mind he is said to have been overcome by the power of the whirlwind."<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the Cheyenne word for whirlwind, *Héwoiv: iās*, also means dragonfly, connoting a

diminutive darting and elusive presence; one, however, not devoid of power simply by virtue of small size.<sup>10</sup>

There is, still, confusion with term usage among references to Native American perceptions of whirlwinds and tornados. Pioneering Kiowa ethnologist James Mooney,<sup>11</sup> for example, used the term whirlwind in his account of the Kiowa shaman *Pá-iñgya* (In-the-Middle), who prophesied tribal renewal and cultural revival in 1888: "He [*Pá-iñgya*] predicted the near approach of a mighty whirlwind which would blow away all the whites and all Indians living among them or following their customs."<sup>12</sup> It is clear, Mooney's use here of "whirlwind" aside, that such devastation would result from a tornado.<sup>13</sup> In the Kiowa language a clear distinction exists between the two wind phenomena: the word for cyclone or tornado is *mān-k'ā'-iH*, while whirlwind is *mā'-t'ou'-i(H)-gyH*.<sup>14</sup> The Kiowas, however, explaining matters with all the precise detail of a scientist, said: "Wind storms without rain[are] caused by a monster with long ears like a jackrabbit which lives in the ground in a hole on top of a hill. When it comes out and flaps its ears it makes wind."<sup>15</sup>

One finds in a Jicarilla Apache origin story that the figure of Tornado fills the role of sleuth and courier. The ancient people wondered why the mountains at the four cardinal directions ceased growing. They wondered, too, what had become of two girls who disappeared while gathering berries and picking flowers. Finally, "they sent Tornado to learn the cause. Tornado goes everywhere and searches every corner, and he found the two girls picking berries on the mountain, and he came back and told the people."<sup>16</sup> This account leaves us unsure whether Tornado is actually a bantam whirlwind or a full storm cloud, but Tornado's helpful and maneuverable abilities make the former identification more likely.

Writing in 1961, anthropologists Morris E. Opler and William E. Bittle used the term whirlwind in their examination of Kiowa-Apache eschatology. Keeping with the general Athapascan dread of ghosts and anything relating to death, the Kiowa-Apaches looked upon the whirlwind with considerable apprehension. Kiowa-Apaches viewed children as vulnerable to the evil influences of ghosts and "because ghosts sometimes appear as whirlwinds or as sparks...that move ahead of whirlwinds, children were taught to look away or cover the eyes at the approach of a whirlwind, and the face of a baby was shielded by an older person so he would not see this phenomenon."<sup>17</sup> If we interpret "sparks" to mean lightning, it is probably that the Kiowa-Apache refer to a tornado as opposed to the typically harmless plains dust devil. In either case, a Kiowa-Apache folktale ends with the sage advice: "you should never fool with the whirlwind. It's dangerous."<sup>18</sup>

## Levity Under Pressure

In the face of inexplicable forces of destruction, people may choose humor as a coping mechanism. It can provide psychological relief from overwhelming fear which might otherwise consume. For the Kiowas, the seriousness of the tornado did not compel abandonment of their acute sense of humor. To the contrary, the wind storm commands a central role in at least one playful Kiowa folktale.

By way of his many adventures and misadventures, the tribe's mythic trickster-hero *Sindi* is often employed as a welcome outlet for controlling emotions under stress.<sup>19</sup> The Kiowas tell one such story, laden with sexual innuendo, wherein *Sindi* courts a captivating woman, who is, unknown to him, actually Whirlwind Woman. As the tale unfolds, *Sindi* is going along on one of his habitual travels and chances upon a woman who he suggests should "marry" him. Whirlwind Woman doubts *Sindi's* stamina, but he assures her he is strong and will not tire during their relationship. To win the woman's favor, *Sindi* also promises he will not let loose of her, and when he believes he has finally gained her affection, he moves very close. That is when she reveals herself as Whirlwind Woman and in a flurry, drags him through trees and thorny bushes, tearing his flesh and eventually dropping him bloodied and covered with dirt. Whirlwind Woman then departs for the sky, leaving the presumptuous *Sindi* in her wake. Characteristic of a well-conceived story, the tale can be interpreted on several planes: as a joke, a lesson, a warning, or simply as relieving entertainment.<sup>20</sup>

## Folktales and Mysteries

Functilious textual analysis, and certainly any historic reconstruction based on Kiowa wind storm folklore is tenuous at best. Variant Kiowa tornado stories, which seem as numerous as tornado story tellers, deny the positivist's dream. It is possible that Kiowa folktale themes and main story elements remained constant over long periods; but how can we expect that every word and phrase, every pause of speech, among hundreds of oral traditions remained fixed through pre-contact time? Did the folktales remain rigidly true in every detail, as if chiseled into stone, until shattered by white contact? Far more likely is that individual story tellers molded their tale to fit the setting and audience of every performance.<sup>21</sup> For instance, when telling the tale before a group of warriors, all seated in their respective positions around a tipi fire, the narrator might inject ribaldry or personal boasting into the mix, which, when told before an audience of children (or ethnologists) the story might instead emphasize the element of fear to compel children's good behavior. Perhaps, even, the social rank of the narrator influenced the manner in which a story was told.<sup>22</sup>

The written versions of Mánkayía's story have undergone observable transformations; changes beyond those attributable to recording mistakes. Working backwards, variations are evident in the 1935 version<sup>23</sup> compared to the 1927 recording.<sup>24</sup> Elsie Clews Parsons, moreover, found two different versions among different informants within two months. Even the oldest recorded version discussed below most likely reflects the story in its reservation era manifestation. What was Mánkayía's story like when the Kiowas were free to rove the prairies driven only by their own will and whim? The answer, sadly, now remains unknown.

It may be helpful when diving into Kiowa folklore to engage in a bit of introspection. Before Mánkayía's story can be read in a mood even remotely reflecting one a buffalo era Kiowa would find reasonable, the modern reader, loaded down with years of scientific based education and centuries of western philosophic indoctrination, must at least try to minimize the effects of the bundle of presuppositions we all carry in our psychological parfleche boxes. We must attempt to imagine a world where animate and inanimate are indistinguishable, and assume all things possess spirit and power. The tornado, in our newly altered mind-set, cannot be conceived of as a weather phenomenon, but rather, must be seen as a living, breathing animal—a being.

Likewise, spirit and flesh should not be arranged in a dichotomy. All things have mysterious power; some being strong, commanding respect and emulation; others being weak, earning only condemnation and ridicule. Even thus perceived, however, Mánkayía still remains fundamentally unknowable. Yet even if such things as Mánkayía or pre-contact Kiowa "religion" are unknowable, at the least some aspects of them should be approachable and, perhaps, meaningful.

### **Mánkayía**

Since in the Kiowa universe horses and tornados are both respected symbols of power, it is appropriate that Mánkayía's creation should be synchronous with the origin of the horse. As a mature tornado Mánkayía loomed as a powerful symbol to the Kiowas; so, too the horse. The storm cloud, however, had a more ominous side, one capable of inflicting tremendous destruction on tipis clustered together on the open plains. The Kiowas' relationship with Mánkayía helps throw light on how they survived within an often dangerous environment while coping with imponderable power.

The first version of Mánkayía, as related below, is a composite of variants first recorded in the twentieth century. From this it is possible to trace somewhat the modern interpretation of an ancient Kiowa tradition. The second version is the one *Tebodal*, then the oldest Kiowa man alive, told James Mooney around 1891. Change in the tale from the 1800s to the 1900s is evident. The threads of

acculturation, subtly knit into the story, expose new patterns discernable by comparison. But first, the modern tale.

### **Mánkayía the Modern**

According to Kiowa legend,<sup>25</sup> the people in a Kiowa camp wanted horses. They had heard of wild horses, but could never find or capture them. So the people resolved to build their own horse. They gathered clay and began forming an effigy in the shape of a horse. They covered the body with snakeskin in imitation of a horse's hide. The teeth, mane and head came from an elk; the ears were those of a wolf, a buffalo provided the eyes; a turkey's beard served as the tail; and the shell of a turtle represented the horse's hoofs. "Into the horse they were making they breathed fire and wind," filling it with life.<sup>26</sup>

Then the Kiowas, their task completed, heard the horse effigy move, slowly at first, then quicker and quicker until its transformation into a living creature was complete. It moved so fast that the Kiowas had to hold the beast tight with all their strength. But it escaped and rose up into the sky. It was a terrible, dangerous thing that twisted around and around, uprooting trees and jerking buffalo up into the sky. The people were terrified and began running about. The old men, the elders, prayed to the formidable creature, asking that it not run over them, reminding the animal that it was they who brought it into being and begging that the creature not hard them if it returned. The horse-spirit heard their prayers, as one of Parson's informants disclosed, because it "knows the Kiowa language."<sup>27</sup>

Afterward, when the elder Kiowas saw the darkness of a storm cloud forming in the sky, they knew what it was. They remembered Mánkayía, that strange, untamed animal with an upper body resembling a horse's fore quarters and with a long, writhing tail like that of a great fish. The Kiowas had a name for the animal; they had made the creature and they spoke to it with the calmness of understanding.

### **Tebodal's Mánkayía**

At first the world was inhabited by only animals which were all god-like (*dagíña*). Then, too, there were four horses. The horses were also god-like, but were superior to the other animals. They went alone, refusing to mingle with the animals. The creatures caught glimpses of these impressive loners, admiring them greatly—for their speed, power, and the marvelous things they could do. The animals tried hard to catch the horses but they always failed. As Tebodal flatly explained, "They keep away from the rest."<sup>28</sup>

At last, one of the animals who was particularly skillful hid by the lake where the god-like horses were known to come and drink. He waited patiently,

taking great care not to betray his presence. Finally, the horses came to the lake. When one of them lowered his mouth to the water the animal sprang from his hiding place, throwing a stone out in front of the horse. The stone struck the water surface creating wave rings which formed a lariat, grabbing the horse around the neck. The other three, seeing their companion's hopeless plight, fled and hence "there are still wild horses."<sup>29</sup>

The animals were not satisfied by having only a single horse so they began to make another, using the first as a model. They made their horse from clay, without legs, fashioning the body after the original. When they came to making the model's hair, the animals realized they had none which properly matched. Compromising, they used buffalo hair but were instantly disgusted with the looks, exclaiming it wouldn't do. "What shall we do with this hideous thing we have made?" they asked among themselves. One animal suggested they throw it into the lake. "No," the others responded, "it is dangerous and will eat and kill us when we come down." Another proposed they leave it on the prairie. "No, it is too dangerous and will eat and kill us when we go out on the prairie."<sup>30</sup>

Finally, after a long council, they decided to put the hideous, deformed model up in the sky where it would make rain. All agreed and it was done. It is now the storm horse, it makes rain and hail, and is seen at the front of the whirlwind.<sup>31</sup>

In 1895 Mooney asked another old Kiowa man, *Adalpepti*, to provide details for Tebodol's story. *Adalpepti* said that *Mánkayia* meant "whirlwind" and he added "it must go around where people live and not cross them." He also revealed a bit of the shared language between *Mánkayia* and the Kiowas, exclaiming: "*Wú! Wú! Wú-ú!*"<sup>32</sup>

## Storms on the Plains

In 1903 Mooney's investigations of the Cheyennes brought him in contact with *Wúnhá*, an aged member of the affiliated *Sutaiyu*. She told him about a storm the *Sutaiyu* people had experienced in the 1830s when she was a small child. *Wúnhá* remembered that time of few horses, when a great hail storm pummeled her camp, loosing hail stones with such velocity that they ripped the sinew of her family's tipi.<sup>33</sup>

Considerable danger attends being caught on the open plains during a storm, and damaging wind storms were not solely relegated to the story telling circle. They were as real to the Kiowas and other Plains Indians as thunder in spring, blowing grass under scorching summer sun and grazing ponies biting at burned up foliage in dry autumn. The Great Plains was (and still is) a place of extremes—good and bad. It cradled immense buffalo herds, offered flavorful roots and sweet fruits. The magnificent openness provided the Kiowas many pleasures with which they filled their lives, but it was also a place of danger, a

home where substantial cover was hard to find and protection from a storm was precious.

The Kiowa warrior Iseeo knew Mánkayá in his youth.<sup>34</sup> Later when serving as an informant for Colonel W.S. Nye, Iseeo described with vivid detail a tornado which had threatened a party of Kiowas.

In 1869 Plenty Stars led a Kiowa war party, which included among its members Iseeo and the noted chief Lone Wolf. They had been on a raid against their hated enemies the Utes and were now returning to their home camps. Back well within their homeland, the party pulled up to the Washita River where, the year before, the Cheyennes and Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer's Seventh Cavalry had fought the Battle of the Washita. As Iseeo thought about Custer, the Washita fight and the dead Cheyenne, a black cloud rolled towards the Kiowas from the southwest. The suffocating humid air must have hung with that "awe-ful [sic] stillness that silences even the birds before the coming of a red-black twister."<sup>35</sup>

Suddenly, the leader of the party shouted for the men to dismount and prepare for a hard rain. Soon, too, with the approaching cloud, Iseeo recalled hearing a "roar that sounded like buffalo in the rutting season."<sup>36</sup> Sloping down from the cloud a sleeve appeared, its center red; from this lightning shot out. The tremendous funnel tore through the timber bordering the Washita, heaving trees into the air.

Some of the young men wanted to run away, but the older, more experienced Kiowas knew what must be done. They called for everyone to try hard and brace themselves. The elders drew their pipes from saddlebags and lit them. They raised their pipes to the storm spirit, entreating it to smoke, and to go around them. The cloud heard their prayers, Iseeo explained, and passed by.

The war party later surveyed the destruction wrought by the storm. Iseeo discovered that the squirming black dots which had caught his attention during the frightful wind had been buffalo wrenched up into the vortex. Trees and rocks lay twisted and shattered on the ground. Even the grass which had been in the storm's path was sucked up into the cloud, the earth left bare. Iseeo told Nye that the storm was the great medicine horse called Mánkayá.<sup>37</sup>

The tornado possesses a power which the Kiowas respected and sought to understand. If they could not control the tornado, they would at least have peace with it. There is mystery and strength with the tornado, and also with the Kiowas' methods of protection. Perhaps we should not expect to understand fully either, but simply appreciate the unique relationship between the Kiowas and fearful Mánkayá.

## NOTES

1. Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Plains* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1931).

2. See, for example, Clark Wissler, "Some Protective Designs of the Dakota," *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, (New York) no. 1, pt. 2 (1907).
3. James Mooney, MS 2531, vol. 2, Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives, hereinafter cited as SINAA. *Mánkayla* is also rendered: *Man-ka-ih* or *Mon-ka-yeé*. Some authors refer to *Mánkayla* by its alias *Tseñ-guddal*, meaning "Red Horse."
4. For one example of a blizzard's tragic work among the Kiowa, see, James Mooney, *Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians* (1898; reprint, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), 360-361, where the Kiowa calendar for the winter 1890-1891 records the deaths of three Kiowa school boys, who, after being disciplined at the government Indian school, ran away for home but were caught in a blizzard and frozen.
5. Elliott Coues, *History of the Expeditions Under the Command of Lewis and Clark ... by Order of the Government of the United States*. (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1893), 1:185.
6. Thomas C. Battey, *The Life and Adventures of a Quaker Among the Indians* (1875; reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), 129-130.
7. J. R. Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, ed. Raymond DeMallie and Elaine A. Jahner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 50-51, 54, 127.
8. Clark Wissler, "The Whirlwind and the Elk in the Mythology of the Dakota," *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 17 (October-December 1905): 258.
9. *Ibid.*
10. James Mooney, MS 2531, vol. 5, p. 63a, SINAA.
11. James Mooney (1861-1921), was a United States Ethnologist for the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology. See L. G. Moses, *The Indian Man: A Biography of James Mooney* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); and William Munn Colby, "Routes to Rainy Mountain: A Biography of James Mooney, Ethnologist" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1977).
12. Mooney, *Calendar History*, 356-357.
13. On Kiowa vocabulary list, MS 2531, vol. 4, SINAA, collected by Mooney on the reservation, he pays close attention to distinctions between various wind storms, writing: "Storm—whirlwind = *p'ān* or *matóigyd*; cyclone—*mánkayth*; ordinary storm—say wind [*gómgyd*], or rain [*sep*]."
14. John P. Harrington, "Vocabulary of the Kiowa Language," *Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1928), 84:212, 235.
15. James Mooney, MS 1887, SINAA.
16. James Mooney, "The Jicarilla Genesis," *American Anthropologist*, old series, 11 (July 1898): 198-199.
17. Morris E. Opler and William E. Bittle, "The Death Practices and Eschatology of the Kiowa Apache," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 17 (1961): 389.
18. *Ibid.*
19. In the literature the name *Sindi* is found spelled variously: *Sinti*, *Saynday*, or *Sendeh*.
20. Elsie Clews Parsons, *Kiowa Tales* (New York: American Folk-lore Society G.E. Stechert and Co., 1929), 43-44. Maurice Boyd, in *Kiowa Voices: Myths, Legends and Folktales, vol. II* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1983), 115, presents a problematic version of this story. Boyd ignores the tale's sexual tone and adds instead a peculiar moral twist about the danger of marrying a restless woman, hinting more at twentieth century Oklahoma wit than vintage Kiowa humor.

21. Pliny Earle Goddard, "The Relation of Folk-Lore to Anthropology," *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 28 (1915): 21, makes a strong assertion for this line of reasoning: "Folk-narratives...are not the product of one person under the particular conditions of some definite time and place. In their verbal transmission they have been moulded by many individuals, until they conform to the conceptions of the average people forming the community. From them we secure the Indian's own views of his activities and of nature. On the other hand, one must make allowances for those features introduced for the sake of art, such as round or ceremonial numbers, conventional forms of narrative, etc. He must expect that many things obvious to the Indian are omitted, and that certain phases of life are passed over in silence because of taboos or a too serious attitude toward them."
22. William R. Kennan and L. Brooks Hill, "Kiowa Forty-Nine Singing: A Communication Perspective," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 4, no. 2 (1980): 157-163, describe such audience influenced text editing in Kiowa song performances, and although it is a grand mistake to assume that contemporary, circumstantial evidence proves the existence of nineteenth century practices, it is tempting to believe that stories were then as plastic as songs are now. As for status playing a role in story telling, Bernard Mishkin, *Rank and Warfare Among the Plains Indians* (1940; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 54, tells us that the role of orator (though not specifically story teller) was rated as twenty-fourth for male prestige in 1870. Following Mishkin's argument that rank held privileges, it is conceivable that proficient storytellers possessed artistic license.
23. Benjamin R. Kracht, "Kiowa Religion: An Ethnohistorical Analysis of Ritual Symbolism, 1832-1987" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Methodist University, 1989), 86-87.
24. Parsons, *Kiowa Tales*, 15-17.
25. *Ibid.*, N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), 48-49.
26. Parsons, *Kiowa Tales*, 16.
27. *Ibid.*, 17. Roland Garrett, "The Notion of Language in Some Kiowa Folktales," *Indian Historian* 5 (1972); 35, attempts to dismiss the causality between the Kiowas speaking and the tornado hearing, however, all versions of the story indeed state a direct causal relationship. The Kiowas speak to the storm, it hears them and goes around.
28. Mooney, MS 2497, SINAA.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. Mooney, MS 2531, vol. 6, p. 18, SINAA. *Adalpepti*, (Bushy Hair), alias Frizzle Head, was about seventy years old in 1895.
33. Mooney, MS 2531, vol 5, p. 79a, SINAA.
34. The name Iseeo is a corruption of *Aisia*, shortened form of *Aisiai-ti*, meaning "Many Tipi Tracks." He is also known as *Tábonmo*, "Looking at the Stars." This man was the third of the name *Aisia* known in the 1890s. Iseeo was born in the winter of 1850-51, raised in the last years of plains buffalo culture. When life as a warrior was no longer possible and the Kiowas were being ensconced on their reservation, he adjusted to new opportunities. He served as an Indian scout for the United States military and for five years was on the rolls of Troop L of the (Indian) 7th Cavalry. When Lieutenant (later General) Hugh Lenox Scott inquired among his charges about Kiowa history, Iseeo became one of his informants. James Mooney, and afterwards Colonel Wilbur S. Nye, both recognized Iseeo as a valuable Kiowa history

- informant. See, Morris Swett, "Sergeant I-See-O, Kiowa Indian Scout," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 13 (September 1935): 341-354; and Mooney, MS 2531, vol. 1, pp. 84-87, SINA.A.
35. Lucille Gilstrap, "Sayt-Aym-K'ee-ah, Kiowa Chief and His People" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1986): 142.
36. Wilbur Sturtevant Nye, *Bad Medicine and Good: Tales of the Kiowas* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962): 156.
37. *Ibid.*, 155-156.

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