TENT TYPES USED BY NATIVE AMERICANS and EURO-AMERICANS

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PLATES

TENT HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Tents were common living quarters for soldiers and migrant populations. Roman tents were described as early as 150 BC as part of a contubernium, an 8 man tent group. The most common tent is depicted as being 10 Roman feet (2.96m square) and about 5 Roman feet tall (1.48m). Mules carried two tent poles, a folded tent, stakes, ropes, two baskets that were used in excavating the camp ditch, digging tools, a small stone wheat grinder, and extra food. They were similar in design to modern wall tents. These tents were erected in a tight formation to hinder enemy movement within the camp. The size varied according to rank, with a single centurion occupying a tent. These were taller and had larger side walls, as the tent was also utilized as an office (Cornelius 2005). The Byzantine Army is credited with being the first to utilize conical style tents around 600 AD.

Bell tents appear as early as the 9th century and were used extensively by the British cavalry during the Crimean War in 1855. The design is a simple structure, supported by a single central pole, covered with a cotton canvas. The stability of the tent is reinforced by guy ropes connected around the top of the walls and being held down by pegs around the circumference to the ground. It has a circular floor plan of some 10ft and larger (Plate 1).

The following discussion of tent development in the United States covers trading posts, the pre- and post- Civil War periods, United State Government Indian Agency reports, and ethnographic references.

Plate 1. Photograph by Roger Fenton of bell tents from Crimean War, located at Balaklava military camp, 1856.

TRADING POST (1540 - 1850)

Fisherman in the 1500s were largely responsible for the establishment of trade routes between the tribes of the northeast and French explorers; however, at this time in the southwest, trade was conducted with the Spanish.

Fort Hall, Snake River, Oregon

Detailed records exist for Fort Hall, located along the Snake River in Oregon. It was built in 1834 by Nathaniel Wyeth (contracted with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company) and includes detailed ledgers of goods that were kept at the Fort, goods that were taken down to the Columbia by Wyeth, and goods that were cashed in the event of an emergency. Blankets, cloth, and beads were some of the more common items kept for sale at the Fort. Canvas was not sold or stored according to these accounts which date to 1834-1839. Osborne Russell, a trapper for Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company kept a detailed diary which included items purchased and used. James Kirk Townsend, a naturalist who was accompanying Russell writes as they prepare for their trip in St. Louis, "The men of the party, to the number of about fifty, are encamped on the bank of the river, and their tents whiten the plain for the distance of half a mile... The beautiful white tents, with a light gleaming from each, the smouldering fires around them, the incessant hum of the men, and occasionally the lively notes of a bacchanalian song, softened and rendered sweeter by distance."

In a chapter titled, Equipment for Emigrants, Rufus Sage encourages travelers to forgo the use of a tent, "A light tent might also be taken if deemed necessary; though such an article is of little use. A robe and a blanket for bedding, four shirts and a single change of clothes are as much baggage as any individual should think of taking for his own use. By these means his movements will be free and unencumbered, while the whole company pursues its way with ease and rapidity" (Sage 1857:279). He comments that from Independence, MO to Fort Hall along the Oregon Trail, the route is passable by wagon. From Fort Hall to Vancouvre, the route was impassable for other than pack-animals (Sage 1857:278).

Fort Laramie, Wyoming

Fort Laramie was established along the Oregon Route. When the additional companies of the Sixth Infantry arrived there in November 1854, additional lodging became critically important. Progress was slow and in the meantime, the men were housed in tents. "New barracks could not be completed before winter set in. Hoffman, in a practical adaptation to local culture, concluded that hide lodges would make better shelter for his men than the canvas tents issued by the Quartermaster Department. He immediately negotiated with Ward and Guerrier to obtain the requisite number of tepees from friendly Sioux still residing in the area. Fort Laramie now reflected a bizarre combination of structures including a walled fort, Southern-style planters' home, Spanish adobes, log hackals, stone buildings, and Plains Indian lodges" (McChristian 2003:131).

Fort Uncompahgre, Colorado

Trade goods making way through the frontier are listed in an exchange between Joseph Roubidoux III, father of Antoine. Antoine was known to have been acquainted with Laffite and would have likely had access to the same sort of goods. "In 1949, the St, Joseph Historical Society came into possession of letters linking Joseph III with the pirate who achieved a measure of fame at the Battle of New Orleans, Jean Laffite. One of these letters is sufficient as an interesting example of the goods sought by early traders such as Joseph and for its evidence as a link between the frontier trade and Laffite. For $3,535.00 Laffite shipped to Joseph III:

> Twenty Mulatto slaves, as follows, ten of mature age, having good teeth: males speaking French in addition five babies; ...[illegible] three under ten years old; twenty mirrors; five hundred large hatchets [or axes]; two hundred butcher knives; twenty-five kettles; twenty-five pounds of silk ribbons; one thousand tinder boxes and flints; three hundred cubits [arm lengths] of wool; three thousand flints; three hundred pounds of bullets; four barrels of wine; twenty pieces of boat canvas; one hundred pounds of vermilion; two hundred pounds of tobacco; three hundred shirts; five hundred pounds of malleable lead sheets; five hundred pounds of sugar...(Wallace 1953).

Fort Uncompahgre's trading inventory included coffee, tea, sugar, tobacco, metal implements, iron arrowheads and cooking pots, calico dress fabric, blankets, and blanketing material, silks, lace, finished clothing, bandanas, and silk scarves. Trading posts carried scissors, thread, and sewing needles, which transformed native clothing into works of art. Material for blankets was shipped from factories in the east and sold unfinished by the yard. Finished blankets were purchased from local manufactures in and around Santa Fe. In addition to a limited supply of finished clothing, mirrors and combs were also sold along side vermillion color for red face paint, glass and ceramic beads, thumbtacks, and thimbles. The thimbles were often sown onto clothing and used as tinklers.

PRE-CIVIL WAR TENT DEVELOPMENT

During the same period as the Crimean War, the United States began utilizing the Sibley tent for exploration and troop movement. The Sibley tent was patented in 1856 by the American military officer Henry Hopkins Sibley. The US Army used the tent during the Utah Expedition in the winter of 1857-1858. His design was commissioned for over 44,000 units in 1857 for the Utah Expedition (Marcy 1859). Plains Indian war veterans noted that the tent was similar to Indian lodges (Plate 2). In 1858, he entered into an agreement with the Department of Way to receive $5.00 for every tent made; however, Sibley resigned from the US Army to join the Confederate States Army and received no royalties on the patent. The tent stands about 12 feet high and 18 feet in diameter, comfortably housing up to a dozen men. His design was unique in several ways. It was supported by a central pole that telescopes down into the supporting tripod so that it takes less space to pack and store. The tripod could be erected over a fire pit for cooking and heat. It required no guy ropes, being held down by twenty-four pegs around the base. The use of a cowl over the central pole allowed for ventilation.

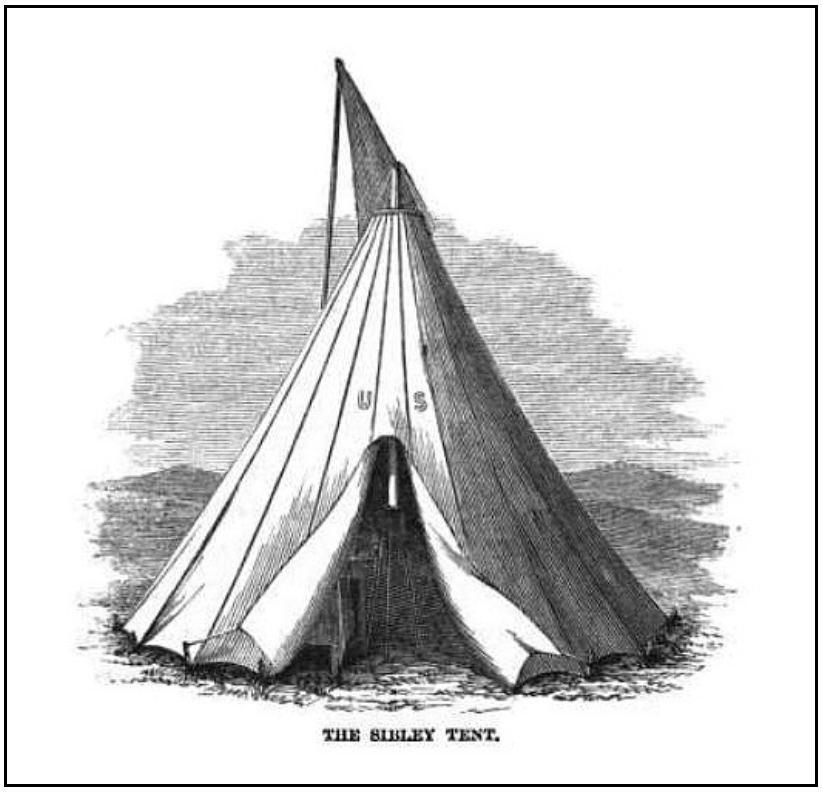


Plate 2. The Sibley Tent. Note its commonalities with Native American tipis (Marcy 1859:143).

CIVIL WAR YEARS

Prior to the Civil War, tents were made out of linen and demand for commercial level manufacturing was minimal. In four years of war, the tent business in the North employed thousands of manufacturing workers – most of the them women – to produce roughly $30 million worth of tents. Several tent suppliers ranked among the nation's leading military contractors (Wilson 2001:299).

The Civil War tent business was created by converting well-established maritime industries: sailcloth production and marketing. Linen textiles were standard material for the U.S. Army during the early 1840s, the use of power-woven cotton duck for Army tents was well-established by the 1850s. In 1859 and 1860, the Quartermaster's Department of the Army contracted with Fox & Polhemus, a New York duck marketing firm, for $60,000 worth of material (Wilson 2001:302).

The Sibley tent was retired in 1862. They proved to be too expensive and cumbersome, as each tent required several wagons to carry. The U.S. Army developed a Wedge tent, measuring six feet long with a single horizontal bar and two vertical bars, which could sleep four soldiers comfortably. These were only used for the first two years of the Civil War due to their size and difficulty to transport (Billings 1887:48-50).

In 1861, the U.S. Army Quartermaster's Department authorized the use of the shelter tent, similar in design and construction to the French Army's *tente-d'abri*, also referred to as a "dog" tent (Plate 3).

Plate 3. Shelter tent (Billings 1887:52).

> I am told it was made of light duck at first, then of rubber, and afterwards of duck again, but *I* never saw one made of anything heavier than cotton drilling. This was *the* tent of the rank and file. It did not come into general use until after the Peninsular Campaign. Each man was provided with a *half-shelter*, as a single piece was called, which he was expected to carry on the march if he wanted a tent to sleep under. I will describe these more fully. One I recently measured is five feet two inches long by four feet eight inches wide, and is provided with a single row of buttons and button-holes on three sides, and a pair of holes for stake loops at each corner. A single half-shelter, it can be seen, would make a very contracted and uncomfortable abode for a man; but every soldier was expected to join his resources for shelter with some other fellow.... The two half-shelters were supported by rifles with their bayonets attached. The rifles were stuck vertically into the ground and a rope was tied around the trigger guard (Billings 1887:52-53).

In 1861, the Confederate States Quartermaster's Department contracted for the manufacture of axes, tents, cooking utensils, and drums and fifes. Distributions included 25 conical tents with poles and pins, 14 bell tents with poles and pins, and 11 wall tents with poles and pins. These records were kept in a small office of the army officers and clerks, located just a few blocks from the State Capital and next door to the Clothing Depot, which was tasked with

providing for the welfare of the troops in the region. In 1862, General Robert E. Lee writes, "This army has with it in the field little or no protection from weather. Tents seem to have been abandoned, and the men cover themselves by means of their blankets and other contrivances. The shelter-tent seems to be preferred by them, and I have thought that something could be manufactured out of the tents now on hand better than what they have in use. A simple fly, or cloth of that shape, would answer the purpose." The Quartermaster's Department had came to the same conclusion and thousands of "Fly tents" along with their own version of the Shelter tent, were already in production. James T. Butler & Co. delivered the first Fly tents that same year. Butler & Co. would continue to produce the new Fly tents by the thousands for the Confederacy and would continue to be the primary contractor for Army tentage during 1863. Company records indicate 27in duck (canvas) cost $3.00 per yard (Schneider 1999).

The end of the Civil War in 1865 eliminated the need for a large tent industry in the United States. The Army's policy of stockpiling left it with a large surplus of tents: in June 1865 over 790,000 shelter tents, nearly 54,000 common tents, and roughly 22,000 larger tents were sitting in warehouses of the Quartermaster's Department. These were re-purposed as mothproof wrapping and book manufacturers and distributed to veterans' organizations, victims of flooding, and refugees. Tent factories closed and cotton textile mills returned to making lighter cotton goods (ibid:330-331).

POST-CIVIL WAR COMMERCIAL TENT SALES/DISTRIBUTION

Dubbed "America's Oldest Tent Maker" R.H. Armbruster Manufacturing was founded in 1875 by Rudolf Herman Armbruster. They started as a small canvas, awning, and upholstery shop in Springfield, Illinois. In the 1890s, a traveling circus hired Armbruster to make the first large canvas tent. Portuguese sailors, who were skilled in tent making trained the staff in sewing large canvas tents for use in the traveling circus. Also during this time they enlarge their catalog by adding small canvas walled tents and expanded to a rental division to rent tents, chairs, and other event products (Armbruster Manufacturing Co. 2019).

In the years after the civil war, commercial tent production expanded. M.D. Smith Sr., a minister born in 1853 had to make his own tent for a revival. Making it better than any other's at the time, he made others and sold them and went into business as Smith Mfg. Co. They made small and large tents. Around 1910, M.D. Smith Jr. started Birmingham Awning and Tent Company (Smith et al. 2015).

Biddle tents, patented in 1895 by Spencer F.B. Biddle, were a lightweight shelter easily packed on horseback (Plate 4). The tent poles were designed to fold in the middle for easier transport, although evidence of "camp made" poles fashioned from local juniper branches with hand-drilled holes for securing has been found in archaeological contexts (Conner et al. 2016:59-61). These could be purchased by American Tent and Awning Co., located in Indianapolis, IN, a company that specialized in tents, awnings, and blankets. The company was founded in 1873 and operated continuously until their closure in 2021.

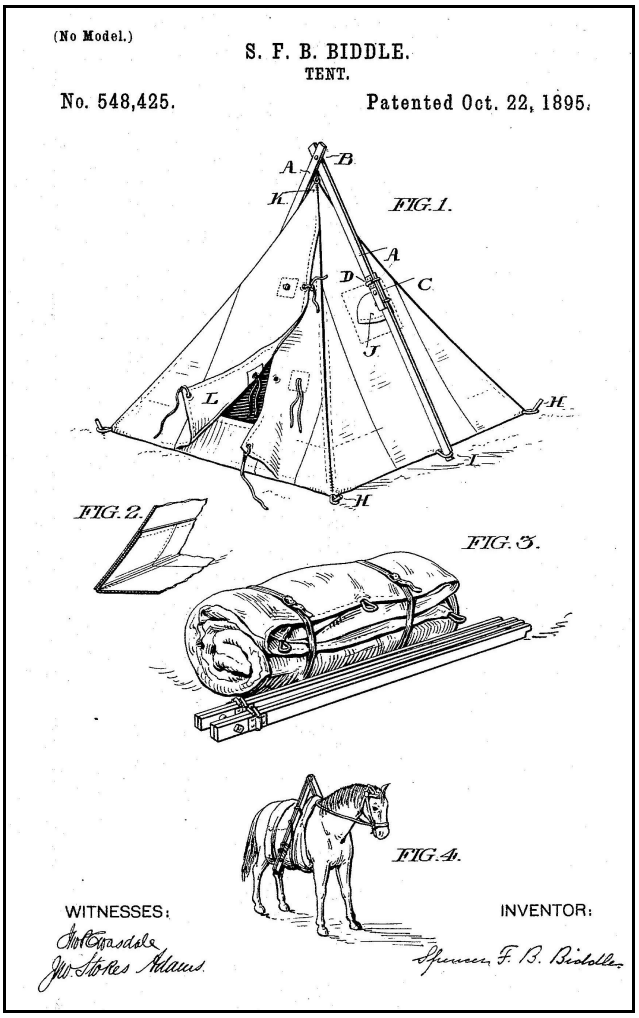
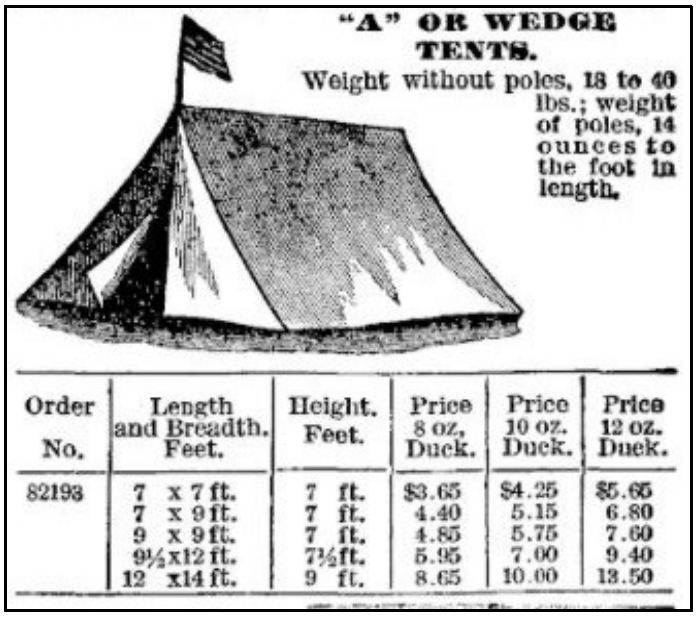


Plate 4. Biddle Tent, 1895.

Sears Roebuck, 1897 catalog

The Sears Roebuck's 1897 catalog advertised three tents available: an "A" or Wedge Tents, Miners' Tents, and Oblong or Refreshment Tents. The "A" or Wedge Tent varied from 7x7 feet to 12x14 feet and height from 7 feet and 9 feet (Plate 5). Instructions are present in the catalog, which direct the purchaser to dig a V-shaped trench all around the tent, about 3 inches deep to ensure that the floor remains dry at all times. There was also a warning against taking the tent down when wet or damp as mildew destroys more tents than all other causes combined. Miners' Tents



"A" OR WEDGE TENTS.

Weight without poles, 18 to 40 lbs.; weight of poles, 14 ounces to the foot in length.

Order No.	Length and Breadth. Feet.	Height. Feet.	Price 8 oz. Duck.	Price 10 oz. Duck.	Price 12 oz. Duck.
82193	7 x 7 ft.	7 ft.	$3.65	$4.25	$5.65
	7 x 9 ft.	7 ft.	4.40	5.15	6.80
	9 x 9 ft.	7 ft.	4.85	5.75	7.60
	9½x12 ft.	7½ft.	5.95	7.00	9.40
	12 x14 ft.	9 ft.	8.65	10.00	13.50

Plate 5. Sears Roebuck "A" Tent (1897).

were conical in shape, measuring between 7x7 and 12x12 feet and 7 to 9 feet in height. Oblong or Refreshment Tents were rectangular wall tents. The front could be opened for an awning or taken off altogether. They measured between 9x14 and 14x23.5 feet. Walls were 6 feet in height and the center height measured 10 to 11 feet. They were sold as plain white duck (heavy, plain woven cotton fabric more tightly woven than plain canvas.) The duck was also available in stripe, blue, or brown. A 1909 catalog advertised these items, as well as a Wall Tents measuring from 7x7 feet to 18x35 feet. Walls measure between 3 and 5 feet with the pole height between 7 and 11 feet. The catalog also indicates Sears Roebuck was manufacturing their own covers and tents.

With the development of auto travel, tents were modified to into primitive campers. In 1913 and 1914, the tent business expanded into camping trailers. Detroit Trailer Company was one of the first dedicated to the manufacture of auto trailers, which included a folding tent trailer furnished with a canopy top. In 1914, Campbell Folding Camping Trailer Company patented the Combined Camping Outfit and Box (Plate 6), the first folding tent trailer the for sale explicitly as a camping trailer (A.D. and L.S. Campbell Patent No. 1,185,981, 1916).

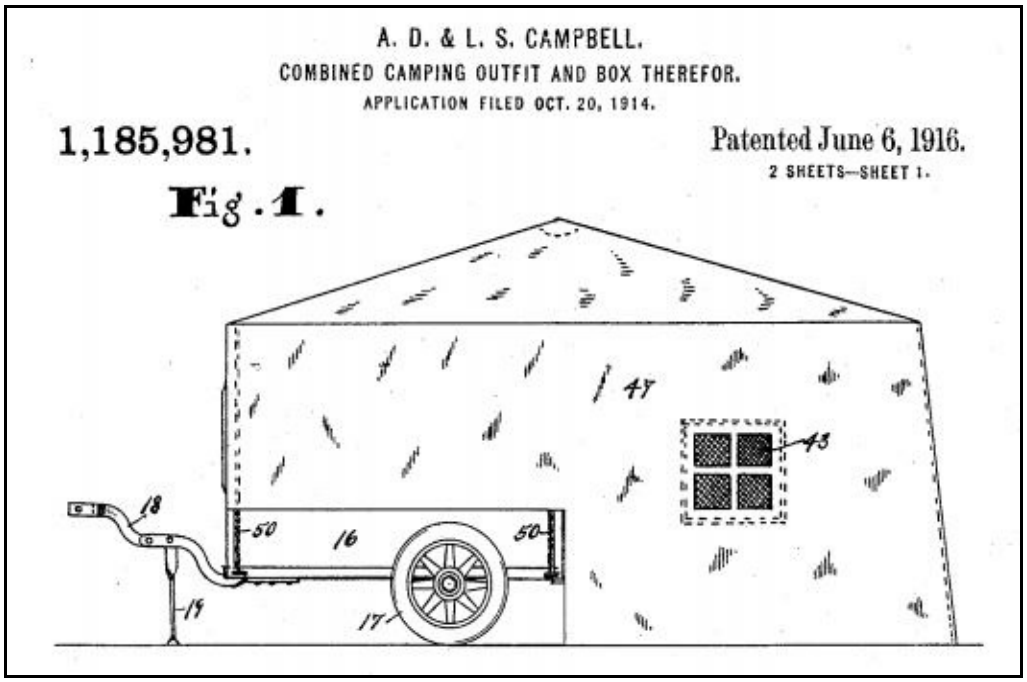


Plate 6. Combined Camping Outfit and Box, patent image, 1916.

AGENCY REPORTS (1868-1880)

Annual reports to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs dated between 1868 to 1880 were reviewed. The following summaries represent those reports that discuss the distribution of annuity goods (with a special attention paid to tents or canvas covered structures), living conditions at the agencies, and Ute mobility as they move around the region.

1868

It seems that canvas for tents was not a sought after resource by Native Americans until the beginning of the reservation era. Prior to this time, due in part of the quality of canvas being produced and limited commercial access, canvas was found to be inferior to hid covering. A report from the Office of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Colorado Territory reported on the difficulty in obtaining game for subsistence:

> Game, in certain localities remote, is now almost extinct. A few black-trail deer, high up against the snow peaks, occasional small herds of antelopes ranging over broad expanse of plains, and a very limited number of bears in the most distant recess of the mountains, form the supply on which these poor people, with very indifferent guns and uncertain supplies of ammunition, are compelled to draw for their subsistence, which under such circumstances must be very scanty and unreliable; indeed it is entirely inadequate, and what is not thus furnished is taken from the unwilling settlers, in cattle or sheep, sometimes by theft at night, but more often in broad daylight, and in the presence of the helpless owner, with the remark that he may call on the superintendent or agent for payment. This of course leaves me as well as the agent in a very embarrassing situation. I cannot reprimand the Indian, for I know that hunger, the most potent of all influences, has driven him to the act, nor can I pay the owner for his loss, because I have neither money nor authority to do so (Hunt 1868:180-183).

According to an agent who was meeting in a tepee at the Yanktonnais and Lower Brulé agency, "It was truly comfortable, begin made of dressed buffalo-skins, and, when contrasted with their muslin tents, we could readily understand why the Indian complained so bitterly of being restrained from buffalo hunting. Many of the Indians who have been brought into the reservations were promised comfortable log houses, as they could not renew their buffalo tepees, but that promise, like so many others, has not been fulfilled. The temporary barracks built here by the soldiers will, I hope, be vacated in the spring and given to the Indians in partial fulfillment of this promise. The site of suitable agency buildings on the west bank of the Missouri ought to be soon determined on, and the supplies for the coming season deposited on them (Whetstone 1870:117).

Superintendent Hunt instructed the "Yampa Grand River" and Uintuintah Utes (more commonly called the Elk Mountain Utes) to scatter over a wide range of country due to the difficulty of procuring game for so large a number when concentrated (Hunt 1868:181). It this point, no annuity distributions had been made, despite a treaty agreement reached for such years earlier (1865). Utah Superintendent F. H. Head states,

> There is not sufficient game to supply the Indians with food, especially when they labor upon the farm. It is evident, therefore, that without more abundant means it will not be practicable to locate more Indians upon the reservation until the farm shall produce a surplus for their use. So long as supplies must be hauled there to feed them, at an expense for transportation nearly equaling their original cost, the Indians can be more economically subsisted elsewhere (Head 1868:152).

1869

The Los Pinos Agency was operational from 1869-1875 in order to fulfill the distribution promises of the Treaty of 1868.

> A source of much dissatisfaction among the Tabequaches arises from the construction given by late Secretary Browning to the tent article of that treaty. It was the intention of the framers of the treaty, and most certainly the expectation of the Indians, that the annuities of stock provided for in the article should be given promptly; but a consequence of a technical construction they have been withheld; and the whole $50,000 has been appropriated, and not a cent has ever been applied. This I have always found very difficult to explain to this untutored people (Hunt 1869:259).

He goes on to explain:

> If their stock annuities are forthcoming the present summer in time to get them to their proper range before winter, I trust all will be well.... Owning to the scarcity of game in certain localities, and in others the entire absence of it, these bands are always very much scattered, sometimes individuals of the same band roaming and hunting fully three hundred miles apart. In this way only are they able to subsist, and this mode is each year becoming more precarious. Indeed, but for the large number of guns and unusual amount of ammunition I have issued to them during the past two years, they must have perished with hunger or taken meat from the herds of rancheros of the mountains and plains as a substitute (ibid).

In the archaeological report of the survey and testing conducted at the original Los Pinos agency, a correlation is drawn between supplies requested by Indian agents and items they recorded on the landscape in the vicinity of camp areas. These camp areas were identified using William Henry Jackson's photos of the agency and Ute Indians camped there. Items located include percussion cap canisters, beads, nails, two cast metal kettles (500 kettles requested), four tin cups - two of which were identical and were in good enough condition as to still hold their original form (Pfertsh et al. 1996).

At the Uintah Agency, Geo. W. Graffam reports that the "present appropriation and annuity goods furnished this tribe are entirely inadequate to their wants, and should be largely increased. I respectfully recommend that the treaty of 1864 be ratified by the Senate, or that a new covenant be entered into with the tribe" (Graffam 1869:233).

1870

A proposal for bids for Indian goods was submitted by the Office of Indian Affairs on July 29, 1870 as part of a report on the Investigation into Indian Affairs. This lengthy report details, among other things, goods that were paid for and distributed to tribes throughout the United States, as well as the request for bids that was made to contractors on behalf of the U.S. government. According to a report on the Los Pinos Agency, this list was published in the

Rocky Mountain News, (Pfertsh 1996:74). The list included "10,000 yards of heavy cotton duck, (for tents)" (Parker 1870:170). It cannot be known to what tribe the duck was destined for, but does show that it was part of requisitioned supplies bound for reservations.

1871

The Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on the Los Pinos Agency in 1871 by Superintendent G.F. Jocknick mentioned meeting "U-rah" (Ouray, described as the head chief of all southern Utes in Colorado) who had "collected some of the chiefs and headmen of the tribe to receive me at their tented camp" (Jocknick 1871:261). They complained that the present agent, Mr. Trask, "shut himself up in his house, refused to issue rations to their squaws and children when they were starving, and treating them like dogs" (ibid). The report goes on to state, "They were glad to learn that their annuities and provisions were now on the way, as they were greatly in need of them; and they wished me particularly to represent to the Department that their tents were old and ragged, and that a new supply of tent-cloth would be more acceptable to them than anything else, and, as they relied in a great measure on the chase for their subsistence, they would be grateful, also, for a few more guns, such as can be purchased in Denver for $16 each" (ibid:263).

The New Mexico Superintendency reports from Abiquiu Agency, which oversaw the Wemenuche and Capote Utes, stated that the Government had made no provision to feed or clothe them, despite their consideration under the Ute treaty of 1868. The same was stated with regard to the Cimarron Agency, which serviced the Mouache Utes and Jicarilla Apaches. It was stated that these bands of Utes had protested the treaty (which they state did not represent their interests) and as such, found annuity provisions delayed (ibid:373).

1872

The 1872 report states that there was still difficulty in securing the annuity owed to the Ute Agency (Capote and Weminuche Utes).

> In view of the fact that no adequate provision has been made for these Indians by the Department, and that they are dependant solely upon the limited supply of provisions and clothing that can be furnished form the fund for the contingent expenses of the superintendency, I respectfully request that their proportion (and also the proportion of the Muache Utes at Cimmaron) of the funds appropriated to carry out the provisions of the treaty of 1868, made with the seven bands of Colorado Utes, and also their proportion of the annuity-goods of the annuity-goods furnished under that treaty, be sent to me annually, for the benefit of these three bands (the Capotes, Weminuches and Muaches,) living in this territory. It is true they do not recognize the treaty, saying an unauthorized person claimed to be represent them at its signing; but as they are three of the seven bands with which the treaty was made, and as Congress has made no other provision for them, I respectfully present their claim to three-sevenths of the amount of the funds and annuity-goods furnished under the treaty (Pope 1872:299).

With regard to the White River Agency, Littlefield reported that nearly a dozen Utes had died from a lung disease and requested that rubber soled shoes be included with the annuity goods, having noticed that several had gone barefoot during the winter when their thin-soled moccasins were spoiled by the snow and mud (Littlefield 1872:289). He reported that a group under the leadership of Douglass (head chief) had left the reservation for several months in an attempt to save the lives of his band. "White River no bueno; all die if they stay here" (ibid 288). Otherwise, the agent reports that the camp was peaceful and quiet. They were making use of the clothing annuities and "purchasing of the traders prints for their squaws and papooses, and even shawls are worn; the men are anxious to get boots and other articles not supplied in the annuity goods" (ibid:289).

1873

Charles Adams, agent at Los Pinos, reports:

> I am very much disappointed in not receiving the annuity-goods for the Indians up to date. Cold weather may, in this region, be expected at any time, and upon the advent of the first snow the Indians will go west without waiting any longer. The majority have gone, and the rest will follow, as they have a dread of snow, and are very anxious to hunt the deer, which is now in its prime, and very plentiful in the valleys west of here. I have to let them go without their blankets, shirts or tents, and cloth for women's dresses; I fear great suffering will necessarily follow. They will take the goods next spring, but will never forget that once more the Government has failed to keep its promises. These goods have been on the road since June 8, but have not been heard from by me; and I would respectfully call your attention to the face that some way should be devised in the future so that the Indians may receive the goods on or before September 1 of each year.

At the Indian Agency in Cimarron, New Mexico, which oversees the Muache subsistence products consist of fresh beef, distributed three times a month and is occasionally supplemented by sugar, coffee, and tobacco in small quantities. They report that the Utes spend most of their time on the plains or in the mountains hunting, and only come to the agency when game is too scarce to furnish them subsistence, or to "obtain a supply of powder, lead, &c" (Dolan 1873:279-280).

The agent proceeded to recommend that the "Southern Ute Agency," where these Indians are to be located, be established as soon as practicable, and the "Indians themselves removed thereto as soon as possible." Agent Crothers at Abiquiu, New Mexico, overseeing the Capote and Weminuche Utes, also request that the Utes be relocated closer to the Los Pinos Agency in order to receive their annuities or that their portion of annuities be sent to the agency in Abiquiu. At this point, it appears that goods, other than the fresh meat, were still not being delivered to these bands (ibid).

1874

The 1874 reports from James B. Thompson, the Special Indian Agent in Denver, address the mobility of the Utes within Colorado:

> Numerous small bands visit Denver in nearly every week, from October to April, from the north, south, east, and west; either on their way from the agencies, at White River and Los Pinos, to the buffalo-grounds, or vice versa; or they come for the special purpose of disposing of the furs and skins they have taken in the chase, and to supply themselves with the means of continuing their hunt. Even were they ever so well able to pay for hotel accommodations, they are not a desirable class of customers to the proprietors of any of our public-houses; and as they do not come to make prolonged visits, it is not their custom to bring with them their canvas·houses and their faithful housewives. The consequence is that they are, in a great degree, dependent upon the charity of a few white persons for food and shelter, and I am repeatedly asked by these good-natured and hospitable citizens why it is that the Government does not take care of its wards. I can only reply that they are off of the reservation, and are, therefore, not entitled to the benefits promised their tribes by the powers that be. My answer to this statement invariably is, “then why don't the powers that be keep them on tho reservation" And just here is where the inconsistency of the Bureau is made apparent as regards its treatment of these Indians. I believe I am correct in stating that they are allowed to hunt on the buffalo-range or elsewhere on the public domain, so long as they keep the peace. They could not stay at either of the agencies during an ordinary Colorado winter with either comfort or safety to themselves or their stock, if they wanted to. They will not stay, unless forced, on the reservation, where there are no buffalo, when they can find this game, as they do now, within a few days’ journey east of Denver (Thompson 1874:271).

Thompson goes on to request that the agency in Denver provide them with comfortable quarters to the parties at a reasonable rent since these visits are sanctioned (ibid).

1877

E.H. Danforth, the agent at White River, wrote a detailed report in 1877.

> An unusual number of Indians have been off their reservation during the past year, and have remained away for some time. There are several reasons for this. The annuities and supplies furnished these Indians amount to, at a liberal estimate, not over one-half that required for their support. None of their annuity goods (and but part of their supplies) have reached this agency during the year. Goods purchased in August of last year have been lying in the railroad depot, 175 miles away, since November last, a period of over nine months. Flour purchased the first of June is still at Rawlins. No clothing, blanket, tent, implement, or utensil of any kind has been issued at this agency for nearly two years; no flour

except once, 15 pounds to a family, since last May. In addition to the usual proportion of their subsistence, which the Indians provide for themselves, they have had this great deficiency to make up, in whole or in part, some way. With the exception of a few families, the only way in which Indians here know how to provide for themselves is by hunting (Danforth 1877:46).

Danforth goes on to report on farming difficulties:

Fourteen different families have commenced in a small way at farming. Unfortunately for them, and for the esteem in which the work will be held in the future, the grasshoppers, the extraordinary drought, and July frosts, have cut their crops off entirely. About twelve acres were prepared and planted by Indians. Oats, corn, potatoes, and garden vegetables were planted and sown; but the Indians will get nothing for their labor (ibid:47).

Danforth goes on to state that those at the agency would dress in Anglo clothing if they could afford it, but it is much more expensive and difficult to procure. Danforth also believed many of the Indians desired houses, and would live in them, but having no appropriation for the purpose, was unable to build any (ibid:47).

Agent Wheeler from Los Pinos Agency reported that Ouray, head chief of the Utes, had completed the construction of a "regular dwelling-house" and had made commendable progress as a farmer. He had raised four acres of potatoes, a field of wheat, some corn, and a variety of vegetables (Wheeler 1877:43-44). With regard to ration distribution, the agent states,

The Utes are in the habit of going out on brief hunting expeditions over their extensive reservation, between "issue days" and in this way contribute very materially toward the support of themselves and their families. The practice, however, of issuing rations every seven days instead of every ten days, as was formerly the custom, will undoubtedly interfere with these expeditions, and the Indians will consequently, become still more dependent upon the Government for their support than they already are. I believe that it would be well to return to the old rule of issuing rations every ten days (Wheeler 1877:43).

The agent also reports that there were homesteaders squatting on reservation lands and had refused to leave. The United State Cavalry was sent to assist with their removal and the squatters were given 30 days. Hon. H.M. Teller "interceded on behalf of the squatters and extended the time. This had caused a great amount of tension on the reservation and the agent requested that all treaty stipulations should be carried out to the letter (Wheeler 1877:45).

The Weeminuche, Muache, and Capote bands of the Ute tribe were to be "collected" at the new Southern Ute Agency. They had little inducement to visit the agency, as the agent did not have any supplies to offer them (Weaver 1877:46).

1878

By 1878, there are increasing reports of the agent dissatisfaction with allowing the Ute to move about to supplement their subsistence. N.C. Meeker, the agent stationed at White River Agency reports,

> It is evident that the facility with which the Indians get ammunition off the reservation is an obstacle to their engaging in rural pursuits. It is true that in the sale of ammunition, the law is violated, but the agent has no power to prevent the sale. The issue of duck, ticking and denim as annuity goods furnishes them with houses easily moved to remote mountains, and the inducements to live in fixed habitations are hereby diminished; in fact, hereditary habits are more strongly established (Meeker 1878:19).

Abbott, reporting from Los Pinos, states,

> The chiefs and headmen, with two or three exceptions, are earnest in their desire to preserve friendly relations between their people and the whites and to remain at peace with the government, notwithstanding the feeling that most of them have that "Washington" has broken faith in treaty obligations and has given encouragement to the white intruders upon their reservation. They cling tenaciously to their tents and seem to have no desire to occupy houses; the former they can fold up and move at pleasure, and such habitations are of course more in accordance with their nomadic character than the stationary dwelling of civilization would be (Abbott 1878:15).

The Southern Ute Agency, Rio Los Pinos, Colorado reports that supplies arrived in January and annuities came February. The agent pointed out the difficulty in collecting the Indians at the agency to receive supplies that had been promised them for five years. There was also difficulty for the Indians to make the trip to the agency during the winter months.

> On the 1st day of March 358 Utes and 44 Navajos reported, at which time rations and annuities were issued them, sufficient of the annuities being reserved for those unable on account of snow to come to the agency. On account of the snow and almost impassible condition of the roads, it was impracticable for the Indians to bring their tents and camp equipage, and they remained but five days here. Upon their departure they demanded rations to the amount of a four weeks' issue, saying they could not return before that time. (Weaver 1878:16).

1879

In 1879, N.C. Meeker of the White River Agency reports the use of tents among those who do not have the ability to construct a permanent house.

> One Indian has had a house built; he keeps three cows and he raises the calves; he has purchased a stove, and his case is promising. Other would like to have

houses, but as I have not sufficient force to build them, and as the Indians will not work themselves to go ahead, they live in their tents. Three wagons have been sent on this year for their use, and they are much pleased with them, and they make good use of them, while they borrow all the agency wagons we can spare. They readily engage in hauling from the old agency, and they have learned the mysteries of harnessing their horses and of managing on the road (Meeker 1979:18).

1880

Henry Page, agent at the Southern Ute Agency reports on the living conditions and continual lack of supplies.

> They live in tents or brush lodges, and frequently move from one portion of the reservation to another, as their desires may dictate, or when one of their number dies, in which case the tent or lodge of the deceased, with blankets, gun, and other articles, are at once burned, several of their best horses killed, and the entire band remove to some other locality; the near relations of the deceased cut their hair as a badge of mourning (Page 1880:17).

> The failure to deliver supplies for issue during the winter and spring, prior to the roads across the mountains becoming, as usual, impassable by deep snows, deprived the Indians of the proper quantity of rations at a time when most needed–an unusual large number remaining in the vicinity of the agency the past winter; consequently there was much privation, which would have been avoided had supplies been delivered at the proper time (ibid:18).

> The buildings at this agency are insufficient for proper storage, and suitable quarters are not furnished for agent and employees. Indians respect those most who respect themselves; and unless an agent has the respect and confidence of his Indians, he must necessarily fail to accomplish that for which he is sent amongst them; and while the government is offering to build houses for those Indians who will live in them, it seems that at least suitable buildings should be furnished to properly care for government supplies and for suitable accommodations for its agent and employees (ibid).

1881-1887

The post-reservation period reports indicate the same grievances year after year. Reliance on a semi-nomadic lifestyle seemed to correlate with adequate and timely arrival of annuity goods, access to water for farming, predictable growing seasons, receipt of fair market value for agricultural commodities, friendly relations with homesteaders and ranchers, and wild game within a reasonable distance from agency buildings. When one, or all of these are absent, it necessitated reliance on more traditional forms of subsistence.

Within the Southern Ute reservation, it is stated that tents and brush structures were the preferred shelter due to inadequate farm land and scarcity of wild game (Page 1881:23; Patten 1882:18; Patten 1883:20). In 1888, the agent again stated that there was interest in farming, but without irrigation systems, seed, and supplies, the fertile lands could not be cultivated (McCunniff 1888:23).

The Ouray Agency and Uintah Reservation in Utah stated that the Uintah and White River bands still relied on living in "wickiups" which also seems to correlate with a lack of adequate supplies and failure of the US Government to erect permanent housing (Davis 1883:140, Davis 1884:158; Gardner 1885:178-179).

In 1886, the agent at Ouray Agency, Utah, indicated that annuity supplies encouraged reliance on the US government and did not promote self-sufficiency, despite the lack of irrigation systems for cultivation.

> The Uncompahgre Reserve is a desert. Of the 1,933,440 acres embraced therein not one can be relied on to produce a crop without irrigation, and not more than 3 per cent of the whole is susceptible of being made productive by process of irrigation. Along the margin of Du Chesne and Uintah Rivers there is enough reclaimable land to give every family on the reserve a good farm. But without irrigation it is an arid waste.
>
> ....If permitted to suggest the needs of these Indians, I would say that first of all they need a strong, vigorous, fearless, and honest agent; and, next, fewer annuity goods and supplies, and at least two additional or assistant farmers for Ouray Agency and three for Uintah– not to do the work for the Indians, but to teach them how to do it themselves, to help them to select good places for their fields, to show them how to fence the same, and to break their land, and plant, irrigate, cultivate, and harvest their crops. Then, fewer blankets and more fence-wire and agricultural implements, less tepee cloth and more lumber, the issue of the agency herds of cattle to them in severalty, some sort of compulsion in the matter of sending their children to school, and the allotment of lands to them in severalty as soon as generally as the same can be done (White 1886:226-228).

In the years between 1883 and 1887, tensions increased between white settlers and Utes living at the Uintah Agency in Utah. In 1887, after returning from the Uintah Agency to receive his annuity money, Enny Colorow, son of Chief Colorow, returned to his camp near Meeker. "...he found two of his tents burned down, his goods taken away or destroyed, and six squaws and eight children who were left at the camp had gone."

ETHNOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

The following excerpt from a newspaper article published by the New-York Tribune was written by an unidentified member of the Hayden Survey team based on his observations and an August 27, 1874 interview with Ouray.

> A UTE VILLAGE DESCRIBED …there are often 80 or 90 lodges [teepees] in each camp. These lodges are all nowadays made of cotton cloth furnished by the Government, are conical in form, supported on several slender poles meeting at the top, where the cloth is so disposed as to make a sort of flap or guard, set by the wind in order to cause a proper draught. A little low opening in one side makes a door which is usually closed by a flap of hide or an old blanket.
>
> The white cloth soon becomes begrimed with smoke at the top, which in time extends downward and deepens, until you have a perfect gradation of color from the white base through ever deepening smoke browns to the sooty blackness of the apex, adding greatly to their beauty. Besides this coloration, for which their owners are not directly responsible, the lodges are often painted in bright colors, particularly about the doorways, and in a band around the base; and usually there will be one or two yellow, or blue, or striped lodges in a camp, giving a picturesque variety to the scene.
>
> About each teepee (lodge) or groups of teepees-for they cluster together here and there in no sort of order-you will ordinarily find[:] several little huts of evergreen branches called wicky-ups; fires with queer kettles hanging over them; frames hung with skins in process of tanning and softening; buffalo robes staked on the ground to dry or to be painted by the squaws at leisure times; piles of all sorts of truck-Indian, Mexican, American and nondescript, among which papooses play…(*New-York Daily Tribune* 1874:4)

Anne Smith's *Ethnography of the Northern Ute* makes mention of traditional hide tipis as well as the use of canvas tipis and tents. Buffalo hides were used until the second half the nineteenth century, when they were gradually replaced by canvas. The hides were thinned, tanned, and cut to the desired shapes. The entire cover is a semicircle with a smoke flap on each side of the centerpoint. The radius of the semicircle is close to the basal diameter of the finished tipi. A traditional tipi with a diameter of fifteen to sixteen feet required thirteen to sixteen hides to complete.

> It is evident that the tipi was known and used by the Colorado Utes in the 18th century, but the brush shelter was also used along with it. Densmore says (1922, p.15) "Thatched dwellings were used by those too poor to have tipis and appear to have been commonly used by all the tribes during the summer.... A dwelling of this type was identified by an officer of the United States Army as the type of dwelling which prevailed among the Utes in 1888 when he was stationed at Ft. Duchesne." In 1936 there were as many brush shelters at the Sun Dance grounds

as there were canvas covered tipis (Smith 1974:34).

Her ethnography also mentions that tents, in addition to traditional shelters, were in use in the 1930s. Narratives told to her about Sun Dance ceremonies and tribal incidents mention tents: "...old M.L. came to their tent" (ibid:135) and "He went and peeked in a tent and saw an old woman sitting with her back to the fire" (ibid:244). She also mentioned that "men, women, and children sleep all together in the same tent" (ibid:213).

In the Handbook of the North American Indians, there are photographs from 1873 that depict brush structures along side of canvas. The caption from the photograph taken about 1900 reads, "Camp of Western Ute at Kanosh, Utah, with both brush and canvas structures" (Callaway, et al. 1986:349).

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS OF CANVAS SHELTERS

Plate 7. Home Sweet Home, by William J. Carpenter, 1915. Photo is described as a Ute(?) Indian woman seated in front of a tepee with two dogs and a horse or pony (Library of Congress, LOT 11443, https://lccn.loc.gov/90708874).

Plate 8. Photo of wall tents on Kiowa Reservation (Virgil Robbins Collection [19344.65.3] Oklahoma Historical Society).

Plate 9. On November 1, 1915, W. Farra and Indian Agent Charles S. Heinline visited Chief Captain Louie and the Paiute Indian camp and distributed twenty-four wool blankets and fourteen army surplus tents to the tribe (*The Times-Herald* 1915:2). The Paiutes used the tents through 1928.

Plate 10. Ute Camp, Randall and Wilcox, 1885-1895. Photo is described as Two Ute Indians pose outside their teepee constructed over a tree and poles, Colorado (Denver Public Library Special Collections, Call No. Z-186).

Plate 11. Ute Indian Camp Garden of the Gods Shan Kive, by Stewart Brothers, 1913. Cropped panoramic view of Native American (Ute) men, women, and children, and white men with teepee and tent in background (Denver Public Library Special Collections, Call No. Z-989).

Plate 12. Utes building the tepee, by H.S. Poley, Sept 1, 1913. Photo shows a Ute woman sitting near a partially constructed tepee at Garden of the Gods, Colorado. They are probably in Colorado Springs for the Shan Kive (Colorado Springs Carnival) (Denver Public Library Special Collections, Call No. P-1329).

Plate 13. Utes building the tepee, by H.S. Poley, Sept 1, 1913 at Garden of the Gods, El Paso County, Colorado. She is probably in Colorado Springs for Shan Kive (Colorado Springs Carnival) (Denver Public Library Special Collections, Call No. P-1323).

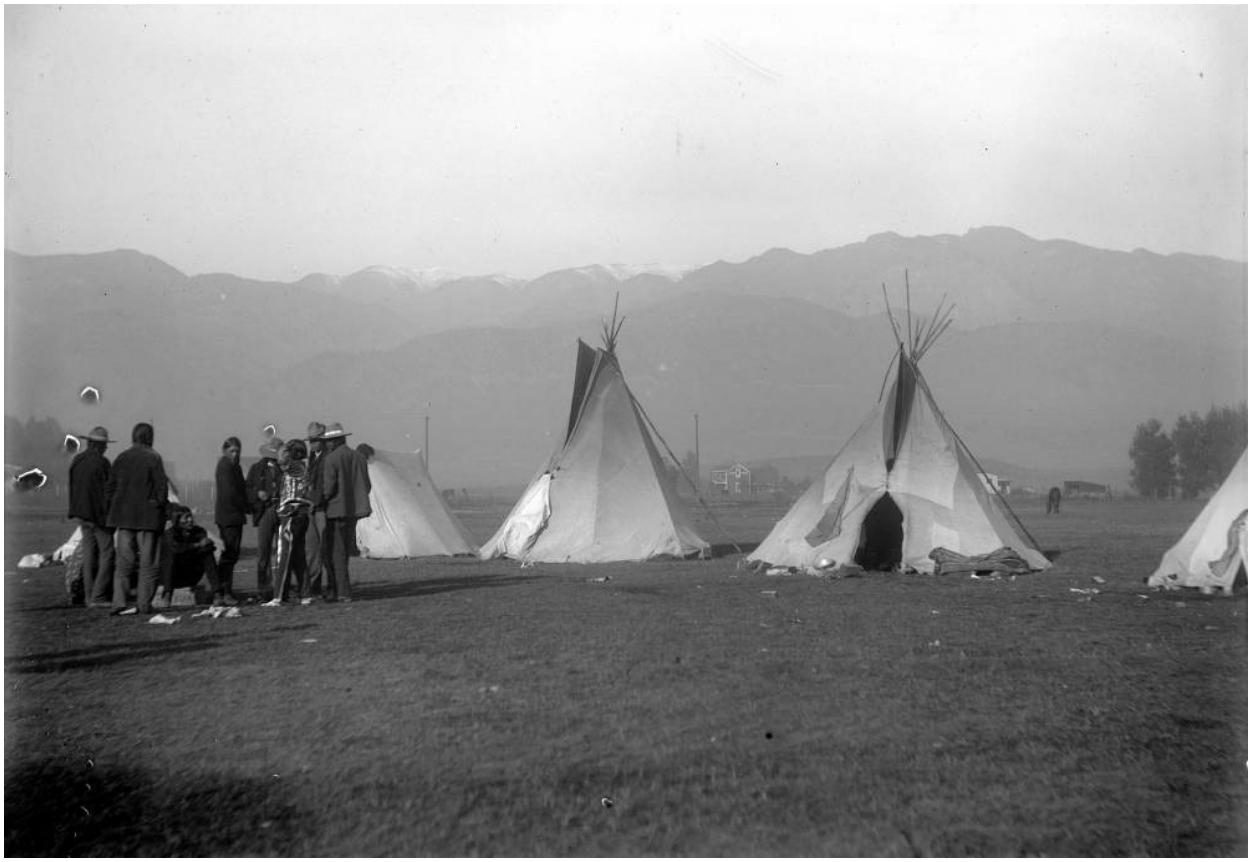


Plate 14. Ute camp, old Zoo Park, near Colorado Springs, by H. S. Poley, 1906. Photo is described as Native American (Ute) men stand and sit near a camp of three tepees and two tents, old Zoo Park, Colorado Springs, Colorado; one sits on a box or wooden crate that reads"[D]enver [Po]st"; they wear dark suits, hats; one man wears beaded leggings and vest (Denver Public Library Special Collections, Call No. P-58).

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