



Nebraska History posts materials online for your personal use. Please remember that the contents of *Nebraska History* are copyrighted by the Nebraska State Historical Society (except for materials credited to other institutions). The NSHS retains its copyrights even to materials it posts on the web.

For permission to re-use materials or for photo ordering information, please see:

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/magazine/permission.htm>

Nebraska State Historical Society members receive four issues of *Nebraska History* and four issues of *Nebraska History News* annually. For membership information, see:

<http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/members/index.htm>

Article Title: Samuel D Hinman and the Opening of the Black Hills

Full Citation: Grant K Anderson, "Samuel D Hinman and the Opening of the Black Hills," *Nebraska History* 60 (1979): 520-542.

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1979SDHinman.pdf>

Date: 7/2/2014

Article Summary: Reverend Samuel Dutton Hinman was a Protestant Episcopal missionary, explorer, treaty maker, and interpreter during negotiations for the Black Hills. He made a significant contribution to the opening of the Black Hills, taking part in all dealings with the Sioux during 1874-1876.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Samuel Dutton Hinman, Henry B Whipple, Chief Taopi, Chief Good Thunder, Thomas Robertson, Mary Hinman, Henry Hastings Sibley, Pierre J DeSmet, Red Cloud, William Hare, Christopher Cox, Robert Lines, E A Howard, Tom Dorin, Thigh [a Brule warrior], Chief Two Strike, Chief Spotted Tail, John H King, Columbus Delano, Fred Grant, John Gordan, Walter P Jenny, Todd Randall, Louis Richard, William B Allison, Abraham Comingo, Alfred Terry, G P Beauvais, W H Ashby, A G Lawrence, Young Man Afraid of His Horses, Edward P Smith, George Crook, Alfred H Terry, John Gibbon, H C Bulis, George W Manypenny, A G Boon, Newton Edmunds, A S Gaylord, William Garrett, Todd Randall, Leon Pallardie, Bill Dowland, Newton Edmunds, Valentine T McGillicuddy, Henry L Dawes, Peter Shannon, Miss West [later married S D Hinman]; Newton H Winchell, Red Dog, Lone Horn, Red Cloud

Keywords: Sioux; Sioux Uprising of 1862; *Davenport, Nellie Peck, Northerner [Steamers]*; Two Kettle; Brule; Santee Agency; Red Cloud's War; Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868; Spotted Tail Agency; Cheyenne; Minniconjou; Yankton; Oglala; Great Fathers; *Book of Common Prayer* [English and Santee versions published by S D Hinman]; 7th Cavalry; Standing Rock Agency

Photographs / Images: Reverend Samuel D Hinman, Scarlet All Over, Red Legs, Shooter, Wapastia, Flute Player, 1867; Hinman as a young man; Episcopal chapel at Crow Creek Agency; St Mary's Episcopal Mission, Santee Agency Number 3, 1870; Oglala chief Red Cloud with son and granddaughter, 1909

SAMUEL D. HINMAN AND THE OPENING OF THE BLACK HILLS

By Grant K. Anderson

General George A. Custer, John Gordan, and Annie Tallent are synonomous with opening the Black Hills. Each played a vital part in developing the mineral wealth of Dakota Territory. An equally important, though not as dramatic, role befell the Reverend Samuel Dutton Hinman. A Protestant Episcopal missionary, he acted also as an explorer, treaty maker, and interpreter during negotiations for the Black Hills. His colorful, checkered career spanned the turbulent 1870s as control of western Dakota Territory was being wrested from the Sioux.

Hinman, born in 1839, was orphaned at an early age. He left Connecticut in his 20th year to attend divinity school in Faribault, Minnesota. Here he came in contact with Minnesota Bishop Henry B. Whipple, who was to become a life-long friend and supporter. It was Whipple who first interested Hinman in missionary work among the Indians. As the young theologian continued his studies, he began holding services for the Sioux in the Faribault area.

He was ordained a deacon of the Episcopal Church on September 20, 1860. At Whipple's urging Hinman accepted a call to Lower Agency, near Redwood Falls, Minnesota. Together with his bride and a lay teacher, a Miss West, Hinman began his work among the Santee Sioux at the Mission of Saint John's.¹

From the beginning he exhibited a genuine interest in his parish. Thirty Indians including Chiefs Taopi and Good Thunder, became Episcopalians during the first year. Thomas Robertson, agency interpreter, aided both Samuel and Mary Hinman in becoming fluent in the Sioux language. This enabled them to translate church works into the Santee dialect, their first translation appearing in 1862.²

The Sioux Uprising of 1862 terminated activities at Saint John's Mission. Warfare erupted with a pre-dawn attack on

Lower Agency August 18. The Hinmans managed to escape and flee to nearby Fort Ridgely. They remained there until hostilities ceased in mid-September. There followed a state-wide outcry for revenge against the Sioux. Several bands of Indians fled to neighboring Dakota Territory. Others were captured by General Henry Hastings Sibley's forces and detained at Mankato and Fort Snelling.³

Hinman accompanied the Santee to Fort Snelling. He moved into their camp, began ministering to their needs, and during the winter of 1862-1863, 93 children and 52 adults became members of his sect. The congregation grew from 30 to nearly 400 and included most principal chiefs. It was through such endeavors that Hinman laid the groundwork for the later strength of the Episcopal Church among the Santee. Success did not always come easily. One night vengeance seeking St. Paul residents broke into the stockade and beat the missionary senseless.⁴

Anti-Indian sentiment increased in 1862. Public opinion called for the expulsion of the remaining Sioux from Minnesota. In February Congress acted. All annuities were stopped and reservation lands opened to white settlers. The legislation also included provisions for relocation of the Santee in spite of opposition by the Episcopal Church.

Bishop Whipple urged President Lincoln to rescind the order. Hinman journeyed to the nation's capital to plead for his people. A small band of Indians accompanied him and asked to be allowed to keep their farms in Minnesota. Unsuccessful in their efforts, the caravan stopped in Philadelphia on its way home. A public meeting was held and an organization formed to provide relief for the Christian Sioux.⁵

In Minnesota preparations were begun for relocation. It had been decided to move the Sioux somewhere along the upper Missouri River in Dakota Territory. Bishop Whipple instructed Hinman to accompany the Indians to their new agency. The exodus began in mid-1863. More than 700 Santee were put aboard the steamer *Davenport* at St. Paul for a voyage to Dakota. Another boat, the *Northerner*, took aboard 540 Indians. These were later discharged at Hannibal, Missouri, and hauled westward over the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad to St. Joseph to await the arrival of the *Davenport*, which had taken the all-water route via St. Louis and the lower Missouri River.

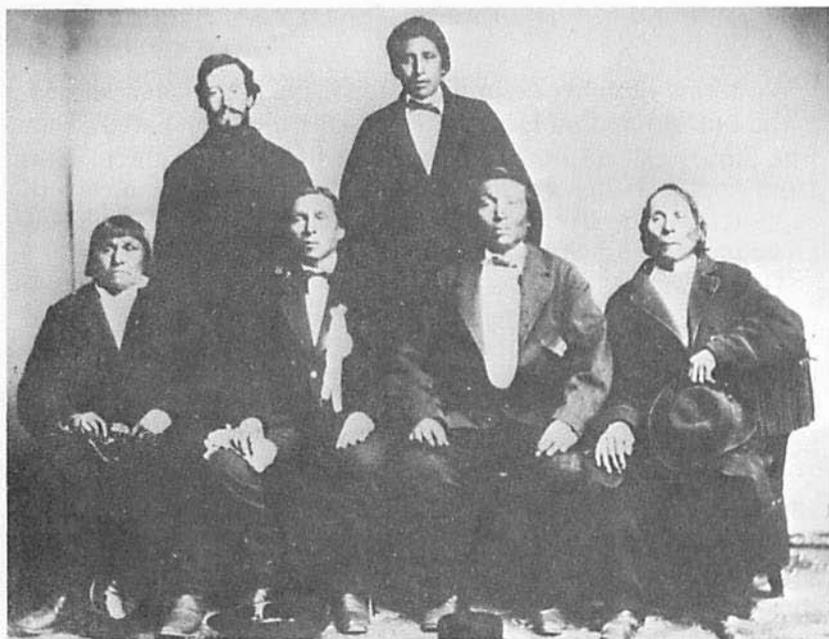
The two groups, consisting mainly of women and children, were crowded aboard the *Davenport* and transported to Crow Creek, 80 miles above Fort Randall, Dakota Territory.⁶

The next two years were harsh for the churchman and his parish. In 1864 Crow Creek Agency housed 1,000 Santee, of which nearly 600 were Christian. Hinman reported to church officials that over 300 Indians had died since leaving Minnesota. Farming conditions were difficult at best. Rations had to be freighted in to keep the Santee from starving. To compound the problem, bands of hungry Two Kettle and Brule were deposited at Crow Creek. As conditions deteriorated, another agency was sought for the Santee.⁷

Hinman successfully resisted efforts to relocate his followers between the James and Big Sioux Rivers in eastern Dakota. Instead, he selected a site in northern Nebraska. The area, designated Santee Agency, was occupied during April, 1866. However, this was to be another temporary location. The arrival of additional Santee from Minnesota proved the site to be inadequate. This, coupled with negotiations to end Red Cloud's War, resulted in yet another move for Hinman's Sioux.⁸

A commission had been sent from Washington in 1867 to select agencies for all Sioux bands and bring peace to the frontier. Little was accomplished for so long as there were military posts along Powder River, Red Cloud refused to attend any council. Efforts were renewed in the spring of 1868. Emissaries were sent to urge the hostiles to come in. Hinman and Father Pierre J. DeSmet, both familiar with Sioux ways, were hired by the peace commission to assist with the proceedings. They remained at Fort Laramie, meeting with bands as they arrived. Through their efforts the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 was concluded.⁹

A clause in the treaty provided a permanent home for the Santee, whose numbers had increased to 1,500—1,000 of which were Christian. Their agency was placed 18 miles below the mouth of the Niobrara River in Nebraska, just across the Missouri River from Springfield, Dakota Territory. Hinman's parishioners were to acquire title to farm land at once and possibly citizenship within three years. A church was constructed and ground broken for a training school for native clergy. They were to be sent, Hinman told church officials, among the hostile bands who were being relocated north of Santee Agency.¹⁰



The Reverend Samuel D. Hinman (standing, left) with Santee head men: Scarlet All Over, Red Legs (seated, left), Shooter, Wapastia, Flute Player. Photo by A. Z. Shindler, Washington DC, 1867. Courtesy of South Dakota State Historical Society.



Hinman as a young man. Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.

An astute observer of Indian affairs, the missionary warned, "The buffalo and all large game is fast being eliminated. They [the Sioux] can no longer trust to the life of the hunter. Thus from necessity they are led to war, or to seek other means of support."¹¹ The Episcopal Church, Hinman felt, should play an active role in helping the Indians find a new way of life.

Throughout the 1870s, Hinman's Niobrara Mission prospered and grew with many new converts. In 1870 he performed the first Christian marriage entirely conducted in the Sioux tongue. His efforts among the hostile bands were not so successful. The Oglala and Brule clung to the old way of life, opposing Christianity and the agency system.¹²

Rumors persisted that gold existed in the Black Hills. Despite 1868 treaty provisions giving the region to the Sioux, Dakota residents were anxious to develop the new El Dorado. To placate public opinion, General Custer was ordered to explore the area in 1874. In preparing his column Custer requested Hinman's assistance. Santee Scouts had accompanied General David S. Stanley's column to the Yellowstone the previous summer, and Custer desired to include them in his party.¹³

The request to Hinman for Sioux scouts reached the agency the Sunday before Custer was to leave. The letter was read at the morning worship service. Thirty Santee volunteered and accompanied by Hinman boarded a train for Fort Abraham Lincoln, North Dakota. They arrived the morning that Custer was to depart. Hinman saw them off and continued on his way. Later Custer praised the Indian scouts from Hinman's parish noting that

among the pleasant incidents, I remember one Sunday as I sat in my tent, I heard in the distance the familiar hymn "Rock of Ages." Knowing that cavalry men are not known as hymn singers, I followed the sound, and you may judge my surprise when I found that the only men who engaged in the worship of God were some of those who had roamed over the prairies in barbarous wildness. May the good work go on.¹⁴

Hinman traveled to Cheyenne, Wyoming Territory, from Fort Abraham Lincoln. He had been appointed to a special Sioux commission which included Episcopal Bishop William Hare, Christopher Cox, and Robert Lines. They were instructed to determine a location for a new agency for Red Cloud and Spotted Tail and also to study the feasibility of consolidating both bands on a single reservation.¹⁵

The full commission left Cheyenne, on July 28, 1874. They had been in the field about a week when Bishop Hare became ill. He returned to Cheyenne with Cox, leaving Hinman and Lines to conduct the reconnaissance of Sioux country. As Custer's forces were penetrating the Black Hills from the north, Hinman prepared to explore the area from the opposite direction.¹⁶

The search for a new agency site began August 5, 1874. In the party were Hinman, Lines, Agent E. A. Howard of Spotted Tail Agency, two companies of the 3rd Cavalry under Captain Charles Meinholdt, and a collection of agency employees, squaw men, and guides. "Our intention was to examine thoroughly all the country north and west of the present location," reported Hinman "and if possible to find some place where water should be abundant and good and where there should be sufficient timber to afford lumber for building and wood for fuel." It was agreed to follow the White River as far south as the Little White River in hopes of finding a suitable site.¹⁷

Tom Dorin, a mixed-blood Brule, and Thigh, a Brule warrior, served as scouts for the Hinman party. They traveled down the White River and cut north toward the Cheyenne. The Badlands were crossed and the Box Elder Creek area examined. "While here we saw the trail of Indian families moving toward Cheyenne agency," noted Hinman, "and also the trail of a large war party moving toward the hills."¹⁸ Failing to find an agreeable area, the party doubled back to search the area south of White River. After considerable looking, a location near the mouth of Big White Clay Creek was selected for the new agency. Before leaving the area Hinman decided to explore the country near Buffalo Gate.¹⁹

The Hinman party camped near Butte Cache while preparing to probe the southern Black Hills. "We dismissed all unnecessary wagons and our attendants mostly dismissed themselves," explained the missionary, "going back off one pretext or another, but really fearing to accompany us."²⁰ Despite such wholesale desertions, Hinman determined to push ahead. Even a visit by chiefs Two Strike and Spotted Tail failed to deter him. The Brule warned against further examination of the Black Hills at this time. The Sioux were already upset because of Custer's exploration of the area in violation of the

1868 treaty. Hinman informed them the Indian office needed a thorough knowledge of the Hills region before a new agency could be selected. He also spoke of rumors regarding the area's wealth and informed the chiefs he hoped to discredit such tales. If no minerals were found, he told them, the Sioux would be allowed to retain the region. After a lengthy council, Spotted Tail condoned "a short tour of observation as we desired."²¹

In his report to Bishop Hare, Samuel Hinman gave his impression of the region:

The Black Hills we found to be a bleak, and except for its abundant growth of hard pine, a forbidding and sterile mountain. Green from its springs and trees, it is a cool and pleasant retreat from the burning sun and baked soil of the desert plains around it, and only a garden spot when compared to, and contrasted with, the bad and utter desolation that surround it. There may, indeed be mineral wealth there, but if so we believe it to be yet undiscovered, and there are no evidence either from location, or character of rocks, or soil, or sand, to warrant any expectation that a more diligent search would be rewarded with success. As an agricultural or grazing region it is worthless. It is high, bleak and cold, traversed by fearful storms in winter and spring, and in summer time almost truly said by the Indians to be inhabited by the thunder gods. . . . When civilization comes nearer and some railroad traverses the plains, the pine may be useful for rough lumber and for fuel; but now, and for a long time to come, its only use and value seem to be that known to the Indians—for poles to uphold their teepees on the prairie, or to make travois for their ponies when they journey. An agency could hardly be located here, and to open the country would be a mistaken kindness to the whites and a great uncalled for wrong for the Indians.²²

The Hinman party arrived back at Spotted Tail Agency, September 5, 1874. Hinman sought out General John H. King, military commander of the district, and recommended the agency be located near the mouth of Big White Clay Creek. King regarded the site as unacceptable because it was unfit as a military installation. Hinman then set out on a scout of the area around the present agency. A meeting of the commission, military and Indian leaders resulted in a new selection for the agency along West Beaver Creek, 10 miles south of the present location.²³

Back at Spotted Tail Agency Hinman learned the frontier was buzzing since Custer's expedition had returned. Gold fever led settlers to demand the Black Hills be thrown open to development. Hinman fully discounted Custer's report as mere fabrication. Whereas Custer portrayed the Black Hills as a treasure storehouse, Hinman saw the area as unfit for even an Indian agency. In a telegram to Columbus Delano, secretary of Interior and fellow Episcopalian, the missionary declared:

Your commission now at Spotted Tail Agency have read the reports—expedition with surprise and regret. The Sioux more peaceful than for years—are very disturbed and angered by them—our expedition in search of a new agency—went among other places to the very center of the Black Hills. We had with us men experienced in mining and no gold or other precious metals was found, nor any sign of anything of the kind—if you desire specimens of sand and quartz can be procured and forwarded to your office within a month. The Indians will allow our guide to return for them.

The explorer was in Cheyenne when Delano replied that geological samples were not required. Hinman left the region and went East to attend a missionary meeting in New York City. He filed a report with Bishop Hare, commission chairman, who was also attending the convention. The official report of Hinman's explorations was not published until November, 1874. An epidemic of Black Hills fever was then sweeping the nation. Newspaper headlines heralded the region's wealth, Custer granted interviews to correspondents, and meetings were held to organize expeditions. Only a scattering of journalists even mentioned the Hinman report. Those that did dismissed its author as an Indian lover who wanted the Black Hills reserved for his wards.

Hinman's report was substantiated by others who doubted gold existed in the Black Hills. Fred Grant, President Ulysses S. Grant's son, had accompanied Custer the previous summer. Back in Washington he informed reporters that Custer's dispatches were distorted. Another member of the expedition, Newton H. Winchell, agreed with Hinman and Grant. A scientist at the University of Minnesota, Professor Winchell, testified he had not seen any of the gold supposedly gleaned from western Dakota.²⁵

During the winter of 1874-1875 the Black Hills issue received considerable copy in the nation's press. The validity of Custer's report was weighed against the adverse statements of Hinman, Grant and Winchell. It was pointed out that even if gold did exist miners would not be able to prospect this newest El Dorado. Article 16 of the 1868 Treaty reserved the Black Hills for the Sioux. The United States government had also pledged to keep whites out of the area, using force if necessary.

The turmoil came to a head March 1, 1875, when John Gordan arrived in Sioux City. Gordan had spent the winter prospecting in the Black Hills. He confirmed Custer's findings and displayed gold his party had discovered. In light of this the government moved to resolve the Black Hills question. On

March 27 Walter P. Jenny was appointed to conduct a geological survey of the region. Also, a delegation of Sioux would be brought to the nation's capital to bargain for opening the Black Hills to white settlers.²⁶

The contingent, composed of 13 headmen from Red Cloud Agency and six from Spotted Tail, came to Washington in May, 1875. A number of mixed bloods and squaw men accompanied the chiefs to act as interpreters. Officials claimed they were not to be trusted and were not accurately translating speeches made by the chiefs.²⁷ To illustrate the point, the *New York Times* quoted an Indian speech and then presented the somewhat different version supplied by its interpreter.²⁸ The Interior Department in an effort to solve the problem appointed Samuel D. Hinman as its chief translator. The selection was a good one, noted a correspondent, as Hinman would "render their complaints to the authorities with fullness and honesty."²⁹ Todd Randall, Louis Richard, and other interpreters who accompanied the Indians did not agree. They claimed Hinman understood only the Santee dialect. "The trick will not serve," explained an observer. "The fact that he (Hinman) is in daily conversation with the Oglala, Minniconjou and Brule now here, establishes his capacity."³⁰ A compromise was finally reached whereby Hinman would represent the government while the chiefs could retain translators of their choosing.

While in Washington, Hinman was interviewed by a correspondent of the *New York Times*. In its June 6 issue, the *Times* recounted Hinman's visit to the Black Hills, quoting at length from his report stating gold did not exist there. As to the discoveries made by Custer's men, Hinman felt the miners had taken the nuggets with them to the Hills. His thesis, according to the *Times*, was that the miners hoped to:

excite the public mind, create a widespread demand for further and more thorough exploration and to induce large numbers of men to emigrate from the East. Even should no wealth be found in the hills the tide of emigration will bring money to the people already on the frontier.

To substantiate his views, Hinman called attention to "the significant fact that the three men who are said to have found gold are the only ones of Custer's large party who made such discoveries."³² If gold was to be found, it would be in the Big Horn Mountains, not the Black Hills, according to Hinman.

The missionary later denied making such statements but it was too late. The *Times* article was picked up by the wire services and touched off a wave of controversy. Several Dakota editors were especially critical of Hinman. To them he represented another obstacle in their battle to open the western part of their territory. This position was exemplified by Ver-million's *Dakota Republican* which editorialized:

Rev. S. D. Hinman, formerly a member of our Territorial Assembly and now an Indian agent is reported . . . as saying there was no gold in the Black Hills and everyone in Dakota believed the same thing. Now Hinman belongs to the Indian Ring and made this kind of talk in the East, but he tells a very different kind of story here. The fact is that everyone here, who has given the subject any thought has no doubt about there being gold in the Black Hills.

In the meantime negotiations with the Indians continued. Hinman accompanied Red Cloud and Spotted Tail on numerous visits to the Interior Department. They were, however, more interested in the quantity and quality of rations than selling the Black Hills. Meetings with President Grant failed to change their position so it was decided to send the chiefs home. A commission would be sent to Dakota Territory to meet with the Sioux and resolve the Black Hills question.³⁴

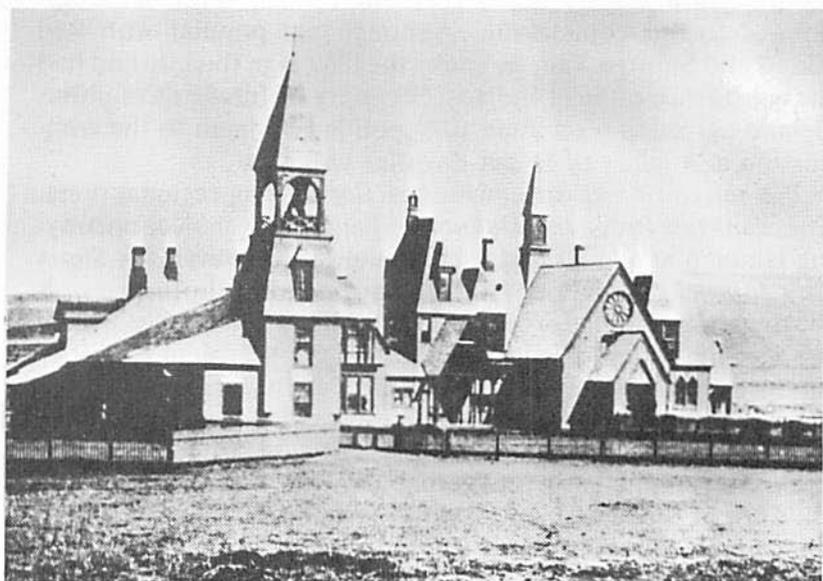
On their last visit to the Interior Department, Cheyenne and Minneconjou leaders urged that Samuel D. Hinman be appointed to this commission. Although not popular with Red Cloud and Spotted Tail, he spoke the language fluently and had the confidence of most Indians. Secretary of Interior Columbus Delano agreed and on June 10 appointed Hinman to the commission at a salary of \$8 per day plus expenses.

The selection met with mixed reaction among regional press. The *Yankton Press and Dakotian* lauded the choice, portraying Hinman as a "fair and candid man."³⁵ However, the *Sioux City Journal* pointed out Hinman had "used his influence with the department [interior] against the opening of the hills, believing that the extent of mineral wealth is not sufficient to justify the forcing of a treaty on the Indians."³⁶ Editors were united, however, in the hope the commission would succeed in opening the Black Hills.

Others nominated to the commission were Senator William B. Allison, Congressman Abraham Comingo, General Alfred Terry, G. P. Beauvais, W. H. Ashby, and A. G. Lawrence. The full commission would meet with the Indians in September,



*Episcopal chapel at Crow Creek Agency, Dakota Territory. . .
(Below) St. Mary's Episcopal Mission, Santee Agency number 3,
Knox County, built in 1870.*



1875. Hinman, together with Comingo and Ashby, were to depart for Dakota at once and made necessary arrangements. They were instructed to hold the council at Fort Sully. If this was not to the Indians' liking, Hinman was to select another site along the Missouri River.³⁷ Although Senator Allison was in fact chairman, newspapers of the day referred to this as the Hinman Commission.³⁸

After a visit with his converts at Santee Agency, Hinman met Comingo and Ashby at Yankton. They planned to move up the Missouri River and visit every agency during the coming weeks. Preliminary councils were called for at each agency before a location and date could be selected for the grand council. Hinman confidently predicted the Black Hills would be open to miners within 60 days. He also discounted rumors of a pending Indian war then circulating in the eastern press.³⁹

The Hinman party moved up river June 25. Before departure Hinman commented on Professor Jenny's report that gold existed in paying quantities in the Black Hills. A *Press and Dakotian* story announced: "Hinman says that the statement of Professor Jenny of the simple discovery of gold in the Black Hills is sufficient to convince him that it exists in considerable quantities, as Jenny is known as the most cautious man. To illustrate: If Jenny says there is a pound of gold in a certain locality the public may reach the truth by multiplying the number by five."⁴⁰ The journal reviewed Hinman's visit to the Hills and, although in direct contradiction of Hinman's 1874 report, informed readers, "It was at his suggestion and earnest solicitation that a geologist was sent to explore the hills. Therefore the country is indirectly indebted to him for the official information received in Professor Jenny's recent favorable report."⁴¹ The *Press and Dakotian* apparently overlooked the fact that Hinman stated that further explorations would fail to discover mineral wealth in the region.

July and August, 1875, were spent in arranging for the council. Hinman and his group arrived at Red Cloud Agency on July 9 and remained for almost two weeks. They found the Indians generally willing to attend a council so long as it was not held along the Missouri River. Rather the Oglala and Brule favored a site on Chadron Creek, midway between Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Agencies.⁴² From the agreed upon site Hinman telegraphed the commissioner of Indian Affairs of his progress

and urged that efforts be made to keep miners out of the Black Hills until negotiations could be completed. The Indians were growing more restless, he reported, as mining parties were daily seen crossing their lands. He also informed the commissioner that Young Man Afraid of His Horses and 50 warriors were dispatched to the Tongue River to induce northern bands to attend the council. In the meantime Hinman's party would leave Red Cloud and visit other agencies.⁴³

The next fortnight found Hinman on a tour of western Dakota Territory. In his wanderings he met Professor Jenny's party and held a meeting with the geologist.⁴⁴ Councils were held with the Sioux at Cheyenne River, Crow Creek, and Standing Rock agencies. The peace commissioner kept in touch with the Indian Bureau, reporting the Indians were agreeable to a council on Chadron Creek in September. Hinman estimated over 3,000 Indians would attend and warned Washington "it is important that presents be sent for them and horses ordered purchased. The failure to remove the whites from the Black Hills is still causing us trouble."⁴⁵ He also requested rations for the Indians and that their agents be instructed to accompany them to the council.⁴⁶

Before heading down river Hinman held a final council at Cheyenne River Agency in mid-August. Members of the Minneconjou, Two Kettle, San Arc and Blackfoot Sioux were, in the words of an observer, "acquainted with him and . . . constantly coming with friendly greetings and to ask his advice."⁴⁷ Hinman opened the session by explaining why a new treaty was necessary:

The present treaty with the Sioux is a bad one: when it was made the Indians did not understand it. The treaty provides that they were to receive clothing for thirty years and food for four years. The Indians believed that they were to receive food also for thirty years. The four years are now gone and the last two years congress has given them food gratuitously but the members talk about it every winter and unless some new arrangement is made they will soon stop giving it to them.

.....
 The soldiers last year discovered that there was gold in the Black Hills. The white people have heard of this, it has been published in their newspapers, and although the great father has tried to keep them out of the Black Hills, they still keep going. . . Next summer he cannot keep white men out of the Black Hills anymore than you can prevent rain falling when the clouds are ready. Therefore, he wants to buy the Black Hills and/or that part of your country that lies west of them and contains gold. In order that we may make a fair treaty, and that all may understand it, he wishes to have all the Dakotas together.

He concluded by noting the site on Chadron Creek had been selected because it possessed adequate water, grass and wood and was also midway between Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Agencies.

Hinman stopped at the Brule and Yankton reservations on his way to Omaha and an organizational meeting with the full commission. They left Omaha by rail to Cheyenne, thence overland to Fort Laramie and on to Red Cloud Agency.⁴⁹ By the time they arrived on September 4, the commission had decided upon a plan of action. At Hinman's suggestion no cash sum would be offered for the Black Hills. Instead, they planned to propose governmental assistance for the Sioux in becoming ranchers. In meetings with various bands during the summer Hinman had discussed the ranching ideas with them. Most Sioux were responsive to the idea and, in his opinion, willing to sell the Black Hills.⁵⁰

The commissioners established headquarters at Fort Robinson near present Crawford, Nebraska. Almost at once they encountered difficulties. Red Cloud declared the Chadron Creek council site to be unacceptable. A postponement was necessary until a site closer to his agency could be located. Commissioners Hinman and Beauvais immediately left to search for a new meeting place. They explored the Crow Butte area, finally selecting a site on White River, 10 miles from Red Cloud Agency.⁵¹

No sooner had the new site been approved than another problem arose. Young Man Afraid of His Horses demanded a meeting with Hinman on September 9. At Hinman's request he had visited the northern Sioux and encouraged them to come to the council. For this he had been promised 100 horses and now demanded payment. H. Stull of the *Omaha Herald* described the meeting:

Interpreter: Young Man Afraid of His Horses says he wants to get the horses Mr. Hinman promised before the council is held.

Hinman: Tell him we sent a message to Washington about the horses at that time, and there has been some misunderstanding about it. We want to get them good horses and guarantee they will receive them, but it will take at least a month to get them into the country and we cannot wait. Ask them if that is satisfactory to them.⁵²

A lively discussion among the Indians followed, to which Hinman replied, "Tell him he has been gone all summer on this business and so have we, and just got back."⁵³ The Oglala still



Signers of the 1876 treaty ceding the Black Hills included Spotted Eagle (left), Fast Whirl Wind, Iron Horse, Iron White Man, Red Cloud (on horse), Hunts Horses, and No Water.

were not satisfied but finally gave in as Hinman informed them “the Great Father had ordered the horses bought at Cheyenne and afterwards changed his mind because he found that he could not get good ones there.”⁵⁴

The grand council to purchase the Black Hills convened on September 20, 1875. An estimated 10,000 to 20,000 Indians assembled to meet the Great Father’s representatives. Senator William B. Allison, commission chairman, acted as spokesman for the government. Hinman, who had been so instrumental in arranging the gathering, remained in the background. Louis Richard, who had accompanied the chiefs to Washington in May, handled the translations, although Hinman had to correct his mistakes. True to his calling, Hinman conducted “well attended and unusually interesting” worship services for the assembled Sioux.⁵⁵

Early in the proceedings it became apparent the Sioux would not relinquish the Black Hills. Exorbitant demands were made by Red Cloud, Lone Horn, Spotted Tail, and Red Dog. After governmental efforts to lease mining rights to the area failed, the council adjourned September 29 without agreeing to

anything. The commission's failure resulted in part from governmental failure to provide presents for the Sioux—something Hinman had requested in a July dispatch to the Indian Bureau. Another shortcoming, according to the *New York Herald* correspondent, was "the miserable interpretation of both the Sioux and English languages in council."⁵⁶ Why Hinman allowed men of lesser ability, such as Louis Richard, to handle the translating remains a mystery to this day.

Hinman returned to Niobrara after the council to resume his missionary work among the Santee. He also continued his task of translating Episcopal Church works into the Sioux language. Before the year ended, he published the *Book of Common Prayer* with English and Santee versions appearing on opposite pages.⁵⁷

But the Black Hills question remained unsolved. When the Allison Commission ended in failure the US Government removed cavalry forces patrolling the area. Goldseekers were then free to enter the Black Hills at their own risk. This action greatly increased the possibility of a conflict between the Sioux and miners. In early December, 1875, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Edward P. Smith ordered all Indians to report to their agencies by January 31, 1876. Those who did not would be considered hostile and dealt with accordingly.

The deadline passed without a noticeable increase in agency population. Jurisdiction of those Sioux remaining off the reservation was turned over to the military. In May a three-pronged offensive—led by Generals George Crook, Alfred H. Terry, and John Gibbon—was dispatched to remove the Indian menace. However, the Army won no decisive victories in the Sioux War of 1876. In fact, it suffered its most crushing defeat. On June 25 General Custer and his famed 7th Cavalry were decimated in Montana.⁵⁸

The nation was celebrating its centennial when Custer's fate became known. Incensed at the news, public opinion demanded a rapid conclusion to the Sioux problem. On August 15 Congress passed an appropriation bill cutting off all financial aid to the Sioux. It also provided that another commission would be appointed. Rather than negotiate, this commission would issue an ultimatum to the Indians—no more rations until they relinquished their claim to the Black Hills. H. C. Bulis, George W. Manypenny, A. G. Boon, Newton Edmunds, A. S. Gaylord and

Bishop Whipple were appointed on August 19 to meet with the Sioux.⁵⁹ Samuel D. Hinman was named the chief interpreter. Hinman's appointment was endorsed by the *New York Times* because he possessed

the great essential in an interpreter of being competent by superior education to properly translate Sioux into English, giving the ideas and the proper meaning of a Sioux orator's speech, its true and full expression and importance, something the average interpreter is unable to do, and which has frequently resulted in confusion and serious misunderstanding.⁶⁰

Although still mourning the death of his wife the previous March, Hinman again accepted governmental employment. It would give him an opportunity to work with his old teacher and friend, Bishop Whipple.

Hinman met with the full commission at a meeting in Omaha August 28, 1876. Manypenny, former commissioner of Indian Affairs, was elected chairman. Hinman reviewed negotiations of the previous summer. In light of its failure, the commission agreed not to hold one grand meeting with the Sioux. Instead, discussions would be held with headmen at the individual agencies and signatures collected one band at a time. To assist in getting the Sioux to "touch the pen," William Garrett, Todd Randall, Leon Pallardie, and Bill Dowland were employed to assist Hinman with the translating.⁶¹

The Manypenny Commission began its work at Red Cloud Agency on September 7. The chairman, with Hinman interpreting, informed the chiefs they must cede the Black Hills. No rations would be appropriated until the Sioux relocated along the Missouri River or in Indian Territory (Oklahoma). The Sioux leaders listened as the government's proposal was explained and then counceled among themselves. It was not until September 19 that they met with the commissioners again. Four days of dealings followed as Hinman and his assistants explained the provisions and urged ratification. Their efforts were rewarded on September 12 as the Oglala accepted the pact.⁶²

Three days later the Brule also consented. Spotted Tail was hesitant, wishing first to visit Indian Territory and Washington. He informed the commissioners: "I wish to have two men help me. One is the chief minister (pointing to Bishop Whipple) and the other the Reverend Mr. Hinman to settle the matter. You have the words of the Great Spirit and you try to live according

to his will."⁶³ In a three-hour evening council Spotted Tail was told travel was out of the question and the agreement must be signed at once. He complied, and with 42 of his headman accepted the agreement on September 26.⁶⁴

The treaty-makers returned to Sioux City and journeyed up the Missouri to Standing Rock Agency. They worked their way down river stopping at the various agencies. The government's demands were explained and signatures collected at each stop. Hinman supervised as headmen touched the pen, noting on each document: "I certify that the foregoing agreement was read and explained by me, and was fully understood by the above named Sioux Indians, before signing and that the same was executed by said Indians."⁶⁵

Whether the Sioux understood what they were signing or not is in dispute to this day. The important thing, so far as the commissioners were concerned, was that they signed the agreement. The commission completed its work on October 27, 1876, and returned to Yankton on the steamer *Nellie Peck*. Their agreement was presented to Congress and ratified in February, 1877. Two years of negotiations, spearheaded by Hinman, finally extinguished the Indians' claim to the Black Hills.⁶⁶

Samuel D. Hinman's later life was full of activity and controversy. In 1877 he assisted in relocating the Ponca Indians from Nebraska to Indian Territory. The same year he was selected as a delegate to the Episcopal Church General Convention in Boston.⁶⁷ Seventeen years of missionary work among the Santee ended suddenly in March, 1878, when Hinman was stripped of his post by church officials. Bishop William H. Hare of Niobrara district charged Hinman with "gross immorality, misconduct and the dishonest and unfaithful use of money entrusted to him for work of the mission."⁶⁸ Although he protested his innocence, Hinman was expelled from the reservation.

The allegations made by Bishop Hare formed the basis of a suit instigated by Hinman in February, 1880. The deposed missionary asked \$25,000 in damages accusing his former bishop of libel. The case was argued before the New York Supreme Court in the spring of 1882. It attracted considerable attention as Hinman was "the first Episcopalian who had undertaken to fight a Bishop of the Church legally."⁶⁹ The proceedings consumed six weeks and resulted in a verdict for the plaintiff in the sum of \$10,000.⁷⁰

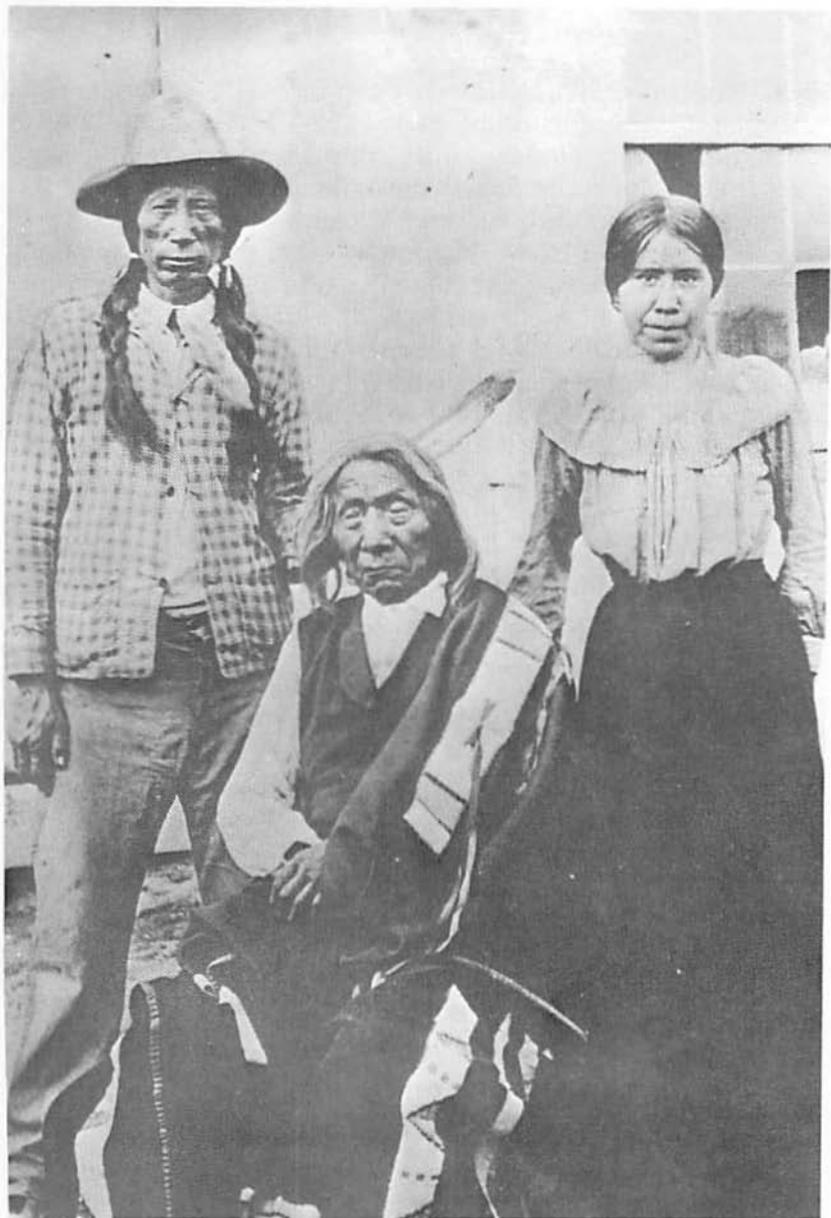
In October, 1882, Hinman returned through Dakota Territory as Census Bureau employee and as an Indian expert enroute to Montana. He stopped in Yankton to visit his old friend Newton Edmunds, then the chairman of a commission to negotiate the purchase of additional land in western Dakota. The Great Sioux Reservation was to be broken into five separate reservations and the land between the White and Big Cheyenne Rivers thrown open to white settlers. Edmunds, who knew the value of a good interpreter, suggested Hinman accompany his party. A dispute arose regarding pay, but when Edmunds offered \$10 per day plus expenses, Hinman consented to translate for the commissioners.⁷¹

In the next two months Hinman again made the rounds of the agencies. Powwows were held, promises given, and threats made to induce the Sioux to sign away more land. All who wanted to touch the pen were allowed to do so. In his zeal to aid the commission, Hinman allegedly allowed boys as young as 7 to sign the document.⁷²

Satisfied they had completed their task, Edmunds and Hinman personally laid the signed agreements before Congress in February, 1883. The Senate refused to ratify the agreement, however, and instructed the commissioners to return to Dakota and gather additional signatures.⁷³

Hinman resumed his work at Pine Ridge in April, 1883. Agent Valentine T. McGillycuddy assisted in the proceedings, which consumed most of the summer. At the same time another commission, headed by Senator Henry L. Dawes, arrived in Dakota to investigate the missionary's activities. It had been alleged that Hinman was deceiving the Sioux into signing the Edmunds agreement. Because of such reports it was agreed to suspend negotiations with the Sioux. Hinman left Pine Ridge and resumed his work for the Census Bureau.⁷⁴ Judge Peter Shannon, a member of the Edmunds Commission, told a reporter he "did not believe that he (Hinman) had misrepresented anything to the Indians."⁷⁵

Bishop Whipple persuaded Hinman to resume his missionary work in 1886. Whipple championed the idea of a single Indian community for his state to be located at Birch Coulee, near Morton. Hinman, still desiring to convert the Indians to Christianity and destroy their old ways, gladly accepted the call. After 24 years the missionary returned to the area where he had



Oglala chief Red Cloud with son and granddaughter, 1909.

begun his church work. Hinman continued to serve the Indians of Birch Coulee until his unexpected death on March 24, 1890.⁷⁶

Samuel Dutton Hinman, little-known Episcopal missionary, performed valuable services in the development of the West. As a missionary, he devoted three decades of his life to work among the Santee. He worked toward what he felt were important goals—converting the Sioux to Christianity and revising their way of life. As an explorer and later a negotiator and translator, Hinman played a major role in opening the Black Hills. He took part in all governmental dealings with the Sioux during those critical years 1874-1876. Sometimes praised for his work but often severely criticized, Hinman nonetheless deserves to be remembered for his contributions to frontier history.

NOTES

1. H. B. Whipple, *Light and Shadows of a Long Episcopate* (New York: McMillan Company, 1912); William W. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, (St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society, 1969), 474.
2. Wayne E. Webb, *Redwood: The Story of A County* (St. Paul: North Central Publishing Company, 1963), 54.
3. Whipple, *Light and Shadows of a Long Episcopate*, 133.
4. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 113; Roy W. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 137-138.
5. William Welsh, *Taopi and His Friends, Or the Indians, Wrongs and Rights* (Philadelphia: Claxton Press, 1869), vii.
6. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 146.
7. Welsh, *Taopi and His Friends*, 2-3.
8. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 159-60.
9. James C. Olson *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 76; George Hyde, *Red Cloud's Folk: A History of the Oglala Sioux Indians* (Norman, Oklahoma Press, 1937), 166-167.
10. Welsh, *Taopi and His Friends*, 1-2.
11. Samuel D. Hinman, *Journal of the Reverend S. D. Hinman* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society), 48.
12. Woodruff, *Episcopal Mission to the Dakotas*, 563. The first marriage performed in the Sioux language by Samuel Hinman took place July 10, 1870. The minister united Frank Vassar and Mary Tasaggluduta in the ceremony.
13. *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, July 3, 1874, reprinted in Herbert Krause and Gary D. Olson, *Prelude to Glory* (Sioux Falls: Brevet Press, 1974), 42.
14. Whipple, *Lights and Shadows of A Long Episcopate*, 318-331.
15. William H. Hare, to Columbus Delano, "Report of the Sioux Commission," November 28, 1874, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1874, National Archives Record Group No. 75.
16. *Ibid.*, 1.
17. *Ibid.*, 90-91.
18. *Ibid.*, 92.
19. *Ibid.*, 93.
20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*, 94-95.
23. *Ibid.*, 95.
24. S. D. Hinman to Columbus Delano, September 18, 1874, *National Archives and Record Service*, Record Group 48, Letters Received, Indian Division.
25. Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, 173: "Professor Winchell's Report on the Black Hills," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, September 10, 1874, 5; also a related article on 4.
26. Watson Parker, *Gold in the Black Hills* (Norman: University of Oklahoma press, 1966), 30-36, 44, 63-66.
27. Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, 178, 183.
28. *New York Times*, May 20, 1875, 1.
29. *Ibid.*, May 26, 1875, 10.
30. *Ibid.*
31. "The Black Hills," *New York Times*, June 6, 1875, 7.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Dakota Republican*, June 17, 1875, 2. Other articles critical of Hinman's position can be found in *Yankton* (South Dakota) *Press and Dakotian*, June 25, 1875, 2; and *Sioux City Journal*, June 11, 1875, 1.
34. *Omaha Herald*, May 27, 1875, 1; *Yankton Press and Dakotian*, May 28, 1875, 2, June 1, 1875, 2, June 6, 1875, 2; *New York Times*, June 6, 1875, 2.
35. *Yankton Press and Dakotian*, June 6, 1875, 4.
36. *Sioux City Journal*, June 10, 1875, 2.
37. Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, 201-203.
38. *Yankton Press and Dakotian*, June 14, 1875, 1; June 19, 1875, 1.
39. *Ibid.*, June 14, 1875, 4.
40. *Yankton Press and Dakotian*, June 25, 1875, 4.
41. "What the Rev. S. D. Hinman Really Said," *Yankton Press and Dakotian*, June 25, 1875, 2.
42. *New York Times*, July 20, 1875, 1.
43. *Yankton Press and Dakotian*, July 22, 1875, 2; *New York Times*, July 22, 1875, 5; *Sioux City Journal*, July 24, 1875, 1.
44. *Sioux City Journal*, August 1, 1875, 4.
45. *Yankton Press and Dakotian*, August 14, 1875, 2.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Yankton Press and Dakotian*, August 17, 1875, 2.
48. *Omaha Herald*, August 14, 1875, 2.
49. *Yankton Press and Dakotian*, August 17, 1875, 4; August 1, 1875, 4; August 25, 1875, 4; *Sioux City Daily Journal*, August 18, 1875, 1; August 19, 1875, 1.
50. *Omaha Herald*, September 13, 1875, 2; *Yankton Press and Dakotian*, September 7, 1875, 1.
51. *Yankton Press and Dakotian*, September 14, 1875, 2; *St. Paul Daily Pioneer Press*, September 12, 1875, 1.
52. *Omaha Herald*, September 17, 1875, 2.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Omaha Herald*, September 16, 1875, 2.
56. *New York Herald*, reprinted in *Yankton Press and Dakotian*, October 21, 1875, 2.
57. S. D. Hinman and J.W. Cook, translators, *Book of Common Prayer*, copy in Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul.
58. An account of the events of 1875-1876 can be found in Parker, *Gold in the Black Hills*, 24-28, and Herbert S. Schell, *History of South Dakota* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 133-139.

59. *New York Times*, August 19, 1876, 1.
60. *New York Times*, September 18, 1876, 5. The article pointed out that Hinman "has been a member of every commission sent out the last four or five years to treat with the Sioux."
61. *New York Times*, September 10, 1876, 1.
62. Don C. Clowser, *Dakota Indian Treaties*, (Deadwood, South Dakota, 1974), 215-222.
63. *New York Times*, September 27, 1876, 5.
64. *Ibid.*
65. Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 949-954.
66. *Dakota Republican*, November 2, 1876, 2; Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, 228; *Sioux City Daily Journal*, October 28, 1876, 1.
67. Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 1039-1040. For a full account of the Ponca issue see "Ponca Publicity," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 1, 43, 435; K. Brent Woodruff, "The Episcopal Mission to the Dakotas," *South Dakota Historical Collections*, 1934.
68. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 179-180.
69. *New York Times*, March 8, 1882, 3.
70. *New York Times*, April 15, 1882, 3. The *Times* followed the libel suit closely. From the beginning of the trial in March, 1882, until the conclusion, numerous columns were devoted to the case.
71. Hyde, *A Sioux Chronicle*, 113-114; Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, 290.
72. Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, 290.
73. Hyde, *A Sioux Chronicle*, 137-138.
74. *Ibid.*, 137-140.
75. *New York Times*, September 9, 1882, 2.
76. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 290.