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Article Summary: Crazy Horse surrendered in May of 1877. His surrender meant that the northern plains Indian wars had come to an end. For history, it was an epochal moment. For a people, it was a sad collapse of a proud way of life. This article presents the story of his historic surrender.

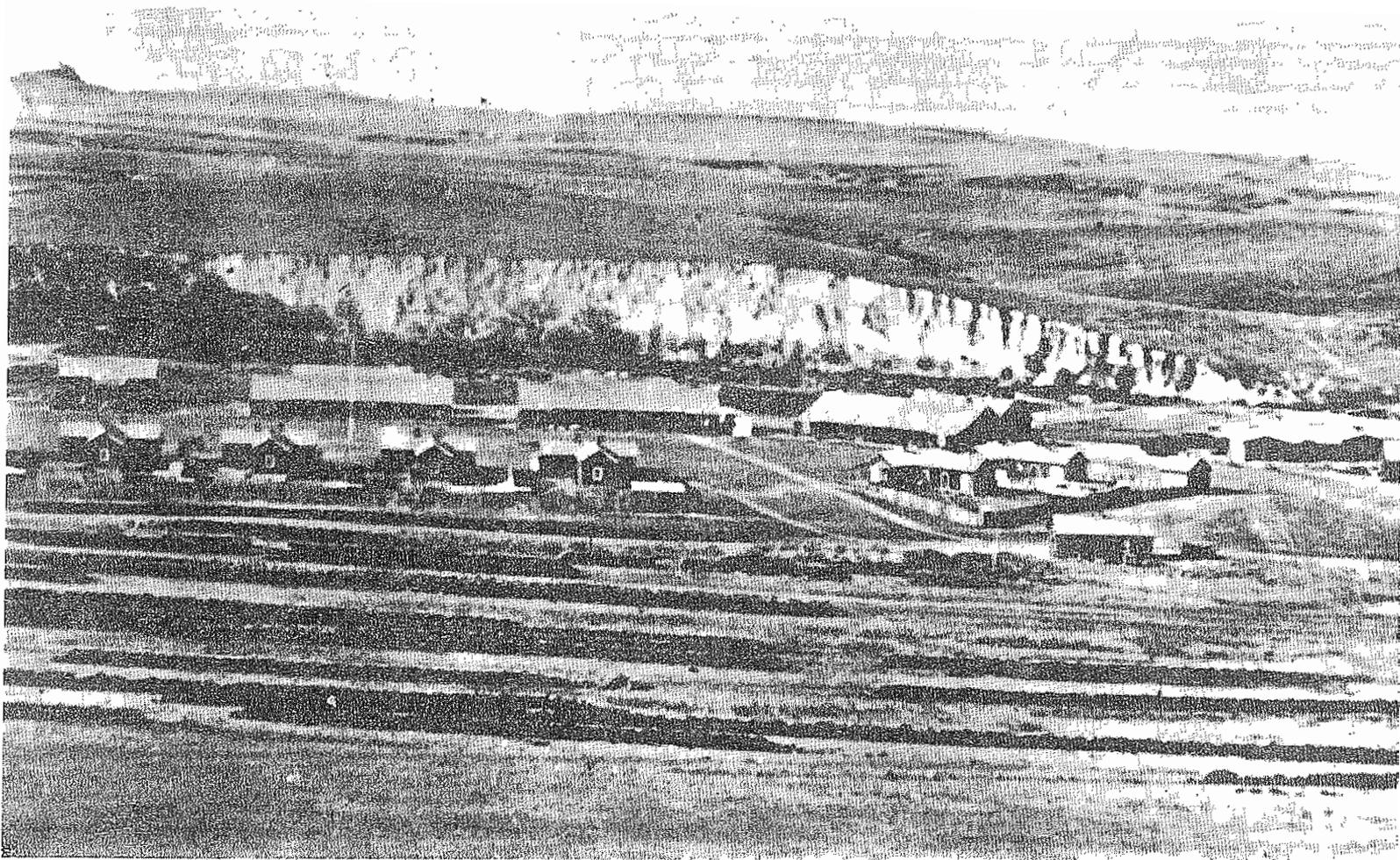
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Photographs / Images: Camp Sheridan; Pine Ridge Area, Nebraska, 1870's; Frank Grouard; John G Bourke; Adjutant's Office and Guardhouse, Fort Robinson reconstruction and same site in 1884; Little Wolf and William Philo Clark



Camp Sheridan was established in 1874 by Sioux Expedition troops on Big Beaver Creek about fourteen miles east of present Chadron. Spotted Tail Agency was nearby. Named for General Philip H. Sheridan, the camp was abandoned in 1881.

WAR OR PEACE: THE ANXIOUS WAIT FOR CRAZY HORSE

By OLIVER KNIGHT

In the early afternoon of a bright Sunday in May, 1877, a sullen Oglala riding a white horse led a peace-chanting cavalcade into the environs of Camp Robinson, Nebraska, there to surrender their arms, give up their ponies, and forfeit forever the sweet freedom of the grasslands. Until Crazy Horse* actually came into sight, however, there had been four months of anxious waiting, because his decision—more than that of any other one man—would determine whether there was to be peace or continued warfare on the Northern Plains.

Crazy Horse's surrender was an epochal moment in the history of the West. With the other large tribal groups having surrendered or found sanctuary north of the border, it removed from the field the last war leader whose "Hoka, hey!" could have been a magnet for the wild young men at the agencies. There would be scattered, small-scale fighting in the West after he capitulated—between then and the bleak winter days when Hotchkiss guns would drum the last death-song at Wounded Knee. But military leaders and others recognized his submission as signaling the end of massive Indian resistance on the North American continent.¹

Irony stripes their recognition of the moment, for military leaders had become aware of Crazy Horse's stature only in the few months preceding his surrender. Throughout the fighting of 1876, Sitting Bull had personified the northern Indians, "Crazy

*Crazy Horse means "His Horse Is Crazy" — or perhaps "foolish".

Horse" being just the name of another Indian.² Gradually, however, Brigadier General George Crook, commander of the Department of the Platte, had become aware of Crazy Horse's position and charisma. Perhaps the vector was Frank Grouard, the controversial plainsman of disputed ancestry (probably black and Indian) who had been Crook's only reliable guide through the then-unknown Sioux country during the summer of 1876. Grouard had lived in the camps of both Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse and in time betrayed both. By 1877 Crook and his staff knew Crazy Horse was their key opponent. Speaking for Crook, Lieutenant Walter S. Schuyler, one of his aides, would say later in the spring: "The chief fighting man is Crazy Horse, as a chief . . . Sitting Bull is looked upon more as a council chief."³

One of the holdouts who had sought to preserve the Sioux way and Sioux lands, Crazy Horse was an extraordinary man by the standards of any culture. Unlike most Indians, he possessed the genius of command. More, he was wrapped in a mystique that drew young warriors to his lance with eagerness and confidence, a mystique compounded of a selfless concern for his people, courage in battle beyond the call of Plains culture, and an almost secretive modesty. In the big camp on the Little Big Horn, the Oglala had made Crazy Horse a new kind of chief—a leader of warriors and wise father of his people.⁴

The son of an Oglala father and Brule mother (the sister of Chief Spotted Tail of the Brule), Crazy Horse was only in his mid-thirties when he stopped Crook at the Rosebud and eight days later led the warriors who wiped out Custer's immediate command, fanatically shouting to his warriors that it was a good day to die. After the thoroughly satisfactory fight with Custer on what they called Greasy Grass Creek, the Indians had "put the war back in the bag" for that summer, thinking the soldiers would have sense enough to do the same. Dismantling their huge collection of villages, the Sioux and Cheyenne had then broken into smaller groups, some scattering to favorite hunting grounds and some going to the Big Horns to cut new lodge poles.

But the soldiers surprised the Indians by not going back to their forts. The Army had been given control of all Sioux agencies. These included the Red Cloud (Oglala) and Spotted

Tail (Brule) Agencies, within forty-five miles of each other in northwestern Nebraska, policed by Camp Robinson and Camp Sheridan, respectively. Crook had deposed Red Cloud as chief of the Oglala in October, 1876, and installed Spotted Tail as chief of all Indians at both agencies. The exchange had no effect on the Oglala governing structure. Guided by five hundred Sioux scouts who enlisted at regular Army pay, Crook had then sent Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie against Dull Knife's major Cheyenne village on a branch of the Powder River in late November. Mackenzie had sacked the village, driving the Cheyenne into the winter snows as paupers. Simultaneously, Colonel Nelson A. Miles—operating in Brigadier General Alfred Terry's Department of Dakota—had remained in the Yellowstone country through the winter, fighting Sitting Bull in October and Crazy Horse in January and wearing down but routing neither.

Generals William T. Sherman and Philip H. Sheridan wanted Crook to strike again, but Crook persuaded Sheridan that the hostiles probably could be induced to surrender. Using Sioux as he had learned to use other Indians in the Pacific Northwest and Arizona, Crook sent spies into the hostile camps who came back with reports that the hostiles were willing to at least talk about surrender.⁵ They were low on ammunition, game was scarce, and the soldiers seemed to be everywhere. From his scouts Crook knew what he could realistically expect.

On the basis of that intelligence, Major Julius W. Mason, commanding Camp Robinson, sent thirty Sioux under Sword, a minor Oglala war leader, to the hostiles on January 16, 1877.⁶ Sword brought back information that showed the "backbone of the opposition had lost its former strength and that, if pushed vigorously in the spring, the enemy would gladly enough surrender."⁷ From them and other Indians, Crook's officers learned that the hostiles would accept Spotted Tail as a negotiator.⁸

With that, Crook left Cheyenne, where he had been attending the court-martial of Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds,⁹ and arrived at Red Cloud Agency on January 29, accompanied by one of his aides, Lieutenant Walter S. Schuyler; Colonel Thaddeus H. Stanton, departmental paymaster; and Robert E. Strahorn, a *Chicago Tribune* correspondent who remained in the field with Crook's forces from March 1876 until May 1877. He also called

in another aide from departmental headquarters in Omaha—Lieutenant John G. Bourke, a slender man of 30, heavily mustached, eight years out of West Point.¹⁰

The first order of business at Red Cloud Agency was to pay the Sioux and Cheyenne scouts. Their payday overjoyed the scouts, some of whom said they would now trust the government, “because it has at last carried out *one* promise with them.”¹¹ It did not matter whether a man was paid the right amount so long as it was in one-dollar bills or smaller currency. With their new-found wealth the Indians bought whatever caught their fancy at the trader’s. One warrior groomed himself in a lady’s kid gloves and another in a lady’s straw hat. Crook let that go on for a time and then quietly passed the word to the headmen that money was to be spent carefully.¹²

What the Army would not tolerate at the agency were the “harpies and vultures.” Payday attracted “gamblers, whores and horse-thieves,” whom Major Daniel W. Burke, post commander, arrested and confined in the guardhouse, keeping it full until he was ready to escort the lot to the boundary of the agency.¹³

On February 7 Crook, accompanied by key officers — Lieut. William P. Clark, chief of scouts at both agencies; Stanton; Major George M. Randall, who had been his chief of scouts the previous summer; and Strahorn — moved the short distance to Camp Sheridan to begin dickering with Spotted Tail.

Spotted Tail, designated by some as “probably the greatest Sioux chief of his period,” was a hard bargainer with a strong and supple mind. For nearly twenty years he had been a peace advocate but never an Indian “Uncle Tom.” Resourceful in negotiation, he had dealt with Presidents, cabinet officers, and generals, often getting the better of the bargain for his people. His agency was where it was because he had simply refused to accept a move to the Missouri River dictated by the Indian Bureau.¹⁴

Now he was telling Crook what he wanted before he would travel hundreds of miles through snow to talk with his Oglala nephew, Crazy Horse, and the other hostiles. He insisted that Crook personally state liberal surrender terms, permit him to take a large body of warriors (a small escort would not have commanded respect in a warriors’ camp; besides many men could carry more presents), and supply him with ammunition,

food, and supplies. As his most important point, he wanted Crook's assurance that the general would help get the hostiles an agency of their own and in their own country.¹⁵

In three days of negotiation, Crook agreed to those terms but laid down the government's fundamental requirement for the surrender of arms, ponies, and ammunition. However, Crook also promised amnesty for acts of the past.¹⁶

Having struck the bargain, Spotted Tail left about February 10 with approximately two hundred warriors and two interpreters who could send back written messages if necessary—Jose (Joe) Merivale, a Mexican-American from New Mexico, and F. C. Boucher. He promised to send immediate word by courier to Deadwood, Cantonment Reno, or Camp Sheridan, depending on where he found Crazy Horse's camp.

To receive the couriers, Crook sent Randall to Cantonment Reno (later Fort McKinney, Wyoming) and three companies of cavalry to the Black Hills under Captain Peter D. Vroom; the cavalry would also protect the citizens of the Hills against Indian raiders. Crook and his staff then left for the more commodious Fort Laramie on February 11.¹⁷

Thus, in a V-shaped ring around the south of Crazy Horse's country, three eye-witnesses took station and left records through which one can sense the milieu and detect the tangled web of human relationships that enwrapped the surrender of Crazy Horse. Strahorn went to Cantonment Reno with Randall. In the Black Hills the *Chicago Times* had L. F. Whitbeck. At Fort Laramie, Bourke added to the diary which is a rich—and under-used—depository of social observation.¹⁸ The Black Hills proved to be the liveliest area. Lieutenant Joseph F. Cummings—less than a year out of West Point—conducted a five-day campaign (February 21-26) in which his company destroyed a village of ten lodges (the Indians got away) and recovered 624 head of stolen livestock.¹⁹

If a green shavetail could do that much, the frontiersmen expected miracles from the older and more experienced Vroom, who arrived later. But Vroom disappointed them in not taking the field. Actually, his orders placed him in a tenuous position. His written orders directed him to protect citizens and property in Deadwood, but oral orders restrained him from offensive operations while Spotted Tail was in the field. His inactivity

caused civilians to come into camp almost daily, in groups of from three to a dozen, complaining to him and threatening to go higher. But Whitbeck noted sarcastically that those "first-class lingerers and nuisances" all had ranches that would be ideal for a military post, and, just by chance, also had hay, beef or something else for sale to the Army.²⁰ Otherwise, camp life, graced by one woman, was tranquil. She was Mrs. Valentine T. O. McGillicuddy, wife of the surgeon. "When the troops are on the march she rides her handsome bay at the head of the column," a writer from the *Chicago Times* observed.²¹

The civilian tension showed in a dispatch from a citizen signing himself "Deadwood," who said, "We are all looking anxiously to see what may come of Spotted Tail's mission."²² At the same time, though, Whitbeck reported that there had been "considerable talk in Deadwood and vicinity" about attacking Spotted Tail if he came there. Although inclined to dismiss the talk as "chaff," he said Vroom was under orders to escort the Indians safely through Deadwood, "and should any riotous conduct manifest itself among the citizens, they and not the troops will be the sufferers."²³

By contrast Randall and Strahorn found life dreary when they reached Cantonment Reno on February 19. However, there was a sense of expectancy. A writer signing himself "Wyoming"—probably an officer, many of whom moonlighted as free-lance correspondents—said: "Events are transpiring that will in the course of a month lead to a renewal of hostilities or result in the establishment of peace. . . . We are awaiting the issue with considerable anxiety, as probably the fate of this cantonment depends upon the result." Strahorn likewise reported that the men were "at the very top-notch of anxiety to have the matter decided."²⁴

Actually, any kind of change would have been welcomed just to crack the boredom. Commanded by Major Edwin Pollock, the 150 infantrymen, in a post composed of thirty log and mud huts, had a "don't care and slip-shod" attitude. The monotony of their routine was varied only by a mail rider once or twice a month and an occasional supply train. They whiled away their snow-bound hours reading month-old newspapers and playing chess or whist. The loneliness can only be imagined for the one woman there, the wife of Major Samuel P. Ferris.²⁵

Time dragged just as heavily for fifty or so hunters, trappers,

and miners who lived in dugouts in the banks of the Powder River until the weather—and the Indian question—would permit them to enter the Big Horns. All the civilians were broke, but some were making a little money by building a bridge across the Powder for the post trader, who took it upon himself to build it when the Army did not provide for it.²⁶

The general mood of the troops at Reno can be sensed by "Wyoming's" morose remark: "This unvaried monotony month after month, becoming worse and worse until it verges into utter stagnation, is that which more than anything else . . . tries men's souls and we sincerely trust that soon Crazy Horse will appear or that orders from Gen. Crook will give us relief."²⁷

At Fort Laramie life was pleasant and lazy for Bourke. After breakfast he and other staff officers listened to the band, inspected the stables, and then took care of any correspondence that had arrived the evening before. After lunch they read what they could find in the company libraries, including Macaulay, Prescott, Burke, and Thackeray. "Living on the frontier," Bourke said, "an Army officer's changes of literary treasures are so slight that he must cheerfully embrace whatever opportunities come within his reach without waiting for a selection."²⁸

In common with many other army officers from the colonial period on, Bourke disliked "borderers" of any stripe, especially those he found at three "ranches" within three miles of the fort—Cooney's, Ecoffey's and Wright's—which were combination gin-mills and whorehouses. "In all my experience, I have never seen a lower, more beastly set of people of both sexes." Earlier he had written that the Black Hills, like all new communities, had become "a resort for the vilest and most unprincipled outlaws" and horsethieves who preyed on agency Indians. Later he would record that Vroom had been relieved of eighteen mules by the Black Hills citizens whom he had been sent to protect.²⁹

Suddenly, the suspense was broken on April 4 when a courier from Lieutenant Jesse M. Lee, agent at Spotted Tail Agency, arrived at Fort Laramie. He reported that Spotted Tail had succeeded and was then on the Belle Fourche with 1,600 Indians. On the same date Vroom telegraphed the same news brought in by Merivale. Crook did not react until the next day; Whitbeck from the Black Hills said Crook had been off on a



Half-breed scout Frank Grouard (left) served as General George Crook's interpreter. Lieutenant John G. Bourke (right), a West Pointer, arrived at Red Cloud Agency in 1877. He became an authority on Indian culture.

fishing trip when the news arrived (maybe a telegraph operator gossiped). Calling in Randall and Vroom, Crook centered his people at Camp Robinson—which also was headquarters for Mackenzie's District of the Black Hills—where he arrived with his staff on April 11.³⁰

In the interim Spotted Tail had indeed helped to end the war, but there was more to Spotted Tail's mission than met the eye. En route he had persuaded about 1,000 Sans Arc and Minneconju as well as smaller bands, to surrender. He then sent a runner to Crazy Horse's camp on Otter Creek.³¹

As it happened, the Oglala and Cheyenne in Crazy Horse's camp were just then on the verge of surrendering to Miles, who was trying hard to become Caesar of the Great North. From his Tongue River Cantonment, Miles had established contact with Crazy Horse's people—sharply divided into war and peace factions—through his interpreter, John (Big Leggin) Brughiere, and some Cheyenne captives. Reassured by the captives, the Oglala and Cheyenne had accepted Miles' demand for “unconditional surrender.” With criers having gone through the

villages to announce that the war was over, the band had marched two days until Spotted Tail's runner intercepted them on Otter Creek. They halted there until Spotted Tail could tell them more.³²

There then ensued a literal tug-of-war between Spotted Tail and Miles, a ravenous glory-hunter who ached to have them surrender to him, notwithstanding his overly frequent protestations (three times in one short report) that he did not care whether they surrendered at the Tongue or at the agencies.³³

Having heard Spotted Tail's blandishments, sixteen chiefs led a delegation to Miles on March 18 to see whether he would modify his terms. Having almost had his quarry, Miles was plainly angry at being frustrated by Spotted Tail. His commander, General Terry, later shared that indignation, referring to Spotted Tail's mission as an "untoward interference with Colonel Miles' plans."³⁴

In both private and official letters, Miles said Spotted Tail had brought ammunition to the hostiles and promised them more at the agencies, but quickly disavowed any implication that Crook had sanctioned it. Actually, Crook's officer might have looked the other way when the warriors had packed their ponies, because Spotted Tail had insisted on taking ammunition. Miles also accused Spotted Tail of offering "liberal terms," as though Crook had deliberately plotted to out-bargain him.³⁵

In spite of his delusions and accusations, Miles undoubtedly was right in part, for evidence from two sources indicates that Spotted Tail played fast and loose with Crook's conditions. From the Black Hills, where Merivale had gone, Whitbeck wrote that Spotted Tail had told the hostiles they would have to give up only the arms captured in the Custer fight. Stronger evidence comes from Bourke. When the Minneconju and Sans Arc reached Spotted Tail Agency on April 14, he noted, "General Crook was very indignant with 'Spotted Tail' for endeavoring to save the Minneconju and Sans Arc from turning in their arms."³⁶ In view of Spotted Tail's record of gaining his point with other white men, it is not too much to conjecture that he gambled on Crook's compromising once the birds were in hand.

It is also apparent that Spotted Tail told the Sioux they would have their own agency, making the most of Crook's promise to use his influence to that end.

On the other hand, there is evidence that Miles dealt under the table. Rabidly jealous of Crook—whom he accused of having been a failure in the Civil War and ever since—Miles frothed at the thought of Crook getting credit for “bagging” several thousand Indians when he thought he alone was responsible for their capitulation. As warriors came in from Crazy Horse’s camp from time to time before the surrender, they told Clark that Miles had told them they would have to give up only their old ponies and their old guns. He could then report they had surrendered arms and ponies, while in reality they would keep their good ones. They said Miles also told them they would be treated badly if they surrendered to Crook.³⁷

In the course of events, Spotted Tail conferred with the hostiles in a general council on the Powder River, but did not talk with Crazy Horse personally. Not wanting to talk peace with his uncle, Crazy Horse went off alone. In his absence his father assured Spotted Tail they would accept Crook’s terms. Later some of them persuaded Crazy Horse to come along.³⁸

Almost all the Sioux chose to go the agencies, but the Cheyenne decided to let each headman take his band where he would.³⁹ It would appear only natural that most of the Indians, then numbering well over one thousand, would have chosen the agencies, knowing they would find food and supplies there. They had seen that Miles had nothing for them in his scrawny outpost of log huts, where even his horses and mules were going hungry. Moreover, there was Crook’s amnesty against Miles’ unconditional surrender (if the latter still obtained). Ultimately, only about three hundred Cheyenne surrendered to Miles. When he told them they could plant gardens to provide their own food, White Bull announced he would grow raisins because that was the best food the white man had.⁴⁰

Not yet aware of what had thus transpired in the north, Crook arrived at Camp Robinson on April 11. He faced a situation in which the hostiles reputedly had agreed to surrender, yet the grass was beginning to green—the prelude to the war season. He had to know precisely what Crazy Horse intended to do.

To find out, he authorized the Red Cloud mission, of obscure and somewhat contradictory origin. One version—oral testimony thirty years after the event—has it that Clark, as chief of

scouts, bribed Red Cloud with the promise that he would use his influence with Crook to have Red Cloud reinstated as chief.⁴¹ At the time, however, Bourke wrote that Crook had told Red Cloud that he was preparing to take the field immediately, to which Red Cloud responded by asking permission to go to Crazy Horse as a peace emissary. Crook replied he could go if he wished, but not as Crook's representative. If he went, he was to tell Crazy Horse that "every day his surrender was deferred was one day closer to the moment" when troops would seek out and kill his warriors wherever found.⁴² Schuyler reinforced the Bourke version soon afterward, saying Crook had sent Red Cloud as an envoy to determine whether Crazy Horse wanted to surrender or fight it out. "Gen. Crook sent word to the Indians that he didn't care much, but he simply wanted to know what Crazy Horse intended to do."⁴³ The versions can be synchronized if one theorizes that Crook wanted Red Cloud to use his influence with the Oglala, and had Clark prime Red Cloud to ask permission, thus saving Crook from asking a favor of the man he had deposed as chief of Oglala.

However it might have been arranged, Red Cloud was on his way almost overnight. With seventy warriors and a mixed-blood who could write messages for him, Red Cloud left on April 12 or 13, promising to send back periodic reports.⁴⁴

Thus juggling several problems at once, Crook spent nineteen days at the agencies, simultaneously preparing to take the field against Crazy Horse if necessary and receiving the surrender of about two thousand Sioux and Cheyenne. Small groups had been straggling in during the preceding several weeks, including some Cheyenne under Little Wolf who said his nearly naked and starving people had walked the entire distance from the Tongue to Red Cloud Agency, struggling through knee-deep snow between the Tongue and Belle Fourche.⁴⁵

Having travelled the forty-five miles to Camp Sheridan on April 12, Crook received the first large contingent of former hostiles on April 14—the one thousand Minneconju and Sans Arc. After first obtaining permission, about three hundred warriors swooped into Spotted Tail Agency, whooping and firing. About an hour later thirty headmen rode in line onto the parade ground of Camp Sheridan, wheeled to the left to face Crook and surrendered in a handshaking ceremony. As their

people ascended a hill to a campsite about a mile away, Bourke said, they looked "for all the world like a swarm of black ants."⁴⁶

Moving back to Camp Robinson, Crook received the surrender of about five hundred Cheyenne under Dull Knife and Standing Elk on April 21. Reduced to destitution by Mackenzie's attack in November, the Cheyenne lived in lodges covered with bits of canvas, hide, rags and gunny sacks. Without utensils of any kind, the women carried water in skin bags. The regular arrival of smaller groups at both agencies made surrenders a matter of common occurrence, gradually swelling the total number of surrendered Indians.⁴⁷

Crook conducted two conferences with the newcomers—a most important one with the Sioux at Spotted Tail Agency on April 15, and a perfunctory one with the Cheyenne at Red Cloud on April 22. Along with several pleas for justice and fair play, Spotted Tail made a strong bid for giving the Sans Arc and Minneconju "a country they could call their own."⁴⁸

In responding to Spotted Tail, Crook said something about a reservation that could have been misconstrued all around. Both Bourke and a *Chicago Times* reporter used long quotations in recording both sides of the conferences, agreeing on essentials but differing in minor points of wording, except for one passage. Where Bourke quoted Crook as saying officials in Washington would "do anything in reason" if all the Indians came in, the *Chicago Times* man heard him say, "If I ask the great father to do anything for you, he will do it."⁴⁹ The *Times* quotation has more the ring of a council statement than Bourke's.

Two days after that statement appeared in Chicago (the headquarters of Sheridan's Military Division of the Missouri), one of Sheridan's aides—Major General George A. Forsyth—arrived at Camp Robinson to talk about that reservation, for the Indian Bureau wanted to move the Sioux to the Missouri River. Implying that Crook had carried his point, Bourke wrote confidently that the reservation for the Sioux, Arapahoe, and Northern Cheyenne would be in southeastern Montana. He defined an area bounded by the 104th meridian (two minutes east of the present eastern boundary of Montana), the 46th parallel, the Little Big Horn (the 46th parallel does not intersect the Little Big Horn, but he can be forgiven since the area had



In April of 1877, Little Wolf surrendered his band of starving Cheyenne to General Crook at Red Cloud Agency. Ill-clad, they had marched in from South Dakota. Standing is Lieutenant William Philo Clark, to whom Crazy Horse surrendered at Camp Robinson in May, 1877.

not been surveyed) and Big Horn to the Yellowstone, the Yellowstone to the mouth of the Powder, and a line due east to the 104th meridian.⁵⁰

However, he was both overconfident and under-informed. On August 15, 1876, Congress stipulated that no more money would be appropriated for the Sioux until they ceded all lands west of the 103rd meridian.⁵¹ In other words Congress had already ordered the Sioux to quit-claim the Black Hills and their kingdom in Wyoming and Montana, or starve. Unaware of that, Bourke was agitated when a rumor reached Camp Robinson ten days later (April 30) that both Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Agencies would be moved to the Missouri. "Now that these Indians have been allowed to surrender at this place and with the understanding that they were to live *here*, our Government

has no right to violate the compact."^{5 2} Both agencies were indeed moved to the present Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations in present southwestern South Dakota the next year. The incident raises some questions about communications between Washington and the field in manipulating Indian negotiations; they are beyond the scope of this article but warrant a closer scrutiny than they have been given.

The large number of surrenders during the middle days of April ruled out a major campaign that summer, climaxed on April 27 when six Indian soldiers (that term was used more often than "scouts" at that time and place) brought a letter from Red Cloud—a semi-literate scrawl by his mixed-blood scrivener—saying definitely that Crazy Horse would arrive in eight or nine days.^{5 3}

That was good enough for Crook. The Indians had done what he had asked. Now he would keep his word to them. Leaving Camp Robinson on April 28, he went to Chicago and Washington to do what he could about the reservation, unsuccessfully as it turned out. He took Schuyler with him but left Bourke as his eyes and ears at the agencies.

Throughout his stay, Bourke studied the Plains Indian culture, foreshadowing the important contributions he would make to anthropology in future years. Visiting their lodges, Bourke came to have a high appreciation of Indian family structure, their kindness to the aged and infirm, and the many gifts for the poor, which were laid on the ground at dances and festive occasions. Using the white culture as a standard of comparison, he found that Spotted Tail and his ranking councillor, White Thunder, treated guests as courteously as did white hosts. In his lodge of "unexceptionable neatness," White Thunder "deported himself fully as well as the generality of white men," and Spotted Tail received Bourke's party "with urbanity, a virtue common to all Indians I have ever seen."^{5 4}

Indian dances enthralled him and other observers, especially the first one they saw—an Omaha dance which the Sans Arc and Minneconju staged for Crook after the conference on April 15. Knowing that he was incapable of appreciating the symbolism of Indian dancing, Bourke simply described it as a dance in which the "masters of ceremonies"—painted in various patterns, most with a yellow imprint of a hand on the flanks, and all

wearing war bonnets that trailed to the ground—rode around the inside of the circle to announce the “next act.” Performers—whose torsos were painted green, blue, yellow, red, black, and in various speckled, spotted, and striped patterns—came into the circle one by one to pantomime his or another’s achievements while a chorus chanted an account of the deed. Each costume was trimmed with sleigh bells, but one man was wrapped in sleigh bells from shoulder to ankle. Each performer wore a red or yellow headdress made of the hair from an elk’s neck and ornamented by a single eagle feather. Bourke saw the dances as an “almost photographic picture” of acts of valor.⁵⁵

At Camp Robinson they saw two other dances. Sioux women treated them to a slow-measured “squaw dance” in which the women stunned the onlookers with long dresses of antelope hide, beaded solidly as mail from waist to neck and with elaborate beading on sleeves and skirts. Borrowing red leggings and red blankets from the Sioux, the impoverished Cheyenne men staged a “spoon” dance in which seventy-five or eighty dancers took part. Into the circle a Cheyenne would ride and whisper to the drummers of a deed of prowess, bringing a deeper thud from the drums and loud whoops by the drummers. From time to time the dancers broke into two groups and would “yell and dance like fury.”⁵⁶

Through numerous conversations, Bourke sought to learn of the tribes and their history. What is now fairly well established as anthropological and historical knowledge was just beginning, dimly, to enter the consciousness of whites interested enough to inquire. Spotted Tail said he did not know when the Sioux first got horses but knew they had come from the south. Fire Crow, a Cheyenne, claimed his people had been the first northern Indians to have horses.⁵⁷

Bourke seems to have been more impressed by an Arapahoe leader, Friday, than by any other. Friday, who had traveled through the Plains, told him that Arapahoe had still used dogs to haul travois when he was a boy, and had first obtained horses from the Comanche. He also said an extensive intertribal trade centered at Bent’s Fort on the Arkansas River (“Billy Bent’s,” he called it), where Sioux bows and arrows were obtained by Comanche in trading with Cheyenne and Arapahoe who had, in turn, obtained them from Sioux at Fort Laramie.⁵⁸

Bourke's recounting of Friday's stories leads to the surmise that Friday might have drawn the thirty-seven pages of unidentified pictographs in Bourke's diary (on leaves from old account books). The "writing" of such autobiographies—"brag skins," more humorous Indians called them—would appear to have been one of the means by which a number of earnest and sincere Indians sought to cement friendships with the whites. No Flesh, an eager but not so sincere Brule, tried to ingratiate himself with Mrs. Anson Mills—and through her Captain Mills, commanding officer at Camp Sheridan—by drawing pictographs of his valorous history.⁵⁹

At least one dog feast—"choked pup" to Bourke—was given in late April, which may have been the one Strahorn described in his autobiography. At age 90 Strahorn garbled the time, place, and people, but he was too much a literalist to have cut this description from whole cloth:

When my turn came my dirty tin platter was served with the rear end of the backbone, with part of the poorly dressed tail attached. [Strahorn obviously did not know that getting the tail marked him as one of the honored guests, in the ritual of the dog feast.] After looking that large and disgusting offering of high hospitality over carefully to see whether I could detach as much as a mouthful without getting any of the hairy dog skin still liberally decorating it, I fairly sickened . . . No worse insult could possibly be visited upon an Indian host than to refuse to eat liberally of such sacred offerings . . . One fiendish glance was enough to induce the swallowing of anything. I can only add that I did my best and can taste that offensively strong, oily dog meat and glimpse its bloody, bristling backbone and tail hairs like a loathsome nightmare to this day.⁶⁰

A most important part of life at Camps Robinson and Sheridan was the gathering of intelligence from the Indian camps. Building a force of Indian soldiers at both agencies, Clark (who became the authority on Indian sign language) maintained an elaborate spy network. Cheyenne soldiers spied on the Sioux constantly and vice versa, isolating troublemakers before they could make trouble.⁶¹

Indeed, the entire behavior of the Indians suggests that they may have adopted a new status symbol during the traumatic transition to a confined life. Proud and vain (in the most favorable connotations), the Plains Indian male had attained prestige as warrior, hunter, horse-owner, or holy man. Now, it would appear, they sought that prestige through influence with the whites. The various accounts throughout the literature suggest that Indian leaders and would-be leaders sought to cultivate Army officers for that purpose. "Some of these

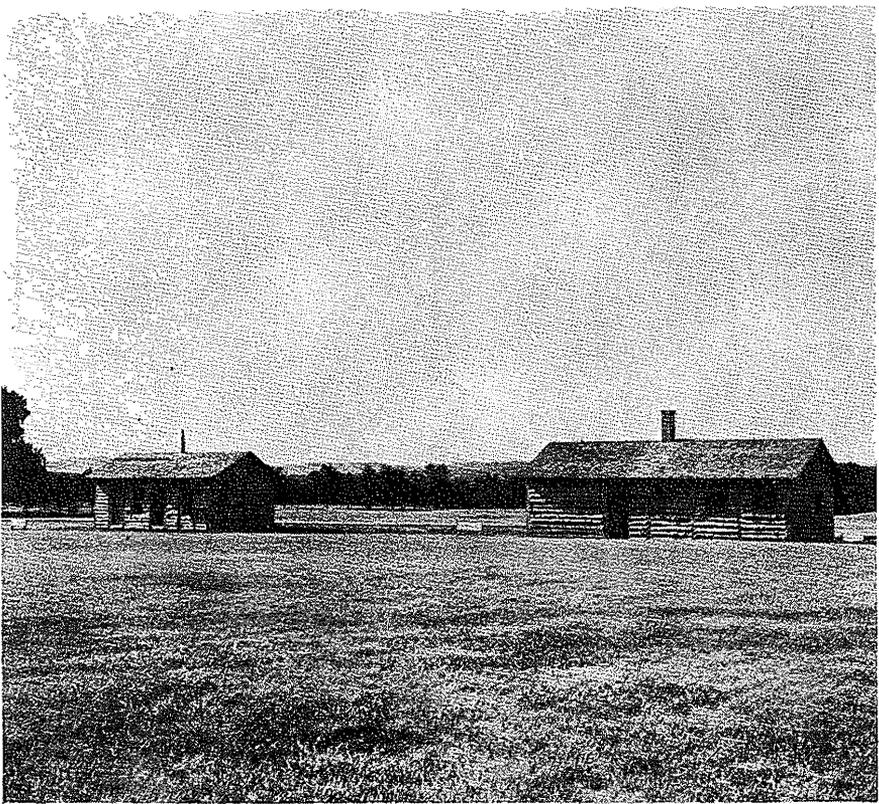
Indians become warmly attached to the officers, impart and receive confidences."⁶²

Meanwhile, Red Cloud had asked for food for Crazy Horse's people. Lieutenant J. Wesley Rosenquest took ten wagons of food and one hundred cattle to Hat Creek where he met the Indians on May 1 and became by repute the first white man to shake hands with Crazy Horse, who as a child had played with white boys around Fort Laramie. Nearly famished, many Oglalas gorged themselves to the point of illness.⁶³

As Crazy Horse neared, apprehension grew among the agency Indians, some of whom said they had heard he would not surrender his arms. That portended a crisis. Knowing that Crazy Horse was dangerous, Clark mobilized his Cheyenne soldiers just in case. Ever since the first few had surrendered, the Cheyenne had shown a marked hostility toward Crazy Horse. They had told officers that Crazy Horse had turned them away when they, in their rags after Mackenzie's attack, had sought succor in his camp. In later years the Cheyenne would tell that the Oglala had shared what they had. The real reason they were so angry at Crazy Horse may have been that he had "soldiered" them when they had wanted to surrender voluntarily earlier in the winter; that is, he ordered his Oglala warriors to break the Cheyenne bows, take their guns and ponies, and beat them.⁶⁴

On the morning of May 6, when it was known that Crazy Horse would arrive that day, Clark stationed a force of Cheyenne soldiers behind a bluff near the agency. They remained there throughout the day, awaiting the signal that would bring them into battle.⁶⁵

With twenty Indian soldiers, Clark—known to the Indians as White Hat—rode out to meet Crazy Horse, accompanied by a *Chicago Times* reporter who had visited Crazy Horse's camp with another detail the day before. Five miles from the agency, they met the Oglala. In a valley between two long, sloping bluffs, the two groups went through a hand-shaking ceremony, while Crazy Horse's eight hundred and eighty nine people blackened the surrounding slopes. Letting He-Dog do the talking, the scar-faced Crazy Horse remained silent. Saying he would surrender only to those in whom he had confidence, He Dog placed a war shirt and bonnet on White Hat. Clark then made the usual talk about everlasting peace, and explained the



The Adjutant's Office (top, left) and Guardhouse (top, right), both built in 1874 at Fort Robinson, were reconstructed by the Nebraska State Historical Society in 1969 on the original site. Below is the same scene about 1894. The third building (in-between), built about 1884 as a second guardhouse, has not been reconstructed. (Colonel Adna C. Hamilton Collection.)



procedure that would be followed in dismounting, disarming and counting the people.

At that point Crazy Horse spoke his only words, "I have given all I have to Red Cloud."⁶⁶ Throughout the literature those words have been interpreted consistently—as they were in the newspaper reports of the meeting—as meaning he had given all his personal possessions to Red Cloud. But the interpretation may be distortion. Since he most certainly held onto his Winchester and had characteristically worn a single feather rather than a war bonnet, he may have meant that he had yielded authority to Red Cloud. Red Cloud was a manipulative tribal politician, whereas it is easy to see Crazy Horse in Mari Sandoz' biography as a man of action who may have been inarticulate and unable to cope with political nuances.

That was the surrender. Contrary to some historical accounts (including Sheridan's annual report),⁶⁷ Crazy Horse did *not* surrender to Crook personally; Crook then was in Washington and would not meet Crazy Horse until May 25, 1877,

With Clark, Rosenquest, and the Indian soldiers in the lead, the column reached Red Cloud Agency about 2 p.m. There was none of the pomp, parade, firing, or whooping that had been part of some of the earlier surrenders (and which some authors have inserted in their accounts of this one). In five disciplined ranks, astride painted war ponies, the three hundred warriors wore their finest: war bonnets, blankets, ornaments of silver, brass, tin, and glass. Watching through field glasses from a distance, an officer exclaimed, "By God! This is a triumphal march, not a surrender!" From end to end of the two-mile-long column rang a solemn peace chant. Reaching their campsite in the White River bottoms, the Oglala formed their lodges in a crescent, about three-fourths of a mile from the agency.⁶⁸

Thomas Moore, Crook's chief packer, took the ponies first, stopping the count at 1,700. Next came the guns, Clark allowing the Oglala to surrender their weapons voluntarily, as they had requested. But when they relinquished only a token number, he announced firmly that he would search every tipi and take every weapon. To shield their humiliation, the Oglala warriors asked that white men be withdrawn from the area. Dismissing all whites but two officers, Clark took his Indian

soldiers on a search that lasted until 8 p.m. and netted 117 rifles and pistols, including two Winchesters which Crazy Horse gave up with neither objection nor assistance; he apparently had placed one Winchester on the ground in the first, token surrender of arms.⁶⁹

Throughout, Crazy Horse—a sinewy man of about 5 feet, 11 inches, exuding command presence—remained silent and passive. He spoke to none of his conquerors until Frank Grouard and Bourke went to his lodge that evening.⁷⁰ On all sides the Anglo-Americans recognized that Crazy Horse's surrender meant that the big Indian wars had come to an end. For history it was an epochal moment. For the people concerned, it was a sad collapse of a proud way of life. For the Dakotas—"The Men"—and the nation, it remained for Bourke to write an apprehensive epilogue:

If our Government will only observe *one-half* of its promises, the Indians will comply faithfully with their agreements, I am certain; the great danger of the future is not from the red man's want of faith so much as from the indifference of our Government to the plainest requirements of honor. Our own faith is worse than Punic; yet, we always prattle about Indian treachery.

.....
 If the Government will only keep its promises and treat these red men with justice, we shall have no more Indian wars.⁷¹

His premonition of dishonor was to prove well-founded.

NOTES

1. Sherman and Sheridan quoted at Washington conference, *Chicago Times*, April 27, 1877; *Report of the Secretary of War*, House Ex. Doc. 1, 45th Congress (1877), Part 2, Vol. 1, 85, hereafter cited as *Secretary of War 1877*; *Chicago Times*, May 7, 1877.

2. This is abundantly clear in the dispatches of correspondents who covered the war and who undoubtedly reflected what Army officers did not know about the enemy.

3. Lieutenant Walter S. Schuyler, speaking for Crook in Chicago interview, *Chicago Tribune*, May 3, 1877. The reporter had sought an interview with Crook, but the general "referred the news-gatherer to his subordinate, as he did not desire to speak concerning matters in which he was personally concerned."

4. Mari Sandoz, *Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas* (New York, 1942), *passim*.

5. Crook in *Secretary of War 1877*, 1:84. The workings of the spy system are described in *Chicago Tribune*, May 3, 1877.

6. Harry H. Anderson, "Indian Peace-Talkers and the Conclusion of the Sioux War of 1876," *Nebraska History* (September 1963), 239-242, hereafter cited as Anderson, "Peace-Talkers"; *Diary of Lieutenant John Gregory Bourke*, 127 vols., original in Library of U.S. Military Academy, 19:1825-1826, hereafter cited as

Bourke, Diary. Bourke's diary, of which the author used the microfilm publication, is immensely rich in details, but it was not a consistent day-by-day journal. The nature of the entries shows that he wrote what he could when he could. Both Anderson and Sandoz depict factionalism and family rivalries as a healthy counterweight to the historical stereotype of "the Sioux," or any other tribal group, as a monolithic people operating through unquestioned consensus.

7. Bourke, Diary, 19:1825-1826.
8. Crook in *Secretary of War 1877*, 1:84-85.
9. Reynolds and Captain Alex Moore were court-martialed and found guilty of misconduct in the attack on Crazy Horse's camp in March 1876; President Rutherford B. Hayes remitted the sentences.
10. *Chicago Tribune*, January 22, January 31, 1877; Bourke, Diary, 19:1826.
11. *Chicago Tribune*, February 12, 1877.
12. *Ibid.*, Bourke, Diary, 19:1829.
13. Bourke, Diary, 19:1829.
14. George E. Hyde, *Spotted Tail's Folk: A History of the Brule Sioux* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1961), ix, xi, 111, 132, 200, 202n.
15. *Ibid.*, 240; Anderson, "Peace-Talkers," 242-243.
16. Bourke, Diary, 19:1835.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Strahorn and Whitbeck will be quoted in the text when their dispatches were signed. Other newspaper writers were not identified by signature or initials at the end of their stories
19. General Orders No. 8, Headquarters, Department of the Platte, March 14, 1877, copy of printed order in Bourke, Diary, 19:1842; *Chicago Times*, March 15, 1877.
20. *Chicago Times*, March 31, 1877.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Chicago Times*, March 15, 1877; *Chicago Tribune*, March 15, 1877.
25. *Chicago Tribune*, March 15, 1877.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Chicago Times*, March 15, 1877.
28. Bourke, Diary, 19:1845, 1847-1848.
29. *Ibid.*, 19:1839, 1848-1849, 1857-1858.
30. *Ibid.*, 19:1852, 1857-1858; *Chicago Times*, April 16, 1877.
31. Anderson, "Peace-Talkers," 246-248.
32. Miles to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of Dakota, March 24, 1877, text released by Sheridan's headquarters, *Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1877, and other newspapers of same date; hereafter cited as Miles, Report. Part of the report appears in *Secretary of War 1877*, 1:496. Nelson A. Miles, *Personal Recollections* (New York and Chicago, 1896), 239, hereafter cited as Miles, *Recollections*.
33. Virginia Weisel Johnson, *The Unregimented General: A Biography of Nelson A. Miles* (Boston, 1962), 153, hereafter cited as Johnson, *Miles*; Miles, Report, *Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1877; Miles to wife, March 22, 24, April 15, 1877, quoted in Johnson, *Miles*, 163, 165, 169.
34. Miles to wife, March 22, 1877, quoted in Johnson, *Miles*, 163; *Secretary of War 1877*, 1:496.
35. Miles to wife, March 17, 1877, quoted in Johnson, *Miles*, 162; Miles, Report, *Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1877.
36. *Chicago Times*, April 26, 1877; Bourke, Diary, 19:1868-1869.

37. Miles to wife, March 15, 17, 1877, quoted in Johnson, *Miles*, 160-161; Miles to Sherman, date not given, quoted in Robert G. Athearn, *William Tecumseh Sherman and the Settlement of the West* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1956), 314; Bourke, *Diary*, 19:1886-1888.

38. Sandoz, *Crazy Horse*, 358; James C. Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1965), 237, hereafter cited as Olson, *Red Cloud*.

39. Anderson, "Peace-Talkers," 249-250.

40. Miles, Report, *Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1877; Miles, *Recollections*, 247.

41. William Garnett, in Ricker Interviews, quoted in Olson, *Red Cloud*, 238. If that offer was made, Crook did not go along with it, for Red Cloud seems to have gradually regained his place later in 1877 after the Indian Bureau resumed administration of the agencies.

42. Bourke, 19:1885-1886. In writing of events in the recent past, as in this synopsis of Crook's conversation with Red Cloud, Bourke was not always precise about dates. It was under the entry of April 27, 1877, recalling the conversation of "a week ago"; Crook talked with Red Cloud either on April 11 or early on April 12.

43. Schuyler, speaking for Crook in Chicago interview, *Chicago Tribune*, May 3, 1877.

44. *Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1877; *New York Tribune*, April 28, 1877.

45. *Chicago Tribune*, March 12, 1877.

46. Bourke, *Diary*, 19:1866-1868; *Chicago Tribune*, April 18, 1877.

47. Bourke, *Diary*, 19:1905-1908, 1917-1918; *Chicago Tribune*, April 23, 1877.

48. *Chicago Times*, April 18, 1877.

49. *Ibid.*; Bourke, *Diary*, 19:1869-1877.

50. Bourke, *Diary*, 19:1901, 1904.

51. Olson, *Red Cloud*, 224.

52. Bourke, *Diary*, 19:1941.

53. *Ibid.*, 19:1918-1919; *New York Tribune*, April 28, 1877, gives text of note from Red Cloud.

54. For an excellent appraisal of Bourke's work, see William Gardner Bell, "John Gregory Bourke," *Arizona and the West* (Winter, 1971), 319-322; Bourke, *Diary*, 19:1878.

55. Bourke, *Diary*, 19:1872-1882; *San Francisco Alta California*, April 21, 1877, in Bourke, *Diary*, 19:1923, an account which Bourke would appear to have written; *Chicago Times*, April 18, 1877; *Chicago Tribune*, April 18, 1877.

56. Bourke, *Diary*, 19:1934-1935, 20:1941-1942; *New York Herald*, May 11, 1877, in Bourke, *Diary*, 20:1997-2004. Bourke may have written the *New York Herald* piece; it contains passages quite similar to corresponding passages in the diary; he pasted a copy in his diary and wrote his initials in the margin at the end of the story, as though he were imitating the newspaper style of the period in which terminal initials were a form of "by-line"; if he did write it, the construction of the story would prove that he was artful at literary deception, concealing his identity well.

57. Bourke, *Diary*, 20:1950-1951.

58. *Ibid.*, 20:1963.

59. *Ibid.*, 18:1751-1787; Anson Mills, *My Story* (Washington, 1921), 158, in which Mills' years are in error; Amos Bad Heart Bull, *A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux* (Lincoln, 1967), xx.

60. Robert E. Strahorn, "Ninety Years of Boyhood," unpublished autobiography, Strahorn Memorial Library, College of Idaho, Caldwell.

61. *Chicago Tribune*, May 3, 1877; *San Francisco Alta California*, April 21, 1877, in Bourke, *Diary*, 19:1923; *Chicago Times*, April 19, 1877.

62. *New York Tribune*, April 28, 1877.

63. The officer's name appears as Lieutenant Rosecrans, erroneously, in some accounts. It appears as "Lt. Rosenquest" in both the *Chicago Tribune*, May 4, 1877,

and *Chicago Times*, May 7, 1877, which is confirmed by Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army* (Urbana, Illinois, 1965), 846; William P. Clark, *The Indian Sign Language* (Philadelphia, 1885; San Jose, California, 1959), 422.

64. Bourke, Diary, 19:1853, 1854, 1862; *Chicago Tribune*, May 3, 1877; George Bird Grinnell; *The Fighting Cheyennes* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1956), 382; Hyde, *Spotted Tail's Folk*, 238.

65. Bourke, Diary, 20:1988; *Chicago Tribune*, May 8, 1877.

66. *Chicago Times*, May 7, 1877.

67. *Secretary of War*, 1877, 1:55.

68. *Chicago Times*, May 7, 1877; *New York Tribune*, May 7, 1877; *Chicago Tribune*, May 8, 1877; Bourke, Diary, 20:1984-1994; Sandoz, *Crazy Horse*, 361.

69. *Chicago Times*, May 7, 1877; *Chicago Tribune*, May 8, 1877; Bourke, Diary, 20:1987.

70. *New York Tribune*, May 7, 1877; *Chicago Times*, May 7, 1877; Bourke, Diary, 20:1984-1994.

71. Bourke, Diary, 20:1938, 1994.