

THE PLACE OF THE NORTHERN ARAPAHOS IN THE RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE INDIANS
OF THE PLAINS, 1851-- 1879.

by

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Abstract

Whites, commonly class the Northern Arapahoes as a warlike tribe, but they call themselves a peaceful people. This study represents an attempt to discover the part of the Northern Arapahoes in the relations between the United States and the Indians of the plains from 1851 to 1879, and to determine whether they really were a peaceful group.

This was a bellicose period, including raids along the Platte, the Powder River Wars, the Sand Creek and Washita massacres by whites, and the Fetterman and Custer massacres by Indians. The Northern Arapahoes associated with the mighty Sioux, dreaded by the whites, and with the Cheyennes, called the Fighting Cheyennes by Grinnell, who knew them well.

Anthropological works contributed importantly to an understanding of plains Indian culture and the societal structure and practices of the Arapahoes. Correspondence with the Indian Office and a former Commissioner of Indian Affairs produced important references on Indian policy, used to clarify the significance of material found in Government reports.

Information from general works was crosschecked wherever possible, and each author's predilection considered. Historical bulletins from Colorado and Wyoming, and other periodicals gave scraps of information which, unimportant by themselves, sometimes helped in solving problems. Contemporary newspapers,

especially the Cheyenne Leader, also contributed in this respect, as well as showing the attitude of settlers toward the Indians who barred them from the free exploitation of lands and resources.

An acquaintance with the Northern Arapahoes, through residence on their reservation, contributed toward an understanding of their character, learning of their traditions, developing an interest in their history and culture.

Although the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1851 was expected to usher in fifty years of peace between the United States and the Indians of the plains, three factors foredoomed the dream to failure: the Indian policy of the United States with its vacillations and misunderstandings; public attitude toward the Indians, colored by desire for their lands, fear of the braves, and a dogmatic faith in their own destiny to populate and civilize the plains; and lastly, the Indian's way of life, which he was loath to abandon, as it satisfied his social and emotional needs.

Misunderstandings contributed to clashes between reds and whites; pressure upon their lands by gold seekers, stockmen and farmers, and the destruction of their game by immigrants made the Indians apprehensive; forays of hungry braves on settler's stock, and their reluctance to abandon their game of inter-tribal raiding for horses, scalps and prestige kept the whites on edge.

Despite the fact that Federal troops waged war against

their Sioux and Cheyenne friends a few years after the Treaty of 1851, nearly fourteen years elapsed before an appreciable number of Northern Arapahoes engaged in hostilities. Even then a majority of the tribe abstained. During the Powder River Wars, 1865 to 1868, more participated, but never the entire tribe. Only once during the period from 1851 to 1879 is there any likelihood that all of the Northern Arapahoes fought against the whites. This was in the Bates Battle of 1874; and even here positive evidence is lacking. During Custer's final days, when hundreds of Sioux and Cheyennes followed Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, the Northern Arapahoes, almost to a man, refrained from hostilities. This fact, with others of a kindred nature, finally brought recognition by the Government of the peaceful disposition of the Northern Arapahoes.

On the basis of the evidence examined the Northern Arapahoes should be classed among the most peaceable of the plains tribes.

Dedicated to
Scalper and Woman - runs - out,
Bill and Cleone Calling Thunder
of
Ethete, Wyoming.

Acknowledgments

The Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1853-1881 has been of especial value in the preparation of this paper. This is the chief source through which the year to year movements of the Northern Arapaho bands has been traced, and the attitudes in Indian white relations have become apparent. The Annual Reports of the Board of Indian Commissioners, first to eleventh, have also been helpful in both respects, as well as the other Federal Government publications listed in the bibliography at the end of this paper. The Cheyenne Leader, 1867-1879 had scattered through its pages much important data not available elsewhere, by means of which the Indian problem was presented as seen through the eyes of partisan frontier reporters.

The works of LeRoy R. Hafen and the co-authors or co-editors of the various volumes used, contributed much valuable information concerning the peace and war activities of the Northern Arapahoes, among which appeared the unique peace proposal which Black Bear's band made to Colonel Sawyers in the Big Horns of Wyoming, after attacking his wagon train. The writings of George A. Dorsey, Alfred E. Kroeber and Harold E. Driver helped importantly in developing an understanding of Arapaho societal structure. The Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet, S. J., 1801-1873, edited by Chittenden and Richardson, gave an especially interesting and

useful account of the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1851. Indians and Other Americans, by Fey and McNickel presented a picture of United States Indian policy which was borne in mind throughout the writing of this paper, though little material was taken directly from it. The Fighting Cheyennes, by George Bird Grinnell, afforded information which filled in the gaps in the semi-independent activities of Northern Arapaho bands.

Especial thanks is due to the Librarians at the Universities of Washington and Oregon in supplying references not readily available closer by; to the University of Wyoming for the microfilm, Index to the Cheyenne Leader, 1867-1890; to the Wyoming State Historical Department for the microfilm of the Cheyenne Leader, 1867-1879, and the use of their equipment; to the State Historical Society of Colorado for the Rocky Mountain News photostat, and for other information; and to the Library staff of the University of British Columbia, without whose patient, cordial assistance this paper could not have been written.

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Cleone -- the latter a descendant of Henry North, and Ba-yet, the woman who escaped from the Utes in the early 1860s and married the white man who aided her in returning to her people. These two, William and Cleone Thunder, gave accurate information when they could, and when unable to do so, led on to other informants whose knowledge of their people, the Northern Arapahoes of Wyoming, was greater than their own.

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Chap. 1 A Picture of Troublesome Times; a View of Indian-White Relationships on the Great Plains of the United States, 1851 to 1879

East of the Rocky Mountains the Great Plains of North America run through the United States from north to south, spilling over the Mexican border at the southern end, and broadening into the prairie provinces of Canada in the north. The portion within the United States forms a vast area some 1300 miles long and up to 600 miles in width. From an elevation of scarcely 2000 feet at the eastern fringe, they rise gradually toward the west, blending with the foothills of the Rockies at altitudes of 4000 to 6000 feet. They embrace the greater part of the states of North and South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas, include portions of Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana, and are home to 7,000,000 people.

Except for the hills, streams and canyons which occasionally break their surface, the topography is smooth and nearly treeless over thousands of square miles, and monotonous in its regularity. At sunrise and sunset shadows stretch endlessly, it seems, across the prairie, long, dark, ungainly appendages, distorted with every variation of the ground. Brilliant sunshine and blue skies characterize the region summer and winter, for the air is dry, precipitation slight and the evaporation rate high. Unbroken winds of high velocity whip soil and dry snow from the earth to produce

dust storms or ground blizzards. Local cloudbursts occur from time to time, filling hollows which have been dry for years, or generating flash floods and wreaking havoc. Rapid changes of temperature take place: with the approach of a cold front the thermometer may drop 40, 50 or 60 degrees in a few hours; conversely, the warming Chinook wind may bring a rise of eight degrees in ten minutes. Open winters are common, but when the blizzard strikes, low temperatures, stinging wind and dustlike, blinding snow blot out the landscape, tie up traffic and destroy game, livestock and sometimes human life. Yet the tremendous openness, the clear, unobstructed vision and the wide horizons exert a hypnotic appeal upon the plains dweller.

In the days before the first plow broke the prairie the land was covered with short, native grasses -- as parts of it still are -- hardy, drought resistant, nutritious, excellent feed for buffalo or cattle. Sagebrush covered unmeasured acres; cactus and soapweed (a diminutive yucca) appeared in spots and patches; blue islands of larkspur beautified the rangeland in early summer; wild sunflowers blossomed later in the season wherever they could find a foothold. Cottonwoods grew along the water courses, where sufficient moisture could be had; box elders yielded sap to the Indians in lieu of maple syrup; in canyons and on rocky hillsides grew the ponderosa pine, which, once rooted, withstood biting winds and drought; the juniper (or red cedar, as it is called) was

similarly found; lodgepole pines, essential to the Indians for travois and tipi poles made stands in the Black Hills and other uplands.

Today the land supports vast acreages of wheat, corn, alfalfa and diverse crops. Dams on the Missouri, Platte and other rivers produce power for the region and irrigation for favored sections, but dry farming is far more extensive than irrigated agriculture. Unbroken rangeland encourages ranching, and sub-marginal farmland has been reclaimed for sheep and cattle grazing. Oil wells and refineries have sprouted in many sections; coal, iron, copper and other minerals are mined. The larger cities such as Denver and Omaha contribute manufacturing, slaughtering, packing and shipping, to produce a diversified economy.

Although trappers and traders had long since penetrated the plains and Rocky Mountains, census records indicate no white population for the region in 1850. More than 50,000¹ Indians were estimated. Immigrants to Oregon and California, unable to leap the plains, followed the long, tedious trails² across them.

1 "Message of the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress," Thirty-second Congress Executive Document No. 2, Washington, A. Boyd Hamilton, 1851, p. 289. The figure was used by President Fillmore.

2 Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, The Rise of American Civilization, (Revised Edition), New York, Macmillan Co., 1933, v. 1, p. 612. In less than a month in 1850 more than 18,000 people crossed the Missouri on their way to California, where the population had already reached 92,000. By 1860 it rose to 380,000.

The plains themselves were Indian land; great herds of buffalo still grazed thereon, though whites had reduced their numbers appreciably -- and the Indians resented this intrusion. Bands of antelope foraged on the grass, while in the hills both deer and elk afforded a change of diet to the red men. As yet no highway crossed the plains, but close to the long tortuous streams, trails were worn by horse and bullock hoofs, and ruts cut deep by the wheels of many wagons. Though plans for a railroad to the Pacific received serious consideration in Washington, nineteen years would pass before it became a fact. When the white men killed or drove off game and their stock devoured the pasture near the trails, the patience of the Indians were thin. With a thorough knowledge of the land, with the mobility needed to live from it, with a life which taught them how to strike and disappear, the mounted braves held the whip hand. It was a tribute to their magnanimity that many immigrants crossed the plains alive.

By 1879 the picture had altered. White men possessed the bulk of the land; unwanted confinement on comparatively small reservations was the lot of the Indians; the buffalo, for generations the daily bread of the aborigines, had dwindled almost to the vanishing point, and within a few years would exist only as a curiosity and tourist attraction. Cattle and sheep by the hundreds of thousands had replaced

the indigenous bovines of the plains.³ Oregon's fertile lands and California's gold attracted thousands of immigrants who went 'round Cape Horn, to the Isthmus of Panama, or across the plains to reach their destination. The discovery of gold in Colorado, Montana and Wyoming, and the free land of the Homestead Act brought other thousands to the plains; and where gold seekers or ranchers moved in, almost invariably the Indians were forced to move out. The cross-country stage line and the pony express, each serving an interim purpose, came and went; the first railroad to the Pacific operated in 1869; three more were well under way by 1879; the telegraph had preceded the railroad across the continent. Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado had attained statehood; Montana, North and South Dakota and Wyoming would follow suit within a few years.⁴ Some two million whites made their homes on the Great Plains by 1879. The independence of the bison-hunting Indians was gone forever.

The transformation on the plains from 1850 to 1879 did not occur without pain and turmoil, for these were troublous times. As the game on which they depended for food, clothing and shelter dwindled under the impact of the whites, the

3 Edward Everett Dale, The Range Cattle Industry, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1930, pp. 100-102. Dale shows that by 1885 members of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association (founded twelve years earlier) owned about 2,000,000 head of cattle in Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska, Montana and Dakota.

4 Montana and both Dakotas gained this status in 1889, and Wyoming the following year.

Indians suffered hunger and privation. Dissension brewed, trouble arrived and there were few dull years. The difficulties of three decades will be briefly described, as well as several important factors behind them.

The Treaty of Fort Laramie, 1851, ushered in dreams of fifty years of peace; but misunderstanding brought tragedy. The chance meeting of a lame cow and a hungry Sioux begot the Grattan Massacre of 1854.⁵ A boastful young officer, bent needlessly upon punitive measures, had failed to learn that cannon and tactless blunder would not settle the Indian problems. The next year General Harney⁶ avenged his slaughter by chastising the Brulé Sioux. For alleged depredations Colonel Sumner attacked and defeated the Cheyennes in 1857.⁷ As the stream of immigrants expanded,

⁵ George Bird Grinnel, The Fighting Cheyennes, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915, p. 105. The cow had strayed from a Mormon immigrant train near Ft. Laramie in southeastern Wyoming. When it was discovered that a young Sioux had butchered the animal, Grattan, fresh out of West Point, approached the chief of the Sioux band with guns and threats. The result was that a matter which could well have been peaceably settled ended in the destruction of Grattan and his command.

⁶ Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1855, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1856, pp. 398-401. This will hereafter be cited as Annual Report, with the year noted.

⁷ J. P. Dunn, Massacres of the Mountains, New York, Archer House, 1958, pp. 211 f.

the game supply diminished further, Indian alarm intensified, and hungry red men helped themselves to more of the white men's stock. Settlers' fear of the natives' treachery likewise increased. In 1861 the Civil War brought rumors of an Indian-Confederate States alliance, a fear accentuated by the great eastern Sioux uprising of 1862,⁸ when more than 700 whites in Minnesota died within a week. By 1864 sporadic depredations in Colorado intensified the settlers' fears, who gave credence to the report of an inter-tribal coalition to drive the whites out of the plains. In Colorado nearly every ranch along the road from Julesburg to Big Sandy, a "distance of 370 miles"⁹ was shortly deserted. Colonel Chivington's massacre of friendly Arapahoes and Cheyennes at Sand Creek, Colorado seemed a natural result, but Indian apprehension of white treachery vastly increased. Violence ballooned, and fearsome retaliation followed. Cheyennes, Arapahoes and Sioux raided along the Platte; the Overland Stage depot at Julesburg, northeast Colorado, twice was hit; terror spread

⁸ Op. cit. Grinnell, pp. 128-129. On the western plains even friendly Indians were suspected of treachery. The eastern Sioux were related to, but not identical with the Sioux of the western plains.

⁹ Op. cit. Annual Report 1864, p. 254. The quotation is from the letter of George Otis, general superintendent of the Overland Mail Line, to William P. Dole, Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

throughout the Platte valley.¹⁰ Since punishment must follow, General Conner struck the red men in their homeland and began the First Powder River War in 1865.¹¹ Indian resistance to the building of the Bozeman Trail through their hunting grounds presaged the Second Powder River War, which soon ensued. Peace came in 1868, followed by comparative quiet, but minor conflict continued in Wyoming's Sweetwater mining district.

In the mid-seventies the Indian Bureau boasted that results had "fully justified" its peace policy.¹² Had the ears of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs been better attuned to the signals of the time, he might have realized that hoof beats on the distant plains marked desertion of the agencies by hundreds of Sioux and Cheyenne warriors, gone to join Chief Crazy Horse and the medicine man, Sitting Bull, Sioux leaders out to resist the white man's encroachments. Shivers of excitement ran through the

10. Op. cit., Grinnell, pp. 181-182.

11 Ibid., pp. 204-205. This was the Powder River region of northern Wyoming and southern Montana, where game was far more plentiful than elsewhere; thus the tribes of Northern Cheyennes and Arapahoes, and the bands of Sioux with which they shared the Platte Agency spent much time there.

12 Op. cit., Annual Report 1875, p. 531. The report indicated that trains of the Union Pacific Railroad had been running undisturbed, as Indian difficulties had waned. Moreover, although hundreds of miners and pilgrims (in violation of the Treaty of 1868) had swarmed over Sioux country, including the Black Hills in their search for gold, no fighting had resulted. "And with any kind and firm treatment" bearing "a resemblance to justice, there will be no serious contention with this powerful tribe hereafter."

settlements. Then in 1876 came the news which shocked the nation, the wiping out of Custer and his entire command in the Battle of the Little Big Horn in Montana.

Three factors of great importance in producing this unfortunate state of affairs will be reviewed. First was the Indian policy of the Federal Government. Under the War Department from 1832 to 1849 mismanagement and discouraging results had characterized the Bureau of Indian Affairs.¹³ Too frequently military force had antagonized the Indians rather than pacifying them; so in 1849, convinced that civilians could better cope with the situation, Congress transferred Indian Affairs to the recently-created Department of the Interior. The belief and hope was that an era of great promise would be ushered in.¹⁴ With kindness substituted for coercion, with benevolent and missionary societies to assist, the Indians might be guided along the pathway to civilization. The Indian Bureau in its new setting achieved its first major accomplishment with the signing of the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1851, a seeming triumph and vindication of the policy behind its own transfer. At this time it propounded a course based

¹³ Tenth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1878, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1879, p. 10. Time and again in Indian Bureau reports Indian antagonism to the military is pointed out. On various occasions they requested civilian rather than military agents.

¹⁴ Op. cit., "Message from the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress", p. 3.

upon the negotiation of treaties with, and the payment of annuities to the Plains Indian tribes. During negotiations interpreters would explain the treaty provisions so misunderstanding could not creep in; the Indians must be convinced that the government intended to be entirely fair. The purpose was threefold: to acquire a right of way through the Indian lands, to gain the good will of the aborigines, and to render them sufficiently dependent upon the issue of annuities as to insure their subservience to the will of the government.

With the passage of a dozen years and several Indian campaigns the solution to the problem of the buffalo-hunting natives seemed no closer. By this time the accepted practice was the use of force to "induce their consent" to negotiate, then to make treaties with them.¹⁵ Following President Grant's inauguration in 1869, a fresh attempt to win them over by peaceful means gained support. None the less, the Secretary of the Interior stressed the fact that force might be¹⁶ necessary; and the Board of Indian Commissioners advocated supporting the agents with military force when needed, thus

15 Op. cit. Annual Report 1864, p. 10.

16 Report of the Secretary of the Interior, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1873, p. 111. He indicated that the purpose of the "so-called" peace policy was to get the Indians on reservations as rapidly as possible. Resistance on their part would be countered by the use of "all needed severity" to place them there.

sparing them the ignominy of "being the toys or tools of lawless savages".¹⁷ Believing that the Indians' resistance to civilizing influences could not be broken down as long as they had buffalo to hunt, the Interior Department opposed congressional measures to prevent the "useless slaughter"¹⁸ of these animals in United States' territory. Only when they had vanished from the plains could the red men be confined to reservations, learn to cultivate their individual land allotments,¹⁹ and live like white men.

17 Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1874, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1875, p. 62. When he tried to count their lodges in 1874, Agent Saville was arrested by Sioux Indians new to the Red Cloud Agency, groups which had not signed the Treaty of 1868. Seven hundred "regular" agency Indians came to his rescue - Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes. Shortly thereafter five companies of troops were stationed at Ft. Robertson (near Chadron, Nebraska) to protect the agency. Interestingly, when 26 troops were sent to suppress another insurrection of non-treaty Sioux, the "regular" Indians had to rescue not only the agent, but the troops as well. (Op. cit. Annual Report, 1875, p. 87.)

18 Congressional Record, First Session, 1874, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1875, p. 62. Representative James A. Garfield, who became President of the U. S. in 1881, also spoke strongly against any control measure. The Report of the Secretary of the Interior, Op. cit., p. vi, shows that the Secretary, also, favored the destruction of the buffalo to hasten the Indians' dependence "upon the products of the soil and their own labors".

19 Evidences of the extreme importance placed upon the gospel of individual allotments -- completely foreign to the culture of the Plains Indians -- may be found in Senate Document No. 319, Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties, v. 2, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1904. It is stressed in the Sioux Treaty of 1868, pp. 998-1003, the Northern Arapaho and Cheyenne Treaty of 1868, pp. 1012-1015, the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Treaty of 1867, pp. 984-985, and in various other treaties.

A month after the Custer debacle of 1876 military supervision returned temporarily to the five agencies which served the various bands of western Sioux. Proponents of a policy of force demanded that Indian Affairs revert to the War Department. Backed by this highly vocal group who believed the Indians should be soundly drubbed, a bill to effect the transfer was passed by the House of Representatives, but the Senate held it up, pending investigation.²⁰ With scarcely an exception the Indians were "unqualifiedly"²¹ opposed to it.

Throughout these years Indian policy was consistent in only one respect. This has been succinctly stated by John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1933 to 1945. "Generally speaking," he said, "the mere obliteration²² of Indianhood was the historical policy.

Public attitude toward the Indians constituted a second important factor contributing to the difficulties between the red men and the white during these years of trouble, the predilections of western settlers being especially significant.

20 Op. cit. Tenth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1878, p. 9. The transfer was not approved by the Senate.

21 Ibid., p. 10.

22 Letter from former Indian Commissioner John Collier Sr., Jan. 6, 1962.

It is not strange that they lost little love upon those whose rights frequently nullified their efforts to obtain the resources and lands which they coveted, especially when they felt that the Indians neither would nor could put them to proper use. In addition, fear of the warriors of the plains existed as an ever-present reality to work upon their emotions. In the press of the region periods occurred when weekly, and sometimes daily reports of Indian depredations appeared.²³ The fact that most of these were biased and others false did not lessen their effect.

In various histories of the region under study, as well as in contemporary reports and documents, the feelings of the white settlers are reflected. Following the Treaty of 1851, Coutant claims in the History of Wyoming, the reduction of the garrison at Ft. Laramie resulted in Indian insolence.²⁴ The red-complexioned lords of the soil, he asserts, were pleased by nothing except the robbing of trains and the killing and scalping of white men.²⁵ Bancroft contrasts the censuring of Colonel Chivington for his massacre of Cheyennes and Arapahoes

²³ Mildred Nelson, Index to the Cheyenne Leader, 1867-1890. (Microfilm) A study of the index indicates that this was especially true from 1867 to 1877.

²⁴ C. S. Coutant, The History of Wyoming, Laramie, Chaplin, Spafford and Mathison, 1899, p. 318.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 319.

at Sand Creek, Colorado, with the resolution of thanks to him²⁶ which was passed by the Territorial Legislature of Colorado! His own feeling of approval is apparent. Even Hebard, who wrote at a later date, seems to have caught something of the same spirit, although she generally shows far greater sympathy for the Indians than do either of the older historians. In her background of the Sand Creek affair (1864), she justifies Governor Evans' assumption that none of the Indians intended to be friendly, on the grounds that they failed to respond to his call for them to come in and confer with him.²⁷ She says furthermore that when Black Kettle's Cheyenne's finally reported for a conference, the governor was fully aware of their insincerity.²⁸ There is reason to believe that both of these statements fall short of fact, which will be shown in a later chapter. Captain H. G. Nickerson, a settler and Indian fighter of the Sweetwater and Wind River regions of Wyoming, referred to the Indians of that area as inhuman fiends.²⁹

26 Hubert H. Bancroft, The Works of Hubert H. Bancroft, v. 25, History of Nevada, Colorado and Wyoming, 1540-1888, San Francisco, the History Co., 1888 (1890), p. 466. Bancroft wastes little sympathy on most of the Indians of the region, and none at all on the Arapahoes.

27 Grace Raymond Hebard and E. A. Brininstool, The Bozeman Trail, Cleveland, the Arthur H. Clark Co., 1922, v. 1, p. 127.

28 Loc. cit.

29 H. G. Nickerson, "Early History of Fremont County," State of Wyoming Historical Dept. Quarterly Bulletin, v. 2, July 15, 1924, p. 3.

Since he specified only that the Indians in question were hostile, he probably meant the Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes, as the only other Indians present in the 1870s were the Shoshones, who were not considered hostile.

With the founding of Cheyenne, Wyoming, and the publication of the Cheyenne Daily Leader in 1867, similar reflections of the public mind appeared in the press. Not the least of the targets was the (Indian) peace policy of the United States Government, and the Quaker influence within the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Thus the spirit of conciliation which graced the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1868 (ending the Powder River War), drew biting criticism. The editor of the Leader predicted that there could be no peace "until the roving destroyers are whipped into subjection...and humbly beg for life and mercy on any terms which shall be dictated by the invincible whites...."³⁰ At a later date he coined a gem of satire in ascribing the murder of a Sweetwater settler to "Quaker applesauce".³¹

The rights of Indians had their champions, but only a brave person would speak in their defense. At the investigation of the Sand Creek massacre one such individual testified

30 The Cheyenne Leader, April 3, 1868. (Microfilm)

31 Ibid., Sept. 18, 1872.

that to "speak friendly of an Indian" was "nearly as much as
a man's life is worth".³²

The hostility toward Indians which typified the press was duplicated by the governor and legislature of Wyoming Territory. In his message to the Legislative Assembly in November, 1875, Governor Thayer dwelt upon the injustice of expelling miners from the Black Hills (in Dakota Territory), whereas the Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes continually violated the boundaries set for them by the Treaty of 1868. The Black Hills with their precious metals, he said, were of no use to the wild Indians who prevented their development.³³ Since 1868 the "Indian marauders" had stolen more than \$600,000 worth of stock and slain seventy-three citizens engaged in lawful pursuits. Yet he knew of no case in which an Indian had lost his stock nor life at the hands of the whites, with one exception, the killing of four (Arapahoes) by a sheriff's party which pursued them for stealing horses.³⁴ If the governor spoke the truth he must have been unaware of a number of such incidents, including the flagrant shooting of the Arapaho chief, Black Bear, and ten other men, women and children in his unarmed party of fourteen who, on their

³² Condition of the Indian Tribes. Report of the Joint Special Committee under the Joint Resolution of Mar. 3, 1865, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1865, p. 34.

³³ Journal of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Wyoming 1875, Cheyenne, Daily Leader Office, 1876, pp. 35-37.

³⁴ Loc. cit.

part, were engaged in lawful pursuits.³⁵

In concluding his message, Governor Thayer recommended that the Legislative Assembly embody its views in a memorial to Congress. The Assembly concurred; the memorial was drafted. The excerpts below will leave no doubt of their convictions:

"Memorial and Joint Resolution of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Wyoming, Feb. 23, 1876:

While all the power of the Government has been threatened, and in a sense used, to prevent white men from trespassing on their lands, so uselessly held by them to the exclusion of those who would mine for precious metals (which it is well known exist there) these lawless pets have been allowed to leave their reservations (so called) whenever they would, to prey upon and devastate the property, lives, and peaceful occupations of these frontier settlers, with the virtual consent of their guardians, the agents of the Government. While the blood-seeking brave (God save the word!) and his filthy squaw have fed at the public expense in those hatch-holes of fraud known as agencies, the widow and children of the white man slain by the treacherous Indian have been obliged to depend on their own energies or the bounty of neighbors for the necessities of life.

In behalf of a long-suffering people...we would ask that the Indians shall be removed from us entirely, or else made amenable to the common law of the land....

We ask that our delegate ... may be listened to and heeded with at least as much respect as some Indian-loving fanatic of the East"36

³⁵ Executive Document of the House of Representatives of the Third Session of the Forty-first Congress, 1870-1871, Wash., Govt. Printing Office, 1871, p. 643. This occurred near the present town of Lander, Wyoming.

³⁶ Miscellaneous Documents of the House of Representatives, Forty-fourth Congress, First Session, 1875, Wash., Govt. Printing Office, 1876, pp. 2-3. The Indians were regarded as the Federal Government's "lawless pets", who were not held accountable for their actions.

A final factor contributing its full share to the misunderstandings and violence of this period was the Indian way of life. Unique and distinctive in many respects, it was neither understood nor appreciated by the whites.³⁷ Like the buffalo which they hunted, the plains Indians separated into comparatively small bands in the winter, but with the coming of spring they gathered into larger groups. The resultant reunion was a time of visiting and happiness; sodality or age-group lodge meetings were held. As the lodges cut across band lines, this was the natural time for them to meet. The Sun Dance, which ordinarily was set up at this time, cut across both lodge and band lines.

The Sun Dance, which went by different names in different tribes, likewise varied considerably in ritual, but it was a significant religious ceremonial among all groups which practised it. That of the western Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes bore many points of similarity. Since this paper largely concerns the Northern Arapahoes, a few points regarding their Offerings Lodge, as their Sun Dance is called, will be given. It was pledged -- or "set up" as they say -- by

37 Fey and McNickle, in reviewing U. S. Government Indian policy from 1787 to 1959, state that none of it was seen through Indian eyes until 1928. (Harold E. Fey and D'Arcy McNickle, Indians and Other Americans, New York, Harper and Bros., 1959, p. 68.)

ceremonial vow; each participant entered it likewise by vow. It included three and one-half days with neither food nor water, usually beneath the hot sun of late spring or summer. The hope of attaining individual power and prestige through the Sun Dance was evident, but equally so was the want of healing, physical or mental, for self, family or friends. Man's dependence for existence on food and water were accented throughout the ceremony, while certain features stressed the idea of fertility in relation to the sun, earth, moon and sex, without which there would be neither food for man nor the possibility of perpetuating life on earth.

The lodges had definite responsibilities in the hunt and on the march. This was frequently a matter of survival. When many animals from a herd of buffalo were slaughtered and butchered, it was the function of one of the sodalities -- one composed of men of mature age -- to see that every family received its fair share of the meat. Sometimes the impetuous youths of a younger lodge, hungering for a chance to gain prestige in a raid or battle, had to be held in check for the safety of all concerned. Men of advanced age, always

38 In 1938 a 'teen-age Arapaho girl became quite ill. Hoping for her recovery, her father and her brother vowed to enter the Sun Dance. She died, but her death could not release them from their pledge. The Arapaho explain it by saying, "You see, you have already made the vow ---." It cannot be broken. (James C. Murphy, Personal Notes Taken on the Wind River Reservation, Wyoming, 1933-1939.)

few in number, men who had been step by step through all the socialities, directed not only the lodge ceremonies, including the Sun Dance, but many other tribal activities as well; hence society was hierarchical. The older men and women were generally held in high respect.

Despite a feeling of strong tribal kinship, the various bands with their own chiefs or leaders often acted independently.³⁹ They fought with bands from hostile tribes, joined friends or allies against their foes, raided for horses, and ranged far afield to visit friends and relatives. They were generally free to make their own decisions. Bands of Northern Arapahoes, a typical plains group, from time to time were reported from dozens of points between the Republican River in Kansas and the Mussellshell in Montana, a distance of 800 miles as the crow flies, much farther as they had to travel, that is mounted on horses and sometimes dragging travois loaded with their lodges and household goods.⁴⁰ Pursuing their migrant life and living off the chase, a few

³⁹ In 1864 the Northern Arapaho chief, Friday, took his band of less than 200 to Ft. Collins, Colorado, determined to remain at peace with the whites. Black Bear's band of several hundred joined them for a time, then left for other parts. In the meanwhile Medicine Man's band -- about half of the entire tribe -- remained hundreds of miles to the north, in the Powder River country, where buffalo were plentiful. This will receive further treatment in Chapter 5.

⁴⁰ Grinnell, op. cit., p. 181, records 80 lodges of Northern Arapahoes on the Republican in 1864-65, to visit their southern kinsmen. Peter Koch reported members of the same tribe on the Mussellshell to trade in 1869-70. See Elers Koch (ed.), "The Diary of Peter Koch," The Frontier, v. 9, Jan. 1929, p. 156.

thousand Indians split into tribes and sub-divided into bands thus occupied untold acres of land; and upon this the whites cast covetous eyes.

For the Indians of the plains warfare had a different connotation than for the whites. True it is that Indians slaughtered every man in Custer's command in 1876, and that under desperate conditions they had been known to "charge on a whole company singly, determined to kill someone before being killed themselves".⁴¹ In such cases the Indians were battling white men under exceptional circumstances; they did not typify strictly Indian warfare. To the warrior of the plains taking a scalp was more important and an act of greater bravery than the killing of many enemies; successful stealth and cunning brought greater prestige than risking one's life to strike a blow. The bravest act of all, ranking far above killing an enemy, was that of counting coup, that is touching or striking an enemy with a long, peeled wand of wood which had a feather tied to the small end.⁴² This was the great prize.

The care with which the plains Indians protected themselves while delivering a blow may well be imagined from a

⁴¹ Op. cit., Condition of the Indian Tribes, p. 92. From a letter of Major Anthony after the Sand Creek massacre, when Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho men, women and children were shot down without mercy.

⁴² Stanley Vestal, Sitting Bull, Norman, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1957 (new edition), pp. 9-10.

report of an all-day battle between Shoshones and Northern Cheyennes (traditional enemies) in the Big Horn region of Wyoming in 1877. The former lost one man, two women and two children in what is described as one of the "fiercest" engagements which ever occurred in the vicinity!⁴³ Cheyenne losses were unknown, but probably comparable.

Fighting between hereditary enemies sometimes brought consternation to white settlers in the plains and Rocky Mountain West. In the early 1860s, for instance, Arapahoes, camped in what is now downtown Denver (Colorado) in considerable numbers, went over the mountains to raid the Utes. When they returned with the news that the latter were chasing them,⁴⁴ near pandemonium broke out in the settlement. As late as 1874 the Indian agent at Denver complained of repeated acts of murder on their "plains enemies" by Utes who came east of the mountains on buffalo hunts.⁴⁵ He suggested that a competent and trustworthy party accompany them to see that they hunt buffalo⁴⁶ rather than Sioux, Arapahoes, Cheyennes and Kiowas.

43 Op. cit., Annual Report 1877, pp. 605-606.

44 Op. cit., Grinnell, p. 119.

45 Op. cit., Annual Report 1874, p. 272.

46 Ibid., p. 273.

On the Indian scale of prestige the stealing of horses from a legitimate enemy was outranked by counting coup alone. Not only was it considered an "honorable pursuit", but often profitable as well.⁴⁷ Horses were indispensable for the hunt, warpath, travel, and as gifts at weddings and other societal gatherings, and of course for trading purposes. In 1804 Lewis and Clark had found the Mandans of North Dakota bartering horses to the Assiniboines for axes, arms, ammunition and other goods of European manufacture which the latter tribe obtained in Canada. In turn the Mandans traded these south to Crows, Cheyennes, Arapahoes and others for horses and leather tents.⁴⁸ Indeed, it was through the combination of trading and stealing that horses had gradually moved northward through the tribes from Mexico to Canada.

Since horses were the most valuable booty of warfare, it logically follows that the plains tribes were unwilling to forego the pleasure of retaining traditional enemies for horse-raiding purposes. Naturally enough, Indian agents often felt that their own wards were picked upon by others,

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1875, p. 753. The agent to the Sioux, Northern Arapahoes and Northern Cheyennes thus called it in 1875, adding that it was as difficult to convince the Indians that horse-stealing was wrong as to persuade a horse-jockey that it is wrong to sell a neighbor an unsound horse.

⁴⁸ Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806, New York, Dodd, Mead and Co., 1904, v. 6, p. 90.

but a study of the records indicates that rarely indeed did one tribe prove less guilty than another. In 1860 the Pawnee agent cited eight unwarranted raids by Brulé Sioux, Arapahoes and Cheyennes in which his charges suffered a loss of thirteen lives, thirty horses, and sixty lodges burned.⁴⁹ Doubts of Pawnee innocence in this endless cycle arise when a later report (1862) indicates that a "recent" raid by "Brula" Sioux was staged to recover horses which the same Pawnees had stolen from them a few weeks earlier.⁵⁰ Some enlightenment is found in the statement of A. G. Colley that the pastime is "a part of their lives, being taught it from infancy".⁵¹ With the aid of the military he had held in check the Southern Cheyennes and Arapahoes of his agency, but when Utes ran off eighty Cheyenne horses within a mile of the post,⁵² a counter raid was shortly under way! During the same year (1863) four soldiers were wounded and one lost his life while pursuing Ute Indians who refused to surrender horses "legitimately" stolen from their Sioux enemies.⁵³ Governor Evans of

49 Op. cit., Annual Report 1860, p. 317.

50 Ibid., 1862, p. 97.

51 Ibid., 1863, p. 252.

52 Loc. cit.

53 Ibid., p. 241.

Colorado Territory endeavored to end the long-existent hostilities between the Utes on one hand and the Cheyennes and Arapahoes on the other, but the latter tribes protested his efforts as "unwarrantable interference".⁵⁴ The governor persisted until he had convinced himself that there would be no further trouble; but the raids continued for a dozen years or more, as the Indians prolonged the enjoyment of their sport.

From the beginning Indian policy had been based upon the premise that the red man must adapt himself to the white man's superior way of life. The whites were concerned lest the Indians should not learn to live like them; but the Indians were sometimes concerned lest they should. At the conclusion of the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1851, a group of men and women from several of the signatory tribes were brought to Washington, D. C. and other eastern cities, ostensibly to impress them with the power of the U. S. and the vastly higher culture of its citizens. Though assuredly impressed, they longed to return to their broad plains and the freedoms of their own society. Before they left the East one committed suicide; others, it was said, were so depressed

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 33. Evans was ex-officio Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the area.

that they might follow suit should they remain longer in its crowded cities.⁵⁵ Despite this sad beginning, the Indian Bureau for more than twenty years stuck to the theory that to see is to be convinced, and continued to bring parties of plains Indians to the East. Retaining their optimism and enthusiasm, advocates of the policy were overjoyed when five delegations numbering from five to fifty made the trip in 1872, and the Board of Indian Commissioners lauded the beneficial results in "all cases".⁵⁶ Little doubt was felt that the "ease, comfort and luxury" of the cities would create in the Indians a desire for better things than could be found in their wild, roving life".⁵⁷ Yet nearly all the delegates grew so homesick for the plains that they wanted the trip to end as soon as possible!⁵⁸

Other indications of the Indians' preference for their own way of life appear in various reports of the period, of which several examples are given below. In 1856 agent Twiss of the North Platte Agency found no desire among the Sioux, Arapahoes, nor Cheyennes to adopt the white man's life, not

⁵⁵ Op. cit., "Message from the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress," p. 335. Thomas Fitzpatrick, who escorted the Indians on the trip, reported that it would not surprise him at all if others committed suicide.

⁵⁶ Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1872, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 128.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 124.

even to planting corn.⁵⁹ Seven years later, when Governor Evans of Colorado Territory attempted a treaty with the same three tribes, his emissary informed them that he wished them to settle on a reservation and live like white men; but they retorted that they were not yet reduced so low.⁶⁰ When the Arapaho, Friday, discovered through unusual circumstances that the milk of human kindness existed even among whites, he did not lose his longing for the plains nor the ways of his people. Lost from his tribe in 1831 at the age of nine, he was found by white traders, sent to St. Louis, Missouri, and taught to speak fluent English, to read and write. Though duly impressed by the consideration which he received,⁶¹ he returned in a few years to his people. As a young man he assumed the chieftainship of a small band of Northern Arapahoes, and with them he remained.

An interesting speculation regarding Friday's return to his tribe appears in Broken Hand, by Hafen and Ghent, the story of Thomas Fitzpatrick, who discovered and provided for the young boy. The lad, it is said, had fallen in love with

59 Op. cit., Annual Report 1856, p. 647.

60 Leroy R. Hafen and Francis M. Young, Fort Laramie and the Pageant of the West 1834-1890, Glendale, the Arthur H. Clark Co. 1938, p. 314.

61 Leroy R. and Ann W. Hafen, Rufus B. Sage. His letters and Papers 1836-1847, Glendale, the Arthur H. Clark Co., 1956, v. 2, pp. 302-303.

62

a white girl, only to be rejected because of his race.

Though previously ready to remain with the whites and become as one of them, the bitter disillusionment drove him back to his people.⁶³ In the light of further information, this theory seems to be the wishful thinking of one so sure of the incomparable excellence of his own culture that he cannot recognize the validity of another choice. Friday himself in 1864

explained his decision in quite a different manner. On friendly terms with the Overland Stage Line agents at Latham, Colorado, he told them much of his early life, including the years at St. Louis. It was, he said, his love for the plains and his tribe which had made him return to his Arapaho life.⁶⁴ Whatever the romantic bent of his stripling years may have been, the adult Friday followed Arapaho custom in matrimony as in his daily living. Though other forms of polygamy were known to his people, the marrying of sisters (seroral polygyny) was

62 Leroy R. Hafen and W. J. Ghent, Broken Hand, Denver, the Old West Publishing Co., 1931, p. 271.

63 Loc. cit., Hafen and Ghent here quote the Manuscript Journal of Talbot, a member of John C. Fremont's second western expedition.

64 Frank A. Root and William Elsey Connolly, The Overland Stage to California, Topeka, Root and Connolly, 1901, p. 347.

a preferred pattern. Friday married four sisters.

65

With the Indian policy of the Federal Government based more upon good intentions than knowledge and appreciation of Indian ways, with the settlers of the West coveting a nearly empty land and its unexploited resources, with the roving life of the Indians conflicting with the interests of the settlers, trouble was inevitable. The red men were numbered only in the tens of thousands; the plains could supply the homes and wants of millions. A dominant race found the buffalo and the Indians in the way; they must therefore change the pattern of their lives or perish. The former were slaughtered to the point of near-extinction; the latter were deprived of the lands of their ancestors, and shunted onto reservations.

65 Op. cit., Murphy, Personal Notes. Lowie says that the sororal form of polygyny was the most common among the plains Indians because sisters were less apt to quarrel than unrelated co-wives. (Robert H. Lowie, Indians of the Plains, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1954, p. 80.)

Chap. 2 The Northern Arapaho Indians

Three plains groups, the Blackfeet, Cheyennes and Arapahoes, though living far from the homeland of the bulk of their linguistic relatives, spoke Algonkian dialects. A conjecture widely credited but lacking positive evidence holds that the Arapahoes -- like their Cheyenne friends and associates -- deserted sedentary, agricultural villages, perhaps in Minnesota, to seek a fuller, richer life upon the plains when the acquisition of horses made the change to buffalo hunting highly attractive. Actually, nothing is known of their place of origin, early history or migrations.¹ Certain features of the Arapaho language indicate a separation of more than a thousand years from the woodland Algonquins of the Great Lakes area and the East.²

Although Canadian reports of the Gros Ventres branch of Arapahoes antedate the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific by more than fifty years, these American explorers first made known the existence of the Arapahoes proper, whom they found in the vicinity of the Black Hills (South Dakota)

1 A. L. Kroeber, "The Arapaho, Part 1", Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, 1902, v. XVIII, p. 4.

2 A. L. Kroeber, "The Arapaho Dialects", Univ. of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, 1917, v. 12, p. 73.

in 1804.³ Because they lived upon the buffalo they were known as "Gens de vach" or "cow people".⁴ Alexander Henry, who met them in the same locality in 1806, referred to them as the buffalo Indians.⁵

Buffalo Indians they were indeed, for, by dropping heated stones into buffalo rawhide fitted into holes in the ground, they boiled their buffalo meat; dried, shredded buffalo flesh mixed with buffalo fat became pemmican, which they packed into parfleches for storage and travel; from bones of the bovines they fashioned awls, needles and other tools; buffalo sinews contributed bowstrings and thread; buffalo hides stretched around thin, pole frames formed their tipis or lodges; buffalo robes served as bedding; and when wood was not handy, buffalo chips -- or dried dung -- kept their home fires burning.⁶ To round out the list -- though far from exhausting

3 Op. cit., Thwaites (ed.) Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806, p. 190. The Atsina, or Gros Ventres of the prairie, now in Montana, are an Arapaho group speaking an Arapaho dialect. They still intervisit with the Northern Arapahoes.

4 Loc. cit.

5 Eliot Coues (ed.), New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest, New York, F. P. Harper, 1897, v. 1, p. 384.

6 Ibid., p. 370. Henry tells of 300 buffalo dung fires smoking in every direction at an Indian camp on the plains. White settlers learned to use buffalo chips for similar purposes.

it -- the use of pulverized dung in lieu of diapers should be included.⁷

As their material culture was based upon the bison, the hierarchical structure of their society was adapted to a life upon the plains. The older men retained comparatively tight, but not tyrannical control. Since the prudence of the young men frequently fell short of their drive for prestige, some such restraint was essential, to hold them in check. A sodality system which provided for the social needs of the Arapahoos from adolescence to old age made possible the effective exercise of the necessary controls. These age-group lodges were so organized that as their years and experience increased, the members advanced, sometimes as an entire group, to the privileges and responsibilities of a higher fellowship. As illness, accident and the daily hazards of their migratory life gradually decreased their numbers, they progressed from stage to stage with an ever-lessening membership. Reverence for age and its authority was inculcated, and the rash actions of the immature and the impatient frequently were curbed. Deference to the elders became institutional; deep respect and affection were

7 Sister M. Inez Hilger, "Arapaho Childlife and Its Cultural Background," Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 148, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1952, pp. 28-29.

rendered to old men and women. Their needs and their desires received considerate attention.

From the foregoing information it may be surmised that sodalities, in Arapaho society as in that of other plains tribes, held a central position. Though actually nine in number, only seven were specified as lodges, for the first two, respectively for 'teen-age boys and men in their twenties, lacked regalia and degrees, thus could not attain this distinction. Since seven was one of the three sacred numbers in Arapaho ceremonial practice, the enumeration of this many lodges had ritual significance.⁸

Several sodalities deserve particular notice. First of these are the Firemoths or Crazy Men, who reversed their ways and language during the ritualistic processes and became clownish.⁹ They would attend a ceremonial feast, for instance, only when requested not to come. Second is the Dog Lodge, composed of older men with their wives. Its members held

⁸ The other two numbers are four and sixteen. Any alert observer of the Arapaho Sun Dance ceremonies and structure of the Sun Dance Lodge will notice numerous examples of ceremonial usage of these numbers.

⁹ William C. Thunder, letter of Dec. 23, 1938. Much of the information on lodges comes from this source. The remainder is taken from A. L. Kroeber, who gives a much more complete account in "The Arapaho, Part 11", Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, 1904, v. XVIII.

special wartime responsibilities, especially those who were recipients of the higher degrees. They could not leave their battle stations unless ordered to do so by a comrade. The shaggy dog -- holder of the highest degree of the lodge -- had to retain his position until driven away by a companion.¹⁰ The third of these, at the top of the social pyramid and representing the oldest group of men, was the Water-dripping Sweat Lodge, in which no more than the sacred number seven could hold membership. Finally, the women participated in a sodality of their own, the Buffalo Lodge, which apparently lacked age requirements.

Initiates of the various sodalities were sponsored by ceremonial grandfathers (grandmothers for the women), whom they treated with great deference, and from whom they received their instruction. This relationship, enduring throughout life, prohibited the grandson and his wife from engaging in any activities, even social games, which would bring them into conflict with the sponsor. In their turn, the grandfathers who directed the initiates received instructions from the old men of the Water-dripping Sweat Lodge, owners of the seven sacred tribal bags or bundles, each representing

¹⁰ The Dog Dancers and the members of the other sodalities also held special Sun Dance responsibilities.

certain powers. In all cases the instructors received many gifts, as well as repetitive expressions of thanks from those whom they directed.

At what time in the past divisions among the Arapaho groups first appeared is a matter of conjecture, but the dialectical differences between the Arapahoes proper and the Gros Ventres indicate a separation of considerable duration.¹¹ Of more recent origin was the splitting of the main body into northern and southern divisions. Of the various theories offered to explain this geographic cleavage, some are obviously false, as written references to both groups antedate the events cited as the causes of parting. One apocryphal tale which has been given considerable credence attributes the separation to ill feeling generated through the slaying of a Northern Arapaho chief by a member of a Southern Arapaho band in the 1850s. When in 1897 he told to Hugh Scott a simpler and more credible explanation, the Southern Arapaho, Left Hand, denied all¹² implications of uncongeniality as a contributing factor. There had been no quarrel, he said, nor any unpleasantness between the bands, but the Northern Arapahoes merely preferred to remain in the north, while the Southern Arapahoes came to

11 A reunion of the Gros Ventres and Northern Arapahoes occurred from 1818-1823, apparently the last of more than a few months duration. Smallpox decimated their numbers at this time. (See Hugh L. Scott, "The Early History and Names of the Arapaho," American Anthropologist (n.s.) 1907, v. 9, p. 553.)

12 Ibid., p. 558.

prefer the south, where horses were more plentiful.¹³ How long a time elapsed from the first seeking of different pastures until the separation became complete cannot be surely said, but the division seems to have developed in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, certainly not later than 1816,¹⁴ according to Scott.

Although the southern group now shares a reservation in Oklahoma with the Southern Cheyennes, their historic friends, and the northerners live on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming with the Shoshones, they still feel themselves to comprise one people, and they speak the same language. Intervisitation is common. Occasionally a Southern Arapaho moves permanently to Wyoming, or a Northern Arapaho to Oklahoma.

They mutually regard the Flat Pipe, long in the keeping of the Northern Arapahoes, as their most sacred tribal

¹³ Ibid., p. 560. Left Hand's explanation is perfectly logical. Historically horses moved from south to north, from Mexico through the U. S. to Canada, both through trading and raiding.

¹⁴ Loc. cit. This version of the geographical cleavage differs little from that of other careful investigators, with the exception of W. P. Clark, who obviously misinterpreted information received from Little Raven, another Southern Arapaho. He concluded that the division occurred in 1867, when the Northern Arapahoes refused to join in a war on the whites. (See W. P. Clark, Indian Sign Language, Philadelphia, L. R. Hammersly and Co., 1885, p. 40.)

possession. Though hidden by its wrappings from public view, the pipe holds a prominent place in the Northern Arapaho Sun Dance ceremonies. Hung on its quadruped of poles, sacrifices or offerings are made to it by those who have vowed to do so. It is approached with as great reverence as is the cross or altar by a member of any Christian sect, and the offering is carefully laid over it. "Dressing the pipe", the Arapahoes call it.¹⁵

Two names frequently used to distinguish the Northern Arapahoes from the Oklahoma group are translated as People of the Sagebrush, and Red Bark People, the latter referring to their practice of mixing red osier dogwood bark with tobacco.¹⁶ By themselves and their southern relatives they are sometimes called the "mother tribe."¹⁷

For generations the Arapahoes and Cheyennes intermarried, camped and hunted together, and jointly raided and fought with their common enemies. Alexander Henry found them sharing a campground as early as 1806.¹⁸ How far in the past their

¹⁵ Op. cit. Murphy, Personal Notes. John S. Carter has written a monograph on the pipe, "The Northern Arapaho Flat Pipe and the Ceremony of Covering the Pipe", Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 119, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1938, pp. 69-102.

¹⁶ Loc. cit. The Arapahoes say that the translation usually given, "Red Willow People," is a misinterpretation.

¹⁷ Frederick Webb Hodge (ed.), Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, New York, Pageant Book Co. Inc., 1959, p. 72. (Bureau of American Ethnology, 1907.)

¹⁸ Op. cit. Coues, v. 1, p. 384.

amicable relationship began is problematical. Eventually they extended their alliance to include the Western Sioux; and the three groups, particularly those in the north, pressed raids -- whether retaliatory or aggressive -- against the Crows, Utes, Pawnees and Shoshones. The forays afforded excellent opportunities for the younger braves to slake their thirst for prestige.

Names of various Northern Arapaho men and women of a later day commemorated the exploits of their ancestors in inter-tribal warfare. Thus Red Plume and In-Among-Them (brothers) received their names from a grandfather who had once counted coup on a Crow warrior who wore a red feather; and at another time he had dismounted to fight the Crows on foot -- in among them.¹⁹ Likewise the name of Woman-runs-out was bestowed upon her by a grandfather who, also in a battle with the Crows, had pitied a woman who ran out of a tipi with a baby on her back.²⁰

After the Treaty of 1851 the Northern Arapahoes and Northern Cheyennes shared a common agency with various bands of the Western Sioux. Despite efforts of the Indian Office to persuade the two former tribes to join their relatives in

19 Op. cit. Murphy, Personal Notes.

20 Lec. cit.

Indian Territory (now included in Oklahoma), they stayed in the north until United States soldiers rounded up hostile Indians following the Sitting Bull campaign, 1876 to 1877. A move to the south was forced upon the Cheyennes, but part of them refused to remain there and broke away to the north, where many met their death from soldiers' bullets. The Arapahoes joined the Shoshones in Wyoming, and there they may be found today.

Throughout the period of turmoil surveyed in Chapter 1 (1851-1879) the closest associates of the Northern Arapahoes were depicted as the fighting Cheyennes and the warlike Sioux, the latter composing the largest, most powerful plains tribe (estimated at 53,000 people), and the one most feared by the whites.²¹ This fellowship, combined with their reputation of being more reserved, treacherous and fierce than their neighbors, would incline one to expect the Arapahoes to be usually in the thick of the fighting, in the focal point of trouble.²² Yet this does not seem to be the case.

The Northern Arapahoes regarded themselves as peaceful people. In 1875 Black Coal, then their most important chief, expressed this tribal feeling before an investigating commission at Red Cloud Agency (Nebraska), where the Northern

²¹ Op. cit. Annual Report, 1874, p. 4. This is an Indian Office estimate.

²² Op. cit. Kroeber, "The Arapaho, Part 1", p. 4.

Cheyennes, several bands of Sioux, and his own tribe were served. "The Arapahoes," he testified, "are called the peace tribe. I never begin war. When I make peace I always keep it. That is the way with all the Arapahoes...."²³ Whether or not Black Coal's statement is wholly valid, it represents far more than a tribal platitude.

In the Fighting Cheyennes Grinnell breaks with popular judgment to present (briefly) a pacific facet of Arapaho character. Though stubborn fighters in supporting their friends and allies, he found them milder and more easy-going than the Cheyennes.²⁴ James Mooney, probably the first noteworthy anthropologist to gain the confidence of the Arapahoes, believed them to be religious, contemplative and friendly, neither truculent nor pugnacious, but more tractable²⁵ and less mercenary than the general run of prairie Indians. Despite these and other evidences which will be presented, the few historians who acknowledge any peaceful inclination among the Arapahoes cite only Friday in this respect, and his efforts to influence his people are generally regarded

²³ Report of the Special Commission to Investigate the Affairs of the Red Cloud Agency, July, 1875, together with the Testimony and Accompanying Documents, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1875, p. 377. Most historians of this period would challenge Black Coal's claim.

²⁴ Op. cit. Grinnell, p. 3.

²⁵ James Mooney, "The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890", Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892-93, Part 2, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1896, p. 957.

as abortive. There can be no contention as to his bent for peace; his importance must be recognized, but there are indications that he did not stand alone. The case for Friday will be given first.

Though sorely tried by the tactics of the dominant race determined to occupy his and other Indian lands, he remained a staunch opponent of force in dealing with them. There is no evidence that he ever took up arms against the whites. When fear of a general Indian insurrection rose toward a crescendo in 1863 and rumors magnified the apprehension, Friday, camped with his band at the Cache la Poudre in Colorado, insisted that he would keep the peace, and refused the offer of a Sioux warpipe.²⁶ Even the terrors of the Sand Creek massacre of Southern Cheyennes and Arapahoes in 1864 failed to shake him from this resolve, and he took no part in the raids along the Platte which followed, although one band of Northern Arapahoes joined the Sioux and Cheyennes in these. Nor did he participate in the Powder River fighting, 1865 to 1867, though General Connor's punitive expedition (1865) brought the latter into conflict with Black Bear's band, when his soldiers attacked them on the Tongue River, a

26 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1863, p. 254.

tributary of the Yellowstone. It was not until 1868, when peace had come, that Friday's band finally was evicted by Federal Government authorities from their encampment on the far-away Cache la Poudre. He then joined his brethren in the Powder River region.

After Friday, the influence of Chief Medicine Man in steering the Northern Arapahoes along the path of peace should be considered. This chief, known to whites as Roman Nose, has received little attention from historians. Among his own people, however, he exercised great authority from the mid 1850s until his death during the winter of 1871-1872. During this period he frequently acted as spokesman for his tribe, and on at least one occasion for certain bands of Sioux and Cheyennes as well. Like Friday, he abstained from the Platte River hostilities of 1864-1865, keeping his band, more than half the entire tribe, in the Powder River country, hundreds of miles from the raids in question. Also as with Friday, he refrained from taking up arms against the whites following the thoroughly unjustified Sand Creek massacre of Cheyennes and Southern Arapahoes in 1864. Indeed, Indian Office reports indicated that the outrage "effectually prevented any more

27 Black Bear's band was probably the one which had aided the Sioux and Cheyennes in their raids along the Platte River. The indications will be shown later.

advances towards peace by such of those bands which were well-disposed" excepting the Arapaho chief "Roman Nose", who had sent word that he was anxious to live with his people in the locality of the "Little Chug" river (the Chugwater,²⁸ about thirty-five miles north of Cheyenne, Wyoming). In response to Governor Evans' offer of the previous summer to protect all friendly Indians, he had brought his large band all the way from Powder River, where buffalo hunting was still good, only to be rebuffed on the flimsy ground that the Little Chug was too close to the great routes of travel.²⁹ Although Medicine Man's part in the Powder River Wars remains enigmatic, after the peace of 1868 he avoided collision with the whites, on one occasion even moving his people to the Milk River Agency in Montana (which served the Gros Ventres relatives and Crow enemies of the Arapahoes) rather than risk an open rupture which seemed imminent in Wyoming.³⁰

Finally, after Friday and Medicine Man, Black Coal too, deserves mention in this regard, though he has more frequently been classed as a raider than as a man of peace. When he

28 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1865, p. 25.

29 Ibid., p. 177. Ft. Collins, Colorado, one of the main stations to which Governor Evans of Colorado Territory had requested friendly Indians to report, was just as close to the main routes of travel.

30 The move followed the murder of Black Bear and a number of other Arapahoes by an armed band of whites, near the present town of Lander, Wyoming, in 1871.

succeeded Medicine Man, following the latter's demise, the Arapahoes returned to the Wind River region of Wyoming to raid their old enemies, the Shoshones, whom they blamed for collusion with the whites in the death of Black Bear. Their forays were terminated by a clash with United States troops, the Bates Battle of 1874, after which Black Coal fought no more. Having made peace, he stuck to it, even in 1875, when droves of Sioux and Cheyennes deserted their agencies to follow the war trail with Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, thus making a mockery of the Indian Commissioner's boast that the process of feeding the Sioux had "so far taken the fight out of them..." that they would not "risk the loss of their coffee,
31
sugar and beef" in a campaign against the soldiers.

Since Friday as a boy in St. Louis had known white men under auspicious circumstances, it might be argued that both Medicine Man and Black Coal had come under his influence and reflected his own attitude. It might be said, in short, that without him the ameliorating factor in Arapaho-white relations might never have developed. But when the available evidence is considered it appears that the amicable inclination of his people may have preceded Friday's influence, and that it did not vanish with his death. Moreover, the trait was shared by Northern and Southern Arapahoes, and was not entirely restricted

31 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1875, p. 5.

to their relations with the whites. Grinnell has pointed out that the Arapahoes had, in past time, fought the Comanches, Kiowas and Apaches, not through any real antagonism to them, but rather because they were the enemies of their own best friends, the Cheyennes. The Apaches must have been cognizant of this fact, for in 1840 they approached the Arapahoes with the request that they act as intermediaries in arranging a peace conference between the five warring tribes, the Cheyennes and Arapahoes on one hand, the Apaches, Comanches and Kiowas on the other.³² The Arapahoes obliged; full agreement was reached, presents exchanged, and hostilities between them permanently ceased.

Moving to a later day -- nearly ten years after Friday's death in 1881 -- it should be noted that a remarkable Arapaho left his home in Wyoming to carry to his southern brethren and others in Indian Territory, the Ghost Dance religion, which had originated with Jack Wilson, the Indian Messiah of Mason Valley, Nevada. Since it was definitely a religion of peace as he taught it, this Arapaho missionary who influenced many tribes, might well have been called the Apostle of Peace. Paradoxically, he shared with the great Sioux warrior of the 1870s the name of Sitting Bull.³³ Fittingly, perhaps, after

32 Op. cit. Grinnell, pp. 63-66.

33 James Mooney (op. cit.) gives the full story in The Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology 1892-1893, Part 2.

the decline of the Ghost Dance religion, Sitting Bull -- Hanacha Thiak in Arapaho -- became a Mennonite convert, thus affiliating himself with one of the historic peace sects.³⁴

Finally, as noted above, it was not the Northern division of the Arapahoes alone which strove from time to time to maintain peaceful relations with the United States Government. In 1870 and subsequent years, notations of the desirable attitude of the Southern Arapahoes appeared in the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Declarations of peaceful intent made at this time were thereafter honored by the Southern Arapahoes.

Similar commentaries on the conciliatory spirit of the Northern Arapahoes appeared in 1872.³⁵ Others followed in 1873; and by 1875 it seemed only the course of wisdom to plan to separate them from the more recalcitrant Cheyennes.³⁶ Subsequently, when Sioux and Cheyenne warriors left their agencies to join the forces of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, it became obvious to their agent at Red Cloud that the Arapahoes, "... almost without exception, remained loyal to the government."³⁷

34 Op. cit. Murphy, Personal Notes.

35 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1872, p. 651.

36 Ibid., 1875, pp. 546-552.

37 Ibid., 1877, p. 415.

Following the Custer debacle, the Interior Department -- long under pressure from settlers to open up the northern Indian lands -- undertook active measures to transfer the Northern Arapahoes, Northern Cheyennes and some of the Sioux to Indian Territory, notwithstanding their opposition to the change. The Cheyennes were compelled to go; but the purported warlike inclination of the Sioux, and its fearful potential toward settlers in the adjacent states and the "civilized Indians" of the area resulted in such a flurry of protest that the plan to shift them was stymied.³⁸ Congress passed an act expressly forbidding the President to move "any portion" of the Sioux nation to Indian Territory.³⁹ Conversely, final recognition of the Northern Arapaho efforts to keep the peace led the United States Government to grant their plea to remain in the north, rather than coercing them into the dreaded transfer.⁴⁰ Shortly thereafter the Indian Bureau completed arrangements to move them to their present location on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, where the Shoshones already resided.

³⁸ The Congressional Record, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1877, Forty-fourth Congress, Second session, v. 5, p. 1617.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 1736.

⁴⁰ Op. cit. Annual Report, 1877, p. 459. The Northern Arapahoes feared they would die "in that miasmatic country".

Chap. 3 The Treaty of 1851 as the Hopeful Promise of
a New Era

In 1849, with California's gold rush sparking a tremendous population boom, and the settlement of Oregon under way, President Fillmore proposed a plan to bind together the widely separated eastern and western frontiers of the United States with a permanent highway to cut across the vast and nearly¹ empty expanse of plains and mountains which lay between. A railroad, he said, would best satisfy the wants and needs of the people, though he did not envisage its immediate² construction. Some means must be devised to extinguish Indian title to the needed strips of land, for difficulties already had arisen between the thousands of westbound immigrants and the "wild" tribes of the plains, through whose habitat the³ projected right of way would have to pass.

Since the wrath of the Indians had been aroused by the immigrant's destruction of their game and forage, the President recommended a gift of \$50,000 to assuage their feelings. In exchange for the right of the Government to maintain roads and military posts in certain parts of their territory, annuities valued at \$50,000 should be distributed among them for a period of fifty years. Thus their goodwill would be

1 "Message from the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress", Thirty-first Congress Executive Document No. 5, Washington, printed for the House of Representatives, 1849, p. 13.

2 Ibid. p. 14.

3 Loc. cit.

purchased, and fear of the loss of treaty rations would surely elicit their best conduct toward the whites. Should molestation of travelers and their stock not cease, the positive indentification of the guilty parties must be assured. By laying the country off into geographical or rather "national domains" the Government could readily identify the predators, or at least the tribe to which they belonged.⁴

Condemning the unsuccessful practice of coercion formerly pursued by the War Department, Fillmore stressed the necessity of kindness in dealing with the aborigines. If the Government would undertake to feed and clothe them, they might be somewhat gently led into the pathways and arts of civilization.⁵ Once the dwindling herds of buffalo were gone from the plains, the Indians must adapt or starve, and without aid they would be unable to establish themselves, "even as graziers".⁶ The contemplated period of fifty years (of annuity issues) probably would be sufficient to determine the feasibility of civilizing the native nomads.

Congress responded with an appropriation of \$100,000 for a great conference to be held at the confluence of Horse Creek and the North Platte River, in extreme western Nebraska, a few

⁴ Op. cit. "Message from the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress", 1851, p. 290.

⁵ The Congressional Globe (Appendix), Washington, John C. Rives, 1852, p. 10.

⁶ Op. cit. "Message from the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress", 1851, p. 290.

miles southeast of Ft. Laramie, Wyoming.⁷ The amicable assembling of the Indians -- Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Assiniboinés, Gros Ventres, Arikaras and Crows -- ten thousand of them, was due largely to the dedicated work of Thomas Fitzpatrick, agent to the Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes.⁸ The Crows made an overland trek of some eight hundred miles to take part in the conference.

Though their habitat and territorial claims did not concern the immediate purposes of the council, the Shoshones came in to observe and learn. They had been invited so that they might witness the United States Government's fairness in dealing with the redmen, and its solicitude for their welfare. The impression thus created might prove salutary in case negotiations should be undertaken with them in the future.

7 The agreement which emerged from this conference is known as the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1851.

8 The figure of ten thousand is the estimate of Father De Smet, an interested observer at the meeting. See Hiram M. Chittenden and Alfred T. Richardson (ed.), Life, Letters and Travels of Pierre-Jean De Smet, S. J., 1801-1873, New York, F. P. Harper, 1905 (c 1904), v. 2, p. 674.

Except for one short interval of anxiety with the arrival of the Shoshones -- traditional enemies of the Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes -- the tribes camped peaceably together during the eighteen days of the conference.⁹ On ground which had formerly witnessed enmity, bloodshed and scalping among them, the peace pipe passed freely from hand to hand and mouth to mouth. The conduct of the Indians earned the "admiration and surprise"¹⁰ of all present. Struck with the evidence of sincerity, trust and hope shown by the Indians, D. D. Mitchell, one of the chief negotiators, expressed the belief that nothing short of "bad management or some untoward misfortune"¹¹ could ever break this spirit.

Father De Smet, whose years of missionary experience with Indians gave him a temporal as well as a spiritual interest in them, was heartened by the obvious sincerity and benevolence displayed by the delegates of the United States Government throughout the meeting.¹² They neglected nothing which would forward the primary objectives of the conference: the cession by the Indians of a practical right of way across the plains,

9 Op. cit. Hafen and Young, Ft. Laramie and the Pageant of the West, pp. 180-181. A French interpreter managed to pull a Sioux from his horse in time to prevent an act of vengeance against a Shoshone who had (formerly) killed his father.

10 Op. cit. "Message from the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress", 1851, p. 288.

11 Ibid. p. 290.

12 Op. cit. Chittenden and Richardson, Father De Smet, v. 2, pp. 675-676.

for which they would receive equitable compensation; the cessation of depredations and hostility toward the immigrants; just remuneration for past injuries incurred by the red men at the hands of the whites; and the establishment of permanent peace between the tribes of the plains. To minimize the possibility of misunderstanding the terms of the treaty, these were read article by article, and painstakingly explained to the interpreters before their translation into the various Indian languages.

Though far from pleased at the prospect of further myriads of immigrants passing into and through their lands, the tribesmen signified reasonable satisfaction with the treaty provisions and looked hopefully forward to better days. The response of Cut Nose, Northern Arapaho, has been selected as typifying feelings commonly expressed at the conference. He said in part:

"I will go home satisfied. I will sleep sound and not have to watch my horses in the night, or be afraid for my squaws and children. We have to live on these streams and in the hills, and I would be glad if the whites would pick out a place for themselves and not come into our grounds; but if they must pass through our country they should give us game for what they drive off"13

A new day, it seemed, had dawned in Indian-white relations, a day presaging an era of tranquility and consideration. Peaceable citizens could cross the plains unmolested,

13 Op. cit. Hafen and Young, p. 190. Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Arthur H. Clark Company, from Fort Laramie and the Pageant of the West, 1834-1890 by LeRoy R. Hafen and Francis Marion Young.

and the Indians would have little to fear from the machinations of mischievous whites, for they would receive the justice which was their due.¹⁴

Having implanted in the Indian mind the idea that peaceful negotiations with the Federal Government could be fruitful, the treaty planners did not intend that it should wither and die. Further steps were needed to impress the prairie dwellers with the power and numbers of the whites, and the great advantages of their way of life. Therefore, with Father De Smet accompanying him as far as St. Louis, Thomas Fitzpatrick escorted a delegation of important members of the plains tribes to Washington, D. C. Of these, three were Arapahoes, Tempest representing the southern bands, and Eagle Head and Friday from the northern groups.

Pleased with the opportunity to introduce the Indians to the rewards of agricultural labor, Father De Smet led the group to St. Mary's Roman Catholic Mission to the Pottawattomis in Kansas, where the bison hunters were deeply impressed by the great quantities of tasty vegetables and fruits. Eagle Head was moved to ask that "Blackgowns" be sent to his own people, so they, too, might cultivate the land, and no longer feel

¹⁴ Op. cit. Chittenden and Richardson, Father De Smet, v. 2, p. 684.

the pangs of unsated hunger.¹⁵ But little did he realize that thirty years must pass before the blackgowns would come to the Northern Arapahoes.

From Kansas City to St. Louis the party traveled by river-boat on the muddy Missouri. Highly excited by the strange experience, many of the delegates expressed their wonder at the steamboat, and the numerous villages along the river's¹⁶ bank.

In Washington, D. C., still under the guidance of Fitzpatrick, the round of tours and receptions made it unlikely that the Indians would ever forget the seat of the nation's Government. The most notable occasion may have been their visit to President Fillmore in the White House, in early January, 1852. Here they were presented with flags and silver¹⁷ medals. Two days later, the Hungarian revolutionist, Louis Kossuth, also honored them with a reception; and here too,¹⁸ each member of the delegation received a special medal.

With each step so carefully planned and executed, the thought that the Ft. Laramie Treaty should fail to solve,

15 Ibid., p. 690.

16 Op. cit. Hagen and Ghent, Broken Hand, p. 247.

17 Ibid., pp. 249-250.

18 Loc. cit.

or at least to greatly alleviate the problems between the Indians of the plains and the white intruders upon their lands seemed preposterous. Conceived in good will and sincerity, designed and negotiated with optimistic solicitude, received by the red men with faith and hope, it appeared unlikely that any untoward sequence of events should arise to prevent the attainment of its intentions. The hopeful promise of a new era seemed, indeed, to be at hand.

Chap. 4 Disillusionment and Distrust Appear, 1851-1861

In spite of the fine spirit and high hopes of the Ft. Laramie Conference of 1851, it was soon apparent that the Treaty would not solve the Indian problem on the plains.¹ Disillusionment, disappointment and distrust made their appearance. The beauties and convenience of Washington, D. C. failed to create among the Indians the anticipated desire to adopt the white man's way of life. Amazement, if it appeared, was soon replaced by homesickness and a longing for their people, their lodges, and the unblemished sunshine of the plains. One member of the delegation, it will be recalled,² committed suicide.

In Washington, too, ratification of the Treaty of 1851 was long delayed. The United States Senate objected to the clause providing for the issuance of annuities over a fifty-year period, \$50,000 worth of goods to be distributed annually to Sioux, Arapahoes and Cheyennes for that length of time. Using its constitutional prerogative to modify the agreement, it reduced the period to ten years, with the proviso that the President, if he deemed it advisable, could extend it to fifteen years. (This eventually was done.) The treaty, of

1 It will be recalled that D. D. Mitchell, one of the negotiators of the treaty, had said that nothing but bad management or perverse misfortune could ever mar the spirit of the Ft. Laramie Conference. (See Chapter 3, p. 51.)

2 See Chapter 1, p. 26.

course, was thereby invalidated until it could be returned to the scattered Indians in amended form for their final approval. To accomplish this, great obstacles had to be overcome; most authorities state that it never was referred to the Indians in its amended form, but this is an unfounded assumption.³ Again responsibility fell upon Thomas Fitzpatrick, who, as his last official accomplishment before his death, returned the amended instrument to the Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes. In November 1853, more than two years after the initial agreement, he reported qualified success in gaining their consent. Of those who had approved the treaty in 1851, he wrote, some signed the amended document, one or two were absent and others dead.⁴ There is no mention of the Indians' feelings about the treaty made in the name of the United States Government which had to be modified two years after they had accepted it in good faith.

In the communication noted above Fitzpatrick expressed his dismay at finding Arapahoes, Cheyennes and many of the Sioux in a "starving state".⁵ With the bison in scant supply

3 Lillian B. Shields, first to break with the traditional attitude, shows that the treaty was returned to the Cheyennes and Arapahoes. (See Lillian B. Shields, "Relations with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes to 1861", The Colorado Magazine, 1927, v. 4, p. 149.)

4 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1853, p. 366.

5 Ibid., p. 368. Fitzpatrick's italics.

their women were pinched with want and the children crying out with hunger. In 1854 Fitzpatrick's successor at the North Platte Agency cited similar conditions, warned that the Indians must change their ways or perish, and advised a policy of force to bring it about. Even though starving, they would not voluntarily abandon their mode of life; therefore he advocated a thorough drubbing for every band from Texas to Oregon.⁶ Only after that could they be expected to give up the chase and use the plow.

The new agent's vindictiveness may be better appreciated in the light of the tragic events preceding his remarks. About mid-August 1854, Lieutenant Grattan, a young army officer totally lacking in diplomacy, moved soldiers and cannon in upon a Sioux encampment to take by force a brave who had captured and butchered a lame cow, astray from an immigrant train. When he callously opened fire upon their village, the frightened Sioux annihilated his entire command.⁷ Shortly thereafter the new agent met with Northern Arapahoes and Cheyennes who had arrived at the agency for their annuities. The spokesman for a Cheyenne band, who had witnessed the Grattan massacre, demanded that immigrant travel on the Platte road should cease, and that for the

6 Ibid. 1854, p. 303.

7 Ibid., p. 301. This occurred near Ft. Laramie, Wyoming.

ensuing year the Cheyennes should receive \$4000 in money, the balance of their annuities in guns and ammunition, and one-thousand white women for wives.⁸ Not satisfied with the impression they had made upon the agent, the band returned after dark, galloped close to the agency corral, and fired three guns. It is not surprising that the terrified agent, citing the Cheyennes as the "sauciest" Indians he had ever seen, failed to appreciate their grim sense of the ridiculous.⁹

The Sioux, who in the Grattan affair had warred upon United States troops, had to be punished. Without regard to the logic of their actions, nor the fact that but one band of this mighty tribe was implicated, to the astonishment of several of the bands hostilities were declared against their entire nation.¹⁰ General Harney decisively defeated the Brule Sioux in the Bluewater Battle of 1855, bringing the war to a close. In this final fight the casualties among Indian women and children ran high, a feature which too often accompanied Indian warfare in the West.¹¹ The importance of whipping the Indians seems frequently to have outranked other considerations in military minds.

8 Ibid., p. 302.

9 Loc cit.

10 Ibid., 1856, p. 619.

11 Some of the more notorious battles in which many Indian women and children were killed were the Sand Creek, Colorado, massacre of Southern Cheyennes and Arapahoes in 1864, Custer's attack upon the same groups on the Washita, Oklahoma, in 1868, and the Wounded Knee, South Dakota, battle with the Sioux in 1890.

Although the Cheyennes had previously been involved in hostilities with Indian enemies, no serious charges of raids or depredations on the whites were brought against them until 1856. In that year they had a brush with United States troops¹² near Casper, Wyoming, after a dispute over stolen horses. One brave was killed, a second arrested, and the band, doubtless aware of the Sioux debacle of the previous year, fled south to join their brethren on the Arkansas.¹³ Months later, when a group of Cheyennes prepared to raid the Pawnees, shots were exchanged between a frightened mail driver and two young warriors who had approached him to beg tobacco, the driver receiving an arrow wound.¹⁴ Too late the Cheyenne leader intervened, for although he saved the whites, Government troops¹⁵ attacked his band next morning. Retaliations followed. Hostilities continued into the summer of 1857, when Colonel Sumner dismayed the Cheyennes with a saber charge, and ended¹⁶ the war against them. No further hostilities occurred upon the plains until 1860, when with Kiowas and Comanches in disturbance in the south, military expeditions took the field

12 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1856, p. 638.

13 Op. cit. Grinnell, pp. 111-112. Three horses were recovered, but one Cheyenne stubbornly refused to yield the fourth stolen animal.

14 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1856, p. 650.

15 Loc. cit.

16 Op. cit. Grinnell, pp. 119-125.

against them.

Perhaps no single factor caused greater dislocation of the Ft. Laramie Treaty than the discovery of gold in Colorado in 1858. The invasion of 150,000 gold seekers into the territory molested the game and alarmed the Indians.¹⁷ The return to the East of more than half of them through Cheyenne and Arapaho hunting grounds, with its untold damage to their food supply, increased the Indians' alarm. Denver, Colorado, and other townsites were selected and construction begun by prospectors on lands guaranteed to the Cheyennes and Arapahoes¹⁸ by the Treaty of 1851. Organized bands of horse thieves, preying indiscriminately on gold hunters and aborigines caused¹⁹ further tensions.

In February 1859, Agent Twiss of the North Platte Agency, expressed his concern to J. W. Denver, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, regarding the disruption in the gold lands, and proposed that the Cheyennes and Arapahoes cede them to the United States in exchange for annuities to be agreed upon.²⁰

17 Ibid., p. 125.

18 LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen (ed.), Relations with the Indians of the Plains, 1857-1861, Glendale, the Arthur H. Clark Co., 1959, p. 173.

19 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1860, pp. 239 and 317. The thieves infested the country between the Missouri River and Pike's Peak, Colorado.

20 Op. cit. Hafen and Hafen, Relations with the Indians of the Plains, 1857-1861, p. 175.

Seven months later he met with Northern Arapahoes and Cheyennes and some of the Sioux bands, and drafted a treaty, arranging for the cession of large blocks of Indian lands -- including the gold fields -- and their acceptance of annuities and reservations, the latter containing good agricultural lands.²¹ Chief Medicine Man of the Northern Arapahoes, as spokesman for all three groups, requested Government aid in learning to farm the lands assigned for that purpose. The Arapaho reservation, specifically chosen for them, was to run along the Cache la Poudre in Colorado, from the mountains to its junction with the South Platte, an area which today includes some of the richest agricultural land in eastern Colorado -- a fertile, irrigated district -- embracing the city of Greeley and the State College of Education.²²

Agent Twiss' efforts went for naught; the treaty failed to receive Senate endorsement. But the gold lands were not forgotten. Less concerned than Twiss for the welfare of his wards, the new Commissioner of Indian Affairs, A. B. Greenwood, journeyed to Ft. Wise on the Upper Arkansas in Colorado. There he met with Southern Arapahoes and Cheyennes, with the

21 Ibid., pp. 179-182.

22 Hazel E. Johnson, Letter of Jan. 8, 1962. Miss Johnson, regional Vice President of the State Historical Society of Colorado, calls these lands "the cream of the crop". Over a period of some years the Northern Arapahoes tried to obtain a reservation there.

expressed aim of persuading them to part with the unneeded areas of their reservation so they could settle down and farm, for the game was rapidly dwindling.²³ He succeeded in separating the Indians by a supposedly safe distance from the gold fields, the route of the Overland Stage Line, the proposed right of way for the first transcontinental railroad, and the more promising agricultural lands of the territory. Without the aid of an interpreter to clarify the terms of the treaty to the Indians, with no evident effort to determine their desires nor provide for their welfare, the Commissioner assumed that they were willing to part with their lands. Although he expected all members of both tribes to be bound by the treaty, the assent of the absentees (all of the Northern bands and a few of the Southern) was considered to be of no importance.²⁴ Thus he pushed through one of the greatest territorial grabs of his day, the Ft. Wise Treaty of 1861. Thereby Cheyennes and Arapahoes lost great tracts of the finest land in the area for the dubious privilege of gaining annuities and retaining an arid rangeland in southeastern Colorado.²⁵ When they found themselves barred from the

23 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1860, pp. 452-454.

24 Loc. cit. Many of the absentees refused to be bound by the treaty.

25 Ibid., 1868, p. 33.

free use of their birthright lands, they vehemently protested the Ft. Wise swindle of 1861.²⁶

Throughout the difficult ten-year period following the Treaty of Ft. Laramie, the Northern Arapahoes remained at peace with the United States, although they pillaged livestock when driven by the fear of famine. Neither the pangs of hunger nor the appeals of their friends succeeded in embroiling them with the Federal troops.

It will be recalled that Thomas Fitzpatrick in 1853 and his successor at the North Platte Agency in 1854 reported distress from hunger among the Indians they served. Likewise Agent Twiss found them suffering and starving in 1855.²⁷ Yet the Arapahoes remained apart from the Sioux troubles of 1854, and the war which followed. Later, when the Cheyennes were involved in hostilities (1856-1857), the Northern Arapahoes disregarded the pleas of these long-time friends and allies, and gave them no assistance in the fighting.

By the middle of the decade immigrant inroads on the buffalo precipitated a crisis among the Arapahoes. Hardest hit were the old and the very young, who, weakened by the lack of food and protection from the weather, died in considerable numbers.²⁸ With smallpox adding to their troubles, they helped themselves to the easiest game at hand, the cattle and sheep

²⁶ Ibid., 1863, p. 130.

²⁷ Ibid., 1855, p. 398.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 403.

of immigrant whites. Their agent had no difficulty in obtaining their consent to withhold their annuity payments until the owners of the livestock should be fully reimbursed, although it might take several years to do so.²⁹ In 1858 and 1859 they were commended for their efforts to observe all Ft. Laramie Treaty stipulations with other Indian tribes as well as with the whites, although the frictions arising from the occupation of the gold fields in Colorado made the latter especially difficult.³⁰

In welcome contrast to the frustration, fear and fighting in this period of Indian history are reports of friendly visits of Northern Arapahoes left by W. F. Reynolds and V. F. Hayden, respectively commander and naturalist of the U. S. Government Expedition to explore the Yellowstone River. A small group of Arapahoes called upon the former in his camp near the present town of Glendo, Wyoming, in 1859, brought him word of mail awaiting him at Ft. Laramie, exchanged fresh meat for bacon, and obviously enjoyed the fellowship.³¹ Hayden recorded a number of visits by Northern Arapahoes similar in their spirit of friendliness.

29 Ibid., p. 401.

30 Op. cit. Hafen and Hafen, Relations with the Indians of the Plains, 1857-1861, pp. 170 and 184-185. In his report of 1858 (p. 170) the agent admitted difficulty in holding his wards in check when enemy tribes raided them for horses. Actually, as shown in the first chapter of this paper (pp. 19-21), none of the tribes involved cared to abandon the practice.

31 W. F. Reynolds, Report of the Exploration of the Yellowstone River, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1868, p. 64.

Both Reynolds and Hayden were highly impressed by Chief Friday, the latter describing him as the man of greatest influence among his people at this time.³² Since Friday alone, of all the tribe, had fluent command of the English language and frequently interpreted for his fellows, it is not surprising that white men have reached this conclusion, but the preponderance of evidence indicates that Chief Medicine Man probably was held in highest regard by the Northern Arapaho people. He, it will be recalled, was designated spokesman not only for the Arapahoes but for the Cheyennes and Sioux as well at the treaty conference of 1859 (which failed to gain Senate approval), a responsibility which would normally be assumed only by the most influential member of a tribe. Moreover, his followers constituted the largest band within the Northern Arapaho group, comprising half the tribe at least, and more than double the number of Friday's followers at their maximum.

Judging by the actions of Medicine Man and Friday during the ensuing years, it seems probable that both of them, through the period of disillusionment and distrust following the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1851, were instrumental in keeping the Northern Arapahoes at peace with the United States, an achievement of no mean distinction. Without more definite documentation, however, this must remain an unverified conjecture.

32 Op. cit. Hafen and Ghent, Broken Hand, p. 275.

Chap. 5 The Civil War Period, 1861-1865. Conflict
Erupts on a Broad Scale.

During the Civil War period, 1861-1865, Indian relations deteriorated until they reached an unprecedentedly low point during the latter year. Cheyennes and Arapahoes rankled with the realization that the United States Government, under the Ft. Wise Treaty of 1861, had alienated their inestimably valuable lands in Colorado (Chapter 4, pp. 50-51). Gold seekers and land-hungry immigrants continued to pour into the territory, giving little thought to the feelings or needs of the Indians whose lands they now possessed. The idea that red men neither could nor would utilize the soil and other resources to good advantage so colored their viewpoint that few desired even peaceable Indians as neighbors. The pioneers regarded them as one among many obstacles to be overcome in fulfilling the white man's destiny, the peopling and developing of the plains. As the settlers occupied more and more land for townsites, ranches, farms and mines, the Indians made way reluctantly, unwilling to be pushed aside; and the feeling against them gradually intensified.

Loss of their land and the continuous destruction of their game by the whites left the Indians gravely unsettled, worried for their daily needs and fearful of the future. Small groups of braves, usually young men, sometimes ran off ranchers' or immigrants' livestock, thus compensating in some degree for the lack of game for food. Continuance of their

age-old pastime of raiding enemy tribes for horses, scalps and prestige agitated the settlers, who feared that, through accident or intent, they might become embroiled with one Indian group or another. As mutual distrust deepened, the raiding custom easily led to clashes between reds and whites, mistaken identity and misunderstanding of intentions serving as contributory factors. Attempts by Indian agents and other officials to persuade the braves to abandon the practice availed little, chiefly because it meant so much to them as a part of their way of life. Furthermore, the white man's logic contained a serious flaw, for the Federal Government showed no inclination to make peace with its Indian enemies until it had first taught them a lesson by drubbing them. Thus the aborigines did not feel obliged to keep the peace with their own traditional enemies, insisting that it was¹ "a poor rule that will not work both ways".

With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 many Federal² troops were withdrawn from Indian country and sent south. This gave the tribesmen of the plains an opportunity to strike a telling blow at the settlers, had they been so minded; but despite dissatisfaction with the Ft. Wise Treaty and occasional

1 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1869, p. 54. These words were spoken by Medicine Arrow, a Southern Cheyenne.

2 Op. cit. Grinnell, p. 127.

forays by hungry braves, evidence is completely lacking that they planned to take advantage of the situation. Yet apprehension soon appeared that the Confederacy might attempt an alliance with them to encourage war upon the plains.³ This fear increased as minor activities of Confederate sympathizers in the Denver area came to light. But in August, 1862, a feeling akin to terror of all Indians gripped the plains. When some 700 whites were slain during a single week of the Eastern Sioux uprising in Minnesota, the entire region was electrified, even to Denver, Colorado, a thousand miles from the disturbances. To the settlers of the area the name of Indian became equivalent to treachery, and few discriminated in this regard. The effect of this feeling upon Indian relations throughout the period can scarcely be overestimated,

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, considering white satisfaction of greater importance than Indian displeasure, initiated direct negotiations with those bands of Cheyennes and Arapahoes which had not approved the Ft. Wise Treaty, but still occupied desirable lands in Colorado and Wyoming. To Governor Evans of Colorado Territory fell the unsavory task of convincing the Indians that by ceding their other lands and settling on the arid Upper Arkansas in southeastern Colorado with their southern kinsmen, they could be converted

³ LeRoy Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, Reports from Colorado, the Wildman Letters of 1859-1865 with Other Related Letters and Newspaper Reports 1859, Glendale, the Arthur H. Clark Co. 1961, p. 301.

to farmers and become self-supporting.⁴ With this end in view he contacted the northern bands of both tribes even to the Powder River region in northern Wyoming and southern Montana, where buffalo were comparatively plentiful, and requested them to report to the Upper or North Platte Agency near Ft. Laramie.⁵ There a council would be held in the hope of persuading them to join their brethren on their barren reservation. The preposterous unreasonableness of the plan can be better appreciated in the light of the report of Colley, agent to the Southern Cheyennes and Arapahoes, that unregulated slaughter of buffalo had resulted in the extermination of every head of these animals within 200 miles of the reservation on the Upper Arkansas, and that other game⁶ was also scarce.

Since none of the Indians were willing to move to the reservation and attempt to live like white men, an indirect approach was used and a unique method of coercion devised. Although the Government was treaty-bound to issue annuities until 1866, those for 1863 were to be withheld until the bands concerned should promise to sign either the Ft. Wise Treaty, or one similar in its terms, still to be drafted.⁷ Many Cheyennes refused to be coerced, but the Northern

4 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1863, pp. 242-245.

5 Loc. cit.

6 Ibid., pp. 252-253.

7 Ibid., pp. 249-250.

Arapaho Chiefs, Medicine Man, Black Bear and Friday, attached their signatures to the promise, after which their rations⁸ were issued. What went through the minds of the three chiefs remains a mystery, for none had put his name to the Ft. Wise Treaty, nor to another of a similar nature, and Medicine Man shortly afterward made it plain to Governor Evans that they would not go to the Upper Arkansas. Perhaps they thought better of the matter, and exercised the prerogatives used by the U. S. Senate in rejecting treaties arranged by the executive branch of the Government. At least it can scarcely be argued that they misunderstood the preliminary agreement they had made, for Friday not only spoke English well, but⁹ could also read and write.

When John Evans became Governor of Colorado Territory and ex-officio regional Superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1862, the idea of an Indian war seems to have been foreign to his mind. But the eastern Sioux uprising of that summer, which shocked the settlers of the plains and made every Indian suspect, must have had a marked effect upon his thinking. Lacking knowledge of the Indian mind, he readily became suspicious, heeded the counsel of a man of doubtful character

8 Loc. cit.

9 Friday's fluent command of English has been a subject of favorable comment among whites who knew him.

rather than that of friendly Indians or officials who knew them better than he, and unwittingly helped to set up a situation which culminated in large-scale hostilities.

By 1863 the talk of war among both settlers and aborigines caused Governor Evans grave concern. In November, about a month after Medicine Man had informed him that the Northern Arapahoes, though they opposed hostilities with the whites, would not settle on the Upper Arkansas, an illiterate and irresponsible white man who was married to an Arapaho and spoke the language, persuaded him that the Arapahoes, Sioux, Cheyennes, Kiowas and Comanches would unite in hostilities against the whites as soon as they could obtain sufficient
10
ammunition in the spring. The motives behind the story told by Robert North, as he was named, are enigmatic, but he convinced the Governor that he had gained the full confidence of the Arapahoes in rescuing a woman of that tribe from the Utes; therefore his warnings should be heeded. In gratitude for his rescue of the woman the Arapahoes had given him a big medicine dance (Sun Dance) near Ft. Lyon (formerly Ft. Wise), in Colorado. It was there, he said, that he had seen

10 Robert North, elsewhere described as the demented, renegade leader of an outlaw band of Arapahoes, was later hanged by vigilantes or robbers. (See Joseph Henry Taylor, Frontier and Indian Life and Kaleidoscopic Lives, Valley City, 1889, pp. 148-154.)

Northern and Southern Arapahoes, Cheyennes, Sioux, Kiowas, and Comanches pledge themselves to war together on the whites.¹¹ Had no massacre of settlers occurred the year before in Minnesota, the Governor might, perhaps, have been less ruled by emotionalism, and sought other sources of information; but he accepted North's story at face value, and anticipated trouble in the spring.

Handicapped by his meager knowledge of Indians and their customs, Governor Evans did not, of course, realize that Northern and Southern Arapahoes, with friendly visitors from other tribes, had come together, not for warlike purposes, but to celebrate the ceremony of the Sun Dance, or the Offerings Lodge, as the Arapahoes called it, the most meaningful religious ritual of the plains Indians.¹² Neither was he aware that the Arapaho Sun Dance could not have been given for North, as it is always the result of a sacred vow, in this case the vow of a Northern Arapaho woman who had escaped from the Utes, and through the aid of Henry North, not Robert (who¹³ claimed credit for it), had returned safely to her people.

11 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1864, pp. 224-225.

12 For a brief explanation of the Sun Dance, see Chap. 1. pp. 18-19.

13 Jessie Rowledge, Letter of June 21, 1961. This Southern Arapaho, who has a remarkable knowledge of his people's past, explains that Henry North had a brother Robert.

The story of this Sun Dance, in short, is an Arapaho epic, still commonly known among both Northern and Southern groups; but it is Henry North, not his brother Robert, who has an important part in it. A detailed account, "The Story of a Woman's Vow", is related by George A. Dorsey in "The Arapaho Sun Dance".¹⁴ The Northern Arapahoes at this time were not preparing for war.

When Governor Evans first came to Colorado he sought to stop the practice of inter-tribal raiding which so often kept the settlers on edge. He rather easily convinced himself -- but not the Indians -- that they would abandon the custom. The hostilities which broke out in the spring of 1864 came as an indirect result of this practice, rather than the inter-tribal pledge of warfare erroneously reported by Robert North.

Due to depredations in the Platte Valley by hungry Sioux and Cheyennes, General Mitchell, hoping to preserve peace, met the Brulé Sioux in council near Ft. Kearney, Nebraska. But all chances of success were spoiled when the encamped Indians, in the dark of night, mistook a party of whites for their Pawnee enemies on a foray, attacked them, and killed several.¹⁵ The troops responded in kind, and warfare began.¹⁶

¹⁴ George A. Dorsey, "The Arapaho Sun Dance" Anthropological Papers of the Field Columbian Museum, v. 4, Chicago, 1903, pp. 5-8.

¹⁵ Op. cit. Grinnell, p. 151.

¹⁶ Lec. cit.

Throughout the spring and summer intermittent fighting continued, until various bands of Apaches, Comanches, Kiowas and Southern Arapahoes and Cheyennes were drawn in, the last two groups, at least, reluctantly. Stating that unwanted war had been forced upon them, they approached Governor Evans in an effort to obtain peace, but met with discouragement, for he distrusted them and referred them to the military for negotiations.¹⁷ But there, also, their efforts were repelled.

From Colorado to Montana feelings ran high against the Indians. In the north, Montana and South Dakota were the main field of combat, and the Sioux the principal belligerents. In late July General Sully's troops and artillery caught up with them, defeating them at Knife River, South Dakota.¹⁸ Closer to the North Platte Agency and the routes of travel in Wyoming and Nebraska, even friendly Indians were treated as hostiles by immigrants, settlers and soldiers, who made little effort to differentiate between the guilty and the innocent.

With the danger of widening hostilities thus increasing, Governor Evans decided on an effort to separate the friendly Indians from the hostiles. In the early summer of 1864 he

17 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1865, pp. 23-24.

18 James McClellan Hamilton, From Wilderness to State-Hood, Portland, Binford and Mort, 1957, pp. 156-157.

called upon all who intended to be friendly to report to designated stations in Colorado for protection and rations. From these points they would be unable to go to the buffalo range or otherwise procure the major part of their food. To his disappointment there was little immediate response. About 175 Northern Arapahoes under Friday and White Wolf reported to Camp Collins on the Cache la Poudre, not far from the former's long-preferred camping grounds.¹⁹ Left Hand's small band of Southern Arapahoes came in to Ft. Lyon on the Arkansas, the other designated station; but they soon departed again. This, in the Governor's estimation, confirmed their hostile intentions. But it is probable that fear of hunger played an important part in Left Hand's decision to leave, for the area was sadly depleted of game. Even at Camp Collins, which was far more favorably located, subsistence for Friday and White Wolf's bands proved to be a perplexing problem.²⁰ The Governor had small success in assigning satisfactory hunting grounds, and the funds allocated for subsistence fell short of paying for the food they required. Beef, when procurable, was comparatively inexpensive, but speculators had cornered the wheat and flour market; their cost was

19 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1864, p. 236.

20 Ibid., p. 223.

21
prohibitive.

By August of 1864 Indian troubles in Colorado, considerably heightened by imagination, had produced a sad effect. With only one exception, every ranch along a 370 mile stretch of the Overland Stage Route in Colorado was reported to be deserted, their occupants having fled to the nearest forts.²² In the popular mind Indians were pitiless savages, ready for unprovoked attacks upon the whites and their possessions. General panic prevailed between Camp Collins and Denver, a distance of nearly seventy miles; farmers improvised fortifications to repel anticipated forays. Three women reportedly went mad from fright.

Governor Evans, disappointed by the poor response to his invitation to friendly Indians, was convinced of general hostility on their part. Fearful of attack, he advised the settlers to hunt down all hostiles, and called for a regiment of one hundred day volunteers for the same purpose.²³ With all Indians now regarded as enemies, a determination for vengeance against the red men replaced fear. A party of one hundred armed men headed for the Cache la Poudre with the intention

21 Ibid., p. 236. The price of flour at La Porte, advanced from \$6 per Cwt. to \$28. La Porte was near Camp Collins.

22 Ibid., p. 237. This is from the report of Superintendent G. K. Otis of the Overland Stage Line to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

23 Ibid., p. 23.

of cleaning out Friday and his friendly band of Northern Arapahoes, but the report of actual hostiles near Ft. Lupton, about forty miles closer to Denver, turned them in that direction, and modified their purpose.²⁴

During the frightening days of August, 1864, an incident occurred which further incensed the settlers against the Indians. This was the capture and alleged mistreatment of a white woman, Mrs. Eubanks, and her child, by Indians. Later, when they surrendered the woman and child to military authorities at Ft. Laramie, three Sioux were hanged for their complicity in the affair.²⁵ The Colorado settlers, who already held the Indians responsible for the disruption in their Territory, grew more inflamed than ever against them, and demanded a general drubbing for all the savages (as they called the Indians) to drive home a much-needed lesson. Colonel Chivington of the Colorado Volunteers, who wished to make a name as an Indian fighter, utilized this demand in making an unprovoked attack upon an encampment of Southern Cheyennes and Arapahoes who were treating for peace with the commandant at Ft. Lyon.²⁶

On the advice of Governor Evans to make their peace with

24 Ibid., p. 237.

25 Arapahoes were at first mistakenly blamed for the capture of Mrs. Eubanks. Grinnell, op. cit., p. 155, states that Cheyennes and Sioux were responsible.

26 Op. cit. Condition of the Indian Tribes, p. 5.

the military, these tribes had approached Major Wyncoop at Ft. Lyon to negotiate with him. Encamped on their own reservation, close to the fort, they believed themselves to be under the protection of the Federal troops, and awaited the outcome of their mission. There it was that Colonel Chivington and his Volunteers fell upon them with merciless slaughter, the Colonel insisting that no Indian should be taken alive, not even a child, as nits would become lice. Two-thirds of those killed in this battle, known as the Sand Creek Massacre, were women and children.²⁷

This ended the chances for peace in Colorado. Most of the Cheyennes, who had suffered the greater number of casualties, felt themselves forced to fight against extermination; but one band even now refused to war upon the whites. The Sioux, however, were easily persuaded to join in such a venture, and eighty lodges of Northern Arapahoes on the Republican River in Kansas were induced to unite with the hostiles.²⁸ This band, evidently Black Bear's, had come from Powder River to visit the Southern Arapahoes, but failed to find them there, for after the Sand Creek affair they had fled farther south to

²⁷ Op. cit. Grinnell, p. 173. Although reports of the number killed vary greatly, 100 to 800, there is little doubt of the proportion of women and children killed. For an idea of Indian resistance in this battle see p. 21 in Chapter 1.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 181.

29

avoid the troops.

From December 1864 until February 1865, one thousand marauding warriors of the combined tribes terrorized the settlers between the North and South Platte Rivers, raiding Overland Stage Line stations and burning telegraph poles as a part of the process.³⁰ Julesburg Station in northeastern Colorado was struck and plundered twice within a few weeks, and on the second occasion was burned to the ground. The raiding finally over, the Indians lived well for a while on the loot they had taken, but when that was gone the three tribes separated to return to their northern hunting grounds.³¹

Most of the Northern Arapahoes, during this period of turbulence and ill-feeling from 1861 to 1865, remained at peace with the whites. With the exception of Black Bear's band, they could at no time be counted among the hostiles, and Black Bear's belligerency occurred only after the unwarranted attack on Southern Arapahoes and Cheyennes at Sand Creek in late November, 1864.

29 Black Bear is not named as the chief of this hostile band, but the location of the other Northern Arapaho bands of any size is otherwise known at this time. Likewise, the 80 lodges, about 450 people, is close to the figure of 400 given for his band in the Rocky Mountain News (Denver), July 8, 1865.

30 Op. cit. Grinnell, pp. 182-194.

31 Loc. cit.

Among the many reports of intertribal raiding in the early 1860s no definite involvements of Northern Arapahoes are cited. Yet it is unlikely that they had abandoned the practice, for a few years later they were known to raid Shoshones, Utes and Crows. Interestingly, when Northern Arapahoes in 1862 found six stray mules bearing the Overland Stage Line's brand, they brought them in to the North Platte Agency, requesting their agent to return them to their owner. This elicited the commendation of the agent, who referred to them as the most honorable tribe within his jurisdiction.³² Actions of this nature on the part of the Arapahoes probably reflected the influence of the older heads in the tribal hierarchy, who wished to avoid trouble with the whites.

Chief Friday, with his knowledge of English and understanding of the whites, was better able to convince Governor Evans and others in authority of his peaceful intentions than were other Indians. His stand became equally clear to his fellows. Within a year of the Eastern Sioux uprising, when the possibility of war on the plains was a topic of common conversation among both settlers and Indians, Friday, approached by emissaries on the Cache la Poudre in Colorado, refused to support the Sioux in a suggested war upon the whites. At approximately the same time, in the fall of 1863, Chief

32 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1862, p. 14.

Medicine Man, through a white interpreter, informed Governor Evans that the matter of war had been discussed at an inter-tribal meeting on Horse Creek, Wyoming. Many favored a war to drive the whites off the land, but he and other Northern Arapahoes ³³ opposed such a course. But Medicine Man's professions of friendship were far less convincing to the Governor than were those of Friday, perhaps because of the language barrier. Evans suspected him of double dealing, and reported that Smith, the interpreter, and Colley, agent to the Southern Cheyennes and Arapahoes, ³⁴ shared his suspicions. Such a conclusion evidently was unwarranted, for letters of Smith and Colley, though indicating distrust of Sioux, Cheyennes and Kiowas, ³⁵ express faith in the Arapahoes.

During the fighting in the north in 1864, when General Sully's forces pursued the Sioux, the greater part of the Northern Arapahoes and many of the Northern Cheyennes remained aloof from hostilities through their customary practice of hunting in the Powder River area, well over one hundred miles from the scene of military activity. ³⁶ When, however, they left the comparative safety of their hunting grounds to report to the North Platte Agency, war was all but forced upon them by

33 Ibid., 1863, pp. 240-241, and 511. Governor Evans usually referred to Medicine Man as Roman Nose, a name which the whites commonly used for him.

34 Ibid., p. 541.

35 Ibid., pp. 542-543.

36 Ibid., 1864, p. 223.

immigrants and Ft. Laramie troops, who regarded them as belligerents and took action against them.³⁷ But the Indians did not retaliate, though they complained bitterly to their agent. The smaller bands of Friday and White Wolf remained at peace with the whites, although the settlers did not appreciate their presence on the Cache la Poudre in Colorado, a few miles west of Latham, near present-day Greeley. As has already been noted, these two responded to Governor Evans' call to friendly Indians to report to Camp Collins.

During these bitter days of 1864, with the stage line traffic nearly paralyzed because of the Indian scare, Friday struck up the acquaintance of the agents at the Overland Station in Latham, and occasionally had Sunday dinner with them. While they ate together or enjoyed after-dinner cigars, he regaled them with stories of his early life, his schooling in St. Louis, and of gold nuggets across the Rocky Mountains of Colorado.³⁸

In the meantime he pressed Governor Evans for his desire of many years, a reservation on the north side of the Cache la Poudre, land which with irrigation was soon to become wonderfully productive. It may be that Friday's youthful experiences in Missouri had equipped him to judge the fertility of soils. At any rate, he would not consider a reservation

37 Ibid., p. 387. This occurred a number of times.

38 Op. cit., Root and Connolly, p. 347.

on the headwaters of the streams to the north of the Cache
 la Poudre, as the land there was too rocky for agriculture.³⁹
 But sixteen white families had settled on the land which
 Friday wished for his tribe, and where whites came in Indians
 were usually forced out.⁴⁰ In disregard of Arapaho and Cheyenne
 title to the land, title which the northern bands of the two
 tribes had never surrendered, his request was refused.

Evidence is lacking that the Northern Arapahoes engaged
 in hostilities against the whites prior to the final weeks
 of 1864. But as already noted, Black Bear's band of eighty
 lodges, which had left the Big Horn-Powder River region of
 Wyoming to visit the Southern Arapahoes, joined the Cheyennes
 and Sioux in the Platte Valley raids after the Sand Creek
 massacre of late November.⁴¹ When the three tribes separated,
 probably in March, 1865, Black Bear purportedly returned to
 the Powder River hunting grounds; but his stay in Wyoming
 must have been brief, for in April he brought his band to
 Colorado to join Friday on the Cache la Poudre.⁴² Thus, after
 having taken an active part in the Platte Valley raids, Black
 Bear accepted Governor Evans' invitation of the preceding
 summer for friendly Indians to report for protection and rations!

39 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1864, p. 235.

40 Loc. cit.

41 Black Bear must have had about 160 braves, as two
 warriors per lodge were usually figured.

42 Op. cit. Rocky Mountain News, July 8, 1865.

The agent at Camp Collins assigned him hunting grounds so his band could procure subsistence, but as game was scarce and no rations were issued to them, it is only natural that he soon departed for his preferred hunting grounds in the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming. By early July his entire band was gone, taking with them White Wolf (or Wolf Moccasin) and most of his following, leaving Friday with a group of only 85 in Colorado.⁴³

Through Friday's persistence, Governor Evans seems to have become convinced that Medicine Man might make a good peace risk, and in the summer of 1864 sent Robert North to southern Montana with his offer of protection and rations to Indians who intended to be friendly. North having failed to reach him, Friday, still hoping for a Northern Arapaho reservation on the Cache la Poudre, dispatched several of his own young men to persuade him to come south. In the spring of 1865, Medicine Man, who had remained apart from the hostilities of the winter months, responded to the Governor's call. As though to prove that Arapahoes were preponderantly peaceful people, with his following of 120

⁴³ Loc. cit. The Arapaho referred to as Wolf Moccasin by the Rocky Mountain News is called White Wolf in the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1864, p. 387. The figure of 85 Indians remaining with Friday appears in the Annual Report of 1868, p. 181.

lodges, nearly 700 people, he traveled from the northern Powder River area to the Little Chug (Chugwater Creek) in southern Wyoming, about thirty-five miles north of Cheyenne. ⁴⁴

Before replying to his request the Governor contacted the Indian Office in Washington, D. C., informing Commissioner Dole that the Sand Creek massacre had spoiled the chance of peace with all of the Indians excepting Medicine Man's Northern Arapahoes; but if this counted for anything in Washington, it did not appear in the course which was followed. The reservation requested, it was said, was too close to the great routes of travel for the safety of the whites, and was therefore unsatisfactory. ⁴⁵ It mattered not that the land on which Medicine Man had requested settlement was their own by treaty right.

The correspondence between Governor Evans and the Indian Office involved considerable delay. Before an interview could be arranged with Medicine Man, General Connor was reported on his way west to punish Sioux, Arapahoes and Cheyennes for their depredations, and the matter was dropped. Their pilgrimage a failure, Medicine Man's band returned to the Powder River country, where the rewards of the chase, meat for food, and hides for clothing and lodges, were more readily obtainable than in the Chugwater valley.

⁴⁴ Op. cit. Annual Report, 1865, pp. 176-177.

⁴⁵ Loc. cit.

Throughout the Civil War period the independent action of the bands within a tribe, so characteristic of the plains Indians, was strikingly apparent among the Northern Arapahoes. Although none of them were stationary, Medicine Man's followers generally frequented the Big Horn-Powder River region; Friday's group spent much of their time on the Cache la Poudre in Colorado; White Wolf and Black Bear's bands followed a more transient pattern, the latter particularly, as it moved from the Big Horns to Kansas, to Colorado and Nebraska for raiding, to the Big Horns again, then to Colorado, and back to the Big Horns. Yet the bands apparently kept in touch with each other, and each seemingly knew where to find the others when it so desired.⁴⁶ Only Black Bear's band warred upon the whites. The others, about two-thirds of the entire tribe, kept the peace in spite of numerous provocations to belligerency.

⁴⁶ An example of this may be seen in the fact that Friday's young emissaries succeeded in reaching Medicine Man, well over 300 miles away in Montana, when Robert North, sent out by Governor Evans, was unable to find him.

Chap. 6 The Powder River War, 1865-1868. A Temporary Respite Is Gained.

With the end of the Civil War in 1865, the center of conflict between red men and white shifted into Wyoming, but the incompatibility of their interests remained. Colonel Collins, an experienced Indian fighter and retiring Commander at Ft. Laramie, probably spoke the mind of the West in recommending that the United States Government construct and garrison forts in the buffalo country of Wyoming, whip the Indians into submission, compel them to sue for peace, and remove them from the mineral rich Big Horns, Black Hills and Yellowstone country.¹ When freed from the occupation of the Indians (savages and an impediment to the white man's progress in his opinion), the territory and its resources could be constructively developed by the superior race.

Although the Government did not consciously follow the advice of the retiring Colonel, its Indian policy during the course of the next three years developed a pattern in many respects similar to that which he had proposed. Gold, this time in southwestern Montana, played an important part. Prior to 1865, Virginia City, the center of the diggings, could be reached only by two circuitous routes, but in that year construction began on the Bozeman Trail, a much more direct course

1 Op. cit. Coutant, p. 430.

from Ft. Laramie in southeastern Wyoming to Virginia City. In violation of the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1851, it cut through the headwaters of the Powder River and the Yellowstone, the famed Big Horn-Powder River area, which comprised the last reasonably good hunting grounds of the Sioux, Crows, and the Northern Arapahoes and Cheyennes. Since the antipathy of the Indians was evident at this invasion of the land which had hitherto been theirs alone, the Government constructed and garrisoned forts through the buffalo country to protect the trail and keep it open.

The Indians had long been dismayed as their game supply dwindled beneath the guns of immigrants and hide and tallow hunters, especially of the latter, who slaughtered the buffalo indiscriminately and left their flesh to rot. They were deeply concerned when the white man's livestock grazed off the nutritious prairie grasses on which the buffalo and their horses depended, for in a land in which one head of cattle required thirty acres or more for year-around pasture, large areas along the traveled routes were quickly depleted of their cover by immigrants' horses and cattle, and wind erosion set in. The grass and the buffalo were their natural resources from which came the bulk of their food, lodges and blankets, resources which they had used for generations, but never abused. Needless to say they did not relish the prospect of a horde of gold seekers trekking through the heart of their hunting lands, scaring away their game and depleting their resources still further.

Another factor which contributed to Indian tension and unrest was the cessation in 1865 of all Government annuities² resulting from the Ft. Laramie Treaty. Having received these payments of food, textiles and implements since 1851, Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes had learned to depend upon them. Thus the abrupt termination of the issues in 1865 made the Indians ever more keenly aware of white inroads upon their game, and of impending disaster if the supply continued to diminish.

Perhaps the times were ready for a leader who could weld the bands and tribes into a greater degree of common purpose than they had formerly shown in the face of white intrusion. Such a man appeared in the person of Red Cloud, the sagacious Ogallala Sioux, a chief of great cunning and iron determination. Backed by many of the powerful Sioux bands, the Cheyennes, and a part of the Arapahoes, he prepared to resist further encroachment upon the land of his people.

In June of 1865 fighting broke out in central Wyoming along the Sweetwater River, which rises near South Pass on the Oregon Trail, through which tens of thousands of immigrants had passed on their way to the Pacific Coast. Several skirmishes occurred until, in late July, 1,000 warriors, Sioux, Cheyennes and Northern Arapahoes, defeated a small contingent

2 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1868, pp. 40-41

of soldiers and killed their commander, Lieutenant Caspar Collins, at the Platte River Bridge, a strategic point on the Oregon Trail near the present town of Casper.³ Soon afterward the Indians moved north to their Big Horn hunting grounds.

How many of the thousand warriors in the attack on Collins at the Platte River Bridge were Northern Arapahoes cannot be told. Friday's band was not among them, for it was still in Colorado. Medicine Man's band also was absent, as it had not yet returned from the Little Chug in southern Wyoming. It is probable that the Northern Arapahoes involved were members of Black Bear's and White Wolf's bands, as some members had left the Cache la Poudre in Colorado in the spring, purportedly headed for the Big Horns, perhaps to join the hostiles. By early July the last of them were on their way.

General Connor, sent to Wyoming to lead the western division of the Powder River expedition, left Ft. Laramie on July 30, 1865, to strike the Indians in their hunting grounds, punish them for their depredations, and bring safety to the Bozeman Trail. He instructed his men to grant no quarter, but to kill all male Indians over twelve years of age.⁴

³ Op. cit. Hebard and Brininstool, Bozeman Trail, v. 1. pp. 160-163. The town of Casper, despite its spelling, was named for Caspar Collins.

⁴ Leroy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, Powder River Campaigns and Sawyers Expedition of 1865, Glendale, the Arthur H. Clark Co., 1961, p. 43. Connor's superior, General Pope, countermanded these orders when they came to his attention, saying they were atrocious.

Along the way to the Big Horns, where he hoped to strike a telling blow, General Connor took care lest news of his approach might precede him. Few Indians that crossed his path survived; a group of forty-two Sioux including two women, and various smaller parties were annihilated.⁵ Finally in late August, close to the Tongue River in the northern part of Wyoming's Big Horns, the General spotted what he had hoped to find, a good-sized Indian village. It was Black Bear's band of Northern Arapahoes. The troops surrounded it in the dark, and when morning came and the Indians were taking down their lodges to move camp, the soldiers attacked.⁶ In true Indian fashion Connor's Pawnee scouts, far more interested in obtaining horses than in fighting, rounded up their enemies' ponies while the completely surprised Arapahoes, unhorsed, strove to protect their women and children. Although outnumbered by the soldiers they fought until midnight in the hope of regaining their lodges and supplies of robes and meat, all of which were burned by Connor's troops.⁷ Women

⁵ F. G. Burnett, "History of the Western Division of the Powder River Expedition," Annals of Wyoming, v. 8, January, 1932, pp. 572-574.

⁶ Robert Beebe David, Finn Burnett, Frontiersman, Glendale, the Arthur H. Clark Co., 1937, p. 89.

⁷ Op. cit. Hafen and Hafen, Powder River Campaigns, p. 46. Hafen and Hafen estimate a village of more than 500 souls, which is possible if White Wolf's band was combined with Black Bear's. (It is referred to as a village led by Black Bear and Old David, but as Old David is otherwise unknown this may have been the soldiers' name for White Wolf.) Connor had 800 troops. The 250 lodges which most authors reported burned is probably

and children were counted among the dead, due, it was said, to the unfortunate fact that the soldiers did not have time⁸ to take careful aim at the braves.

Three days later an intriguing incident occurred which cast Black Bear's braves in a more amicable role. Near the present town of Dayton in the Big Horns they attacked a wagon train of Bozeman Trail roadbuilders commanded by Colonel Sawyers. His small party, greatly outnumbered by the Indians, found itself in grave danger until the Arapahoes, according to Sawyers' journal, finally realized that this was a party of workers, with no soldiers among them, and made them an offer of peace.⁹ Sawyers wanted help to get his wagons through; the Arapahoes needed horses, having lost theirs in the battle with Connor. They proposed therefore, that three

a gross exaggeration on the part of the original authority, which was a common failing in reporting Indian fights. It is unlikely that at this time the Arapahoes, reported by their agent to be poorly equipped, could have had so many extra lodges for the storage of furs. They averaged $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 people per lodge, which should have meant not more than 100 lodges in the entire village. A few years later, when game was further depleted, they crowded two families, about 10 to 12 people, into each badly worn lodge.

8 Ibid., p. 131.

9 Ibid., pp. 262-263.

of them and three of Sawyers' men should go together to the General; if the whites would aid them in regaining their ponies they would guaranty safety to the roadbuilders. And so it was agreed. Several Arapahoos voluntarily remained with Sawyers as hostages, pending the return of the six couriers. The suspicious wagoners kept careful watch on the many Indians who came into camp to consult with the hostages, but since they were always friendly their fears proved groundless.

Next day the three Arapaho messengers returned alone, having encountered a party of armed white men who were on their way to the relief of the wagon train. Since they feared further trouble with the approach of soldiers, they returned to Sawyers' camp, reported to him what had happened, and the entire group of Indians moved on.¹⁰

General Connor continued his maneuvers until he discovered another Indian village in the Big Horns, which he also hoped to destroy. But disappointment was his lot, and he was sorely tried when word came from Washington ordering him to desist from hostilities and return to Ft. Laramie.¹¹ Convinced that

¹⁰ Helman, one of Sawyers' men, gave quite a different account of the Arapaho incident. The gist of it is that the Indians planned treachery, and were finally ordered out of camp. Helman's version is entirely reminiscent, related thirty years after the event, whereas Sawyers' journal was written at the time the events occurred. (See Hafen and Hafen, Powder River Campaigns, pp. 322-323.)

¹¹ Op. cit. Burnett, p. 577.

his show of force had taught Black Bear a much-needed lesson, he hated to leave the hunting lands without drubbing other Indians and ending their depredations.

In January, 1866, through the snows of a fearful winter, messengers were sent out from Ft. Laramie to invite the Indians to a peace conference.¹² The Northern Arapahoes could not be reached, and Colonel Maynardier, Commander at Ft. Laramie, feared that they might continue hostilities. In this event he would seek Sioux aid in chastising them.¹³ But they caught wind of the move for peace, and in late June, when the snows were gone, sent six couriers to Ft. Laramie to make sure that they could share in it.¹⁴

Several bands of the great Sioux tribe approved the Treaty of 1866, but agreements with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes were not concluded. The Government had no intention of abandoning the Bozeman Trail forts nor removing the garrisons; but realizing that the Indians would bitterly oppose the depletion of their hunting grounds, it stressed the need of great tact in maintaining travel through their country.¹⁵ Red Cloud's determination and tenacity, however, had not been fully considered. Neither he nor his Ogallala Sioux would accept

12 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1866, p. 205.

13 Ibid., p. 206.

14 Ibid., p. 208.

15 Ibid., p. 211.

tactful travel over the Bozeman Trail, nor retention of the forts, nor the treaty, nor peace, until the road was closed and the hated forts abandoned. They prepared for further war.

Red Cloud's feelings were brought home strongly to the nation on December 21, 1866. A large body of warriors, who had resolved to drive the soldiers from their Big Horn hunting grounds, slaughtered eighty troops under Colonel Fetterman. This inexperienced, boastful Indian fighter had claimed that a single company of soldiers could defeat 1,000 Indians. Red Cloud's group of Sioux, Cheyennes, and a few Northern Arapahoes, with very little aid from fire-arms, had proved him wrong.¹⁶

With the help of the Crows, their erstwhile enemies, Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes defended their last important game area in Northern Wyoming and southern Montana. Fighting continued into the summer of 1867. In early August the Indians learned the deadly effectiveness of the new, breech-loading rifles which had replaced muzzle-loaders in the hands of the troops.¹⁷ With these weapons the soldiers twice defeated them, inflicting heavy casualties.¹⁸ But although Red Cloud

¹⁶ Most authors indicate the presence of only a few Arapahoes, but Dunn, op. cit. p. 246, says 100 lodges took part. Dunn is frequently inaccurate.

Hebard and Brininstool, op. cit., v. 1, p. 339, state that Eagle Head and Black Coal led the Arapaho contingent. Taylor, op. cit. p. 151, credits the leadership to the white man, Robert North.

¹⁷ Op. cit. Hebard and Brininstool, v. 1, pp. 50 and 180.

¹⁸ Ibid., v. 1, pp. 70 and 181. These were the Hayfield Fight in Montana and the Wagon Box Fight in Wyoming. In the latter a howitzer also inflicted heavy damage.

lost the battles he was to win the war.

As a result of the annihilation of Fetterman's command in 1866, President Johnson ordered an investigation into the causes of Indian dissatisfaction and violence.¹⁹ A commission of civilians and military officers met with the Indians, heard their grievances, and concluded that the establishment of forts and stationing of soldiers along the Bozeman Trail had precipitated the trouble. The Indians had never agreed to this, and felt that, with the consequent effect upon their game they must fight or die of starvation.

Again a council was called at Ft. Laramie to end the Powder River War. In mid-September, 1867 about three-hundred Indians came in, largely Crows and Arapahoes, who were very friendly, and a few Cheyennes.²⁰ General Harney, head of the peace commission, awaited the arrival of the Sioux before proceeding with the treaty, but Red Cloud, wary of the white man's promises, refused to report to Ft. Laramie until he had seen the Government troops depart from the posts along the Bozeman Trail.²¹ He finally arrived in the spring of 1868. With the signing of the Harney-Sanborn Treaty in May the war was ended, and Red Cloud never fought again.

19 Op. cit. Grinnell, p. 244.

20 Op. cit. Cheyenne Leader, Sept. 19, 1867.

21 Ibid., May 13, 1868.

Whereas the Indian Office in Washington praised the newly inaugurated policy of conquering the Indians with kindness, the Cheyenne Leader (Wyoming) commented caustically on the "Quaker" influence which had instigated the surrender of the entire Powder River area to the Indians, and pessimistically prophesied continued hostilities in Wyoming and South Dakota.²² The final peace, the Leader editorialized, would be dictated by the invincible whites, whose destiny it was to civilize the plains.²³ The treaty barred them from access to the Black Hills gold, as it was on Indian land; but, the Leader cynically stated, though the Government proposes, the pioneer disposes.²⁴ With such an attitude held commonly in the West, a stable, lasting peace could scarcely be expected. Only a temporary respite had been gained.

As criticism of the soft policy toward the Indians continued, proponents of a tougher course revived their demands to return the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the War Department. Commissioner N. G. Taylor opined in reply that the proposed transfer would be tantamount to continual war, whereas the true policy toward the Indians should be one of peace.

22 Ibid., March 18, 1868. Wyoming and South Dakota were then included in Dakota Territory. With the completion of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1869, Wyoming became a separate territory.

23 Ibid., April 3, 1868.

24 Loc. cit.

Citing the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864 as a mistake of the military, he estimated the cost of the resulting war, only recently brought to a close, at \$40,000,000.²⁵

Within the Indian Bureau, nonetheless, signs appeared of yielding to the pressure of land-hungry settlers. Preliminary plans were drawn for confining some 130,000 Indians on two reservations, thus freeing the remainder of their lands for the whites.²⁶ One reservation would comprise the greater part of Oklahoma, the other the western half of South Dakota. But if necessary to prevent another Indian war, the latter might be temporarily extended westward to the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming, the unceded Indian land which they had fought so hard to retain for their own use!²⁷ A glowing future was depicted for the red men. Stocking the reservations with cattle, sheep and goats would instil in them a desire for individual ownership of land and goods, thus paving the way for the mastery of agriculture and the mechanical arts.²⁸ With the crowning work of teacher and missionary their rosy future would be perpetuated.

Further study indicates that this was mere glossing of a hopeless situation for the Indians, and rationalizing of the brutal fact that they must be moved out of the white man's

25 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1868, p. 8.

26 Ibid., pp. 44-45.

27 Ibid., 1867, p. 8.

28 Ibid., p. 73.

way. The practical impossibility of preventing settlers from encroaching on Indian hunting grounds was admitted.²⁹ Furthermore, the two eastern divisions of the Pacific Railroad were rapidly approaching Denver, a fact which demanded the concentration of the Indians on reservations, far enough removed from the steel rails to preclude any danger to them.³⁰ Peace, perhaps, would last until the pressures again became too great.

The extent of Northern Arapaho participation in the Powder River War is somewhat enigmatic. Some warriors, as already indicated, engaged in the Sweetwater and Platte Bridge skirmishes in June and July of 1865, probably members of Black Bear's and White Wolf's bands. During the same summer General Connor attacked a village of five hundred or more, Black Bear's band and possibly White Wolf's. The same bands later had a brush with Sawyers' wagon train, followed by a unique armistice. No further record of Northern Arapaho hostilities appears until the time of the Fetterman fight, in December, 1866. A small contingent engaged in this affair. Thereafter the records are indefinite, excepting for the final days of fighting, such as the Hayfield and Wagon Box fights. The bands represented and the numbers engaged is nowhere indicated.

29 Loc. cit.

30 Ibid., p. 73.

Friday's band was never numbered among the hostiles, for this group of eighty-five remained on the Cache la Poudre in Colorado throughout the period of fighting. Despite the fact that they were destitute -- the Governor of the Territory had been unable to provide them with rations -- they did not depart from their encampment there until the summer of 1868.³¹ They were the last of the Arapaho and Cheyenne bands, Northern or Southern, to quit Colorado Territory. They wished to remain in this land which by right belonged to them, and left only under pressure, because the white settlers did not want them there.³²

Medicine Man's relationship to the Powder River War cannot be so positively stated. He and his band of 120 lodges, more than half the tribe, returned from southern Wyoming to the Powder River hunting lands during the summer of 1865. Whether he succeeded in keeping any of his followers out of the conflict can only be conjectured. Certain facts, however, indicate that Medicine Man may have stood for a peaceful course. Nowhere, for instance, is his name mentioned as a hostile during the war period. This is likewise true of Friday, who, as already shown, had no part in the war; but Chief Black Bear and three others of less importance are named as Arapaho leaders

31 Ibid., 1868, pp. 180-181.

32 Loc. cit. This news of Friday's band comes from the report of Governor Hunt of Colorado Territory.

in the fighting.³³ As the Northern Arapahoes' most important chief, and one who had been tribal spokesman on a number of occasions, the omission of his name from among the hostiles is very interesting. Again like Friday, Medicine Man failed to sign the Harney-Sanborn Treaty of 1868, which ended the Powder River War, although Black Bear and more than twenty other Northern Arapahoes attached their signatures.³⁴ This may have especial significance, for customarily a major chief who had engaged in hostilities against the United States would have endorsed the agreement which brought the conflict to a close. When the bulk of the tribe, 119 lodges, arrived at Ft. Laramie for the treaty signing, Medicine Man and 25 lodges of his people stayed behind in the Big Horns.³⁵ Whether the 140 to 150 people represented by these twenty-five lodges had remained aloof from the war is still unknown.

During the early months of the fighting (sometimes called the First Powder River War), less than half of the Northern Arapahoes were involved, but from December, 1866 until the end of hostilities (the Second Powder River War), a greater number may have taken part. Friday's band stayed completely out of it; but more than this cannot be definitely stated.

³³ These three were "Old David", Eagle Head, and Black Coal.

³⁴ Op. cit. Annual Report, 1868, pp. 253-254.

³⁵ Loc. cit. The letter of Charles Geren, Sioux interpreter at Ft. Laramie (published in the Annual Report), states that 119 Arapahoes arrived at the fort; but it is evident from the rest of his letter that 119 lodges was intended. Both clothing and tents of the Northern Arapahoes were sadly worn.

Chap. 7 Land Pressure and Sporadic Warfare, 1868-1874.

The Treaty of 1868 brought an uneasy peace. Whites were barred from the unceded lands which the red men retained as hunting grounds, and the Government tried to confine the Indians as far as practicable to their reservations. The Interior Department regarded the treaty as an expedient only, and looked hopefully toward the day when the buffalo would be gone, each Indian cultivated his individual allotment of land, and the broad prairies, emancipated from their hold, would be settled by the whites.

Determined efforts to dispossess the Indians of their remaining useful lands marked the period. With the completion of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1869 steel rails united the nation from coast to coast. Immigrants and household goods could now be moved across the plains in a few days time, in contrast to the former wagon trains which consumed weeks of travel through dust and mud, under conditions of extreme privation. With the thousands of settlers which the railroad brought into the West came scores of buffalo hunters, many drawn to the prairies solely for the thrill of shooting the huge bovines, whose speedy extinction was now assured. During a single summer a party of sixteen killed 28,000 buffalo.¹

¹ Congressional Record, Forty-third Congress, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1874, p. 2106.

While such unregulated slaughter rapidly forced the Indians to depend upon Government rations for their subsistence, no one has recorded their reaction at this wanton waste when the stench of millions of pounds of the decaying flesh of these animals reached their nostrils.

In Wyoming, such towns as Cheyenne, Laramie, Rawlins and others which had sprung up during the railroad's westward progress were assured of permanence. They also offered convenient jumping-off places for prospectors, miners and others interested in the natural resources of the region, whether they were on or off the Indian lands.

With the influx of population accompanying the opening of the railroad and its efficient service from the east, the Federal Government created Wyoming Territory, with its capital in Cheyenne. This afforded a ready instrument through which miners, stock raisers and other pressure groups could work; and they were not slow to make their wishes known.² A ready ally was at hand in the person of Territorial Governor J. A. Campbell, regional ex-officio Superintendent of Indian Affairs, for he championed the settlers' interests from the first. In his inaugural address to the legislature (1869)

² Op. cit. Dale, pp. 100-102. Founded in 1873, the Wyoming Stock Growers' Association soon became the most powerful pressure group in the area, and influenced Wyoming's Legislature very strongly. Within a few years it extended its operations into Colorado, Nebraska, Montana and the Dakotas.

he argued that each Indian should be allotted sufficient land to support himself with proper cultivation, but no more. The remainder should go to the whites.³ The result, of course, was further pressure on the Indian lands, which seemed never to relax; and the Indians felt the relentless squeeze.

Although Red Cloud gained his ends in the Powder River Wars, his braves had learned to appreciate the deadly effects of howitzers and breech-loading rifles in the hands of trained soldiers, and probably would be loath to face them again. With the transcontinental railroad running, capable of moving troops and munitions readily to convenient disembarking points, the prospect of armed resistance by the Indians seemed remote. To ensure astute behavior on their part, and to protect the settlers and their investments, five new forts were garrisoned in Wyoming, four of them close to the railroad. From these troops could proceed handily into Indian territory if needed.

Although the Northern Arapahoes felt the pinch of the times on their lands and game, they endeavored to retain peaceful relations with the whites. In an attempt to further such an effort, they separated from their Sioux friends and made two trips to meet with their traditional enemies, the Shoshones, to arrange a peace and obtain the right to stay on

3 Op. cit. Cheyenne Leader, Oct. 13, 1869. The Governor suggested no restriction on the amount of land a white man might hold.

the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. The second of these trips was a journey of nearly 700 miles from a temporary encampment on the Musselshell in Montana. When their hopes for peace in their new home ended with a burst of violence against them, they refrained from the bloody vengeance which was within their power to wreak on a group of ruffian miners who were seeking to exterminate them.⁴ Leaving the Wind River region, they returned to Montana for a time, where the pressures of conflict were less obvious.

During this period, they had slight association with the Sioux malcontents, that is, with the followers of Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull. In 1873, when they finally spent most of the year at Red Cloud Agency, their agent complimented their good behavior.⁵ Although the pressures of the time and their reluctance to abandon traditional ways brought them into conflict with Federal troops in 1874, few of the charges made against them during this period can be substantiated. They held generally to a path of peace in their relations with the whites.

Of the unceded Indian territory in the region three sections were especially coveted, the gold tracts of Wyoming's Sweetwater district, the Black Hills of South Dakota and

⁴ Op. cit. Nickerson, p. 3. They set out, says Nickerson, to annihilate the Arapahoes.

⁵ Op. cit. Annual Report, 1873, p. 612.

northeastern Wyoming, and the Big Horn-Powder River country west of them, purportedly rich in soil and minerals. In 1872, after two years of dickering, the Federal Government purchased the Sweetwater gold lands from the Shoshones, thus finally legalizing the presence of mines, stamp mills for crushing ore, homes and the entire town of Miner's Delight on land guaranteed to the Eastern Shoshones in 1868. This foothold gained, the pioneers demanded the opening of the Wind River and Pope Agie Valleys to settlement, arguing that fresh vegetables for the miners should be produced on the arable land.⁶ But the Shoshones would not surrender these rights.

Eastward in the territory stockmen south of the North Platte looked covetously across the river, as though straining at the leash to enter the cattlemen's paradise from which the Treaty of 1868 excluded them. Stung by the apparent unreasonableness of a decree which elevated Indian hunting rights above their grazing privileges, they pressed the Territorial Legislature and Congress for a change.

Representing a variety of interests, in 1870 the newly-formed Big Horn Association determined to explore the soil and mineral resources of northern Wyoming, despite the treaty and Government red tape which excluded them from the land they

⁶ The Pope Agie (pronounced Popesia), near Lander, Wyoming, is a tributary of the Wind River. The latter becomes the Big Horn between Shoshone and Thermopolis, flowing north to discharge into the Yellowstone in Montana.

longed to use.⁷ Eventually with the permission if not the blessing of Washington, an expedition left Cheyenne in May, explored the Big Horns, met with no open opposition from the Indians, and though it found no gold, returned in August with optimistic reports.⁸

In 1872 Governor Campbell hopefully reported that Wyoming's Indians, or "non-producing savages", would be removed to a reservation in Dakota, thus freeing 20,000 square miles of incalculably valuable land for the stockmen, farmers and miners of Wyoming Territory.⁹ A year later he confidently predicted the early expulsion of all Indians except the peaceful Shoshones (friends of the whites) from the territory.¹⁰ Shortly after, a Government Commission met with Sioux, Northern Arapahoes and Northern Cheyennes at Red Cloud Agency in Nebraska, but failed in an effort to persuade them to relinquish their treaty rights in the Big Horns.¹¹

In direct violation of the Treaty of 1868, and over the protests of the Indians, General Custer in 1874 led a military party to the Black Hills to make a rough survey of their re-

7 Op. cit. Cheyenne Leader, March 3, 1870.

8 Ibid., August 23, 1870.

9 House Journal of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Wyoming, Cheyenne, Daily Leader Office, 1872, p. 16.

10 Ibid., 1873, pp. 25-26.

11 Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1873, p. 157.

sources. Lack of open hostilities from the Indians during this and the earlier Big Horn expedition led to the premature conclusion that Indian dependency on the coffee, bacon and beans issued at the agencies had broken their will to resist, and that large-scale hostilities were a thing of the past. Francis A. Walker, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, endorsed the widely credited opinion that the alternative of war for the Indians had run its course, and added that any hostile "savages" would be readily crushed by troops moving north and south respectively from the Union Pacific and Northern Pacific Railroads.¹²

In 1872 Federal troops moved into five forts in Wyoming, ostensibly to protect the Union Pacific Railroad, but especially to prevent the Indians north of it from taking unauthorized leave of their reservations.¹³ The attempt to thus curtail their roaming habits, it was hoped, would render them more amenable to civilization, and give the settlers greater safety from their depredations.¹⁴ Advocating a somewhat sterner policy the Wyoming press suggested that the red men be warned to remain on limited reservations or be shot on sight.¹⁵ The whites, it added candidly, needed their immense unceded tract of land in the Big Horn-Powder River area.

12 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1872, p. 397.

13 Ibid., p. 79.

14 Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1875, pp. 5-6.

15 Op. cit. Cheyenne Leader, Jan. 27, 1874.

Once the buffalo were exterminated the Indians would be forced to depend upon the Government rations issued at the agencies. With only lesser game to hunt there would be little need of roaming in the Big Horns, still less in the valley of the far-off Smoky Hill River in Kansas, where the Sioux and Northern Arapahoes and Cheyennes retained the right to roam and hunt so long as there were enough buffalo to justify the chase. The tribesmen could then be confined to smaller reservations, and the frontiers of settlement even further extended. These were the main criteria by which Secretary of the Interior Columbus Delano judged the success of Indian policy. Under his direction the Interior Department winked at the terrible slaughter of buffalo for hides, tallow, tongues, and just for the joy of killing. Thousands of tons of buffalo meat rotted on the plains. Justifying the prospect of their total disappearance, Delano pointed out in 1872 that only the total elimination of buffalo could force the Indians to cultivate the land. To Delano, this was a highly desirable goal. Due largely to his opposition, a bill designed to halt the useless slaughter of buffalo (H. R. 921) met defeat in the House of Representatives in 1874. The Indians, it was argued,

¹⁶ Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1872, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1873, p. 3. The extension of western railways was another criterion which pleased him.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. vi.

¹⁸ Op. cit. Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1872, pp. 123-131.

could not be confined to restricted reservations until the last buffalo had vanished from the prairie.

From 1870 to 1875 a large number of delegations from the various plains tribes visited Washington and other eastern cities at Government expense. Advocating this cheap means of convincing its wards that war on the whites was futile, the Indian Bureau expressed its pleasure with the apparent results.¹⁹ To impress the Indians with the desirability of the white man's way of life, they attired them in the style of the day, complete with silk hats, black suits and paper collars.²⁰ But though they visited the zoo in New York, The Academy of Music in Philadelphia, and other places of note, they invariably looked forward to the end of their trip.²¹ They yearned for their own societies and their homes in the West.

A somewhat sinister facet of the trips to Washington was the pressure applied on chiefs and headmen to give up additional land and accept restricted reservations for their bands. A group of Northern Arapahoes and Cheyennes was subjected to such pressure in 1873. The Indian Bureau wished them to remove to Indian Territory, to join their southern brethren. Although the Indians strongly opposed the plan the bureaucrats insisted, and eventually several chiefs yielded to the pressure

19 Op. cit. Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1872, pp. 123-131.

20 Loc. cit.

21 Loc. cit.

and gave their consent. Washington officialdom had begun to realize that agreement could be more readily obtained from the Indians in small groups than in a tribal assembly. Once this lesson was learned it was not forgotten.

The technique of congregating many thousands of Indians within a limited territory was foreshadowed by the treaties of 1866 with the Five Civilized Tribes in Indian Territory, the Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Seminoles.²³ Yielding unwillingly to Government demands, these tribes were forced to break up their tribally owned lands, accept individual allotments for themselves, and allow other Indians to settle within their reservations. Five years later the Indian Bureau recognized the situation as a golden opportunity to start the wild Indians of the plains definitely and painlessly upon the road to civilization. Settled on the land, owning individual plots of ground, the Arapaho and the Apache would learn from the successfully agricultural Cherokee and Choctaw, for example, the advantages of farming over the nomadic mode of life.²⁴ Thus the plains Indian problem would be finally solved -- and the lands over which they roamed would be released to the whites.²⁵

22 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1874, p. 46.

23 Ibid., 1871, p. 466.

24 Ibid., p. 467.

25 John Collier, Indians of the Americas, New York, the New American Library, 1947, pp. 125-129. Collier shows that of nearly 4½ million acres of Cherokee tribal lands, individually allotted against their will, nine tenths was lost to whites within 20 years.

By 1871 Americans had gained little understanding or appreciation of the Indian way of life. Few indeed had knowledge of its finer side, and the phases which caught the public eye were difficult to comprehend. The red man's attitude toward enemies of his own race was of this kind. Although Custer's slaughter of Southern Arapahoes and Cheyennes on the Washita (Oklahoma) in 1868 made little stir, the whites were plainly shocked at the massacre of Pawnee buffalo hunters by Sioux who were similarly engaged in 1873. The Indian Commissioner asked Congress to revoke the latter's right to hunt off their reservation, while on his own authority it was temporarily suspended.²⁶ Moreover, he requested military commanders to prevent Indians from passing without a permit²⁷ from one reservation to another.

Although increasing pressure on their lands forced the Indians into a greater realization of tribal unity than they had formerly known, bands of diverse sizes occasionally reverted to independent action. Shortly after the Treaty of 1868, for example, a few Northern Arapahoes and two Sioux villages joined Southern Cheyennes in battling Federal troops in Colorado, while nearby kinsmen abstained from hostilities, and others, in their Wyoming hunting grounds, were far away from the

26 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1873, p. 376.

27 Loc. cit.

28
fighting.

The doctrine of individual land allotments, so dear to those who wished to raise the Indians from a "barbarian herd" to the status of civilization, made little headway with the red men, who in their attitude toward land ownership, as in so many respects, clung tenaciously to their traditional customs.²⁹ Sioux, Arapahoes and Cheyennes on the Red Cloud Reservation in Nebraska, who accepted individual allotments in 1874 found themselves stuck with barren soil, worthless for farming.³⁰ The climate was too dry, and irrigation impracticable.³¹ Their fellows, unfavorably impressed with this example, were loath to follow the white man's path.

Due to their numerical strength and their power in war the Sioux were the Indians most dreaded by the whites. Red Cloud, the uncompromising leader of the warring tribesmen from 1866 to 1868, by the 1870s exerted a restraining influence among his people. But the names of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse ranked high among the malcontents. Depredations by and dangers from the Sioux made front page news. Numerous items, both true and false, published in the western

28 Op. cit. Grinnell, pp. 279-281.

29 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1873, p. 372.

30 Ibid., 1877, p. 415.

31 Ibid., p. 459.

press, testify to the importance of their impact upon the frontiersman's mind. And well they might. Custer in 1873 fought Sioux along the Yellowstone River in Montana.³² A group of wild ones, so-called, new to the Red Cloud Agency and its ways, arrested its agent, surrounded and immobilized a contingent of soldiers summoned to his aid, and precipitated a serious situation. Some 700 regular agency Indians, probably Sioux, Cheyennes and Northern Arapahoes, rescued both agent and troops, thus averting possible tragedy.³³

Unidentified Indians often were called Sioux, and when depredations occurred this tribe most frequently received the blame. Their unexpected appearance near the settlements produced forebodings of trouble among the whites. In 1874 the erroneous report of a band of Sioux on Horse Creek, north of Cheyenne sent shivers of apprehension through the town.³⁴ But relief ensued when the Indians were identified as Cheyennes and Arapahoes, only forty strong, heavily laden with dried meat after a successful buffalo hunt in the Republican valley.³⁵

A news report of February, 1874, attributed most of the plunderings of the past six or seven years to the northern bands of Sioux.³⁶ Before the end of that year Sitting Bull and

32 Op. cit. Cheyenne Leader, Feb. 18, 1873.

33 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1874, p. 45.

34 Op. cit. Cheyenne Leader, Feb. 18, 1874.

35 Ibid., Feb. 19, 1874.

36 Ibid., Feb. 6, 1874.

Crazy Horse had recruited from these and other bands a considerable following of braves who, like themselves, mistrusted the white man's intentions. Resenting his constant pressure to part them from their lands, they regarded him as a prime usurper. Determined as they were to resist further encroachment, it was, perhaps, more accident than planned intent which postponed their great outbreak until 1876.

Some historians insist that the Northern Arapahoes also engaged in sporadic warfare against the whites in the bitter years from 1868-1874, except for Friday who vainly counseled peace.³⁷ Although this evaluation is generally accepted, it is not the entire truth. There is reason to believe, indeed, that the Northern Arapahoes as a whole were less responsive to the belligerency of their Sioux and Cheyenne friends than at any time since the Civil War period, when two-thirds of the tribe abstained from hostilities against the whites.

After the signing of the Treaty of 1868, 119 lodges of Northern Arapahoes -- some 700 souls -- went south with Black Bear to visit their kinsmen. Finding their Cheyenne friends embroiled with United States troops, a few Arapahoes and two Sioux villages joined them for a while, the Arapahoes desisting after the defeat of General Forsythe in the Beecher Island fight (eastern Colorado).³⁸ It is not recorded whether Black

37 Op. cit., Hafen and Ghent, Broken Hand, p. 278.

38 Op. cit., Grinnell, pp. 279-281.

Bear was implicated in the fighting, but the bulk of those who had come south with him remained at peace, as also did those who had stayed in the north with Medicine Man and Friday.

Black Coal, though frequently portrayed as anti-white, in 1869 assisted Federal troops from Ft. Fetterman in picking up the trail of marauding Indians who had killed two whites on La Prele Creek, near the present town of Douglas, Wyoming.³⁹ Coincidentally Medicine Man, Friday and a number of other Arapahoes were en route to Ft. Bridger (southwestern Wyoming) to make peace with Chief Washakie of the Shoshones and gain the chance of staying on the Wind River (or Shoshone) Reservation. But as the Shoshones were in the Big Horns on their autumn buffalo hunt, the Arapahoes returned to Ft. Fetterman.⁴⁰ They left word at Ft. Bridger that they would return in three months time.⁴¹ Suspicious when he learned their object, Washakie wondered why the Arapahoes now wished to dissociate themselves from their Sioux and Cheyenne allies; but he thought better of the plan when he learned of Friday's connection with it.⁴²

True to their word, the Arapahoes returned in February, 1870, and concluded terms for a temporary stay on the Shoshone Reservation. They agreed to maintain friendly

³⁹ Op. cit., Cheyenne Leader, Nov. 8, 1869. The marauders were said to be Sioux.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Nov. 12, 1869.

⁴¹ Loc. cit.

⁴² Op. cit. Annual Report, 1869, p. 274.

relations with the Shoshones and the whites, and to notify them of the coming of northern hostiles. Thus they began their stay on the reservation, a stay which endured less than two months, and ended in an outburst of violence in which eleven Arapahoes were killed.

Historians generally accept the thesis that the Arapahoes were insincere, that they intended neither to keep the friendly relations which they promised, nor to notify Shoshones and whites of impending hostile raids. The resultant ill feeling and blood-letting is attributed to Arapaho treachery. The examination of a number of facts, however, casts grave doubt upon this conclusion.

A possible explanation of why the Arapahoes sought harbor on the Shoshone Reservation may be found in the report of Agent Daniels that they did not like to remain at Red Cloud Agency because the Sioux were apt to cause them trouble.⁴³ He had, he added, found them well-disposed and quiet.

When they failed to find Chief Washakie at Ft. Bridger in the fall of 1869, Medicine Man, Friday and the greater part of the tribe set out for the Milk River Reservation in Montana, where their Gros Ventres relatives and Crow enemies were domiciled. They left behind the Sioux and Cheyennes, who had been more deeply embroiled in hostilities than they. One

⁴³ Ibid., 1872, p. 651.

hundred and sixty lodges, upwards of 900 Arapahoes, were reported on the way; ten lodges reached the agency. But when smallpox struck, wiping out most of the advance guard, the main camp moved back to the Musselshell in alarm.

February saw them again in Wyoming, still determined on peace. They found and negotiated with Washakie, and hopefully encamped on the Shoshone Reservation. Depredations occurred, and though these were by no means new to the Sweetwater settlements, the Arapahoes were suspected. Stolen horses reported in their camp afforded an indication of guilt accepted by the settlers as proof, despite the fact that similar identification of stolen stock had proved faulty on various occasions. When on the 31st of March a raid resulted in the loss of more horses and three hunter's lives, the miners acted quickly. Nearby army officers from Ft. Stambaugh blamed Cheyennes and Sioux, but the settlers held the Arapahoes accountable, though the latter denied all knowledge of the affair.⁴⁵ Convinced that they had "undisputable" evidence of Arapaho guilt,⁴⁶ 250 armed civilians headed for their camp.

Of what the evidence consisted there is great confusion. Bancroft indicates that H. G. Nickerson, who spied on the Arapaho camp, found enough in it to verify a verdict of guilt,

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1870, p. 201.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 176.

⁴⁶ Ibid. cit. This is quoted from the report of Governor Campbell of Wyoming Territory.

but gives no clue to what he saw.⁴⁷ The South Pass News cited the presence in Friday's camp of harness taken from St. Mary's Station on the Sweetwater, where the three hunters were murdered.⁴⁸ But Nickerson's own version of his spying trip readily leads to the conclusion that the Arapahoes were judged guilty by conjecture only.

As Friday was indebted to him for a former act of kindness, Nickerson went directly to his camp, set somewhat apart from the main group headed by Medicine Man. This assured him of protection from the other Arapahoes who correctly surmised that he had come to spy.⁴⁹ Fearing for his own life, he seems not to have realized that they may have been equally fearful. He saw no stolen horses, no harness from St. Mary's Station nor other manifestations of guilt; but he learned that many young braves had gone over on the Sweetwater -- for a buffalo hunt they said. Not until his return home did Nickerson learn of the St. Mary's killings, which occurred on that day. Thereupon, he and others, putting the coincidences together,⁵⁰ convinced themselves of Arapaho guilt. On such flimsy evidence the Arapahoes were condemned, and vengeance planned against them. The idea that hungry Indians would leave camp

⁴⁷ Op. cit. Bancroft, p. 767.

⁴⁸ Op. cit. Cheyenne Leader, April 21, 1870. The South Pass News of April 11 is quoted by the Leader.

⁴⁹ Op. cit. Nickerson, "The Early History of Fremont County",

⁵⁰ Loc. cit.

for such a sensible purpose as hunting buffalo evidently seemed preposterous.

On their way to clean out the Arapaho camp, the armed band of vigilantes raised for this purpose met Chief Black Bear and an unarmed group of mixed sex and age, on their way to Camp Augur to trade. Firing upon them they killed Black Bear and ten others, and continued on their way toward the main body of the tribe.⁵¹

When dusk fell the vigilantes halted for the night, building great campfires for their light and heat. Thus exposed they were easy marks for Indian vengeance; yet only a few Arapahoes came near, and shot into the blazing fires, which were then extinguished.⁵² The Indians did no more.

In their grief and burning anger only a powerful influence for peace could have withheld the young braves, as it did, from violent retaliation. Whether this was exerted by Medicine Man, Friday, the elders of the Hierarchy, or all of them, no records indicate. Convinced that they were the victims of white treachery and Shoshone duplicity, the Arapahoes left the region, most of them heading for Montana and the Milk River Agency.⁵³

51 A young boy from Black Bear's party was adopted by an army officer and educated in the east. Under the name of Sherman Coolidge he returned to Wyoming in 1884 as a missionary to his people.

52 Op. cit. Nickerson, "The Early History of Fremont County," p. 4.

53 Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, Washington, Govt. Printing Office 1873. p. 83. Friday

It should be borne in mind that the Arapahoes were legally on the Shoshone Reservation at this time, having approached Governor Campbell of Wyoming Territory and Chief Washakie of the Eastern Shoshones, making a treaty with the latter which granted them the right of temporary residence on Shoshone land. But the vigilantes were trespassers living illegally on Indian soil and extracting gold to which they had no right. The town of Miner's Delight itself had been built about a mile and a half within the southern boundary of the reservation.⁵⁴

Although he felt that the effect of the vigilantes' lesson to the Indians had been salutary, Governor Campbell of Wyoming Territory showed doubt of Arapaho complicity in the St. Mary's slaying when he stated that there was "no means of ascertaining" it.⁵⁵ Lieutenant G. M. Fleming, agent to the Shoshones, went far beyond this, for he bitterly assailed the vigilantes' actions in firing upon Black Bear's party, and depicted them as thieves and cutthroats.⁵⁶ The Commander at nearby Camp Augur, he alleged, could readily have prevented

told Commissioner Brunot that the Shoshones had aided the whites in the Black Bear episode. Of what this aid consisted is not indicated.

⁵⁴ Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1872, p. 51.

⁵⁵ House Journal of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Wyoming, Cheyenne, N. A. Baker, 1870, p. 15.

⁵⁶ Op. cit. Annual Report, 1870, p. 176.

their murderous action. But instead, Fleming charged, he condoned their deed with tacit approval.⁵⁷

Though used to violence in their mining towns, Sweetwater residents were quick to hold the Indians accountable for outrages which could not be traced to their own brawls.⁵⁸ Results of this attitude were sometimes tragic, sometimes ludicrous. Distrust and fear of Indians were ever-present factors, accented by the common practice of prejudging the aborigines. How many of the purported Indian atrocities may have been precipitated by miners in pursuit of summary justice is an open question. When a hunter remained too long afield a punitive expedition against the red men was in the wind. If he turned up unmolested before Indians were located, the vigilantes disbanded, and tragedy was averted.⁵⁹ But it did not always work out this way.

In 1872 Michael Henan's murder in the Popo Agie Valley put the settlers' nerves on edge. Blamed at first upon Arapahoes, it was probably the work of white horse thieves; but the effect was just the same.⁶⁰ The next day, while the

57 Ibid., p. 179.

58 Street fights were common. The leader of the vigilantes who murdered Black Bear was later killed in one. Coutant (op. cit. p. 666) lists five fatal brawls in one year.

59 Such an incident is related by James Chisholm in South Pass 1868, Lincoln, Univ. of Nebraska, 1960, pp. 148-149.

60 Op. cit. Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1872, pp. 112-113. The murderers left imprints of high heeled boots, indicating that they were whites or Mexicans, possibly accompanied by a few Indians.

search for the murderers was under way, two hunters disappeared, and their horses supposedly were indentified in Indian hands. Here, it seemed, was conclusive evidence that the Indians had murdered them. A hail of bullets spattered about the "guilty" braves, but they escaped unharmed, with the allegedly stolen horses. Two parties, independently organized, set out in pursuit; and one, mistaking the other for the hostile Indians, fired upon it, continuing to shoot for a considerable length of time before discovering its error.⁶¹ Terrorized South Pass residents who heard the firing sent word to nearby Ft. Stambaugh of 300 rampaging Arapaho and Cheyenne warriors, requesting all available troops and a howitzer to repel them.⁶² Meanwhile the two "murdered" hunters rode safely into town on their own horses, having seen no Indians! Miraculously, no one, neither white nor Indian, had been killed nor wounded.

Such incidents as this in the Sweetwater region cast much doubt upon the validity of the charges against the Arapahoes.

One hundred miles away at Rawlins Springs, near the town of Rawlins and the Union Pacific Railroad, four young Arapahoes lost their lives in a brush with a Sheriff's posse in 1873.

⁶¹ Op. cit. Nickerson, "The Early History of Fremont County", pp. 4-5.

⁶² Op. cit. Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, pp. 112-113.

The Indians, allegedly out to raid the Utes, were charged with shooting a white boy and stealing his horses. Denying both accusations, they claimed they were attacked by the posse and their horses taken without reason. An investigating committee headed by Territorial Governor Campbell, after hearing both sides exonerated the whites and declared the Indians guilty.⁶³ A study of the Governor's report, however, indicates that the decision may have been reached before the hearings were held. The commission, he reported, accepted the sworn testimony of the whites rather than the story told by the Indians, as their "proverbial disregard for truth"⁶⁴ made it "of little worth".

Other sources to which little attention has been paid also cast doubt upon the verdict of Arapaho guilt. Colonel John E. Smith, Commandant at Ft. Laramie, said he dissuaded all but twenty of a large group of Arapahoes from going to Rawlins Springs to bury the four young men, as he feared they would avenge themselves on an equal number of whites.⁶⁵ The possible punishment of those who had perpetrated the outrage against the Indians caused him no worry, but he

63 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1873, p. 251.

64 Loc. cit. The Arapahoes were also accused of violating the Treaty of 1868 by their presence south of the Platte. But as the river flows nearly due north at this point, the Indians were west of it rather than south.

65 "Indian Troubles", Annals of Wyoming, January, 1933, p. 757. This is from Smith's letter to his superior officer in Omaha, Nebraska.

feared that Indian vengeance might be wreaked on innocent people.⁶⁶ In like vein the Board of Indian Commissioners, after a visit to Red Cloud Agency, wrote tersely of the "unjustifiable murder" of peaceable Indians near Rawlins.⁶⁷ In spite of their official condemnation by Governor Campbell's investigating committee Arapaho guilt at Rawlins Springs was not a proven fact.

While seeking to avoid collisions with the whites, the Arapahoes vented their rage for Black Bear's death upon the Shoshones, whom they accused of complicity in his murder. In a raid in 1871 they killed a Shoshone boy, leaving coup sticks behind as identifiable evidence of their revenge.⁶⁸ This represented an example of traditional Indian warfare, a game of risk in which a man's prestige was based upon his skill at counting coup (touching an enemy with a coup stick), taking scalps or stealing horses, and getting away unharmed. This was a game which the whites could never understand. Charged with another raid in 1873, in which two white women in the Popo Agie valley lost their lives, the Arapahoes denied the accusation. Friday contended that they had been in the vicinity only once since Black Bear's death, the time the

⁶⁶ Loc. cit.

⁶⁷ Op. cit. Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1873, p. 26.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 83. The facts of the raid were reported by Friday; and the coup sticks were found where it had occurred.

Shoshone boy was killed. It seems unlikely that he withheld the truth in this, for on the same occasion he volunteered the information that a small party of Arapahoes, Cheyennes and Sioux, out to steal horses from the Crows, had killed a white man in western Montana.⁶⁹ Evidently unconvinced in the Pope Agie valley case, Brunot of the Board of Indian Commissioners attributed the women's slaying to friends of the young Arapahoes killed at Rawlins Springs.⁷⁰ But the Wyoming press and the Bureau of Indian Affairs blamed it on the Sioux,⁷¹ naming Red Cloud's son-in-law as one of the principals.

Neither Arapaho innocence nor guilt can be definitely established in the Pope Agie valley murders, yet two significant facts should be noted. First, the raiders on this occasion left no coup sticks behind, unlike the traditionalist Arapahoes in their incursion against the Shoshones. Second, Nickerson, who was in the vicinity when the murders occurred, does not implicate the Arapahoes in his description of the case, even though he had little use for this tribe of Indians. These facts give support to the claim of Arapaho innocence made by Friday, who enjoys a reputation of veracity.

With the death of Chief Medicine Man in the winter of 1871-1872, the Arapahoes lost one of their strongest influences for peace. Black Coal, as his successor, was loath to embroil

69 Ibid., p. 26.

70 Loc. cit.

71 Op. cit. Cheyenne Leader, August 15, 1873, and Annual Report, 1873, p. 612.

himself in difficulties with the whites, but felt no such compunctions about the Shoshones. By 1873 his raids against them were of common occurrence. Discomfiting and counting coup upon them may have been Black Coal's objectives. Although he broke down the banks of their newly-constructed irrigation ditches, and threatened the workers in the field, the Government farmer who worked with the Shoshones reported no casualties. The troops, under orders to shoot only in self defense, found no need to resort to fire-arms.⁷² Indeed, the field workers feared the ever-present rattlesnakes as a greater menace than the Arapahoes.⁷³

In 1874 Captain Bates of the United States Army set out to end Black Coal's depredations. With a small command of soldiers and Shoshones he met the Arapahoes about forty miles east of Thermopolis, Wyoming. Forty to fifty Arapaho braves were killed, and although they made a courageous stand, when the soldiers withdrew they did not attempt to follow.⁷⁴ With 1100 people or less in the Northern Arapaho tribe at this time, the loss would be cruelly felt, sufficient reason, probably, for not pressing the battle further. It may be, in addition, that the Indians had as little understanding or stomach for the white man's manner of warfare as he did for theirs. Whatever the reason, Black Coal's raids were

72 Op. cit. David, p. 257.

73 Ibid., p. 265.

74 Op. cit., Cheyenne Leader, August 5, 1874. This was the Bates Battle of July 4, 1874. Various sources report from 400 to 3000 Indians engaged, although the entire Northern Arapaho tribe could muster less than 400 fighting men at this time.

over. Except for seven individuals at the time of the Custer debacle in 1876, the Northern Arapahoes never again fought United States troops.

Pressure on the Indian lands characterized the period from 1868 to 1874 to a greater extent than in earlier years. As more natural resources came to public attention in the West, growing numbers of settlers looked upon the Indians as an impediment to progress, which must somehow be removed. Suspecting the red men frequently of thievery and treachery, the whites often judged and acted too hastily, thus laying themselves open to similar charges. Sometimes stolen horses allegedly indentified in Indian hands, merely resembled horses known to belong to whites. Though settlers occasionally attacked Indians to forestall suspected duplicity, the latter often had equally valid reasons for fearing them.

The biased reports of Indian activities in Wyoming's press indicate a perspective shared by many rough frontiersmen of the area. More than mere grim humor prompted a journalist writing of a skirmish near South Pass to say that no whites "fortunately" nor Indians "unfortunately" were killed.⁷⁵ And only a careful perusal of a column captioned "The Indian Murders at Ft. Laramie" would reveal that two⁷⁶ of the three principals in the killing were white men.

⁷⁵ Ibid., July 6, 1869.

⁷⁶ Ibid., Jan. 13, 1873.

Such reporting of Indian news typifies the times, and makes it extremely difficult to ferret out the facts from a morass of sensational journalism.

Despite some lapses the peace force among the Northern Arapaho^s was still in evidence from 1868 to 1874. Small groups aided their age-long Cheyenne friends against Federal troops in 1868, but most of the tribe refrained from warlike actions. With the shock of Black Bear's killing in 1870, the force was badly strained, but did not break, for the vigilantes responsible for his death were not wiped out, though it was within the Arapaho^s' power to do so. Even after death removed Medicine Man's strong influence for peace, they were unwilling to war against the whites. They must have realized that the settlers were the real source of many Arapaho sorrows, yet under Black Coal's leadership they vented their spite upon their Shoshone enemies. These could share, at least, an understanding of the Indian mode of warfare, which the whites could not. Yet it was the forays against the Shoshones which led to their final clash with the United States troops, in the Bates Battle mentioned above (page 128). Earlier in the period only individuals and small groups had participated in hostilities against the whites, but it is likely that a large proportion of the tribe, with the exception, perhaps, of Friday's band, engaged the soldiers at this time, in the battle which permanently ended Black

Coal's belligerent role.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ There is no documentary evidence that Friday ever fought the whites. Yet, if he was with Black Coal when Captain Bates attacked, he may have had no other choice.

Chap. 8 The Second Sioux War and the Loss of Tribal Lands, 1874-1878.

When would the magnificent unceded Indian lands, especially the mineral-rich Black Hills and Big Horns, fall into the awaiting hands of the whites? That was the great question in the minds of western settlers from 1874 to 1876. Certain they were that despite impeding treaty provisions and definite Indian opposition, they would obtain them. Barred from both areas by the Treaty of 1868, they had violated its restrictive clauses with few important repercussions. In the autumn of 1874, after General Custer's reconnaissance party returned from its illegal incursion into the Black Hills, a group of miners went in, sank twenty-five prospect holes, and reported pay-gold in all of them.¹ Others flocked in, until President Grant, perhaps better aware of Indian agitation than the man in the street, ordered General Crook to the region to drive the prospectors out, and forestall possible dire consequences.² None-the-less, interested people formed mining companies, and hundreds more headed for the Black Hills. Cheyenne, Wyoming, with the advantages of a jumping-off point, tingled with excitement as outfitters prepared to share the wealth which others might gain.³

1 Op. cit. Bancroft, p. 774.

2 Martin F. Schmitt (ed.), General Crook, His Autobiography, Norman, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1946 (new edition, 1960), pp. 188-189.

3 Op. cit. Bancroft, p. 775.

Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes, approached by a Special Commission in 1874, adamantly refused to relinquish their rights in the Big Horn-Powder River region.⁴ Indeed, the Indians' unfavorable response to the proposal convinced the commission that more would be lost than gained by pressing the matter, except for Chris C. Cox, who insisted that the Big Horns were of little value to the Indians, and recommended abrogating the "obstructive" provisions of the treaty (those barring whites from the desired Indian lands), thus opening the Big Horn area to settlement.⁵ Citing the agricultural and mineralogical potential of the uncaded territory, he contended that in fairness to the people of Wyoming it should be settled by a "white, enterprising population" -- not by Indians.⁶

Nor was Cox alone in this opinion. Upon his inauguration in 1875, Governor Thayer of Wyoming Territory decried the occupation of the Big Horns and Black Hills by "wild Indians" who would neither cultivate the soil nor develop its mineral wealth.⁷ Upon his urging the Legislative Assembly adopted a resolution requesting Congress to remove the unwanted Indians from the territory, reviling them in the bitter terms of uncompromising racists (see Chap. 1, p. 17).

4 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1874, p. 87.

5 Ibid., p. 90.

6 Loc. cit.

7 Op. cit. House Journal of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Wyoming, 1875, pp. 35-36.

Across the border in Nebraska, Agent Saville of the Red Cloud Reservation, which serviced Sioux, Northern Arapahoes and Cheyennes, urged the speedy destruction of game in Wyoming's hunting lands, thus freeing them for white settlement. If this could not be arranged by treaty it should be accomplished by force.⁸ Only in this way could hostile Indian bands be sufficiently pauperized to bring them permanently to the agencies.

The Black Hills of western South Dakota and northeastern Wyoming were peculiarly fitted to the needs of Indians in transition from a hunting to a herding and agricultural economy.⁹ With grasslands, forests, soil and water resources, they left little to be desired. The Indian Bureau frankly admitted the probability that no other land available to the Government for the use of the Indians was at all comparable in this respect.¹⁰ Nothing seemed more logical than retaining these lands for Indian usage and development, and expending every reasonable effort to start them on their way to self-support in an area which Sioux, Arapahoes and Cheyennes already held in common, as they had for many generations. But the land was rich in gold, so some means must be found to dispossess the aborigines and obtain it for the whites. The mineral rights were not enough. Since miners had to eat, the agricultural potential

8 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1875, p. 753.

9 Ibid. p. 8.

10 Loc. cit.

of the adjacent countryside must also be controlled and developed by the whites.¹¹ If the Indians were to become herdsmen and farmers as the bureaucrats insisted, they would have to go elsewhere to do so.

In 1875 another Special Commission met at Red Cloud Reservation with the representatives of the Northern Cheyennes and Arapahoes, and the various bands of Sioux, who comprised a tribe of many thousands, with single bands sometimes much larger than the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes combined. The commission made an offer of \$6,000,000 to procure the Black Hills for the Government of the United States, but the Indians turned it down, as they valued the land at a much higher figure.¹² Countering with a request for \$60 to \$70 million, they asked that the money be put away at interest, on which they would live well.¹³ Although the Indian Bureau for years had stressed the desirability of winning their wards to the ways of the whites, this indication of business acuity was poorly received by the commissioners, however admirable it might have appeared in an eastern financier. They disgustedly reported that no worthwhile agreement could be successfully concluded in Indian country by means of a grand council of chiefs in the presence of a large body of Indians.¹⁴ The deal

11 Loc. cit.

12 Ibid., p. 190.

13 Ibid., p. 198.

14 Ibid., p. 199.

was dropped; but Indian agitation over these recurring attempts to part them from their choicest possessions did not disappear.

Officials of the Indian Bureau noted with apparent satisfaction the impunity with which soldiers, prospectors and others violated various provisions of the Treaty of 1868 (as already cited), and voiced the opinion that another general Indian war could never occur. Conflicting tribal interests, they reasoned, rendered unified action impossible, and the advancing settlements rapidly filled up the country between the tribes, thus further dividing them.¹⁵ Custer's penetration of the Black Hills had brought no violent repercussions from the Indians; and the military camps near Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Agencies, surrounded by Indians outnumbering the troops ten or twenty to one, remained, to all appearances, in perfect safety.¹⁶ The peace policy, originated in 1868, seemed fully justified. Results indicated the wisdom of feeding and parleying with the "unreasoning savage", and convincing him that the Government wished only for his welfare, but could also compel him to submit to law.¹⁷ Seeming success bred smug assurance.

Few realized the extent to which the success of the peace policy depended upon the tolerance of the Indian population,

¹⁵ Ibid., 1874, p. 4.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 5. The two agencies were only 40 miles apart.

¹⁷ Loc. cit.

nor that a breaking point might soon be reached. Yet for those who cared to see, the signs were there. Minneconjous, Sans Arc, Uncpapas, and other so-called wild bands of Sioux, new to Red Cloud Agency, in 1874 resisted attempts to count them for the issuing of rations, arrested the agent, and surrounded the contingent of soldiers called to his aid, holding them helpless until some seven-hundred regular agency Indians interceded, and freed the captives.¹⁸ Although not obstreperous at this time, the regulars, who had been reporting to the agency for years, were far less content to sit down to the enjoyment of their issues of coffee, sugar and beef than the Washington bureaucrats could realize.¹⁹ In 1875 an investigation of corruption and inefficiency at Red Cloud Agency disclosed shocking conditions, and real distress among the Indians.²⁰ Sioux, Northern Arapahoes and Northern Cheyennes who were called upon to testify brought these to light. The Ogallala Chief Red Cloud, demanding the agent's removal, made serious charges, many of which were substantiated by the investigating commission. The testimony of the Arapaho Chief Black Coal, and the Cheyenne Chief Little Wolf -- largely verified by others -- while somewhat milder than that of Red

18 Ibid., p. 45.

19 Indian Commissioner E. P. Smith had optimistically prophesied that the Indians would not risk the loss of such agency comforts for a campaign against the whites. (Op. cit. Annual Report, 1874, p. 5.)

20 Red Cloud complained bitterly to Yale geologist O. C. Marsh, who had come west to collect fossils. Marsh contacted President Grant, who ordered an investigation.

Cloud, still portrayed a scandalous picture.

When Black Coal and his Northern Arapahoes had arrived at Red Cloud Agency from their Wyoming hunting grounds, they were very low on food, clothing and tent materials. Although it was winter, many lacked covering for their lodge poles, as the hides had worn out, and since game was scarce they could not be replaced.²¹ Due to the transportation difficulties from Cheyenne, and the deep snows of a hard winter, the badly needed agency rations were in short supply. Nor were the rations satisfactory when available. Spoiled pork and mildewed coffee were not unusual; tobacco so strong it caused headaches and blankets too short for a tall man to use were regular issues.²² Agent Saville could not have been responsible for all of these conditions; few if any were unique to his agency. But serious charges had been made against him, and the commissioners were there to investigate. His Indian census seemed markedly high, a tempting and lucrative practice at various agencies, for an overshipment of goods and rations (assigned to the agencies on a population basis) could be profitably disposed of by an agent and his friends. Saville had, for example, recorded 1535 Northern Arapahoes, a perfectly ridiculous figure when it is realized that there were less than two-thirds of that

²¹ Op. cit. Report of the Special Commission to Investigate the Affairs of the Red Cloud Agency, p. 449.

²² Ibid., p. 375. This was a part of Black Coal's testimony, translated by Friday. Little Wolf spoke in a similar vein.

number to move to the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming from 1878 to 1880.²³ Although they did not prove him guilty of corrupt practices, the commissioners concurred in a verdict of inefficiency, and Saville was removed from office.²⁴

The Indian Bureau was soon to realize the prematurity of its conclusions that the agency Indians were too content with their dependency on Government rations to give serious thought to the warpath as a means of improving their lot. Many of the regulars, acquainted with agency ways for years past, despite the sugar, mildewed coffee, spoiled pork and strong tobacco issued to them, responded to Sitting Bull's challenge and prepared to resist the whites. Hundreds of Sioux from various bands, and scores of Cheyennes, both Northern and Southern,²⁵ deserted the agencies to cast their lot with the hostiles. Shortly before the assault on Custer in the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876, a tiny contingent of Northern Arapahoes, seven braves, according to Grinnell, offered their services to the Sioux.²⁶ The latter, suspecting them of spying for the soldiers, insisted that they camp apart until they could make sure of them.²⁷

²³ Op. cit. Annual Report, 1875, p. 752.

²⁴ Repercussions in Washington led to the resignation of Columbus Delano as Secretary of the Interior.

²⁵ Op. cit. Vestal, p. 143. Vestal states that a fair number of Arapahoes answered the call, but in this he evidently is misinformed, for authorities who had wider acquaintance with the Indians participating differ markedly with him in this respect. See Grinnell, op. cit. p. 347, James McLaughlin, My Friend the Indian, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1910,

The Sioux Chiefs Red Cloud and Spotted Tail stood for peace, apparently realizing the power of the whites and the futility of making a stand against them. Spotted Tail worked particularly to end the belligerencies. Visiting camp after camp he urged the hostiles to surrender, until the last large²⁸ band gave up in August, 1877.

Custer's debacle on the Little Big Horn in 1876 stimulated to even greater efforts the advocates of the policy of concentrating the western Indians on a few large reservations. As usual when ulterior motives are important, they offered ample justification for the proposal. Secretary of the Interior Chandler estimated a saving to the Government of \$100,000 annually in transportation costs alone on Indian supplies; moreover, he was sure that the control and teaching²⁹ of the aborigines would thereby be greatly enhanced. Further rationalization depicted the replacement of tribal custom by United States' law and court jurisdiction, and affording the Indians greater protection through the power of Government in life, liberty and character, thus identifying them legally

p. 130, and E. S. Godfrey, The Field Diary of Edward Settle Godfrey, Portland, Champøeg Press, 1957, p. 347.

26 Op. cit. Grinnell, p. 347.

27 Op. cit. Godfrey, p. 69.

28 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1877, pp. 412-413.

29 Op. cit. Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1876, pp. v and vi.

with the white citizenry.³⁰ Yet with such good reasons readily available, the actual purpose behind the policy occasionally found its way into print. A recommendation to Congress in 1878 requested that body to reduce the number of reservations not only for the benefit of the Indians, through the resultant civilizing influences, but also as a means of freeing the bulk of their lands for white occupancy.³¹

Under the constant prodding of miners, stockmen, and agriculturalists who longed for the red men's lands, the Indian Office had for a number of years brought pressure to bear upon the Northern Cheyennes and Arapahoes to join their southern relatives in Indian Territory. It mattered not that both groups opposed the plan.³² The Northern Arapaho Chief Black Coal epitomized their feelings in stating that God had given them the land in the north; they had all been born there; they liked it and had no desire to go south.³³ To compel agreement to the move in 1874, their agent at Red Cloud was instructed to withhold their annual issue of food and goods until their transfer south.³⁴ As the Indians remained adamant,³⁵ the use of troops was planned to ensure their removal.

30 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1876, p. 388.

31 Ibid., 1878, pp. 440-442.

32 Ibid., 1874, p. 46.

33 Op. cit. Report of the Special Commission to Investigate the Affairs of Red Cloud Agency, p. 376.

34 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1874, p. 11.

35 Ibid., p. 97.

In 1876 similar coercive measures were applied to those peaceable Sioux who remained at Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Agencies. A Special Commission at this time persuaded them to consider transference to Indian Territory, and an Act of Congress forbade any appropriation for their subsistence until they agreed to relinquish all lands outside their permanent reservations, including, of course, the invaluable Black Hills which they jointly held with the Northern Cheyennes and the Northern Arapahoes.³⁶ Disarmed as the Indians were, under the surveillance of troops, with scant opportunity for subsistence in their hunting grounds, it required no stroke of genius for a commission, avoiding a grand council of chiefs in the presence of their people, and other mistakes of the previous year, to travel from agency to agency -- seven in all -- and obtain the assent of the headmen of each group to the cession of their beloved lands.³⁷ The Government in return agreed to furnish subsistence to the Indians until they could become self-supporting. Although twelve bands of Sioux and the Northern Arapahoes and Cheyennes were included in the compact, the many hundreds still counted as hostiles had no voice whatever in the matter.

36 Ibid., 1876, p. 333.

37 Ibid., p. 336. The unsuccessful Commission of 1875, it may be recalled, blamed their failure on the fact that they had met with an assembly of chiefs in the presence of a large body of their fellows.

The Second Sioux War caused postponement of the transfer of Northern Arapahoos and Cheyennes to the south. Now with belligerencies ended, the Indian Office revived its efforts to remove them and the Sioux to Indian Territory, where, it was planned, the three tribes, so long together, would at last be separated. Although they were loath to leave the north, the Ogallala and Brule bands of Sioux yielded to bureaucratic pressure, and sent delegates to Indian Territory to examine potential locations for their bands. But a cry of protest arose in the House and Senate of the United States, where the lawmakers expressed their dread of the powerful Sioux in an interesting way. Fearing that the presence of this mighty tribe might ruin the chance for peace among both reds and whites within the general vicinity, they forbade by Act of Congress the removal of any portion of the Sioux to Indian Territory.³⁸ Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Agencies were transferred instead to South Dakota, within which state most of the Sioux today reside on six reservations.

Much against their will the Northern Cheyennes were forced to go to Indian Territory, where many of them sickened, as was "always the case" with northern Indians.³⁹ In 1878, Dull

³⁸ Op. cit. Congressional Record, Forty-fourth Congress, Second Session, 1877, pp. 1617 and 1736.

³⁹ Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1879, Washington, Govt. Printing Office, 1880, p. 84.

Knife's band of about 300, disheartened by their situation,⁴⁰ broke away from the unwanted surroundings and headed north. After weeks of eluding United States troops, about half the band was captured and taken to Ft. Robinson, Nebraska, as prisoners of war. In a vain effort to force their return to Indian Territory, food, water and fuel were withheld from them in the dead of winter, until, in a desperate break for freedom, all were killed. The other half of the band, somewhat more fortunate, succeeded in reaching their Sioux friends. They were ultimately given a reservation on the Tongue River in southern Montana; and there they still remain.

The Arapahoes, in a final recognition of their loyalty -- as will be shown below -- were permitted to remain in Wyoming. During the period from 1874 to 1878, characterized by the alienation of Indian lands and the spilling of blood, their peaceful relation with the United States Government was practically unimpeachable, and stands in sharp contrast to the belligerency of hundreds of their Sioux and Cheyenne friends. Great numbers of the former cast their lot with Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, while many of the Cheyennes quietly slipped away from Red Cloud Agency in small groups for the same purpose. But when General Reynolds started in

40 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1878, p. 445.

pursuit of Sitting Bull's braves in the late winter of 1876, the Northern Arapahoes, determined to stay out of trouble, moved from the vicinity of Ft. Fetterman (near Douglas, Wyoming), into Red Cloud Agency in Nebraska.⁴¹ Overbalancing the seven Arapahoes who fought Custer's men in the Battle of the Little Big Horn, twenty-five accompanied General Crook⁴² as scouts in his campaign against the Sioux and Cheyennes. After Custer's defeat they were probably instrumental in disarming their own brethren and other non-hostiles, as the rounds of four agencies were made by the troops for this purpose -- a precautionary measure -- and Red Cloud, where the Arapaho tribe remained, fell to the lot of General Crook.

When Crook left Ft. Fetterman in November, 1876, in pursuit of Crazy Horse's braves, the Arapaho and other Indian scouts were assigned to General McKenzie to assist him in tracking down Chief Dull Knife's band of Northern Cheyennes. Indeed, the presence of many Sioux and Cheyennes, in addition to the Arapahoes in McKenzie's forces, caused grave concern in a mission such as this.⁴³ But the misgivings proved unfounded; the service of the Indian scouts, and particularly that of the Arapaho Chief Sharp Nose, proved invaluable to McKenzie

41 Op. cit. Cheyenne Leader, Mar. 2, 1876.

42 Loc. cit.

43 Ibid., Jan. 20, 1877.

in his surprise attack on Dull Knife's Cheyenne village during a bitter winter night in Wyoming's Big Horns.⁴⁴ This debacle set the stage for their surrender later in the spring.

Through their final years of association with the Sioux and Cheyennes at Red Cloud Agency, despite unsatisfactory treaty issues of food and goods, despite the usurpation of their lands, and despite the last desperate effort of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse to change the course of plains Indian history, the Northern Arapahoes kept peace with the Government of the United States. Although many hundreds of Sioux and Cheyennes were drawn into the conflict, the Arapahoes, as their agent stated, remained loyal, almost to the man.⁴⁵

The peaceable disposition of the Northern Arapahoes finally gained official recognition. Fearful of their projected move to the south now that peace had returned to the plains, a delegation journeyed to Washington with the earnest plea that they be permitted to reside on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, rather than making the dreaded transfer to Indian Territory, and in cognizance of their abstinence from hostilities against the United States, the President granted their request.⁴⁶ The Shoshones, who occupied the Wind River Reservation, consented also, and in August, 1878,

⁴⁴ Loc. cit. Sharp Nose was at this time second in importance to Black Coal among the Northern Arapahoes.

⁴⁵ Op. cit. Annual Report, 1877, p. 415.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

900 Northern Arapahoes arrived for permanent residence.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1879, pp. 166 and 224. The Annual Report of 1877 gave the Northern Arapaho census as 1100 souls, perhaps a little high. Two or three small bands may have been hunting or visiting elsewhere at the time of the transfer to Wyoming, and moved later to the Reservation, for it is known that somewhat more than 900 eventually arrived.

Chap. 9 The End of the Trail, 1879.

Conceived by President Fillmore in 1849, the Indian peace policy produced the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1851, with the hopeful promise of a new era. Based upon the supposition that kindness and fair-dealing would win the faith of the Indians for the United States Government, its advocates expected them to abandon their nomadic life and rapidly replace it with the white man's civilization, whose advantages, they felt, would be speedily recognized and accepted. As the red men became dependent upon annual issues of food, clothing and other necessities, they would be amenable to the will of the Government. Three main obstacles, unforeseen at the time, prevented the fruition of this hope, and brought the plains Indians to the end of the trail of their old, free life without equipping them for a successful adaptation to the challenges of an alien culture. These were the Indian policy of the Federal Government, public hostility toward the red men, and the love of the latter for their own institutions and traditions.

With little understanding of the people with whom they dealt, the Federal Government followed a policy which was consistent in only one respect -- the obliteration of Indianhood, the destruction of a culture. Beginning with the sincere intention of guiding the Indians through a transition period to self-support by agriculture, the best interests of the aborigines were soon lost to view as the clamor of settlers

for their land and resources resulted in pressure which the Federal Government could not withstand. As the more arable lands came under white control, the Indian Office made feeble attempts to teach its wards to farm, but under such unfavorable conditions of climate and soil that the efforts were usually foredoomed. Although the Indian Bureau recognized the Black Hills region as one of unusual excellence in which to develop a grazing industry among the aborigines, it spared no efforts to transfer its soil and invaluable resources to the settlers of the West. As with so many of their most useful lands, the Indians could not retain this area to help them on their way to self-support.

From 1868 to 1876 peace policy advocates claimed success in dealing with the Indians, but almost inevitably the whites, rather than the native bison hunters, enjoyed the benefits of this success. While bureaucrats spoke platitudes of the advantages accruing to the Indians from placement upon limited reservations, they pushed plans to transfer large tracts of their tribal holdings to the more enterprising race. Solemn treaty pledges often failed to materialize; schools promised to the Northern Arapahoes by the Treaty of 1868 appeared only after ten long years and another Indian war. A teacher arrived in the fall of 1878, followed finally by the opening¹ of classes in January, 1879.

1 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1879, pp. 166-167.

Of the irritants which fostered insecurity among the Indians and kept their nerves on edge, the role of the military in Government policy ranks high. Acknowledging its inefficacy in 1849, Congress transferred the Indian Bureau from the War Department to that of the Interior, yet this, unfortunately, did not sufficiently minimize its importance as an instrument of policy, a situation which the Indians understood and deeply resented.

In 1853, Thomas Fitzpatrick, a man respected for his fairness to the Indians, warned of their agitation over the presence of troops in their vicinity. Convinced that they destroyed timber, scared off game, excited hostile feelings, and afforded a rendezvous for worthless and trifling characters, the Indians felt uneasy in their proximity.² Twenty years later, on the basis of discussion with various tribal groups, Powell and Ingalls of the Board of Indian Commissioners reported that opposition to reservation life was based primarily upon Indian dread of the soldiers, whose very name synonomized evil. Social demoralization and venereal diseases followed in their wake. "We do not wish to give our women to the embrace of the soldiers," the Indians declared.³

As Commander of United States forces in the West, General Phil Sheridan only added to their fears when, in June, 1869,

2 Ibid., 1853, p. 362.

3 Ibid., 1873, p. 443.

he officially ordered that the Indians off the limits of their reservations should be under the exclusive jurisdiction of the military, and would usually be considered hostile.⁴ This he directed in spite of the rights, guaranteed to them by Treaty, to hunt and roam in various places off their reservations.

Whether in ignorance or disregard of Indian bitterness toward the military, when peace was restored in 1878 the House of Representatives approved a bill to return the Indian Bureau to the War Department. Indian reaction, as might well have been expected, was one of agitated and unqualified opposition.⁵ Fortunately the Senate held up the bill, pending study and investigation. It never became law.

In testifying before an investigating commission in 1875, Chief Black Coal of the Northern Arapahoes tersely expressed the feelings of the red men toward the military. He spoke as follows:

"We used to live first rate before the soldiers came to this country; when they came the first thing they did was to try to raise a war. We used to travel with the old mountaineers, but since the soldiers came to this country they have spoiled everything and want war.

I have heard something about changing the agent we have now. We don't want a military officer for an agent. We want a citizen, the same as we have now."⁶

⁴ Ibid., 1876, p. 340.

⁵ Ibid., 1878, pp. 9-10.

⁶ Op. cit. Report of the Special Commission to Investigate the Affairs of Red Cloud Agency, July, 1875, pp. 376-377. Friday interpreted for Black Coal.

As settlers and fortune-seekers flocked into the West, encroaching upon the Indian domain, public hostility toward the aborigines engendered constant pressure upon Congress and the Indian Bureau to alienate more lands from their nomadic owners. They greatly resented the legal bars which kept them from developing the resources which, they believed, the Indians would never put to proper use. Thus Indian treaties, in effect, were made only to be broken. Though often called finalities, they were frequently mere expediciencies; white civilization found them as barriers in the way, so they could not stand. As frequent and rapid changes occurred, the Indians were the victims of great injustices.⁷

With the end of the Indian war in 1877, the settlers rejoiced at the unfettering of the frontier, for, as the red men were shunted on to reservations the uncaded lands north of the Platte, where they had hunted and roamed, were thrown open to the stockmen. Freed at last from the legal restraints which had bound them, they now drove cattle and sheep across the river to graze on land which for years they had wistfully eyed.⁸ At this time the white population of Wyoming Territory

⁷ Op. cit. Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1877, p. ix. This observation was made by Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz.

⁸ R. E. Strayhorn, The Handbook of Wyoming and Guide to the Black Hills and Big Horn Regions, Chicago, Knight and Leonard, 1877, pp. 20-21.

had increased to 20,000 or more.⁹ The figure compares roughly to the number of friendly Indians reportedly served by the agencies of the region in 1876, who were now stripped of the bulk of their tribal lands by a more aggressive people.¹⁰

From the time of their final placement on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming in the fall of 1878, rumors of a planned uprising among the Northern Arapahoes abounded. Characterizing the stories as spurious, their agent added that many frontiersmen would be glad to see such an insurrection.¹¹ It would, of course, have afforded the desired excuse to force the Indians finally out of Wyoming, and turn over their reservation lands, with ranges for livestock and irrigation for agriculture, to the covetous whites.

Finally, the Indian way of life, coupled with the two obstacles already reviewed, comprised an almost insurmountable barrier to a smooth transition from the hunting to a grazing, agricultural, or industrial livelihood. With little appreciation for the Indian point of view, thousands of Americans, officials and laymen alike, expected him to abandon a culture which satisfied his social and emotional needs, and surrender the major part of his lands as well. Obviously, the period

9 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1878, p. 1182.

10 Op. cit. Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1876, p. 11.

11 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1881, p. 183.

anticipated for the adaptation proved too short; and even now, 115 years after the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1851, the transformation is incomplete. Justly proud of the faith of their fathers -- their own hereditary culture -- many Indians are not content to exist merely as dark-skinned white men.

Gone, of course, is the free hunting and roaming life of the olden time, to which the Indians clung until their game supply had shrunk dangerously, and they were penned up¹² on reservations so the whites could settle on their lands. But their lodges or sodalities, and the hierarchical structure of their society remained for many years. As recently as 1939¹³ it had not entirely disappeared. Even today the Northern Arapahoes hold their Offerings Lodge or Sun Dance -- a religious ceremony of tribal significance -- with annual regularity on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. Although the pre-reservation Arapahoes have passed away, and some changes have necessarily occurred, it remains Indian in all essentials, with its stress upon the necessities of life -- food, water, earth and sun. Those who enter it still do so

¹² Op. cit. Annual Report, 1878, p. 1184. In October, 1878, Governor John W. Hoyt of Wyoming Territory, regional Superintendent of Indian Affairs, gave this as the real reason for assigning Indians to reservations.

¹³ Op. cit. Murphy, personal notes.

by ceremonial vow, prepared for the ordeal of three and one-half days of rituals with neither food nor drink, under the¹⁴ hot July sun.

Despite the optimism for a comparatively painless transition period anticipated in 1851, the Northern Arapahoes, Northern Cheyennes and the great Sioux group found themselves confined on reservations in 1879, their nomadic mode of life essentially a thing of the past, but with little of a constructive nature to take its place, nor to inspire confidence for the future. Largely dependent upon the Government for the necessities of life, they were little more than started on the long, weary road which they must follow before the desired adaptations could be made.

During the period of dispossession between the first Ft. Laramie Treaty and their eventual confinement, the Northern Arapahoes generally displayed an attitude of peaceful intentions toward the United States Government. They remained aloof from the Sioux campaign of 1855 and the Cheyenne hostilities of 1857. Even after Chivington's treacherous attack on Southern Arapahoes and Cheyennes at Sand Creek, Colorado in 1864, an action which shattered the faith of most Indians in the white man's purposes, only Black Bear's band of Northern Arapahoes joined Sioux and Cheyennes

¹⁴ The 1930s and early 1940s saw the passing of the remnant of pre-reservation Arapahoes. Nakash (Sage), over 90 years of age, was among the last of these to go.

in their retaliatory depredations. Chiefs Friday and Medicine Man amply demonstrated their preference for peace. The former was first to respond to Governor Evans' offer of protection to friendly Indians who would report to designated points, and the latter moved the tribe's largest band from their hunting grounds to southern Wyoming in acceptance of the invitation, after the Sand Creek affair had sent more than a thousand braves upon the warpath.

When in 1865 Government troops carried the war into their hunting grounds, more Arapahoes than merely Black Bear's band probably became involved, as they felt themselves forced to fight. Unfortunately no records indicate whether Medicine Man's moderating influence prevailed upon 140 to 150 followers to keep the peace, although this many remained in the Big Horns with him when the known belligerents reported to Ft. Laramie to sign the Treaty of 1868, which ended the war. Friday's band stayed throughout this time in the Cache la Poudre in Colorado, many miles from the scene of battle.

In the distressing days of 1870, after the unjustified slaying of Black Bear and his unarmed party, the Northern Arapahoes refrained from violent retaliation against the whites, but left the Wind River region of Wyoming for the Milk River Agency in Montana.

Following the death of Medicine Man in the winter of 1871-1872, Black Coal, his successor as the major chief of the tribe, raided the Shoshones recurrently on their Wyoming

reservation, until stopped by United States troops in the Bates' Battle of 1874.¹⁵ This marked the end of armed conflict between the Northern Arapaho tribe and Government soldiers. Seven individuals only, joined the hostiles against Custer on the Little Big Horn, whereas twenty-five served as scouts under Generals Crook and McKenzie in the Second Sioux War.

After the Arapahoes were assigned to a reservation in Wyoming in 1878, Territorial Governor Hoyt visited them to investigate insidious rumors of insurrection which were common talk throughout the region. Consultations with members of their tribe, as well as the Shoshones, who shared the same reservation, convinced him that the fears were groundless,¹⁶ as he found evidence of only peaceful intentions among them. Their agent, also, was satisfied with their quiet, peaceable¹⁷ conduct. This characteristic was noted again in 1881, the year that Friday died, when they were described as friendly¹⁸ and peaceable "toward all mankind."

An incident which occurred about 1879 further substantiates this picture of the Northern Arapahoes as friendly and peaceable toward all. A small band of Shoshones,

15 The Arapahoes had charged the Shoshones with duplicity in Black Bear's death in 1870.

16 Op. cit. Annual Report, 1878, pp. 1182-1183.

17 Ibid., p. 651.

18 Ibid., 1881, p. 183.

having traveled all day through snow and wind in the Standing Rock region of the Dakotas, came at evening upon many tipis, where meat hung drying upon poles. Not knowing whether the Indians encamped there were friends or enemies, they took the chance that they might be given food. A hunting party of Arapahoes -- long their enemies -- made them welcome, divided them among their various tipis, filled their hungry stomachs with boiled buffalo meat, and lodged them for the night.¹⁹ Before the Shoshones moved on in the morning, the Arapahoes who had fed and lodged these traditional enemies, warned them in sign language to use great care in leaving, as many Sioux were camped to the northwest of them, and there²⁰ they might be far less welcome.

19 D. B. Shimkin, "Childhood and Development among the Wind River Shoshone," Anthropological Records, v. 5, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1943, p. 314. This incident was related by Pivo Brown, a Shoshone who lived until 1938.

20 Loc. cit.

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