



**A STUDY OF ART AMONG  
THE KIDWA INDIAN  
SCHOOL CHILDREN**

Donice Clay

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A STUDY OF ARTS

1928

AMONG THE KIOWA INDIAN SCHOOL CHILDREN

*Donice Clay*

By

DONICE CLAY

Bachelor of Science

Oklahoma College for Women

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PREFACE

APPROVED:

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...of Iowa ... advanced in the work  
of the school ... order to draw certain conclusions  
that would ... individual inter-

Emily H. Davis  
In Charge of Thesis

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Dean of Graduate School

## PREFACE

It is the purpose of this study to analyze the characteristics of Kiowa Indian Art as evidenced in the work of the school children in order to draw certain conclusions that would prove beneficial to us in our individual interpretation of the art principles.

I feel that I have become greatly enriched from my contact with the Indian school children. It was a never ceasing inspiration to watch them overcome their hesitancy and reticence in their enthusiasm and love of creation.

In the preparation of this study several methods of procedures were employed. The work of the Kiowa Indian children was collected and studied. In order to obtain the best results, they were not informed for what purpose the work was done, nor were they given definite assignments. From the first they selected their own subject matter, color combinations, and materials with which to work. Different types of materials were provided for them, among which were crayolas, water colors, colored chalk, colored ink, colored pencils, construction paper, and drawing tablets. In working with color combinations the children were allowed to choose the colored paper that they liked best. They not only drew upon their imagination for combining colors but represented them as they had actually been used among the tribe. As they loved

to draw, all that was necessary was the permission to stay after school if they wished "and color." So great was their love of this work that often they remained through the entire noon period, not wishing to take the time to eat. It has been from this procedure that the major part of the information set forth has been obtained.

The second method was the collecting of data concerning their history as it would affect their art. This was accomplished through books, visits to the Indians themselves and information from the white people who had lived among them for research work.

Kodak pictures were taken of the children in their ceremonial costumes, and collected from other sources from which reproductions were made. Pictures of relics were received from friends. When impossible to secure the original pictures, tracings were used. In working on the designs, beadwork was collected as much as possible, otherwise pictures were traced from older sources.

In the title page a style of lettering was designed by Enostra Maunkee, Mildred Mausape, and Aileen Redbird. The motifs used are taken from designs of the Kiowa tribe worked out by the school children and rearranged by the writer to make an artistic and appropriate design for this page.

The work is based upon three types; past and present craftwork, work of the older youths of the tribe, and that of the Kiowa Indian school children. By these

three types it is possible to trace the tribal characteristics plainly and see where the white people may learn methods of technique, color combinations, and design.

I wish to acknowledge my thanks to the following people without whom it would have been impossible to complete this study. First to my advisor, Rena Penn Britton, Household Arts Department, who has so thoroughly furnished inspiration and enthusiasm in addition to her capable guidance in the construction of this work. To Mr. Joe Cline, former worker among the Kiowa Indians for relics, designs, and information. To the Kiowa Indian Artists at Oklahoma University studying American ways in order to perfect their technique. And last to my own small Indian pupils who have so faithfully accomplished their work, not realizing that by so doing they may have taken a forward step to bring back the glories of a dying race.

In conclusion I wish to say that I know of no more interesting research than among the Indians. They are a never ceasing source of inspiration and wonder. They seem to know instinctively what is wanted even though it is still vague in the mind of the inquirer. To a friend they give all they have--to a chance acquaintance they offer indifference. With them it is the proverb "To receive you first must give." It is a primary necessity to win their confidence and friendship before any progress can be made.

## INTRODUCTION

Wherever an Indian tribe is found there also is romance, mystery, and glamour. It is necessary to delve into the past of a particular tribe in order to find the motives and characteristics of their life today.

The Indians have long been a disappearing race and unless these things are studied now it will be impossible to obtain reliable information from myths and legendary sources.

The Indians of today speak our language, attend our institutions and conform to our customs but live in a different world. Because they have been made to feel inferior to the white people, they have withdrawn themselves from any contact with them and have developed a reticence and shyness when circumstances place the two together. They still sing Indian songs and speak the Indian language but most of their tribal histories and ceremonial art have gradually disappeared.

Although at one time the Indians had many relics and ceremonial articles these have been traded or given away in return for trivial objects. Some have been sold, others presented as a token of friendship to the whites until there is at present very little of this type of artistic material.

In studying the art work of the Indians, and of the Kiowa Tribe in particular, we find that their art is rather



closely connected with that of the other tribes, especially the Cheyenne. It differs only in interpretation. Each tribe is recognized by the characteristics apparent in its art. The Kiowa Indians bead a mocassin only around the sole with a small band and a shield shape on top while a member of the Cheyenne Tribe fully beads the material. The tribes are also distinguished in the manner in which they decorate their war bonnets.

The characteristics of the tribe determine the use of the designs and technique. The Kiowas are considered a restless tribe and this may account for the fact that few examples of their art show patient and intricate work.

They love to play with their art designs. In all of their work they have depicted their own emotions, their religion or even their superstitions. Their work appeals to the intellect through accuracy and beauty. Their naive interpretation, as well as their symbolic quality and love of realism, lends an interesting touch to their technique.

In order to better study the art of the Kiowas only such material has been used as depicts their individuality and which is outstanding as a tribal expression. The data used with the exception of one or two reproductions, is entirely the work of the Kiowa Indian school children. These pupils were eight years of age with the exception of Dora who was ten. With this age in mind it may be well considered that any characteristics brought out were representative rather than acquired. The children were left to work out

their own ideas and technique. Thus the material used for illustrative purposes groups itself in two divisions, (1) Reproductions from older Kiowa Indian Art, and (2) the original work of the Kiowa Indian school children in the second and third grades.

In studying these illustrations it can readily be seen that the Kiowas are a representative tribe gathering materials from their surroundings and combining with their own tribal lore. In their art can be traced the influence and many ideas of other primitive art.

It is because of this relationship that Indian Art is one of the outstanding studies of the future. It is a study that broadens as it continues and although the Indians will never be on their highest plain, the sun is rising on a new era for them in which they may live in past splendor and future recognition. As the Indian disappears his work becomes more valuable because it can never be replaced.

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CHAPTER I  
HISTORY OF THE KIOWA TRIBE

Every Indian Tribe has its individual history, traditions and legends. In considering these I believe that the background of the Kiowa is one of the most picturesque, unique, and interesting of the entire group. In their history is found all the glory, the romance, and the pathos of humanity. They accepted life with a simple philosophy, trusting always that the "Great Spirit" would provide for them. They lived where the hunting was good and depended on nature for food. Preferring the life of the hunter to that of the farmer, they took the path of the Gypsy, going from one place to another. They lived from the game that nature provided, staying only as long as it lasted, pushing on when it was exhausted. They left little trace of having been there. They glorified nature because they lived by nature. They worshipped the Great Spirit for providing them with it. When they fought, they fought mostly for the preservation and the right of freedom; when subdued they accepted it with their simple philosophy and sought other hunting grounds.

Their entire life was composed of intense emotion, religion and drama. As we trace them from place to place we see their love of nature, their happiness in hunting, their disappointments in war as well as their sorrows and suffer-

ings on the reservations.

Being one of the last tribes to hold out against civilization, the Kiowas fought to keep their freedom and liberty; when conquered they accepted the new ways and methods of living. They saw in it an opportunity of enriching their own life and turned defeat into progress. Today some of them are contributing their share toward progress and the movement of knowledge and expansion. This is true of the Kiowa Indian Art Students at the Oklahoma University who are attracting national and international attention.<sup>1</sup>

As far back as there is any trace they had a well developed type of government. Each person had a place in the tribe. One of the most important positions was that of tribal historian. It was his duty to keep an accurate record in the form of a rough diary of their wanderings. Having few materials with which to work they portrayed their life on skins of animals using crude drawings. They often portrayed the pictures in color using stains from leaves and berries. The Kiowas were the only Indians who kept tribal work of this type. In this manner they found an outlet for their love of art and intense desire for expression.

The first historian of whom we have any mention is Set'San who was the tribal historian for a period of approximately 60 years. Later Anko acted in that capacity. These

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<sup>1</sup>Szwedzicki, Kiowa Indian Art.

Calendar histories are now in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D. C.

An interesting characteristic of these histories is the fact that a significant event from the white man's viewpoint was not considered important in the eyes of the Kiowa Indian. The Custer Campaign to the white man was very important as it resulted in the Indians being put on the reservations. However, it was omitted entirely while the theft of a horse by a member of the tribe is given prominent attention. This may be because the horse represented conquest or bravery.

Another interesting fact concerning the calendars was the period of time recorded. This was really half as long as represented since they regarded one year as spring and summer, and another as fall and winter. There was always some part of the picture that indicated whether it was the spring and summer year or the fall and winter. If the former it was generally indicated by an altar with vines; if the latter there was a picture of a tepee.

These crude drawings were later compiled by James B. Mooney, a government representative, and made into a calendar history with the events depicted in the order in which they came. It is called "The Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians."

In studying this calendar history it is necessary to

know some of the signs and symbols used by them to depict objects and events. Whenever the sun was shown it represented diety. The buffalo was their symbol of strength; the cactus meant re-incarnation. The weeks were represented by the sticks. The small pox was depicted by painting red dots on a figure. The coming of the whites is shown by the soldier's bugle.

Keeping these symbols and characteristics in mind it is not so difficult to read the history as it was recorded by them. Plate 1 shows that during the fifth week there was a form of battle as shown by the arrows. The Indian with arrows in his chest probably refers to the killing of an Indian Spy. The illustration of a house is probably a symbol of a fort as houses to the red men were unknown then. The figure of a man directly under a wolf and above a bar represents winter. Thus it is seen that during the beginning of the winter there was United States money captured as shown by the realistic drawing of the silver dollar. Later the coming of spring is portrayed by the altar with vines.

In the actual making of the calendar, the colors were tan, red, and blue in flat tones. The figures are more symbolic than naturalistic and the completed calendar seems to be in the form of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics. It covered the time between 1832 and 1833. The general effect is sketchy in line and detail. Valor and sportsmanship are emphasized as well as religious ceremonies.

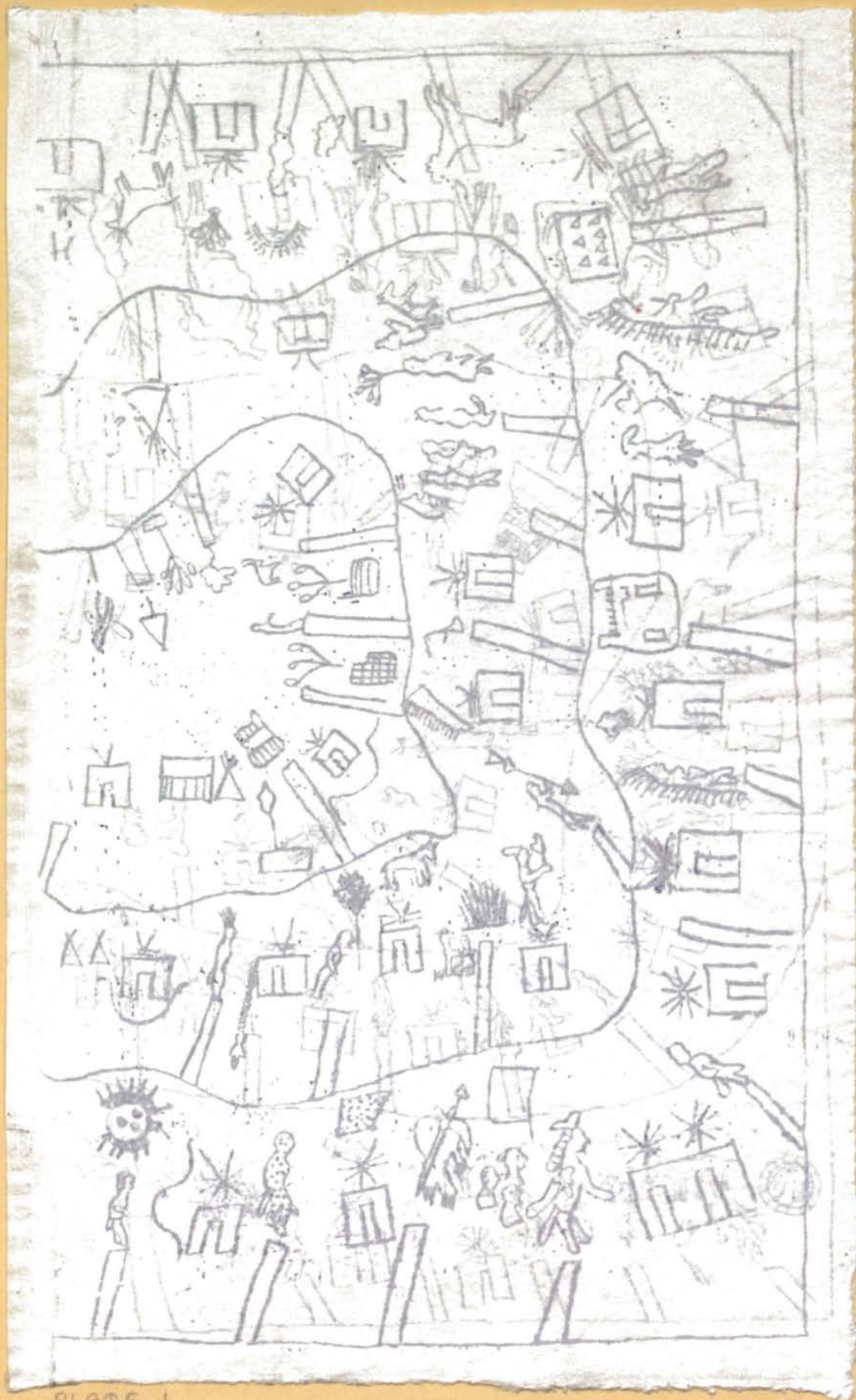


PLATE I



Their tradition or myth concerning their creation is very unusual and shows their belief in the supernatural. They believe that the Great Mysterious One sent a special messenger to earth who tapped on a hollow log calling "Tep'pdah" which means, "Come out." People immediately began to emerge. The name of the tribe was "kiagu-dal-Taga" which means "People of the large tent flaps". This was because of their peculiar habit of leaving two large flaps at the top of the tent where the skins were put together.

The Kiowa's first home was in the far North. According to their first records their original habitation was between the Rocky Mountains and the Hudson Bay. There is a supposition that previous to this time they lived in Alaska, as their facial features are not unlike the Eskimo and some of the designs used by the Eskimo are also used by the Southern Kiowas. This was evidenced when Enota, on seeing a picture of an Eskimo design, immediately recognized it as one of the designs used by her tribe.

The earliest reliable trace of them is found in western Montana. This is described by them as a land of deep snows. According to tradition, while enjoying a hunt, a dispute arose over the disposition of the game which caused the departure of half of the tribe. Those leaving journeyed until they came to the land of the Crows, finally settling east of them in the Black Hills of Dakota. This tribe of Indians was very friendly with the Kiowas and helped them in many ways.

From them the Kiowas gathered many customs and dances which they adopted as their own. One of these is the Taimé Dance or Sun Dance. So great was the friendship between the two tribes that the Kiowas left their children in the Crow camp for several years in order that they might learn the language and preserve the tribal friendship.

The Kiowas were not allowed to stay here long. They soon encountered the Dakotas who pushed them south. The Comanches likewise waged war on the small party. There followed a period of wandering. They visited the Gulf of Mexico described by them as "The big water which the eye could not cross." Proof that they also visited the Pacific is found in the description of the "Water where the sun walks down."<sup>2</sup> From each place visited they gathered materials and inspiration from their surroundings. In time these things became tribal customs and tribal lore. For this reason the Kiowas are called a representative tribe.

Their final residence was established in the Wichitas, a range of mountains in Southwest Oklahoma, where they have lived for nearly half a century. It is an interesting fact that in all their wanderings they have never forsaken the mountains and wherever they settled the mountains played a prominent part in their lives.

During their residence in the Wichitas constant raids were made into Mexico for the purpose of securing horses and

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<sup>2</sup>Joseph Griffis, Tahan - Out of Savagery into Civilization, p. 88.

plunder, as well as satisfying their desire to roam and explore. Often the material brought back contained fabrics, pottery, and other examples of craftsmanship.

Their religion, considered as a unit, may be said to have been a deification of nature. They firmly believed in transmigration of the soul and that owls and other night birds were the souls of the dead. The greatest of their gods was the sun god. To him they made living sacrifices and held dances in his honor. The buffalo was also worshipped as a symbol of strength and majesty. Another god was the Peota plant, worshipped more in a spirit of fear and superstition than reverence.

The Kiowas today have absorbed a great amount of knowledge from the white people and have abandoned some of their old customs and manners. It is true that the sun is setting on their tribe. The tribe is depleted, one of a rapidly disappearing race. As the sun sets on their lives it is also rising on a new era. The possibilities of this era can only be surmised, but already have been seen the awakening consciousness to Indian Art, Indian Music, and Indian Literature. It is truly an American art.

## CHAPTER II

ART IN RELATION TO THE LIFE OF  
THE KIOWA INDIANS

Before beginning the study of art among the Kiowas it is best to know the place that art holds in their lives. If one realized what art means to them, how they regard it, and for what purpose it is used, one can better understand the motives and characteristics found there.

Generally speaking the term "art" includes literature, music, and the dance as well as drawing. These are the elements composing what we call the Fine Arts. Of these the legends and literature will be dealt with briefly, a general summary of the music and dance attempted and the rest of the study devoted to the drawing, designs and symbols, concerning which this research was made.

It has been found that the Kiowas have a well developed sense of the beautiful. They strive always to express their religion in their work. Every type of work is done conscientiously and in a very serious manner. This is equally true of the music, legends, dances and art.

Their legends are lofty, ethereal and allegorical in character. There is generally a moral contained in each, either emphasized or merely a subtle suggestion.

In the legends they strive to express their ideas in the same way as they would paint a picture. They play with

word imagery as they do with color with the result that in reading one of their legends the reader has a sense of beauty--a feeling of unity, rhythm, and pleasing design. Their choice of words covers a wide scope and includes vivid description, imagination, and creates a lasting impression. Their favorite legend is "The Chief of the Great White Horse".

Their ceremonials include music, art and dance. Here again is found a perfect blending of emotions into a unity of the whole. Every detail of the ceremony is worked out with precision and accuracy as well as harmony. There is no false note or discord, no confusion or lack of expression. The observer has the feeling of being a part of the ceremony itself. It is with a sense of disappointment that one finds himself at the close of the ceremony only a member of the matter of fact world which seems monotonous in comparison with the scene he has just witnessed.

Contrary to the general opinion, the music is not merely a monotonous drum beat. There is complicated rhythm worked out; there is a special method of beating; a special type of drum. This is made with great care. A kettle is found that is shaped similar to half an ellipse. Over this is tightly stretched buckskin. The Indians of today, when unable to obtain the buckskin, use tire innertubes to get the desired effect. Great care is taken to get the correct hollow sound.

When the drum is completed and accepted the pitch is such that it apparently sounds louder away from the ceremony than standing near. The original drum was decorated with wierd signs symbolical of their superstitions. Feathers were also used.

With the drum is used a form of rattle which is likewise decorated. As with the drum great care is taken in obtaining the desired effect. This is made from a gourd of a specified size--approximately two inches in diameter. The gourd is cleaned out and put through a process of preservation. After it has dried it still retains its original appearance. Small pebbles are placed on the inside. These are chosen with accuracy in regard to size as a single deviation from the standard would make a heavier or lighter resonance and produce a jarring effect to the Kiowas, who are very sensitive to a single discord in any form. The handle is then attached to the rattle and arranged so that it is permanently stationary.

After this process is completed it is ready for decorations. The first and most important decoration is the placing of the good luck symbols on the gourd. This is done in line and often takes the form of the swastika. In addition to this, other symbols are placed at different intervals so that no matter how you turn the rattle, a symbol is seen. The last step in the decoration is the beadwork. A colored string is arranged with a solitary bead on the end or having

beadwork half way up. There are two of these strings, the one extending down a little further than the other. The reason for this is that they have a different sound when they hit the outside of the gourd or each other. The general effect is that of a rattle with a tinkling accompaniment. All of these details are worked out with the utmost care. This rattle was started as a superstitious belief to keep away the evil spirits but it is still used.

For every dance there is a different rhythm. The Kiowa Indian War Dance, for instance, requires a heavy beat followed by two short beats. It may go on indefinitely or may stop any time. In this dance it is customary for the participants to wear the heavy blankets, and the war bonnets. This is the most difficult and intricate of all the Indian dance steps and consists of many tiny steps taken in a shuffling method. Most of it is performed on the toes and the foot is brought down and drawn back in practically the same motion. Very little territory is covered as they generally stay within the radius of a two foot circle. The steps in the course of their presentation have the tendency to turn the dancer around several times. The dancer bends from side to side and gives the appearance of a dancing bear. Only the warriors are allowed to participate in this dance.

The ceremony relating to the peote plant is very unique and interesting. Originally it consisted of song, dance, and music. As has been stated, the peote plant was one of

their gods, worshipped for the opium effect it had on those eating it. The dance is now against the law but parts of the ceremony are still followed. In this, as in the war dance, only the men are engaged. There are four singers and a drummer in addition to the dancers. The singer holds the rattle and shakes it in a slow rhythmic motion before the ceremony begins. The singers are grouped about the drummer who beats around a circular path in the center of the drum to the accompaniment of the rattle. When the place in the circle is sounded that gives a note corresponding to the tone the singer wishes, he shakes the rattle rapidly thus informing the drummer that he must strike that identical spot during the length of the song. Each person sings three verses. As nearly as can be interpreted the songs tell the effect that the peote plant has on the individual, what he sees and how he feels. At the end of each verse the rattle is raised perpendicularly and allowed to descend in a fluttering manner. It then resumes its rhythm for the following verse. At the close of each song the rattle is passed to the person on the left who goes through the same ceremony. The rattle is always held by the person singing, and each singer tunes the drum to his own pitch of voice by signifying the note the drummer should use. As was explained by a Kiowa Indian youth, the peote plant is now regarded as a superstition rather than a god. However, the song and drum beat are still



used.

Another interesting dance is the Round dance which has its own ceremony. In this the women and men both participate. Its name is derived from the fact that the drummer sits in the center while the others dance around him. It is necessary to beat the drum for a period of half an hour in order to get the correct vibrations. At a certain time, either by a subtle signal or a recognized intuition in the rhythm, the dancers begin. They are in costume and dance in a circle facing the drum. The dance, though rather slow, is beautiful in movement and effect. Those dancing take a side step, bend the knees, and straighten. When this is done in unison it has a pleasing aspect.

The Forth-Fine dance is similar to the Round dance but is the Indian love dance. Here the couples are grouped about the drummer, each warrior with his maid. They dance but stand in the same place. There is a song that belongs to this dance. It is also performed in costume.

Their songs are always sung in the Indian language. They are very dramatic, being accompanied with gestures. Many hours are spent in order to obtain the correct graceful movement for the song. It was the writer's privilege to witness the instruction of small girls in the singing and movement of one of these songs. The Indian mother interpreted the song as meaning "Prayer to God". The reverent attitude, the graceful gestures enriched by the Indian

costume can only be imagined. The gestures themselves need little interpretation as the Heaven was God, the circular movement the sun, while the flat smoothing gesture was nature. The song was begun high and ranged to a low tone just above a whisper. It ended by merely fading away leaving a sense of expectancy on the part of the listener.

The same meticulous care in working out of details is also present in the Kiowa Indian ceremonial costumes. There is apparently no limit to the time and patience required in the actual construction. More work is required for the costumes of the women than those of the men as there is much more decoration present.

The costume of the Indian woman consists of a buckskin dress decorated with bead work and fringes (Plate 2). The buckskin is light tan in color, with the beadwork put on at the shoulder seam following the line of the arm. Just beneath these and extending across the chest is a row of beads, four to a group, and strung on pieces of buckskin. At each end of this row is a piece of material resembling a handkerchief which is tied in a knot at the top. The knot contains Indian perfume from a wild plant or herb. Long strips of buckskin are suspended from the sleeves to give a decorative draped effect. The skirt is sewed on to the bloused waist with a little apron of the same material which is beaded in long loops. A beaded belt is worn at the waist line. This is passed through beaded holders in the form of



PLATE 2

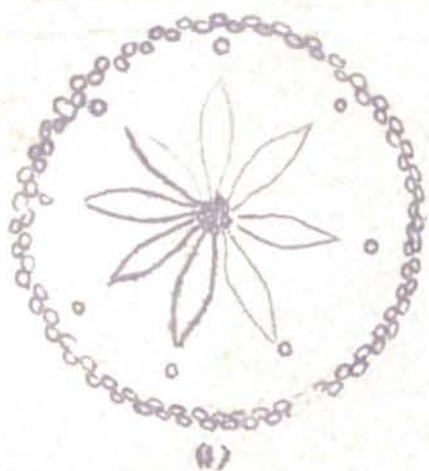
a circle using green, white, red, and orange beads, as seen in Plate 3, figure 1. Above the border of fringe on the skirt is an additional row of bead work which takes the form of continuous pyramids.

Each tribe of Indians is known by the method of decorating their war bonnets as well as the make of the moccasins. The Kiowa war bonnet is made of feathers that are white approximately half the length of the feather and red at the ends. The feathers are held together by a headband made of bead work and arranged in a particular design as shown in Plate 3, figure 3. Just above the ear is a small rosette made of beads and consisting of different colors.

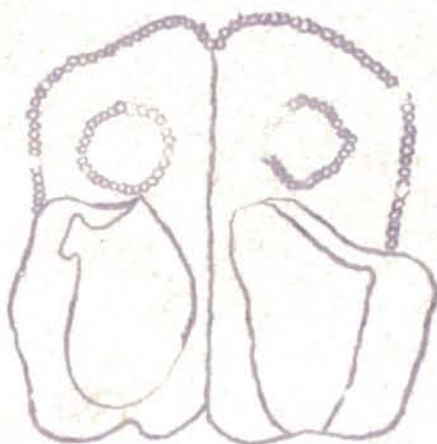
The moccasins are made of buckskin and beaded only around the sole and a small shield shape on the top. Plate 3, figure 2, shows this design from an upright position.

The costumes of the Kiowa men are very difficult to obtain and there are few specimens existing. Their buckskin jackets extend almost two thirds of their height. Under this, buckskin trousers are worn. The sleeves are fringed from the shoulder and a small fringe ornaments their chest.

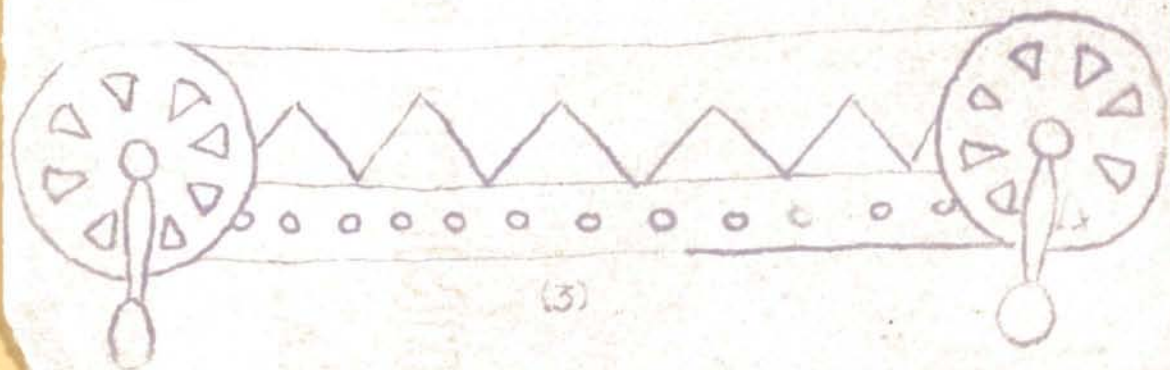
They use their costume as a means of expression and for the opportunity it affords to create. From the first the creative instinct has been among their foremost inter-



(1)



(2)



(3)

PLATE 3

ests. They strive to accomplish difficult things that others apparently cannot do. They seem to thrive on attention and flattery and appreciate sympathetic understanding. Their background of travel, beliefs and traditions, as well as their keen observations, afford them a wide range for creative ability. Other factors which influence this are found in their resourcefulness, outdoor life, and the element of the supernatural. From each of these sources they draw inspiration and subject matter.

Previous to becoming civilized, the Kiowas were considered a restless tribe, seeking enjoyment in their wanderings and raids. Now that this pastime has been forbidden they turn to art for expression of their thoughts and emotions as well as an outlet for their enthusiasm and energy. In the construction of a picture they travel in imagination and portray on paper scenes where they have been or would like to go.

Briefly summing it up, Kiowa art is seen as a means of expressing emotion, creative ability, preserving historical records, and love of beauty. Art then may be said to afford the opportunity of turning every day, matter-of-fact scenes into a panorama of color and beauty. Considering these it is safe to say that art is to the Kiowa a second religion.

To them the elements of art takes many variations. Some of these are apparently simple but very difficult to

attempt to copy. Other forms appear to be difficult and yet are prepared with ease and rapidity. Still others are complicated and take weeks of strenuous patient work to prepare. In all types the work is typical of the mind conceiving the idea.

Carving is classed under the first form. It is very simple to the eye but very complicated when an attempt at copying it is made. As a form of art it is not practiced extensively at present among the Kiowas. The materials used were wood and stone. The wood carving was more prominent in the early history of the tribe. It apparently reached its height with the carving of a statue of an old woman. This figure was less than a foot tall and was represented as having flowing hair. It was stolen from the tribe and never recovered.

A second attempt at carving was made somewhat later. The material used in this instance was stone. The completed figure was called the Taimé and was used for the Sun Dance Festival. This image was nearly two feet high and dressed in a robe of white feathers with a single feather for a headdress. Pendants of ermine skin were suspended from her costume as well as strands of blue beads. Her face was painted to represent the sun. This carving was only of the head and bust and is now an heirloom in a Kiowa family.

The carving of today consists of the cutting and decoration of the wooden beads, bracelets, and other types

of jewelry. Very intricate designs are used, often taking the form of lace work. They are decorated with signs and symbols representative of their beliefs and tribal traditions.

Free hand drawing also comes under this classification. The subject matter has the appearance of being simple and easily imitated. They have a technique peculiar to themselves in which the lines are more indications than reality. They do free hand drawing more frequently than the carving as they have more material with which to work and the time required is much shorter.

Before the Kiowas were civilized they did not know how to write and drew crude pictures in the hieroglyphic form to denote what they wished to say. This was true in the tribal calendar, kept by the historians. The custom still persists in a manner since they would rather draw or illustrate with pictures than to write with words. Many times they will talk and illustrate their talk with pictures of their own interpretations. This is true in the accompanying illustration of Plate 4, which was done by an eight year old Kiowa school girl as she told the writer a brief history of her tribe. Her name was Enosta Hamilton; in Indian, Goomah--which means Red Woman. As she told a fact she illustrated it. The story as it was related follows: "A long time ago the Indians did not have any

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<sup>1</sup>James B. Mooney, Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians, page 240.





PLATE 4

houses so they lived in tepees. When they had no stoves they made a camp fire. When they had no guns they used bows and arrows. When they had no meat they killed deer." Many times the drawing helped them to talk more freely, to overcome their reticence in taking part in the conversation, and served as a means of self expression.

Perhaps the beadwork is more prominent among the older women of the tribe than among the younger. It is true that the beadwork is not as extensively done at present as it was before the tribe was put on the reservation. This is due to the fact that the costumes are not used so much, in fact, only for formal festivals or commercial purposes. This type of art like the free hand drawing cannot be imitated perfectly. The Indians cannot resist a set pattern as regards the way they wish the article to look but are inconsistent in the number of beads separating the parts of the design. They put in only enough to give the desired appearance filling in with extra beads to give fullness or take out fullness by using smaller beads. The finished product has no apparent irregularities, is smooth in design and texture and has a perfect surface. If an attempt were made, however, to separate the parts of the design by using the same number of beads each time, the result would be confusing in pattern as well as design. Their beadwork is done more by instinct than by set instructions or formula. It is a very important phase of their art as it is primarily by

this craft that a tribe is known.

The beads themselves are very tiny--too tiny, in fact, to be used with a needle. This necessitates a slow process of running the thread through two beads, threading the needle and sewing through the material. This is repeated again and again until the design is completed. The material used as a background for this work is generally buckskin as it gives a smooth, soft nest for the beads in addition to offering weight and foundation to the design.

Jewelry is an art that the Kiowas love. They not only use it in their ceremonial costumes but in every-day life as well. The method of making jewelry varies. Sometimes it is in the form of bead work. This is true in the necklace which is made of hundreds of tiny beads strung in single ropes and the ropes twisted together. In this type of a necklace every color of bead is used. There is no definite formula for color arrangement, each designer using his own instincts as to the artistic value.

Ear rings are made in the same manner. Sometimes they are made of wood carved in the form of loops or circles. Other forms of ear rings include interlaced circles, combinations of balls and loops or even triangles. The ears are pierced to make room for these articles which are also decorated with signs and symbols.

At one time their blankets were woven and made by themselves. Very little evidence is found of that now, however,

as the blankets are furnished by the Government in return for a small charge. In addition to blankets they also use shawls. There are quite similar to the Spanish shawls both in color and appearance. The materials for the shawl vary from an embroidered silk to a figured light woolen.

Pottery is one type of art in which the Kiowas are not very interested. It seems that at one time, influenced by the raids into Mexico and the material brought back, pottery was attempted but for some reason it did not flourish among the Kiowas and they are not interested in the work at the present time.

In all of these types of art there are certain symbols or motifs used. Each one has a meaning which makes it possible to read a piece of art as one would read a book.

The sky was a symbol of happiness. To the Indians it meant the fulfillment of desires--the Eternal Peace. It was seldom represented as one color, the introduction of variations of color coming in the setting sun or dawn. Death was indicated by a long dark trail, while spiritual life was represented by mountains and plains. Flowers always symbolized perfume. There were different types portrayed, the favorite being the daisy. It was used in a rather unique manner and generally in bright colors. The leaves of the flower were prominent as well as the stem. It was flat and conventional in form and was used alone or in combination with geometric forms as illustrated in Plate 7, figure 7.



PLATE 5

It was also carried out in belt holders which are small disks of buckskin beads, Plate 3, figure 1. In some places the flowers were used as a decorative purpose only as shown in Plate 22 or serving as a border, Plate 19.

It was seldom that the sun was not shown in the composition. It was worshipped as a God and is still regarded as such to a certain extent, in spite of the fact that they have accepted Christianity. When portrayed in a scene it means a caress. The Kiowa Indian school children loved to play with the sun in their work. Often the whole sun was not shown. Generally they showed it as being partly hidden behind a cloud, Plates 25 and 27. Many times, if there were no cloud indicated, they drew the half sun from the border line of the picture, Plates 5, 19, 26, and 28. Mountains were utilized in this manner, having the top of the sun just showing above them, Plates 13, 14, 16, 17, 22, and 24. It was sometimes shown as a simple round form as in Plates 8, 11, 24 and 29 or with slanting rays or dotted lines radiating from the surface, Plates 5, 22, 24, 27, 28, and 29.

When the sun was put into the form of a geometrical motif, it was represented as rays drawn straight from the sides on a horizontal manner, extending the same distance on each side and broken by a vertical line with the horizontal line then continued approximately one-third further, Plate 7, figure 4.

The wolf was a symbol of greed and was used to denote selfishness or hoarding, while the coyote meant fear. The distinction was drawn in the habits of the two animals, the wolf being bold and venturesome, the coyote slinking and afraid. It was generally used to denote contempt.

Whenever the antelope was used it denoted grace and freedom. This symbol was not used extensively except in religious matters where they wished to deify nature. Sometimes it was used in landscapes or scenes to add a touch of interest. Another symbol that was used in the same manner was the fawn. This differed a little in the meaning from that of the antelope as it was used to denote shyness and reticence.

One of their favorite symbols was the cloud. They did not often feature the same type of cloud twice. They loved to mould it into different forms, place it in different positions and use a different technique. Sometimes it was shown as being a rolling cloud with puffs at the edges, other times it was merely a suggestion of a cloud nearly transparent and veiling the sun. Always the cloud meant deity to the Kiowas, especially so when colored in gorgeous hues. They loved to place the cloud in relation to the sun often having the cloud rising over it or even showing the sun with a small cloud over the top. Plates in which instances are carried out are 12, 18, 19, 22, 24 (figure 2) 25, 27, and 28. In Plate 19 Enosta portrays the clouds as being the drifting type edged with small dots. The irregular shapes are noticeable with the long narrow form

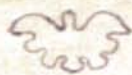
at the right and the two small ones in the center with the rounded effect on the left. This is the most interesting arrangement of four unlike shapes. Because the cloud was a distinctive part of the drawing they took pleasure in arranging it in the composition as a means of balancing other objects, for its decorative shape, or to fill in the spacious effect of the sky.

A symbol that is seldom seen at the present time is the rattlesnake. In actual life it always gives a warning before striking. For this reason the Kiowas considered him as being fair and adopted it as a symbol of fairness or impartiality. This was used mostly in depicting business affairs such as trading and bartering. It was used sometimes in love and especially in war. It is seen on the tepee in plate 4.

Their motifs are very interesting in design, form, and relation to historical characteristics. Their geometrical motifs are strikingly similar to the early Egyptian. The same type of figures were used and portrayed in the hieroglyphic manner. The swastika is used by both the Kiowas and the Egyptians and in both instances mean the same. In both the Egyptian and the Kiowa method they were used as a method of decoration as well as to further some superstitious belief.

One of the Kiowa symbols is the maltese cross, Plate 6, figure 4. This is used on tents, as decoration for cere-





Chinese Bar

Kiowa Motif  
(1)



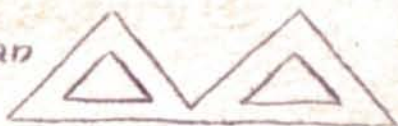
Egyptian Swastika

Kiowa Swastika  
(2)



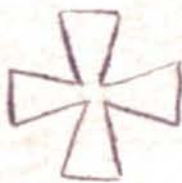
Nameless Caucasian

Kiowa Design  
(3)



Grecian Cross

Kiowa Cross  
(4)



Grecian Border

Kiowa Border  
(5)



Turkish Star

Kiowa Star



Persian Rosette

Kiowa Rosette

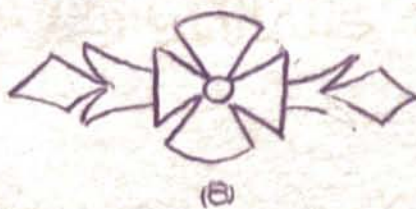
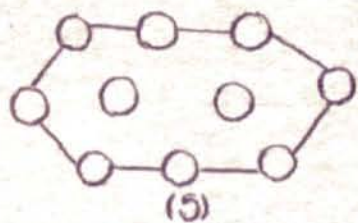
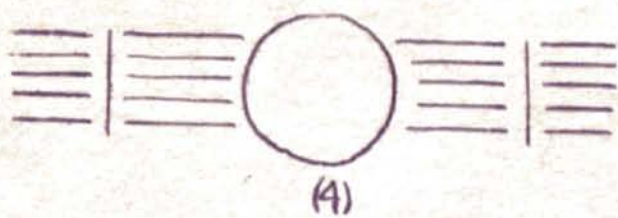
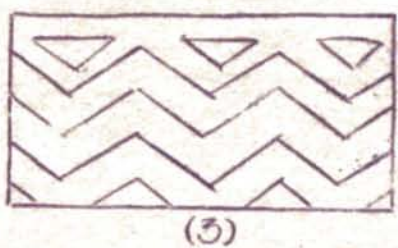
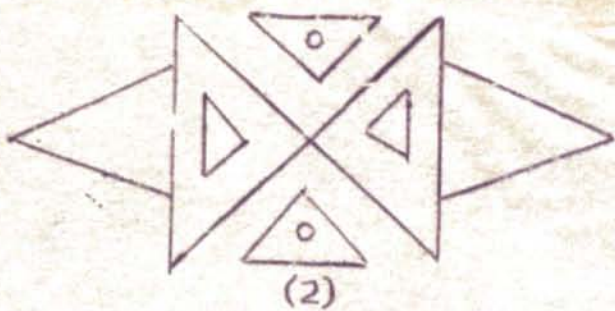
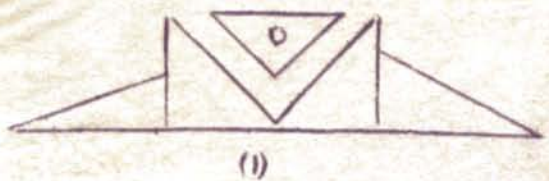


monial materials and as border designs. It is similar to the Greek cross but more interesting in spacing and proportion. Among the Kiowas as well as among the Greeks it denoted religion. In both instances the arms are of equal size.

The motif resembling the bat motif of China is also interesting. Illustrations of both are found in Plate 6, figure 1.

Pyramids present a wide scope with which to build motifs. The unusual type is the pyramid within a pyramid. There is a similar motif used among the Caucasians as illustrated in Plate 6, figure 3. Among the Caucasians this was used as a border design on their rugs. The Kiowas use it as a border motif on their costumes. It serves as a decorative effect above the hem of the dress, Plate 2.

Their geometric designs have the form of squares, triangles, pyramids, diamonds and circles. Angular lines are used extensively. In the accompanying illustration, Plate 8, which is a free hand drawing by Enosta, the angular motif is used to indicate a building with offsets which produce a variation in the type of line and silhouette. The doorway and the angular steps are strikingly like the Egyptian. The border is composed of the star motif within a circle which was explained by her as meaning that something was about to happen. It was the following day after the drawing was made that Enosta's mother was



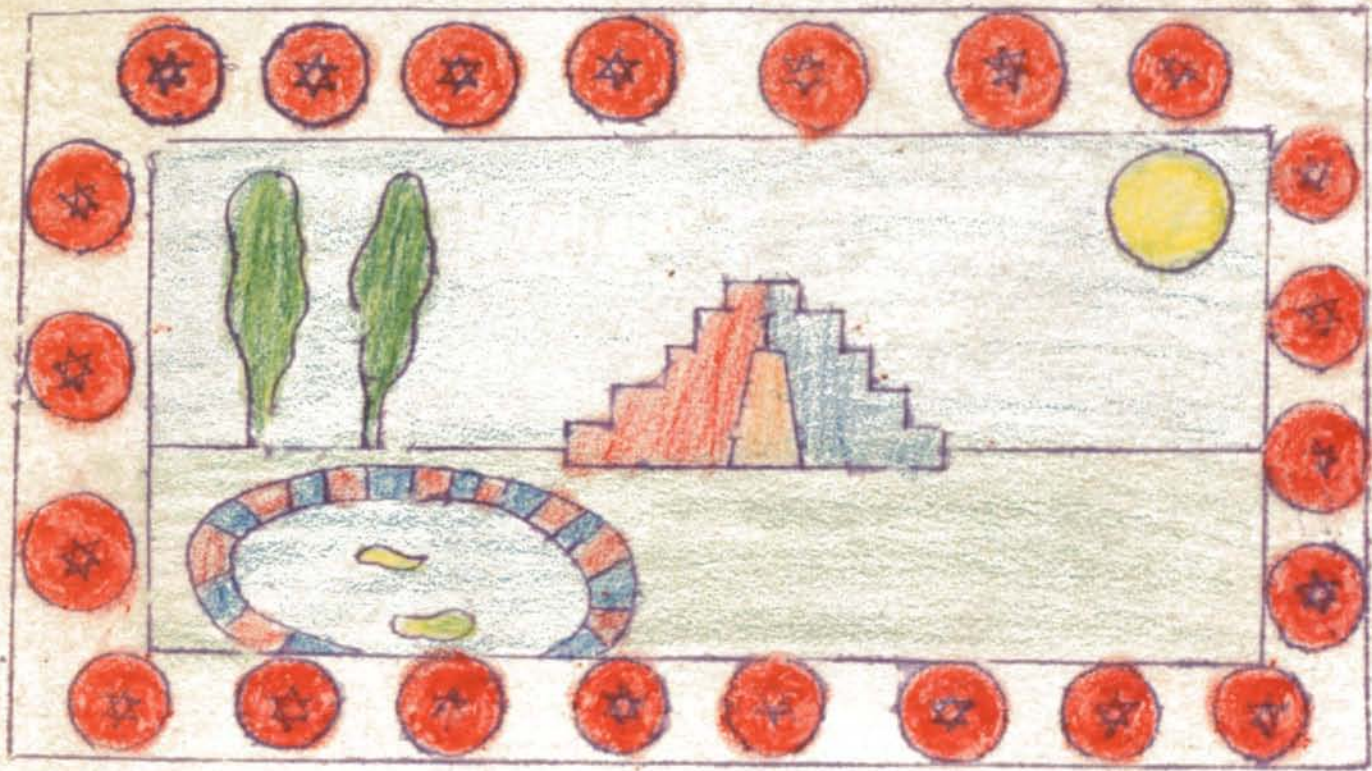


PLATE B

LIBRARY  
A & M COLLEGE  
STILLWATER OKLA.

taken to a sanitarium for tuberculosis.

Many times motifs are used which are triangles coming from triangles, Plate 7, figure 2. This makes rather a fantastic effect and yet pleasing in design. It is true of the large triangles with the points for the base and the space at the top broken by a smaller triangle, Plate 7, figure 1.

Another motif using the triangle design is that of two right triangles with the hypotenuse meeting and having a smaller triangle fitting into the top space as shown in Plate 7, figure 1. At the end of each triangle is an elongated triangle making the base one continuous line.

Sometimes this triangular motif is drawn as described above except that the motif is doubled with the same motif below the center as above, Plate 7, figure 1 and 2.

An effective border made of geometric designs is found in the repetition of triangular lines. This is very striking in color with the wider spaces left white. It produces a zig-zag effect, Plate 7, figure 3. This motif was not only used as a border but in the decoration of sleeves and chest designs.

Circles are used either alone or in combination with other geometric shapes. Sometimes we see the circle placed in the center of a triangle and always in the center of a flower. Often the whole unit is composed of circles connected with straight lines as shown in Plate 7, figure 5.



PLATE 9-TAKEN FROM A KODAK PICTURE

Again it is found in the combining of four circles to form the clover design, Plate 7, figure 7. Sometimes its only purpose was to inclose other motifs.

The star is a geometric motif which lends itself easily to a combination of other motifs, Plate 8. They are generally used alone although sometimes they are represented as being at the points of elongated triangles having the effect of rays.

In the accompanying composition, Plate 9, there is a combination of motifs used. This is the cradle for a Kiowa baby. At the top of the framework are nails placed in the form of a cross and symbolical of religion. The motifs used on the cradle itself are variations of the triangle within a triangle. The lower unit is one large triangle containing two smaller ones and a diamond shape. The spacing is especially interesting as the diamond is the center of interest, balanced by the two small triangles below. The general effect of this unit is dark. Just above this and in contrast to it is seen a diamond shaped motif containing four diamonds, each having a smaller diamond inside. This same motif is repeated in the next unit while the next row has three elongated triangles with bead trimming. The top row contains two elongated triangles the same size and shape but the general appearance is different.

In a general summary of the motifs and symbols there appears to be a strong tendency toward primitive and hist-

oric art. As mentioned elsewhere in this study the resemblance of the Chinese, Eskimo, Egyptian, Persian, Grecian, and even Turkish motifs is marked as in Plate 6, which shows a relationship to various types of historic periods.

The Kiowas do not confine themselves to geometric motifs entirely but use, in addition, graceful rhythmic lines and curves. Neither do they restrict themselves to the conventional. They use naturalistic designs when they wish depending upon the idea they strive to convey.

Flowers as a design seemed to be prominent in different forms. Plate 21 shows the arrangement of daisies as drawn by Dora. The foundation leaves at the bottom of the stem are shown opposite each other while the rest are scattered. This is the only instance of this kind found in their work. As they generally have a reason for deviating from custom it may have seemed to her that the leaves made a better pattern and formed a base for the tall stems and flowers. The seeds are indicated in the center by small brown dots which serve a double purpose. In addition to showing texture of the flower itself, they contribute to the design and color of the composition.

The flower motif is also found in Plate 22 by Mildred. This time they are placed as a decorative border following the line of the hills. The fact that the flowers are all the same color and apparently the same height and type give



the feeling that their purpose is for design and decoration only. The sun has been decorated with small dots and dashes in preference to the usual sunset colors.

This same motif is prominent in Plate 26 and takes the flat conventional form. It makes quite a decorative pattern as it is repeated over the foreground.

Plate 29 shows a free hand drawing of ducks in which design plays an important part. The heads of the ducks are based on the circle while the body is a form of elongated rectangle. The circle motif is also used in the leaf of the water lily as well as in the border design. The meaning of this border was not ascertained as Enosta was uncertain herself as to the interpretation, intimating that it was an original idea of her own. It appears to be a variation of the circle motif joined by straight lines as shown in Plate 8.

The leaf motif is used extensively as it is graceful in form and has pleasing movement. It consists of two leaves being joined together with a rounded foliage effect at the base. Within the space separating the leaves is a small figure similar to a butterfly. This is shown in Plate 7, figure 6.

Often an illustration contains interesting methods or variations of this leaf motif. They are placed on the trees or on the stems of flowers. They are even used as a border motif which incloses the composition as in Plate 19.

As this symbol was originally interpreted as a message from God it was worked out in different shapes and often occurred as mere suggestions.

The Kiowas utilize motifs and objects to give the effect of balance. This is true of both leaf and cloud effects. The leaves when shown on the stem of the flower are generally exactly opposite each other. When portrayed on a tree each branch has the same number of leaves on each side. The arrangement for spacing between the leaves may be irregular but the design as a whole has perfect balance. In Plate 5, Enocta has drawn two types. In each instance the leaves of each tree are symmetrical and formal, although the one on the left is not formal in the placement of the leaves. Here, also, the sun is drawn to the border of the illustration and serves in a manner to balance the effect of the tree on the other side.

The use of motifs to gain balance is also true in Plate 8, in which the balance is very subtle. The two trees at the left are arranged with the fish pond and are balanced by the sun on the opposite side of the drawing. The pyramid is placed in the center. A most instinctive feeling of balance and color is felt in the yellow of the sun repeated in the gold fish. This is an excellent example of a formal center of interest in an informal setting.

In Plate 22, Mildred has attempted to formally balance the leaves on the stem of the flowers. The trees have been

grouped with three on the larger hill and one on the smaller, giving balance by the heavier mass near the center with the single unit off to one side.

Line structure is also very important to the Kiowa Indian. Perhaps the most outstanding element is the rhythmic movement expressed. This is characteristic of the children's work as well as that of the adult. The motion may be expressed by a long sweeping line with a swing or curve denoting intense feeling and rhythm. In the instance of animals it is generally found in the graceful curve of the back. If it is in motion or in the process of springing, the action is portrayed by a continuous line sweep from the shoulders to the tip of the tail. With human figures it is expressed by arrested movement such as an upraised foot, balancing on the toes or emphasizing the muscles. These principles are shown in Plate 23. In this rhythm of line movement the Kiowas are pre-eminent.

In Plate 19, the lines used, as well as the color, tend to give the composition its delicate appearance. The space unit is again interesting in regard to line formation, the largest being that of the rabbit with the carrot. The second unit in relation to the interest is that of the flowers with the small nest and the egg-like shapes. The nest is shown in a flat decorative manner as well as the flowers.

In Plate 26, the mountains are again illustrated in

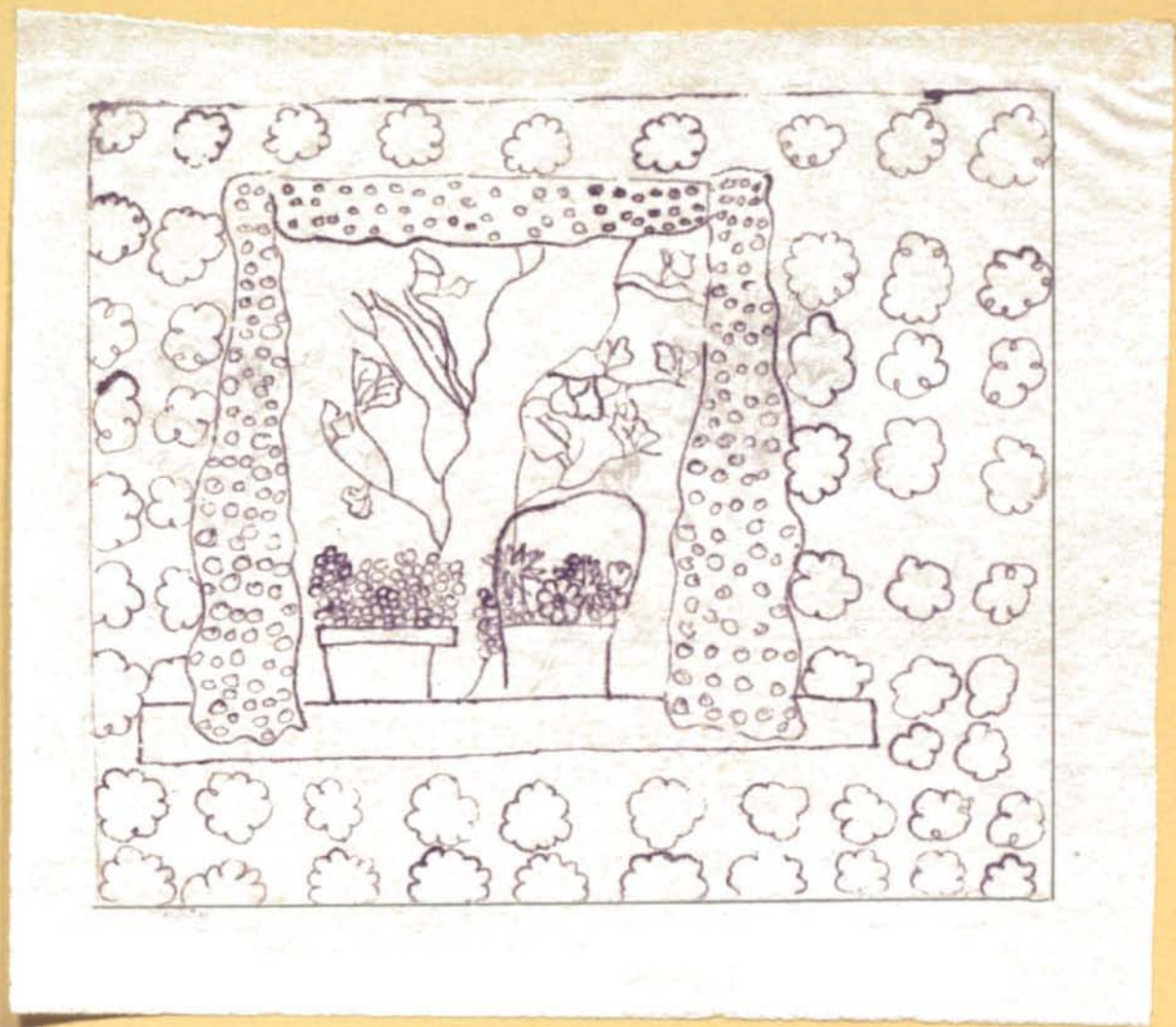


PLATE 10

the irregular spacing and the employment of the curved line is used. At the extreme left the gate is represented by the use of repetition of the horizontal line. The line of the fence is interesting in its winding form and in the manner in which it divides the composition into different units of interest, that of the rabbit and flowers, of the trees and birds, and of the mountains and sun.

Each line used produces an effect. The rounded lines of the hills in Plate 17 produces a restful effect with the graceful manner in which the lines converge and seem to disappear in an overlapping arrangement. In Plate 16, the lines show rhythm and grace as well as defining the skyline of the mountains and trees in the distance.

They use line to obtain different results, one of which is to break up space. This is done to divide the composition into different units as shown in Plate 4, one unit containing the tent, another the figure with the bow and arrow, and another with the deer. In this case, no unit is the same proportion or shape, the hill section dominating with minor accents. This is also seen in Plate 13, which is especially interesting in this respect. The straight division of the foreground is a contrast to the rounded irregular spacing in the background, produced by the converging of the lines.

The ability to make clear cut lines is also characteristic of their work. Each line is expressive and used for

a purpose; therefore it is emphasized. No unnecessary lines are used and even small lines are made clear and purposeful. This is true of the decorative motifs used in drawing an Indian costume. None are merely indicated. Each one stands out as it is in reality in both line and color.

Another use of line is the purpose of defining a contour or shape of an object. In Plate 16, two of the mountains are shaped in points while the third is rounded. The contour of the hills is contrasted with that of the mountains as they are flat on top with a curved line representing the slope.

Plate 12 shows the contour of the hills and mountains employing the use of the convex line entirely. The rounded line, based on a circle is also used in Plate 12 to show the outline of the clouds. In Plate 11, a still different type of line is used to define the shape of the plant stems. This is in the form of a naturalistic wavering line to show the method in which the branches and twigs are formed, while the trunk is treated in a conventional manner.

An interesting effect is produced by the angular lines of the house found in Plate 8. Here they are used primarily to break the silhouette and to add an element of interest. It is much more effective in contour than if a straight unbroken line were used. The length of these angular lines are in good proportion to the size of the building itself

as they are not too large to be monotonous or too small to detract from the rest of the composition. The angular building is found in Plate 11 and is interesting in contrast to the usual peaked roof effect. The deer drawn by Enosta and used on the title page shows a deviation from the ordinary in the use of angular lines in preference to the curved. It is more of a design than a naturalistic drawing.

Another use of line is in the depicting of perspective or distance. This is employed in an effective manner by drawing lines to a vanishing point causing them to gradually disappear on the horizon. In Plate 28, figure 1, this result is obtained by diminishing the space between the lines leading back into the composition. It is interesting to follow the path which leads to the door of the first house, winds parallel with the fence, across the field, through the gate, and to the door of the second dwelling. From there it disappears over the hills, down into the small ravine and up to the last farmhouse. The line of the fence has been broken and the division of space produces six different units to the composition. Although the front side of the house has been drawn flat, an attempt has been made to show the rest of it in perspective. This is also true of illustrations in Plate 12, in which the end of the house is shown as well as the side against which the smaller addition is placed and the front. Plate 24, figure 3 repeats

the same principle, and the barn illustrated in Plate 27 is shown in the same manner.

Perspective by use of line is also attempted in the marks used for grass. In Plate 28, figure 1, they are fewer in the foreground and much more distinct than further back in the illustration. An excellent example of this is found in Plate 19, in which the grass blades are indicated in the first elevation while the hills at the back are colored solid. The blades outlining the first hill are much more distinct while those forming the contour of the others are mere dots.

Another method of gaining distance is by the diminishing of the size of objects. The snow scene in Plate 20 is probably the best illustration of this type. It is interesting to see that the trees are in relation to size, the larger being further apart and the smaller brought closer together by distance. As distance increases, the space diminishes until the last tree is merely indicated. Distance by gradation of size is also shown in Plate 11 in the bird formation. The nearest being larger, the further back they are placed, the smaller they are, leaving the last one to apparently fade into the distance. Again in Plate 27, the two tumble weeds in the background are much smaller than that in the foreground while the cave itself is carried out in very small detail to show that it is further away. An interesting approach to perspective is



obtained in Plate 24, figure 1, which is an excellent example of rhythmic line giving space and distance by the manner in which the path winds over the hills. The path in the foreground is rounded to give the appearance of the curved surface of the hill. The line is then broken to indicate a ravine or that the direction of the road is changed. The second path is more narrow than the first and drawn smaller in scale.

In some instances perspective is dealt with very briefly and many times merely indicated. Plate 8 shows the rectangular building placed a fraction in front of the horizon line which is the only attempt to show distance in the illustration. This is also true of Plate 13, while Plate 15 creates the idea of perspective by grouping some of the objects in front of the others.

This same effect is gained by converging lines in the form of folding hills. This is well illustrated in Plates 13, 17, and 19. One interesting effect is found in Plate 23 in which the car is set farther back and is much smaller than the horse in the foreground. Here an attempt is made to show three tires as if the car were actually turning the curve.

Every line is definite, purposeful, and emphatic. This phase of art work is not stressed to such elementary pupils but is something which is entirely instinctive to the Kiowa children and shows their keen observation.

Line treatment is also used to obtain repetition. Plate 10 repeats the rhythmic line found in the curtains in the form of the tree outside the window. This is a very sensitive flowing line. The same type of line is evidenced in the handle of the basket as well as in the delicate tracery of the leaves. Plate 22 shows the re-appearance of the line found in the curved hills and the line of the flowers just below following the exact trend and direction. The scalloped line of the clouds also finds expression in the tree tops and flower petals.

This same element of repetition is also found in Plate 30 in which the circular figures of the wall paper are repeated in the circular flowers in the window, a good example of the recurrence of a motif.

One effective use of the repetition of line motif is found in the borders, and their relation to the composition itself. In Plate 11 the circle and heart are used in the outside band with the circle repeated in the flower units and sun in the illustration itself. The top line of the heart shape is repeated in the silhouette of the birds with their outstretched wings. Both instances serve to bring about a merging of the composition with its border.

Plate 29 shows repetition of the rounded figures of the border in the sun, lily leaves, and the figures of the ducks themselves. The straight lines attached to the rounded shapes are repeated in the stems of the water lilies and the

sun rays.

The border of Plate 19 is composed of the flower motif which is a prominent feature of the composition itself. The variation of the circle form is evidenced in both the nest of eggs as well as the rounded tops of flowers, each apparently of a different type. Here Enosta has attempted to distinguish between the kinds of flowers by the use of line, the first being a series of curved lines, the second being oblong petals, and the third being mere indications. Plate 20 shows a different border composed of repeated horizontal ovals within vertical ones, recurring in the composition in the various animal forms. In Plate 14, the chevron shapes are used to outline the illustration which is a variation of the motif shown in Plate 7, figure 3.

Many times the repeating of a motif or object tends to give the work more texture and feeling. This is shown in Plate 17 in which the tree shapes are repeated and are apparently for decoration only. Plate 18 illustrates an interesting repetition of shapes based upon the circle which appears first in the flower heads at the lower edge of the composition. It again occurs in the heads, tails, and ears of the small rabbits as well as the eggs in the basket. It is even present in the antennae of the butterflies.

Motif repetition is especially true in Plate 12 in



PLATE 11

which the flower figures are repeated for decoration as well as the lines on the roof of the house, indicating the shingles. The dotted outlines of the clouds also give interest and character to the work. In this instance the effect is gained through the repeating of color as well as line.

Color means quite as much if not more to the Kiowa than the structural background. Although there is no set rule among the tribe as to what colors to use in combination the artist relies on his own judgment and combines the colors to suit himself. As a rule he is a severe critic and considers the composition from an impersonal point of view in regard to harmony and arrangement.

Their color schemes range through every known color. One illustration may have a great variety of color, some of which are used to blend the others as well as to give it a finishing touch. Silver or gray was often used in this respect. Other examples, as Plate 20, may be very simple and have quite a sameness of color effect.

In the portfolio of Kiowa Indian Art compiled by Szwedzicki several interesting color combinations are found. Although this work pertains to the older youths of the tribe, it is interesting to note the manner in which color is used.

A favorite rich color scheme which is adaptable to



PLATE 12

different proportions is black and grey with red-orange, yellow-orange, yellow and silver. This is especially effective if black is used for a background. The silver lends a unique finish and aids in the blending of other colors.

One of their unusual color schemes contains a pink-white background or foundation with red, black, rose, silver, and gray-blue. In this instance the tri-color combination of silver, gray, and gray-blue act as the neutralizing agent.

They also use an interesting color combination of pale turquoise, ruby red, vermillion, yellow, and orange which is very vibrating and colorful.

All of these color details are found in the work of the Kiowa Indian art students at the University of Oklahoma in their portrayal of the Kiowa dances and costumes. Some of these characteristics are also found in the color work accomplished by the Kiowa Indian grade pupils.

Plate 13, executed by Dora, shows the color combination of blue-green, yellow-green, yellow, orange, red-orange, red, and blue. Although the yellow contrasts with the blue-green, it is related to the yellow-green, while the blue-green and the yellow-green are connected. The orange trimming on the house is also related to the red found in the object in the window as well as the sun and the first ray.

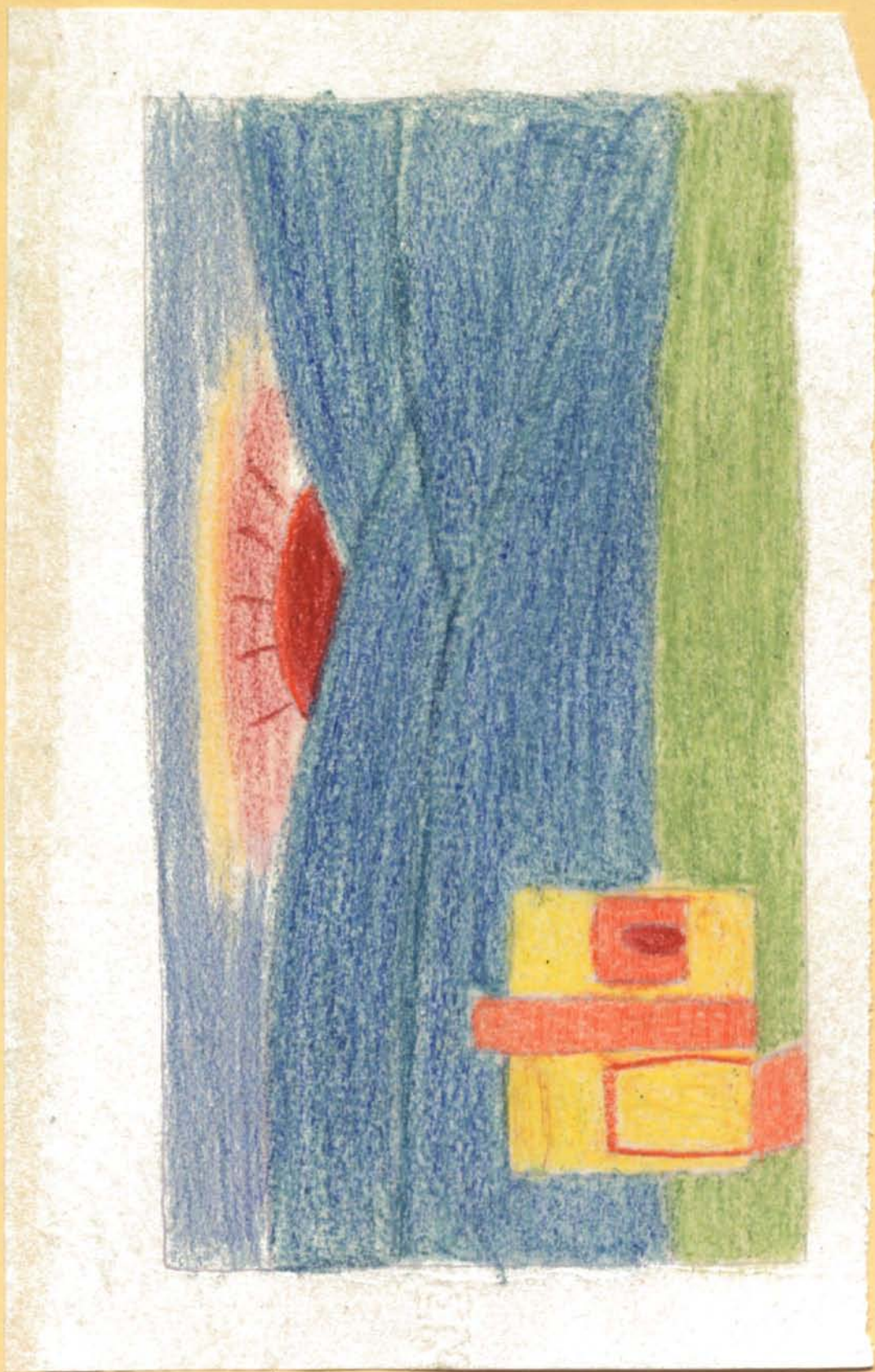


PLATE 13



The sun is made more interesting by using a different shade of red than that found in the first ray, its color being repeated in the red at the window. The general effect produced is a subdued, yet colorful background with brilliant colors emphasizing the details. The brighter colors are found in the foreground which aids in making the composition interesting from the viewpoint of space division. The ground and sky are made to appear the same width by the center sun's taking the center of interest.

Plate 14 is also made by Dora. While this color combination is not so unusual in the selection of the colors, it is extraordinary in the manner in which they are used. The border is the most striking part of the composition, standing out in brilliant contrast to the composition itself and acting as a frame which gives the effect of distance to the drawing. This is composed of the variations of the symbol seen in Plate 7, figure 3. It is in the form of angles using the contrasting colors of red, white, and blue.

The entire theme is built around the mountains which are the most important unit of the composition. In order to make them look more distant and hazier, blue color was scraped off. The sun has been colored orange in preference to the usual red or yellow and thus forms a complementary color scheme with the mountain unit and sky. In this



PLATE 14

composition color has been used to obtain various results. Value gradation has been employed to give distance, intensity used for emphasis, and different values for contrast.

In Plate 15 a different type of subject matter is used by Dora in which she was able to obtain a wider scope for the use of color. This is an Easter design having the striking element in the color combination, repetition and balance. The color scheme used ranges from blue, red-violet, green, and blue-green to orange. The violet, red-violet, and orange unit are arranged in the center as the contrasting unit and separating the related unit of blue, green, and blue-green. The diagonal lines in green suggest the grass with the blue above representing the sky. This is a simple composition and yet the color scheme is worked out in harmony and balance, as well as in interesting shapes and placement.

Plate 30 is also interesting from the color viewpoint in that the entire composition is made with the use of contrasting colors. The red flowers with the green foliage form a unit of complementary color combinations while the yellow curtains are used to lend a lighter touch to the rather heavy colors used in the wall decorations. Red seems to stand out as the predominating color although blue is used extensively. Only four colors are used in this



illustration, with no variations.

It is rather interesting to compare the delicate coloring found in Plates 19 and 20 with the brilliant and vivid result shown in Plates 14 and 30. Plate 12 indicates a daintiness of detail in the arrangement and coloring of the flowers as well as the pleasing shade of green used for the house and repeated in the trees for emphasis. The light shade of blue used for the river as well as the small boat repeating the rose coloring of the flowers aid in this respect. Plate 20 is unusual in the fact that only two colors are used with their varied shades. This produces a light, cool combination. Plate 27 is also delicate in effect using the light shades of green, rose, yellow, and blue, combined with the white, lightly outlined clouds.

A general summary of the characteristics of the Kiowa Indian art shows a love of harmony and unity in design and color. They work with meticulous care to obtain the perfection of the finished product. Every composition contains a well thought out plan. If bright colors have a tendency to be inharmonious, a neutralizing agent is used to blend them together. Their color technique is rather sketchy in detail, being put on in a careless, free manner with little attempt at shading, the whole being flat in appearance.

They are not satisfied with purely geometric designs, but curves and flowing lines are found extensively. Their subject matter is varied and interesting, generally treated as decorative realism. Through a subtle suggestion in their work they give a feeling of their personality in the freedom of expression, love of the beautiful, alertness, and imaginative powers. They are free from any restraint and portray things as they seem to be. They appear to have the power of making objects live, so vivid and dramatic is their technique.

CHAPTER III  
ANALYSIS AND APPRECIATION OF THE ART WORK  
OF THE KIOWA INDIAN SCHOOL CHILDREN

From the beginning the Kiowa has taken most of his inspiration from his environment. Wherever he traveled he gathered details and retained the impressions for future use. This offered him a wide range of subject matter and realism. Not only is this true of the natural surroundings but of the people with whom he came into contact as well.

The Kiowa school children proved to be a fascinating group with which to work. These six small Indian girls, from seven to ten years of age, were from different families and yet there is a striking resemblance of characteristics in the work produced.

Dora and Laverne Kauahquo were grand-daughters of Chief Lone Wolf. The family name means "Painted Blanket" and originated from the trading of a horse for an article of that type. Dora was the eldest of the entire number, being ten. Her given name in the Indian language was Feline. As she was called by this at home, it was rather difficult for her to recognize the English interpretation of it. Her favorite type of subject matter was methods of travel. Ships were alluring and appealed to her fancy as well as horses and other conveyances. Plate 16 shows Dora's interpretation of the covered wagon. Flowers in the



PLATE 16



naturalistic form were also popular subjects with her as seen in Plate 21. Her sister Laverne also liked to draw methods of travel but her fancy turned more toward aeroplanes and flying birds.

Enosta Hamilton, who was eight years old, was the interpreter for the group. Her name in Indian was Goomdah, or Red Woman. She was so named because her mother wished to live long and named her child after herself. When her mother became ill and was taken to the sanitarium, Enosta changed her name to Enosta Maunkee, explaining that her mother was changing her name and expected her to do the same. Although not explained at the time, the impression was given that the mother was soon to die and perhaps receive another name. Enosta was very quick and eager to learn something new. Her mind was full of imaginative ideas while her ingenuity was remarkable. Her type of subject matter differed in that she loved to work with signs and superstitions. Little symbols to show her thoughts and troubles were placed about in the illustration. Landscapes also were favorite themes in which nearly always there were rolling hills. Her compositions show unusual ability in scale and color. Plate 17 shown here is typical of her work. The rounded hills with the folding effect was a dominant feature. The row of trees at the base gives a decorative touch as well as employing the triangle motif. The straight path leading to the mountains is shown in

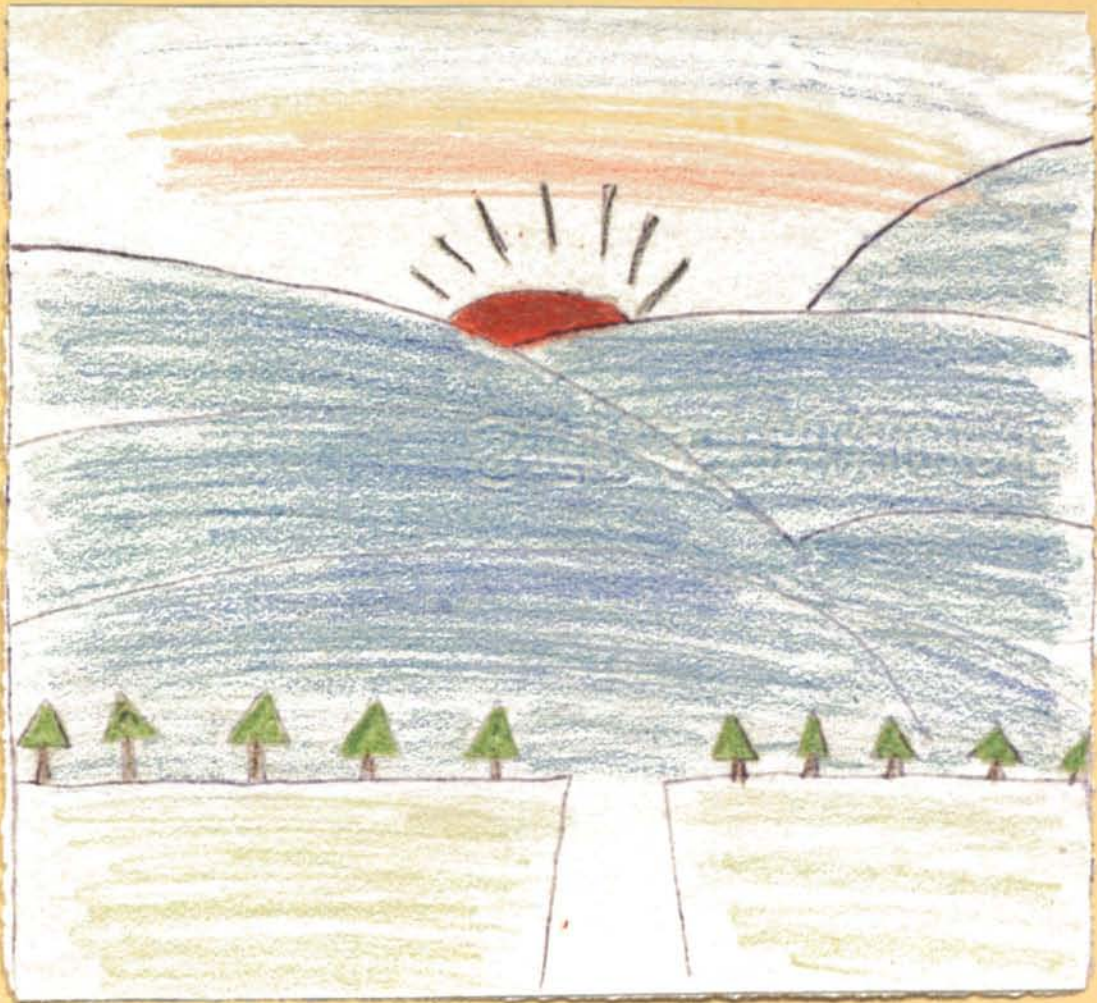


PLATE 17

perspective and combines the curved line with the straight line effect. Another very interesting detail found in practically all of her work is the colors of the sunset which are red, orange, and yellow.

Lucille Redbird, in Indian Pelee, was also eight years of age. She was vivacious and restless. Her health was poor, however, and she was out of school much of the time because of illness. Her work was more interesting in the color schemes used than in the subject matter. Her themes were likewise drawn around nature and generally took the form of landscapes.

Aileen Redbird, a cousin of Lucille, was the smallest of the group. Although she was only seven she was in much demand for her participation in Kiowa dances and songs. Each summer at Indian gatherings she was paid to dance with her parents, all three being well versed in this art. In her compositions she was not as clear as the others. Her objects were always tiny and hard to distinguish as to size and shape. Her work was better in color than form. The tent drawn on the title page is taken from one of her illustrations.

Mildred Mausape, a second grade student, was the most affectionate child of them all. Her work is full of detail and contains many objects as illustrated in Plates 18 and 25. Butterflies became intensely interesting to her, as well as the subject of aeroplanes. Plate 18 shows a

representation of her subject matter. Although too small to know much about proportion and perspective Mildred has arranged the composition rather well. The tree with the butterfly is the center of interest and the Easter eggs with the rabbits filling the space between. The latter are placed in a unique manner with a parent and a baby rabbit repeated twice and two tiny bunnies on the end. The flowers are for decorative purposes only and are identical in height and formation. The tiny tree at the right may have been placed there to offset the path leading to the house or to keep the left side of the composition from being too heavy. Variety of subject matter is also shown in Plate 25. Here we see various animals, clouds, trees, flowers and houses combined with no sense of perspective or scale.

All six of these children worked with landscapes and nature to a great extent. If flowers were used, they were usually represented as a certain type and distinctions made between that unit and the others. Both naturalistic and conventional styles were used, often appearing in the same composition. This is true of Plate 26, in which the naturalistic birds and squirrel are contrasted to the conventionalized flowers.

Probably one of the most representative elements found in this study was that of realism. Animals drawn were shown as a rule as if they were really alive. There was



PLATE 18

no intentional misrepresentation or fallacy. Subject matter was depicted as it appeared to them. Sometimes the children were given work to do in which the subject matter did not seem to them as being true. When this happened it was not unusual to find that they carried out directions in class work and when finished the object was drawn just below the picture in the manner in which they thought it should appear. This was first noticed in Enosta's work. She was given a small picture of a dog about which she was told to write a story for composition. The dog did not appear to her to be accurately drawn so she re-arranged the illustration placing curves to represent the wagging of the tail and small marks to indicate toe nails. When this was finished she was able to concentrate upon her assignment.

This same realistic influence was carried out in the coloring. Objects were portrayed as they really appeared in nature. In spite of the fact that the Kiowas loved brilliant hues, they could not be persuaded to color in a part of the picture when it would be untrue or false. Plate 24, figure 4, was drawn by Mildred. When it was first presented in line form it was supposed that the circles on the tops of the mountains were meant for the places touched by the sunset. It was very astonishing, therefore, to have the picture fully colored with the exception of these places. When questioned for the reason the children seemed very surprised at the apparent lack of natural knowledge,

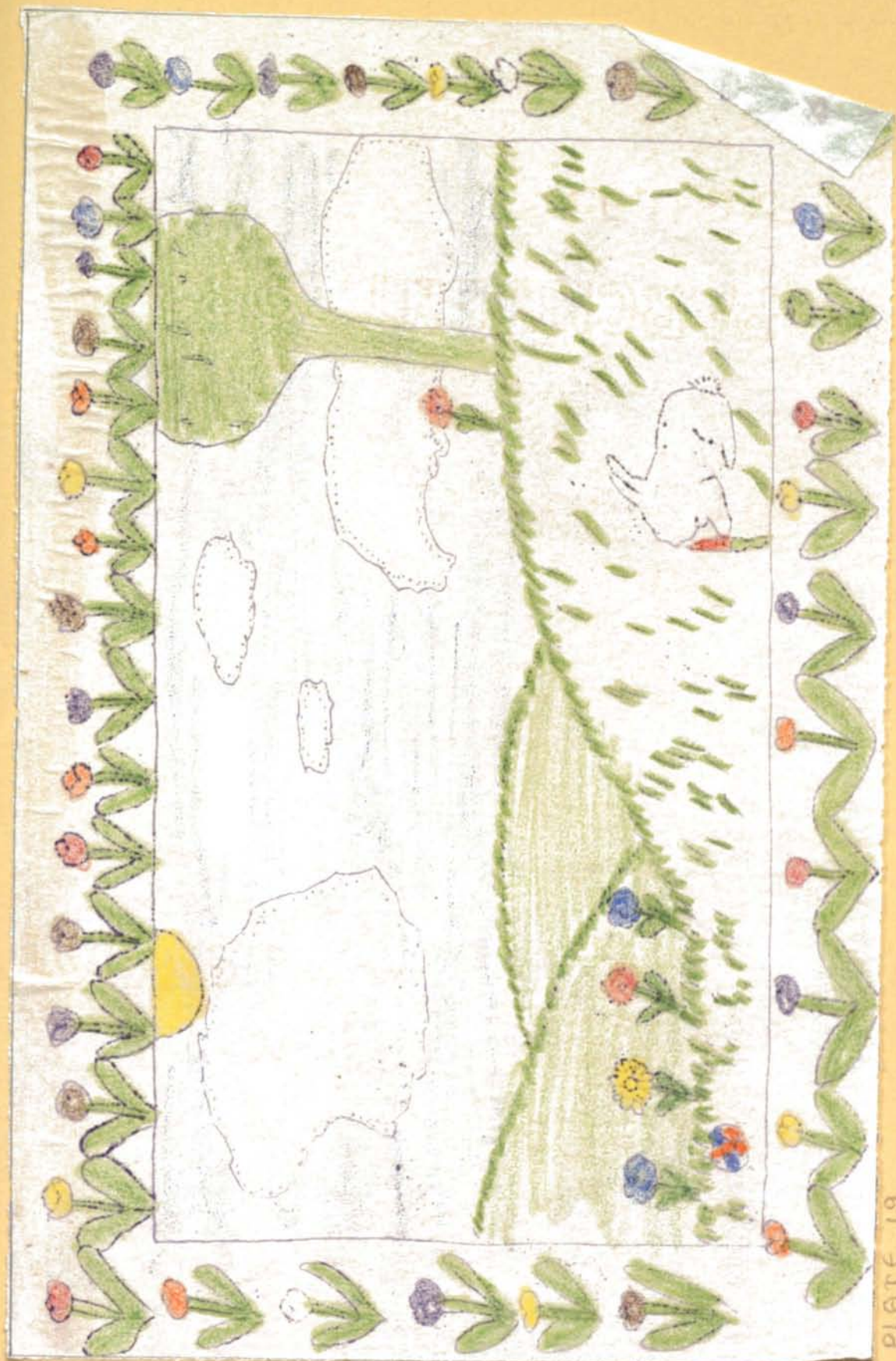


PLATE 19

replying that it was snow and could only be colored with white. In this instance opportunity for color was rejected for reality.

No matter how much appeal a composition had for the Kiowa children, they would make no attempt to finish or color a piece of work done by another. While searching for something to do, several were offered work that had been started by one of them and never completed. This they refused to do with the statement that it was hers. There seemed an unwritten law that whoever started a piece of work must also finish it.

An unexpected characteristic found in this study was that of humor. It is a general opinion that Indians have none of this quality. This is true only in their association with the whites in which their reticence hinders their true characteristics from appearing. In this type of work it took various form. Enosta liked to portray objects in a ridiculous light when she was in a playful mood, such as the placing of lighted cigars in the mouths of animals, as well as placing musical notes from the throats of birds, Plates 26 and 27.

As the Kiowas have always been restless in their mode of living, so they are in their art. It was a very difficult matter to keep them busy for any length of time without a rest or a change of position. They might start with very serious intentions and work in absorbed silence for five or ten minutes at the end of which time they would



wish to move around, laugh and talk. If they had not finished the subject they were working on by that time it would probably never be finished as the thought was broken. Neither do they like to repeat a composition or do it over. When they finish they like to look at it, admire it and talk about it, but consider it a thing of the past. They would repeat it if asked to do so, but no composition is ever as pleasing as the first one, as the joy of creation has departed and it becomes copy work. This made it necessary in compiling the study to hectograph the illustrations from the originals, matching color and tone as nearly as possible. It also accounts for the fact that the paper used and the blue lines of the hectograph have a tendency to change the general appearance to a certain extent.

In addition to these general characteristics previously mentioned, each child had individual traits or peculiarities which marked the work as hers. Enoeta loved to draw clouds in a decorative manner with small dots repeated at intervals along the edge of the outline. This is shown in Plate 24, figure 3, and Plates 12 and 19. Brilliantly colored sunsets were also individual with Enoeta in which the red merged into orange which in turn gave place to yellow. (Plate 24, figure 2, Plate 17).

Dora used very little decoration about the sun, sometimes none at all. If she felt that it needed more emphasis she sometimes drew small rays about the surface as seen in Plate 14. Her clouds, when shown, were full and rounded



PLATE 20

giving the appearance of puffed edges. When Mildred showed clouds in an illustration they often took the form of a scalloped background as seen in Plate 22, or were small and scattered similar in size and shape in Plate 25.

They also differed in the manner in which they portrayed animals. Dora portrayed animals in a very realistic manner, showing line movement (Plate 23). Mildred's animals were usually drawn with no regard to scale or perspective, (Plate 25). Enosta showed animals from different viewpoints, sometimes from a side view, and often from the back. Plate 20 is a snow scene by her in which the animals are shown from both the side and the back. This also illustrates her alertness and powers of observation.

Both detail and proportion were characteristic of Dora's work. As has been stated before, the Kiowas are very alert and receptive, even though they may have no use for it at the time they retain a mental image for future use. This gives them a realistic portrayal when needed. Plate 23 illustrates this in a line drawing. For this composition the accuracy with which Dora has shown the muscles of the horse, the shape and proportion of the head, as well as the walking effect, is unusual in a third grade pupil. The small intricacies of the bridle are prominent even to the rosette below the ear. The proportion of the entire horse is very realistic. This illustrates also the line movement peculiar to the Kiowas. The horse appears to be actually walking with the neck shown as it moves up



PLATE 21

and down in coordination with the steps. The cacti are the type found in New Mexico and Colorado, while the mountain in the background is depicted in angular lines very similar in shape to Little Bow Mountain, one of the chain of Wichitas found south of Hobart, Oklahoma, and which has a remarkable rock formation at the summit in the shape of a square room. The sharp angular figures on the side of the mountain probably represent caves.

Imagination and originality were ever present in their work. As was characteristic of the tribe in general they seldom, if ever, used models. In this manner their imagination was trained to respond when called on for more elaborate work or details. Their alertness helped in this respect also. Enosta was probably more outstanding in this than the others. An instance is recalled in which she was working after school when in the course of conversation the topic of kittens was mentioned. This immediately brought to her mind her own white kitten at home and she proceeded to draw a picture of it. This same kitten is shown in Plate 5. Another manner in which her imagination was given full reign was in the composition of a desert scene. This was done in class period and developed from one object to the next. The theme was extraordinary in itself, being that of a skeleton at the base of the hills. Near the skeleton was the posted sign of danger. The belief in the supernatural was carried out in the form of a howling coyote shown on a rock in the upper right-hand corner of

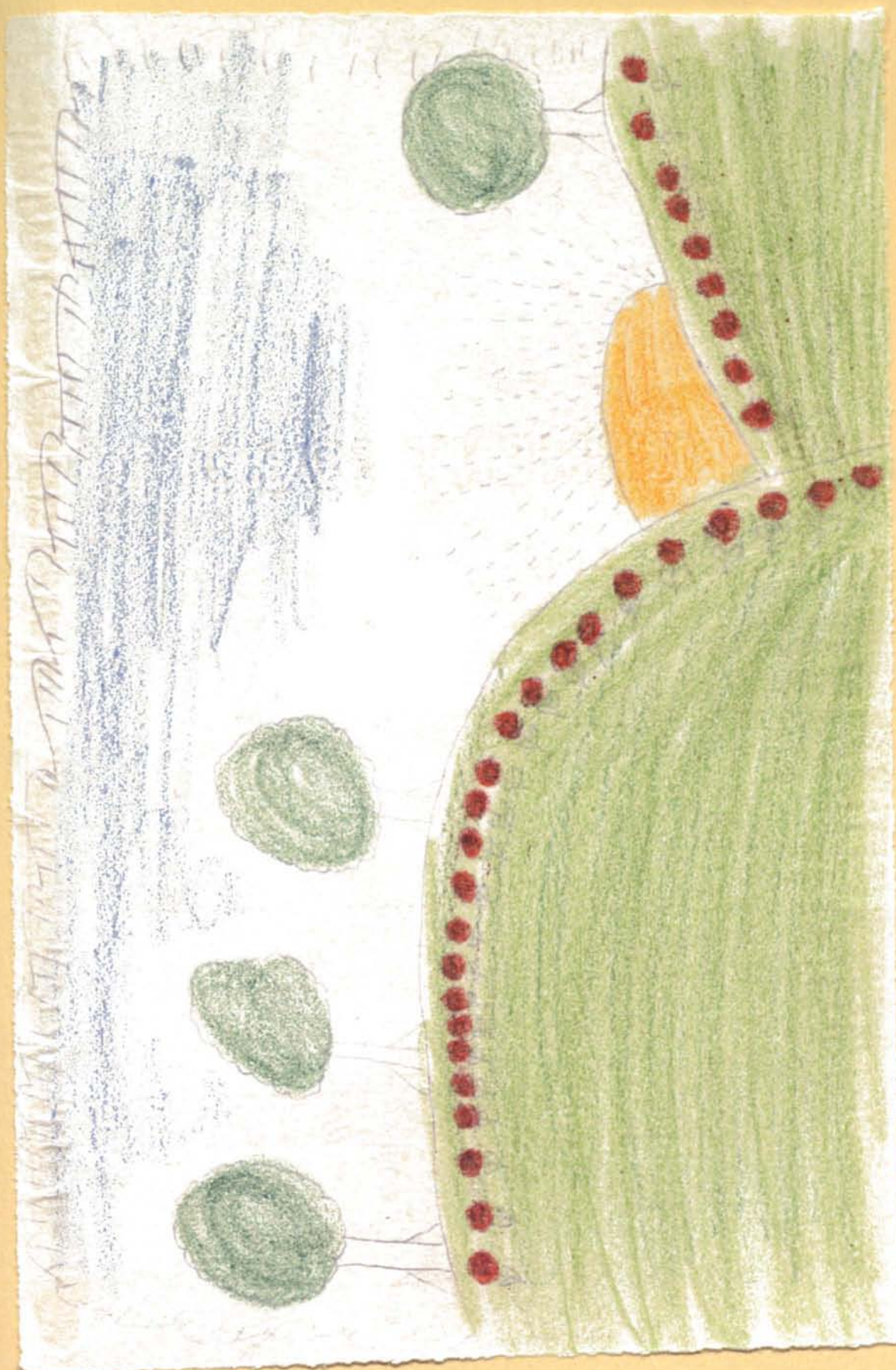


PLATE 22

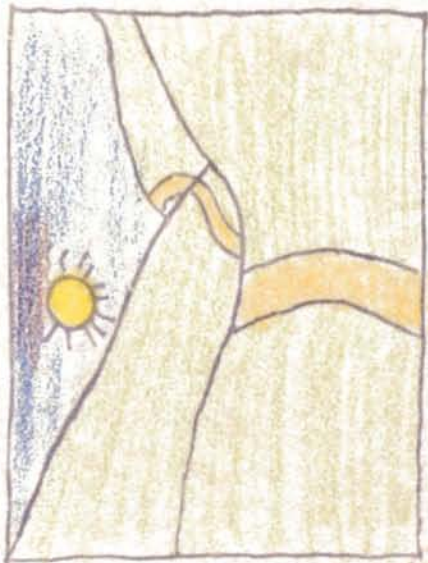
the illustration. Ehosta was very emphatic that this was a night scene and colored it in a unique manner using a blood-red moon, midnight blues and purple. As has been mentioned previously the coyote was a symbol of fear.

Often the children preferred to do work in a small scale. Nothing delighted them so much as to draw on tiny pieces of cardboard or make small booklets of illustrations. Plate 24 shows this characteristic. In figure 1 the favorite theme of hills is employed for the foundation work. Graceful curved lines are used to gain this effect. A variation of shape is found in the size and contour. The path going over the hills is shown to be the winding type conforming to the shape of the elevations. The colors of the sunset and the sun rays are probably used to make this unit more interesting to counteract the rather simple subject matter. Figure 3 of this plate is another type of landscape, combining earth, sky and water. The cloud effect is interesting in the small dots around the edge to give the effect of wind puffs. It is rather pleasing combination, dainty and fanciful. Figure 4, the interest lies in the uneven line of the treetops as well as in the brilliance of the sunset. The tops of the mountains are represented in a naturalistic manner and apparently capped with snow. (The colors used are very few in number).

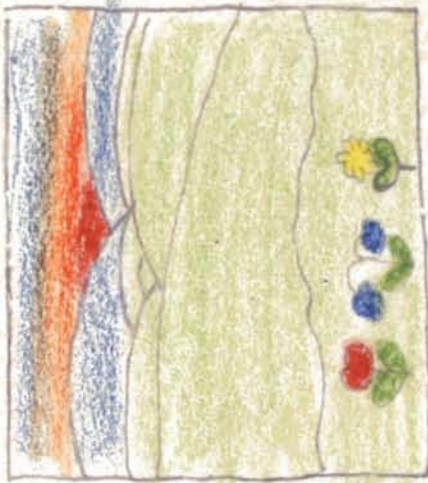
In compositions 1 and 2, Plate 28, there are different types of subject matter carried out in small detail. Figure 1 is another scene of farm life, representing a







(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)

rural neighborhood. Although this illustration is only in line form, it shows rather clearly the country aspect. Figure 2 contains a new type of subject matter. Here Enosta has given the impression of a scene in which the path of the moon appears on the water and has treated it by a different approach. The moon being red, she has chosen yellow for the pathway. This color is repeated in the stars, which though small are perfectly shaped. The cloud has been indicated in a very broken line rather than fully outlined. The dashes placed inside the cloud give the effect of shape while the line of the boat and sail has been utilized to depict motion. The picture has been drawn small to scale, yet the objects are nicely proportioned and spaced. Other instances of subject matter foreign to them are found in the Easter scene, Plate 19, and the aeroplanes as shown in Plate 18.

Small detail is shown in Plate 26 by Enosta which is a rural scene. Perhaps the most outstanding part is the distinctive division of spaces by the fence, the red bird's nest and other small details for interest. Enosta was very anxious to point out the fact that the small dots above the birds were notes that they were singing. An element of interest is found in the fact that the birds although red have tiny blue eggs. The squirrel is drawn from a side view and is shown in a natural position.

Plate 27 is similar in type and also done by Enosta. The most noticeable element here is in the cloud formation.



PLATE 25



PLATE 26



PLATE 27



PLATE 28

The broken curves are used perhaps to give the effect of wind puffs. Additional emphasis is found in the lines inside the cloud itself. In this as in the previous work there are no two alike in size. The sun is again partly hidden and in the lower right hand corner is found the portrayal of a tumble weed or Russian thistle found in Oklahoma. A clear distinction is shown between the barn and house in color and structure, unquestionably similar to farm houses in her community. Her love of small detail is shown in the storm cellar near the house with the figure ready to descend. The lacy pattern made by the tree, as well as the bird singing, are interesting elements in the illustration. The plain open spaces of sky and land give a very descriptive and typical Oklahoma atmosphere.

In consideration of the art of the Kiowas as a group there are several facts that must not be overlooked. One of these is that in their contact with the white people, they have gained information and knowledge that has aided them in perfecting their art. They have investigated and conquered the use of new materials which they did not have before becoming civilized. Water colors and oils have proved a fascinating medium to the older artists in which they are able to obtain the effect desired in their work.

Among the smaller Kiowas several elements were noticeable which they had learned at school and which they adopted for future use. One of these was sketching. Although sketching was used in the primitive period it was

in the form of a mere indicated line. It is not the same technique used as at the present time. Then the line was very meagre as to detail. The type learned by the children was the blocking in type in the form of short lines to obtain the general outline before going over it in detail. This type of technique was not emphasized but only explained and was immediately adopted by them as an easier method of expression before the thought of the composition was lost. In this respect it is the nearest of all their characteristics to being acquired.





PLATE 29

## CHAPTER IV

## CONCLUSION

The manner in which the white people have aided the Kiowas appears small and insignificant when compared with the way in which they have contributed to our art. From a perusal of the portfolio on Kiowa Dances and Costumes, prepared by the Kiowa Indians at Oklahoma University, as well as the characteristics apparent in the work of the Kiowa Grade children, certain outstanding tendencies are evidenced by which the white people could benefit in studying and adopting the same principles. Among these is the ability to show restrained movement. This may better be described as the power of giving apparent life to objects portrayed. It is probably due to their exceptional knowledge of anatomy and to their interpretation of movement.

They have contributed to the world a wealth of imagination, glamour, and kaleidoscopic color, which has succeeded in producing a new impetus and inspiration to art in general. Their direct and expressive methods have a tendency to awaken a new trend of thought toward artistic progress.

Their historical background in which is combined their intense emotions, superstitions and religion has given them access to an inexhaustible supply of unusual subject matter as well as an abundance of motifs and designs, while the variety and brilliance of their color combinations has added a refreshing contrast to knowledge already in use.

The dramatic quality is one of the most important elements the Kiowas have contributed to the world of art. Their compositions are full of emotion and feeling, while every stroke has some meaning. There are no unnecessary lines and no discord. Their work is compact and yet the smallest detail is not overlooked.

Perhaps the most difficult characteristic of the Kiowas from the viewpoint of the white people is that of the portrayal of the human figure and perspective. That this is an inherited trait is found also in the work of the Kiowa school children, Plates 19, 20, 24 and 28. It is a continued marvel to others how these people so close to the primitive state can so accurately **show** the movements of the human figure.

Kiowa art therefore may easily be appreciated for the dramatic qualities, clearness and unsophistication of subject matter, interpretation of distance and exactness of detail as well as the accuracy in portraying the human figure.

A general summary of the characteristics found among the Kiowa Indian school children would include the use of tribal motifs and symbols in the form of borders, as well as for decorative purposes in the picture itself; a knowledge of geometric figures of circles, squares, and triangles and a wide variety of subject matter based upon nature, belief in the supernatural and present day environment; a knowledge of color and its meaning and balance in

addition to the ability to show line movement and rhythm. Alertness, vivid imagination and the desire for improvement have been the foundation upon which their work was based. Realism, as well as the conventional, is a well developed characteristic with the children of this age.

That Kiowa Indian Art has influenced the world of today is found in the increasing value of its utility. Many Spanish homes and houses of the southwest have found a purpose for it in the decorative element which it possesses as well as from the artistic viewpoint. The motifs are adaptable and suitable to different uses in design and color.

As long as the world of art is alert to new ideas and inspirations, as long as human nature is interested in originality and technique, and as long as there is a demand for individual interpretations, that long will Indian Art be recognized as one of the influential forces of the world of progress. As such Kiowa Art will hold its place.

In conclusion it may be safely said that these characteristics set forth in this study are inherited and tribal characteristics rather than acquired as they are evidenced among the children of the tribe as early as the seventh and eighth year. With this in mind, the fact stands out that these are representative traits of the tribe itself and therefore characteristic of the Kiowas as a whole and that from the study of them important aids may be found for the progress of present-day art.

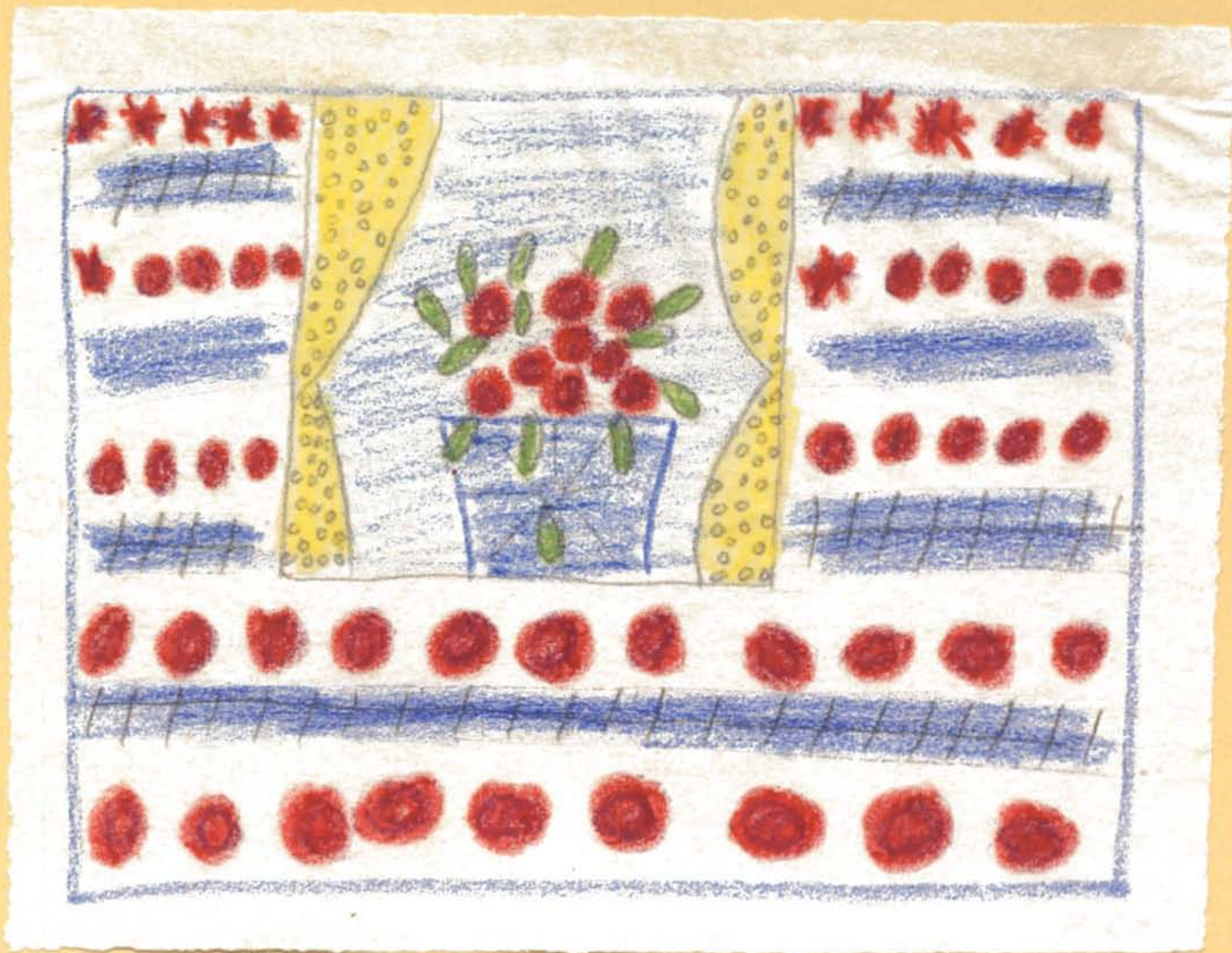


PLATE 30.

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