

War Paint On Horses Explained

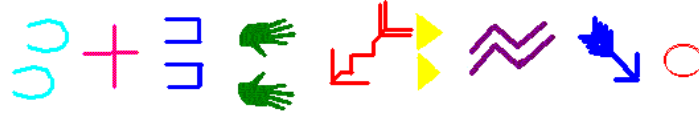
Many people know that horses were painted or marked by Indians. This was commonly called **“War Paint”**. I wanted to put together a source document of possible meanings and explanations behind this tradition.



What Is War Paint Why Did Indians Paint Horses?

When the Native Americans painted symbols or marked their horses, it had purpose. Each symbol had a meaning and was done to assist the horse in battle or hunting. The painted marks often had mystical, powerful, enhanced strength or spiritual significance.

Some reasons were related to warfare, hunting, victories, medicine symbols and injuries. Horses would be painted before battle to make them faster, stronger, powerful and more successful. Then after battle to show the rider and horse's victory, defeat, battle scars, horse's stolen and enemy killed. Much like the tradition of Pilots in war will paint markings on their planes to show how many planes they have shot down. Remember there is no exact absolute one definition to these symbols since each Tribe or area defined their own meanings.

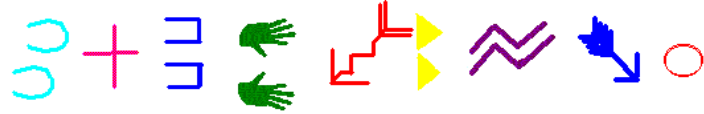


In the picture above, the horse has four markings

Circle around the eye
Feathers in the mane
Hand print on shoulder
Lines across his nose

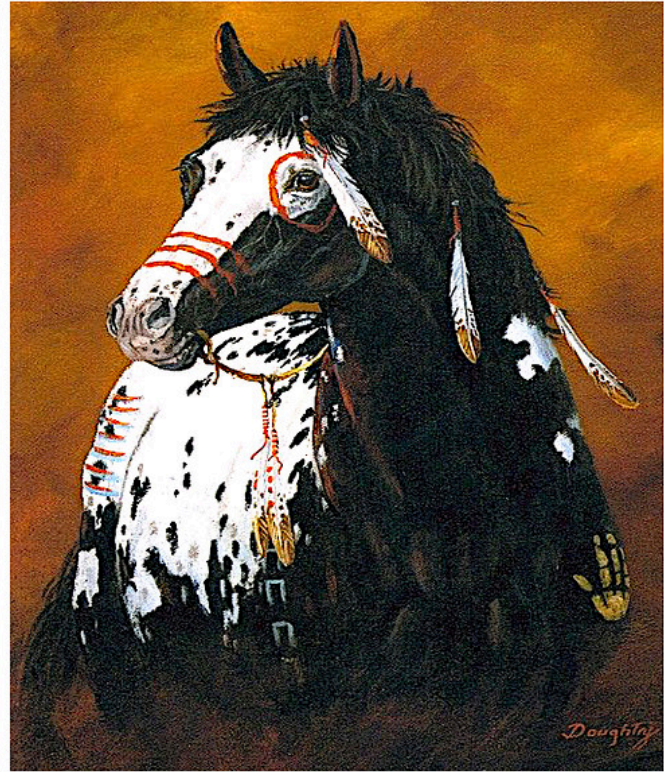
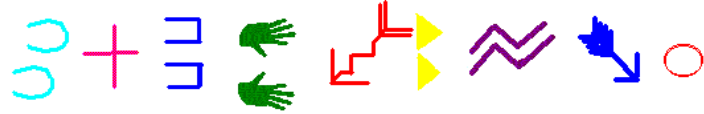
- 1) A circle around the horse's eye, ear or nostrils was done to enhance that ability of sight, hearing and smell
- 2) Feathers on the horse serve as the symbol of the Indian way of life. A feather can be a symbol of many things in different tribes – trust, honor, strength, wisdom, power, and freedom. It could also be to make the horse look bigger and stronger
- 3) The "Pat Hand print " had many meanings. When on the shoulder, it could mean that the horse brought its owner back from a previous dangerous mission
- 4) Lines or stripes across the bridge of nose seems to indicate number of war honors or Overthrowing a settlement

REMEMBER: Some War Horse Symbols and markings were different for tribes, location, some for before battle, some for after battle, some for hunting, some for war and some for respect or health.



Symbol meanings varied between tribes and individual warriors. White sometimes meant safety. Red meant war, power in battle. The large circle on the white horse's chest might mean "strong heart." The hail indicates misfortune and defeat for the enemy. Both horses have red hands meaning vengeance & victory against the enemy.

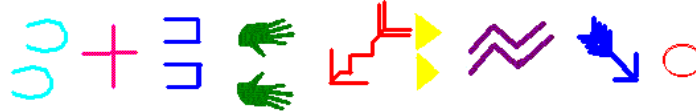
- Arrow points in a line which brought victory
- Thunder or lightning stripes were to please the God of war
- Arrowheads on all four hooves made the horse swift and sure footed
- Right & Left hand prints on horse's chest, which showed that he'd knocked down an enemy
- Hail Stones were a prayer for hail to fall on the warrior's enemy
- Two crossing bars meant that the horse and his rider had escaped ambush
- Hoofprints were drawn on the horses and stood for the number of horses captured in raids
- Most all horse Battle Scars were always painted or surrounded by red
- Long zig-zag lines symbolize lightning to add power and speed to the horse
- For Warriors going to battle on a do-or-die mission, the Upside-down Hand print was used
- Hand Print of left hand drawn on the horse's right hip were the highest honor



Two war ponies with slashes across their nose and circles around their eyes, indicating successful attacks on rival villages and keen senses for battle. Both horses' manes are adorned with eagle or hawk feathers in hopes of bequeathing the strength of those great birds of prey to the horse. Painting on right by Terry Doughty.

Horse War Paint Colors - What They Mean

- Red could symbolize war, blood, strength, energy and power
- Black was mainly used to symbolize victory or before returning home to the camp
- White could symbolize mourning or could mean peace
- Blue could symbolize wisdom and or confidence
- Yellow symbolised the color of death. It showed that the warrior and horse were brave and willing to fight to the death
- Green could symbolize endurance, great healing power and believed to improve vision
- Purple showed power, mystery, magic or connection to the Spirit World



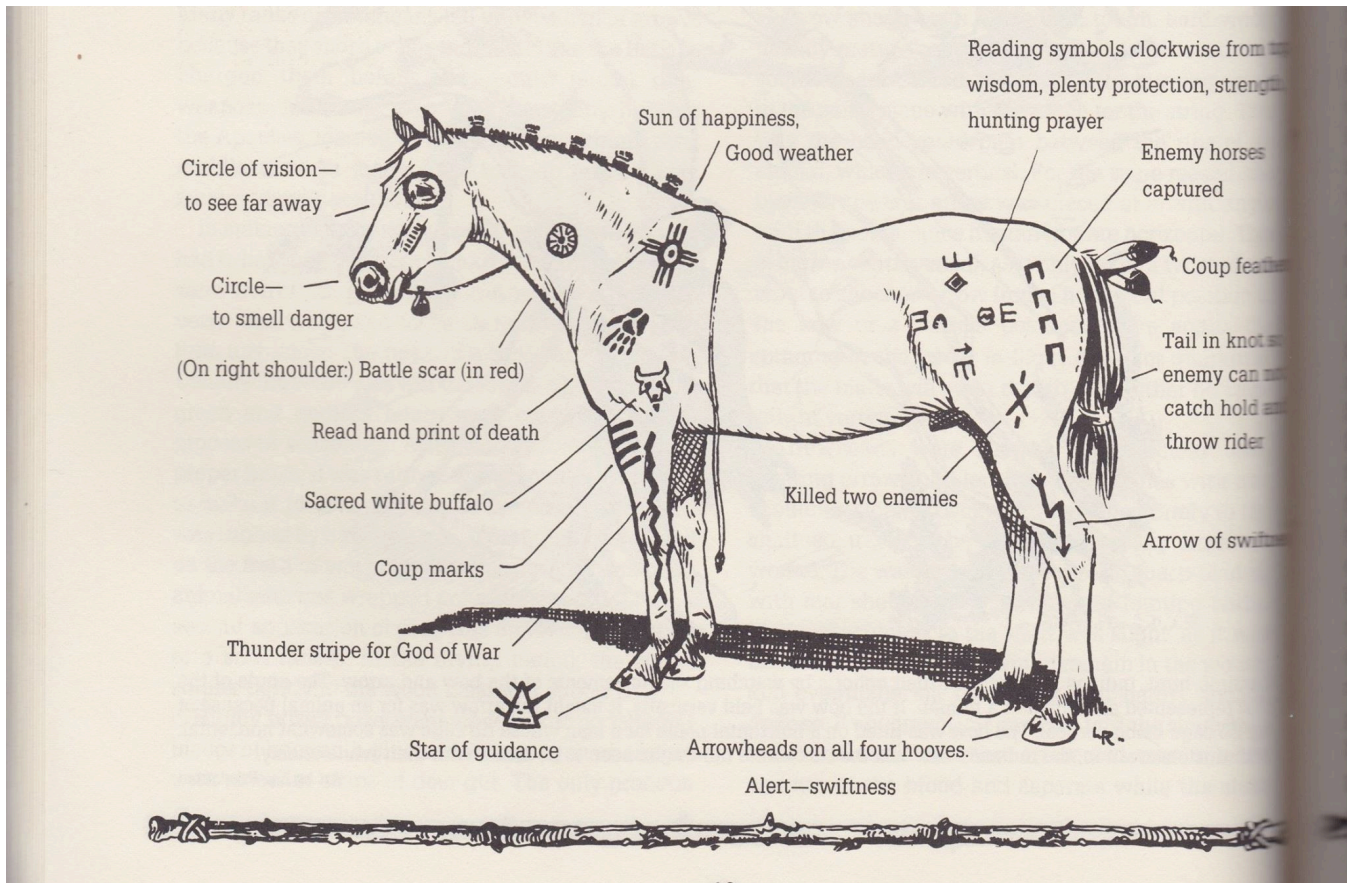
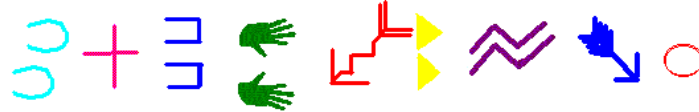
Color Meanings and Symbolism Chart		
Color	Color Meanings & Symbolism of Face Paint	Color Meanings & Symbolism of War Paint
Black	Victory and Success	Power, Aggression & Strength
Red	Faith, Beauty and Happiness	Blood, Violence & Energy
White	Sharing, Purity and Light	Mourning
Yellow / Orange	Intellect and Determination	Willing to fight to the Death
Green	Nature, Harmony and Healing	Endurance
Blue	Wisdom and Intuition	Confidence
Purple	A sacred color and symbolised power, mystery and magic	
Color	Color Meanings & Symbolism of Face Paint	Color Meanings & Symbolism of War Paint

How Did the Indians Get The Paint To Use On Their Horses

The Native Indians made Horse War Paint from the natural resources that were available to them to make different colored dyes and pigments including red clays, barks and berries, white clays and eggshells, black charcoal, yellow from flowers, plants and moss, blue from clays and duck manure and green from moss and algae. Paint in its simplest form, consists of ground up pigment suspended in some sort of liquid, or binder such as urine, spit, egg yolks, animal fat and blood. Native American prepared the paint which was then dried and stored as a powder. The paint powder was kept in deerskin pouches which could be carried with them.

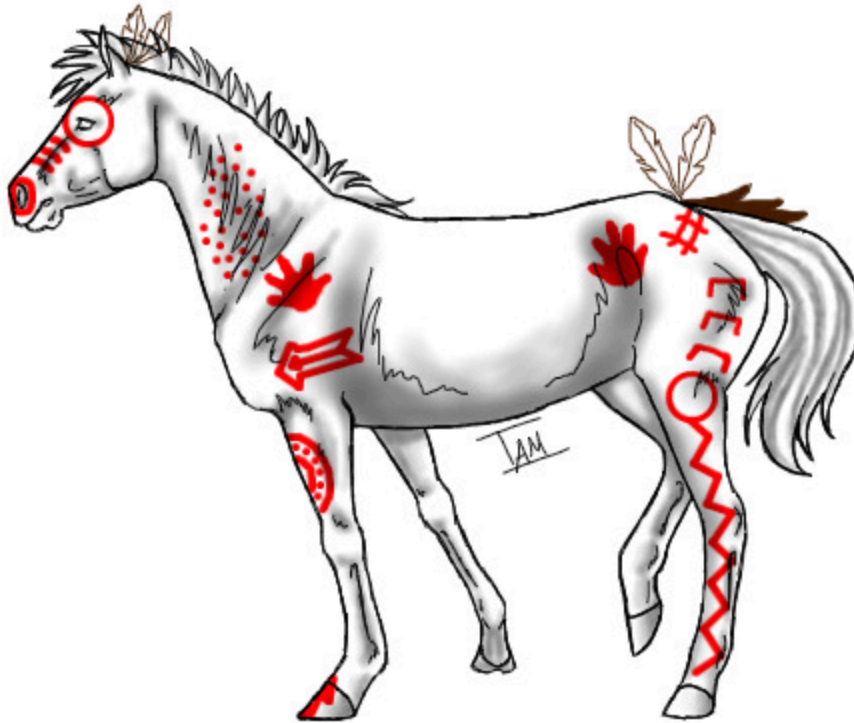
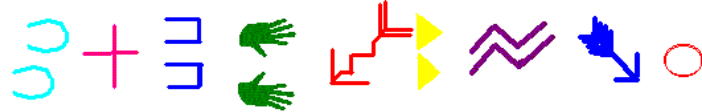
- Red-colored paint was made from clay containing iron oxides, roots, berries, beets
- Black was made from coal or charcoal
- White was made from clay, limestone, ground gypsum, eggshells, and seashells
- Yellow was made from the Bixa plant/annatto paste for a bright yellow or orange paint
- Green was made from moss, algae, flowers, or berries
- Blue was made from duck manure, clay, oxides, sunflower seeds, flowers
- Purple was produced from blueberries, coneflowers, and hibiscus





- Arrowheads on hooves = Alert, speed, agility
- Feathers on tail, prior injuries or Coup or overthrows
- Tail in knot so enemy can't grab and throw the horse or rider
- Hip, Horse hooves shows number of enemy horses captured or taken
- Hip, protection and hunting prayer
- Hip, Killed two enemies
- LR leg, arrow at joint for swiftness
- FL leg, lightning or thunder stripe for God of War
- FL leg, number of overthrown, or coup of other camps
- Shoulder, Sacred white buffalo
- Upside down hand, print of death
- Circle nose and eye, enhance smell and vision
- Neck round symbol could be protection of previous injury
- Symbol on high withers = Sun of happiness and good weather

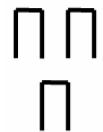


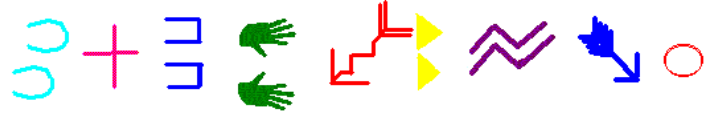


Explaining the Markings of the Above Horse



- Nostril ring: smell danger or enhancing the smell
- Stripes on nose: Count of war honors
- Eye ring: seeing danger or enhancing the Eye
- Feathers behind ear: Coup feathers
- Dots on neck: Pray for hail to fall on enemies
- Hand print on Shoulder: Message of the Death Oath of Vengeance
- Shoulder Arrow: Adds enhancing strength ←←
- Mark on front leg: Protecting a wound from other battles
- Arrow on Hoof: Speed or agility
- Hand on Flank: Missions Accomplished
- Lines on Back Leg: Medicine Symbol for Snake
- Feathers Above Tail: Many Wounds
- Cross Lines on hind quarters: Escaped Ambush
- 3 hoof-like markings on hind quarters: Captured Mounts

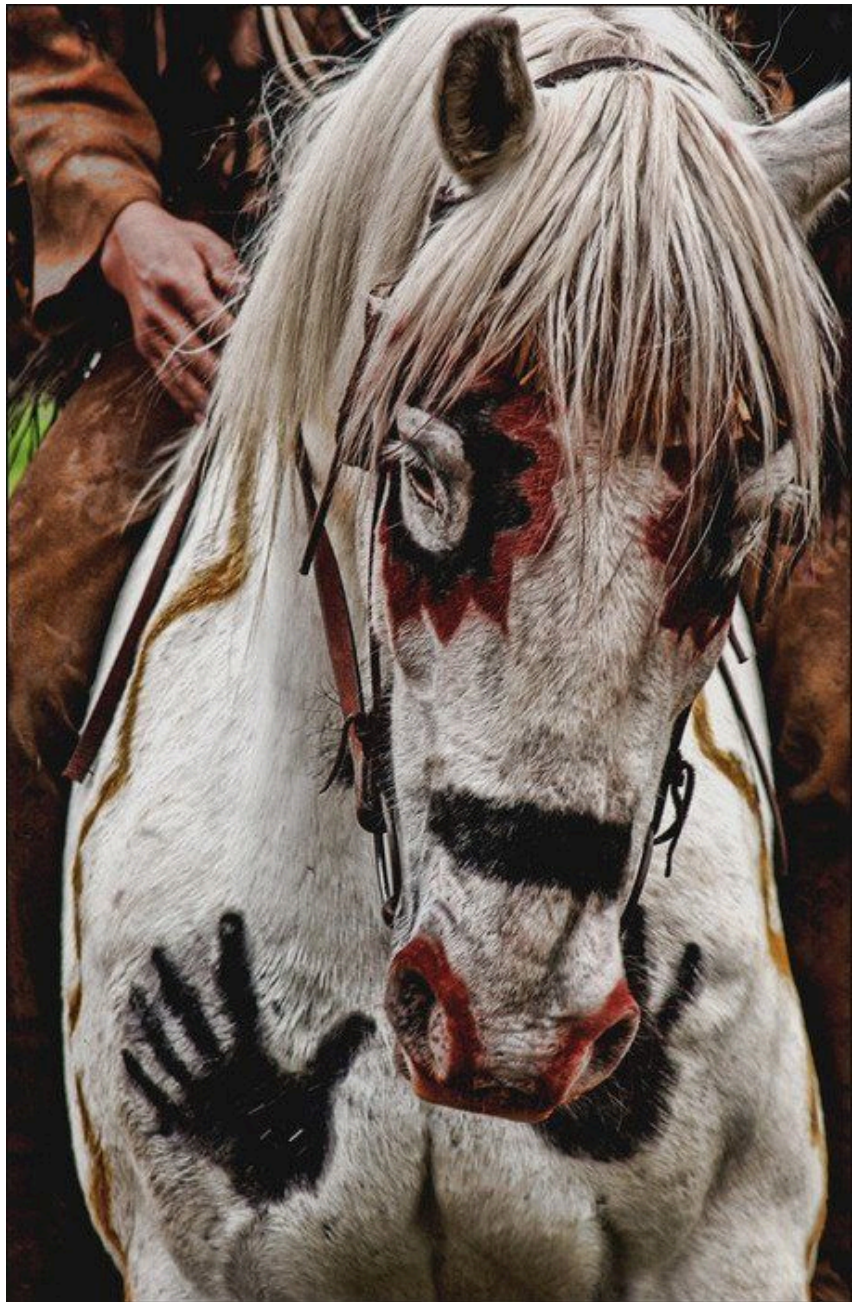


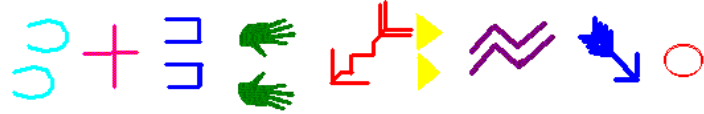


Circles around the eyes and nose for good sight and smell.


The hands on the chest show the horse has knocked down some enemy.

Bar across the nose show overthrown a camp or victory






Symbols of the Hunting Horse


The Sun of Happiness Indian symbol,  a most important symbol, was used to ensure blue skies. Indians never hunted during a rainstorm it considered unfair to the Great Spirit and the buffalo. The Circle of Vision Indian symbol was the symbol painted around the horse's eye to give keen sight and let him be the first to see the distant buffalo.



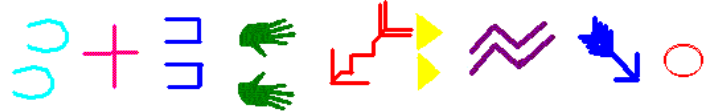
A Fence symbol  was placed on the horse's jaw to help ensure good luck.



The Sacred buffalo symbol was to show the Great Spirit that the hunter was thankful for his past kills.

Arrow of swiftness  symbol was painted on the horse's hips symbolizing past good hunting times. Buffalo Tracks were painted over the horse's hips symbolizing other good hunting times. An Arrow of Swiftness was painted on the horse's legs to give him speed to chase and catch the Buffalo.





A List of the Many Symbols Used By Many Different Tribes

- Arrow points in a line which brought victory
- Hail Stones were a prayer for hail to fall on the warrior's enemy
- The hoof print symbol is painted on the side of the horse. Every hoof print symbolizes each animal taken on a raid
- The Lightning symbol, long zig-zag lines symbolize lightning to add power and speed to the horse



- Fire arrows in a zig-zag fashion pointing downwards meant trouble for the enemy, which in turn became the strength of the warrior.
- Arrowheads on all four hooves made the horse swift and nimble-footed

- Fire Arrows



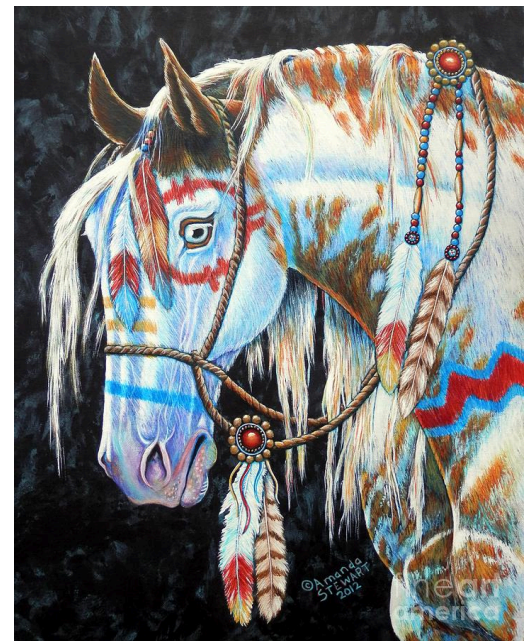
would cause

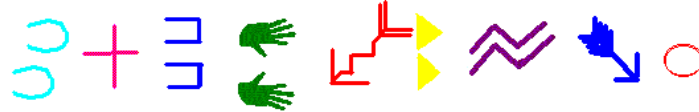
trouble for the enemy, which in turn would add strength to the warrior

- Two crossing bars meant that the horse and his rider had escaped ambush. Hoofprints were drawn on the horses and stood for the number of horses captured in raids



- The horse's Battle Scars (always painted red) and the Pat Hand Print (left hand drawn on the horse's right hip) were the highest honors
- The Pat Hand Print was always reserved exclusively for the horse who had brought his master back home from a dangerous mission unharmed





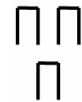
- For the men who would be going on a do-or-die mission, the Upside-down Hand print would be used. It was the most prized symbol a warrior could place on his horse



- Circle around the eye or nostril: Make the horse's senses stronger
- Lines across nose: Overthrowing a settlement

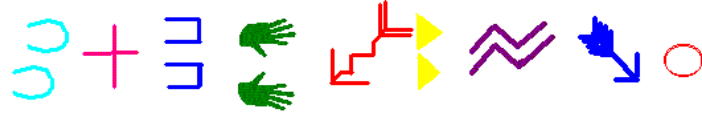
- Straight arrow: Symbol of victory
- Handprint: A mission carried out successfully. In red: Vow of vengeance against an enemy

- Zigzags Thunder stripes to please the god of war
- Circle with zigzag: Symbol of speed and stealth
- Square or rounded hoof prints meant successful horse-stealing raids
- Fire arrows: Bad luck on the enemy
- Crossed lines: Rider has escaped an ambush
- Eagle: Fight until safe
- Two triangles one on one against an enemy nose to nose, stand for war or campaign
- The red hand print stands for death of an enemy or stained hands from war; used by many different tribes



- Bars on the horse's neck means the number of war parties horse and rider have been in together
- Feather stands for 'Power.'
- Zig-Zag arrow means 'fast' or 'speed' to the horse
- 'Good Luck' hunting symbol Arrow pointing is a 'Hunt' symbol, meaning luck in finding big game
- Arrowhead (s) means 'Gift,' as given to another in friendship or love
- Broken arrow, a 'Peace,' symbol used when settling tribal disputes
- Animal head with horns, meaning 'Good Journey' usually in the hunt of big game or in search of a new home where game and wood are plentiful
- Eagle symbol, 'Flight to Safety' horse to carry rider safely to freedom
- Hand print in Red means the warrior died in the war. He would leave the blooded hand print on the horse's right shoulder for the people to know that he had died.





- 'Eyes' stands for Many Tribes, usually in war
- 'Sacred God' possibly from a vision quest
- A Medicine Bag could be weaved into the bridle and Coup Feathers were braided into the war horse's forelock and tail



A circle around the horse's eye and nostrils for alert vision and a keen sense of smell.



Arrow points in a line which brought victory.



Thunder stripes in the horse's front legs to

please the Indian's god of war.



Arrowheads on all four hooves made the horse swift and nimble-footed.



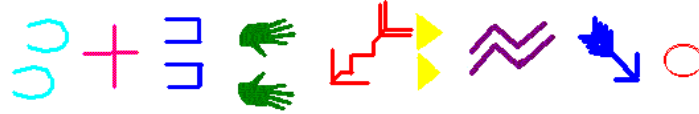
Fire Arrows would cause trouble for the enemy, which in turn would add strength to the warrior.



Right/left hand prints were outlined upon the horse's chest, which showed that he'd knocked down an enemy.

Hail Stones were a prayer for hail to fall on the warrior's enemy.





Two crossing bars meant that the horse and his rider had escaped ambush.



Hoofprints were drawn on the horses and stood for the number of horses captured in raids.



The horse's Battle Scars almost always painted red and the Pat Hand Print (left hand drawn on the horse's right hip) were the highest honors. The Hand Print was always reserved exclusively for the horse who had brought his master back home from a dangerous mission unharmed.

While preparing himself for battle, the Indian warrior would apply his personal honors on his war horse. The symbols he painted depicted enemies killed and ponies stolen.

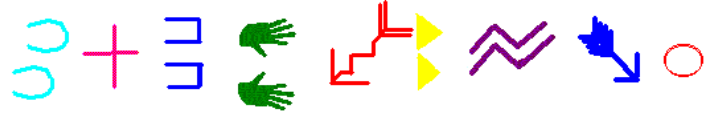


For the men who would be going on a do-or-die mission, the Upside-down Hand print would be used. It was the most prized symbol a warrior could place on his horse.



From the Apache and Comanche tribes, legends about this hand print tell of a furious battle in which a warrior was fatally wounded. Before the brave warrior's death, he patted his horse on the right shoulder, thus leaving a bloody hand print on his horse for all his people to see his "message of death" when the horse returned to camp alone.





When the Indian groomed his horse for battle, he would knot up the horse's tail to prevent the enemy from taking hold of it and using it to dismount him from his horse.

He would gather the mane into clusters, tying it to prevent entanglement in his bow and arrow during the combat

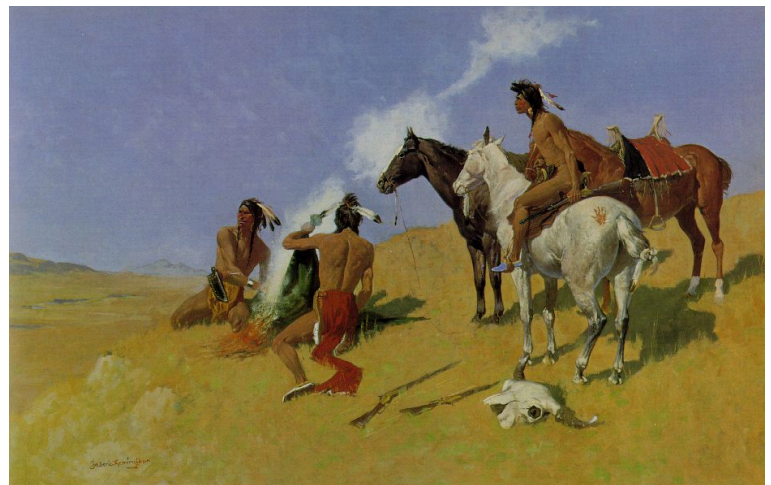


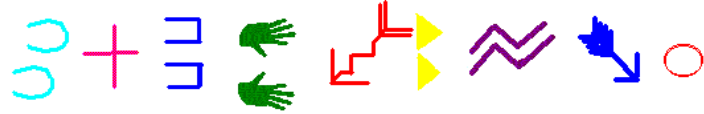
War Paint Is One Form Of Non-Verbal Communication

Horse War Paint is just one form of Non-verbal communication used by Native Americans.

The other types of non-verbal communication methods included:

- Smoke Signals
- Fire signals that were used at night
- War paint
- Native American Sign Language
- Mirrors sent messages over long distances using sunlight to direct the flashes
- Piles of stones could be used to convey messages or directions
- Picture messages on trees, skins, rocks using Native American Symbols





The Horse and the Native Americans

Many Native American tribes were introduced to the horse during the 1600s by Spanish explorers. There are many legends among the tribes that describe their first contact with the horse. My

personal favorite is 'The Sky Dogs.' Life changed drastically for the Indian with the *coming of the horse* to North America. The travois was used for many centuries by Native Americans. Dogs were the most common pack animal before the horse (even though tribes also used them for food), a whole new way of life opened up for them.

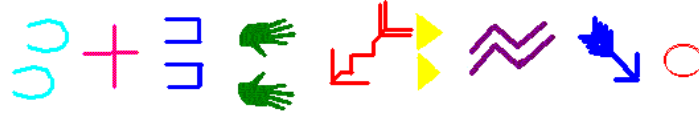


Moving from one home to another took much less time. From California to Missouri, Plains Indians began to put the horse to good

use in

hunting and in war. Some Nations excelled at raising some of the finest horses and ponies ever to grace our land. Among the most notable is the **Appaloosa** by the Nez Perce, in the Northwest. These horses were greatly prized for their unique color patterns and stamina. Another favorite was the **American Bashkir Curly**. Though not as flashy as the Appaloosa or Paint, this breed was greatly prized for its





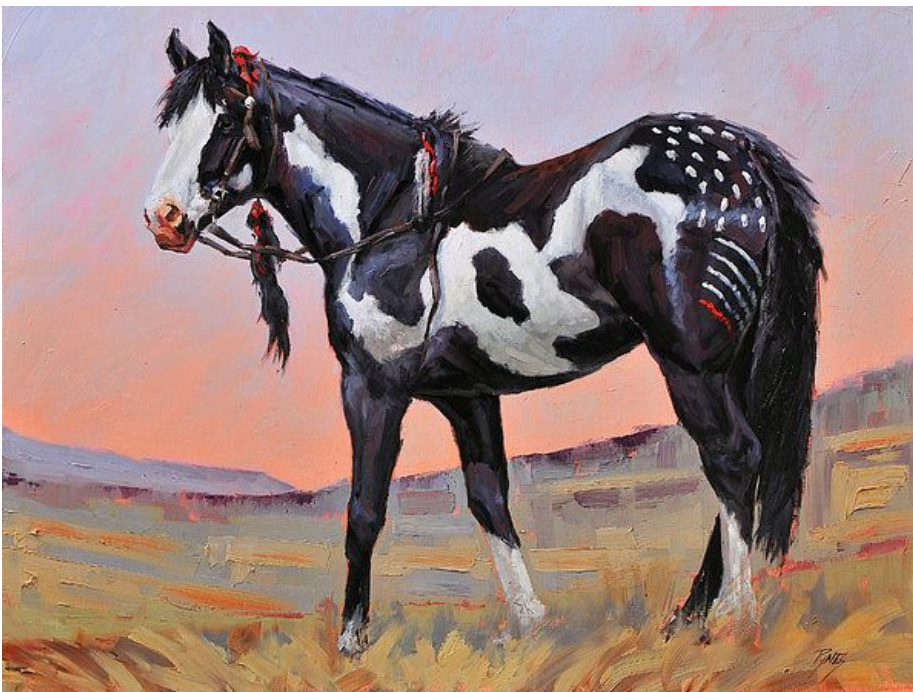
long, curly mane and tail hair, used in weaving warm clothing. This breed grew very long hair in winter months, shedding large amounts come spring. The brood mares, once foaled, provided large amounts of milk, enough for their owners as well as their foals - up to three gallons a day!

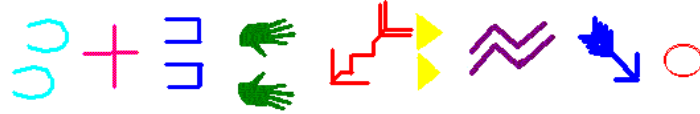
Today, the **American Bashkir Curly** is still considered a prize, not only to the Native Americans, but especially to people with allergies. This horse is known as the hypoallergenic breed, mainly due to the fact that dust and straw do not become entangled in its mane or tail, providing people with allergies a dust free horse to own.



The Native American Indian valued their horses and held them in the highest esteem. Going into battle was dangerous for both the Native American and his horse. It therefore made sense to apply war paint to their horses as well as themselves. The achievements of warriors were often reflected in the symbolic images of their war paint. The clothes, tepees and all of his belongings, including his war horse, was decorated with the symbolism of his achievements or his various spirit guides. Every element of War Paint on the face and body of an American Native Indian had meaning. As did the symbols that decorated his **Mustang horse** - Horse War Paint.

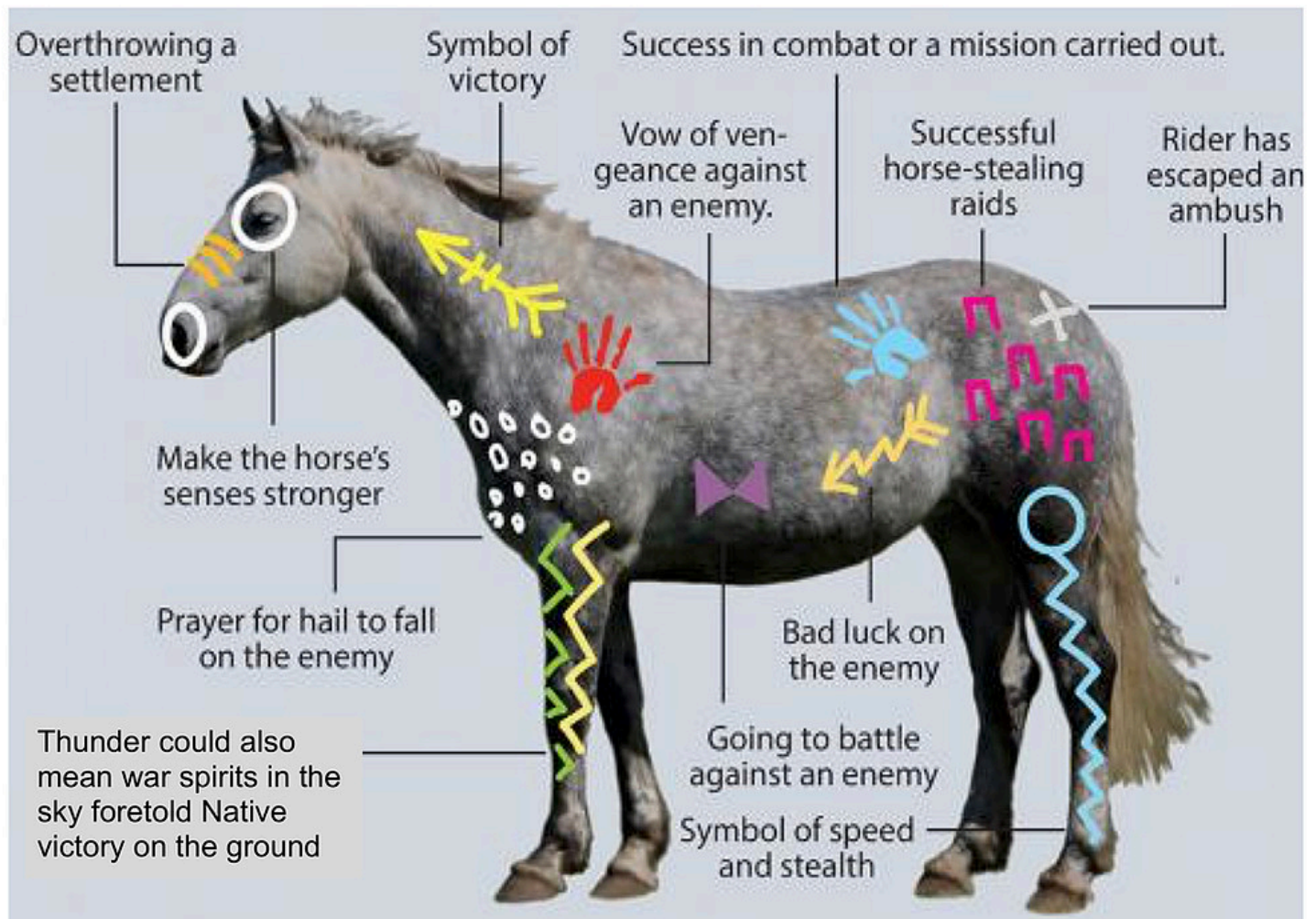
Though tribal tradition dictated how and why an Indian painted his horse, the color preference of the horse was left to the individual. Generally, a bay horse was thought by the Sioux Indian as too common, with more preference given to sorrels and roans. The roans they called "scorched." Most favored were **Pintos**, not only for their colorfulness, but for the advantage of natural camouflage. When an Indian didn't have one, he might paint his white or grey horse to resemble a pinto. The special name of "freckled rump" was given to another favored mount of the Indian, the Appaloosa,

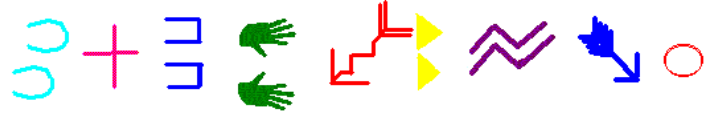




which is thought to have originated with the Nez Perce Indians. Though tribal tradition dictated how and why an Indian painted his horse, the color preference of the horse was left to the individual warrior.

When the Indian groomed his horse for battle, he would gather the mane into clusters, tying it to prevent entanglement in his bow and arrow during the combat.





The Significance Of Feathers

Different colored feathers have different meanings in different cultures. Black feather meaning is death and the spiritual realm. Red feathers are symbolic of fertility, life, and the physical world. A grey feather can generally be interpreted as **a sign of peace and tranquility**. Finding or seeing a grey feather on your path means a period of calmness and clarity is about to enter your life. Grey feathers often appear after a turbulent time as a symbol of hope and harmony.

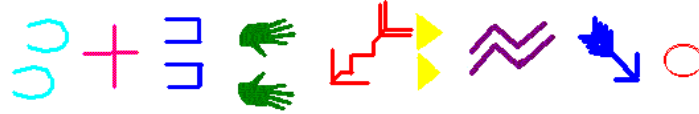


However, no feather falls without meaning. Each feather has special symbolic significance according to Native American culture; for example, hawk feathers symbolize **guardianship** while owl feathers symbolize wisdom.

It's a **symbol of acknowledgment**, that someone or something in the spirit world is looking out for you, keeping you safe and empowering you to whatever path you set upon. If you see a feather, your angel is near and they are reminding you that, with them, you are safe.

Cherokee natives, the eagle feather is **used for ceremonial, healing, and purification purposes to this day**. The practice used for these purposes is called Eagle Medicine (the goal is to achieve a certain mindset through diligence, understanding, awareness, and personal visions).





The only way an Indian can actually get one of these feathers is by doing a brave deed, like fighting off a bear or going up against the enemy. They were never allowed to wear the feather until they went in front of their tribal court and retold the story of their victory. It was at this time that they were allowed to put it in their headpiece. Only chieftains, warriors, and braves have ever been awarded this special gift. The next time you see eagle feathers in a [headdress](#), think about how they were earned.


Dances With Wolves Movie & Buffalo Scene

In the 1990 movie Dances with Wolves, it was commonly believed that Indians only painted their horses for battle, but they were also painted before buffalo hunts. Specific symbols were reserved for hunting to display a horse's past achievements, and bring protection and good luck to the horse and rider.

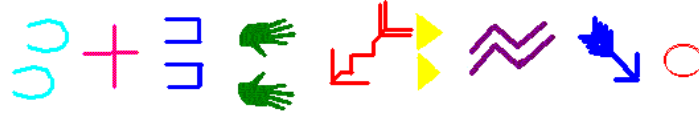
If you watch the character John Dunbar (Kevin Costner) riding with the Lakota warriors to a buffalo hunt, pay attention to the symbols painted on the horses.



On Dunbar's horse, named Cisco, there were zig-zag patterns painted on his legs. These symbols represented lightning bolts that gave honor to the lightning god and were believed to give the horse greater speed.

Kicking Bird's horse, the white horse, had a ring painted around its eye and blue patches with white dots on its shoulder and rump. The ring around the eye was meant to enhance the horse's vision while the blue with the dots represented the buffalo

tracks  in the ground, which indicated the horse had participated in successful buffalo hunts in the past.





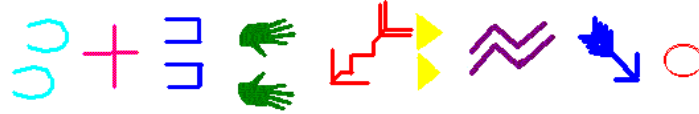
Wind in His Hair's horse, a dark bay, had horseshoes on its hind quarters and a hand print on its shoulder. The horseshoe symbols showed how many other horses this horse helped steal from rival tribes and European settlers. Other hunting symbols were a fence painted  on the jaw to keep the good luck from escaping from the mouth; a buffalo painted  on the shoulder gave thanks to the Great Spirit for past kills; yellow triangles on the hooves made the horse more sure-footed and nimble; and the sun was to wish for good weather as it was dishonorable to hunt during bad conditions.

Paint colors did have some meaning to individual tribes, such as red for the color of blood and blue for the color of wisdom, but individuals would use whatever colors were available at the time with no special meaning. Colors were usually made out of different colored soils, charcoal, and flowers; and then were mixed with something to help it stick, such as animal fat or urine.



Facts About The Hunt Scene In Dances with Wolves

- 3,500 real buffalo were used to film this scene while 20 wranglers guided the herd
- It took a full day to stampede the buffalo past the cameras over ten miles and then to round them up again, it took eight days to film
- 24 Indian actors rode bareback
- Kevin Costner was the actual one riding, not a stuntman, as his character.
- At one point, Costner fell off his horse during the stampede, but was not hurt.



A horse's Battle Scars (always painted red) and the Pat Hand Print (left hand drawn on the horse's right hip) were the highest honors. The Pat Hand Print was always reserved exclusively for the horse who had brought his master back home from a dangerous mission unharmed.

War Paint meanings varied from tribe to tribe. Some were marks of Distinction, Honor, achievements and success. For some it was spiritual and mental preparation. Medicine Men often chose certain

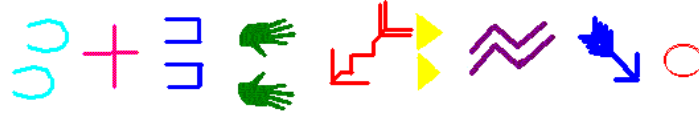


markings for warriors and believed that powerful magic was passed on during the application of the Horse War Paint, helping the warrior to believe himself and his horse were invincible. Some Warriors felt it gave them power and magical help. It was believed that the application of certain symbols and colors afforded the wearer with special powers for strength and protection, by drawing on these powers, and combining them with the power of the warrior and his horse, it would make them indestructible and more successful. Following a battle, a triumphant warrior might apply paint to his horse so the tribe could see at a glance the outcome of the battle from a distance.

Indian war horse symbolsThe horse's Battle Scars (always painted red) and the Pat Hand Print (left hand drawn on the horse's right hip) were the highest honors. The Pat Hand Print was always reserved exclusively for the horse who had brought his master back home from a dangerous mission unharmed.

While preparing himself for battle, the Indian warrior would apply his personal honors on his war horse. The symbols he painted depicted enemies killed and ponies stolen.

Example of a secret prayer symbol used on the hunting horse and after placing her hunter's symbols on the hunting horse, the woman would draw a "secret" prayer on the horse's hindquarters. This prayer was never explained prior to the hunt, and if her hunter came home



successful, she proudly would tell the meaning of her symbols. She would probably use this "lucky" prayer again and again.

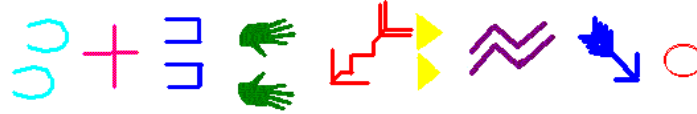
Should her hunter return unsuccessful, she would be humiliated because the prayer she had painted was the wrong one. Then the other women of the tribe gossiped about her and would say that she was of little help to her provider, which would add to her embarrassment.

The hunter would sometimes spank her for drawing a bad-luck prayer, but sometimes he would feel sorry for her and share in the disgrace. If the woman's hunter did the latter, he might explain that the prayer would bring double the luck to him on the next hunt.

Coup Feathers



The picture above represents feathers given to warriors Native tribes. These feathers are normally earned from different acts of courage displayed by the warrior in dangerous times of war and battle. **Feather 1:** Is a feather with a piece of horse hair tied to it, symbolizing a warrior's first coup. A Coup: is when a warrior gets close enough to the enemy to touch them and walk away without injuries. For this award, the act must be witnessed by a fellow warrior. This is one of the highest honors bestowed to a warrior. **Feather number 2:** Is a red colored feather (Blood Feather) achieved when a warrior has been injured in battle (Much like our Military of today get the "Purple Heart" award for injury during battle). **Feather number 3:** Is a feather with a notch cut into it symbolizing that the warrior took the scalp of his enemy. **Feather number 4:** Is a feather with a painted red dot, symbolizing the warrior has killed an enemy. **Feather number 5:** Is a feather sliced diagonally at the top, symbolizing that the warrior slit the throat of an enemy. **Feather number 6:** Is a feather with serrated edges, symbolizing a warrior has accomplished Four coups. **Feather number 7:** Is a feather with its upper sides cut off signifying a warrior completed Five coups. **Feather number 8:** Is a split feather, showing a warrior has been injured multiple times in battle. If a warrior is awarded numerous feathers from his Tribe's Council, he now has permission to create a headdress for himself. **Most feathers come from a falcon or hawk, but an Eagle Feather is the most sacred.** Native American culture involves being one with nature. Big birds like the Hawk, Falcon and Eagle are considered very special animals because they fly so high which puts them closest to the heavens and Gods.



In Summary:

Though the Indian no longer rides against enemies or chases the great buffalo, this unique way in which he expressed himself with symbols on his dearest possession, **his horse**, has often been captured on many contemporary art objects.

The Horse has been sacrificing and contributing to mankind since they met. No other animal had more significantly contributed to the advancement of man than The Horse.

Anyone who has sat on that special seat on a horse's back knows it is the greatest seat you can have. People who have experienced the joy and wonder of riding a horse would always choose to ride on a Mustang rather than ride in one.

More Varied Native American Symbols

Certain symbols were used by the tribes to communicate with other members. Below are just different symbols of Native Americans.

Secret messages were conveyed through symbols. Each symbol had its own significance. They were painted on an individual's clothes, tepees, and other belongings to mark various accomplishments and heroic achievements. Below are the different symbols with their meanings.



The Eye of the Medicine was a very powerful symbol that represented the Medicine man or Shaman. They were believed to have magical powers of spiritual healing, and also see the future. The outer lines of the symbol

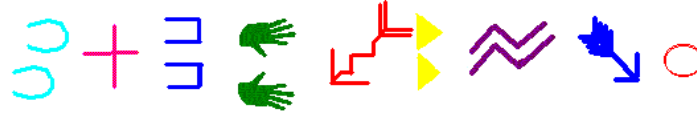


signified the four directions: North, South, East, and West.

The inner line signified the Spirit world, which the Medicine man was knowledgeable of, and the circle in the center signified the eye of the Medicine man and his spiritual vision.

Lightning was a common symbol that was seen painted on the face or across the forehead of almost all the warriors. It was believed that it brought power and speed to the wearer. A lightning and zig-zag symbol, if painted in red, also symbolized the Thunderbird. It was



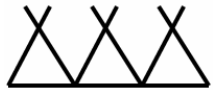


considered to be a powerful spirit, which flashed lightning from its beak and eyes.

Two arrows in opposite directions symbolized war. The decision of taking part in the war was completely voluntary, and the acceptance to go on one was made through public gestures.



Four Ages of Man signifies the four milestones i.e., four stages of a man's life. They were childhood, youth and adolescence, maturity in middle age, and wisdom in old age. It is mainly used by the tribes in Southwestern USA.



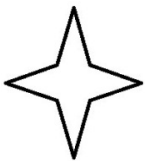
Indian Camp symbol It signified an Indian village that consisted of Tepees. Tepees are tent-like houses of the Native Indians. They were constructed from wood and animal skins. They were made in such a way that it was easy for them to set up and dismantle quickly.



The hand symbol meant that the warrior was successful in a hand-to-hand battle. It was painted on the faces or on the horses. It symbolized 'life' and was perceived to impart energy to the warrior.

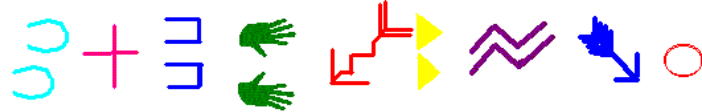


The homecoming symbol signified the return of a warrior. A number of ceremonies were held to welcome the brave warriors after the war was over. During festivals, homecoming dances were held for the warriors.

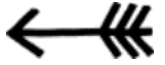
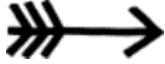


The culture of the Native Indians was highly influenced by rituals and different beliefs, which were depicted in their use of symbols like the star symbol. They were mainly used for the warrior's gallantry acts and other major events of his life.

The Native Indians considered their horses as highly valuable assets, and would often protect and honor the war horse by painting certain symbols on its body. They were made for the horse's protection and to indicate trouble and warnings, or in its affections.

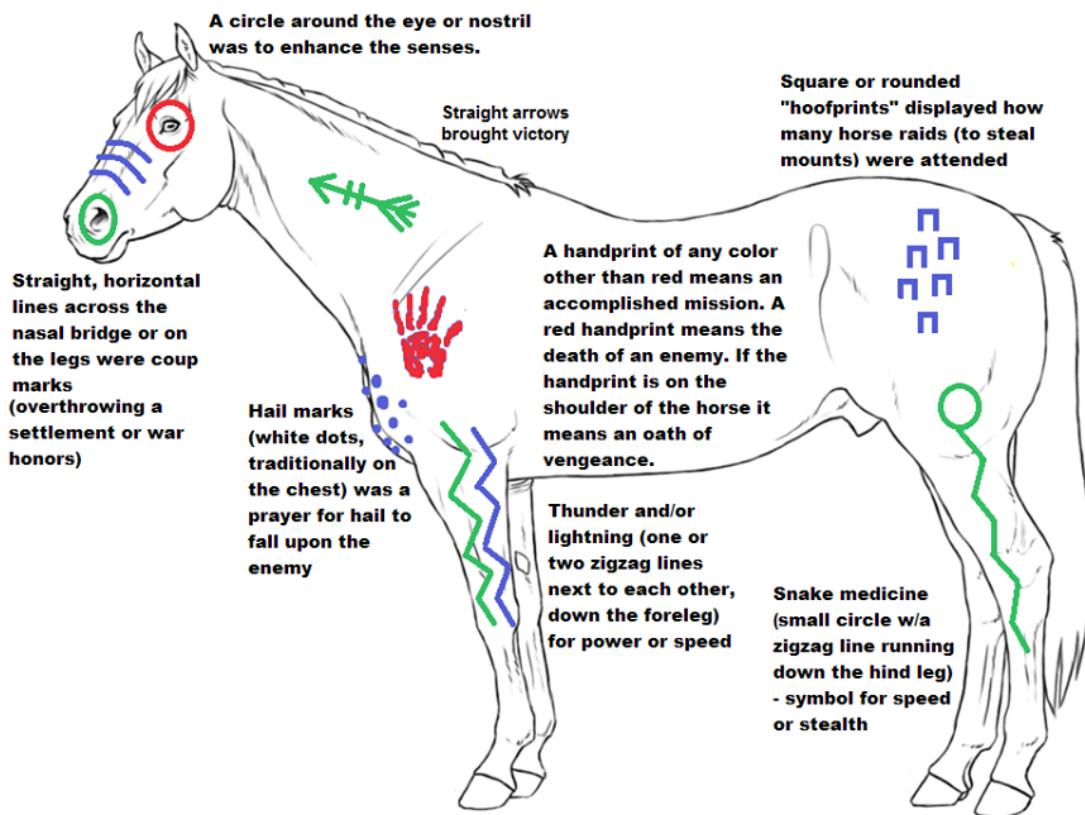


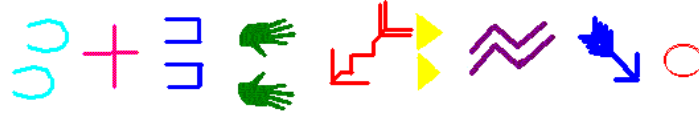
Arrowheads meant that the horse was swift and agile.



Two arrows facing different directions = War

TRADITIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN MARKING





Circles were painted around the horses' eyes and nostrils, as it was believed that it would enhance their sight and smell.



Straight Arrows were painted on in order to bring victory.



Thunder Stripes were painted on the horses' front legs to please the Indians' God Of War.



Fire Arrows meant trouble for the enemy, in turn, adding strength to the warrior.



Hail Stones were a prayer for hail to fall on the warriors' enemy.



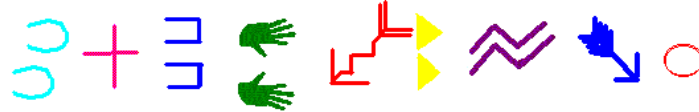
Two Crossing bars meant that the horse and warrior had escaped an ambush.



Hoof Prints were drawn and stood for the number of horses captured.

The Zigzag paint leading down a horses' hind leg stood for the snake, which was the symbol for medicine. Stripes painted on the horses' face stood for the number of battles the horse has fought in and won, otherwise known as War Honors. Different Handprints meant various things.

These symbols were painted in any color that could be found in the forest/plains. They would paint most of these symbols on their horses in hopes that it would bring luck and that they would win their battle.



NATIVE AMERICAN SYMBOLS



horse
journey



thunderbird
unlimited
happiness



lasso
captivity



butterfly
everlasting
life



eagle
feathers
chief



crossed
arrows
friendship



tepee
temporary
home



arrow
protection



shaman eye
wise, watchful



hogan
permanent
home



cactus flower
courtship



sun rays
constancy



big mountain
abundance



day & night
time



saddlebag
journey



rain clouds
good prospects



headdress
ceremonial
dance



man
human life



running water
constant life



morning star
guidance



deer track
plentiful game



4 ages
infancy, youth,
middle & old age



rain
plentiful crops



cactus
desert



rattlesnake jaw
strength



arrowhead
alertness



snake
defiance, wisdom



lightning arrow
swiftners



kokopelli
fertility and joy



sun symbol
happiness



gila monster
desert



house of
water



buffalo
sacred life,
abundance



broken arrow
peace



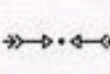
dead people
death



peace pipe
spiritual
ceremony



drum
the great spirit



facing arrows
warding off
evil spirits



buffalo skull
sacredness,
reverence for life



camp
indian village



campfire
temporary
overnight stop



turtle
perseverance,
long life



totem
a spirit-being,
symbol of a tribe



sky band
leading to
happiness



gecko
dream time



feather
courage, wisdom
and strength



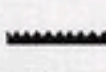
dream catcher
protection
from nightmares



eagle
honesty, truth
and power



bear
strength and
leadership



fence
guarding
good luck



cross
paths crossing



two arrows
war



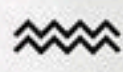
enclosure
ceremonial
dances



thunderbird
track
bright prospects



moon
guardian
of the Earth



mountain
range
destination



coyote tracks
coyotes



healing hand
protection



bird
care,
lighthearted



bow & arrow
hunting



spring
rebirth and
renewal



brothers
unity and equality



homecoming
return of
a warrior



many fish
a body of water
hoarding food



lightning
power, speed



dancer
celebration



dragonfly
renewal and
renewal



harmony
balance & peace



eight pointed
star
hope & guidance



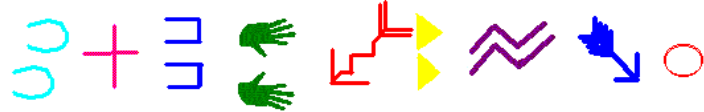
hummingbird
love & happiness



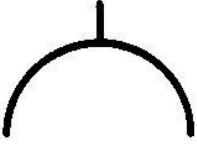


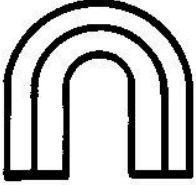
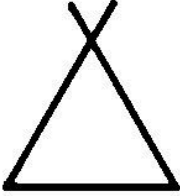



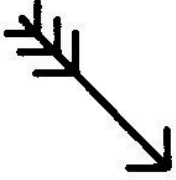
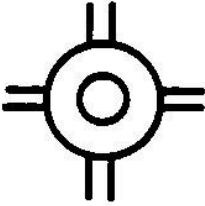

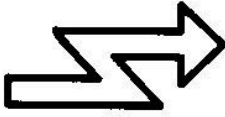
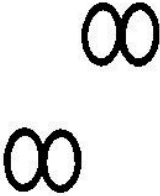
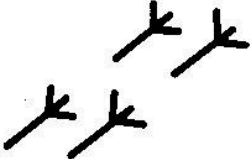

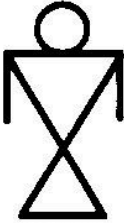

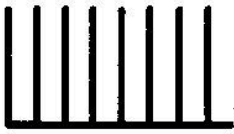
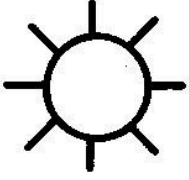
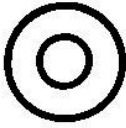




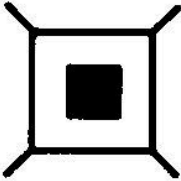
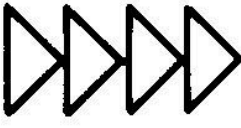
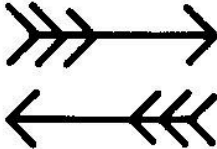



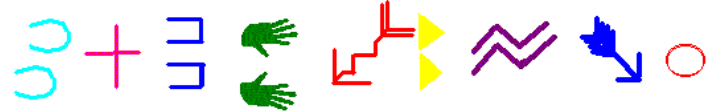
bear track
good omen



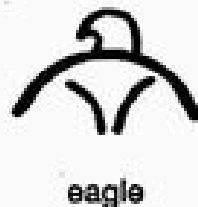
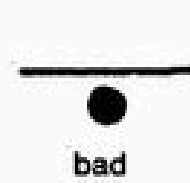
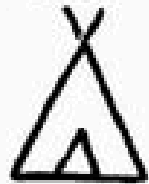
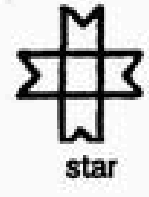
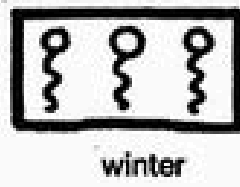
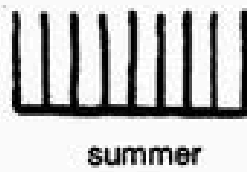
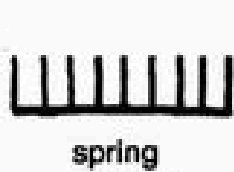
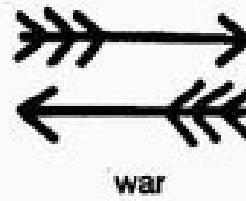
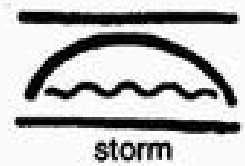
drying rack
plenty of meat

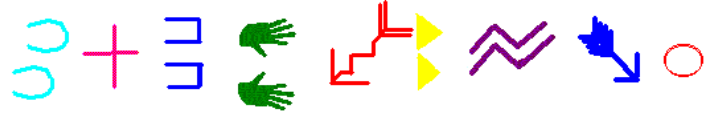


				
moon	morning	noon	evening	lightning
				
rainbow	teepee	blossom	rain	campfire
				
hunt	happy	spring	fast	deer
				
bird tracks	man	woman	river	summer
				
sun	sad	camp	horse tracks	mountain
				
friendship	good luck	good crops	war	bear



Picture Dictionary

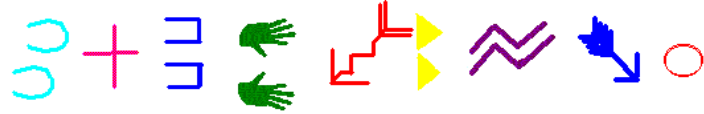




Student Name _____

Native American Pictographs

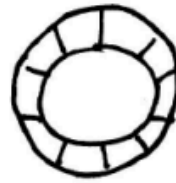
sad	happy	fast	good	much food
sun	moon	mountain	river	spring
summer	winter	Indian camp	campfire	many fish
bird tracks	trails crossing	storm	bear	horse
teepee	man	woman	hunt	friendship
peace	good luck	good crops	war	deer



MOON



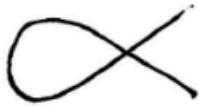
FIRE



SUN



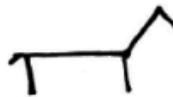
LIGHTNING



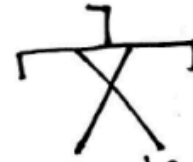
FISH



MOUNTAIN



HORSE



Eagle



RIVER



CAMP



SAD



HAPPY



WAR



RAIN



STAR



LAKE



TURTLE



BUFFALO



FEATHER



MANY
FISH

