

Cheyenne

by *Amanda*

Cheyenne Ancestors: The Cheyenne are believed to have come across frozen ice over the Bering Straits to North America over 30 thousand years ago, eventually settling in the woodlands around the Great lakes. They were one of many Native Americans known as the Algonquians. It is not known when the Cheyenne were named, but it is thought to be around middle of the 17th century. The Cheyenne became established in the green valleys of Minnesota along the upper Mississippi River. As time went on the Cheyenne were forced to relocate many time by the settlers that swarmed from the east. By the 19th century the Cheyenne people had migrated in to the plains of South Dakota. They spread west and south, expanding their territory to the Rocky Mountains in Montana, Wyoming and Colorado.



Cheyenne Houses: When the Cheyenne people first arrived in North America they lived in villages of two to three hundred people. They lived in sturdy wood framed houses covered with packed earth and tree bark from elm and birch trees. But after being forced from their villages so many times by the European settlers they learned to live in tepees. They were easier to pack up and move around. In the early 1900's they moved several times a year, they no longer lived in peace. The tepee was easy to take down and put up with moving so often it suited the Cheyenne way of life. The Cheyenne tepee was a cone shape made from poles and buffalo hides. A small tepee required 10 hides and larger one would use up to 20. The hides were sewn together and placed over the frame of about 20 long wooden poles that were dug in to the ground in a circle. The pole tops were tied together and were covered with an additional hide that could be opened to allow the smoke out. The furniture was grass mats and blankets made from buffalo hide. When moving the tepees came down and were rolled up and moved on a sled device called a *travois* that was pulled by horses. At the new location tepees went up quickly and they were home.

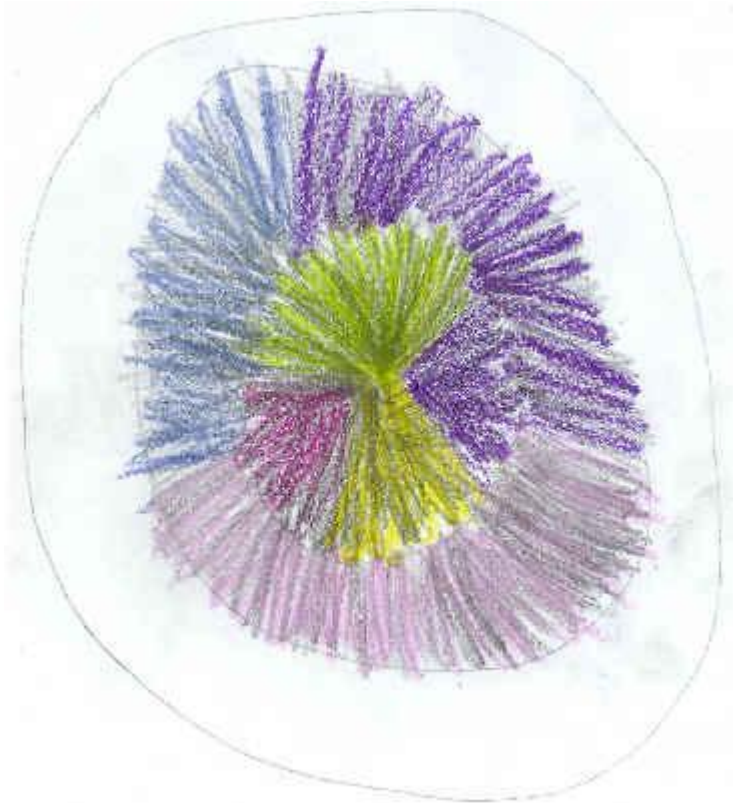
Cheyenne way of life: The Cheyenne were peaceful people not wanting to fight. They lived off the land. That is why they choose the areas that they choose to live in. There new land was rich with food. Women gathered wild potatoes, turnips, grasses and berries. The men hunted buffalo, elk, deer, raccoons, foxes and bears. The rivers offered fish and birds life was good. In addition to the natural resource the women planted crops. The farming was the women's job, learning how from other native people of the area. They also learned to trade for horses with other natives. The horses were thought to make you wealthy the more horses you owned made you rich. In the middle of the 1800's European traders started to arrive, at first they were welcomed as they offered manufactured goods and metal tools which were a welcome change from the wood and bone tools they had. But again with change came more moving. In the early 1900's the women no longer planted crops due to how much they moved they lived off what was already on the land. Life was growing harder.



Cheyenne Religion: The Cheyenne had a strong belief in family and community. They celebrated personal family experiences such as births, marriages, and deaths. As a community they had grand ceremonies. The Cheyenne believe that the earth had two layers; the surface was a thin covering for holding the roots of the plants and trees. The second layer was called the "deep earth" where the female lived that was Mother Earth. Then above the earth was a layer of air for life, above that was the "Blue Sky Space" where the sun, moon and stars live the male part of life. The largest spiritual celebration is held in the summer on the longest day of the year it is the "Sacred Medicine Arrows". Cheyenne families travel far to attend, tepees are gathered in a semi-circle with all the doors facing the east towards the rising sun. They arrows are blessed during this celebration. The "buffalo arrow" is to make the animal weak and easier to

kill. The "human arrow" was blessed to make their enemies weak and easily defeated. Sun dance was held every summer to bring back life in the earth for every living creature.

Cheyenne Battles: By the 1850's traders had moved in and set up shop right next to Cheyenne land at first it was good. But with gold discovered and more and more people heading west and traveling into Cheyenne 's' territory tensions heated up. The Cheyenne peace chiefs tried to negotiate peace with the American leaders. But Colorado officials would not listen they ordered villages destroyed. On November 28, 1864, U.S. troops lead by Colonel John Chivington came upon a Cheyenne camp at Sand Creek. At dawn the next day 700 soldiers attacked the camp with rifles and cannons. By the end of the day more than 400 hundred Cheyenne were dead most of them women and children. Chief Black Kettle survived and quickly formed warriors to defend the remaining tribe. Other tribes joined them. Cheyenne became known as warriors; in one battle they killed an entire army command. There last defeat was the battle of Little Big Horn also the most famous. That was on June 25, 1876, Custer and all of his 225 soldiers were killed. The government then sent out more troops to attack the Cheyenne villages, killing most of the residents. In the end the Cheyenne leaders realized that they could not stop the development of the area and to save the people still alive they signed the agreement to move to the "Indian Territory".



Cheyenne of Today: There are two groups of Cheyenne the Southern group and the Northern group. The southern band live in Oklahoma they have had the most changes. They did not own land there they have moved on to other areas. The Northern tribe did much better since they did own the land they were able to keep it and divided it into family lots. As a result the tribe has grown and was home to over 3500 Cheyenne people in 1990. The Cheyenne there own business, go to school and work just like all of us.



Quilling was done by using quills from porcupines.. The women would then soften the quills by soaking them and dyeing them for color. Porcupine quills were very hard to work with and quilled leather was hard to take care of. The women would use quilling on clothing, shoes and war bonnets. Women who excelled in quillwork and had made at least thirty garments could become members of the Robe Quiller's society. Their achievement was considered equal to that of warriors, and they were highly respected in their communities. Quilling and beadwork was worked together on most garments. It has become a lost art form. Today some Native Americans are trying to bring it back with the use of porcupine quills but the most popular form today is done with paper.

I used embroidery floss and faux suede.