CHAPTER 6
HISTORIC DOCUMENTATION OF AMACHE

The Creation of Self

When Amache married John Prowers, she became intimately involved in a world very different from that of her youth. The society of the Cheyenne is kin-based. Even members of Northern Cheyenne tribes were distantly related to Amache's camp. However, the society she married into was driven by the economics of emerging industrial capitalism. Although kinship was often tied to business relations, increasingly the social sphere in which Euro-Americans moved, and certainly where they lived, was contingent upon their source of income. Although economic relations on the western frontier were different than those in the increasingly urbanized east, they were marked by the fracturing of families (Schlissel, et al. 1989). Amache passed from a world where everyone was kin to "the problematic world of strangers" (Beaudry, et al. 1991:155).

As a new member of Euro-American society, Amache had to forge an identity for herself. That identity included the language she would speak, the way she reared her children, her relations to friends and family, and her attitudes.
about marriage. Those behavior patterns would be reflected in her material world: choices in personal adornment; the spaces in which she lived and worked; the tools she used to keep her home and the food that would be served there. Of course, any number of these would be mitigated by the others who also held sway over those arenas, especially her husband.

The historic record of Amache, like any historic record, needs to be analyzed. That analysis, almost like an excavation, involves peeling back layers to see what is revealed. We know that Amache had a number of cultures from which to choose to create herself. The two which appear in the documentary record are her natal Cheyenne culture and Victorian culture. However, different accounts emphasize one over the other. Before presenting the two main narratives of Amache's history, it is important to know the outlines of the two cultures. Cheyenne culture has already been discussed at some length. Victorian culture, although generally a trope with which we are somewhat familiar, deserves closer scrutiny before we are to place Amache on the continuum between the two.

**Victorian Culture**

The Victorian era is delineated chronologically by the years Queen Victoria ruled England, 1837 to 1901 (Crow 1972). It is related to the preceding Georgian era, especially with regards to architectural style. There are a number
of hallmarks of the Victorian era: revolutions in communication and travel brought about by railroads and telegraphs; religious and moral standards propagated through the growing mass media; the creation of "the cult of domesticity" with women at the center; and perhaps the most important, the creation of the middle class as we now know it (Howe 1975). Suddenly, instead of being the center for production, the home needed a reason to exist. Women of the emerging bourgeoisie were no longer producers. Their labor became fine-tuned to focus on serving their children and husbands. With the prevalence of live-in servants, this service focused on moral and social functions. This era--foreshadowing the current deluge of self-help books--saw the fluorescence of books, pamphlets and magazine articles aimed at teaching readers how to be proper Victorians. It has been suggested that, as obsessed as we are with Victorian culture, the Victorians were even more obsessed with it (Howe 1975).

The creation of an entirely new class brought with it the pangs of legitimation. One method the middle class employed was the creation of philanthropic organizations. "The bourgeoisie constructed institutions that would both act to contain disorder and serve their specific economic and emotional needs as an emerging class" (Smith-Rosenberg 1985:87). Bringing enlightenment to the masses about such topics as hygiene, sobriety and self discipline served the dual purpose of making the organizers feel they were contributing to society while creating better workers. Although it took them out of the home, women
often were the leaders in such movements. Because they were cast as the moral centers of the family, many saw them as the moral centers of society as a whole.

A virulent strain of consumerism was also a hallmark of the emergent Victorian bourgeoisie (Howe 1975). It too served to legitimize, not so much the entire class, as individual members of it. A Victorian home, properly decorated with correctly dressed inhabitants, revealed the ability of its owners to participate in the culture. A good example is the ritual of "calling," and the pieces of material culture that went with it, the card and hallstand. The calling ritual consisted of women visiting one another and leaving their calling card. The cards themselves were placed on a tray on the hallstand. The calling ritual, says historian Kenneth Ames, "was evidence of conspicuous leisure and an instance of non-productive, if gracious, labor" (1978:43). The hallstand was required in order to correctly leave one's card. Thus the stand itself was as critical to proving the status of a household as the knowledge of when and how to call. It was, as Ames calls it, "a portable emblem of respectability" (Ames 1978:35).

**Narrative One: Amache as Victorian Wife and Mother**

The Bent County Courthouse, located just two miles north of Boggsville, displays a number of historic paintings in its foyer. An oil painting of Amache is hung next to one of her first husband John Prowers (Plate 3). Below the picture, entitled "Amache, The Cheyenne Princess" is this inscription:

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Plate 3 - Painting of Amache Prowers in Bent County Courthouse
AMACHE, the Cheyenne Princess, also Mrs. John W. Prowers. At the age of fifteen years she married John Prowers, who was twenty-three years of age. Ten children were born to them.

It was a wide stride from the teepee to the Prowers House at Boggsville, but the Prowers home was a success. Mrs. Prowers was held in high esteem by the members of her tribe and was respected by all her new friends among the people of her adoption due to the strenuous effort of the Cheyenne woman to adapt herself to the white man's ways.

She passed away at Las Animas in 1905, aged 58 years. Charles W. Hurd.

This narrative of Amache, the one that emphasizes her Euro-American enculturation, is perhaps the most popular version of her life. Charles Hurd, the author of that inscription as well as a book on Boggsville (1957), emphasizes the great pains Amache took to ingratiate herself into white society. "She was giving up her own way of life and was taking on the white man's civilization" (Hurd, 1957).

In the El Pueblo Museum in Pueblo, Colorado, similar text appears next to Amache's photo: "Vibrant, intelligent, a woman at peace with herself, she became a leader in the Upper Arkansas settlements and was always in demand at social functions...For her part, Amache enthusiastically joined in community work, and even became a member of the Eastern Star." Several sources mention Amache's participation in The Order of the Eastern Star, which is the women's auxiliary branch of the Masons. Nell Propst, in her popular work Uncommon Women and the Colorado Prairie goes even further: "Amache Keesee (her name

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after her second marriage) was a beautiful, refined woman and Boston society talked about her with fascination, but also respect and genuine liking" (Propst 1992:58).

It is perhaps not surprising that these narratives often accompany a reprint of a specific photograph of Amache (Plate 4). This photograph speaks volumes. Rigorously posed, Amache sits at a writing table, her hair, jewelry, and clothing at the height of Victorian style. Her necklace, a cameo on a long, thick chain, epitomizes the display of material possessions endemic to Victorian identity.

A final text of Amache as a Victorian woman can be seen at the Las Animas cemetery, just south of Boggsville. There, Amache is buried beside the largest headstone in the cemetery, that of John Prowers (Plate 5). Her portion of the monument reads "Amy Prowers Keesee". Amy, spelled in various ways, was the name John Prowers called his wife. The inscription on her headstone reveals nothing of her original identity, nothing of her birth name. Amache Ochinee is indeed dead.

**Narrative Two: Amache as Cheyenne Woman**

There is another narrative of Amache that can be found in the documentary record. These other accounts, although still discussing Amache's
Plate 4 - Photograph of Amache Prowers, Courtesy of Colorado Historical Society
Plate 5 - Prowers family monument in the Las Animas Cemetery
acculturation, also emphasize continuity with Cheyenne ways of life. The two accounts which provide the most detail come from two of her daughters.

In 1945, Mary Prowers Hudnall wrote an article entitled "Early History of Bent County" for the Colorado Historical Society magazine. The article includes this passage:

Mother clung to many of the Indian customs and we children learned to like them. At Christmas she always prepared us an Indian confection made thus: She would slice dried buffalo meat very thin, then sprinkle it generously with sugar and cinnamon and roll it up like a jelly-roll...We kids just loved it but father looked on rather askance and would slip over to the store to return with a wooden pail of bright colored Christmas candies for us. Every season mother used to gather prickly pears for sweet pickles...She knew all the prairie herbs and their use...We always had preserves made with wild plum, choke-cherries, grapes, etc. And of course we had our spring greens of lambs-quarters and wild lettuce (1945:241).

Historian Dorothy Boyd interviewed Inez Prowers Comstock, another of Amache's daughters. Inez related a story of a dinner party that occurred when she was about 20, five years after John Prowers' death in 1884. Two of Amache's relatives, Little Elk, her half-brother and White River, a male cousin, were in attendance. After the dinner, all present smoked a pipe filled not with tobacco, but with Kisineck, probably the traditional Southern Cheyenne smoke described by Grinnell (1962). At first Little Elk took three puffs, then passed it to White River, who then passed it to Amache. After that, all the others in attendance smoked (Boyd n.d.).
The John Hough Manuscript file at the Colorado Historical Society contains a newspaper clipping about the Prowers. The *Kansas City Star* published an article in 1905 with a reminiscence of some unnamed "pioneer" about visiting the Prowers house. Speaking of Prowers, the oldtimer said:

He married a full-blood Indian squaw, a chief's daughter...Being a child of the plains and opposed to restraint, Prowers' wife did not take kindly to even the primitive civilization of the early-day Las Animas, and living in a wooden house suited her not at all (CHS Ms 323, ff 47).

Perhaps the element of Amache's history that best reveals her adherence to Cheyenne social customs is her remarriage to Dan Keesee. The exact date of that marriage is unknown. A search at the Las Animas courthouse failed to turn up a marriage certificate. Thus the marriage probably took place between 1884, when John Prowers died, and 1888 when the Bent County Courthouse burned along with all of its records.

Amache's remarriage was apparently not viewed kindly by the Prowers family and still it is not talked about by descendants (Petersen, 1994). Certainly, John Prowers' estate of about $750,000 was large enough to support Amache and the children in comfort. Her remarriage could not be justified by economic necessity. It is important to remember that Victorian ideology stressed the placing of family interests above personal ones (Mintz 1983). A social commentator writing in 1865 called widows who remarry, "second-hand wives"
(Calhoun 1917:216). Thus it is not surprising that her remarriage was viewed
with a certain amount of distaste.

By contrast, from the Cheyenne viewpoint remarriage was a perfectly
appropriate course of action. Indeed, a Cheyenne woman had much more
control over her marital relations than a Euro-American woman of that era. It is
interesting to note that, as opposed to the photograph discussed above, the
photograph of Amache taken during her marriage to Dan Keesee reveals a much
toned-down display (Plate 6). Her hair is pulled up, but still in the braids that
apparently were her normal hair style (Hurd 1957). She is wearing a simple dress
and no jewelry. In fact, her portrait seems almost stark, especially when
compared with that of her husband, posed against a busy Victorian back drop
(Plate 7).

Based on the documentary record, we have opposing reconstructions of
Amache Prowers' life. This is not to say that we cannot give more credence to
those documentary records that are closer to the source, ie: those of her
daughters as opposed to Hurd, a later historian. But none of these are primary
documents; Amache left no written record of her life.

The next chapter, an analysis of the material record of Amache, acts as
counterpoint to the historic record. Not only can material remains help us judge
the accuracy of the current competing narratives it can also extend them in new
ways. The method employed is similar to that advocated by historical
Plate 6 - Photograph of Amache Prowers Keesee, Courtesy of Phillip Petersen
Plate 7 - Photograph of Dan Keesee, Amache’s second husband, Courtesy of Phillip Petersen
archeologist Mark Leone. By seeing the historic and material record as independent one can create a dialogue between the two, like that of contrapuntal melodies. The differences and ambiguities force us to return again to both records "to see or discover what can be seen in either source that was not apparent before" (Leone 1988:26).
CHAPTER 7

THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF AMACHE

The Architecture of Home: An Analysis of the Prowers House

The Prowers house at Boggsville is much like the Boggs House. They both are comprised of a formal front wing, formal entry porch, and window symmetry. From the front, both houses display the symmetry typical of Georgian structures (Figure 7 and Plate 8). In fact, neither of these homes would look out of place in Missouri. However, the Euro-American flavor of the houses is a facade. Both are constructed of adobe, an indigenous technology adopted by the Hispanics of the Southwest. But original plaster from both structures reveals that the fronts of the houses were painted with squares to make them appear, at least from a distance, as if they were constructed of stone.

Although both houses have a formal front wing, they also have two other wings. The footprint of the houses is a "U" shape with the three wings enclosing a courtyard. The courtyard or hacienda style house is a common variant of nineteenth century vernacular New Mexican houses (Spears 1986). The
Figure 7- Front of Prowers house as it appeared historically
(from Long Hoeft 1994)
Plate 8 - Front of Boggs house
courtyard, usually an informal space, provided an outdoor work area as well as a protected and easily visible place for children to play.

The Prowers house has been interpreted by historic architects as a fine example of territorial architecture—the melding of Hispanic and Euro-American styles (Long Hoeft, 1994). The formal mantels in the front rooms are a fine example of the classical revival elements of territorial style (Figure 8). The fourteen room, two story Prowers house took that concept even further. Two story adobes were rare. They usually were built in areas of high Euro-American influence like the railroad towns of Wagon Mound and Las Vegas, New Mexico; and military towns like Watrous, New Mexico, located just outside of Fort Union. The difficulty in keeping two story adobes standing is well illustrated by the Prowers house. The only standing wing was listing badly prior to renovation. Failing to incorporate a foundation was the death knell for the other two wings of the Prowers house which may have collapsed by the turn of the century (Carrillo, et al. 1994).

It is clear that display was important to the form of the houses at Boggsville. The attempt to pass these adobe houses off as stone makes that abundantly clear. Another aspect of the site intended to make an impression on visitors is the Avenue of Trees, a tree-lined entryway from the river crossing up to the site (see Figure 3). This design element, like the symmetry of the front
Figure 8- Mantels in the Prowers house (from Long Hoeft 1994)
wings of the houses, is quintessentially Georgian. It embodies the power of
humans to recreate nature in an ordered fashion

The orientation of the Boggs house takes full advantage of opportunities
for display. The vast majority of traffic through Boggsville would have been
coming from Fort Lyon to the east (Carrillo et al, 1994). As one passes west up
the Avenue of Trees, the facade of symmetry holds. It is not until one passes by
the house that the Boggs courtyard becomes visible (Plate 9). In addition, the
orientation of the Boggs house makes sense from an environmental viewpoint.
The south facing courtyard takes advantage of passive solar energy. (I can vouch
that on chilly mornings the best place on the entire site to drink one’s coffee is
that sunny Boggs courtyard protected from the wind that seems to continually
blow on the Plains.)

The orientation of the Prowers house has neither of those advantages.
The front of the house faces south, with the courtyard opening to the east. As
one rose up from the banks of the Las Animas, the courtyard of the Prowers
would have been visible (see Figure 5). The courtyard itself is in the shade most
of the time (and is thus a miserable spot for morning coffee). If one takes into
account only the elements of Hispanic and Euro-American architecture, the

\[\text{2 For a discussion of how Georgian worldview influences the material record, see}
\text{Mark Leone’s work on the William Paca Gardens of Annapolis (1984). “Gardens}
\text{were places where their builders were to demonstrate that they understood natural}
\text{laws so well they could reproduce them and...were able to say that society and its}
\text{structure were natural and rational as well” (Leone 1988:33).}\]
Plate 9 - Courtyard of Boggs house
orientation of the Prowers house makes no sense. But if one factors in the influence of Amache's Cheyenne world view, it becomes much more clear.

It is not terribly surprising that, to date, the analysis of the architecture at the Prowers house has not factored in any Cheyenne influences. The Prowers house and a tipi could hardly be more divergent variations on the theme of domestic space. But one of the few areas where Victorian and Cheyenne ideology overlap is in the home, for it was there that women were in charge. Although Amache did not construct the Prowers house as she would have a tipi, she must certainly have had influence on its form.

Domestic space reflects the rituals of daily life. One of the rituals that is the most critical to everyday Cheyenne functioning was *niv'stan'y'vo*, the supplications to the cardinal points of the compass. Regardless of where she lived, Amache was probably always aware of her orientation to cardinal directions. The Prowers house, with its east-facing courtyard, mirrors a Cheyenne encampment. The tipis themselves opened to the east or southeast, and the camp circle did the same (Figure 9). That configuration allowed the Cheyenne to greet the sun daily as it rose in the east (Grinnell 1962). The "U" shaped Prowers house similarly opened up to the east, enabling Amache to greet the rising sun.
Figure 9 - The Cheyenne camp circle (from Grinnell 1962)
The Artifactual Record

As stated in the earlier discussion of Boggsville archaeology, the depositional regime makes it difficult to discuss the artifacts recovered from the Prowers house excavations. The historic documentation of Amache's life indicates she utilized a great deal of typically Victorian material culture. Boyd's (n.d.) interview of Inez includes a sketch of Amache's china pattern. The two artifacts that appear to date to the early occupation—the ink bottle and another small bottle—give us little feel for the consumption of mass produced goods at the Prowers House (see Plate 1).

There are a number of artifacts that appear to be Native American. A couple of small seed beads were recovered from excavations south of the house (Plate 10). In addition, a few pieces of groundstone were recovered in excavations to the north of the standing south wing (a mano fragment in the 1994 excavations and two fragments—probably manos—in the Fall 1993 excavations). One piece of groundstone, a portion of a basalt pestle, was recovered from one of the interior units, Unit 170N, 47E.

The seed beads are typical of those found on post-contact Native American sites and probably reflect Amache's use of beads as decoration. The groundstone is more problematic. The fragments recovered outside the west wing are pieces of larger manos. As such they are probably not Cheyenne in origin. Such large objects were too unwieldy for easy transport and are not
Plate 10 - Biface and seed beads recovered from Spring 1993 Prowers house excavations
reported in the ethnohistorical record of the Cheyenne. More likely, they represent Hispanic use of grinding stones for processing corn, or are remains of an earlier prehistoric occupation. The pestle, however, is a part of a typical Cheyenne toolkit. Its location between the bottom of the floor joists and the floor itself indicate it was deposited during the historic era. In addition, Mary Prowers Hundall's account of her mother's processing of wild foods (1945) gives added credence to the association of the pestle with Amache. It was just such tools that she would have used to make buffalo candy or grind herbs.

Only one Native American sherd has been recovered from the excavations at the Prowers house. The artifact, a small micaceous sherd, appears to have once been part of a bowl (Plate 11). The sherd has been analyzed by Priscilla Ellwood, a ceramicist who specializes in Eastern Colorado pottery (Ellwood 1995). Her preliminary analysis indicates that it is a piece of post-1750 Taos Incised ceramics (Ellwood, personal communication). It does not appear to match any of the Plains types of pottery, prehistoric or historic. Given that the Cheyenne had not produced ceramics for over fifty years before Amache's birth, the results are not surprising. This piece, although it may have been acquired by Amache's family in trade with the Pueblo, more likely represents something that Rualda Boggs would have acquired from Taos Pueblo.
Plate 11 - Native American sherd recovered from 1994 Prowers house excavations
Lithics at the Prowers House

As outlined earlier, a number of lithics have been recovered from Prowers house excavations that may stem from three different sources: prehistoric Native Americans, historic Hispanics or historic Native Americans. Because of the unclear stratigraphy on the rest of the site, I focused my research on those lithics recovered from units excavated inside the standing west wing of the house. Those units were dug from just below the floorboards to the bottom of the floor joists. Excavation halted at the bottom of the floor joists. Thus we can postulate with a certain amount of confidence that these artifacts were deposited during the historic era because they come from fill deposited since the house was constructed.

The two historic sources for these lithics, Hispanics and Native Americans, can be differentiated based on the morphology of their lithic technology. The most thorough analysis of the phenomenon to date is James Moore's research on Spanish Colonial stone tool use. Based on artifacts from 35 sites he writes, "formal tools were usually rare, but debitage was common and often exhibited edge damage indicating informal tool use. In some cases it was the author's opinion that reduction techniques were simple or had been accomplished by someone unfamiliar with lithic technology" (Moore 1992:240). This data backs up my personal experience recording Hispanic sites in the Pinyon Canyon region south of Boggsville. Hispanic lithic technology appears to be one
of expediency. Certainly their lithic technology was much less formal than that of the area's Native Americans. Thus, we expect a Hispanic lithic toolkit to be characterized by few formal tools, a high percentage of utilized flakes, and few small, finishing flakes.

A historic Native American toolkit, on the other hand, would include a higher percentage of formal tools, a lower percentage of utilized flakes, and more finishing flakes. In fact, as lithic tools were being edged out by metal, formerly utilitarian tools took on more of a symbolic function. Analysis of historic Pawnee sites indicates that lithics begin to be found more frequently in burial contexts or associated with medicine bundles, which has been analyzed as “an indication of their increasingly sacred nature” (Hudson 1993:269). As magico-religious items, they would have been utilized less and thus more prone to curation. Thus, we would expect an even higher percentage of smaller flakes as the debitage would reflect less tool production and more tool sharpening and maintenance.

An analysis of lithic debitage by its mass can indicate two different aspects of lithic technology, the level to which tools are being refined, or the amount of curation. The smaller the flakes, the more formal the lithic technology and the further along in tool production. For example, the first several flakes struck off a core are much larger than the flakes carefully taken off a finished tool in order to replenish its edge. Two statistical tests were run on the Prowers
house lithics based on the mass of the artifacts. The results of a T-Test comparing the total mass (length x width x height) of interior and exterior unit lithics is presented in Table 3. The mean mass of the interior units is 314 cubic cm as opposed to 1472 cubic cm for the exterior units. The F value of 30.67 far exceeds the 9.89 value required to give a 1% confidence value. In other words, the chances that the difference in the size of lithics found inside and outside the west wing could happen by chance are less than 1 in 100. It appears that the lithics inside the house fit with what we would expect from a historic Native American toolkit.

A discriminant analysis of the same data gives a very interesting result (Table 4). The lithic artifacts appear to fall into two populations: small lithics and large lithics. These populations do not, however, split cleanly between interior and exterior units. Four of the artifacts recovered from the exterior fit better with the interior unit population. One of the interior lithics has a closer fit with those on the exterior, but only by a very small percentage (11). This result does not, however, refute the theory that artifacts found inside the west wing were deposited by a Native American toolsmith. In fact, we should expect that some of the artifacts recovered from the exterior units were deposited prehistorically. Those items that more closely match the interior units may, in fact, represent an earlier site component.
Table 3
T-Test of Lithic Debitage
Prowers House Spring 1993 Excavations

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Group 1 = Interior units
Group 2 = Exterior units
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Discriminant Analysis of Lithic Debitage  
Prowers House Spring 1993 Excavations

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**SYMBOLS USED IN PLOTS**

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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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It could be argued that the difference in the size of lithic artifacts between the interior and exterior units could be a result, not of source, but of formation processes. Namely, the larger artifacts were swept away and the smaller objects fell through the floorboards. However, a number of artifacts found in the interior units were quite large. Unfortunately, measurements were not taken on many of the artifacts, but measurements taken on diagnostic artifacts indicate a number exceed the mean mass of exterior unit lithics (1472 mm3 ± 361), including a biface (2000 mm3), a piece of blue earthenware bowl (7392 mm3), and two bottle fragments (5320 mm3 and 2850 mm3). It appears there were some pretty big gaps between the Prowers house floorboards.

Admittedly, the sample size used for the analysis of lithics is small (n=6 for interior units and n=13 for the exterior units). However, this analysis is based on debitage alone. In addition to the six pieces of debitage, two formal tools, a biface and a uniface, were recovered from the interior units (see Plate 10). That 1 to 3 ratio of tool to debitage is much lower than the 1 to 8.5 ratio of lithics recovered in the Fall 1993 exterior excavations. The lithics from 1994 (used in the statistical analysis) did not include a single formal tool, but did include two utilized flakes. The much higher rate of formal tools from the interior units, and the utilized flakes from the exterior units shores up the analysis of the debitage, strengthening an association of the interior lithics as Native American and the exterior as Hispanic.
Amache and Lithics

The assertion that the lithic tools and debitage found on the interior units of the Prowers house are of historic Native American etiology points to the one historic Native American we know lived in the house: Amache Prowers. This proposition, although it seems reasonable enough, leads us into the heart of a controversy in archaeology, the relation of women and lithics. Long standing archaeological practice has been to equate lithic production with men. David Hurst Thomas, a respected New World archaeologist, went on the record as recently as 1983 claiming "the most visible activity in the archaeological record is stone tool fabrication, an exclusively male endeavor" (Thomas 1983:439). Joan Gero, in her research on "genderlithics", questions such exclusive assertions. In Engendering Archaeology, she makes the point that lithic production by women is common sense:

As women work...it is inconceivable that they sat and waited for a flake to be produced, or that they set out each time to borrow one. Women clearly required ready access to efficient working edges in their routine work, and they must have manufactured them as needed. Since the user of a tool is in the best position to judge its adequacy, it makes sense that women produced many of their own tools...(Gero 1991:170).

The ethnographic record points out a number of lithics that were part of Cheyenne women's toolkits, including hide scrapers, implements for cutting meat, and knives with which to sharpen their digging sticks. Anthropologist Stan Hoig asserts "the many chores performed by Cheyenne women required a variety of
tools that they devised themselves" (Hoig 1989:25, emphasis mine). This would have especially been true of Amache, who was separated from Cheyenne men most of the time. If her stone tools needed sharpening, she would have had to do it herself.

One puzzling aspect of the lithics in the Prowers house relates to the exigencies of flint knapping. When a stone tool is produced or sharpened, the byproducts include very sharp, small pieces of stone, perfect for slicing one's feet if one happens upon them barefoot. It hardly seems an activity fit for the indoors. However, based on Mary's account of John Prowers reception of the yearly buffalo candy, he was perhaps none too keen on her practice of Cheyenne customs (Hudnall 1945).

Historical architects postulate that the upper rooms of the Prowers house were the chambers for John and Amache and their children (Long Hoeft 1994). It would have been in these upper rooms, away from the public spaces, where Amache would most likely have been flint knapping. The lithics, which were recovered from beneath the floor of all three of the south wing rooms, would have easily fallen through to the bottom floors. In fact, the tongue-in-groove flooring found throughout the house would have been the perfect place for lithics to lodge, remaining hidden until the floors began to heave and gaps opened up. Ironically, it appears the privacy built into Victorian homes gave Amache the space in which to engage in traditional Cheyenne activities.
The assertion that Amache engaged in lithic tool production or maintenance is based on only a handful of artifacts. Still, the presence of lithics deposited along with historic Euro-American items throughout the interior units remains very suggestive. Based on the lithic material alone it would be a less than solid assertion. However, taken in combination with the written records about her maintenance of Cheyenne traits, and other pieces of the material record, it fits into the patterns of behavior we might expect from Amache.
CHAPTER 8
LEARNING FROM AMACHE

The Archaeobiography

Amache Ochinee Prowers was a multifaceted woman. Her life presents for us a case study of how an individual made her way in a world fraught with unprecedented change. As a Native American and a woman, there were many avenues of power unavailable to her. Discussions of domination and resistance remind us, however, that there are different forms of power (Paynter and McGuire 1991). Amache's "power over" any individual was limited. However, her "power to" was always available and it is obvious from the record that she exercised it.

It could be argued that by marrying John Prowers, Amache committed cultural suicide. Indeed, none of her children appear to have practiced a Cheyenne lifeway. The marriage announcement of her daughter Ida May, printed in fine script on linen paper, indicates that Ida's wedding was a far cry from Amache's own marriage ceremony (Figure 10). John Prowers gained control of
Mr. Lewis Frederick Horton
and
Miss Ida May Prowers
announce their marriage,
on Wednesday, September the twenty-ninth,
eighteen hundred and ninety-seven.
Las Animas, Colorado
Cheyenne lands not to encourage cultural autonomy, but to feed his growing cattle herd. Even Amache's final resting place erases her "Cheyenneness."

But we must remember the world Amache left behind was coming abruptly to a close. If she had married a Cheyenne man and stayed with her tribe, she could very well have been counted among the dead at Sand Creek. The year she married John Prowers was the year the Fort Wise treaty was signed, giving away the lion's share of traditional Cheyenne territory. She made a decision that vastly increased the chances of her own survival and the survival of her future progeny.

It is clear that Amache was no shrinking violet. She adapted those elements of the Victorian world that suited her, while still engaging in a number of Cheyenne behaviors. Those behaviors have written themselves into the material record of Boggsville. She exerted her "power to" in a number of ways and created a life for herself that was innovative because it had to be.

Her use of language is an example of the way Amache was creative in her cultural expression. Her daughter Mary wrote, "Mother was a quiet, sweet woman, and very intelligent. She readily picked up the English language. She never talked the Cheyenne language at home, only occasionally with her own people" (Hudnall, 1945:240). Yet her brother-in-law John Hough gives a very different account. Writing of his 1867 trip out to the Colorado Territory he never referred to Amache by name, but called her the "full blood Cheyenne
marrying to Prowers. Hough wrote that she "had but little knowledge of
the English language. She could understand fairly well but would make no
attempt to talk it. She would speak in Spanish to those who addressed her in
English if they did not understand Cheyenne" (in Petersen, personal files). By
1867, Amache had been married to John Prowers for six years. She had worked
with Prowers at Bent's New Fort for several years and had spent about a year in
Missouri living with his aunt. She was apparently intelligent enough to be fluent
in Spanish as well as Cheyenne. It seems more probable that she could speak
English, but that in certain situations she chose not to.

Racism was integral to the Victorians' belief in their own moral
superiority. "While Victorian didacticism assumed that every one would benefit
by acquiring Victorian culture, the stereotypes supposed that some people were
incapable of doing so, at least beyond an elementary stage" (Howe 1975:528).
John Hough, who later moved on to a career in the Colorado state government,
was a man of considerable ambitions. The presence of a "full blood Cheyenne
squaw" in his inner family circle may have been an uncomfortable situation for
him. Perhaps, in order to free herself from commerce with someone who had
little respect for her, Amache refused to speak to Hough in English.

Although they became full participants in Euro-American culture,
Amache's Cheyenne life still held interest for a number of her descendants. Mary
remembers with great fondness the times she spent in Cheyenne camp with her
grandmother, who apparently declared her "too dumb to learn Cheyenne" (Hudnall 1945:241). At camp Mary would catch turtles and listen to her grandmother's stories. Mary's son Leonard retained his mother's interest in Cheyenne culture. When Leonard was twelve he would take Amache's half-brother and cousin to town to show them off, walking Cheyenne style--single file (Boyd, n.d.). Perhaps it was about then that Leonard acquired the nickname "Chief." He kept much of the family memorabilia and the Prowers account book now at the Colorado History Museum bears the inscription, "Property of Leonard 'Chief' Hudnall."

Archaeological Implications

There are a number of implications of this research. A very concrete one deals with the future of archaeological research at Boggsville. The research design for the site targets questions about architecture, household organization, social structure and class, gender, and ethnicity (Carrillo, et al. 1993). However, the excavations to date have been driven by architectural and site structure concerns. No sealed deposits, features that might give us the material to begin addressing the research questions, have been dug. That situation is understood by the Boggsville Revitalization Committee and the next excavations planned include a number of privies and a cistern.
The research design itself deserves some attention. The hypotheses regarding gender suggest that gender based segregation may have occurred at Boggsville (Carrillo, 1995). Because of the deposition at the site, this question remains to a certain extent unanswerable. However, my analysis of Native American artifacts points to Amache's presence throughout the west wing of the Prowers house. The documentary record indicates that both Amache Prowers and Rumalda Boggs played hostess to travelers on the Santa Fe Trail as well as soldiers from Fort Lyon. In addition, they were caring for a number of children. The notion that they were segregated from certain portions of their houses or the site seems questionable, especially in light of the material record of Boggsville which indicates a female presence not just in the artifacts, but in site layout and architecture.

The remains at Boggsville could address interesting questions about gender. It has been suggested that the frontier nature of Boggsville allowed women to play "a non-circumscribed female role" (Carrillo 1995: 57). Certainly the almost exclusive presence of women of color must have influenced the settlement. Perhaps a better research question would involve comparing the assemblage from Boggsville to a contemporaneous site in a more concrete social setting--St. Louis, for example.

The existing research design also suggests that racial or ethnic segregation may also be possible at Boggsville (Carrillo 1995). This hypothesis
suffers from the same difficulties of evaluation as that of gender-based segregation. We know that Boggsville exemplifies the mixing of ethnicities that often took place on the frontier. Instead of looking for exclusion, we need to be researching how ethnic interaction shaped the settlement. The occupants of Boggsville, by negotiating identities and ethnicities via material culture, gave the settlement its unique form. The analysis of Cheyenne influence on the architecture of the Prowers house is one example of how such research might be undertaken.

This critique is not meant to be an indictment of Boggsville's research design. The work at Boggsville was informed by current research paradigms. Like much of the historical archaeology done in the west, the work here has been influenced by Hardesty's conceptions of the western frontier (Hardesty 1980, Hardesty 1988). His research, conducted mostly in Nevada, centers on mining communities. In those settlements, ethnic and gender-based segregation occurred frequently. But boom mining towns and an agrarian settlement along the Santa Fe Trail are worlds apart.

Luckily, the breadth of research in historical archaeology has grown tremendously in recent years. Indeed, the Fall 1991 issue of Historical Archaeology was devoted to gender issues. A number of historical archaeological projects have dealt specifically with women in positions as "cultural brokers" (McEwan 1991:34), including research in California (Purser
1991), the High Plains (Kornfeld and Francis 1991, Whelan 1991), the Spanish New World (McEwan 1991), and northern Michigan (Scott 1991). It is to sources such as these we can turn to help reconfigure our research.

A Woman of Her Time

In downtown Las Animas, a mural depicting the Santa Fe Trail decorates the side of one of the buildings (Plate 12). This mural, located just a few miles north of Boggsville, is interesting because it reflects common misconceptions about the Trail. There is a single Native American depicted, but all the other faces are Euro-American. No Hispanics are evident, in spite of their important presence as traders, and the two females consist of a white woman clutching her bible and her daughter who is hiding behind her mother’s skirts and apparently frightened out of her wits. The dominant presence is that of Kit Carson, who, in fact, spent little time on the Trail and only lived at Boggsville for less than a year. This Euro-centric version of the Trail’s history is not an uncommon one. The fact that the only females depicted are travelers on the trail is noteworthy. In discourse on the women of the Santa Fe Trail, traveler Susan Magoffin figures prominently; her journal of a trip along the trail is one of the best historic sources we have for Santa Fe Trail history (Magoffin 1926).

However, the women who traveled the trail were in the minority compared to the women who lived along it. Some of them, like Charlotte Green,
Plate 12 - Mural of Santa Fe Trail in Las Animas, Colorado
the black cook at Bent's Fort, provided services for travelers. Others, like
Amache Prowers and Rumalda Boggs, were positioned more peripherally. But,
for the most part, the women along the Trail have been silent, and their
contributions have gone unacknowledged. This thesis has attempted to utilize
the dialogue between history and archaeology to correct that narrative. In
focusing on an individual, it has fleshed out Peggy Pascoe's West, where women
of color stand at the center of the crossroads.

Amache Ochinee Prowers' story is not just the narrative of one individual.
In many ways, she personifies the history of the Santa Fe Trail. Cultural
mediators and innovators like her were present all along the Trail, in towns like
Santa Fe and Trinidad and in settlements like Boggsville and Bent's Fort.
Boggsville's blend of Hispanic, Native American and Euro-American material
culture is not out of the ordinary, just relatively unobscured by later development.

Amache lived in a time that brought sweeping changes to the region,
requiring the creation of a new society. Cultural mediators like Amache built the
foundation of the American West. We residents of the late twentieth century
West, are still trying to build upon those foundations. Issues of ethnic identity
and integration in this region are as current today as they were in Amache's time.
One need only look at the evening news for examples of this struggle. In 1995,
Hispanic students became the majority in the Denver City School District, but
Colorado remains an "English only" state. It is critical that we return to our
history, not just to rescue it from the black and white of John Wayne movies, but for clues on how to proceed. We need to examine how those who came before us negotiated ethnic identity, because just like Amache, we live in a world where compromise is crucial to our survival.
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