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Article Summary: Spotted Tail worked from 1866 on to create Brulé tribal consensus, gradually accepting the changes forced upon his people by government support for western settlement while doing all he could to protect their interests. Adaptation to reservation life was an unpopular and difficult process, but Spotted Tail understood that the Brulé band had no alternative.

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Photographs / Images: Spotted Tail, principal chief of the Upper Brulé Lakotas; inset list of signatories to the Treaty of Fort Laramie, June 27, 1866; Two Strike, of the militant Southern Brulé Miwatani Society; Mathewson T Patrick, Upper Platte Indian agent; Pawnee Killer, one of the leaders of the Oglala Lakotas; General William Tecumseh Sherman with a group of Indians; inset list of Brulé signatories to the Treaty of Fort Laramie, April 29, 1868; Swift Bear, who favored removal to a reservation near Fort Randall on the Missouri River; General Christopher C Augur, who ordered all Southern Lakotas to the reservation after they had raided American homesteads along the Saline and Solomon rivers; Little Wound, whose followers declared war in August 1868; Red Leaf, ranking Wazhazha band chief; Spotted Tail, who kept most of the Brulé tribe at peace while other Indians rebelled

SPOTTED TAIL

AND THE TREATY OF 1868

By Kingsley M. Bray

For the Lakota people the establishment of the Great Sioux Reservation marked the beginning of the modern era on the High Plains. In 1868, responding to massive political and economic changes, Lakota diplomats concluded a treaty with the United States to secure a future for their people in a world changing beyond recognition. One of the key Lakota players was Spotted Tail, principal chief of the Upper Brulé division. His contribution to the troubled treaty negotiations set a benchmark for Brulé politics during the difficult years of accommodation to the reservation system, while his moral example of wary, gradualist acceptance of change established a Brulé consensus that would hold through the war years into the twentieth century.

Other Lakota divisions continued to resist American expansionism, but by 1870 the Brulés had made a comparatively easy transition to a new *modus-vivendi* with the U.S. government. Using treaty proceedings and documents still untapped by historians, this paper will reexamine Spotted Tail's role during the crucial years of transition, as he and his people were drawn inescapably into a new world of restricted land base and radical economic change.

Born about 1823 in the White River valley of modern South Dakota, Spotted Tail grew up in the Wazhazha band of Brulés. He was already a noted war leader when tensions along the Overland Trail erupted into warfare in



A skilled diplomat and forceful leader, Spotted Tail, principal chief of the Upper Brulé Lakotas, played a crucial role in the troubled treaty negotiations leading to the establishment of the Great Sioux Reservation. NSHS-RG1227:10-4

1854–55. His participation in an attack on a mail coach resulted in his voluntary surrender and a year-long detention at Fort Leavenworth and other frontier posts—an experience that convinced Spotted Tail of the futility of military resistance to U.S. power. He was freed in the fall of 1856, and over the following ten years shifted his affiliation from the conservative Wazhazhas to the Southern Brulés, whose hunting range centered south of the Platte River. By 1863 he was the division's ranking war leader.

When warfare re-ignited across the central Plains in 1864, Spotted Tail did what he could to limit Brulé involvement. Early in 1866, as government officials scheduled a new round of treaty talks at Fort Laramie, Brulé chiefs and war leaders nominated Spotted Tail as their principal spokesman. His formal position within the tribal hierarchy remained as one of its "head soldiers," but American officials had little grasp of the nuances of Lakota political organization. At age forty-three, Spotted Tail was recognized by the government as the head chief of the Upper Brulés.¹

Councils at Fort Laramie took up most of June 1866, impeded by political differences both petty and profound. Iron Shell, chief of the Brulé Orphan band, held some claim to tribal primacy. Rejecting the Treaty Commission's preferment of Spotted Tail, he departed into the war zone of the Powder River country. When the Northern Oglala leader Red Cloud ordered his delegation to quit cooperation with the commission, following the arrival of a U.S. Army force sent to garrison the war zone, most of the Wazhazha band chiefs, led

Kingsley M. Bray of New Moston, Manchester, England, has recently completed a biography of Crazy Horse.

by Spotted Tail's cousin Red Leaf, also abandoned negotiations. Almost two weeks of Indians-only talks were finally capped on June 27, when Spotted Tail led seven other Brulés, plus six Southern Oglala and Loafer band signatories, in "touching the pen" to the abortive Treaty of 1866.²

The treaty pledged the signatory bands to withdraw from the emigrant routes through their country. Sold heavily by the commissioners as treating a single road—the Bozeman Trail to the Montana goldfields that crossed lands unclaimed by the Southern Brulés and Oglalas—the original clause unmistakably specified multiple routes, including any "hereafter to be established." In return the government pledged a seventy thousand dollar annuity, split equally between the Brulés and Oglalas, for twenty years.

With buffalo declining across the Plains, the treaty outlined a Lakota future as Jeffersonian yeoman farmers. For every twenty-five lodges agreeing to settle and farm, \$125 per lodge would be expended over four years to purchase stock, teams, agricultural tools, and seeds. Whenever one hundred lodges settled to plant, the government would provide a farmer, a blacksmith, and sufficient teachers to educate adults in intensive farming and children in reading, writing, mathematics, and religion. Post-Civil War radicals and social improvers were mapping out a high road to assimilation for the American Indian.³

In the days following the signing, while diplomacy climaxed in a round of feasting and distribution of treaty goods, Spotted Tail readied his village to travel. The season was too advanced to begin planting, and without government rationing the Lakotas would have to follow the buffalo. Although the herds still numbered in the millions, buffalo range was contracting into scattered, discontinuous districts. With the war zone off limits, peace proponents were restricted to the Republican River country in southwestern Nebraska—the region Lakotas called the Buffalo South.

Brulés

Chief: Spotted Tail, Southern Brulé
 Chief: Swift Bear, Corn Band
 Chief: Dog Hawk, Orphan Band
 Chief: Hawk Thunder
 Chief: Standing Elk, Corn Band
 Soldier: Tall Mandan, Corn Band
 Chief: Brave Heart, Lower Brulé
 Chief: White Tail, Wazhazha Band

Oglalas

Chief: Big Mouth, Loafer Band
 Chief: Walks Underground, Southern Oglala
 Chief: Black Warbonnet, Southern Oglala
 Chief: Standing Cloud, Southern Oglala
 Chief: Blue Horse, Loafer band
 Chief: Big Head, Southern Oglala

Signatories to the Treaty of Fort Laramie, June 27, 1866.

The Brulés united with Southern Oglala signatories to form a strong village of more than two hundred lodges. Formalizing the rank of commission-sponsored "chiefs," the Big Bellies—the council of headmen and elders—then selected four men, Spotted Tail, Swift Bear, Standing Elk, and Walks Underground, as Deciders, leaders temporarily empowered with coercive authority. As the village trekked slowly down the Platte Valley, some warriors began to drift northward, heading for the war zone and its lucrative traffic in stolen stock.⁴

Early in August, while the main village paused at Ash Hollow, a drunken Brulé warrior fired on an emigrant train near the South Platte crossing, wounding three civilians. Acting to brake a deteriorating situation, Spotted Tail turned out his *akicita*, or camp police. Having shot the offender's pony from under him, Spotted Tail "beat him severely, and when the young Indian's father, (a chief) interfered in his behalf, Spotted Tail gave him a severe cut on the head with a sabre," before turning in both men at the Beauvais & Lee trading post. In a talk with the military, Spotted Tail asserted that he would punish all such offenses, "blood for blood and life for life," and compensate former damages

in ponies. "He said he wanted peace with the whites, and that he did not forget the late treaty only when he slept." Little Thunder, Standing Elk, and Bad Wound all echoed Spotted Tail's assurances.⁵

The resolve of the pro-American chiefs temporarily silenced the reckless minority. In a village encompassing the spectrum of Lakota attitudes toward the American presence on the Plains, the Corn band had moved farthest along the road to accommodation with the United States. Fifty lodges strong, they had already experimented with planting plots of maize to supplement the increasingly precarious mainstay of the buffalo hunt. The ranking band chief was Swift Bear, a lean, stooped Lakota with a pleasantly melancholic expression. Two or three years younger than Spotted Tail, Swift Bear was brother-in-law to trader James Bordeaux. Operating important trading posts on the North Platte and White rivers, Bordeaux was an influential player in Corn band politics. His close association with Swift Bear kept the band leadership on a pro-American footing, and encouraged its farming experiments. In the polarizing Lakota world even token farming was divisive, and anti-American factions vehemently opposed it. By 1866 Dog Hawk's *tiospaye* or kin group of the Orphan band was prepared to join Swift Bear in planting, but the rest of the Brulé tribe disowned agriculture as unacceptable appeasement of the invaders.⁶

In 1866 the anti-American faction of Southern Brulés cohered about the leadership of Two Strike, another older contemporary of Spotted Tail. Although recognized by the treaty commission as a chief, Two Strike had declined to cooperate with the peace agenda. An imposing figure despite his short stature, he was a leader in the influential Miwatani Society, the Lakota counterpart of the militant Cheyenne Dog Soldiers. During the 1860s the Southern Brulé and Southern Oglala chapters of this society allied more closely with the Dog Soldiers, rejecting treaty relations with the United States.

As winter 1866–67 drew on, Two

Spotted Tail and the Treaty of 1868

Strike's rhetoric swayed more of the nonaligned. Continuing warfare on the northern Plains delayed ratification of the treaty, and in the diplomatic vacuum Two Strike accused the government of not fulfilling its promises. Annuity payments had been promised semiannually, but the first due date in fall 1866 passed unmarked. In the winter privation months Two Strike found ready support for claims that such treaty gifts as mosquito netting and umbrellas were useless impedimenta. By March 1867 Two Strike reportedly controlled three-quarters of the 120 lodges of Southern Brulés in Spotted Tail's village.⁷

Spotted Tail knew that to maintain a viable tribal consensus he would have to balance the opposing poles of Brulé opinion. During the decade following his detention at Fort Leavenworth he had emphatically shifted his position into the pro-American camp, but nothing indicates that he had yet embraced the future of farming and restricted reservations. After the 1866 treaty he came reluctantly to accept them as inevitable.

Swift Bear's influence was crucial in this respect, and the two men, so different in instinct and disposition, forged a working alliance that would dominate Brulé politics for the next fifteen years. Without Spotted Tail's gradualist adoption of government-sponsored change, Swift Bear's position would have been that of a minor faction leader, unable to shape a broader consensus around the Corn band agenda of accommodation and agriculture. But without Swift Bear's advocacy of radical change, Spotted Tail's head chieftainship would have been a barren figurehead rank, first among equals jostling to placate war leaders like Two Strike.

In March an investigative commission arrived on the Plains to examine the causes of Indian hostilities. They learned that some 350 lodges of Lakotas were hunting on the central Plains between the Platte and Arkansas rivers. Although nominally peaceful, 140 lodges were Southern Oglalas encamped with the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers on Pawnee Fork.

Runners were dispatched to invite them to parley at Fort McPherson. In Spotted Tail's village, approximately 210 lodges of Brulés and treaty Oglalas, Two Strike's influence was evident in a rejection of any negotiations based at a military post. Even Two Strike was shifting ground, however, summoning home his brother, who had been living with the Sans Arc Lakotas in the war zone.

distributions be brought by trader-commissioner G. P. Beauvais, and issued outside "on the prairie." "These Chiefs who are here with me," he insisted, "have spoken before, but have not been listened to. The words have never reached my Great Grandfather. . . . Our Great Grandfather did not hear of our poverty this Winter, but will hear of it now."⁹

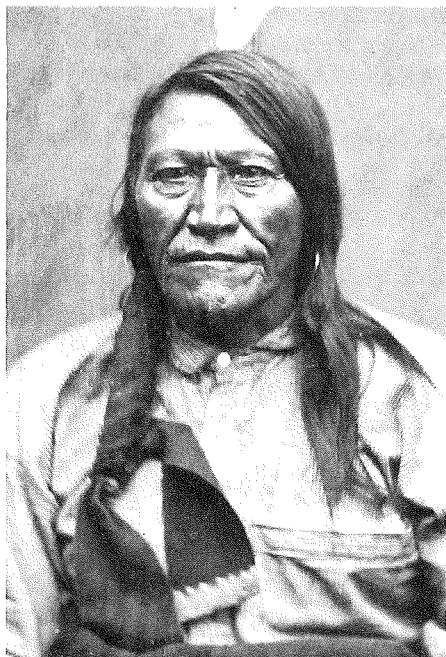
*"These Chiefs who are here with me,
have spoken before, but have not been listened to.
The words have never reached my Great Grandfather.
. . . Our Great Grandfather did not hear
of our poverty this Winter, but will hear of it now."*

The new commission relocated from Fort McPherson to the Beauvais & Lee trading post at the California Crossing of the South Platte. On April 18 a party of ninety men and eighty women and children arrived from Spotted Tail's village. Encouragingly, besides Spotted Tail, Swift Bear, and many of the treaty signatories, Two Strike was present. Bear Looks Behind, a Miniconjou brother-in-law of Swift Bear, was visiting from the war zone.⁸

At 10 A.M. on April 20 official talks began. In the opening address Eli S. Parker, an educated Seneca Indian who had acted as General Grant's aide during the Civil War, stated that the commission had not "come to make treaties," but to "separate the friendly Indians from those who are not." Parker sounded the note of a reservation set apart for the Lakotas, promising "large presents of goods and provisions" once the "Great Grandfather," the President, was satisfied that his Indian children were peaceable. Spotted Tail's response was conciliatory, but he insisted that his people had been mistreated since the treaty. Treaty goods had not reached them. He requested that no more agents be appointed, but that future annuity

Reflecting his growing understanding with Swift Bear, Spotted Tail turned to the issue of a reservation, introducing specifics into Parker's platitudes. He conceded that the hunting grounds south of the Platte, wrested from the Pawnees, were "not ours, but there is plenty of game [there]. . . . Our land is towards White river. That country belongs to us, and I have it in reserve and we expect to return there some future day. We wish to remain here as long as there is game." Reflecting rumors about military reprisals, he concluded by asking that traders Leon Palladay and Todd Randall be employed as special interpreters for the Brulés and Oglalas respectively, to travel with the camps while in the hunting range.¹⁰

Swift Bear followed with a shorter speech. Deftly presenting the Lakota case, he moved to the issue that would dominate the future—the reservation. "What belongs to a person, I suppose he has a right to ask for it. The White river country is ours, and we claim it as our country, and we are only on a visit here, on account of buffalo and game. We have only borrowed it. I know that the whites are coming among us, that emigration and civilization are coming



Two Strike, of the militant Southern Brulé Miwatani Society, insisted on a summer buffalo hunt on the Republican River, threatening the consensus Spotted Tail was working to achieve. NSHS-RG1289:86



With treaty talks stalled in spring 1867, Mathewson T. Patrick, Upper Platte Indian agent, had to provide half rations to a thousand Brulés camped on the swollen Platte River. *Omaha: The Gate City* (1917)



In September 1867 some two hundred warriors rode into North Platte to participate in the peace talks. Among the leaders was Pawnee Killer of the Oglala Lakotas. NSHS- RG2955-27

this way as it is below, and we are not dissatisfied with it." In return for conceding the Bozeman Trail, Swift Bear outlined the hunting grounds he wished recognized, bracketing the Platte and Arkansas rivers between north-south lines running from Plum Creek and Lodgepole Creek. Should war break out between the Americans and the Dog Soldier Cheyennes, he requested a safe haven north of the Platte, between Plum Creek and the Blue Water. Both these hunting ranges he differentiated from the permanent reservation projected in the White River country.¹¹

Responding that evening, the commissioners approved a hunting range as far south as a line ten miles north of the Smoky Hill River. They agreed to recommend that the White River "be kept secure for you to settle upon, as your permanent home." Privately, a timescale of one year was agreed, the commission recommending that the reserve should be working by April 1, 1868. Meanwhile,

should war erupt on the central Plains, impeding hunting, the friendly Indians must cross north of the Platte and the government would subsist them at Fort McPherson and other points. Having approved the special interpreters, they earmarked four thousand dollars in presents and provisions. Even the Two Strike faction had to concede the fairness of these arrangements, and while the commission prepared to parley with the Northern Lakotas in the war zone, Spotted Tail's people returned to the Republican.¹²

The crisis had already hit. While the government temporized in the north, General W. S. Hancock had been ordered to cow potentially hostile Indians along the Arkansas River. After nervous Dog Soldier Cheyennes and Southern Oglalas on Pawnee Fork fled his march, Hancock ordered their abandoned village burned on April 19. Angry warriors lashed out at the mail route along the Smoky Hill River, seeking to

embroil Spotted Tail's people in their reprisals. The Brulé council held firmly for peace and reappointed Spotted Tail, Swift Bear, Two Strike, and Standing Elk as chiefs in total command. On May 6 the village crossed the swollen Platte. Of the 160 lodges of Brulés present in April, some 140 were encamped in the Sandhills by mid-May. The pro-treaty Oglalas split, Walks Underground joining relatives with the war faction, and Fire Thunder's *tiospaye* following Spotted Tail. By late June some 876 Brulés and 144 Oglalas were following Spotted Tail. While Cheyenne horse thieves targeted Brulé herds, Spotted Tail opened negotiations to lure the main Southern Oglala camp out of the Dog Soldier alliance. For three months talks stalled as warfare escalated across the Buffalo South.¹³

Initially, the Brulés were rationed at Fort McPherson, but Spotted Tail protested having to cross the Platte repeatedly. Provisions were then distributed from Brady Island, until Upper Platte Indian

Spotted Tail and the Treaty of 1868

Agent M. T. Patrick relocated his agency in June from Fort Laramie to North Platte City at the forks of the Platte. Operating out of a rented storeroom, Patrick juggled the logistics of feeding upwards of a thousand people on half rations. Flour, bacon, coffee, sugar, and salt were freighted from Omaha by the Union Pacific Railroad, which was laying track across Nebraska in 1867. Indian Affairs Superintendent H. B. Denman contracted with ranchers to drive fresh beef to North Platte. For the Brulés the dependency culture of the reservation began during these troubled weeks.¹⁴

Spotted Tail's command of the new world of rationing was matched by his firm advocacy of Brulé interests. On April 18 a Brulé family was brutally murdered by army deserters on the North Platte. Spotted Tail personally investigated the scene of the crime, and persistently demanded presents to "cover" the deaths, just as he had compensated for Brulé offenses with gifts of stock. Finally, in August, Superintendent Denman presented mourning relatives with two American horses, six Indian ponies, and a wagon, for a total value of \$1,150. Such small-scale coups secured Spotted Tail's reputation as a hard-nosed diplomat with the Americans, who increasingly circumscribed the Brulé world.¹⁵

Government officials also viewed Spotted Tail as an indispensable ally in the peace process. On May 21 Investigative Commission President John S. Sanborn requested the presence at Fort Laramie of Spotted Tail, Swift Bear, and Two Strike. Northern Lakota messengers had named the Brulé chiefs as intermediaries before resuming the dialogue broken by Red Cloud's war. Although protesting that negotiations with the Southern Oglalas demanded his attention, Spotted Tail and interpreter Palladay took a military ambulance to Fort Sedgwick on June 1, then boarded the westbound stage. In contrast with his adept handling of affairs at home, Spotted Tail could not sway the Northern Oglala, Wazhazha, and Miniconjou leaders at Fort Laramie.

During councils on June 12 and 13, he lent his support to the commissioners, urging that the Northern bands unite with him at North Platte. But the commission's failure to match the presents of powder and lead made to Spotted Tail's people undermined the talks. Spotted Tail personally fielded the spite of the Northern leaders, resentful at his intervention on behalf of the commissioners. Only the Loafer band, a fixture at the agency, agreed to go to North Platte. Even then most of the band resisted removal, or departed for White River. On July 8 Big Mouth and two hundred followers debarked at North Platte. Without horses to move their camp, Palladay had managed to secure the Loafers passage on the Union Pacific eastbound.¹⁶

Superintendent Denman scheduled a major council with the Indians at North Platte on July 10. Talks were dominated by a single theme. Making much of the insufficient rations, Lakotas wished approval for their regular summer hunt on the Republican. Although the Buffalo South had, through Hancock's bungling, become a second war zone, the Sandhills held only small game, and Spotted Tail's people must hunt to live. Denman replied that the Great Father wished them to remain where they were until the war was over. They would, he claimed, be well provided with "lodges, clothing, and sufficient powder and lead to kill antelope and other small game."

All seemed to accept Denman's explanation except Two Strike. "[A] Brulé chief . . . one of Spotted Tail's men, he is a wild, unruly spirit, and can control about 20 lodges, or 120 Indians," reported the superintendent. Two Strike "said that his women and children could not live on the food of the white man, that they must have wild meat, and that as soon as the water of the Platte River went down, he would go south to the Republican, for Buffalo, he said he was friendly with the whites, and would not go to war, but he must have wild meat and lodges for his family. The

imperative tone of the speech, and the decided manner of the Indian, left me to suppose that he might breed mischief, and on inquiry of the Interpreter; and others who know him they said he was wild, and hard to control, but friendly, that if he carried out his threat of going on a hunt, he would remain peaceable."¹⁷

Spotted Tail was visibly displeased with Two Strike's speech. Nevertheless, he was unwilling to publicly undermine tribal solidarity, and his response was guarded. Denman concluded that if a crisis arose, Spotted Tail "would control" the recalcitrant Two Strike, but preferred a compromise. Probably reflecting Spotted Tail's agenda, Denman tentatively proposed that the Indian Office approve the hunt if only the men went out, leaving their families at North Platte as a guarantee of peace. Denman also moved to placate Spotted Tail by authorizing the issue of fifty pounds of gunpowder, one hundred pounds of lead, and three thousand percussion caps—ammunition with which to hunt small game. Although expected to last forty days, seven thousand more caps were wrung from Denman to keep the Brulés aboard the peace process.¹⁸

Throughout July, as the Brulés roamed through the Sandhills, Two Strike continued to press for an immediate departure. Although his following rose to forty or sixty lodges, he clearly could not form a consensus. The Brulés were fearful of becoming embroiled in the war raging on the central Plains. The arrival of Dog Hawk, with four lodges of his Orphans band tiospaye, confirmed that in the northern war zone Red Cloud's Lakotas projected a summer of hostilities more intense than the last. On July 28 the Brulé chiefs visited Agent Patrick, and agreed to move their village within six miles of North Platte. Warned that Military Division of the Missouri commander William Tecumseh Sherman would view a move across the Platte as a hostile act, Two Strike reluctantly agreed to cooperate with Spotted Tail.¹⁹

Over the following week Two Strike thought better of his pledge. With river

levels falling, on August 5 his camp crossed the Platte Forks. He assured Patrick that his fifty lodges would commit no hostilities. In a separate interview Spotted Tail told the agent “he could prevent [Two Strike’s departure] no longer But that he was confident that he would remain peaceable with the whites, and that he had but 30 Lodges with him.”²⁰

Thirty miles downstream of North Platte, late on August 6, a Cheyenne war party succeeded in derailing a Union Pacific freight train. On August 17, as Cheyenne and Lakota families looted the wreckage, a unit of Pawnee government scouts routed the party, killing seventeen warriors and capturing three noncombatants. The Cheyennes and Southern Oglalas moved farther southward. Thinking better of a deteriorating situation, Two Strike’s camp, now twenty lodges strong, returned to North Platte on August 19 and reunited with Spotted Tail’s village.²¹

Events were turning in Spotted Tail’s favor. Advised that a new Indian Peace Commission was convening in St. Louis, Spotted Tail adeptly worked the new situation. Through Agent Patrick and Superintendent Denman, he convinced the commission that the Brulé’s could use their influence to end the hostilities on the central Plains. As quid pro quo, he asked the commission to approve an organized Brulé hunt on the upper Republican. On August 18 Denman boarded the Union Pacific to announce the commission’s approval. Brulé leaders were visibly impressed at the confidence the officials placed in Spotted Tail. Ten messengers were instantly readied to visit the Oglalas and Cheyennes, each handsomely outfitted by Denman, and equipped with eight packages of tobacco. After they departed at 1 P.M. on August 20, the main village prepared to start. Some twenty lodges of Loafers, led by the band akicita, Bad Hand, chose to tag along. Provided with twelve days’ rations the village, about two hundred lodges strong, started southward under white flags presented to each of the

principal chiefs, printed with the legend “Spotted Tail Friendly Band.”²²

Conditions for peace seemed auspicious. On August 21–22 the Cheyennes and Oglalas fought a protracted skirmish with a troop of Tenth Cavalry scouting westward from Fort Hays. Indian losses were heavy, and the main Southern Cheyenne-Dog Soldier village determined to withdraw south of the Arkansas for its fall hunts. The Southern Oglalas, with Turkey Leg’s camp of Northern Cheyennes, turned back northward, and on September 2 held a parley with the Brulé’s on the Republican. To pressure from Spotted Tail, the former hostiles conceded that they wanted security to hunt peaceably. Gambling on the commission’s goodwill, Swift Bear

Southern Lakotas separately. When the commissioners learned that no Northern Lakotas were gathering at Fort Laramie, they agreed to Spotted Tail’s proposal of a grand council at North Platte.²⁴

While the Brulé, Oglala, and Cheyenne villages remained on the Republican, a large party was deputed to attend the talks. Late on September 17 some two hundred warriors rode into North Platte. Spotted Tail, Swift Bear, and Standing Elk were accompanied by Oglala chiefs Walks Underground, Pawnee Killer, and Whistler. Turkey Leg represented the Cheyennes. Among the coterie of headmen, akicita leader Crazy Lodge represented Two Strike’s band.²⁵

Talks opened two days later with keynote speeches from Swift Bear and

... each speaker insisted that the Bozeman Trail and the Smoky Hill route be closed to preserve hunting range. Every speech was appended with a demand for ammunition—nominally for hunting purposes, in truth a necessary guarantee of trust in the atmosphere of poisoned suspicion.

assured them that ammunition would be distributed to all who made peace.²³

Spotted Tail recognized that six American prisoners in the Cheyenne camp represented a bargaining chip. In return for the captives taken by the Pawnee scouts, the Cheyennes should free their prisoners. The following day Spotted Tail had Special Interpreter Todd Randall scribble a note to Agent Patrick, and dispatched Bad Hand with two other messengers to carry in the news. Before leaving North Platte, Spotted Tail had agreed to a provisional schedule to meet the Peace Commission there about September 10 or 11, and travel with them to a grand council opening at Fort Laramie on September 13. Now he warned that such a timetable was unworkable. Declaring that Randall and the prisoners would be at North Platte on September 15, he requested that part of the commission wait to treat with the

Commissioner of Indian Affairs N. G. Taylor. The commissioner was placatory, and Indian responses were marked by a litany of grievance. To conciliate militant kinsmen, the Brulé leadership signaled a departure from the unsatisfactory agreements of 1866. While conceding the established rights-of-way along the Platte and Arkansas rivers, each speaker insisted that the Bozeman Trail and the Smoky Hill route be closed to preserve hunting range. Every speech was appended with a demand for ammunition—nominally for hunting purposes, in truth a necessary guarantee of trust in the atmosphere of poisoned suspicion. To the commission’s proposal of two large reserves to be established in spring 1868—one for the Lakotas north of the Nebraska line, one for the southern Plains tribes south of the Arkansas— Spotted Tail adroitly observed, “At the north and the south

Spotted Tail and the Treaty of 1868



Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman (second from left) pressed the Indians to accept a reserve near the Missouri River. He bluntly refused to issue ammunition to the Oglalas and Cheyennes, but eventually gave in, powder and ball was issued, and a secure winter was assured. NSHS-RG1227:11-2

there is trouble between us." His tactic betrays a larger strategy of slowing change to rates compatible with Lakota social cohesion. Expanding on his position expressed in April, Spotted Tail argued cogently for prolonging the status quo. "There is plenty of game in our country at present, and we can not go to farming until all that is gone." Swift Bear acknowledged that a reserve on White River remained a long-term goal, but was unwilling to rock the consensus articulated by Spotted Tail. Only Big Mouth, speaking for the Loafers, requested an immediate location at the forks of Horse Creek.

Talks resumed on September 20, with a bravura performance by commission hawk General Sherman. He pressed the Lakotas to accept a reserve embracing the White and Cheyenne rivers near the Missouri River to facilitate transportation of goods and provisions. There permanent homes could be established, and the

Indians taught American methods of agriculture. Bluntly he refused to issue ammunition to the Oglalas and Cheyennes, as unproven in their commitment to peace. Responses immediately chilled. Pointedly dropping the reserve issue, Swift Bear rebuked the commissioners for their lack of trust. Spotted Tail made no speech, but, in a nicely judged bit of Lakota stagecraft, Oglala spokesman Pawnee Killer exited the council. The commissioners debated the ammunition issue, and at length made an embarrassing concession. Powder and ball was generally issued, and talks suspended until November, after the commission completed its round of talks on the southern Plains.²⁶

Off-the-record, Spotted Tail reciprocated Swift Bear's solidarity by agreeing that their two bands were "willing to go and will remove" ultimately to the reservation. Publicly the two chiefs had secured the short-term gains all shades

of opinion could unite around. Hunting rights, ammunition, and supplementary rationing at North Platte ensured a secure winter for the Southern Lakotas, whose camps strung along the north tributaries of the upper Republican: about 180 lodges of Brulés, plus 120 Oglala lodges. Traders opened operations on the wintering grounds. Blue Horse's Loafer camp, about twenty lodges, based itself near North Platte for rations and intelligence.²⁷

Swift Bear, White Eyes, and a Wazhazha headman confusingly named Quick Bear, with interpreter Palladay, accompanied the Peace Commission back to Fort Laramie early in November, but the Northern Lakotas remained recalcitrant: sensing the government was preparing to close the Bozeman Trail garrisons, their chiefs preferred to sit out the diplomatic hibernation of winter. In the hiatus commission agents welcomed the return of intermediaries,

and old Fort Laramie residents like Fire Thunder and Big Mouth's Loafers gravitated back to the post, earning their rations and Civil War-surplus clothing by mounting deputations into the war zone.²⁸

Late in November Spotted Tail, followed by Oglala chiefs Pawnee Killer, Whistler, and Walks Underground, visited North Platte to claim thirty days' worth of provisions, and to greet the eastbound commission. Goodwill presents, including "for each member of their bands a suit of clothes," were distributed to keep the peace process on track.²⁹

On November 26 Spotted Tail delivered a speech that addressed the profound misgivings felt by Lakotas regarding the future. On one hand he stated categorically: "We want a reservation on the White River, and when the buffaloes are gone we will go upon it and try to do as the whites. The Great Father wants us to plant corn—we will then have to do as the Great Father wants us to."

Underlining Lakota ambivalence at the prospect, he spoke at greater length of his people's love of their hunting life. "Now, we want to live as our fathers have lived, on the buffalo and the deer that we now find on our hunting grounds. We love to roam over the Plains. We love our wigwams. We love to hunt. We do not want to live like the white man. The Indian can not be a white man. We are men like you, but the Great Spirit gave us hunting grounds, gave us the buffalo, the elk, the deer, and the antelope. Our fathers have taught us to hunt and live on the plains, and we are contented."

Having outlined the long-term future and the here-and-now, Spotted Tail addressed hopes for an imminent end to wars. "We will all try to meet you in council when the grass is green and our ponies can travel." The Brulés "will meet you at the great council and make a strong peace." Then, equipped with provisions, clothing and camp gear, Spotted Tail returned to the hunting grounds.³⁰

Buffalo were abundant, and prospects

for peace remained high when the commission returned to North Platte on April 4, 1868. Spotted Tail's village awaited the peacemakers at the agency, and Commissioner Sanborn asked Spotted Tail that "some of your chiefs and young men . . . accompany us to Laramie and meet your brothers from the north" in one grand treaty summit. The principal grievance of the Northern Lakotas had been removed by a guaranteed termination of the Bozeman Trail once a "permanent peace" was made. Although he paid lip service to the reservation scheme, Sanborn dwelt on the point Spotted Tail pressed: hunting rights south of the Platte. "Our people do not object to your hunting on the Republican while the game lasts, provided peace is maintained between you and the whites." Addressing the misgivings of commission hawks, Sanborn demurred:

We have some people on the frontier who are timid, who think it will be impossible for the Indians to remain there and be peaceable, but we hope otherwise. It is very important that there should be no trouble between you and the whites, as it would result unfortunately for both.

In response Spotted Tail spoke of promises made him by the commission yet unfulfilled, and protested a proposal of naming just one licensed trader. Gesturing at "the poor white men" present, "with whom we always divide everything we have," he requested that all be permitted to trade, granting them a living and Lakotas the benefit of competition. Without taking up the subject of the reservation, he too dwelt on hunting rights in the Buffalo South. Insisting that his people had no hostile intent, he said "all we care for is to live where there is plenty of game for our children." He urged the commissioners to ask the Northern bands "to come down here and see how we live—that we have no hardships and are not troubled by anybody." Spotted Tail agreed to facilitate the Fort Laramie talks, though, he noted dryly, "We did not succeed in doing much" at the last attempt.³¹

Accordingly, when the commission

boarded the Union Pacific the following day, Spotted Tail "and fourteen of his influential people"—including Swift Bear, White Eyes, Quick Bear, Dog Hawk, Standing Elk, and Whirlwind Soldier—joined the party. Arriving at Fort Laramie on April 10, they found, besides the resident Loafers, two hundred lodges of previously hostile Brulés and Oglalas. Although such key leaders as Red Cloud and Man Afraid of His Horse remained in the war zone, most of the Wazhazha band, led by Spotted Tail's cousin Red Leaf, were present, and over the next fortnight the Brulé Orphans, following the chronically suspicious Iron Shell, arrived from the Black Hills.³²

Spotted Tail had been permitted to bring one or more of his wives from North Platte, and they were presented with an army Sibley tent, plus a canvas wall tent, for their household. This novel lodge beside the Laramie hosted a series of talks as Spotted Tail's party "advise[d] with those [already] here" and the latest arrivals. The commissioners soon learned of the differences between the bands. While all wanted an end to warfare, observed official secretary A. S. H. White, only "Spotted Tail, 'Swift Bear,' 'Big Mouth' and about 300 more, express a willingness to proceed at once, to a reservation—to cultivate the soil, quit the chase and try to live like white men."³³

The document hammered out through the winter by the Indian Peace Commission tackled the issues these leaders raised. It set aside a great tract of land, coterminous with modern South Dakota west of the Missouri, as the Great Sioux Reservation. Remote from the main thoroughfares of American emigration, the Lakotas would be taught to farm and equipped with seed, stock, tools, and machinery. They would be provisioned through the initial years of transition from the hunting economy, and schools would educate the coming generation in the necessary skills to prevail in the ethnic melting pot of Gilded Age America.

Needless to say this bright dream

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would not survive a potent mix of cultural conservatism, dependency resentment, inadequate funding and planning, ecological constraints, and the fallout from American land hunger and an army high command bent on a military solution to the "Sioux Problem." For the present the proposed treaty satisfied those Lakotas already convinced of the need for economic change and accommodation to the expansionist United States.

By contrast the bands arriving at Fort Laramie from the north had formulated a minimalist peace. During the winter Northern Brulé and Oglala councils had agreed they wanted an end to American intervention in their societies. Hitherto treaties had exchanged rights-of-way through Lakota lands for annuity presents—goods that warrior societies perceived as binding the people to an unacceptable level of emigrant and military intrusion. While conceding existing routes south of the Platte River, no further routes would be approved. True to the radical warrior agenda, the Northern bands declared that "treaty goods" were no longer acceptable to their people. Henceforth Lakotas would trade for all their needs from American society. As for the contentious issue of farming, that was completely off the agenda.³⁴

Diplomats had their work cut out to square this recalcitrant circle. Key to the compromise was the issue of hunting rights outside the reservation. Adjoining the western boundary of the reserve a wide swath of the northern war zone was recognized as "unceded Indian territory." Besides terminating the Bozeman Trail posts, treaty article sixteen closed the unceded lands to further American intrusion. A second tract of hunting range reflected the imperatives Spotted Tail had identified to secure his people's co-operation. Lakotas "yet reserve the right," stated Article 11, "to hunt on any lands north of North Platte, and on the Republican Fork of the Smoky Hill River, so long as the buffalo may range thereon in such

numbers as to justify the chase." The concession on the Buffalo South compromised the military dimensions of the treaty envisaged by hawks like Sherman, but Spotted Tail's indispensable role as peace facilitator enshrined it in the agreement outlined by the commission. Off-the-record commitments to permit

1. Iron Shell, Orphan Band
2. Red Leaf, Wazhazha
3. Black Horn, Wazhazha
4. Spotted Tail, Southern Brulé
5. White Tail, Wazhazha
6. Tall Mandan, Corn Band
7. Bad Left Hand
8. Two and Two
9. White Bull, Wazhazha
10. Pretty Coon
11. Bad Elk
12. Eye Lance
13. Bear Looks Behind, Corn Band
14. Big Partisan, Corn Band
15. Quick Bear, Wazhazha
16. Cold Place
17. White Eyes, Southern Brulé/Oglala
18. Swift Bear, Corn Band
19. Standing Elk, Corn Band
20. Brave Heart, Lower Brule
21. Dog Hawk, Orphan Band
22. Sacred Bull
23. Hawk Cloud
24. Stands and Comes
25. Big Dog

Brulé signatories to the Treaty of Fort Laramie, April 29, 1868

continued trade in the North Platte zone (originally conceived as being limited to the reservation) completed a set of government concessions. A peace for all shades of Lakota opinion looked achievable.³⁵

Accordingly, the commission pressed the Brulés to enter into formal councils. Iron Shell demurred, awaiting more arrivals from the north, but Red Leaf, heartily sick of the vicinity after ten weeks of enforced idleness, argued for an immediate start. Beginning on April 28 two days of public debate climaxed the Brulé councils. The high profile of

Iron Shell and Red Leaf was no accident. Spotted Tail had learned the lessons of 1867 and made no speech at all, enduring in silence Iron Shell's satiric condescension: "You [the Peace Commission] have taken Spotted Tail away from me and have him to go around with you. That is good. I expect you will listen to him when he talks with you. You are right in bringing him here." Swift Bear, a less abrasive personality, spoke at length. He closed his address with the Corn band imperative: "We want a reservation of land to be surveyed and have fenced off along the White River down to the Whetstone Creek along the Missouri River. We want that land respected by the whites. Protect us and keep the whites off it." But he restricted his main remarks to an unexceptionable mantra for peace.

On April 29 spokesmen for the Northern Brulé warrior societies dominated the speeches. They argued for the immediate closure of the Bozeman Trail posts. Besides urging the restoration of their traders—now so poor that "I see some of them going about with their pants torn"—White Crane forcefully articulated the equation of military occupation and game depletion. "We want all our game given back to us," he contended, for good measure berating the President of the United States for ruining "our game and grass, and not satisfied with that, has given us cold winters." The only remarks on the reservation were Big Month's, reprising the Loafer demand for a separate tract on Horse Creek. Iron Shell closed proceedings with the bitter observation that Americans broke all their treaties, then led the line of twenty-five Brulé chiefs and headmen to "touch the pen" as Secretary White marked a cross against their names.³⁶

Immediately the Wazhazhas and Orphans packed to travel, accepting Spotted Tail's invitation to join his village in the Buffalo South. According to his later statements, Spotted Tail agreed to two private deals before his departure. First, he claimed verbal approval from

the commission that “he and his people were to be permitted to remain on Republican this winter and go to reservation next spring [1869].”³⁷ Moreover, the commissioners assured him “that if [Spotted Tail] would come to the Reservation with his people and use his influence to keep them here that he could have his choice of location, and wherever he should locate the supplies intended for him would be transported by the Government.” A location in the reservation interior, near the forks of White River, would be his favored site.³⁸

For two months the reunited Upper Brulé tribe, some 400 lodges strong, hunted successfully across the range secured by Spotted Tail’s diplomacy. Southern Oglalas and Northern Cheyennes, their summer strength peaking at 140 and 130 lodges respectively, united with the Brulés along the upper Republican. The ceremonial season climaxed with the tribal Sun Dance, and a massive warrior force united against enemies everyone hated—the Pawnees. The intractable contradictions of the treaty, however, soon made themselves felt. With forty lodges, his personal camp, Spotted Tail visited North Platte in early June to meet Commissioner Sanborn. A copy of the treaty was prepared for Special Interpreter Todd Randall “to procure the signatures of ‘Two Strike’ and [Oglala Decider] ‘Pawnee Killer’ at the village at the Republican River Forks. The accompanying message confirmed that the treaty permitted the Indians to hunt “while they remain at peace and game is found. . . . but that all those who do not desire to hunt longer may go to the Missouri River near Fort Randall and be supplied with food and clothing, and be taught how to raise crops and live like the whites.”³⁹

The location did not match Spotted Tail’s preferred site near the forks of White River in the reservation interior. Moreover, Sanborn instructed Randall to actively encourage an immediate departure. Sanborn himself rushed eastward to attend negotiations with Missouri River Lakotas. Spotted Tail evidently

distanced himself from the proposals. Thinking better of a delicate mission, Randall backed out, entrusting his brief to “some of Spotted Tail’s soldiers [akicita police]” as the chief prepared to return to his village on June 6. The



When treaty talks resumed in spring 1868 Swift Bear was among those favoring removal to the reservation at a location near Fort Randall on the Missouri River. Spotted Tail’s preferred site was near the forks of White River.

scanty evidence indicates that the message alienated Two Strike—who certainly did not sign the document—reopening factions within tribal solidarity. By the beginning of July most of the Wazhazhas and Orphans had departed, unwilling to even debate the issue of relocation to the reservation.

Differences were scored deeper during July when Swift Bear, who had remained at Fort Laramie, returned to

the village. He revealed that some Lakotas had already departed for the new reservation. Convinced of the economic benefits of relocation, the majority of the unmarried trading community had formed a “Committee of Half Breeds” to organize removal there. They persuaded many of their Loafer band relatives to accompany them. The two communities formed a single village organization, a fascinating blend of Lakota and Euro-American political structures.

When the caravan of six to seven hundred people started east in mid-June, it followed Big Mouth and Swift Bear. Adolph Cuny, as master of transportation, and Swift Bear’s brother-in-law James Bordeaux, “in charge of all subsistence,” completed the traditional roll-call of four Deciders. Sefroy Iott and Joseph Bissonnette, appointed special interpreters respectively for the Oglala and Brulé contingents, performed functions like traditional akicita heralds.⁴⁰

Arriving at North Platte on June 29, the column lay over at the agency for a week. Swift Bear and twelve or fifteen lodges of the Corn band detached themselves. Accompanied by Todd Randall, they crossed the Platte to join Spotted Tail. As the presence of Randall confirms, Swift Bear’s intention was to accelerate a general move to the reservation. Thirty-one lodges of “old men, women & children . . . not able to follow the chase for game” soon drifted to North Platte. The preponderance of old men suggests that most Big Bellies favored peace and security. Despite the opposition of the Two Strike faction, and the misgivings of even moderate conservatives like Spotted Tail, the Brulé council was unwilling to polarize the tribe over the issue, and named delegates to visit the reservation. The Corn band headman Standing Elk, with Dog Hawk, of the profarming faction of the Orphans, led thirteen lodges “to ascertain what provision the Peace Commission has made to subsist them and to make them presents &c. and they are to report to the Indians on the Republican what they see and the Conditions of things there.”⁴¹

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After visiting Fort McPherson on August 5, where the commanding officer issued them a small amount of provisions, the delegation called on Agent Patrick. Because the Peace Commission had ordered the agency at North Platte closed, rations were unavailable, and the party pressed northward on August 7. Spotted Tail may have hoped that the lateness of the season precluded any tribal move before winter closed the trails, but events suddenly spun unforeseeably out of control. For the past year relative peace had held over the central Plains since the withdrawal of Southern Cheyennes across the Arkansas. Early in August 1868 the Dog Soldiers, impatiently awaiting the arrival of annuities due them under their treaty with the Peace Commission, drifted northward. A large war party including visiting Lakotas started against the Pawnees, but American homesteads along the Saline and Solomon rivers proved an irresistible target. Between August 10 and 12 the raiders stole stock, burned homes, killed fifteen men and raped five women, galvanizing the American public against placating Plains Indians.⁴²

The military high command used the raid as their entering wedge against the concept of the unceded hunting grounds. Verbal undertakings by the Peace Commission were unilaterally abrogated when Sherman ordered his field commanders to close all trade outside the reservation. Commission representatives were even prevented from holding talks at Fort Laramie with visiting Lakotas. Gen. Christopher C. Augur, commanding the Department of the Platte, issued orders for all Southern Lakotas to remove immediately to the reservation, threatening military reprisals against any who resisted. Runners from Agent Patrick repeatedly urged the chiefs to start for the reservation, to meet ominous refusals. At Fort McPherson unmarried traders like John Y. Nelson were pressed into service as emergency messengers.⁴³

On the Republican they found the Brulé and Southern Oglala village—

estimated at 2,000 people, about 330 lodges—in an uproar of dissension. The Dog Soldiers were moving northwest toward the upper Republican. War parties raided along the flashpoint corridor of the Smoky Hill route, killing



In August 1868 a war party of Cheyenne Dog Soldiers and Lakotas set off against the Pawnees, raiding American homesteads along the Saline and Solomon rivers. The military reacted predictably, and Gen. Christopher C. Augur ordered all Southern Lakotas to the reservation.
NSHS-RG2411-182

straggling Americans and driving off stock. Rejecting the treaty concluded with the Peace Commission, war leaders proclaimed that a concerted war like Red Cloud's might drive Americans from the central Plains also. Inevitably reckless Brulé and Oglala warriors were drawn into the raiding, fiercely rejecting the appeals of Spotted Tail and Swift Bear to move out of the war zone. Militant warrior societies suspended the peacetime chiefs. At society dances they invested new leaders to assume control of the village. Beginning on August 27 raiders struck at the herds of ranchmen near North Platte and Fort McPherson. Some torched contractors' cords of

firewood stacked along the railroad. Several mules were driven from Todd Randall's corral, hinting at a dangerous escalation of hostilities. The polarization of society that Spotted Tail feared was snapping the tribal consensus he had worked so hard to achieve.⁴⁴

At the end of August the village divided. Of the Brulés, fifty lodges followed Two Strike and his head akicita, Bad Yellow Eyes, up the Republican to join the Dog Soldiers. Organized around the leadership of the Miwatani Society, the band was dubbed the Owl Feather Headdresses, after the headgear of club members. Spotted Tail and Swift Bear with about 130 lodges started for North Platte. To prevent a meltdown of their authority discipline was necessary, and the peace chiefs probably won the support of the Kit-Fox Society, strongest of the Brulé warrior clubs. The majority of Oglalas, some 120 lodges following Pawnee Killer, Whistler, and Little Wound, declared for war. Only thirty lodges, the tiospaye of White Eyes and Walks Underground, attached themselves to Spotted Tail. As the consolidated village trekked northward, Iron Shell and twenty-four lodges of his Orphan band, hunting in the Sandhills, hurried south to join Two Strike on Thickwood Creek. The move vividly illustrated the older chiefs' bitter jealousy of Spotted Tail.⁴⁵

Messengers from General Augur scheduled emergency talks with Spotted Tail. On September 8 Augur arrived at North Platte to find the fugitive bands already gathering nearby. Spotted Tail invoked the Peace Commission's permission for his hunting operation, but Augur replied that the Cheyenne depredations meant that the Buffalo South "would be filled with soldiers until the Indians were driven out, and that it would be impossible for him to remain there without becoming involved in war and that I advised him to go at once with all his people to his reservation."

After some consultation among the chiefs, Spotted Tail declared that "he would go, and all those with him; that he had separated himself from the

Indians on the Republican, and would never have anything more to do with them; that they had acted very badly; and that he would never try to do anything more for them.” Augur asked what reason the hostile faction gave for the new outbreak. Spotted Tail “replied none; they did not pretend to have any excuse or cause of complaint; that the Cheyennes, or most of their young men, had never wanted peace or were tired of it.”⁴⁶

Over the following week, Augur, Superintendent Denman, and Agent Patrick worked to effect a speedy departure. Augur hired fifteen wagons for the move, and bought provisions plus “a small quantity of clothing and ammunition.” He placed the goods in charge of Special Interpreter Todd Randall, rehired on the Peace Commission payroll. On the night of September 15–16 a drunken brawl convulsed the village, and Oglala chief Walks Underground was killed by a man of his own band. Sore heads and bitter feelings notwithstanding, the people were ready to travel on September 16. Some 145 Brulé and 35 Oglala lodges followed Spotted Tail and Todd Randall into the Sandhills.⁴⁷

The journey of 150 airline miles ended at the junction of the Missouri with Whetstone Creek (present Gregory County, South Dakota). Outriders from the village appeared as early as September 26. Along the benchlands Loafer tipis clustered beside a rude street of log cabins belonging to the trading community—eighty were completed before the end of the year. A substantial number of offices, stables, and carpenter and blacksmith shops would be completed during the following year. An eighty-by-thirty-foot storehouse, housing flour and bacon, completed the agency complex. Across the Missouri grazed beef cattle sufficient for twenty days’ rationing. Some eighty acres of land had been broken by agency farmer John B. Colombe, and property on hand included twenty plows, one mowing machine, a steam sawmill, and sixteen yoke of work cattle. Gen. W. S. Harney, placed in



By the end of August 1868 Spotted Tail's consensus was breaking down, and most Oglalas, including those following Little Wound, declared war. NSHS-RG1227:2-1

overall command of the Great Sioux Reservation by Sherman, projected 1869 as a year of significant advance down the road to Lakota acculturation.⁴⁸

The location of Whetstone Agency matched Swift Bear's boundary proposal, but did not accord with Spotted Tail's

demand for an interior site. Over the succeeding eighteen months the working accord forged by the two chiefs would be repeatedly strained as Spotted Tail asserted his independence. While the Corn band pitched camp in two locations near the agency, Spotted Tail refused to settle on the Missouri. His 120 or so lodges of Southern Brulés and Oglalas stayed on the prairie, stringing their winter camps along lower White River seventy miles to the northwest. There were no buffalo in the region, but deer and antelope were found in reasonable numbers. With the agency run by a succession of placemen, Spotted Tail was able to dominate affairs, successfully demanding that rations and goods be freighted to his village.⁴⁹

His undoubted skill in shaping affairs with the Americans served Spotted Tail's interests well. No sooner had he arrived on the reservation than he began work to reunite the Southern Lakotas after the upheavals of the summer. The war faction proved unequal to organize the sort of campaign that had won Red Cloud's war in the northern war zone. On September 17, the day after Spotted Tail departed North Platte, the Dog Soldiers and their Lakota allies had struck a patrol of volunteer scouts led by Maj. George A. Forsyth on the Arickaree Fork of the Republican. In a week of dramatic charges and persistent sniping, the warriors besieged Forsyth's men on a sandbar in the dry creekbed, but after Forsyth was relieved by a unit of the black Tenth Cavalry from Fort Wallace, hostilities wound down.⁵⁰

Mindful of casualties and the exhaustion of their stock, the Lakota contingent started drifting northward during November. Many war faction Oglalas intended joining tribesmen in the Powder River Country. Iron Shell, invoking close connections with the Miniconjou, moved his Orphan band to Bear Butte on the northeast flank of the Black Hills—within the haven of the reservation, yet distant enough from his detested rival. Another thirty lodges of Brulés—probably Two Strike's camp—

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crossed the Platte Forks to winter along upper White River. Like Iron Shell, they adopted a neutral attitude toward the Americans. Demonstrating their change of heart, Brulé warriors opened a dialogue at Fort Laramie, returning stock stolen from local ranchmen. Undoubtedly that dialogue was mirrored by communications eastward to Spotted Tail's village.⁵¹

Buffalo herds south and west of the reservation boundaries meant that Two Strike was not compelled to join Spotted Tail, but the renewal of relations boded well for the ultimate reunion of the Brulé tribe. During November a second contingent of Loafers left Fort Laramie for Whetstone under charge of Peace Commission interpreter Charles E. Gueru. As it descended the Niobrara valley, a sizeable contingent of Lakotas from the Republican caught up with the column. Abandoning the war faction completely, upon arrival on the reservation these Oglalas and Brulés joined Spotted Tail's village. Swollen by such permanent increments, plus floating visitors from all points of the Lakota compass, in December the village had grown to between 200 and 260 lodges. Increased by the new Loafer arrivals, the population of the agency community (including seventy-seven families of unmarried traders) was now estimated at 1,700 people.⁵²

Spring 1869 was a season of mixed fortunes for Spotted Tail's consolidation policy. He had hoped to mark the lull in hostilities by securing permission to hunt in the unceded territory south of the Platte. The army took a more skeptical view of the peace prospects, and Spotted Tail was undoubtedly constrained to force through akicita edicts forbidding any off-reservation movement. Defying the orders, a few lodges deserted Spotted Tail and the agency camps to hunt. With Two Strike's camp they crossed south of the Platte in June, joining the war faction of Southern Oglalas. When the two camps reunited with the Dog Soldiers, and raiders once more targeted the isolated ranches and stage stations of the Kansas

frontier, a third summer of warfare ignited on the Buffalo South.⁵³

Spotted Tail's political problems were compounded by ongoing economic shortage. The ration system was plagued with inefficiencies, and during the hard winter depleted issues played their part in the deaths of more than one hundred children and old people. Annuity goods were also delayed. A partial issue in July proved bitterly inadequate, opening Spotted Tail to criticism from dissatisfied factions. Vital clothing and material for renewing tipis, expected weekly, did not arrive until October. The balance of the annuities, plus an additional estimate for blankets and tobacco—no luxury but a vital diplomatic commodity—was not fulfilled until February 1870. The play of political intriguing, heightened by the rationing culture and the ready availability of bad liquor, resulted in deadly feuds. In one momentous case on October 28, the intoxicated Loafer chief Big Mouth was killed in self-defense by Spotted Tail.⁵⁴

Despite all this, Spotted Tail's following continued to grow. The drift to the reservation underlined the stark reality of game depletion on the High Plains. By the time Capt. DeWitt C. Poole assumed control of Whetstone Agency in July 1869, Spotted Tail's core village had grown to 1,850 people, almost three hundred lodges. In his first estimate of the Indians in his charge, Poole observed that such counts were difficult because of the constant arrival and departure of people to and "from the north."⁵⁵ Poole's observation indicates the source of Spotted Tail's increments. Although unnoted in the record, it seems likely that Iron Shell at last gave up the unequal contest for influence. His band sifted in from the Black Hills to join Spotted Tail. The invisibility of Iron Shell in the record for the next few years points up Spotted Tail's effective marginalization of this former rival to tribal primacy.⁵⁶

Even the Wazhazha band, aligned with the Northern Oglalas during the war years, opened a dialogue with

Whetstone. Quick Bear, leader of a warrior faction well disposed toward Spotted Tail, may have brought in a Wazhazha increment during the spring. In the face-to-face politics of the Lakota world, the fiercest divisions often severed close relatives. Red Leaf, the ranking Wazhazha chief, had resisted the pretensions of his cousin as tribal head chief. After the treaty Red Leaf imposed martial law on his village to prevent defections to Whetstone. One year later, however, Red Leaf arrived at Whetstone, on August 6, 1869, with some fifty lodges of followers, plus Blue Horse's camp of Loafers. It would be a short visit, but a majority of the band was now convinced that the old life was running out of time. Buffalo herds in the Powder River Country that had sustained Red Cloud's alliance continued to dwindle and contract northward. Through the next twelve months the Wazhazhas remained on the reservation, shuttling between Whetstone and Cheyenne River agencies and the Black Hills. In a year of unprecedented challenges, the neutralization of the single largest Brulé band was not the least of Spotted Tail's diplomatic achievements.⁵⁷

Although dissidents continually threatened to decamp for the hunting grounds beyond the Platte, significant defections were checked by a season of decisive military activity on the central Plains. On June 9 eight troops of the Fifth Cavalry and a battalion of Pawnee scouts departed Fort McPherson on a mission to terminate the Dog Soldier alliance. Maj. Eugene A. Carr's Republican River Expedition was tenacious in pursuit. Weary of the chase, the Dog Soldiers and their Lakota allies determined to cross the Platte and join Red Cloud's people in the Powder River Country. As they waited for river levels to fall, Carr surprised them at Summit Springs on July 11, killing a reported fifty-two Indians, and capturing seventeen.

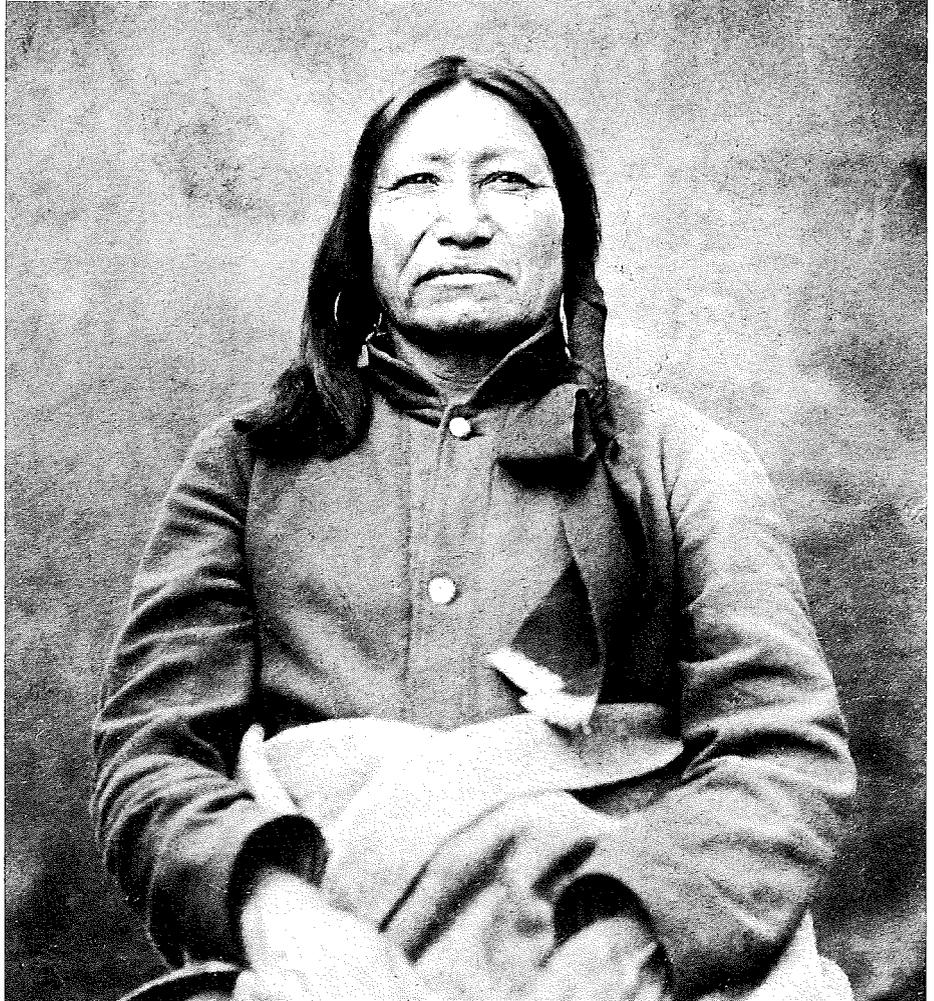
Their camp destroyed, the militants scattered. Two Strike's camp drifted back onto upper White River, while on August 27 a half-dozen lodges—Little



In August 1869 Red Leaf (right), Spotted Tail's cousin and the ranking Wazhazha band chief, brought some fifty lodges of followers to the Whetstone Agency. This neutralization of the largest Brulé band was not the least of Spotted Tail's many achievements. NSHS-RG2063:283

Dog's tiospaye of Oglalas—arrived at Whetstone. The main Oglala camp, fifty-six lodges, reunited along Prairie Dog Creek, only to be dispersed by another of Carr's patrols on September 26. According to army intelligence, fleeing Oglalas abandoned everything but their weapons and ponies, agreeing "not to stop until they reached the Sioux reservation." By fall no Indians were left in the region between the Platte and Arkansas rivers. American hide hunters were now free to hunt out the region, extinguishing the four or five million buffalo remaining by 1875.⁵⁸

At the instigation of Spotted Tail and Swift Bear, several of Carr's prisoners were released at Whetstone Agency. As cold weather returned, the suspicious holdouts drifted onto the reservation. Following Pawnee Killer, a few straggled in to join Spotted Tail. Whistler's Oglalas, now forty lodges, camped along the middle course of White River. During December part of the band, following Little Wound, moved downstream to amalgamate with Spotted Tail's winter camp. Broken-down horses, wretched



Astutely juggling potentially divisive tribal factions and skillfully negotiating with American officials, Spotted Tail kept most of the Brulé tribe at peace through the troubled years of adjustment to the reservation and the crisis of the Great Sioux War. NSHS-RG1227:9-3

shelters, and scanty equipment spelled the consequences of war. "During the war I was strong hearted," Little Wound told officials, "but now I am poor. . . . I did not listen to the words of the Great Father and his soldiers cleaned us out." Whistler with the rest of the band followed during the first weeks of 1870. All 150 lodges of the Southern Oglalas were now encamped with Spotted Tail. Black Bear, a moderate who worked closely with the Brulé leadership, was recognized as their Decider.⁵⁹

Most significant of the arrivals was

Two Strike. His remaining following tracked warily in to Spotted Tail's village during December. Two Strike's political future contrasted with Iron Shell's eclipse. Spotted Tail was careful to cultivate the former war leader. When the village reorganized in spring, the council of headmen confirmed both Spotted Tail and Two Strike as Deciders. In May, when Spotted Tail and Swift Bear were invited to meet the President in Washington, Spotted Tail warmly named Two Strike to manage the day-to-day running of his village. This act of calculated trust

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was a political move that paid off handsomely. For the rest of his life Spotted Tail could rely on Two Strike as a faithful if feisty lieutenant. Although Two Strike continued to press for permission to hunt beyond the Platte, no Brulé would henceforth force such issues to the point of war.⁶⁰

By spring 1870 Spotted Tail's village, Brulé and Oglala, topped four hundred lodges, the largest ever. A further fifty lodges of the Corn Band, plus one hundred lodges more of Loafers, comprised the population living at the agency. Of the Upper Brulés, only about 115 lodges of Wazhazhas remained "out," and Red Leaf, with thirty lodges, returned to the agency on May 1 for a stay of some weeks. Again reflecting Spotted Tail's commitment to mending fences, when Agent Poole authorized increasing the Washington delegation to four men, the head chief named Wazhazha trusty Quick Bear as his chosen comrade.⁶¹

The Brulé tribal consensus that Spotted Tail had sought to create since 1866 was now a political fact. It accommodated a broad range of Brulé opinion, from Swift Bear's profarming lobby to the conservative followers of Two Strike. After 1870 the Brulé tribal council permitted the farming experiment to go ahead, while keeping the issue of hunting rights on the government's agenda. Spotted Tail's astute juggling of the potentially divisive tribal factions held the majority of the tribe peaceful through the troubled years of adjustment to the reservation and the crisis of the Great Sioux War. When the tribal council appointed Spotted Tail its treaty spokesman in 1866, the Brulés were still viewed by American officials as among the most hostile of the Lakota divisions. Before his death fifteen years later they were regarded as reliable friends and allies, undivided by the bitter factionalism that beset divisions still committed to warfare.

In 1915 one old Lakota summarized to Fr. Eugene Buechel, S.J., a Catholic missionary and linguist, his assessment of Spotted Tail's achievement. Spotted

Tail "acted then very wisely in what he spoke to white men. He looked into how the people might be well off, he gave them security, and . . . for that purpose he went to the President four times. . . . His deeds were not a few, and then he brought to a conclusion with the white men a way the people might at first get on well."⁶²

Through a century of economic switchbacks and downturns on the reservation, the Brulé adaptation—a grim but realistic acceptance of the changes forced upon them, while retaining fundamental Lakota values—has held good. Symbolized by the reservation university that today bears Spotted Tail's name, Sinte Gleska, it is a legacy worthy of a great Lakota leader and a great American.

Notes

¹ George E. Hyde, *Spotted Tail's Folk: A History of the Brulé Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2d. ed., 1974), is the standard life. Although a wealth of documentary evidence exists to fill out Hyde's portrait of Spotted Tail, his book will stand as a pioneer synthesis of Indian testimony and tradition with official primary sources. For Spotted Tail's role in the events of early 1866, see also Col. Henry A. Maynadier to commissioner of Indian affairs, Mar. 9, 1866, in *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1866* (Washington, D.C.: GP), 207–8 (hereafter *Annual Report* and the year); Todd Randall testimony, Apr. 16, 1867, in "Records Relating to the Investigation of the Fort Philip Kearny (or Fetterman) Massacre, 1866–1867" (National Archives Microfilm Publication M740, roll 1), Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA); Spotted Elk statement on Spotted Tail in Fr. Eugene Buechel and Paul I. Manhart, *Lakota Tales and Texts*, 2 vol. (Chamberlain, So. Dak.: Tipi Press, 1988), 2:615–22.

² N. B. Buford to secretary of war, June 6, 1867, in 40th Cong., 1st sess., Senate Ex. Doc. 13, 57 (hereafter Senate Ex. Doc. 13); "Report of Commissioners appointed by the President of the United States to treat with the Indians at Fort Laramie," in *Annual Report*, 1866, 208–9.

³ "Articles of Treaty concluded at Fort Laramie with the Upper Brule and Oglala Bands of Sioux Indians, June 27, 1866," *Papers Relating to Talks and Councils Held with the Indians in Dakota and Montana Territories in the Years 1866–1869* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1910), 19–20. Note that this printed version of the treaty omits the signature of White Tail, Brulé chief, present in the manuscript

copy in Unratified Treaties File, Record Group 75. Brave Heart was a chief of the Lower Brulé division, who signed the Treaty of 1865 at Fort Sully. Although treaty commissioners ascending the Missouri River in May 1866 expected to meet him there again, he attended the Fort Laramie talks, and signed the treaty at that place in both 1866 and 1868. Small camps of Lower Brulés, who usually hunted along the lower White and Missouri rivers, regularly visited their Upper Brulé relatives and trade partners, sponsoring ceremonies and trading for horses.

⁴ Ridgway Glover, "Photography Among the Indians," *Philadelphia Photographer* 3 (August 1866): 239–40. Glover photographed Swift Bear and Walks Underground. This pioneer photographer was killed by Lakotas in the northern war zone, and his priceless images were lost. For Upper Brulé tribal organization, see Royal B. Hassrick, *The Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 25–31. Remi Nadeau, *Fort Laramie and the Sioux* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, rpt. 1982), 213.

⁵ *Omaha Daily Republican*, Aug. 21, 1866.

⁶ E. B. Taylor to commissioner of Indian affairs, Oct. 1, 1866, *Annual Report*, 1866, 210; commissioner of Indian affairs to secretary of the interior, Jan. 20, 1867, *Papers Relating to Talks and Councils*, 33. For more on Swift Bear (ca. 1825–1909) see the memoir of his niece, Susan Bordeaux Bettelyoun and Josephine Waggoner, *With My Own Eyes: A Lakota Woman Tells Her People's History*, ed. Emily Levine (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); also James A. Hanson, *Famous Indians of Northwest Nebraska* (Chadron, Nebr.: 1983), 21–23.

⁷ N. B. Buford to secretary of war, June 6, 1867, Senate Ex. Doc. 13, 57; Buford to secretary of the interior, Apr. 11, 1867, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs from the Upper Platte Agency, Record Group 75, NARA (hereafter Upper Platte Agency letters). On Two Strike (1819–1913) see Susan Bordeaux Bettelyoun, "Two Strike," Bettelyoun Mss, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln. Bettelyoun states that after 1868, Two Strike's band was called the Owl Feather Head-dress band. This was a nickname for the Miwatani Society and contrary to Bettelyoun's explanation, its use reflects the militant nature of Two Strike's following and its Cheyenne counterpart. See Clark Wissler, "Societies and Ceremonial Organizations in the Oglala Division of the Teton-Dakota," *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of National History*, Vol. 11, pt. 1 (1912), 41ff; Hassrick, *The Sioux*, 16–17.

⁸ Senate Ex. Doc. 13, 58, 72, 87–89; see also "Minutes of Meetings of the Special Commission, Mar. 4–June 12, 1867, 75–97; Gen. Alfred H. Sully to commanding officer, Fort McPherson, Apr. 25, 1867; M. T. Patrick to Sully and Hon. Commissioners, Apr. 14, 1867; Patrick to John S. Sanborn, Apr. 16,

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1867, all in Records Relating to the Investigation of the Fetterman Massacre; Todd Randall to commissioner of Indian affairs, Apr. 22, 1867; Sully to commissioner, Apr. 20, 1867 (telegram), Upper Platte Agency letters.

⁹ "Minutes of Meetings of the Special Commission," 75–97.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.* (includes quotation); Senate Ex. Doc. 13, 58, 88.

¹³ Senate Ex. Doc. 13, 58. Col. Henry B. Carrington to John B. Sanborn, May 21, 1867, in Records Relating to the Investigation of the Fetterman Massacre; H. B. Denman to commissioner of Indian affairs, May 24, 1867; July 2, 1867, Upper Platte Agency letters. For background on Hancock's march, see Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866–1890* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, rpt. 1984), chap. 8.

¹⁴ Gen. Alfred H. Sully to Gen. Christopher C. Augur, May 19, 1867; H. B. Denman to commissioner of Indian affairs, June 27 and July 2, 1867; M. T. Patrick to Denman, June 29, 1867, Upper Platte Agency letters.

¹⁵ M. T. Patrick to H. B. Denman, June 29, 1867; Denman to commissioner of Indian affairs, July 18, Aug. 23, 1867, Upper Platte Agency letters.

¹⁶ John S. Sanborn to Col. Henry B. Carrington, May 21, 1867; Carrington to Sanborn, May 22, 1867; Sanborn to Leon Palladay, May 23, 1867; Sanborn to Carrington, May 23, 1867; Carrington to Sanborn, May 25, 1867; Palladay to Sanborn, June 1, 1867; Sanborn to Palladay, June 3, 1867; all in "Minutes of Meetings of the Special Commission," 224–58; M. T. Patrick to H. B. Denman, June 29, 1867; Denman to commissioner of Indian affairs, June 26, 1867; Denman to acting commissioner of Indian affairs, Dec. 10, 1867, all in Upper Platte Agency letters.

¹⁷ H. B. Denman to commissioner of Indian affairs, July 16, 1867, Upper Platte Agency letters.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*; H. B. Denman to commissioner of Indian affairs, Aug. 24, 1867, Upper Platte Agency letters.

¹⁹ M. T. Patrick to H. B. Denman, July 28, 1867; Denman to commissioner of Indian affairs, Aug. 2, 1867, Upper Platte Agency letters.

²⁰ M. T. Patrick to H. B. Denman, July 22, July 27, and Aug. 5, 1867 (includes quotation), Records of the Northern Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75 (hereafter Northern Superintendency Records).

²¹ Peter John Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain: A History of the Northern Cheyenne Chiefs and Warrior Societies, 1830–1879, with an Epilogue, 1969–1974*, 2 vols. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 1:488–91; George W. Webb, *Chronological List of Engagements Between the Regular Army of*

the United States and Various Tribes of Hostile Indians Which Occurred During the Years 1790 to 1898, Inclusive (New York: AMS Press, rpt. 1976), 32; unattributed newspaper clipping printing H. B. Denman to commissioner of Indian affairs, Aug. 21, 1867, enclosed with Denman to president of the Indian Peace Commission, Sept. 11, 1867, Records of the Indian Peace Commission, RG 48, Records of the Secretary of the Interior, Indian Division, NARA (hereafter Indian Peace Commission Records).

²² H. B. Denman to commissioner of Indian affairs, Aug. 21, 1867, Indian Peace Commission Records. An official permit, issued by Denman to Spotted Tail on August 20 is still in the possession of family members. The author was able to view this and other Spotted Tail documents at the Fourth Fort Robinson History Conference, April 2002, courtesy of Mary Spotted Tail. The permit state that Spotted Tail, "with the consent of the Peace Commission goes south of the Platte River for the purpose of hunting Buffalo, and using his influence with the warlike Indians to induce them to abandon the War Path and meet the commissioners at Fort Laramie in September to negotiate a treaty of Peace."

²³ Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 1: 492–96, 506; Todd Randall to M. T. Patrick, Sept. 3, 1867, enclosed in Patrick to H. B. Denman, Sept. 10, 1867, Indian Peace Commission Records; Patrick to Denman, Sept. 12, 1867, Northern Superintendency Records; report to the president of the Indian peace commission, Jan. 7, 1868, *Annual Report*, 1868, 29.

²⁴ H. B. Denman to president of the Indian Peace Commission, Sept. 11, 1867; Denman to acting commissioner of Indian affairs, Sept. 9, 1867 (telegram); M. T. Patrick to Denman, Sept. 10, 1867, enclosing Todd Randall to Patrick, Sept. 3, 1867, all Indian Peace Commission Records. Denman to acting commissioner of Indian affairs, Sept. 8, 1867, Upper Platte Agency letters.

²⁵ Henry M. Stanley, *My Early Travels and Adventures in America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, rpt. 1982), 197–200.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 200–16; Council proceedings, Sept. 19–20, 1867, in *Papers Relating to Talks and Councils*, 48–55 (Spotted Tail quotations at 49).

²⁷ A. S. H. White to secretary of the interior, Oct. 2, 1867, Indian Peace Commission records (includes quotation); Luther S. Bent to commissioner of Indian affairs, Dec. 12, 1867, Upper Platte Agency letters; M. T. Patrick to H. B. Denman, Dec. 2, 1867, Northern Superintendency records.

²⁸ Louis L. Simonin, *The Rocky Mountain West in 1867*, trans. Wilson O. Clough (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 79; A. T. Chamblin to H. B. Denman, Nov. 29, Dec. 8, Dec. 22, 1867, Jan. 4, 1868, Northern Superintendency records; Denman to acting commissioner of Indian affairs, Dec. 16, 1867, Upper Platte Agency letters.

²⁹ Stanley, *My Early Travels*, 282ff.; M. T. Patrick to H. B. Denman, Dec. 2, 1867, Northern Superintendency records; Patrick to president of the Indian Peace Commission, Dec. 3, 1867 (includes quotation), Indian Peace Commission records.

³⁰ Council with Spotted Tail, Nov. 26, 1867, *Papers Relating to Talks and Councils*, 55–56.

³¹ Council with Spotted Tail, Apr. 4, 1868, *ibid.*, 12–13. Spotted Tail's appeal on behalf of the trading community reflected legal machinations by licensed trader Luther S. Bent to have confiscated all buffalo robes traded the previous winter by unlicensed personnel.

³² A. S. H. White to secretary of the interior, Apr. 14, 1868, Upper Platte Agency letters.

³³ *Ibid.* Alexander Gardner, official commission photographer, took two stereographic views of "Spotted Tail's Camp at Fort Laramie."

³⁴ Preliminary council proceedings (speech by Battiste Good), Apr. 13, 1868, *Papers Relating to Talks and Councils*, 13–15.

³⁵ Treaty of 1868, printed in Charles J. Kappler, comp. & ed., *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*. . . , 2 vols. (Washington, D. C.:GPO, 1904) 2: 998–1007.

³⁶ Proceedings of Council with the Brulés, Apr. 28–29, 1868, *Papers Relating to Talks and Councils*, 5–12; quotations at 9 (Iron Shell), 10 (Swift Bear), and 11 (White Crane).

³⁷ Spotted Tail statement to Gen. Christopher C. Augur, Sept. 8, 1868, *Papers Relating to Talks and Councils*, 120.

³⁸ Capt. DeWitt C. Poole to governor, Dakota Territory, and ex-officio superintendent of Indian affairs, Jan. 4, 1870, Letters Received from the Whetstone agent by the Dakota Superintendency, Field Office Records, RG 75 (hereafter Whetstone Agent letters).

³⁹ Charles E. Guerin (misprinted "Gøren") to commissioner of Indian affairs, July 1, 1868, *Annual Report*, 1868, 252–54; M. T. Patrick to H. B. Denman, July 17, 1868, Northern Superintendency records; *Omaha Weekly Herald*, June 17, 1868; Enclosure No. 11: Instructions to Todd Randall, special Indian interpreter, June 2, 1868, transmitted with John S. Sanborn and William S. Harney to acting commissioner of Indian affairs, June 4, 1868 (includes quotation), Upper Platte Agency letters.

⁴⁰ *Omaha Weekly Herald*, June 17, 1868 (includes quotation); John B. Sanborn to commissioner of Indian affairs, May 16, 1868, enclosing Adolph Cuny, et al. to the Hon. U.S. Commissioners, May 11, 1868; Sanborn and William S. Harney to Cuny et al., May 13, 1868; Enclosures No. 2 (Cuny), 4 (James Bordeaux), 5 (Sefroy Lott), and 6 (Joseph Bissonette), transmitted with Sanborn and Harney to acting commissioner of Indian affairs, June 4, 1868, all Upper Platte Agency letters; M. T. Patrick to H. B. Denman, July 17, 1868, Northern Superintendency records. A significant analysis of the role of the trading community in negotiating the Treaty

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of 1868 is Harry H. Anderson, "Fur Traders as Fathers: The Origins of the Mixed-Blooded Community Among the Rosebud Sioux," *South Dakota History* 3 (Summer 1973): 233–70.

⁴¹ M. T. Patrick to H. B. Denman, July 17, 1868, Northern Superintendency records; Patrick to Denman, Aug. 6, 1868, Upper Platte Agency letters (includes quotations); Patrick to Denman, Aug. 22, 1868, *Annual Report*, 1868, 249–50.

⁴² For background on hostilities on the central Plains, see Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 137–38; 143–44. A Cheyenne perspective is afforded by Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 1: 568ff. Ten lodges of Lakotas were encamped with the Dog Soldiers at the time of the raids, and twenty Lakota warriors were numbered among the two-hundred-strong war party.

⁴³ M. T. Patrick to H. B. Denman, Sept. 16, 1868, Upper Platte Agency letters; Hyde, *Spotted Tail's Folk*, 143–44.

⁴⁴ Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 1:570–73; *Omaha Daily Herald*, Aug. 21, 1868; *Omaha Weekly Republican*, Sept. 9, 1868; *Omaha Weekly Herald*, Sept. 9, 23, 1868. The main Dog Soldier village was on Walnut Creek, near Fort Larned, early in August. By August 15 it was located on the Solomon River. In mid-September it was on the Arickaree Fork of the Republican.

⁴⁵ Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 1: 573; Susan Bordeaux Bettelyoun, "Two Strike," Bettelyoun Mss; M. T. Patrick to H. B. Denman, Sept. 16, 1868, Upper Platte Agency letters; *Omaha Weekly Republican*, Sept. 9, 1868. Gen. C. C. Augur to president of the Indian Peace Commission, Oct. 4, 1868, *Papers Relating to Talks and Councils*, 119–20. On the Kit Fox Society: The Oglala Left Hand Heron stated that the Brulés "used the Tokala [Kit Fox Society] the most [as *akicita* police]," H. Scudder Mekeel, Field Notes, Summer of 1931, White Clay District, Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota, American Museum of Natural History. Because the Kit Fox habitually oversaw distribution of treaty annuities, a generally pro-American stance may be detected.

A son of the old chief Little Thunder, White Eyes signed the Treaty of 1868 as a Brulé, but he usually lived with the Oglalas. In 1890 he was enrolled at Pine Ridge with the *Iwqyusota*, a sub-band of the Southern Oglalas.

⁴⁶ Gen. C. C. Augur to president, Indian Peace Commission, Oct. 4, 1868, *Papers Relating to Talks and Councils*, 120.

⁴⁷ *Ibid* (includes quotation); M. T. Patrick to H. B. Denman, Sept. 16, 1868, Upper Platte Agency letters. Augur's account breaks down the bands departing North Platte as follows: Spotted Tail, seventy-three lodges (Southern Brulés); Swift Bear, thirty-four lodges (Corn Band); Oglalas, thirty

lodges; Big Foot, eighteen lodges (Lower Brulés); Half-breeds, eleven lodges; and twelve families without lodges, "living under bushes and pieces of canvas."

⁴⁸ M. T. Patrick to commissioner of Indian affairs, Dec. 30, 1868; Roll of employees at Whetstone Agency, in Capt. DeWitt C. Poole to governor, Dakota Territory, & ex-officio superintendent of Indian affairs, Aug. 3, 1869, both Upper Platte Agency letters. For background on Whetstone Agency, see Will G. Robinson, "Whetstone," *The Wi-lyohi: Monthly Bulletin of the South Dakota State Historical Society* 8 (May 1954); Hyde, *Spotted Tail's Folk*, chap. 6; Anderson, "Fur Traders as Fathers;" Richmond L. Clow, "The Whetstone Indian Agency, 1868–1872," *South Dakota History* 7 (Summer 1977): 291–308; Raymond J. DeMallie, introduction to reprint edition of D. C. Poole, *Among the Sioux of Dakota: Eighteen Month's Experience as an Indian Agent, 1869–70* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, rpt. 1988). During the entire sojourn at Whetstone, Spotted Tail kept his village from twenty to seventy miles away from the agency.

⁴⁹ M. T. Patrick to commissioner of Indian affairs, Dec. 30, 1868, Upper Platte Agency letters.

⁵⁰ Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 147–49; Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 1: 573–87.

⁵¹ De B. Randolph Keim, *Sheridan's Troopers on the Borders: A Winter Campaign on the Plains* (Philadelphia: 1885), 85; Maj. William Dye to acting adj. gen., Dept. of the Platte, Nov. 28, 1868, Dec. 17, 1868, Feb. 3, 1869, RG 393, Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, NARA (microfilm at NSHS). Hereafter Dept of the Platte letters.

⁵² Dye to act. adj. gen., Dept. of the Platte, Nov. 20, 1868, Upper Platte Agency letters; Dye to act. adj. gen., Nov. 28, 1868, Dept. of the Platte letters; M. T. Patrick to commissioner of Indian affairs, Dec. 30, 1868, Upper Platte Agency letters.

⁵³ Poole, *Among the Sioux of Dakota*, 58; *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians Within the Military Division of the Missouri, From 1868 to 1882, Lieutenant General P. H. Sheridan, Commanding* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1882), 20, 25; Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 156; Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 2: 723–24.

⁵⁴ Capt. DeWitt C. Poole to commissioner of Indian affairs, July 21, Sept. 13, 1869; Poole to governor, Dakota Territory, Dec. 4, 1869, all Upper Platte Agency letters; Poole to governor, Dakota Territory, Feb. 14, Mar. 4, 1870, Whetstone Agent letters; Poole, *Among the Sioux of Dakota*, 82ff; Hyde, *Spotted Tail's Folk*, 166–69.

⁵⁵ Capt. DeWitt C. Poole to commissioner of Indian affairs, July 21, 27, 1869 (includes quotation), Upper Platte Agency letters.

⁵⁶ I find no mention of Iron Shell (ca. 1815–83) in the official record between February 1869 and March 1872, by which time he was a leader among the bands permanently resident at the agency. However, the winter count kept by Iron Shell himself yields a valuable clue. As its entry for 1869 it records, "The Sun Died," referring to a solar eclipse visible along the Missouri River in Dakota Territory on Aug. 7, 1869. The eclipse was the cause of special excitement among the Indians at Whetstone, suggesting Iron Shell's band was living nearby. Hassrick, *The Sioux*, 350; Poole, *Among the Sioux of Dakota*, 76–77; Robinson, "Whetstone."

⁵⁷ Capt. DeWitt C. Poole to governor, Dakota Territory, Aug. 14, 1869, with appended schedule of population; Poole, Schedule of Provisions Issued, May 1870; Capt. G. M. Randall to governor, Dakota Territory, Apr. 5, 1870; Maj. Gen. W. S. Hancock to commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 27, June 1, 1870 (telegrams), all Upper Platte Agency letters. Poole to commissioner of Indian affairs, Aug. 20, 1869, *Annual Report*, 1869, n.p.

⁵⁸ James T. King, "The Republican River Expedition, June–July 1869," in R. Eli Paul, ed. *The Nebraska Indian Wars Reader, 1865–1877* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 31–70; Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 156–57; Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 2: 726–35; *Record of Engagements*, 21–25 (quotation at 25); Capt. DeWitt C. Poole to governor, Dakota Territory, Aug. 14, 1869, Upper Platte Agency letters.

⁵⁹ Capt. DeWitt C. Poole to adj. gen., Dept. of the Platte, Aug. 1, 1869; Poole to governor, Dakota Territory, Dec. 4, 1869; Poole to Gen. C. C. Augur, Jan. 8, 1870; Little Wound speech, Oct. 5, 1870, in "Journal of the U.S. Special Indian Commission to the Oglala Sioux, August–October 1870," all in Upper Platte Agency letters; Poole to governor, Dakota Territory, Jan. 4, 1870, Whetstone Agent letters; *Omaha Weekly Herald*, Dec. 8, 1869; Poole, *Among the Sioux of Dakota*, 123.

⁶⁰ Capt. DeWitt C. Poole to governor, Dakota Territory, Jan. 4, 1870, Whetstone Agent letters; Poole, *Among the Sioux of Dakota*, 123–125, 137.

⁶¹ Poole, *Among the Sioux of Dakota*, 137–38; Poole to governor, Dakota Territory, May 4, 1870, Whetstone Agent letters. Poole, Schedule of Provisions Issued, May 1870, Upper Platte Agency letters, notes "Red Leaf's Band from Black Hills[,] 300 men" (error for people?) were issued on May 1 for twenty-four days. Red Leaf (ca. 1815–ca. 1890) remained near Whetstone through early June. Invited to follow Spotted Tail's delegation to Washington, he refused to go. Lt. A. E. Woodson to Maj. Gen. W. S. Hancock, June 7, 1870 (telegram), Upper Platte Agency letters.

⁶² Spotted Elk statement on Spotted Tail in Buechel & Manhart, *Lakota Tales & Texts*, 2: 621–22.