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Article Summary: The surrender of Crazy Horse and the members of his village at the Red Cloud Agency in May 1877 marked the end of the Great Sioux War. The author explores the influence of Lakota political organization and kinship networks on Crazy Horse's decision to accept reservation life.

Cataloging Information:

Names: Nelson A Miles, Lame Deer, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, George Crook, George A Custer, Rankard S Mackenzie, Hunts the Enemy, Spotted Tail, Rutherford B Hayes, Young Man Afraid of His Horses, American Horse, Yellow Bear, Roman Nose, Black Shield

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Photographs / Images: map of Sioux War Country, Fall 1876-Spring 1877; illustration: Battle of Wolf Mountains, *Army and Navy Journal*, May 5, 1877; Little Big Man; Touch the Clouds; Red Dog's village at Red Cloud Agency, American Horse; Hunts the Enemy, Red Cloud's nephew, who later took the name George Sword; Swift Bear; Spotted Tail; "Delegation of Sioux Indians who made the treaty whereby the Black Hills were surrendered to the US Government": Yellow Bear, Interpreter Jose Merrivale, Interpreter Billy Garnett, Interpreter Leon Pallardy, Three Bears, He Dog, Little Wound, American Horse, Little Big Man, Young Man Afraid of His Horses, Hunts the Enemy (George Sword); He Dog

CRAZY HORSE

and the End of the Great Sioux War

By Kingsley M. Bray

As new grass greened the northern Plains in the first week of May 1877, events signaled the end of Indian resistance in the Great Sioux War. On May 7, Col. Nelson A. Miles dealt a decisive blow against *Lame Deer's* village, the last group of Sioux to try and maintain the old nomadic life in the Lakota hunting grounds of the Powder River Country. Two hundred and fifty miles northward, where the invisible medicine line of the Forty-ninth Parallel offered a haven from U.S. military pursuit, a larger body of Sioux followed *Sitting Bull* into exile in Canada. And far to the south, thousands more Sioux and Cheyennes succumbed to the inevitable and surrendered at the garrisons of the Sioux Reservation. The mass capitulations climaxed on Sunday, May 6, when *Crazy Horse*, the greatest Lakota war leader of his generation, led his village into *Red Cloud Agency* and symbolically surrendered three Winchester rifles. The Sioux War was over.¹

A wealth of Indian testimony exists that enables us to understand the Great Sioux War from Indian perspectives. Sioux and Cheyenne combatants, and their relatives who served as army scouts or acted as peace negotiators, have left a vast body of source material from which we can reconstruct Indian motivations. Some of these accounts are the result of military debriefings within weeks of the events which they describe; others are recollections recorded by the pioneer

historians of the Indian wars early in the twentieth century. Like all historical sources they need rigorous evaluation and careful weighing to detect bias and inconsistency. The special problems posed by translation must always be borne in mind in Indian history.

I shall attempt to formulate an Indian perspective on the late stages of the Sioux War, and in particular to trace the processes and events that led to the surrender of *Crazy Horse* on that distant spring afternoon. Other authors have addressed the late phases of the Sioux War from a military perspective, or attempted to understand something of the complexities of Indian politics in both the agency and non-agency camps.² Here the use of previously untapped documents, viewed through the prism of Lakota political organization and kinship networks, aims to create a perspective from within the *Crazy Horse* village, and to map more closely than ever before the sequence of events as they unfolded week by week until surrender became inevitable.

The Sioux War of 1876–77 grew out of years of mounting frustration between the United States and the hunting bands of Sioux and Northern Cheyennes, who roamed the Powder River Country between the Black Hills and the Big Horn Mountains. The discovery of gold in the Black Hills powered high command voices that wished a military solution to the "Sioux Problem." After the hunting bands declined to report to the agencies of the Great Sioux Reservation, where a majority of the Sioux already lived, the army was turned loose in spring 1876.

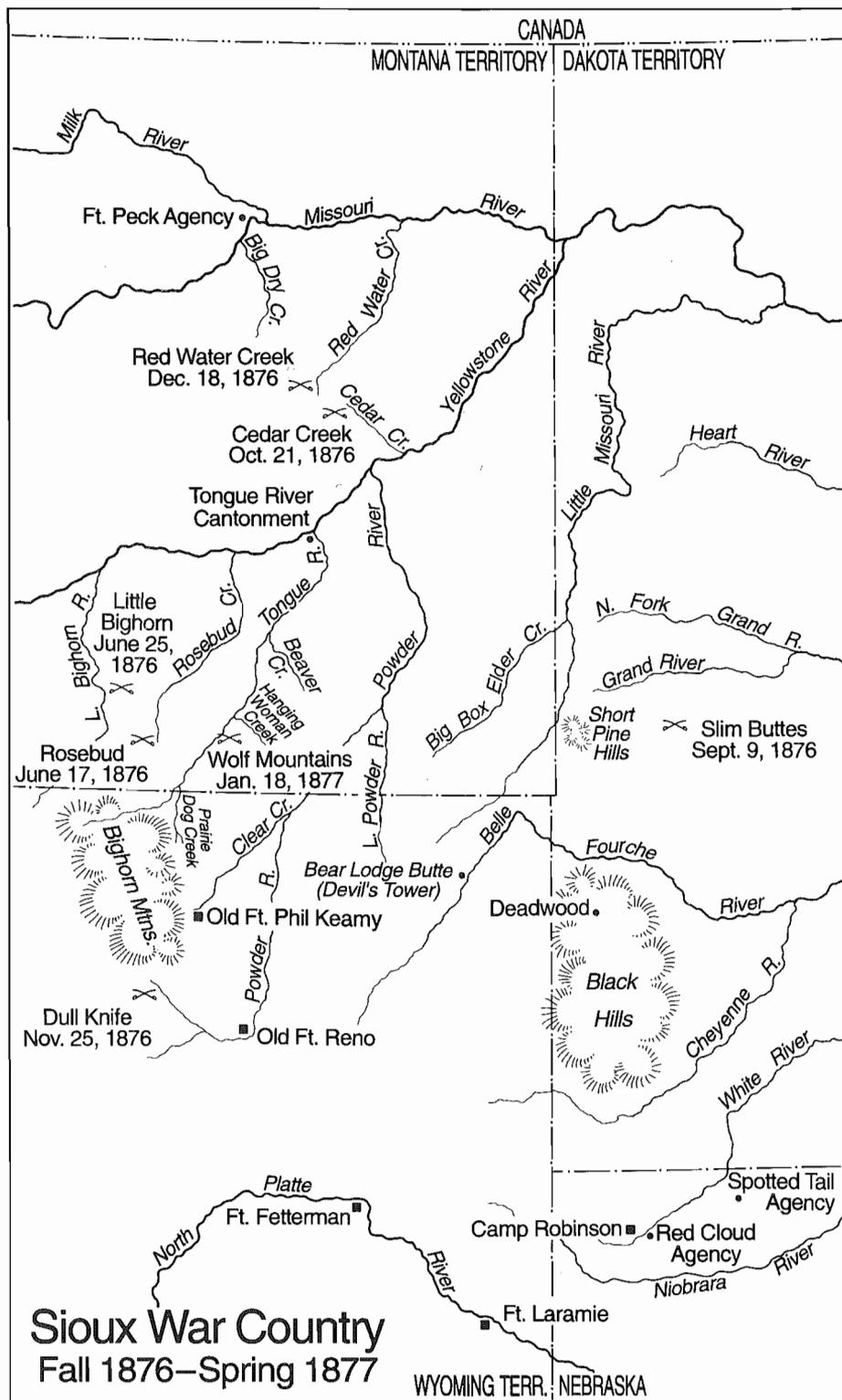
To a centennial nation's bewilderment, the coalition of Sioux and Cheyennes responded by defeating the forces of Gen. George Crook at the Battle of the Rosebud on June 17, and barely one week later, annihilating the immediate command of Lt. Col. George A. Custer on the Little Bighorn River. For several critical weeks the stunned columns of Crook and of Custer's superior, Gen. Alfred H. Terry, lay becalmed at base camps, freeing the Indian coalition to move off after buffalo.

By midsummer that coalition numbered upwards of one thousand lodges, housing six thousand people and at least 1,500 adult males. About one half of this number, the "winter roamers," lived in the hunting grounds year-round, shunning the reservation and its culture of dependence. Each spring they were strengthened by the arrival of the "summer roamers," bands that spent the cold months at the agencies, drawing rations with their reservation kin. At the head of the coalition stood two leaders of outstanding character and ability, with keen strategic insight and total commitment to the hunting life: *Sitting Bull*, holy man of the Hunkpapa division of Sioux; and *Crazy Horse*, war chief of the Oglalas. Together these two leaders had worked hard to foster a spirit of solidarity in total rejection of reservation life, and to forge an autonomous tribal identity for the disparate hunting bands as a new Sioux division, the Northern Nation.³

By fall the Northern Nation could no longer remain united, however. Typically this was a season of dispersal, as game became scattered. Summer roaming bands usually drifted in to the agen-

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Crazy Horse



cies ahead of cold weather. And with the regrouping of the demoralized columns of Crook and Terry, the coalition finally faced a slow, dogged pursuit. Faced with these realities, the coalition gradually broke up into four blocs. By late November these blocs were occupying distinct districts and pursuing different strategies regarding the war. Farthest south was the main Cheyenne village, at least 183 lodges. Having made fall buffalo hunts in the upper Bighorn Valley, it had retired to winter quarters in the southern reaches of the Big Horn Mountains, probably hoping to sit out further military operations.

Farthest north, Sitting Bull's Hunkpapas and their associates, aggregating about 230 lodges, had gravitated beyond the Missouri to attempt trade both at Fort Peck and with the Canadian Métis. Although no Hunkpapas approved peace negotiations with the Americans, a minority favored a complete withdrawal from the war zone. Fifty-seven lodges, led by headmen Iron Dog, Long Dog, Little Knife, and Lodge Pole, had crossed into Grandmother's Land—the British possessions of Queen Victoria—early in November. There they could make fall hunts without further interference and plan cold-weather operations secure from pursuit.⁴

Largest of the blocs was that of the Miniconjous and Sans Arcs. Even after a modest surrender at Cheyenne River Agency following negotiations and hostage taking by Col. Nelson A. Miles, this village counted perhaps 380 lodges. It also remained deepest divided over the issue of war. Although its leadership forbade further surrender at the agencies, by early December a strong peace movement favored reopening talks with Miles, possibly to explore his floating the idea of relocating their home agency from the mouth to the forks of Cheyenne River, nearer the hunting grounds and the Black Hills. Locating close to Miles's headquarters at the junction of the Yellowstone and Tongue rivers, this village was attracting moderates from Crazy Horse's Oglalas.⁵

The Crazy Horse village, comprising about 250 lodges of Oglalas, Brulés, straggling Cheyennes, and others, was located in the middle Tongue River valley. Crazy Horse, thirty-six years old and utterly fearless, was the inspiration of the battlefield. His bravery in the Custer battle was already legendary; his generosity, mysticism, and normal peacetime reserve lent him the charisma of enigma. As Oglala war chief, Crazy Horse was in tight control of his village through the *akicita* police, which enforced council decisions. During the fall, as news from the agencies dwelled on pony and arms confiscations, the arrest of incoming “hostiles,” and the surrender of Lakota rights to the Black Hills and the Powder River Country, Crazy Horse’s rhetoric had hardened against capitulation to the Americans. The council passed a ruling that no movement be permitted to the agencies. *Akicita* leaders were entrusted with punitive powers to enforce the order, empowered to beat offenders, destroy their property, and kill their horses.

Concerned at the potential fragmentation of the coalition, Crazy Horse sent runners to arrange talks with Sitting Bull, but the first big army victory of the war forced a new process of reconsolidation. On November 25 Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie’s command surprised the Cheyenne village in the Big Horns, killing over forty people and driving the half-clothed survivors into the frozen Wyoming mountains. The Cheyennes, suffering terrible hardships, moved north to contact Crazy Horse’s village. On December 6 the ragged vanguard of Cheyennes found the Oglalas encamped high up Beaver Creek, an east tributary of Tongue River barely sixty miles from Miles’s Tongue River Cantonment.

The Oglala reception of the defeated Cheyennes was controversial. According to Wooden Leg:

The Oglala Sioux received us hospitably. They had not been disturbed by soldiers, so they had good lodges and plenty of meat and robes. They first assembled us in a great body and fed us all we wanted to eat. To all of the women who needed other food they gave a supply. They gave us

robes and blankets. They shared with us their tobacco. Gift horses came to us. Every married woman got skins enough to make some kind of lodge for her household.⁶

Wooden Leg’s account typifies one pole of Cheyenne opinion. Significantly, he belonged to the winter roamer Cheyennes and lived in a small kindred that had spent all fall with Crazy Horse. Young Two Moons, another warrior belonging to the non-agency Cheyennes, also remembered that the Oglalas fitted out the refugees with “lodges, robes, and pack saddles—and fitted them out well.”⁷

On the other hand, Cheyennes with stronger ties to the agencies told a less favorable story. Crazy Horse “received them with very slight manifestations of pity,” reported Cheyennes surrendering the following spring, “and made them feel that their presence in his camp was only tolerated and not desired.”⁸ Arapaho Chief recalled that the Sioux “gave [the Cheyennes] nothing,” forcing them to trade for the “few small lodges” they received. And Little Wolf, a principal chief of the Cheyennes, singled out Crazy Horse himself as without “compassion” for the refugees.⁹

A rather complex process was clearly at work. After initial feasting in Crazy Horse’s village, Oglala compassion quickly became selective, targeted at non-agency Cheyennes. Black Elk’s recollection, that Oglala men “went from camp to camp to collect clothes and tipis for the Cheyennes,” indicates that the *akicita* became the main channel of redistribution. *Akicita* donors would seek to bind Cheyenne recipients to agreeing to the no-surrender line. Indeed, in intertribal councils the Sioux recognized Black Moccasin and his nephew Ice as principal Cheyenne leaders, marginalizing the position of such moderate leaders as Dull Knife and Standing Elk.¹⁰

Crazy Horse seized upon the Cheyenne disaster to reinforce his anti-agency ideology. One hundred and fifty Indian scouts enlisted at Red Cloud Agency had led Mackenzie to the Cheyenne village, a point not lost on hardliners. Moreover, the reinforcements brought by the Chey-

ennes encouraged Crazy Horse in a growing conviction that he need not sit out the war. The war chief had already sent runners to invite Sitting Bull back to the hunting grounds south of the Yellowstone. Alone among the Northern Nation leaders, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse grasped the strategic challenge posed by Miles. Miles’s plan was to isolate the Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse groups, then break them piecemeal. Both chiefs sought to keep the two wings of the Northern Nation close enough for ready communication. The Hunkpapa chief had spent a few days of intensive trading with the Métis, but on December 7 he recrossed to the south side of the frozen Missouri, heading toward a new rendezvous with Crazy Horse. With his column was a train of mules packing fifty boxes of fixed ammunition, the fruit of the Métis trade.

Nevertheless, Sitting Bull could not dictate to his followers, and even as he turned southward, a further fifty-two lodges, led by Black Moon, White Guts, and Crawler, opted for refuge in Canada. The 109 lodges now in Grandmother’s Land constituted almost half of the non-agency Hunkpapas. Sitting Bull remained in control of the main Hunkpapa village, 122 lodges, but on December 18 Lt. Frank D. Baldwin caught Sitting Bull unaware near the head of Redwater Creek. The Hunkpapas scattered over the frozen plains between the Missouri and the Yellowstone. Although he captured the camp and seized vital winter supplies, Baldwin failed to inflict casualties or to capture the ammunition pack train. By the last days of December the Sitting Bull village was regrouping on the lower Powder, but the time lost in refitting prevented the rapid journey to Crazy Horse that the Hunkpapa chief had planned.¹¹

The Crazy Horse village had by this time received other reinforcements. On December 16 five headmen from the Miniconjou-Sans Arc village were shot down by Crow army scouts as they approached Tongue River Cantonment to reopen talks with Miles. The peace

Crazy Horse

movement was immediately discredited, and the village leadership resumed total control. This leadership was vested in four chiefs known as Deciders (*wakicunze*), who were granted temporary control of the village. Spotted Eagle, of the Sans Arcs, was the principal chief; his fellow Deciders were Red Bear, another Sans Arc, and the Miniconjou Lama Deer and Black Shield—four of the most vehement opponents of agency life. Ignoring placatory messages from Miles, the Deciders ordered the village to leave the Yellowstone Valley immediately. They hurried southwest to join Crazy Horse, finding the Oglalas and Cheyennes in a new wintering site just below where Hanging Woman Creek joins the Tongue.¹²

By about December 20 four villages, roughly equal in size, were established at Hanging Woman: Oglala, Cheyenne, Miniconjou, and Sans Arc. Numbering over eight hundred standard lodges, this massive winter gathering included most of the summer strength of the Northern Nation, since significant defections had been prevented by the soldiers' lodge. White Eagle, a headman related to one of Miles's hostages, had made several attempts to leave the Sans Arc village with his four lodges of kin, but each time *akicita* drove him back.¹³

Crazy Horse again seized upon the killing of the peace talkers to swing moderate opinion behind his war front. Vowing revenge upon the Crows, he personally scouted Tongue River Cantonment, but found Miles had dismissed the offending scouts. He returned to Hanging Woman to plan a more ambitious campaign. He proposed to take the offensive, crush Miles, and win back the hunting grounds of the Northern Nation. By the last week of December the strategy had taken shape. Fifty Oglala and Cheyenne warriors were sent to harry the cantonment and draw Miles up the Tongue into a massive ambush to be staged somewhere in the upper valley.¹⁴

Always a precarious tactic, the decoy plan depended on careful coordination. To ensure surprise, the soldiers' lodge

even tried to keep the plan secret from the women. The last thing Crazy Horse needed was village dissension. When a new peace movement emerged in the Miniconjou and Sans Arc villages, he moved swiftly to nip it in the bud. The peace party grew in response to the arrival, about December 23, of two delegates from Cheyenne River Agency. The envoys were Important Man, a Miniconjou headman and brother to hostage Bull Eagle, and Fool Bear, a Sans Arc. They carried tobacco from Lt. Col. George P. Buell, commanding the post overseeing Cheyenne River, but his terms were flatly unconditional: Surrendering parties must give up all horses and arms. The delegates' candid account of the military takeover on the reservation caused much unease, some listeners declaring "they never would submit [on such terms] . . . as long as they lived."¹⁵

At councils and feasts held throughout the villages, the delegates found that the "Sans Arcs and Minneconjoux were disposed to listen to a little kind talk from us, but the Cheyennes and Ogallalas would not listen, and abused us very much."¹⁶ Red Bear, the Sans Arc Decider, chided them with American bad faith: "My friend, we sent a man, your own brother, to the whites, to see on what terms they would let us come in, but they have kept [the hostages] in prison and sent you here, and want us to come in and deliver ourselves up to release them." The delegates also spoke to Yellow Grass, a holy man who claimed to be in "constant communion with the spirit of General Custer," even taking his Lakota name of Long Hair. Yellow Grass had access to sources of ammunition, for he was conjuring cases of the stuff at night feasts. Speaking as a former moderate converted to the war faction, he said that he had been "a great friend of the whites, living around the traders a great deal, in the old times . . . but now I see they are determined to destroy all our peace and happiness, and my advice will be to my people, as long as I live, never to submit to the whites."¹⁷

As this council closed, Important

Man and Fool Bear went to visit the families of the hostages. Suddenly Crazy Horse appeared. Without constituted authority, in a private lodge outside his own village, the war chief warned the delegates they "would never be allowed to take anyone from that camp. If any left they would be followed and killed."¹⁸ His willingness to claim authority beyond the Oglala village demonstrated his determination to preserve the war front at all costs. The decoy party was now enroute to Tongue River Cantonment, and Crazy Horse would not tolerate desertions.

Nevertheless the delegates continued to whittle at Miniconjou-Sans Arc solidarity. About December 25 they slipped out of the village after nightfall with thirteen lodges: "We got quite a ways, supposing we had got away, when all at once 'Crazy Horse['] appeared with a good many warriors, who shot all our horses, took our arms and knives, and all our plunder, and then told us if we wanted to go to the whites to go on, but the snow was so deep we could not travel without horses, and we had to return to the hostile camp."¹⁹

The following day, undaunted, the delegates sought to secure village consensus for a daylight departure. At least 150 lodges, almost one-half the strength of the combined Miniconjou and Sans Arcs, were now willing to leave for Cheyenne River, perhaps alienated by the highhanded manner adopted by Crazy Horse. But when the *akicita* deployed in force, "and told us no Indians could leave that camp alive," the movement petered out. *Akicita* speakers ordered Important Man and Fool Bear to leave the village. They departed, but returned singly by night to toll away four lodges, close relatives of the hostages. As an indicator of the way the wind sat in the Miniconjou village, headman Spotted Elk sent word by the delegates "that he would like to come in if his horses and arms would not be taken from him."²⁰

Meanwhile the decoy party had reached Miles's post. On December 26

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they drove off 150 head from the beef contractor's herd. Miles was quite as determined as Crazy Horse to end the war swiftly. His column of over four hundred infantry began the march up Tongue River on December 29, exchanging gunfire with the decoys on January 1 and 3, 1877. On January 6, as the column approached Hanging Woman Creek, it passed the just deserted village sites. The ambush plan called for the villagers to move higher up the Tongue toward the Big Horn foothills, where a surprise attack would be easier.

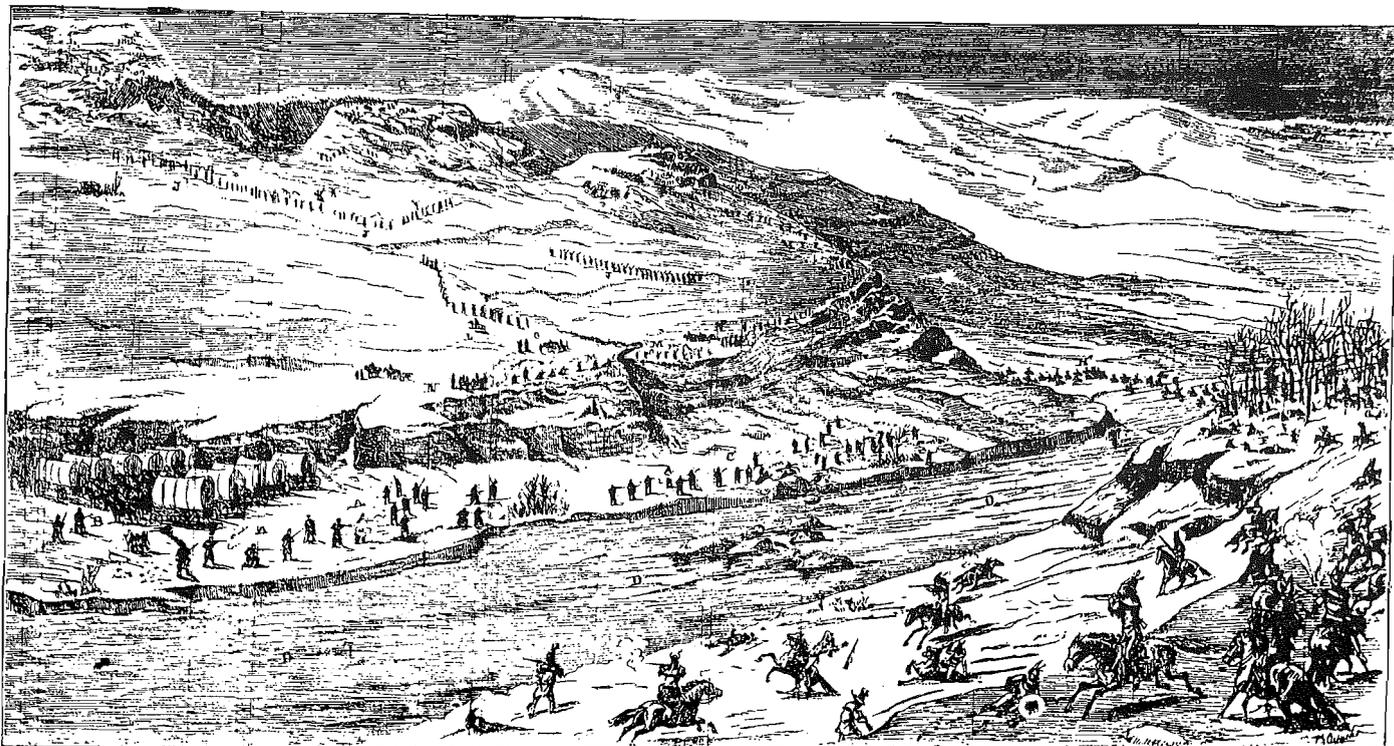
The fragmentary Indian reports and oral histories indicate that dissension continued to threaten the unity of the war front. Upon striking the lodges, part of the Indians headed up Tongue River, part ascended Hanging Woman. Crazy Horse's Oglalas and most of the Cheyennes, including war leaders Ice and Two Moons, were with the Tongue River group, clearly the core of the war faction. Smaller numbers of Cheyennes and

other Sioux took the eastern trail. When Miles's scouts captured a small party of Cheyenne women and children on January 7, however, the two groups hurried to reunite on the Tongue. Disagreement continued on how to free the captives. The Cheyenne White Frog recalled that a party of Sioux "went back to meet Miles and [to] fight or make peace," perhaps reflecting an uneasy compromise between war leaders and moderates.²¹

The party attempted no negotiations; however, over two hundred warriors engaged in a spirited skirmish at dusk until darkness and several artillery rounds dispersed them. That night *akicita* meetings backed Crazy Horse's demand for a full-scale assault on Miles. But disagreement continued. Some argued that the decoys should continue their operations until Miles entered the broken country. Others urged an immediate ambush between Miles's present camp at Belly Butte and the breaks of Wall Creek. Crazy Horse clearly favored the latter option, and

early on January 8 he led out some five hundred warriors, about half the total force, identified as Oglalas and Cheyennes. The rest, evidently the majority of the Miniconjous and Sans Arcs, stayed behind. Perhaps angrily, Crazy Horse "directed the Indians to go down and meet [Miles] . . . or else move camp."²²

The Battle of Wolf Mountains opened as war party organization collapsed and a rush of warriors alerted Miles that he was under serious attack. Crazy Horse and the other leaders—fellow Oglala Little Big Man, Hump (a Miniconjou *akicita* leader strongly identified with the Oglala war front), and the Cheyennes Ice and Two Moons—sought to control the assault by dividing the force. Oglala warriors took the west side of Tongue River, and Cheyennes attacked from the east. Crazy Horse had his pony shot from under him in one charge. The leaders signaled maneuvers on shrill eagle bone whistles, but despite a spirited attack the warriors could not dis-



The Battle of Wolf Mountains. *Army and Navy Journal*, May 5, 1877

Crazy Horse

lodge Miles from his defensive positions, especially when his artillery began to find the range. As afternoon drew on a blizzard arose, forcing the Indians to disengage and withdraw upstream. Four warriors, including Crazy Horse himself, performed as rearguards while the main party retreated.²³

As the warriors engaged Miles the villages pressed on up the Tongue, marching through the night and the next day before relocating in a strong defensive position late on January 9. Here at the junction of the Tongue and Prairie Dog Creek (near the modern Montana-Wyoming boundary) the rearguard returned on January 10 to report that Miles had turned back to the cantonment. Miles's withdrawal gave the villages time to regroup and muster resources. Scouts brought still more good news: Buffalo were plentiful "some miles below" the new site, and the jubilant hunters were able to concentrate on making surrounds to replace depleted stores and horse meat rations.²⁴

The presence of game relieved the pressure on the war front, temporarily silencing voices that urged negotiation and surrender. The villages were now grouped in two equal-sized clusters: probably one of Oglalas and Cheyennes, and one of Miniconjous and Sans Arcs. One week after Wolf Mountains the war front received another fillip. Sitting Bull made his delayed arrival on January 15 with about one hundred Hunkpapa lodges, the ammunition pack train, and a fund of scare stories from the agencies. Immediately morale was revived in a flurry of feasts, dances, and councils. "The Heralds harangued through the camp, directing all the Indians to get themselves in good condition for fighting, saying: 'You see, by going to the whites, you will be put in the guard house and held as prisoners.'"²⁵

Sitting Bull presided over the distribution of the ammunition, as well as blankets, beads, and tobacco, at village giveaways. "I got some of the cartridges and also some tobacco," reported Eagle Shield. "I got about thirty [needle gun



Little Big Man. NSHS-B774-25

cartridges]. Others got more than I did." Eagle Shield's grandfather, Miniconjou Decider Black Shield, was glad of the revival of the war spirit, stating "he wants to fight—wants war."²⁶ Others were able to use Sitting Bull's ammunition to further the war front's aims. The holy man Yellow Grass revived his night rituals,

conjuring up no less than ten boxes of cartridges at one meeting.²⁷

Yet Sitting Bull's arrival posed new questions for the Northern Nation. What was the coalition's long-term strategy? Did it intend to try and remain in the Lakota hunting grounds this year, despite the certainty of renewed cam-

painging in spring? At inter-village councils Sitting Bull declared his intention to return north of the Missouri, to trade again with the Canadian Métis, and to “induce the Red River Indians [Assiniboins and Crees] to join the hostiles.”²⁸ Carefully worded, this plan left open his subsequent intentions—a return to the war zone, or regrouping in Canada. Although Sitting Bull remained committed to maintaining the coalition, many Hunkpapa headmen were becoming convinced they should join their relatives in Grandmother’s Land. Four Horns, Hunkpapa peace chief and Sitting Bull’s uncle, most clearly articulated this view.

However nuanced, Hunkpapa opinion was united on a bottom line: no negotiations with Americans, no surrenders at the agencies. Contrasting with Hunkpapa unity, the Miniconjous and Sans Arcs remained deeply polarized over these issues. The village leadership was committed to keeping up the war, but of the Deciders only the Sans Arc Spotted Eagle supported a move to Canada. A number of lesser headmen and war leaders—notably the Miniconjous Flying By and Red Thunder and the Sans Arc Turning Bear—drew closer to Spotted Eagle over the issue. Still other headmen favored peace talks. Eagle Shield, who deserted the village about January 17, summed up their mood after he arrived at Cheyenne River Agency: “Many would come in now if the Indian soldiers would not prevent them.” Like him, they “do not want to fight do not want to see any more war . . . I heard that [they were] . . . willing to make a treaty provided they can retain all their country and the whites will move out of it.”²⁹

One of the key players in the re-emerging peace party was Miniconjou headman Red Horse, a brother-in-law of Crazy Horse himself. Recalling a visit to Cheyenne River, with its regular rations and security, Red Horse spoke up in open council and “told Crazy Horse in presence of his soldiers” that he recognized the U.S. President as his Great Fa-

ther—conceding the U.S. government a kinship status denied by hardliners. In his experience, he continued, the whites were “ready to feed the hungry and clothe the naked.”³⁰ Other peace proponents were leaders who had fled Cheyenne River Agency after the military takeover to preserve their pony



Touch the Clouds. NSHS-I392-442

herds from confiscation. They included Miniconjous Spotted Elk, his brother Touch the Clouds, and their relative Roman Nose; and White Eagle of the Sans Arcs. All feared pony and arms confiscations, but all agreed that Canada held no attractions. Their stipulation that peace must entail American withdrawal from the hunting grounds was unrealistic, but may have been floated to bring on board hardliners who supported the war, but did not seriously consider exile in Canada.

The peace party had numbered 150 lodges of Miniconjous and Sans Arcs in late December. Regrouping after Wolf Mountains, it was finding new support in the hitherto united Oglala village. On January 16 two Brulés, Charging Horse and Make Them Stand Up, were sent to Spotted Tail Agency “to get the news” and to ask that Brulé head chief Spotted Tail “go there to them with tobacco.” They were to state that Spotted Tail’s people and theirs were “one and the same,” and assure agency chiefs and army officers that a peace embassy would net large-scale surrenders.³¹

Just what body authorized these messengers is unclear. Since it was clearly not any of the hardline village organizations, they were probably deputed at a feast of moderate headmen held in a private lodge. Brulés were certainly present; the later actions of Touch the Clouds and Roman Nose suggest that they also may have sponsored the message. Spider, an Oglala headman and half-brother to agency head chief Red Cloud, may also have been represented in the talks.³²

Thus by late January two opposing strategies were cohering: One rejected all U.S. dialog and favored regrouping in the safety of the British possessions; the other urged peace talks through reservation intermediaries. Together, the two factions probably accounted for only half the total strength of the Sioux in the Tongue River villages. Crazy Horse himself, together with almost all Oglalas and Cheyennes, plus significant numbers of Miniconjous and Sans Arcs, belonged in neither faction. For them, continued occupation of the Powder River hunting grounds remained the prime objective.

Crazy Horse had never visited the agencies, rejecting all invitations to counsel with reservation leaders. He realized that surrender would constitute a political minefield for any Northern leader committed to maintaining a position independent of the agency hierarchy. Canada, however, offered no solutions. The country north of the Missouri had been opened to Sioux expansion

Crazy Horse

by the Hunkpapas: Sitting Bull's people would claim primacy in dealing with Canadian officials, marginalizing Oglala leaders. Hence Crazy Horse's determination to maintain the Northern Nation in its traditional hunting grounds.

Despite enjoying greater initial support than the other factions, Crazy Horse's position gradually became untenable. Serious cracks were now appearing in the Oglala front. On January 24 a minor headman named Red Sack unexpectedly found himself invited to the Oglala council tipi. The councilors formally deputed him to go immediately to Red Cloud Agency—hitherto entirely off limits—to ascertain how matters were and to return and let them know as soon as possible.³³ Red Sack's mission represented a radical departure. Unlike the two Brulé messengers, Red Sack formally represented the Oglala village organization. It is impossible that the mission had the backing of Crazy

Horse, but elders and moderate leaders such as No Water may have pressed the issue until the war chief withdrew opposition to preserve solidarity.³⁴

About the same time as Red Sack's departure, one even more controversial took place. Some fifteen lodges of Brulés, Oglalas, and Miniconjous slipped away to surrender at Spotted Tail Agency. Led by Eagle Pipe, a Brulé, and the Oglala Spider, they had made an earlier attempt to leave, but had their arms and ponies confiscated by the *akicita*. Relatives secretly outfitted the party with fifty-four horses and a handful of guns. After eluding detection they headed east, their tiny procession floundering through deep snows.³⁵

Within a day or so further defections revealed the depth of the crisis faced by the war front. At a soldiers' lodge feast Red Horse told Crazy Horse to his face, "I was going where the whites lived and [would] give myself up to them. I told

him he must not send his soldiers to intercept me, better for his cause if he did not for . . . there are many of his own people who [are] like me."³⁶ Crazy Horse offered no immediate objection, but Red Horse and his supporters had learned the lessons of December and laid careful plans. Both Red Horse and White Eagle visited the tipis of their personal followings, advising them to steal away at night and to rendezvous on Powder River.

A few lodges slipped away, evidently including the kindred of Spotted Elk. Red Horse was successful in invoking his relationship as brother-in-law to Crazy Horse, meeting no resistance as he departed about January 28. But as White Eagle's womenfolk completed their packing, Crazy Horse led "about a hundred of his soldiers, [and] surrounded my camp. Some of them dismounted, entered our lodges and took our guns . . . I was very angry then at the



Red Dog's village at Red Cloud Agency. NSHS-B774-48

soldiers, and pulled down my lodge and started right in the face of them. They shot down two of my horses, but I moved on.” Altogether some thirty-nine lodges, 229 people, left with the three headmen for Cheyenne River Agency.³⁷

So far the desertions were small-scale, but stark realities meant that the massive winter gathering on Tongue River would have to break up. Even in bountiful summer such a huge camp could not remain together long; in winter the scattering of game dictated dispersal. The Hunkpapas were keen to move north, and about January 25 Sitting Bull led some fifty lodges out of the camp. Although many Hunkpapas continued to press for immediate retreat into Canada, Sitting Bull did his best to maintain coalition solidarity. He announced that he would camp at the forks of Powder River; and he and Crazy Horse agreed on a later rendezvous at Blue Earth Creek, an east tributary of the lower Powder. Final decisions about the increasingly divisive issue of Canada could wait till then.³⁸

The breakup only encouraged more waverers in the Oglala village. White Eagle Bull, with another man and a woman, left on January 26; five lodges of Brulés left on January 29, both parties bound for Spotted Tail Agency. In a final attempt at enforcing martial law, Crazy Horse’s police deployed on February 1 to prevent the departure of leading Cheyenne chief Little Wolf. In an angry scene Little Wolf defied the *akicita*, who confiscated or killed eleven of the Cheyenne ponies, and pressed on with his four lodges for Red Cloud Agency, swearing vengeance on the Oglala war chief.³⁹

The policy of “soldiering” that had effectively controlled the Crazy Horse village for almost six months was clearly breaking down. In the face of a growing peace party that tacitly favored opening negotiations, continued soldiering could only rupture what remained of village solidarity. Crazy Horse’s actions after February 1 show that he understood this, and moderated his opposition to the peace party. His decision reflected

political realities, but it is tempting to speculate that Crazy Horse had reached a critical point in his life. By nature reserved, even diffident, the soldiering may have become an intolerable burden to the war chief: initially necessary to maintain unity, but increasingly coercive and resented by the ordinary people. Faced with soldiers’ lodge rhetoric about punitive surrender terms, waverers could point to the pony and arms confiscations carried out by their own *akicita* as scarcely less harsh.

As Northern Nation unity cracked, Crazy Horse became increasingly confused over mapping a concerted strategy. Within a few days of Sitting Bull’s departure, another 150 lodges of Hunkpapas, Sans Arcs, and Miniconjous started to join him at Powder River forks, following Spotted Eagle. Early in February most of the remaining Miniconjous and Sans Arcs, about two hundred lodges, drifted uncertainly in their wake. The Oglalas and Cheyennes remained together, but now scouts reported buffalo herds in the Bighorn Valley. A move west after game would compromise Crazy Horse’s ability to reunite with Sitting Bull: precisely the opportunity Miles would exploit in breaking the coalition. Crazy Horse continued to favor a move east to counsel with the Hunkpapas at Blue Earth Creek, perhaps citing reports of buffalo even farther east on the upper Little Missouri.⁴⁰

All other Oglala and Cheyenne leaders urged the Bighorn option, and Crazy Horse found himself without support. About February 3 the main village moved west into the Bighorn Valley, about 350 lodges strong. Their number included perhaps thirty lodges of Miniconjous and Sans Arcs, following Hump, who chose to stay with the Oglalas. Only a small cluster of lodges remained on the Tongue. The majority of these—about twenty lodges of Oglalas and Brulés led by No Water, and thirty of Cheyennes following headmen American Horse, Red Owl, Tangle Hair, and Plenty Camps—evidently turned south toward the upper Powder, ultimately

bound for surrender at Red Cloud.⁴¹

Crazy Horse was left with only his own *tiyospaye* or kindred group, some ten lodges strong, composed of his closest relatives. This kindred was one of three that composed the *Hunkpatila* band of Oglalas. The dissolution of the Hunkpatila illustrates well the divisive situation facing Crazy Horse. A second kindred led by his father’s brother Little Hawk remained with the main Oglala village, while the third *tiyospaye*, led by his uncles Iron Crow and Running Horse, perhaps followed Spotted Eagle to seek refuge in Canada.⁴²

No acrimony seems to have been involved in the division of the village. Soon Crazy Horse’s tiny camp moved east across the snowy ridges into the middle Powder valley. His objective thus remained rendezvous with Sitting Bull, but now alarming news arrived from that quarter too. On February 7 the Hunkpapas broke camp at Powder River forks, bound for immediate refuge in Canada. Perhaps Sitting Bull left only after learning of the Oglala move west, thinking Crazy Horse had given up the rendezvous plan. Once beyond the Yellowstone, other Hunkpapa leaders forced the pace, crossing the frozen Missouri on February 15 twenty miles above Fort Peck. But, in a mirror image of Crazy Horse’s actions, Sitting Bull himself budded off the main village with ten lodges, stalling on the headwaters of Big Dry Creek.⁴³ There Sitting Bull monitored the back trail, still seeking to maintain a chain of camps linking his followers with Crazy Horse. But his position was plain: regrouping of the coalition in Canada and only an indefinite return to the homeland.

Crazy Horse must have been bitterly disillusioned when Sitting Bull’s runner found him. As the unity of the Northern Nation irretrievably broke down, it seemed that the homeland was now his sole burden. With a divided people, and a dual threat from military action and the subtler compromises of negotiation, Crazy Horse was unsure how to formulate a new strategy for preserving the

Crazy Horse



American Horse. NSHS-1392:39-1

hunting grounds. Such a strategy would have to encompass the previously unthinkable: that the remnant Northern Nation could no longer resist the bluecoated troops it had so comprehensively defeated not one year before. Psychologically, Crazy Horse seemed unable to summon the reserves of will-power that had driven him through the winter to maintain the war front at all

costs. He drew back from the spiral of punishment imposed upon his own people and withdrew into a caricature of his normal peacetime diffidence. As the late winter wore on, Crazy Horse turned increasingly for guidance to the holy men of his band, preparing himself to undergo the *hanbleceya* or vision quest, that he might beg the powers of the universe for guidance in this deep-

est crisis of his life, of his people.

Meanwhile at base camps beset by winter, army commanders prepared a new diplomatic offensive against the Northern Nation. From Tongue River Cantonment Colonel Miles dispatched his half-Sioux scout Johnny Bruguiere and Sweet Taste Woman, one of the Cheyenne captives, on February 1. Three hundred miles southeast, the White River agencies were the scene of intense talks between General Crook's subordinates and the reservation chiefs. Courted by Crook, Spotted Tail declined to lead an embassy north until unconditional surrender terms were relaxed, but at Red Cloud Agency Crook's proposals met with a warmer response. The Oglala agency had long been perceived as a trouble spot, but a younger generation of Oglala leaders were determined to improve its image and to forestall government proposals to remove the reservation Sioux to Indian Territory. Many had already served as scouts in Mackenzie's winter campaign. When Maj. Julius W. Mason, commanding Camp Robinson, asked for delegates to go north, thirty men volunteered. Representing all the agency Oglala bands, their leader was Hunts the Enemy, a nephew of Red Cloud himself and an *akicita* leader in his Bad Face band.⁴⁴

Equipped with tobacco packages and presents for the Northern chiefs, Hunts the Enemy's party set out on January 16. They were beset by Cheyenne horse thieves and morale problems, and made slow progress until they crossed the Belle Fourche on February 8. There they met Red Sack's small party bound for the agency. Red Sack's report seems to have galvanized the delegates, for they now made good progress through worsening conditions. Passing down the thickly snowed valley of the Little Powder, the party cut the trail of forty lodges heading east. These were the tracks of the camp of Red Horse, Spotted Elk, and White Eagle. These people had met as planned on Powder River. Detailing one man to follow up the trail, Hunts the Enemy continued down the Little Powder.

As they neared its mouth they “met three Indians who told them that Crazy Horse was encamped some little distance above on Powder River and that Sitting Bull was just below the mouth of Little Powder.”⁴⁵ Deciding that their Oglala relatives were the priority, the delegation swung up the valley of Powder River. About February 11, as they approached the mouth of Clear Creek, the delegates made out through the thick bottomland timber a small cluster of ten tipis, Crazy Horse’s camp.

The delegates were “kindly received,” they later reported, in deep contrast to Crazy Horse’s reception of earlier envoys. Many people in the camp were their relatives, and the thirty-man party numbered about twice the strength of the tiny camp. After a feast of welcome a herald called a formal council. There, Hunts the Enemy and other speakers presented the army’s terms of surrender at the agencies. “Their speeches,” the delegates reported, “were not [immediately] responded to.”⁴⁶ Etiquette prescribed that messengers sleep at the host village after making their proposal, leaving the camp council to debate the issues and reach a decision. In a small camp and on such a matter, all adult males with a war record would participate in the council. Red Feather, Crazy Horse’s young brother-in-law and comrade, remembered clearly his kinsman’s mood. “Crazy Horse didn’t want to go to the agency. He didn’t answer them for a long time.”⁴⁷

Indeed, the second council called the following day was an exercise in stalling. Crazy Horse was surprisingly gracious, saying that the delegates “were relations and should be friends.”⁴⁸ After the pipe had circulated, he said

the smoke was good. He did not commence the war. His relations were at the Agencies; he could send for all the [Northern Nation] Indians and let them decide what they could do; that if he told them to stay they would do so, even if they were to die, but he would let them say.⁴⁹

Politely, Crazy Horse declined to open the delegates’ tobacco. He told Hunts the



Hunts the Enemy, Red Cloud’s nephew, who later took the name George Sword. NSHS-1392:39-4

Enemy to take it to the main Oglala village in the Bighorn Valley. Whatever their decision, he reiterated, he would “do the same as the others did.”⁵⁰

After a couple of days of talks, the delegates divided. Some, including Crazy Horse’s relative Tall Man, stayed in the war chief’s camp. Others started for the agency. Only four pressed on to the main Oglala village: Hunts the Enemy himself; Running Hawk (a brother of agency Oglala chief Young Man Afraid of His Horses); Long Whirlwind (for-

merly an *akicita* leader in the Oyuhpe band with relatives in the Northern Oglala village); and the Cheyenne-Sioux Fire Crow. Although mounted on fresh horses from Crazy Horse’s own herd, the going was bad, and the delegates took three days to reach Tongue River. Finally they located the Oglala-Cheyenne village on Rotten Grass Creek in the foothills of the Big Horn Mountains. Uproar seized the village and warriors raced out to meet the four delegates, leading them to the council tipi.⁵¹

Crazy Horse

After a brief talk the delegates were dismissed to private lodges. They learned that Miles's envoys had already opened negotiations. A deputation of twenty-nine men, chiefly Cheyennes but including the Miniconjou Hump and three other Sioux, had left for Tongue River Cantonment with Bruguier and Sweet Taste Woman five nights before. Little else reassured the four delegates, and they spent an anxious night. So fearful were Long Whirlwind and Fire Crow that they decided not to attend the big council called the next day.

Only Hunts the Enemy and Running Hawk entered the great council tipi and sat before the circle of Oglala and Cheyenne leaders. After the pipe had passed, an Oglala *akicita* arose and ordered Hunts the Enemy to speak. The delegate stood and addressed the council, stating that he was sent by General Crook himself. Crook's message was that the Great Father in Washington wished all wars between Indians and whites to end. All the Oglalas should live, like the agency bands, in peace. The Northern bands should come to Red Cloud Agency, where "there shall be nothing untoward done to them."⁵²

The *akicita* now ordered Oglala elder Iron Hawk to respond, "but speak as we said to speak, only." An accomplished orator and camp herald, Iron Hawk had been entrusted to articulate the consensus position reached by the council since the delegates' arrival. Iron Hawk ordered Hunts the Enemy to "carefully hearken as you sit. He reviewed the intrusion of Americans into the Lakota hunting grounds and the resulting war. If however, the Great Father was serious in wishing peace

he shall have it . . . [for] I am the very one who, when someone tries to outdo me in being agreeable, I always win. So I shall move camp and approach [Red Cloud Agency], but I am burdened down with much meat; I am heavy; there is much snow; all the rivers lie across my road; and they are deep. I must travel slowly, so [Hunts the Enemy], before I arrive, you shall come to me again, or else send your men to me.⁵³

Iron Hawk concluded by saying that he spoke for the Oglalas and Cheyennes. The Miniconjou and Hunkpapas were in the country "below," and would have to be consulted separately.

An undertaking had been made. The Oglalas and Cheyennes would visit Red Cloud Agency in the spring and make peace with General Crook. More problematic issues, such as pony and arms confiscations, were passed over for the present, perhaps for debate with the later delegates requested by Iron Hawk. The decision had been made without consulting Crazy Horse. Although no formal break had occurred with the nominal war chief, and both delegates and councilors were at pains to cite Crazy Horse's amenability to village consensus, the Northern Oglala council was now acting independently of him.

The delegates remained in the village for several days, observing developments and awaiting news from Miles and Crazy Horse. Soon after the big council, runners from Crazy Horse arrived to invite all bands "to meet him on little Powder river."⁵⁴ Crazy Horse had now heard reports of an embassy led by Spotted Tail, and wished to finally decide the issue of peace or war at a full gathering of the Northern Nation.⁵⁵ During the last week of February Crazy Horse moved his ten lodges east across the bleak divide into the upper valley of the Little Powder, camping amidst deep snows. As they traveled they were joined by people from the main village, responding to Crazy Horse's invitation. By February 26, when five more of Major Mason's delegates departed for the agency, a total of 120 lodges, chiefly Oglalas and Cheyennes, had gathered on the Little Powder.⁵⁶

Near the forks of Powder River was the main village of Miniconjou and Sans Arcs, while Spotted Eagle's village was somewhere on the east side of the lower Powder—a total of about three hundred lodges more. Crazy Horse may briefly have believed that he could recombine the majority of the Northern Nation, but late in February new discouragements

multiplied. Sitting Bull's response to the Oglala invitation to a new rendezvous was flat: "He was going north to the British Possessions," and was unequivocally abandoning the hunting grounds.⁵⁷ Faced with Sitting Bull's imminent departure, the Spotted Eagle village hurried across the frozen Yellowstone on February 26–27, ascending Cedar Creek to join the Hunkpapa war chief in the upper Missouri valley.⁵⁸ About the same time the main Miniconjou-Sans Arc village moved east to the upper Little Missouri. Its intentions were unclear, but constituted a rejection of any grand council with Crazy Horse.⁵⁹

Closer to home, the 110 lodges of Oglalas and Cheyennes camped near Crazy Horse declined to form a united village with his tiny camp. As February turned into March they organized for buffalo hunting, making two successful surrounds, but maintained their distance from the war chief. When delegate Tall Man left for the agency on March 4, he observed only that "quite a number of Indians were camped within about a days march" of Crazy Horse.⁶⁰ Thus even those Oglalas who had responded to Crazy Horse's invitation were careful not to recharter a village in which he could reassert martial law through the *akicita*. It seems likely these people were already committed to surrender ahead of any council. Perhaps in an effort to mollify them, Crazy Horse made a reluctant undertaking to the delegates to "come in [to Red Cloud Agency] and hold a council" during the spring.⁶¹

Even more discouraging, Crazy Horse's own kindred was beginning to fragment by the beginning of March. Four lodges, evidently including that of his own father, Worm, left on a hunt for small game down the Little Powder. Most demoralizing of all, another four lodges turned south to join No Water in immediate surrender, arriving at Red Cloud Agency on March 14.⁶² This left Crazy Horse, the greatest Lakota war leader of the day, with a following of two lodges in the snow drifts of the Little Powder. Every day brought news of

fresh defections. On March 3 Four Horns crossed into Canada with fifty-seven lodges of Hunkpapas, bringing the total in exile to 166 lodges. On March 4 the deputation sent to Tongue River Cantonment arrived home in the main Cheyenne-Oglala village on the Little Bighorn. Miles had offered them a home at Tongue River if they surrendered and agreed to enlist as scouts against hostile Indians. Leaving that question open, the council was satisfied enough to call a formal end to hostilities, and had it “cried through the camps that the war was over, and that no more hostile expeditions would be allowed against the white man.”⁶³

A further arrival from the reservation brought significant news. Red Sack had reached Red Cloud Agency on February 23 and had been permitted to return north, his factfinding mission complete. He confirmed that Spotted Tail was mounting the biggest diplomatic initiative yet.⁶⁴ The two Brulé messengers from the north had arrived at his agency on February 10 with the news that an embassy led by Spotted Tail would net at least one hundred surrendering lodges. Immediately the Brulé head chief went into intensive talks with Crook and won crucial (if off-the-record) concessions. The thorny topic of pony confiscations was finessed when Crook agreed that stock be surrendered to enlisted Sioux army scouts, who would be free to redistribute them to their Northern relatives. Most significantly, he promised to recommend to the President in Washington that the Northern Nation be assigned a separate reservation in the hunting grounds, once all hostile bands had surrendered.⁶⁵

Armed with these concessions Spotted Tail had departed his agency on February 13, taking the trail along the east edge of the Black Hills. With him were 250 Brulé headmen, including band chiefs Swift Bear, Two Strike, and Iron Shell, a mule train of presents, and interpreters José Merrivale, Frank C. Boucher, and Tom Dorion. Crazy Horse was evidently apprehensive at the news.

His father, Worm, was married to two sisters of Spotted Tail, women the war chief called “mother.” In Lakota society an uncle had compelling influence over his nephew. As the non-treaty coalition dissolved, an able politician like Spotted Tail might assimilate surrendering Indians into his own agency bands, marginalizing Northern leaders. Aware of his own precarious position, and unprepared to negotiate with his Brulé uncle, Crazy Horse at last decided to set out on a vision quest, to implore the cosmic powers for guidance for himself and his people. “There were things that he had to figure out,” recalled his cousin Nicholas Black Elk in 1931, “and he was wanting the spirits to guide him. He would then go back to his people and tell them what he had learned.”⁶⁶

About March 5 Crazy Horse and his wife, Black Shawl, packed their tipi and struck into the snowy hills between the forks of Powder River. Black Shawl was probably already sick with a serious respiratory illness, so although childless, the couple was not alone. Also living in their tipi was Tall Bull (possibly a Miniconjou relative) and two women and two boys—useful to Black Shawl in running the lodge in her husband’s absence. A second tipi of relatives accompanied them, all that was left of the ten lodges that had followed the war chief from Tongue River.⁶⁷

For almost three weeks Crazy Horse disappeared among the snowy ridges between the Powder and Little Powder. Only one eyewitness account exists from those missing weeks. The Black Elk family was pressing on to surrender when, recalled Nicholas Black Elk:

We found Crazy Horse all alone on a creek with just his wife. He was a queer man. He had been queer all of this winter. Crazy Horse said to my father: “Uncle, you might have noticed me, how I act, but it is for the good of my people that I am out alone. Out there I am making plans—nothing but good plans—for the good of my people. I don’t care where the people go. They can go where they wish. There are lots of caves and this shows that I cannot be harmed. . . . This country is ours, therefore I am doing this,” said Crazy Horse.⁶⁸

For days at a time, carrying only a pipe and tobacco bag, Crazy Horse left his tipi to seek the vision of guidance. Sheltering in caves only when late winter storms blasted the Plains, he fasted and prayed, wept and begged the powers for the vision that could show him how best to preserve his people’s lands. Still the vision eluded him. He was an experienced quester, having dreamed of such powerful helpers as Thunder and Rock, the Horse and the Shadow, but this desperate effort yielded nothing. At endurance’s end he would return home and make purifying sweat baths, talking over his experiences with his relatives, before leaving once more for the wilderness.

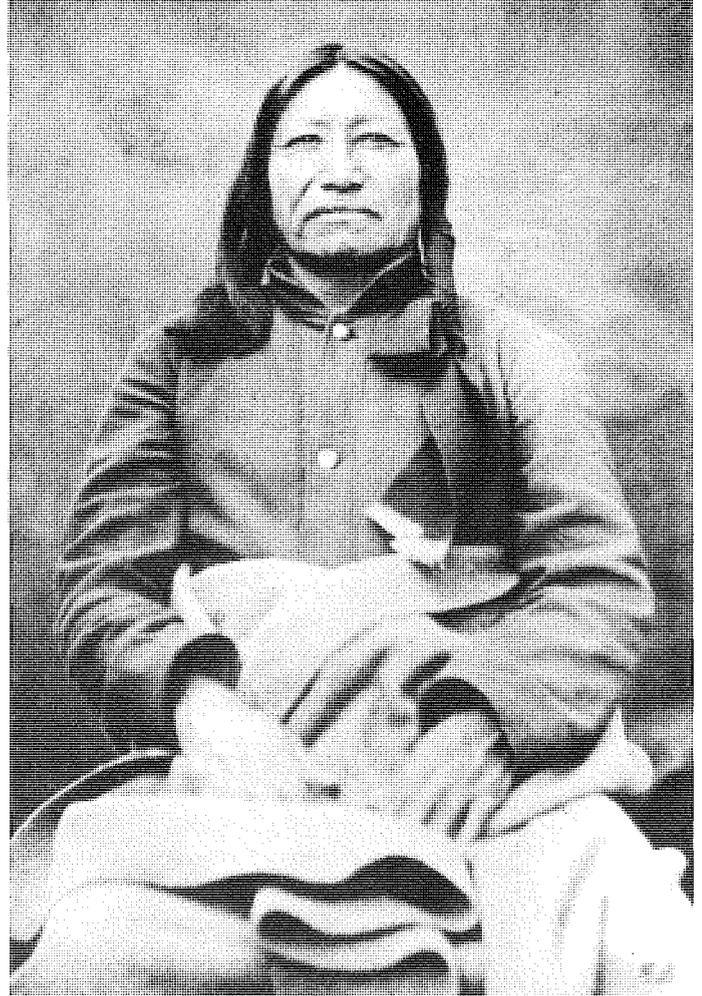
As this private drama unfolded, pivotal public events centered on Spotted Tail’s peace mission. On February 20 the delegation met Eagle Pipe’s fifteen lodges at Box Elder Creek. Eagle Pipe told the Brulé chief that he had left the camp of Red Horse, Spotted Elk, and White Eagle on the Little Missouri, enroute for surrender at Cheyenne River Agency. Spotted Tail hurried Eagle Pipe southward while the delegation pressed north of the Black Hills. Near Where-the-Crows-Were-Killed Butte, a landmark commanding the trail to Cheyenne River Agency, a base camp was established. Spotted Tail sent runners to all villages, scheduling a grand council on Little Powder River late in March. In doing this he was adopting as his own Crazy Horse’s aborted plan for a Northern Nation council.⁶⁹

In setting up his base camp Spotted Tail also hoped to open early negotiations with the Miniconjous and Sans Arcs. By the first days of March their main village, 136 lodges, had located on the Little Missouri River within thirty miles of Spotted Tail’s camp. The village remained deeply divided over the issue of war. A part, cohering about the leadership of Roman Nose, was clearly keen to parley with the Brulé delegation. Another faction, associated with Touch the Clouds, was perhaps awaiting word of the reception accorded to Spotted Elk

Crazy Horse



Swift Bear. NSHS-RG1227:10-7



Spotted Tail. NSHS-RG1227:9-5

upon surrender at Cheyenne River. A significant faction remained committed to war, however, and had unleashed a new offensive against the Black Hills miners. Beginning the second week of February, a thirty-man war party struck panic into the mining settlements of the northern Black Hills, stealing horses and hundreds of cattle and sheep.⁷⁰

Divided and hungry, the village continued to fragment in search of game, but one hundred lodges moved near Spotted Tail's base camp and opened tentative negotiations by March 5. Lame Deer's son, the *akicita* leader Fast Bull, acted as spokesman. He said that the rest of the scattered village "had been sent for[,]

and when they came back they would then have a grand council" with Spotted Tail on the Little Missouri. Although Fast Bull assured the Brule chief that "they would then take tobacco and make peace . . . [he] would not take the tobacco until they had the council."⁷¹

The Miniconjous and Sans Arcs remained divided, however, and by the second week of March a majority were gravitating back westward into the Powder River valley perhaps to await the grand council at Little Powder, some perhaps to monitor the continuing negotiations with Miles. Growing impatient, Spotted Tail himself struck west to reach the Little Missouri some ten miles above

the Short Pine Hills about March 13. There he found thirty crowded lodges. Nearby was a second hunting camp of forty lodges. After the arrival of Spotted Tail the two camps reunited in a single village. Comprising Miniconjous, Sans Arcs, and a few Oglalas, the village nominated Touch the Clouds as its speaker. This son of late Miniconjou head chief Lone Horn was a regular visitor at the White River agencies. Probably by now aware that his brother Spotted Elk had been forced to surrender all his stock upon capitulation at Cheyenne River, Touch the Clouds was glad to hear Spotted Tail's assurances about his ponies and the qualified promise of a

reservation in the north. After five days of talks held during fierce storms, Touch the Clouds “promised to return” with Spotted Tail to the Brulé agency.⁷²

With the storm blown out, the Brulé delegation pressed westward to rejoin the main Miniconjou-Sans Arc village, now located on the Little Powder about fifteen miles above its mouth. Spotted Tail arrived there on March 20, finding one hundred crowded lodges, including a few Oglala and Cheyenne visitors. The village had reorganized itself again, and appointed as Deciders Lame Deer, his son Fast Bull, Black Shield, and Roman Nose. This leadership was still polarized, and Spotted Tail had to deploy all his powers of persuasion in six days of intense debate. Both Lame Deer and Fast Bull insisted that peace was impossible as long as miners remained in the Black Hills and Miles’s troops occupied the Lakota hunting grounds. To this point Spotted Tail may have intimated that Miles’s garrison would be closed once hostilities ended. Of the other Deciders, Roman Nose was “specially anxious for peace,” according to interpreter Frank Boucher. Roman Nose had strong Brulé connections. Clearly influenced by the presence of his close associates Iron Shell and Swift Bear, Roman Nose favored immediate surrender at Spotted Tail Agency.⁷³

Black Shield, the remaining Decider, was the key to village consensus. Long opposed to reservations, and a staunch supporter of the war, just what persuaded Black Shield to finally swing his support behind Roman Nose is unclear. Spotted Tail’s promise of a new reservation in the hunting grounds, and the assurances of nominal surrenders of stock coupled with the deepening poverty of his people, must have borne out the arguments of the peace party. By March 25 a clear majority of people favored surrender at Spotted Tail, formalized in a consensus statement by the Deciders. Roman Nose and Black Shield accepted Spotted Tail’s tobacco and smoked the pipe of agreement. Lame Deer and Fast Bull declined to smoke, but chose not to

force the issue, stating only that they wished to remain and “collect more [Miniconjous] . . . who were scattered.”⁷⁴

There remained the unresolved issue of Crazy Horse and the Oglalas. The largest Cheyenne and Oglala village was still on Tongue River, awaiting the return of a second delegation to Miles. Six Oglalas from that village were visiting the Miniconjous and Sans Arcs as delegates to the grand council. Their leader, Black Twin’s Son, advised Spotted Tail that a new Oglala rendezvous had been arranged at Bear Lodge Butte (modern Devil’s Tower), near the northwest edge of the Black Hills. Those Oglalas that had been on the Little Powder near Crazy Horse early in March had already moved to Bear Lodge; the village now on Tongue River would soon join them. Black Twin’s Son assured Spotted Tail that “so soon as he got to his people, he was going to move in [to Red Cloud Agency] with his family.”⁷⁵

Spotted Tail remained unconvinced. The Bear Lodge rendezvous constituted a rejection of his own grand council. Other reports indicated that the Oglalas intended leaving their village at Bear Lodge, while the men alone traveled to Spotted Tail Agency to parley and “trade their robes & furs”—a traditional courtesy visit only.⁷⁶ Mindful of Crook’s stipulation that all Northern Indians must surrender, Spotted Tail sent his last package of tobacco to Bear Lodge, warning the Oglalas “not to come in unless they brought their women and children—that they must bring their wives and children with them.”⁷⁷

On Crazy Horse, above all, the Brulé chief remained unsure. No satisfactory news had been heard from the war chief since he departed on his vision quest. Spotted Tail’s own runners could not locate him. His father, Worm, had arrived in the Little Powder village with his four lodges. Worm told his brother-in-law that Crazy Horse “was out hunting by himself,” but insisted that he would make peace, “and shakes hands through his father the same as if he himself did it.” Worm presented a pony to

José Merrivale “as a token that Crazy Horse makes peace.”⁷⁸

Still concerned that Crazy Horse was deliberately avoiding him, Spotted Tail detailed one Brulé warrior and an agency Oglala to take tobacco and search for the war chief. Then, on March 26, Spotted Tail turned eastward. Up to ninety lodges followed him. As well as the Miniconjous and Sans Arcs, Worm’s small party of Oglalas opted for surrender. Only ten or fifteen lodges chose to remain with Lame Deer and Fast Bull. Despite wretched trails, swollen streams, and the exhausted stock, Spotted Tail forced the pace to cover seventy miles in two days, reuniting with Touch the Clouds’s camp late on March 27. Here a single village organization was re-established, seating Miniconjous Touch the Clouds and Roman Nose, with the Sans Arcs High Bear and Red Bear, as Deciders. The village then started south at a more leisurely pace. After crossing the Belle Fourche on April 2, Spotted Tail felt confident enough to leave the village and hurried in to his agency with the news of the imminent surrender.⁷⁹

Even as Spotted Tail turned east from the Powder River drainage, Oglalas and Cheyennes from the main village were approaching the valley from the west. Dissatisfied at reports of the second delegation to Miles, they were heading for the new rendezvous at Bear Lodge. Probably on March 2 they arrived on Powder River some twenty miles above the Little Powder. Awaiting them at the campground was a familiar tipi: Crazy Horse had at last returned from his vision quest and, with Spotted Tail’s departure, seemed ready to resume his role as war chief.⁸⁰

An Oglala council was called. The delegates to Miles had left Tongue River Cantonment on the twenty-third, and were doubtless present. Little Hawk, Worm’s brother, was the ranking Oglala delegate, with Hard to Kill (another relation of Crazy Horse’s) representing the Hunkpatila band *akicita*. Four Crows, an *akicita* in the Sore-Backs band, had also

Crazy Horse



Delegation of Sioux Indians who made the treaty whereby the Black Hills were surrendered to the U.S. Government.

"Delegation of Sioux Indians who made the treaty whereby the Black Hills were surrendered to the U.S. Government." Seated: (l. to r.) Yellow Bear, Interpreter José Merrivale, Interpreter Billy Garnett, Interpreter Leon Pallardy, Three Bears. Standing: (l. to r.) He Dog, Little Wound, American Horse, Little Big Man, Young Man Afraid of his Horses, Hunts the Enemy (George Sword). NSHS-RG2095-78

visited Miles. They reported that both Hump and his brother, the Miniconjou headman Horse Road, with seven Cheyennes, had remained at Tongue River Cantonment as hostages guaranteeing the surrender of their relatives. Nevertheless, their report discouraged any Oglala capitulation to Miles. A clear consensus prevailed for negotiations at Red Cloud Agency, but expectations were high that Crazy Horse would have a significant contribution to make to the council. Instead, the war chief sat quietly through the debate. It was left to Iron Hawk to once more crystalize the consensus position: "You see all the

people here are in rags, they all need clothing, we might as well go in." Crazy Horse indicated his weary, tacit approval, and the council closed.⁸¹

Crazy Horse's silence actually betrayed his continued indecision. The three weeks of his vision quest had left him gaunt but unenlightened. If the powers had granted him any vision, its significance was unclear, committing him to no definite course of action. That was demonstrated immediately after the council, when messengers arrived at his tipi with the astonishing news that Lame Deer had remained on the Little Powder that morning, rejecting Spotted Tail's to-

bacco and planning to leave on a buffalo hunt on Tongue River the following day. Instantly galvanized, Crazy Horse determined to join the Miniconjou chief. That evening he confided in his old comrade He Dog, who unsuccessfully tried to talk him out of the plan. On the morning of March 27, as the Oglala village prepared to press on to Bear Lodge, Crazy Horse departed to join Lame Deer.⁸²

Crazy Horse clearly felt that Lame Deer's stance was nearest to his own. He still wished to keep the Northern coalition alive, and retain Lakota hunting grounds in the Powder River Country. Lame Deer's hunt offered the last

opportunity for that course of action. Crazy Horse may have calculated that his dramatic departure would cause a break in the Oglala village, with the core winter roamers choosing to follow their war chief. If so, his hopes were cruelly dashed. Only one other Oglala lodge, that of the eternally defiant Low Dog, decided to join Lame Deer. About ten lodges of Hump's Miniconjous, flouting their chief's order to surrender to Miles, may have followed Crazy Horse down the Powder.⁸³

Once united with Lame Deer, the reality of the situation soon became plain to Crazy Horse. Lame Deer had no strategic aim, stating simply that he wished to make one more buffalo hunt; then he might turn in his camp at Cheyenne River. A few more irreconcilables gravitated toward Lame Deer's camp. At Bear Butte thirty lodges of disillusioned Miniconjous and Sans Arcs broke away from the village bound for Spotted Tail. Several lodges of Hunkpapas appeared from Sitting Bull with more depressing news. Camped in the Missouri River bottoms forty-five miles above Fort Peck, Sitting Bull's village had been caught by a sudden thaw on the morning of March 17. His camp destroyed, the Hunkpapa leader had finally withdrawn toward the Canadian border.⁸⁴

Peaking at only sixty-three lodges, wavering between defiance and the nostalgic wish for one last hunt before surrender, the Lame Deer camp offered no military solution to Crazy Horse's quandary. In despair, perhaps concerned by his wife's weakening condition, Crazy Horse finally turned back to rejoin the Oglalas. Chastened, with no announcement, he rode quietly into the Oglala village at Bear Lodge about April 3. His dream of a revived coalition to hold the Powder River Country was over.

After the frantic activity of March, the pace of Crazy Horse's life slowed abruptly. The village took time to regroup, resting and recouping stock. After two months of dispersal, it reorganized in a single camp circle of up to 155 lodges, mostly Oglalas but including



He Dog. NSHS-B774-7

about twenty-five lodges of Brulés, ten of Miniconjous, and five of Sans Arcs. Four new Deciders were seated to administer affairs: Little Hawk, Little Big Man, Old Hawk, and Big Road. They selected He

Dog to act as head *akicita*. Hunting parties departed, small family groups scattering to forage in a terrain still blasted by storms and mired by thaw.⁸⁵

At first Crazy Horse seemed listless,

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despairing. "This country is ours, therefore I am doing this," he had told the Black Elk family a month before. Now he seemed to believe that "[a]ll is lost anyway . . . the country is lost."⁸⁶ News continued to confirm his despair. The main Miniconjou-Sans Arc village surrendered at Spotted Tail Agency on April 14. Reports from the north located Sitting Bull's village in the Milk River valley within fifty miles of the Canadian line. Numbering 135 lodges of Hunkpapas, Sans Arcs, Miniconjous, and a few Oglalas, they would finally cross the medicine line into Grandmother's Land during the first week of May, bringing the total of refugee Lakotas in Canada to about three hundred lodges.

Closer to home the Cheyenne resistance had finally collapsed. When the Oglalas pressed on to Bear Lodge the Cheyennes had remained in camp on Powder River for an intense round of councils. The delegates from Miles prevailed upon some three hundred people, including forty-three lodges of Cheyennes (and four lodges of Hump's closest Miniconjou relatives) to surrender at Tongue River Cantonment. These Cheyennes, including war-leaders like Ice and Two Moons, had been the core of Crazy Horse's Cheyenne supporters during the winter soldiering regime. A contingent of sixty Southern Cheyennes rode through the village and announced that they would turn themselves in at their own agency in Indian Territory (modern Oklahoma). Most, however, were swayed by the arrival of seven Cheyenne messengers from Red Cloud and their assurance of good treatment. When the chiefs' council announced that every Cheyenne could choose his place of surrender, the majority—almost six hundred people—opted for Red Cloud. Two small parties decided to stay out, one joining Lame Deer, but for the Cheyennes the war was over. The main village, following chiefs Dull Knife and Standing Elk, hurried on past Bear Lodge early in April. Living in wretched tents made from gunny sacks

and old blankets, horse-poor and hungry, many Cheyennes still nursed their grievance against Crazy Horse. They made no secret that upon surrender many warriors would volunteer as army scouts for a spring campaign against the Oglala war chief.⁸⁷

Yet as the days passed, Crazy Horse seems to have undergone a change of heart. In private talks with agency envoys and Oglala headmen, he mulled over Crook's plan to seek a separate reservation for the Northern Indians. Little Big Man, Big Road, and the other headmen had heard that the presidential election of 1876 had placed a new Great Father, Republican Rutherford B. Hayes, in Washington. Crazy Horse had always rejected the kinship status of the president, but word that Hayes was an old Civil War comrade of Crook's boosted confidence that the general could deliver on his promises.

Slowly, Crazy Horse began to formulate a more measured response to the offer of peace. One development that may have clinched his decision was that agency Oglala chiefs Young Man Afraid of His Horses, American Horse, and Yellow Bear had opened a dialog with Colonel Mackenzie at Camp Robinson. In return for locating their three bands, over two hundred lodges, at a new reserve on Tongue River, they promised to make peace with neighboring tribes and work as scouts against hostile Indians. Mackenzie undertook to report favorably up the chain of command.⁸⁸ The assurance that agency and Northern Oglalas could cooperate in seeking a reserve in the hunting grounds may have gone far to convince Crazy Horse that an honorable peace could be won for his people. In a momentous private decision, the war chief decided he would gamble upon Crook's promise and go to Red Cloud Agency. And in a startling shift towards pragmatism, he even approved a provisional agency site high up Tongue River, near the site of modern Sheridan, Wyoming.⁸⁹

Finally, at a big council held in his honor, Crazy Horse delivered his con-

sidered response to the latest round of agency delegates. Rising briefly from his seat, Crazy Horse spoke tersely and simply: "This day I have untied my horse's tail and layed [*sic*] my gun aside and I have sat down." The envoys pressed him to order the camp moved, but the war chief demurred:

Not until I rest, then I will be willing to go.
But before I go, give lots of ammunition to my people. I have set a place for my people that will be the reservation.⁹⁰

At this, or another council held within a few days, Crazy Horse expanded on his change of heart. He cited the new Great Father in Washington, "who was a very good man, and [who] would probably do more for the Indians than any who had preceded him." The very fact that Crazy Horse conceded kinship status to the president was a radical departure. The decision had at last been made. Six Northern messengers were sent to Red Cloud with positive word. The village would leave Bear Lodge and cross the Belle Fourche River on April 16, hoping to arrive at the Red Cloud Agency by April 28.⁹¹

Meanwhile at Camp Robinson the army had continued to monitor ambivalent reports about Crazy Horse's intentions. From statements by agency Oglalas, Mackenzie concluded that Crazy Horse was unlikely to surrender, and that the winter roaming segments of the Oglalas and Cheyennes "will almost certainly stay out."⁹² Such an eventuality would require a spring campaign, for which Crook and Mackenzie must implement immediate plans. Anxious to confirm Crazy Horse's intentions, Crook conferred with Red Cloud himself about April 10. The Oglala agency head chief had been out of favor with Crook since the previous fall, when the general deposed him and appointed Spotted Tail nominal chief of both White River agencies. Both Crook and, subsequently, his chief of Indian scouts, Lt. William P. Clark, played on Red Cloud's insecurity. After three days of talks, in which Clark tacitly promised Red Cloud's restoration by appointing him first sergeant of

scouts, the Oglala chief formed an eighty-man Oglala delegation to meet Crazy Horse. Led by Red Cloud and band chiefs Yellow Bear, Slow Bull, and the lately surrendered No Water, accompanied by interpreters Antoine Ladeau, Antoine Janis, and José Merrivale, the party struck north on April 13, leading the obligatory pack train of rations and presents.⁹³

Within three days of Red Cloud's departure, the runners from the Northern village began to appear at the agency with the positive news that the army had awaited so long: Crazy Horse was coming in. Up the trail Red Cloud's party also fielded encouraging news. The village indeed broke camp on April 16, making its first overnight stop on Bear Lodge Creek, on the south side of the Belle Fourche. With *akicita* restrictions lifted, three lodges of Brulés immediately departed for Spotted Tail Agency, traveling much faster than the main village, which was delayed in awaiting the return of hunting parties. Its schedule further slowed by "very rainy weather" and the rail-thin stock, the village made slow progress. But about April 20 the van met Red Cloud's party. Red Cloud's heralds had a simple message: "All is well; have no fear; come on in."⁹⁴

Nervousness was inevitable as agency leaders and Northern Oglalas met, but Red Cloud handled the amenities well. He succeeded in assuring Crazy Horse and the other leaders that no punishment would follow their surrender—no academic issue, for Kiowa, Comanche, and Southern Cheyenne leaders in the Red River War had been sent to imprisonment in Florida only two years before. He carefully explained the procedure of surrendering stock: It would all be given up to the agency Oglala scouts, and later redistributed among the Northern village. The village herd, although in poor shape, was exceptionally large at 2,200 head. Keen to reaffirm their kinship status with agency relatives, five hundred head were given as presents by the Northern people during the march south. On firearms, Red

Cloud could offer no good news: All would have to be given up, he explained, perhaps sniping at Spotted Tail, who seems to have claimed the army would demand only captured weapons. Here was a flashpoint for trouble, but Crazy Horse merely remarked: "All right, let them have them."⁹⁵

If any leader ever needed careful handling, it was Crazy Horse, but the diplomatic Red Cloud was equal to the occasion. "We all went in to the agency in good spirits," recalled Short Bull; there "was no bad feeling among the chiefs or anybody."⁹⁶ Crazy Horse's surprising tractability can only be explained by his new commitment to a negotiated solution to his people's predicament. Red Cloud explained that a delegation of Oglala leaders would be invited to counsel with the president in Washington about Crook's scheme for a reservation in the hunting grounds. Although he had refused to represent the Northern Oglalas on a similar delegation prior to the war, Crazy Horse now immediately agreed to go to Washington. Welcoming the opportunity to lay the Northern Nation's case before the new Great Father, he questioned Red Cloud and his comrades closely about the protocol and practicalities of such trips.⁹⁷

The difficult details of surrender worked out, it remained only for a full-dress feast and council to make a public announcement to the village of what lay ahead. Hosted by Crazy Horse and the Northern leadership, Red Cloud and the agency delegates were formally invited to the council tipi. Rising from his seat, Crazy Horse personally spread a buffalo robe for Red Cloud to sit upon. Then, in the most conciliatory gesture yet, he removed his own hair-fringed war shirt, symbolic of his status as principal war chief of the Oglalas, and placed it over Red Cloud's shoulders.⁹⁸

Crazy Horse thus transferred symbolic supremacy in the village to Red Cloud, and tacitly accepted the primacy of the agency Oglalas' tribal organization over that of the Northern village. It was a startling gesture of conciliation at

the end of this winter of unprecedented polarization and hardship, when Crazy Horse had taken the coercive potential of Lakota society further than any leader in history. Through an effort of extraordinary will, he had sought to maintain the Northern coalition as a military force all winter, keeping up village strengths that were unmatched even for summer operations. Repeatedly he had tightened the bonds of *akicita* control, normally relaxed after each major hunt or war party, over a people increasingly war weary. In unprecedented fashion he had sought to impose his personal control even beyond his own Oglala camp circle, marching boldly into other villages—even into private lodges to persuade, to cajole, or even to inflict punishment: Whatever was necessary to maintain the war front and save the hunting grounds of his people.

Now it was over. With military options used up and exile in Canada unacceptable, only diplomacy remained. Warily, Crazy Horse accepted the inevitable and agreed to surrender and then open negotiations with military and civil authorities over a reservation in the hunting grounds. As the Deciders issued their orders to strike the tipis and start the final march to Red Cloud Agency, Crazy Horse was determined to pursue that negotiated solution. With newfound confidence in his agency peers and trust in the promises made by General Crook, he rode to the head of the column and started it southward, out of the hunting grounds.

Notes

¹ The best modern overviews of the Great Sioux War are John S. Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876* (Fort Collins: Old Army Press, 1976), and Jerome A. Greene, *Yellowstone Command: Colonel Nelson A. Miles and the Great Sioux War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991). An excellent outline of events is supplied in Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866–1891* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, rpt. 1984), chaps. 14–15.

² Jerome A. Greene, ed., *Lakota and Cheyenne: Indian Views of the Great Sioux War, 1876–1877* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994). The introduction provides a valuable insight into

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assessing Indian testimony in the context of the Sioux War. Two important articles that address the surrender process are Harry H. Anderson, "Indian Peace-Talkers and the Conclusion of the Sioux War of 1876," *Nebraska History* 44 (Dec. 1963): 233–54, and Oliver Knight, "War or Peace: The Anxious Wait for Crazy Horse," *Nebraska History* 54 (Winter 1973): 520–44. The single most important source on Lakota social and political organization is James R. Walker, *Lakota Society*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982).

³ On the Northern Nation, see Lakota texts collected in Eugene Buechel, S.J., *Lakota Tales and Texts*, ed. Paul Manhart, S.J. (Pine Ridge, S. Dak.: 1978), especially Thunder Tail's account of Crazy Horse, 363ff. Gray, *Centennial Campaign*, chap. 29, suggests a figure of one thousand lodges for the Indian coalition as of June 25, 1876. I differ somewhat from Gray's ratio of persons to lodges, but his lodge estimate squares well with what we can reconstruct from surrender tallies, 1877–81. See also Kingsley M. Bray, "Teton Sioux Population History, 1655–1881," *Nebraska History* 75 (Summer 1994): 165–88. Robert M. Utley, *The Lance and the Shield: The Life and Times of Sitting Bull* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1993) supersedes all biographies of Sitting Bull. Mari Sandoz, *Crazy Horse, the Strange Man of the Oglalas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, rpt. 1961) is a hagiographical historical novel. Crazy Horse awaits a definitive biography.

⁴ Greene, *Yellowstone Command*, chaps. 4–5, is the best overview of this phase of the war. On Hunkpapa movements to Canada, see "Papers relating to the Sioux Indians of the United States who have taken refuge in Canadian Territory. Printed Confidentially for the use of the Ministers of the Crown" (Ottawa, 1879), 9ff. (hereafter cited as Canadian Papers); also Lt. R. H. Day to post adjutant, Ft. Buford, Feb. 10, 1877, in Papers Relating to Military Operations in the Departments of the Platte and Dakota Against the Sioux Indians, 1876–96 ("Sioux War Papers"), (National Archives Microfilm Publication M666, rolls 272–92), Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1871–80, Record Group 94, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter cited as Sioux War Papers).

⁵ See especially Spotted Elk statement in Col. W. W. Wood to assistant adjutant general, Dept. of Dakota, Mar. 1, 1877, Sioux War Papers.

⁶ Thomas B. Marquis, *Wooden Leg, A Warrior Who Fought Custer* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, rpt., 1962), 287–88.

⁷ Young Two Moons to George Bird Grinnell, Sept. 20, 1908, in Peter Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain: A History of the Northern Cheyenne Chiefs and Warrior Societies*, 2 vols. (San Francisco: Harper and Row), 2:1071.

⁸ John Gregory Bourke, "Diary," vol. 24, 12, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.

⁹ Arapaho Chief to George Bird Grinnell, Sept.

16, 1906, in Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain* 2:1378 n.76; Bourke, "Diary," vol. 19, 1854.

¹⁰ Black Elk statement, in Raymond J. DeMallie, *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 201; statements of Fool Bear and Important Man, in Col. W. W. Wood to assistant adjutant general, Dept. of Dakota, Jan. 24, 1877, Sioux War Papers. Black Moccasin and Ice were leaders of the ten lodges of Cheyennes that had stayed with the Oglalas throughout fall 1876.

¹¹ On Hunkpapa movements to Canada, see sources in note 4. Baldwin's pursuit and flight is detailed in Greene, *Yellowstone Command*, chap. 6, and Utley, *The Lance and the Shield*, 177–79. Sitting Bull's subsequent movements are traceable from Lt. R. H. Day to post adjutant, Ft. Buford, Jan. 26, 1877, Sioux War Papers.

¹² Fool Bear and Important Man statements; Eagle Shield statement, in Col. W. W. Wood to assistant adjutant general, Dept. of Dakota, Feb. 16, 1877, Sioux War Papers.

¹³ Fool Bear and Important Man statements.

¹⁴ Black Elk statement, in DeMallie, *Sixth Grandfather*, 199–200; Greene, *Yellowstone Command*, 157; Harry H. Anderson, "Nelson A. Miles and the Sioux War of 1876–77," *Chicago Westerners' Brand Book* 16 (1959): 25–27, 32.

¹⁵ Fool Bear and Important Man statements.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ White Frog to George Bird Grinnell, Aug. 17, 1913, in Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 2:1380 n.18.

²² Swelled Face statement, in Col. W. W. Wood to assistant adjutant general, Dept. of Dakota, Feb. 21, 1877, Sioux War Papers.

²³ The Battle of Wolf Mountains is well described in Greene, *Yellowstone Command*, 163–76. Cheyenne accounts are synthesized in Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 2:1072–78; see also Marquis, *Wooden Leg*, 289–93. An Oglala perspective is provided by Black Elk in DeMallie, *Sixth Grandfather*, 201–2. Short Bull's 1930 recollection is in "Oglala Sources on the Life of Crazy Horse. Interviews given to Eleanor H. Hinman," *Nebraska History* 57 (Spring 1976): 1–52. See also Col. Nelson A. Miles to assistant adjutant general, Dept. of Dakota, Jan. 23, 1877, Sioux War Papers.

²⁴ Eagle Shield statement.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Swelled Face statement.

²⁹ Eagle Shield statement. Assessments of the attitudes of Spotted Eagle and other pro-Canada leaders, and subsequently of surrender advocates, are based on their later actions.

³⁰ Red Horse statement, in Col. W. W. Wood to assistant adjutant general, Dept. of Dakota, Feb. 27, 1877, Sioux War Papers.

³¹ Charging Horse and Make Them Stand Up statements, in Lt. Horace Neide to Lt. John G. Bourke, Feb. 10, 1877, Sioux War Papers.

³² Shortly afterwards, Spider left the village to surrender at Spotted Tail Agency (see below).

³³ Red Sack statement, in Lt. William P. Clark to Lt. John G. Bourke, Feb. 24, 1877, Sioux War Papers.

³⁴ As an intriguing possibility, could these headmen have enlisted the support of Little Big Man, a prominent *akicita* leader? Little Big Man was a pragmatic politician with a keen grasp of the realities of the Northern Nation's predicament. As early as 1873 Little Big Man conceded to Red Cloud Agent Jared W. Daniels that "I should want a country," i.e. the Powder River hunting grounds, no longer than thirty-five years, presumably because he knew that the game would not last and his people would have to take up farming on the reservation. Daniels to commissioner of Indian Affairs, Apr. 15, 1873, Letters Received by Office of Indian Affairs, 1824–81, Red Cloud Agency (National Archives Microfilm Publication M234, roll 717), Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration. After surrender Little Big Man notoriously deserted Crazy Horse. Perhaps his shift in allegiance began late in the winter, just when an ambitious leader might seek to embody an emerging consensus for negotiation.

³⁵ Eagle Pipe statement, in Lt. Jesse M. Lee to Lt. John G. Bourke, Mar. 6, 1877, Sioux War Papers.

³⁶ Red Horse statement.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, and White Eagle statement in Col. W. W. Wood to assistant adjutant general, Dept. of Dakota, Feb. 27, 1877, Sioux War Papers. For a tally of surrendering people at Cheyenne River Agency, see "Register of Whites, Indians, and Indian Bands at Cheyenne River Agency, 1876–1877," Post at Cheyenne River Agency, vol. 54, 146–47, 152–53, 166–67, Records of United States Army Continental Commands, Record Group 98, National Archives and Records Administration.

³⁸ This is my interpretation of White Eagle Bull statement, in Lt. Horace Neide to Lt. John G. Bourke, Feb. 16, 1877, Sioux War Papers. On Sitting Bull's movements see also Lt. William P. Clark to adjutant general, Dept. of the Platte, Sept. 14, 1877, Sioux War Papers. This is Clark's invaluable report on the Sioux War, based on Indian statements collected after surrender. It is printed, with valuable contextual material and notes, in Thomas R. Buecker, "Lt. William Philo Clark's Sioux

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War Report and Little Big Horn Map," *Greasy Grass* 7 (1991): 11–21.

³⁹ White Eagle Bull statement; Lt. Jesse M. Lee to acting adjutant general, Dist. of the Black Hills, Mar. 19, 1877; Little Wolf statement in Clark to Bourke, Feb. 24, 1877, both Sioux War Papers.

⁴⁰ Clark to adjutant general, Dept. of the Platte, Sept. 14, 1877, records the movement of Spotted Eagle's 150 lodges to join Sitting Bull. The main Miniconjou-Sans Arc village seems to have moved slowly after Spotted Eagle. Swelled Face (as n.22) seems to indicate their arrival on Powder River about the second week of February. This must be at a point below the forks of the Powder, since Hunts the Enemy's agency deputation did not meet them when in the vicinity of the forks, about February 10. White Eagle Bull (as n.39) reported buffalo at the head of the Little Missouri, significantly near the proposed rendezvous.

⁴¹ Village movements and fissions are now extremely complex. Three hundred and fifty lodges is a best guess figure based on a standard six persons: one lodge ratio. However, by late winter, many people were living in cramped privation conditions. (This seems particularly true of the Miniconjou and Sans Arcs.) Actual privation lodges in the main village of Oglalas and Cheyennes in early February may be reconstructed at about 310 lodges, since Oglala agency delegates who left the village on February 22 estimated it at two hundred lodges, after the departure of 110 lodges to rejoin Crazy Horse. See delegates' statements in Lt. William P. Clark to Lt. John G. Bourke, Mar. 3 and 8, 1877, Sioux War Papers. The surrendering followers of No Water, American Horse (Cheyenne), et al., are listed in the "Report of Arrivals of Indians from the North," in the Red Cloud Agency register. See Thomas R. Buecker and R. Eli Paul, eds., *The Crazy Horse Surrender Ledger* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1994), 101–4.

⁴² Hunkpatila organization is based on detailed band reconstructions that I have assembled for a history of the Oglalas in progress. The Iron Crow kindred probably represents a mixing of Hunkpatila and Oyuhpe band elements. The Oyuhpe may be defined as a kind of "floating" band between the Oglalas and Miniconjou. Iron Crow's kindred in 1881 is listed in the "Big Road Roster" of Northern Oglalas then held at Standing Rock Agency after returning from Canada. (See Garrick Mallery, "Pictographs of the North American Indians: A Preliminary Paper," *Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* IV [1882–83], 174.) Unlike other kindreds in the "Roster," there seems virtually no overlap with people surrendering at Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies in 1877, outside of Iron Crow himself and Human Finger. My belief is that the kindred followed Spotted Eagle to Canada in spring 1877, led by Iron Crow's brother, the *akicita* Running Horse; but Iron Crow himself took a few lodges to surrender at Spotted Tail Agency with Touch the Clouds'

Miniconjou. Iron Crow (aka Jumping Shield) seems to have moved unofficially to Red Cloud Agency during May 1877, where he seems to replace Old Hawk as one of the four Deciders in the Crazy Horse village. Human Finger perhaps surrendered at Spotted Tail Agency as one of the four lodge heads following Worm, Crazy Horse's father. He transferred to Red Cloud in May also, perhaps later joining Iron Crow in flight to Canada in January 1878. For the flights of surrendered Sioux to Canada, see Kingsley M. Bray, "'We Belong to the North': The Flights of the Northern Sioux from the White River Agencies, 1877–78," *Montana, The Magazine of Western History*, in press.

⁴³ Hunkpapa movements are based on "Canadian Papers," 12–13; Lt. R. H. Day to post adjutant, Ft. Buford, Feb. 19, 1877, Sioux War Papers.

⁴⁴ *Army and Navy Journal*, Feb. 3, 1877, notes the departure of Mason's Oglala delegates. See also William Garnett, Interview No. 2, 1907, in Eli S. Ricker Collection, MS8 (microfilm), Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln. Hunts the Enemy, who took the name of George Sword later in 1877, gave his own account to Pine Ridge physician James R. Walker. I have used the translation by Ella Deloria, "Sword's acts Related," in typescript at the Colorado State Historical Society, Denver.

⁴⁵ Delegates' statement, in Clark to Bourke, Mar. 3, 1877. This intelligence was a little outdated: Sitting Bull's village had probably left Powder River two or three days before. Conceivably the reference is to the Spotted Eagle village.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Red Feather statement to Eleanor Hinman, July 8, 1930, in "Oglala Sources on the Life of Crazy Horse."

⁴⁸ Tall Man statement, in Clark to Bourke, Mar. 8, 1877.

⁴⁹ Delegates' statement, in Clark to Bourke, Mar. 3, 1877.

⁵⁰ Red Feather statement.

⁵¹ Deloria (trans.), "Sword's acts Related."

⁵² *Ibid.* See also Running Hawk statement, in Lt. William P. Clark to Lt. John G. Bourke, Mar. 9, 1877, Sioux War Papers; Short Bull statement to Hinman, "Oglala Sources on the Life of Crazy Horse."

⁵³ "Sword's acts Related." Iron Hawk (born 1833) was a son of Oglala Chief Old Smoke, met by Francis Parkman in 1846, and a headman in the Sore-Backs kindred of the Bad Face band of Oglalas.

⁵⁴ Tall Man statement.

⁵⁵ *Omaha Daily Bee*, Mar. 14, 1877, embodying delegates' information. See also n.64.

⁵⁶ Delegates' statement, in Clark to Bourke, Mar. 3, 1877.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Miles's scout reports noted: "A considerable

body, estimated variously from fifty to one hundred and fifty lodges, crossed the Yellowstone and went up Cedar creek Feb. 26 or 27." Miles to assistant adjutant general, Dept. of Dakota, Mar. 24, 1877, reproduced as undated *Chicago Times* clipping in Bourke "Diary," vol. 19, 1902–3. This must be the Spotted Eagle village, which I reconstruct as: forty-five lodges Sans Arcs; thirty-five lodges Miniconjou; fifteen lodges Oglalas, total ninety-five lodges.

⁵⁹ The Miniconjou-Sans Arc main village, reported at 136 (privation) lodges, was on the Little Missouri fifty miles north of the mining settlement of Spearfish, early in March. See Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie to Lt. John G. Bourke, Mar. 17, 1877, Sioux War Papers. From later reports, it seems that up to thirty lodges may have stayed in the Powder River valley.

⁶⁰ Tall Man statement.

⁶¹ *Omaha Daily Bee*, Apr. 17, 1877.

⁶² Tall Man statement.

⁶³ "Canadian Papers," 12–13; Miles to assistant adjutant general, Dept. of Dakota, Mar. 24, 1877.

⁶⁴ Tall Man statement; Clark to Bourke, Feb. 24, 1877. Uncertainty exists as to when Crazy Horse first received word of Spotted Tail's embassy. One newspaper report claims that six runners were sent up the west side of the Black Hills to carry news of Spotted Tail's departure. *Omaha Daily Bee*, Mar. 14, 1877. These delegates could have reached Crazy Horse during the third week of February, resulting, as the report states, in his summoning all Northern Indians to a grand council. Although this fits well with the course of events, delegate Tall Man was unequivocal that, when he left Crazy Horse for Red Cloud Agency on March 4, "Spotted Tail had not been heard from, except through the information given them by Red Sack." Tall Man statement. Red Sack could hardly have arrived with Crazy Horse much before March 1. Perhaps Tall Man meant that Red Sack's was the first intelligence received after the formal announcement of Spotted Tail's departure from his agency.

⁶⁵ Neide to Bourke, Feb. 10, 1877; Lt. Jesse M. Lee to commissioner of Indian affairs, Mar. 20, 1877, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824–81, Spotted Tail Agency (National Archives Microfilm Publication M234, roll 841), Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration; Bourke "Diary," vol. 19, 1835 (on pony surrenders), 1901, 1903–5 (outlines proposed Northern Sioux reservation in southeastern Montana, bounded on west and north by Little Bighorn, Bighorn and Yellowstone rivers). On Crook's arrangements about surrendering stock, see also Lee to Bourke, Mar. 6, 1877.

⁶⁶ Black Elk statement, in DeMallie, *Sixth Grandfather*, 202.

⁶⁷ F. C. Boucher, Spotted Tail's son-in-law, stated that Crazy Horse "went out by himself" about three

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weeks before Spotted Tail reached the Little Powder (March 20). Boucher statement, in Lt. Jesse M. Lee to assistant adjutant general, Dist. of Black Hills, Apr. 8, 1877, Spotted Tail Agency; Letters Sent, vol. 1, 667–70, Field Records, National Archives Central Plains Region, Kansas City. But Crazy Horse was still in camp when Tall Man left for the agency on March 4. I therefore assume that Crazy Horse left on his vision quest soon after Tall Man's departure. Boucher also states that Crazy Horse had only his own lodge with him, but Indians arriving at Spotted Tail Agency told Lt. Clark that Crazy Horse "was out hunting with . . . two lodges." Lt. William P. Clark to Lt. John G. Bourke, Apr. 2, 1877, Sioux War Papers. On the composition of Crazy Horse's household at surrender see Buecker and Paul, eds., *The Crazy Horse Surrender Ledger*, 162. On Black Shawl's illness, diagnosed as tuberculosis by surgeon V. T. McGillicuddy on May 7, see Julia B. McGillicuddy, *McGillicuddy Agent: A Biography of Valentine T. McGillicuddy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1941), 75.

⁶⁸ Black Elk statement, in DeMallie, *Sixth Grandfather*, 202.

⁶⁹ Lee to Bourke, Mar. 6, 1877, incorporating Spotted Tail and F. C. Boucher to [Spotted Tail Agent], Feb. 20, 1877; Gen. George Crook to Lt. Gen. P. H. Sheridan, Mar. 25, 1877; Good Breast statement, in Lt. Jesse M. Lee to Lt. John G. Bourke, Mar. 10, 1877, all in Sioux War Papers.

⁷⁰ For a detailed account of the Black Hills raids from a military perspective, see Thomas R. Buecker, "Can You Send Us Immediate Relief?: Army Expeditions to the Northern Black Hills, 1876–1878," *South Dakota History* 25 (1995): 95–115.

⁷¹ Good Breast statement.

⁷² F. C. Boucher statement; also anonymous Sioux statement in Clark to Bourke, Apr. 2, 1877.

⁷³ *Ibid.*; also Lone Bear statement, in Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie to Lt. John G. Bourke, Apr. 1, 1877; Turning Bear statement, in Lee to assistant adjutant general, Dist. of the Black Hills, Apr. 2, 1877, all in Sioux War Papers. For Miles's jaundiced view of Spotted Tail's negotiations, see Miles to assistant adjutant general, Dept. of Dakota, Mar. 24, 1877.

⁷⁴ F. C. Boucher statement; Turning Bear statement; Lone Bear statement (including quotation).

⁷⁵ Lone Bear statement.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; F. C. Boucher to "Major Neide," Mar. 25 [error for 27?], 1877, copy enclosed with Lee to assistant adjutant general, Dist. of the Black Hills, Apr.

2, 1877 (includes quotation), Sioux War Papers.

⁷⁷ Spotted Tail statement, in Lt. Jesse M. Lee to assistant adjutant general, Dist. of the Black Hills, Apr. 5, 1877, Sioux War Papers.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Lone Bear statement; Boucher statement; Turning Bear statement.

⁸⁰ Red Feather to Hinman, July 8, 1930, states: "The Indians who were in the Big Horn Mountains [i.e. the main Oglala-Cheyenne village] started for the agency. *They found Crazy Horse waiting on the Powder River*" (my italics). "Oglala Sources on the Life of Crazy Horse," 26. The March 26 dating seems definite because of the tight chronological coordinates governing the movements of Spotted Tail and Lame Deer. See also Marquis, *Wooden Leg*, 297f.

⁸¹ Red Feather to Hinman (includes quotation). On the second deputation to Miles, see Miles to assistant adjutant general, Dept. of Dakota, Mar. 24, 1877.

⁸² He Dog, "History of Chief Crazy Horse (as written down by his son, Rev. Eagle Hawk)," in Robert A. Clark, ed., *The Killing of Chief Crazy Horse* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, rpt., 1988), 53–54. This is a late and difficult text, taken down long after the event. However, it is emphatic that Crazy Horse left the Oglala village to join Lame Deer. My chronology is derived from the tight dating of the contemporary documents, which do not mention this important incident.

⁸³ Low Dog was the *kola* or comrade of Lame Deer's nephew, Iron Star, killed in the fight with Miles on May 7, 1877. Low Dog enrolled at Spotted Tail Agency with the surrendering Lame Deer village on Sept. 4, 1877. "Census Roll of Indians at Spotted Tail Agency, 1877," 64, Rosebud Indian Agency File, National Archives Central Plains Region, Kansas City. He then played a leading part in the November 17 flight to Canada. See Bray, "We Belong to the North."

⁸⁴ Clark to adjutant general, Dept. of the Platte, Sept. 14, 1877; Gen. George Crook to Lt. Gen. P. H. Sheridan, Apr. 27 and May 30, 1877 (telegrams). On Sitting Bull, see also Utey, *The Lance and the Shield*, 181.

⁸⁵ Intelligence that Crazy Horse had recently arrived at Bear Lodge was received by Capt. Peter D. Vroom, in camp near Crook City, from José Merrivale on April 5. Vroom to Gen. George Crook, Apr. 5, 1877 (telegram), transmitted in Crook to Sheridan, Apr. 7, 1877 (telegram), Sioux War Papers. Oglala village strength is based on surrender

statistics in Buecker and Paul, eds., *The Crazy Horse Surrender Ledger*, 114, 157–64. Leadership is reconstructed from *Army and Navy Journal*, May 12, 1877; and cf. Bourke, "Diary," vol. 20, 1984–85; also John G. Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, rpt., 1971), 412.

⁸⁶ "Life of Crazy Horse and Fast Thunder," traditional statement by Mathew H. King to E. Kadlecek, Mar. 12, 1967, in Edward and Mabel Kadlecek, *To Kill an Eagle: Indian Views on the Last Days of Crazy Horse* (Boulder: Johnson Books, 1981), 125.

⁸⁷ Marquis, *Wooden Leg*, 197–300; Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 2:1124–28. See also Lt. William P. Clark to headquarters, Dept. of the Platte, May 4, 1877 (telegram), transmitted in R. Williams to assistant adjutant general, Div. of the Missouri, May 5, 1877 (telegram); Col. Nelson A. Miles to assistant adjutant general, Dept. of Dakota, Apr. 22, 1877, Sioux War Papers.

⁸⁸ Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie to commissioner of Indian affairs, Mar. 19, 1877, Sioux War Papers.

⁸⁹ Short Bull to Hinman, July 13, 1930; Little Killer to Hinman, July 12, 1930, in "Oglala Sources on the Life of Crazy Horse," 40, 44.

⁹⁰ Black Elk statement, in DeMallie, *Sixth Grandfather*, 203.

⁹¹ *New York Tribune*, Apr. 28, 1877 (includes quotation); Bourke "Diary," vol. 19, 1884; vol. 20, 1977.

⁹² Mackenzie to Bourke, Apr. 1, 1877.

⁹³ Bourke "Diary," vol. 19, 1885–86; Garnett Interview No. 2, tablet 2, Ricker Collection. A valuable group of documents, including a list of all delegates in the Red Cloud party, is collected in "Red Cloud's Mission to Crazy Horse, 1877: Source Material," *Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly* 22 (1986): 9–13.

⁹⁴ *New York Herald*, May 11, 1877; *New York Tribune*, Apr. 28, 1877 (incorporating Red Cloud to [Lt. William P. Clark], Apr. 16, 1877); Short Bull to Hinman.

⁹⁵ *Chicago Tribune*, May 8, 1877; Little Killer to Hinman.

⁹⁶ Short Bull to Hinman.

⁹⁷ Garnett Interview, tablet 2, Ricker Collection.

⁹⁸ *Chicago Tribune*, May 8, 1877.