Wounded Knee 1973: Forty Years Later

Papers of the Forty-Fourth Annual
DAKOTA CONFERENCE
A National Conference on the Northern Plains

THE CENTER FOR WESTERN STUDIES

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A National Conference on the Northern Plains

“Wounded Knee 1973: Forty Years Later”

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PREFACE

For the Forty-fourth Annual Dakota Conference, the Center for Western Studies observed the upcoming fortieth anniversary of the occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota. We did so in the larger context of the massacre at Wounded Knee by the U.S. Seventh Calvary on December 29, 1890. On that date, Miniconjou Lakota chief Spotted Elk (Big Foot), over 300 of his Ghost Dance followers, and 38 Hunkpapas were attacked at their encampment on the banks of Wounded Knee Creek on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Of the 230 Indian women and children and 120 men at the camp, at least 153 were counted dead and 44 wounded. Army casualties were 25 dead and 39 wounded.

Eighty-three years later, on February 27, 1973, 200 Oglala Lakota and American Indian Movement (AIM) supporters seized and occupied the village of Wounded Knee for 71 days in protest of a recent murder and long-held grievances against the BIA. They demanded an end to intimidation of AIM members and “traditionals” on the reservation. They demanded that treaties signed by the U.S. government be honored, especially the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty, which acknowledged Sioux claims to the Black Hills. The village was quickly surrounded by law-enforcement officials, and a siege ensued. Before it ended on May 5, the armed conflict claimed the lives of two AIM supporters. An FBI agent and a U.S. Marshall were wounded, and 1,200 people were arrested. Through the free and open exchange among all conference attendees, we considered the legacy of the occupation and the earlier massacre.

Many of the more than seventy presentations, however, did not result in a written format that could be included in this compilation. However, the talk by Russell Means in the Chapel of Reconciliation was recorded and is available on C-Span, and talks by several others were recorded by Indian Country TV and are available on YouTube. Many presentations were on topics unrelated to the theme of the conference, which is an option we welcome. Two sessions, in fact, discussed new books about the Great Plains in separate panel sessions: Remaking the Heartland: Middle America in the 1950s (Princeton University Press) and The Plains Political Tradition: Essays on South Dakota Political Culture (South Dakota State Historical Society Press).

Dedicated to examining contemporary issues in their historical and cultural contexts, the Dakota Conference is a signature event of the Center for Western Studies, which provides programming in Northern Plains Studies at Augustana College. In awarding a Challenge Grant in support of the Center’s endowment in 2008, the National Endowment for the Humanities cited the Dakota Conference, specifically, for its hallmark blending of academic and non-academic presentations.

Harry F. Thompson, Ph.D.
Executive Director
The Center for Western Studies
For most of ninety days during the winter of 1944, blizzard after blizzard, then floods and mud, closed roads in and around the ranching community of Opal in northeast Meade County of western South Dakota. Two country school teacher sisters—Margaret “Muggs” Swenson, twenty-eight, and Clarice Kay Swenson Weiss, twenty-three—captured details of the winter in letters as they shared resources, entertainment, and news with neighbors who were also “prisoners of the snow.” They also waited to hear word of Kay’s husband Glen as just before the first blizzard Kay had learned that his Air Force bombardier crew was missing in action in Germany. The sisters thrived in time of hardship, recording their stories to entertain themselves and to inform their sister Judy who lived in Kansas City, Missouri.

In April of that year Kay received official word that Glen was a prisoner of war in Germany. Kay taught another term at East Pine School waiting for Glen to return, which he did in June 1945, having spent seventeen months as a POW in northern Germany. In March of 1946 they purchased and moved to a farm one mile east of Colton in Minnehaha County where they farmed and raised sheep. Glen died in 1992 and Kay, now ninety-two continues to live on the farm. Kay is with us today to share her memories.

**Clarice Kay Swenson Weiss**

**Prairie Schoolteacher and Farmer**

Kay Swenson [Norwegian, Swede and Dane] was born in 1920 in Minnesota where the family farmed near Willmar and raised shorthorn cattle. After WWI, when she was four, they moved to Timber Lake in Dewey County, South Dakota off the Cheyenne Indian Reservation. Visitors included Black Fox and Bear Necklace. The land there was too sandy for farming so they looked for
more fertile land further southwest and rented one mile north of Faith where the children walked to
school. Then her grandmother died, leaving them some money, so they settle on Sulphur Creek
southwest of Faith in northeast Meade County in 1928. The first year they had a great alfalfa crop
that allowed them to purchase the land from a divorced couple at $10/acre. John and Hannah’s
family included four daughters; Kay, Margaret “Muggs,” Anna and Judy, and two sons; Harland and
Wally. Harland, a West Point graduate and military career man, was serving in Northern Ireland.
Wally lived in the bunkhouse at home during the war and his help was essential to the family
livelihood.

The Swenson’s first family home about eight miles southeast of Opal burned and her father
bought and moved another house onto their land. They were not able to sell the place later and the
Swenson Ranch Inc. remains in the family today and leased since 1946, now by a great-
granddaughter. The farm is located 40 miles from Faith and 60 miles from Sturgis. The railroad
going west stopped at Faith, but Highway 212 gave them access to Sturgis and the northern Black
Hills.

Glen Albert Weiss (6 May 1916-25 Feb 1992) and his family farmed and raised sheep some
16 miles north and west of Sulphur Creek on Fox Ridge Trail. His parents were Charles F. and
Elizabeth M. Ingalls Weiss. Glen had a sister Edith. He and Kay both graduated from Faith High
School where her sister, Margaret “Muggs” was a classmate of Glen. Kay spent one year at Black
Hills Teachers College and earned her teaching certificate with the help of waiting tables. Glen
spent two years at South Dakota School of Mines and then volunteered with the military because he
would be drafted. During his early enlistment he took an exam for the Air Force and entered the
Army Air Force in 1940 and became a bombardier on a B17. Before heading overseas, Glen and Kay
were married in 1942. In November 1943 she moved back to the Swenson home from Grand Island,
Nebraska as Glen had shipped out to a base camp in England.

Kay continued teaching in a country school and just before the 1944 blizzards started back
home, a telegram arrived stating that Second Lt. Glen was reported “missing in action” since 11
January. She said that the little kids in her schools kept her sane. Glen became a prisoner of war
and spent seventeen months in Camp Stalag 1 on the Baltic Sea at Barth, losing 30 pounds during
that time though he said that they were treated well for where they were. A church tower not far
away from the camp was etched in his memory. Glen was liberated by the Russians, returned to the
U.S. in June 1945 and flew to Minneapolis. Kay took a bus to meet him there and they traveled back
to western South Dakota to resume their lives.
Here they rented a place between their parents and took up farming for themselves and helping the folks. That December Glen’s father had he and his brother drive to eastern South Dakota to pick up ear corn for their sheep. While in Minnehaha County they saw an ad in the paper for a place for sale just east of Colton, offered by the Alfred Thompson Estate at $75/acre. In March 1946 they purchased the place and moved to northwest Minnehaha County, though Kay was upset that they were leaving their families. They started farming and raised sheep, and Glen’s father sent sheep to them to fatten. Following the war Nylon had become available and the wool market gradually went flat but the fertile soil east river sustained their farming operation. She did admit that they were closer to schools and conveniences of life.

Their daughter Margaret Marie was born 31 Jul 1946, followed by Elaine, Charlotte, Edith Ann and Joel Charles. Margaret became a meteorologist. Edith, an RN, is married and lives in St. Paul where she is trying to retire; their daughter is also an RN and works at Sanford in Sioux Falls. Joel and his wife live in Fargo and both are chiropractors. Elaine married Scott Hendrickson and they live near Kay east of Colton. Scott spent 22 years in the Air Force and is the house father while Elaine is City Officer at nearby Baltic. They have two children, Olivia and Jonas. Kay has ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Two neighbors lease her land.

Author Biographical Sketch

Loren H. Amundson is a native of Colton, Minnehaha County, South Dakota, and great-great-grandparents rest in five cemeteries in the county. Dr. Amundson is not new to writing and publishing. His long career in clinical family practice and academic family medicine saw him edit and publish medical quarterlies and over fifty peer-reviewed chapters and papers in referenced medical journals and books. He retired as professor emeritus of family medicine from the USD School of Medicine n 1996, having founded the department in 1974-75. In the waning years of the twentieth century, genealogy became a way of life for him. He completed publication of his six-book family history series, Norwegians, Swedes and More, in 2007. Since then he has produced several monographs for extended families, and in 2009 published a book, Huntimer, for the families who homesteaded this hamlet three miles north of his hometown. He has also been author or co-author of several Minnehaha County Historical Society Historical Markers. Loren and his wife Mavis volunteer weekly at the Sioux Valley Genealogical Society at the Old Courthouse Museum, and since January 2008 he has spent several hours week volunteering here in the Archives at the Center for Western Studies.
SOCIAL HISTORY IN A RURAL SOUTH DAKOTA TOWNSHIP CIRCA 1910

GRANT K ANDERSON

Summit Township, Lake County, South Dakota was settled in the late 1870s and 1880s predominately by first and second generation Norwegian Americans. Some came directly from the old country. Many others migrated from settlements in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. The lure of land drew these pioneers to northeast Lake County amidst the Great Dakota Boom. They claimed land under the Homestead and Timber Culture Acts and purchased additional acres from the government. It was the “...intention of many of the immigrants to acquire land and divide it among their children and make it a sort of family home locality (Hjmskead) like the old country,” observed rural sociologist John P. Johanson.

In 1879 township residents petitioned the U.S. government to provide a post office. By that year a small town began in Section 17, about 13 miles northeast of Madison. Five years later these Norwegian settlers met to organize the Prairie Queen Lutheran Church. A structure would eventually be built in the southeast quarter of Section 19, Summit Township. Services would be conducted in the familiar Norwegian tongue. This would become the center of an immigrant ethnic community so common in South Dakota of that period. The town of Prairie Queen was moved one-half mile north after the South Dakota Central Railway was built in 1907. Only the church remained in its original location.

Andrew E. Kittleson, a forty-six year old farmer in adjoining Nunda Township, would act as federal population census enumerator for Summit Township in 1910. He began his duties 26

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3 [www.smithzimmerman.dsu.edu/prairiequeen.asp](http://www.smithzimmerman.dsu.edu/prairiequeen.asp). This source contended Prairie Queen was the first all Norwegian settlement in Dakota Territory.
April at the John Davis residence and worked his way across the landscape. Kittleson finished his task 5 May when he recorded the John Johnson family. The record he produced offers a glimpse of life in this homogenous area at the start of the second decade of the 20th century.

He enrolled 495 township residents, 69 more than at the turn of the century. This 16% growth rate was slightly below all of Lake County’s decade increase of 17%. Only four of the county’s sixteen townships were more populated. Population density for Summit Township stood at 13.75, a mere one-quarter of one percent beneath the county standard. Females outnumbered males by 15, which was unusual as statewide there were 133 males per 100 South Dakota females.

Immigrants accounted for 24% of the township’s population. This was a 3% decrease from a decade earlier. First generation Norwegian Americans comprised 85% of the township’s foreign born. Another 166 residents were the offspring of two Norwegian immigrant parents whereas 39 more had a single Norwegian parent. Thus in 1910, 306 Summit Township residents, 62% of the total were either born in Norway or had at least one parent that was.

Enumerators asked foreign born residents, for the first time in 1910, the year in which they immigrated. Fifty-six of Summit’s 101 Norwegian residents had left their homeland in the 1870s or 1880s.

Sarah Opdahl, 69, departed Norway as a 12 year old in 1853. Marie Lee, 58, wife of Amund Lee, was three when she crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1865. Martin Albertson, 70, and Hans Albertson, 60, emigrated the following year. At the other end of the spectrum were the seventeen township residents who had arrived since 1900. Hilda, Mrs. Hans Johnson, was 31 when she immigrated in 1909. Two years before, Dorthea Gulstine, 29, crossed the Atlantic. Her Norwegian born husband, Stephan, reached South Dakota in 1906.

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6 All statistics for the 1900 population census were taken from Anderson, Grant K, “Immigration and Assimilation: A Case Study of South Dakota Settlers,” Blakely, H W, ed, The Karl E Mundt Foundation Historical & Educational Foundation, Series No. 7, 12th Dakota History Conference, April 10, 11, 12, 1980 Papers, (Dakota State College, Madison, South Dakota: 1981), 111-144.
7 These included Chester (552), LeRoy (498), Nunda (526), and Rutland (524). Abstract of 1910 Federal Population Census, op cite., 683.
8 IBID., 107.
9 IBID., 693. Lake County contained 699 residents born in Norway. 801 residents were native born with both parents born in Norway.
Native born Summit inhabitants increased by 17% between 1900 and 1910. Census returns show 265 residents were born in South Dakota. The other 30% of native born came from other states with Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota in the vanguard. Such a heavy concentration of native South Dakotans, 70% of the native born, was unusual in 1910. Statewide 47% of the native population was born in South Dakota and 53% in other states. “The wholly native[born] element, whose parents were both native [born], surpassed the first generation [children of immigrants] in number during the decade 1900—1910” in South Dakota.¹⁰ Summit Township was an exception with 19% of its population in the wholly native category.

Seven second generation South Dakotans appear in the population enumeration. These were the offspring of parents who themselves were born in Dakota Territory, indicating roots deeply established over several decades. Olai, 31, and his wife Belle, 30, Overskei, were themselves children of two Norwegian immigrant parents. The couple shared their home with their three South Dakota born children ages 3, 5, and 8 months.

Seventy-two Summit Township mothers bore 414 children of which 366 (88.4%) were alive in 1910. The representative township female had 5.75 children. Eight women gave birth to at least 10 offspring. Another 22 mothers, 30.6% of the total, had at least eight children.

Infant mortality numbers were high in rural South Dakota. Twenty seven of the 72 mothers, 37.5% of the total, lost at least one child according to the 1910 census. One unfortunate immigrant mother lost 40%, 6 out of 15, of her children by 1910 and another native Norwegian lost 33% (4 out of 12) of her offspring.

Nine township inhabitants bore at least 8 children all of which were alive in the census year. Mary Eggabrantan, a 64 year old Norwegian immigrant, was the most fortunate as all twelve of her children reached maturity. All nine of Ellan Davis, Julia Peterson Ida Elkstrum, and Helga Anderson’s offspring were alive when the census was taken.

The township was home to 82 residents five years and under. These youngsters made up 16.5% of the total population and were the most numerous age group. Youth prevailed in 1910 for nearly 1 in 2 of the entire township population was aged 19 and under. The figures

¹⁰Johanson, John P, Immigrants and Their Children in South Dakota, (Department of Rural Sociology, Bulletin 302, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota, May 1936), 5.
rises to 58% when those 24 and under are included. Such a population distribution spoke well for the area’s future growth and stability.

Seventy-four percent of township children aged 6 thru 14 had attended school within the past year. Statewide 82.8% of rural children were enrolled in school. Thirteen area children did not attend school according to the 1910 census.11

Adult males, vital to a healthy rural economy, made up 24% of township inhabitants. This was 4% below the county standard for males 21 and over, and below the ratio of 30.5% for the entire state of South Dakota.12

A handful of Summit Township members would today be labeled senior citizens. Twenty-nine were aged sixty and above with 8 in their seventies. Lars Gauthun, 88, and his wife Borgilde, 86, were among only 4% of the entire American population age 85 and over.13 The couple had both exceeded their average life expectancies of 45 and 48 respectively when they left Norway in 1887 bound for Dakota Territory.14 They lived out their retirement years at both their daughters’ Summit Township homes. Lars would die in 1910 and Borgilde in 1912. Neither learned English or became American citizens.

Among the 43 Norwegian immigrant heads-of-household living in Summit Township in 1910, 23 were naturalized citizens. Sixteen provided no citizenship information to the census enumerator. Four declared themselves as aliens—Thomas Lone who emigrated in 1861, Ivan Burg (1873), Stephen Gulstine (1906) and Carl Anderson (1883). Records indicate the latter filed a Declaration of Intent to become an American citizen 5 March 1888 with the District Court for Lake County in Madison. No record shows he ever completed the process.15

First and second generation Norwegian Americans found a knowledge of English essential to conduct business and educate their children. “Even though they often prized their

12 Ibid., 107.
14 The Norwegian life expectancies were for people born 1821—1830. Statistiks Sentrulbyri, www.rhd.unit.no.koding/encodedcensus.htm.
15 Declaration of Intent, dated 5 November 1888. Clerk of Courts, Lake County Court House, Madison, South Dakota. The citizenship of foreign born whites in Lake County, 1910, Naturalized, 56.5%; Having First Papers, 7.2%; Alien, 3.2%; Unknown, 32.8%. Abstract of the 1910 Federal Population Census, op. cite., 707.
ethic culture, they learned English rapidly and adapted quickly to social and political behavior,” found Frederick C. Luebke in his “Ethnic Group Settlement on the Great Plains.” This largely explains why only 2.4% of Summit Township people listed Norwegian as their language spoken although their Prairie Queen Lutheran Church conducted services exclusively in Norwegian well into the 1920s.

Six of the twelve residents who listed Norwegian as their spoken tongue were aged 60 and above. They immigrated to the United States between 1868 and 1880. The most recent arrival, 33 year old Dorthea Gulstine left Norway in 1907. A year earlier the Anton Sanbral family crossed the Atlantic. These four, ages 5 to 35, along with Gulstine, had not been in their adopted land long enough to be fluent in English.

From available data one is able to get a picture of rural life in 1910. The representative Summit Township dwelling contained a 45.3 year old husband, and a 41.4 year old wife that had been married 16.8 years. They had 3.4 children under the age of eighteen living at home. Thirty-eight percent of the residences contained grown children, most of whom listed their occupation as farm laborer. Eighteen of the 87 households contained extended family members, hired men and/or servants. They comprised 21% of township households, down from 33% the previous decade. Seven households were headed by females, all widows between 45 and 76. Six residences housed only two people. Albert Stephenson, a single 24-year-old male, was the only Summit resident to live alone.

Conversely, several homes must have been cramped as they sheltered double-digit numbers. Peter Mohr, a 49-year-old German immigrant farmer and his 49-year-old German born wife Katie, shared their home with their twelve children ranging in age from 5 months to

18 William Morris Peterson of Chicago addressed area voters on campaign issues from the Republican perspective 11 May 1910. His presentation was delivered entirely in Norwegian. Madison Daily Sentinel 7 October 1910, 3.
19 Across South Dakota the average number of persons per dwelling was 4.6 and the average number per family was 4.5 in 1910. Abstract of the 1910 Federal Population Census, op cit., 694.
19 South Dakota contained 127,739 dwellings in 1910. IBID.
25 years. Neighbor Carl Anderson’s farm was home to 13 including Mrs. Anderson’s parents who were in their eighties. Interestingly the census taker listed them as boarders, not relatives. Other households that contained ten or more residents included Charles Berg (12), Leland Gilman (11), Thomas Peterson (10) and John Davis (10).

They were among the 92% of township heads of household whose occupation was farming.20 Eight heads of household listed other occupations—three of them being carpenters. Milly Albertson’s profession as a music professor was the most unique in a rural township.

Summit farm numbers rose by eleven over the previous decade. This 8% increase exceeded the 6% growth rate for all of Lake County. Farms contained an additional 3055 county acres than at the turn of the century. Improved acres, those cultivated, increased by 26,584 during the same period. Ninety-one percent of all Lake County farm land was improved in 1910 compared to 60.8% statewide.

Data for individual farms was collected in a federal agricultural census of 1910. Unfortunately, these enumeration schedules were not preserved. Township and specific farmer data is therefore not available. What remains are statistics for county and state levels only. We are left to deduce township conditions by studying county information.

A new century brought growth and prosperity to the agrarian economy. Across South Dakota the value of all farm land increased 377.1% between 1900 and 1910.21 An acre statewide was valued at $34.69, whereas those located in Lake County were valued at $50.75 by decade’s end.22

Government statisticians observed “Unlike the older states, South Dakota shows for the past decade a greater relative increase in number of farms than in population. The number of

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20 Ostergen, Robert C, “European Settlement and Ethnicity Patterns on the Agricultural Development of South Dakota,” South Dakota History, Volume 1 and 2, Spring/Summer 1983, 58-59. The immigrant farmer lived in two worlds—a social and cultural world based on continuity with the past and an economic world that was alien but essential.

21 Durand, E Dunn, ed., Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910 Volume VII, Agriculture, 1910 and 1910, Reports by States, With Statistics for Counties, Nebraska—Wyoming, (Government Printing Office, Washington DC: 1913) 520. The value of South Dakota farm buildings increased 231.3% and implements and machinery by 176.5% over the same period.

22 ibid., 521.
farms increasing by 47.6 percent and the population by 45.4 percent. The acreage in farms increased 36.4% and acreage of improved land 40.2 percent.” However, “the average size of farms decreased from 362.4 to 335.1 acres in the same time span,” with 60.8% improved. Lake County trailed the state figures with an average 294.6 acres per farm but the percent of improved land was time and a half that of the state.

The Census Bureau calculated “the average value of a South Dakota farm, including its equipment, at $15,018, of which $12,945 represents the value of land and buildings, $1639 the value of livestock and $435 the value of implements and machinery.” Lake County figures surpassed each of these with a total average farm value of $21,209.43. A typical Lake County farm’s land provided 79.2% of its worth whereas buildings accounted for 9.8%. Another 8.3% came from domestic animals and poultry while implements and machinery added 2.6%. The value of all county farms increased 219.5% between 1900 and 1910. Rising prices for land and all commodities fueled this growth.

Livestock valued at $1764.29 were raised on the 98% of Lake County farms reporting domestic animals. Receipts per farm from sale of animals were $453.43 plus an additional $65.88 in animals slaughtered for home use. The typical county farm owned 17.5 head of cattle, 6 of which were dairy cattle. The latter was worth $31.11 per head. Total number of cows, especially dairy cows, increased materially during the decade. Per farm value of dairy products, excluding home use of milk and cream, amounted to $120.25 yearly.

As a power source horses were essential to rural life. Lake County averaged nine per farm, with eight classified as mature. Each was valued at $120.30, nearly two and one-half times the amount reported in 1900.

Poultry provided a food source as well as farm income. Wives and children tended a hundred chickens that roamed the average county farm. Receipts from the sale of poultry and eggs per farm were $102.97. Twenty-seven swine, valued at $8.79 each, could also be found.

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23 *IBID.*, 524.
24 *IBID*. The average value of land and buildings statewide was $38.63 per acre, or more than three and a third times as much as in 1900. The Census Bureau calculated, unlike toe older states, South Dakota showed for the last decade a greater relative increase in the number of farms than in the population. Farms increased by 47.6% between 1900 and 1910 while the state’s population increased 45.4%
25 *IBID.*, 525.
26 *IBID.*, 528.
Figures for crops obtained for the 1910 census relate to the activities of the calendar year 1909. The “...general character of South Dakota agriculture is indicated by the fact that four-fifths (78.8 percent) of the total value of crops in 1909 were contributed by cereals, 12.1 percent by hay and forage,” concluded the government study. Lake County surpassed the state norm for cereal value with 87%. However it lagged behind hay and forage at 7.4%.

Barley was the cereal of choice as 27% of Lake County’s tilled acres were devoted to it followed by 20% for corn. Oats at 18%, hay 17%, and wheat, 14%, rounded out the principal crops. Corn yields exceeded state averages by 2.7 bushels per acre, wheat produced at almost the state average of 14.3 bushels, oats yielded about half the norm, and barley fell a few bushels short. Hay also outpaced state yields.

Corn was the most profitable crop for Lake County farmers. It generated an average value per acre of $14.25, or $1 above the statewide standard. Barley’s popularity did not translate in maximum profit. The cereal generated $8.67 value per acre or $1.09 less than the state value. Oats returned a mere $6.52 per acre, far less than the $10.29 state average.

More emphasis on corn production carried with it concerns about quality seed. Summit Township farmers could attend a farmer’s institute held at the Opera House in Madison March 22 and 23, 1910. Superintendent A. C. Chamberlin felt it “almost necessary that all farmers of Lake County attend...” In a letter to the Madison Daily Leader he proclaimed “…the seed corn situation in the state is probably the most serious it has ever been.” Chamberlin encouraged attendance at the institute to receive “…instruction on methods of testing...even if the seed corn the farmer has at hand will only test 40 or 50 per cent of good germinating ears.” They would serve the farmer better “than to buy seed he knows little or nothing about,” reasoned the Superintendent. Newspaper accounts suggest the meeting was well attended.

Republican Governor Robert S. Vessey encouraged the “…careful following of modern scientific methods...to secure a magnificent corn yield far surpassing any previous year.”

27 IBID., 532. The total value of crops in 1909 was 184.1% greater than in 1899.
28 IBID., 533. Statewide the acreage of corn was 223% as great as in 1889 both absolute and the relative gain during the decade just ended, was greater than during the preceding one. The increase in oats acreage was similar to corn.
29 Madison Daily Leader, 9 March 1910, 3.
30 IBID., 11 February 1910, 3.
proclaimed statewide seed corn selection days for early fall 1910. Vessey urgently “requested all of our farmers go into their fields on September 9 and 10 and carefully ... select the best ears for seed for the coming year.”

No record was discovered as to how well Summit farmers followed his proclamation.

In South Dakota in 1910, 61.8% of farms were owned free and 38.2% carried mortgage debt. Owned free farms decreased by one and one-half percent since the century began. Mortgaged farmland increased 7.5% over the same span.

Almost a third of Lake County farmers reported mortgage debt in 1910. Their average farm value was $17,531.79 and the average debt load represented 29.5% of the value of their land and buildings. Across the state mortgage indebtedness amounted to 21.2% of the value of a 1910 farm, down from 38.6% in 1890. Data regarding amount of farm mortgage debt was not obtained in 1900.

In Summit Township the number of farms owned free increased 17% in the first decade of the 20th century. Actual numbers show seven more farms were owned free than in 1900. One quarter of the township farms carried mortgage debt in 1910. This represents a 10% increase for the decade. Greatest shift in Summit Township farms were those that were rented. The figure decreased 18% from the 1900 mark. This category fell from 32 Summit farms in 1900 to 19 by 1910. Across South Dakota the opposite was true as “…throughout the 20 year period (1890-1910) the number of ...tenants has been increasing at a somewhat more rapid rate than the number of farmers who own their farms,” concluded government researchers.

Even with this increase, in South Dakota “the proportion of farms operated by tenants for the state as a whole is about two-thirds the proportion for the entire country,” figures revealed. Share tenants were more frequent than cash rent tenants.

The year 1910 was known for unusual weather patterns. Summit Township found itself in the “grip of the worst winter storm of the season,” in early January. A newspaper account pointed out “the oldest inhabitants refer to the fact that the big winter of 1881 did not begin until the first week in January and with the first storm that year there was not nearly as much

31 IBID, 23 August 1910, 3.
32 1910 Agricultural Census, op cite. 525.
33 IBID, 526.
snow on the ground “as by 4 January 1910.34 Two nights later the mercury dipped to -24 degrees below zero.35

Late February began fifty plus days of “glorious summer weather.”36 Madison recorded a high of 72 on March 18. Farmers were picking corn left in fields by the previous early winter weather. Plowing and harrowing was underway “…more than a month before the usual season.”37 A hard freeze occurred April 11. The weather continued erratic with below average rain featuring localized showers “…in one neighborhood while the adjacent territory suffered from drought”.38 Below average crop yields resulted.

Many attributed the bizarre weather to the “influence of Haley’s comet,” which was visible during the spring. Township residents could view the celestial visitor “…every evening in the west sky between six and seven o’clock. It’s duration is short,” noted local media.39

State Historian Doane Robinson, in his 10th annual review of the progress of South Dakota, found, “…prices have varied a good deal since last year, wheat upon average about the same, corn and oats very much lower, and flax, hay, and potatoes much higher as are dairy products and eggs.” The “hay crop is perhaps one-third below the average in volume but the value is not materially affected,” he noted.40

Robinson concluded “…the people generally of fore headed and living in exceptional comfort, paying current bills with reasonable promptness, and buying more conservatively than for several years.” 1910 has been a year of liquidation rather than expansion,” he concluded.41

The local county tax assessor provided the best glimpse of Summit township’s economic vitality in 1910. Real estate tax rolls indicate average farm size in the township dropped 18% between 1900-1910. Conversely, averaged assessed value per farm rose from $1486.85 to

34 Madison Daily Leader, 4 January 1910, 3.
37 Madison Daily Leader, 18 March 1910, 2.
38 Madison Daily Sentinel, 15 December 1910, 3. Farmers reported a good stand of corn in spite of uncertain seed and cool weather. The small grain was reported as a good stand. Ibid., 16 June 1910, 3. Professor J W Goff toured Lake County and found crops looking fine, some of the best he had ever seen in the county. Despite the drought he predicted an above average harvest. Ibid., 13 July 1910, 3.
40 Madison Daily Sentinel 15 December 1910, 3.
41 Ibid. A government report on currency in circulation reported each man, woman, and child in the country should have $34.71. Madison Daily Leader, 9 December 1910, 3.
$2487.58 over the same decade. Six farms were assessed at $3000 or more. Soren Bortnem, a 58 year old Norwegian immigrant, was the largest real estate holder with 560 acres. Sander Anderson, another immigrant and the township’s only blind resident, was taxed on 451 acres. Four others controlled a half section each. Most township farms were 160 acres, a quarter section. They ranged in assessed value from $1960 to $1375. Improved land, soil type, and buildings accounted for the differences.

Personal property, including livestock, farm machinery, and household goods were also taxed and offer a barometer of economic well being. Each Summit township head of household was assessed an average $287.19 personal property tax in 1910. Seven residents were assessed at least $700 personal property. Among them was John Johnson, a 45 year old Norwegian immigrant who landed in America in 1902. His immigrant wife, Ingrid, followed two years later. In less than a decade in South Dakota the couple and their three young children accumulated personal property assessed at $1820 while farming 160 acres Summit township Section 18.

Others were not as fortunate. Ten township households were assessed on $150 or less of personal property. One was Anton Hanson and his wife Martha, both 34 year old Norwegian immigrants. Together with their five children they occupied 154 acres of Section 17. Their personal property tax amounted to $138.

Assimilation was well under way in the Summit township of 1910. The immigrant generation was being replaced by the second generation and beyond. Lack of new immigrants began weakening the ties to the old country. Economic dictated a knowledge of English as did public schools. Township residents sought prosperity and Americanization while trying to retain their ethnic heritage.

The federal census enumerator, as well as the county tax assessor, left rich fodder for the historian. Beyond the purposes for which they were intended, their records offer a detailed view of rural life a century ago. It was a time of growth and change.

42 Real Estate Tax Book, Summit Township, Lake County, South Dakota. Treasurer’s Office, Lake County Court House, Madison, South Dakota. Eight quarter sections had an assessed value of less than $1500. Ole Overski’s real estate taxes certainly would increase as his 24 x 24 house with two enclosed porches was completed. Madison Daily Sentinel, 8 September 1910, 2.
43 Personal Property Tax Book, Summit Township, Lake County, South Dakota. Lake County Courthouse, Madison, South Dakota.
AVERAGE PRICE IN 1896 AND 1910, AND THE ADVANCE SINCE MARCH 1896

REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATIONS COMPARED

<table>
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<th>PRODUCT</th>
<th>MARCH 1910</th>
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<th>PER CENT ADVANCE</th>
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<td>SINCE MARCH 1896</td>
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<td>EGGS, PER DOZEN</td>
<td>.26</td>
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Madison Daily Sentinel, 4 November 1910, 6.
Central Meade County Tenacity

Robert Benson

Meade County is one of the largest counties in the United States. Sturgis to Faith is approximately 100 miles. Many rural communities consisting of a general store and post office have existed since the turn of the twentieth century. Since Sturgis is the county seat much of the commercial and educational activities of the people have occurred there.

I like to think of Meade County weather as very cyclical – extreme droughts versus abundant moisture. One of the results of the extremely dry conditions is what is called by the locals – Hard-pan. Hard-pan is a soil much like cement, which was sometimes used as the roof of a dwelling because it did not leak. My theme here is the tenacity of the people to endure what many an easterner would call impossible environmental conditions. These small ranching communities, numbered around fifty, helped sustain life until a trip to Sturgis could be made. The topography was and still is rolling prairie land broken up by creeks and rivers. Highway 34 divides the county. The boundaries of area are Highway 212 as the northern border and Interstate-90 as the southern.

The Belle Fourche River and the Cheyenne River along with Bear Butte Creek were both a help and a hindrance to the early settlers. Old timers have stated that they would sometimes be forced to wait a month or more for the water to recede in order to cross. On the northern part is a long ridge of several miles known as Fox Ridge which is visible for many miles. The lone sentinel for the west part of the county is Bear Butte. On a clear day, it is visible from 60 miles away. The Bismarck Trail traverses the northwest corner of this area.

Before homesteading, large herds of cattle and horses roamed this section with brands of large outfits. Later brands so represented the culture of the county that a new restaurant in the fifties in Sturgis featured local county brands on all the booths used for dining. The early settlers found the grasses extremely nutritious and several varieties that are resistant to drought and unfavorable growing conditions thrived there. Railroads did not influence the development of this central area of the county as trains traversed only the extreme southwest and northeast corners of Meade County. Before the days of trucking, the cattle were herded
south to Wasta for shipment on the Chicago, Milwaukee and Northwestern railroads. Most of the ranching communities began in the first ten years of the twentieth century, although some commenced as early as Smithville in 1880 and as late as 1919 in the case of Royal Center. I am most familiar with Alkali because of social events including Sturgis people and Hereford because of the Sturgis to Hereford mail route.

The 1862 Homestead Act provided 160 acres for each filing with required improvements. In the 1909 Act, 320 acres could be filed on although South Dakota did not become eligible until 1915 after most claims had been filed. In 1916 the Stock Raising Homestead Act applied to grazing lands unsuited for farming. Despite the many hardships such as drought and winter storms these honyockers stayed and worked the land. The term honyockers refers to the first early settlers to an arid western region and the tenacity that they acquired by staying on the land and surviving untold obstacles. The homestead shacks were only 10X12 in size due to the amount of lumber that could be hauled in one wagon load by a team. Some homesteaders had no team, and had to hire their lumber hauled. Those that came before 1906 accessed the rail-head at Pierre, South Dakota. The homestead shacks were made of rough boards with tar paper on the outside, nailed with shining round tins to keep the nails from pulling through the paper. The inside walls usually remained unfinished, but sometimes a heavy blue or red building paper was nailed up. Some shacks had a whole dug in the ground under the floor for storage. The door was a small section of the floor cut out and fastened together and hinged. Frost collected on the windows and on the nails in the inside of the shack. The frost furnished some entertainment for the children, when so often there was little for them to do. They could draw pictures and sometimes ate the frost, also making designs with thimbles and other articles. These shacks replaced the sod houses, for the most part, because they were easier to construct and took less time to build. A majority of the sod houses were built in the nineteenth century with the tap-paper shack gaining dominance by 1915.

Perhaps the first herd to perpetrate Meade County was the military expedition in 1865. The expedition skirted the Black Hills on the east and passed Bear Butte en-route to its rendezvous with the other two commands on the Powder River in Wyoming. The only firm accomplishment the expedition could claim was bringing the first domestic cows into these plush grasslands. Early explorers had watched the Indians herd large bands of buffalo on to the
grassy foothills of the Black Hills. Dick Williams and Bob Lee in “The Last Grass Frontier” mention that in 1874 General George Custer brought cows with his troupe. The task of opening this last grass frontier to white settlers and their cows was left to Custer. Custer’s expedition opened the prized grasslands of the luxurious Meade County ranges to the white man and his cows for the first time. Custer’s herd of 300 head of beeves was brought along to feed the men on the march. Official files indicate that R. Burgit of Mandan, Dakota Territory had the contract to supply beef to the garrison at Fort Lincoln in 1874. “As evidence of the rich pasturage to be found in the region,” Custer added, “I can state the fact that my beef herd, after marching 600 miles, is in better condition than when I started, being now as fat as consistent with marching conditions.” Custer and his cows had made history. They had reached the nation’s last grass frontier together. Gold was the key that opened the door to development of a great cow kingdom that had been forbidden to the white man for so long. It is somewhat ironic that the cows brought greater wealth to the country than the gold. What Custer had written about the great grazing potential of the Black Hills region was virtually ignored at the time. It was the discovery of gold that captured the nation’s interest.

In my study of Meade County, I have discovered how interesting homestead life was. As told in “Central Meade County – 1903-1963,” a homesteader couple, Francis and Hazel Rounds, (or honyockers as they were called) went to Stoneville to file on 160 acres in 1911. After debarking from the train at Sturgis they took a stage to Stoneville. They took his friend’s father’s team and started on the sixty mile trip back to Sturgis. They ran into blizzard halfway. It was cold and getting late, so they asked a homesteader if they could stay overnight. The homesteader refused so they continued on, finally getting to a halfway house where they were received for the night. She was expecting a baby. So, in February 1912 they went to Kadoka. They started for Newell which had the closest railroad. The temperature was fourteen below zero when they left home. They stopped at a homestead on the way to get warm. Her face was frozen, so the homesteader Mr. Justman went out and got snow to put on it, to thaw it out.

In “Central Meade County” under the Wrightsonville section, Nellie Wrightson Lapp describes some of the problems the early settler encountered:
When homesteading it was dangerous to be out on foot. C.K. Howard had big horn Texas steers on the Cheyenne and Belle Fourche Rivers, and big herds of horses came close to our shack. My sister Daisie and I used to scare them at night by drumming on a dishpan, one staying at the shack to holler to the one out in the dark.

My Mother’s shack had dirt floors, and we found a rattlesnake hidden under the cupboard which was made from apple boxes. The shack was covered with tar paper and when it rained one sat in the rocking chair at the foot of the bed, and the other at the head of the bed with oil cloth to keep part of the bed dry. My shack was sod and all right when the roof stayed on.

My neighbors were Harry and Bill Strong on the north, and east. Many a time I sat on the pole corral at Porters while real cowboys roped a bronc.

About 1910 we had a ferry in at Bob Shoun’s crossing. In 1911 the river was so dry we had to go to a water hole to water our teams. The hole was between Bob Shoun and Joe Burtons where we had fishing parties that summer. Griffens and Del Anderson were some that went. We seined the water hole and had fish by moonlight at night. The corn never came up until August that year. Nearly everyone left the country.

I found it interesting in different parts of the state of South Dakota, church missionaries also became homesteaders – sometimes quite successfully. Also, there seemed to be many Norwegian carpenters both in northeastern South Dakota and western South Dakota. My great grandfather, Peter Baukol, built several structures in northeastern South Dakota. School terms were usually for a six month period. Many “shanty” schools had a succession of teachers each of whom stayed fourteen months until they had “proved up” on their newly acquired homesteads. Sometimes students rode a horse seven miles to school. All newcomers were attracted by what the land promised, although some were disillusioned as soon as they arrived. According to John C. Evans, whose father, Rev. John E. Evans started the JE Cross ranch, the mail delivered to Stoneville arrived three times a week by stage from Newell. Entertainment was not neglected as indicated by John C. Evans:

There was also the store at Fairpoint, a much more metropolitan center. There I would ride in a buggy with my father and play with Hank Sevareid, who was my own age. Later, when we were somewhat older, Max and I formed a sort of combo and played for dances in the old Fairpoint town and dance hall, still
standing on the Sevareid premises. This activity seemed to have out father’s blessing, and I would chord away on an old pump organ while Max sawed like mad at his violin, at the same time blowing on an especially long harmonica held in his mouth by a Sears Roebuck contrivance going around his neck and shoulders. Thus, instead of moving the harmonica, he moved his head. Finally the dance would be interrupted for a box social. I always ate with my sister Margaret and her current boy friend. We have stopped at Fairpoint several times during the past few years. Nels is there, Ed, Bill, and Marty; and Hank has passed away and lies in the Fairpoint cemetery.

A colorful character worth mentioning was:

There was “Indian Pete,” Pete Culbertson, uncle to the Sevareid boys, famed in Wild West show business, and raised by Indians. What high adventure there was for my brother and me when Pete arrived! He was a colorful character and represented something out of the old west much older and more romantic than we would ever know. Some of his former “Indian Pete” broncho-busters were still in the area. I think Leslie Boe was one, though this may not be correct. I was forever astonished that such a great man condescended to stop at our place, but of course I know now that it was our father who drew him to us. With long, braided hair wrapped twice around his head, silver mounted saddle and bridle, two ivory handled six shooters always worn in his belt holster, he rode in on a strawberry roan. “Do you ever shoot ‘em off, Pete?” we wanted to know.

A high, waning falsetto represented a laugh, starting at the top with a gradual descent. “Ai-ye. I carry ‘em for rattlesnakes and prairie dogs.” His circus must have broken up at Faith, because I know his carousel lay abandoned there for years. He had a ranch somewhere on the Sulphur Creek, and in his good days, he would start from there for his Eastern tours.

Our place became something like a “road house,” a way station where many people came overnight or for several days, except that our mother never charged anybody. One man who always did pay and insisted on doing so was the old peddler with team and wagon full of merchandise. He came once a year, and if I ever knew his name, I am not now aware of it.

We named all the hills and buttes around us: the Jernberg Butte, the Cottrel Butte, the Quinn Hill, named for people on whose land they were located. A prairie fire once swept down the Quinn Hill from the west and up to our very yard. There were also Fox Ridge and Fox Butte, visible in the blue distance fifteen miles away up the Big Draw valley.

Among all this activity my father brought “church” to the eastern half of Meade County. Hundreds of miles I rode with him by team and buggy to Sulphur Creek, Horse Butte, Red Owl, Tama, Opal, Marcus, Chalkbutte, White Owl, and a dozen
other places. The last two or three years we had cars that were less dependable, a Reo, a Ford, and by that time I was driving for him. But the church gatherings occurred less often and grew smaller as people left the country. Some turned around and went back as soon as they arrived, but most tried to “make a go of it” as my father had done. However, they too left one by one, and the population melted away.

So it went. Jake Keffler lost a team of big Iowa draft horses at the bottom of a well he was digging on the Drew place a half a mile north, the same place where one poor, lonely man later committed suicide. Only a fraction of the memories now come clear. Hauling freight from Sturgis or Newell over the gumbo in infrequent wet weather meant a complete stop until the mud dried up. Then the whole wagon became one solid mass. Usually water was scarce in Big Draw Creek and elsewhere, but Mr. Hagen, the Norwegian carpenter, could “witch” for it, so he was in demand as a preliminary to any well digging.

Finally the handwriting began to show on surfaces other than sod walls. My brother, Max, yearned for the life of a cowboy. He rode bucking horses, herded sheep, taught school for four months, but when he announced his intention to become a barber at New Stoneville, now located five miles east of the old store, my father shipped him away to high school. And with my mother insisting, he laid plans for the abandonment of JE Cross ranch. This was in 1919, and by that time he had lost heavily in a large herd of cattle for which he had gone into debt. These turned out to be of Southern origin, unused to prairie blizzards. With Max gone, I stayed away from high school that year to help him. The cattle would go crazy with the cold, attacking horse and rider before they went down. We hauled them in with stoneboats off the prairie by dozens and hauled them out the same way. In the barn we tried to pull them to their feet by means of rope windlasses, but to no avail. None of them ever survived. They died like flies, and by spring we had the biggest collection of carcasses and bones I shall ever expect to see again.

The winters were completely ruthless. Blizzards swept across those prairies at from fifty to seventy-five miles an hour. We managed to be inside when there was one in progress. Once, however, I was lost on a cold night but wound up at Kerchenberger’s five miles away at just about bedtime. I was still too young to know enough to “let the horse have his head.” Searchers were out all night, but like the rising sun I turned up cheerful and beaming the next morning. The old sod house was a true shelter and we were always safe and warm there. We burned lignite from Johnnie Higgins’s mine, and our cook stove and heater were all we needed. Sometimes our house was nearly buried. Then we would tunnel out through the snow from the front door.
The stone barn went too, stone that we had all helped haul from the surrounding buttes. After that the sod walls dissolved into only the crazy, whirling dust devils that lowered everything flat to the prairie floor. Now there is nothing. Thus is ended. By 1920 all traces of human occupation had vanished. Everywhere there is moving dust and wind. Only the hills remain sentinels and the brilliant night stars.

Automobile travel was overwhelming around 1912, before the Model T era. Getting stuck was always a problem especially when traversing streams. Running out of gasoline was easy to do because of the sixty mile or further drive. Telephone lines started to be installed at this time. Same Keister came from Lead to homestead near Stoneville. He was the first to discover coal north of Stoneville. Indians stopped at John and Maggie Oliver and traded articles for bread, butter, etc. In one instance they piled dirt in the shape of butter so Maggie would understand what they wanted. 1911 was a very dry year with small puddles of water in the river. You could hear wagon wheels crossing rocks at night. Many settlers left with a cow, horse, and some chickens. Sometimes a neighbor would “file over” some person’s land to claim it for himself. This usually resulted in a court case. In the twenties, Edward and Anna Nelson raised five acres of watermelons and muskmelons. These melons raised on the sandy soil along the Belle Fourche River were extremely delicious to eat. All the neighboring communities showed up to purchase them. The melons were publicized in the Gurney Seed Catalog of Yankton and also in the Rapid City Journal under the heading of “Ed Nelson the Watermelon King,” as he sold melons in Rapid City and other Black Hills towns. Fred Westgate had one of the first cars in the vicinity called the “Apperson Jackrabbit.” The 7 passenger Apperson touring car sold in Sioux City for $1,600 in 1916. Also in 1916, George Reicher bought a Ford touring car for $402.00 and had it delivered to his ranch – then he had to learn to drive it. A “Bachelor’s Lament” by Elmer Stainbrook, taken from “Central Meade County” – 1903-1963 sums what many homesteaders thought:

Then come to Meade County, there is a home for you all.  
Where the wind never cease, and the rain never falls;  
Where the sun never sets, but sweetly remains  
Till it burns up our crop on the government claim.  
How happy I feel on my government claim,  
I have nothing to lose and nothing to gain,
I have nothing to eat and nothing to wear,
So nothing for nothing is honest and fair.
It’s here I am sitting, and here I will stay;
My money is all gone and I can’t get away.
There is nothing that makes a man hard and profane
Like starving to death on a government claim.

Nada Brown Schultz mentions that her father had a desert claim of 320 acres. In 1962 it was still referred to as a desert claim.

Life still goes on in central Meade County. Despite the above sad lament according to the “Meade County Time – Tribune” on Wednesday, January 26, 2011 The Tumbling Tornado’s (rural Meade gymnasts) culminated their season on Saturday, January 22, 2011 by performing between basketball games at the Union Center Community Hall. This issue of the local Sturgis area news included “Central Meade County News” by Sandy Rhoden who stated the following interesting observation:

Weather patterns are a bit hard to predict in central Meade County as we’ve been experiencing some temperature inversions. While we experience a couple of nice days last week, the outside temperature seemed to drop down to zero quite quickly some evenings. If the thermometers were able to burn fat, the last couple of weeks would have been the time as they’ve certainly been getting their exercise going up and down.

Also included in this issue were the Opal News by Kay Ingalls and the Elm Spring News by Lawrence Burke. Other issues of this paper occasionally present Bonita Springs and other communities included in this newspaper. In closing, the struggles of Central Meade County continue with post office closures in recent years and are more likely to occur. As indicated in the Meade County Times – Tribune of Wednesday, February 9, 2011:

Postal service at Prairie City, in the far northwest corner of the state, ended in December of 2009. The post office at Mud Butte, another remote Meade County town, closed for good in 2010. Many others in northwestern South Dakota have closed in recent years. “Red Owl, Plainview, Marcus, Stoneville...they’ve all lost post offices,” said Lavonne Hansen post mistress at Howes, who hasn’t heard anything specific about the future of Howes from Postal Service officials. “I’m concerned about any small post office. They’re all at risk.”
Post offices in isolated rural areas usually operate at a deficit, just as Howes does. During Fiscal Year 2010, which ended Oct. 30, the Howes post office has revenues of $11,177 and total expenses of $42,399, Nowacki said. In its last year of operation, the Prairie City post office had an operating deficit of $19,000. Numerous other small post offices – at out of the way places like Enning, White Owl, Reva, and Milesville – face similar financial scenarios.

The Howes post office is inside the Howes store, the only business in Howes, which is on the lonely stretch of S.D. Highway 34. Sturgis is 85 miles away and Faith is 28 miles to the north. People who live in the area, including many from the nearby Cheyenne River Indian Reservation, come to Howes to shop for groceries, buy gas, drink coffee or enjoy a game of cards or cribbage. “It’s the neighborhood gathering place,” said Hansen. “It’s the only thing in the community of Howes – and the only post office for 28 miles around.” Hansen also owns the Howes Store, and said the post office needs the store and the store needs the post office to survive.

“It’s kind of a hand in glove thing,” she said.

In closing, I am greatly indebted to the publication “Central Meade County” 1903 to 1963 published by the Stoneville Steadies Extension Club of Stoneville, South Dakota.

All of these stories and tales help to prove the tenacity of Central Meade County people.

In June yellow cactus plants still bloom – every year.
Dissent in Indian Country

By Elizabeth Cook-Lynn
Professor Emerita/Native Studies/ EWU

This paper offers a brief commentary on the role of “dissent” in Indian Country from 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre to the present, now called the AIM (American Indian Movement) years of 1970.

It is an excerpt of a longer unpublished manuscript.

It is written in memory of 500 years of struggle for Indigenous Rights against the implacable AGE OF EMPIRE in America.

While “dissent” or “to be in opposition to” is said to be an American ideal, the history of the events named in this conference tells us that such an ideal is extraordinarily cynical. It is not as though the U.S. will crush a democratic movement of “dissent” as the Chinese did in 1989 at Tianamen Square; that would be too fraught with consequence. It is rather more like Michael Ignatieff suggests: “No country has invested more in the development of international jurisdiction for atrocity crimes that the U.S., and no country has worked harder to make sure that the law it seeks for others does not apply to itself.”¹

Native peoples throughout the world have learned that opposition or “dissent., politically speaking, is to be considered successful only if sought by imperialists and believers in Christianity and Capitalistic Democracy. More often, economic exploitation, cultural decimation and political exclusion can be used as constant and systematic persecution of weaker peoples through the rule of law, techniques less likely to be challenged.

Franz Fanon, a third world theorist of our time, wrote about what he called the Manicheanism of dominant Europeans vis-à-vis members of a subject race. Defined by a 6th century Persian prophet, the Manicheanism of colonial rule is defined as the universal struggle between light and darkness, a struggle confounding American historians of all stripe, therefore,

little is written about it. ² It is time for the discussion to occur since what we are viewing now in America’s historiography is this: national greatness has taken hold in America at the same time that national resistance to empire has developed within the cultures of colonized peoples. That is what the Indian-White conflict of the Wounded Knee history demonstrates.

_Dissent_ can take many forms, sometimes that of aggressive revolution, as in 1776 i.e., the good revolution; sometimes it can result in great catastrophes as in the case of the disagreements between slave owners and non-slave owners in America in 1860, the result being the Civil War with hundreds of thousands dead. The unfortunate reality of the political uprising and killings at Wounded Knee in 1890 is that much scholarship is reluctant to consider it or the recasting of that event as AIM as a democratic ideal. Rather, it has turned the period into something of an anti-Indian crusade. The opposition to Empire, which characterized both events, or, in the more vernacular definition of the American Indian’s experience, the opposition to invasion, colonization, genocide and plunder in this century probably comes as no surprise to historians. What is surprising is the virulent hatred of modern uprisings by native peoples, and the inability of people of good will to come to grips with such activity as both inevitable and useful. Nothing good can come of it, say settlers and scholars alike, which renders the effort to diminish it as a rational political activity is profound and ubiquitous.

The trouble is that History often addresses only terminal events, there is little examination of the real crimes inherent in this centuries-long narrative, crimes like genocide and endemic poverty and oppression. Because history usually deals only in terminal events, it is now accepted that revolution is for the Puritans and Christians who landed on the shores of this place in 1700, not for the indigenous persons who met them at the boat.

In developing counter-currents to protect themselves against aggression, natives have found that the path has been littered with vengeful forces. The American Indian Movement, thus, was called at the time of its emergence and illegal protest striking fear in the communities of both Indian and Settler and it has since been called a “mafia” organization referencing its supposed criminality. Like all native resistances, AIM has been called a tragedy, a barrier to peace and justice, its people pitiful and wrong.

² Fanon, F. Activism, p 143 _Colonialism/Postcolonialism_. Ania Loomba, Routledge, 1889. Associate Professor of English. Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.
Every protest is local, at first, compared to what it can become.

When the American Indian movement went international, it was described by law and order folks as “a dangerous and un-American Mafia organization.” It has been called “the scourge of Pine Ridge” referencing a reservation town which was and is home base for the movement as well as the long-time federal agency of the Oglala Sioux. Even many of the successors of the movement, fearful consumers of the American Dream that they have become, have joined this condemnation.

Two recent books written by white male observers about the period are reflective of this dilemma.

Joseph H. Trimbach, a retired Special Agent of the FBI published American Indian Mafia ³ to fairly enthusiastic reviews by readers who were probably more patronizing and self-serving than intellectual. Editors Tim Giago and Paul DeMain of Indian country news outlets and even Oliver North, the law-breaking Marine of the Reagan administration, considered the book and example of good history. Praise for the book came from Bill Janklow, a former and disgraced governor of SD who was forced to resign from the U.S. House of Representatives after killing a man in an auto crash when he failed to stop at a stop sign. Encouragement for the book came from federal attorneys and judges including the former president of the SD Bar Association. It has been considered by some a competent and even scholarly historical examination of events even though it was self-published. It is a thorough condemnation of the movement based almost solely upon FBI files.

Of the folks who have given more favorable assessments of the movement is a New York Attorney Kenneth S. Stern whose book Loud Hawk ⁴ won an award from the Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Human Rights in North America. The book was largely ignored except by the most astute follower of the history of the period. Stern was a lead counsel before the U.S. Supreme court on behalf of AIm defendants and managed a legal acquittal for Ogala activist Kenneth Loud Hawk of Pine Ridge.

Almost all events of “dissent” in history by Indians including the protest of illegal US law confronting the Northwest fishing tribes for 60 years have been likewise condemned by regional officials as well as average Americans, neighbors of the tribal people. It is a pattern of racism largely disguised as democratic law. The 1950’s termination laws, a major cause for the rise of AIM were passed at the same time that 550 square miles of treaty protected lands of the Sioux Indians along the Missouri River were flooded for hydro power without the consent of the people who lived there. Tribes squandered millions of dollars in lawyer’s fees in futile attempts to protect their lands and resources; even lobbying organizations like the Congress of American Indians could not stop the plunder.

At that moment of the 20th century, the American Indian Movement was born, a political war waged by the poorest people in the nation, a category they still hold. Clearly, it was a revolution against the ‘legal’ injustices and plunder of resources brought about by the tactics of colonization. The movement was born out of a history of defensive war and the human need to dissent against the established order of an imperialistic and capitalistic power intent upon the destruction of Indian Nationhood. The movement was born as indigenous resistance against settler/invader racism, greed, theft, encroachment, jurisdiction, endemic poverty, destruction and death to native peoples. To be realistic in the analysis of playing the offensive and defensive rules of a game started in 1492 which has been stacked by colonists against indigenous peoples everywhere is the challenge of our time.

In spite of the noisy debates that raged then and continue, and in spite of the radical and sometimes lawless activities of the time on the part of Indians, the unfortunate truth is that since the AIM period, colonial structures have been strengthened on Indian lands, seldom diminished. Backlash legislation as well as revenge tactics by American citizens of all classes has been the result. What it has meant to those who were participants and supporters is that dissent has always been a dangerous enterprise.

The empire would strike back.

Thus, native peoples are presently called upon forty years later to testify in endless court cases against themselves and to deny their histories. Today, they witness the slow disintegration of their protests. There are no monuments in America to those native peoples who resist the will of tyrants. Whatever we may think about its tactics and history, Wounded
Knee of 1890 and the American Indian Movement of 1970 were efforts to articulate the sacred notion that the denial of centuries of dangerous superpower strategies of oppression and plunder is not acceptable. They point to the failure of democratic nation-to-nation agreements and the subsequent colonizing legislation entrenched in the greed of invaders.

As early as 1883, laws of colonization set up implacable roots following years of hot war; since then the battlefields of dissent by native peoples have been a reality. In that year the Major Crimes Act was passed by Congress. It was perhaps the most significant and destructive colonial act of genocide though it has been treated in history as the rule of law of a democratic world. This Act destroyed tribalism and provided the illegal template for the continued use of Congress’s claimed “plenary” power over native enclaves even into modern times. It has occupied a conceptual genocide category in law even since.

According to the writings of Vine Deloria, Jr., “No agreement was made with any tribe in passing this act. The act does not mention that it was to supplant existing treaty provisions, (though that is exactly what it did). No effort was made to amend the treaties that forbid such an assumption of jurisdiction.” 5 The allotment Act followed resulting in the loss of native title to two-thirds of the entire native state in this country. Once the template in these kinds of legal fictions to remove law and estate from the country’s native land owners was considered “settled” law, hope for justice, defense of treaties and democracy for Indians was lost.

It is for historians to say that the American Indian Movement was the most courageous attempt in our time to articulate in 1974 these failures in the law. We may not see this time again in our lifetimes because in spite of what the American Indian Movement sought, there has been little attempt by American law makers and politicians to rectify the bad law of the 19th century mentioned in this history. The result is that the role of “dissent” has diminished. Complicit native power structures are simply trying to make corrupt colonial systems work.

Forty years after the contemporary revolutionary events of the AIM period, the federal and state law establishments of the region of the great plains are still actively pursuing and indicting the leaders and participants of that movement for their perceived and largely un-provable crimes.

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5 Indian Historians Write Back, 2011. James Riding In and Susan Miller, eds. P. 76. TTUPress
The latest case in point occurred in 2011 when the *State of South Dakota vs John Boy Graham* (tried by States attorney Marty Jackley in Pennington County last winter) concluded with Graham, a Canadian Indian being given a life sentence in the 45 year old murder of another Canadian India, Anna Mae Aquash. Clearly overstepping its boundaries in trying the case when the federal government declined to do so, the state used its assumption of jurisdiction by declaring the Indian-ness of both the victim and the perpetrator to be irrelevant. How this was done when both persons are clearly indigenous to Canada probably needs some more analysis than it was heretofore given. The question of what happens when law, itself, becomes illegal is unsettling, to say the least. Moreover, the role of Arlo Looking Cloud, an Oglala Indian, convicted of the same murder some years prior, is still unclear as he remains incarcerated even though he was promised a “deal” if he would turn state’s evidence against his fellow AIM compatriot, Graham, as the trigger man.

It is not the intention of this paper to address the entire history of AIM nor is it a sufficient overview of the cases and other references to history. The point is that the concept of *dissent*, an American ideal, is not available to American Indians to be used in the significant development of anti-colonial discourse. It’s use is prevented and deformed by anti-colonial law featured throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Indian life in America is fraught with risk as the power of colonial oppression in the law makes native *dissenters* the victims over and over again. The truth is that those slaughtered at Wounded Knee in 1890, though now the subject of much regret and wailing by bleeding heart Americans, were revolutionaries who challenged the law. They were defenders of their indigenous rights as landowners, not just occupiers, and they among the thousands of American Indians protesting the governmental policies of their times.

If wrong law is not challenged (not just by Indians but by postcolonial theorists across the globe) arguments in favor of further victimization of natives will run its course and the ideals of this country’s claim to be one of the important experiments in democratic law will fade away.

Perhaps because of the growing totalitarian character of American culture, the path of American Indian *dissidents* may not have satisfactory outcomes. It may be that the American Indian Movement can be said to be over; yet, it serves as memorable proof that resistance to colonial rule by indigenous peoples can be more than mere gesture in American history.
A persuasive example that illustrates how important dissent is to the appropriate functioning of a democracy is that of a great American dissident, Ralph Waldo Emerson. In his day, he hated slavery and despised the men and women who wrote the coercive Slave Law of 1850. This was a law that allowed American slave holders to chase down their slaves, a law which tried to hound people into submission.

In the same way, Sitting Bull of the 19th century hated the Allotment Act of 1889 which allowed the theft of 2/3rds of native treaty land holdings reducing his people to beggary. In the same way, AIM leaders of the 20th century hated the Termination and Relocation laws which diminished their treaty agreements. These periods were times when laws were written to hound people into submission. The same can be said of the so-called AIM Trials of the first decade of the 21st century which are putting forth arguments that Emerson, in his day, called “filthy enactments of the law of the 19th century.” Forever an analyst of wrong law and a dissenter, Emerson concluded: “I will not obey this law.” Were he alive today, he would know that further hounding of AIM supporters, ongoing forty years later after the events in question is also filthy law and should not be obeyed.

Emerson was not so much different from the people of the American Indian Movement of two hundred years later who said that they would not obey the laws that were destroying them. Yet, the difference is there in history for all to observe. Emerson was a man of means, he has status in American Literature, he has a reputation. And he was a white man.

When processes of wrongful law made by slave holders, or colonizers, or democratizers who invade and destroy and oppress go unchecked, the claims to democratic ideals fall on deaf ears. Disobedience or dissent is the only way for the futile apathy and disappointment not to take over the national character.

Historians must look at this moment in history to say that in contrast to those who do nothing, the strength of those courageous dissenters who were slaughtered at Wounded Knee so many years ago have told the world that movements like theirs as well as the American Indian Movement of 1974 deserve the chachet of democratic struggle, not the stink of failure. DISSENT AS A PRINCIPLE OF LAW HAS MEANING IN HISTORY AS WELL AS IN THE PRESENT TIME.

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I’ll close by saying in challenge that writers of American Indian history accept the notion that it is no longer possible in this age of enlightenment to deny the real meaning of movements of dissent like Wounded Knee and AIM. People who suffer oppression at the hands of colonists and forceful Christianizers and Democratizers will continue to come out of the many odd corners of the lands where they know death is a part of life and where native people will be judged not by what other people say of them but what they say of themselves.\(^7\)

American historians who are too often the handmaidens of the denial of native inventions and experiences make the mistake in believing that the oppressed will continue to be content with poverty, wrongful law and the abuse of political authority.

The lessons of the American Indian Movement of 1974 tell us otherwise.

The author of the following letter is a man named Samuel DeForest Woodford, and he is writing to his wife, Mary. Samuel was born in 1835 in Aurora, Erie County, New York to Alonzo and Marie Bryant Woodford. However, when he was quite young his family moved to Cattaraugus County, New York. He married Mary Elizabeth Fuller on June 16th, 1857 of Cold Spring, Cattaraugus County, and the two had eight children, although two died while still infants. Samuel enlisted as a Union soldier in Company 1, 154th Regiment, New York State Volunteers, which became part of the Army of the Potomac, during the summer of 1862 and served in the army until 1865, the end of the war. Throughout this time he was a prisoner of war twice, once in Belle Isle and once in Andersonville. He returned home in 1865 to his family, and in 1884 the family moved to Wessington, South Dakota. In 1911 Samuel and Mary moved again, this time to Ireton, Iowa, where Samuel died on Feb. 27, 1913 at the age of seventy-seven years old. His wife and he were married for nearly fifty-six years. His wife, Mary, died on Feb. 18, 1923 in Wessington, South Dakota after moving back there to live with her daughters after the death of Samuel.

During the course of Samuel’s service in the army, he was involved in the Battle of Fredericksburg and the Battle of Gettysburg among others. The following letter takes place soon after the Battle of Fredericksburg and describes the losses and the morale of the men among other things. He includes quite detailed description on the feelings of the men towards their general, General Ambrose E. Burnside. See, Burnside had just replaced General McClellen in Nov. 7, 1962, and attempted to launch an offensive against the rebels in December, which resulted in the poorly planned and carried out Battle of Fredericksburg.

The battle was commanded by Burnside of the Army of the Potomac and Lee of the Army of Northern Virginia. Burnside believed that crossing the river at Fredericksburg would give them the element of surprise against Lee’s army. He was right about them being surprised, but they gained no advantage from it. Burnside’s plan was to send engineers while it was yet
dark to build bridges for the men to cross over; however, they took too long and soon Confederate soldiers were shelling the engineers who had to retreat. Burnside began ordering his soldiers to open fire on the city, but it was too foggy for them to be able to have any clear targets, and so this attempt only destroyed the city; it did nothing to prevent further shelling from the Confederates. Time and time again the engineers tried building the bridges, came under fire, and retreated, to which Burnside would resort to blindly opening fire on the city. He finally sent in platoons of men to attempt to push the rebels out of the city. They eventually succeeded but it was a very bloody affair and many lives were lost. After the city was secured, though, the bridges could be built and the soldiers transferred over the river.

Now, Lee had also lost quite a few men from his army, and only had half of his army on hand. The time to continue the attack was right then. Burnside, however, wasted away the rest of the day and gave Lee enough time to call upon General Jackson to come to his aid. Because of this mistake on Burnside’s part, the Confederates gained 78,000 more men as a result of the Army of the Northern Virginia arriving. The rebels also had an advantage behind the hills near Fredericksburg, which provided a natural barrier. In addition, Burnside’s planning and issuing of commands was foggy at best, and none of his subordinates knew exactly what they were supposed to do once the battle did restart. The battle resulted in a Union loss, with the Army of the Potomac losing over 1,200 lives and almost 10,000 wounded.

The letter written by Samuel is somewhat of a reaction to the battle of Fredericksburg. He describes how the men felt about Burnside. Samuel says that the, “troops say if he ever tries to lead them into another such a place they will lay down their arms.” Because of this slaughter, Burnside lost the respect and trust of his men. Throughout a few of Samuel’s letters he describes a decrease in patriotism, and he says how he doesn’t know what he’s doing here anymore and doesn’t know what they’re fighting for. He mentions how the newspapers only say two hundred men were killed in the battle, but that he would put the numbers at ten times that. He believes this is an attempt to “draw the wool over their own eyes.” Samuel also describes in another letter how the men are disappointed with McClellen’s removal and that their replacement for him is Burnside. Other things Samuel discusses include fellow soldiers’ health, his own health, and conditions. He asks his wife to have a sturdy pair of boots made and
sent to him, and at the end of all of his letters he includes a section on how he wants Mary to hug and kiss the children for him.

This transcription is a faithful reproduction of the original letter from the Samuel DeForest Woodford Papers (#30300), on deposit in the archives of the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College. Peculiarities in spelling and punctuation have been retained with minor exceptions; editorial changes are indicated in brackets. Additional information pertaining to the names of people has been indicated by parentheses.

Fredericksburg[,] Dec. 11/[18]62

Dear Mary

I have just read a letter from you and one from Howard and was glad to hear you wer[e] all well. It has been some time since I have had a chance to write to you for we have been on the march all the time for the last nine days. We are now lying on the hill opposite Fredericksburg, everything is all quiet here now[,] but it must have been a hard time for our poor boys last Saturday[.] The enemy are situated on the h[e]ight by land on the other side of the river right in plain sight[,] Our camp is in shelling distance of one of their forts. There has been quite a number of boys from the 64 to see us[,] They all look healthy that are left[.] There is but few of them[,] only about two hundred of them left in all[,] they lost seventy in killed and wounded[,] eight killed and 62 wounded. Poor Frank was among the wounded[.] Fransis James and Asher had went to see him[,] I was going to see him but they moved him before I got time[,] he was wounded in the bowels[,] the ball entered near the A [scratched out] naval[,] is lodged somewhere near the back bone but did not cut any of his inwards[,] they think he will get well[,] he says he will[,] he was much pleased to see the boys. But it must stop now for awhile. I again seat myself to write a few more lines to you while I have time. There is quite a stir in camp this afternoon[,] Some think that our batteries are intending to open on the enemy before long but there may not be anything in it. the boys are all well but Asher but he may be by this time[,] he had the bilious fever before we left Fairfax and was not able to go with us when we left there but was gaining[,] there was no fear but he would get along in a few days. I had the jaundice pretty bad for two weeks but am well again. I cured it taking cherry bark and other such stuff[.]
Robinson I presume is at home or on his way by this time, It must be an awful sight to visit the hospitals after a battle[.] Where the boys went there were arms and legs laying at the door of the tents that had been taken off and thrown out doors. I am in hopes there will not be much more fighting before this war will be closed[.] Deen told me he was on picket the next night after the battle[,] he being on one side of the river and the rebs on the other[,] they commenced talking to each other and agreed not to shoot each other[,] so the rebel came over and had a good visit. the reb said he was getting sick of the war and if our men would bring Lincoln [Abraham Lincoln] they would Davis (Jefferson Davis) and let them fight the thing out themselves[.]

Dec 21. You will see by my last date that I did not finish my letter the same day I began it. It has been so that we could not send our letters until the twentieth. Perhaps you would like to know what kind of weather we are in[,] the Sunny South[,] it is sunny enough but the trouble is the sun does not do us any good. there is no snow on the ground but it is as cold as it is in old Cattaraugus [Cattaraugus County, NY] when the snow is two feet deep. it is impossible for a man to keep warm over any fire he can make[,] I believe I never saw as cold wind as they have[,] it is impossible to get clothes enough on to keep it from striking through. It is about such weather here as it was at home last year when howard and I were logging in December, only the air is a great deal colder. Everything is quiet here yet[,] I do not know whether they will have another fight here or not[,] if they do it will be a hard one, but our division will not have much to do for we are to support our batteries stationed on this side of the river. There has been a report in camp for the last few days that Banks [Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks] had taken Richmond[,] but the most of the men do not think it is so[.] There have been some few papers from the north in camp since we were here and they state that our loss in the battle was less than two hundred[,] that is the way they try to draw the wool over our eyes[,] as near as I can find out our loss was at least ten times that amount. The soldiers all curs[e] Burnsides [General Ambrose Burnside] for leading them into such a place[,] They say that McCalan [General George McClellan] never would have done it[,] he would have first shelled them from their entrenchments[,] I have understood that the troops say if he ever tries to lead them into another such a place they will lay down their arms[,] Sergle says his men shall never go into such a place. I am glad he will not for I feel as though every life that is lost in this war is first
thrown away[,] my patriotism has all oozed out of my fingers end or somewhere else[.] You wanted to know how Liles like[s] it[,] he seems to be in pretty good spirit—it’s a great deal better than I could under the circumstances. O Mary[,] it seems as if I should die of grief if I had done as he has. He seemed to feel pretty bad for the first few days, but it soon wore off. I am pretty sure he is of a different nature from me. He tried to get a furlough to go home but could not[,] if I had been him they would have had to chain me to have kept me[,] You must be satisfied with a short letter this time Mary for my fingers are numb with the cold. You can see that by the writing[,] Give my love to Father and Mother and all the rest of the folks[,] Tell Howard the first time he sees Whitely to have him make me a pair of Kipp boots double souls on the bottoms and heels filled with nails and made of the best of material[,] a common pair of boots will not last here more than two months. I bought me a pair in Washington and they will not last more than six weeks more[,] You cannot get boots taped here. As soon as we get into winter quarters I will let you know and you can send them to me.

Warren Hengsley is well but Theodore was left at Fairfax in the Hospital[,] There are a great many sick and it is no wonder[,] If they were obliged to live so at home they would all die[,] The soldiers that have been here for a year or two have got used to it[,] so they stand it pretty well. Squire has been to see us three or four times[,] he is the same old sixpence[,] He has got a good place driving an ammunition wagon. Deen looks hearty, but I will stop writing for this time not that I am tired of communicating with you[,] for God knows it is my greatest delight[,] but from necessity[,] the master of all poor soldiers[,] Kiss and hug all the children for me and except of your own portion of the love of your own absent.

DeForest

(Envelope addressed Dec. 19, ’62)


Samuel DeForest Woodford Papers, The Center for Western Studies, Augustana College.
The author of the following letter is a man named Martin Larson, and he is writing to Herbert Krause. Martin Larson and his wife, Myrtle, lived in Sioux Falls, and he worked for the City Water and Light Department. It was very difficult gathering any information about him, because the collection contains only this letter and the response from Herbert Krause, which is largely indecipherable. He appears in the Sioux Falls Directories of the 40s, which is where is found the name of his wife and his occupation, but no other information was found regarding Martin Larson. My conclusion is that the following letter is predominantly fan mail to Henry Krause.

Herbert Krause was born on May 25, 1905 on a small farm in Minnesota, near Fergus Falls. His father, Arthur Krause, was a farmer, and later a blacksmith, and his mother’s name was Bertha. He was very bright, but was unable to continue his education after high school right away. His family wanted him to work on the farm, and when they finally agreed to let him further his education, they wanted him to go into the ministry. He started attending Park Region Luther College at the age of 21. He graduated from St. Olaf College in 1933, and then started attending the University of Iowa in 1934. Krause signed his contract at Augustana College in 1938 and became the new head of the English Department. He had, however, accumulated a large amount of debt, and could not pay it off until he received the proceeds from *The Thresher* in 1947. In 1970, Krause founded the Center for Western Studies at Augustana College, and became the first Executive Director. His vision for the Center was that it should be a place of learning, preserving, and interpreting the history and culture of the northern plains. Krause died on September 22, 1976 at the age of 71. Having never been married, he left his entire estate and his 30,000 volume library to the Center for Western Studies. Shelves upon shelves at the Center’s library are filled with his own personal collection.

Herbert Krause was the author of many published works. He wrote eight books, two short stories, and many essays, articles, reviews, and poems. *The Thresher* is the most
important one when dealing with the following letter, because it is the reason for the letter. Martin Larson states he is done reading the novel, describes what he thinks about the letter, and compares it to other books written around the same time period. In his opinion, the novel is quite hard to read and he must continually consult his dictionary to understand Krause’s extensive vocabulary. He compares *The Thresher* to other novels such as *The Egg & I* by Betty MacDonald, *Black Boy* by Richard Wright, and *God’s Little Acre* by Erskine Caldwell, which were novels published around roughly the same time. These comparisons at first led me to believe that Larson was either a professor or writer because he appears extremely well read. However, after doing research on him, I discovered Larson worked for the City Water & Light Department of Sioux Falls.

*The Thresher* is a fictional novel about the changes in the way that wheat was harvested and how it influenced the lives of people on the prairie. The main character is Johnny Black, and the story revolves around his ambitious desire to control the region of Pockerbrush, and how the evolution of threshing is his method of achieving this desire. It gives a very accurate description of everyday life in a pioneer community. This novel is the one referenced in the following letter, so it makes sense that Larson describes how he has witnessed this evolution of threshing that Krause so eloquently writes about.

Another of Krause’s important works is *Prelude to Glory*, which is a compilation of articles pertaining to the expedition to the Black Hills by General Custer in 1874. This book was edited with former history professor Gary D. Olson, and includes an introduction by Olson and Krause. This was Herbert Krause’s last major work. His legend, however, lives on through his many writings and through the Center for Western Studies.
Martin Larson

605 E. 20th St. Feb. 3-1947
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Dear Herb:-

Well it is done it is finished as stated before[,] I am a plain reader. The Thresher has so much in it. It takes time to absorb and digest its contents—for instance your command and choice of uncommon words kept me constantly consulting Webster and “Har[illegible letters]” vocabulary which I have constantly on at my elbow on my desk. Having lived in this vicinity 70 years I am not an old man, but I have lived much[,] I have lived the evolution of threshing—and in all things a constantly changing environment.

It was a daring adventure on your part to go through with this work—your unvarnished expose—obscene, indicant, offensive to hastily—well I have to be critically ensured—how in hell you could get by with the manuscript before publication with pay[,] I mean Augustana College must have taken nerve on your part. I have read tobacco road[,] read the Egg and I—Black boy[,] Gods Little acre and others—they have nothing on you.[]

I was a little surprised at the comment in Pathfinder of Jan 29-47 owned by the FarmJournal—they said “the book falls short of its goal—because the goal was set too high.”

Having perused its contents I feel I am a better man,

Sincerely,

Martin Larson
Bibliography

Bill Krause Collection, The Center for Western Studies, Augustana College.
Herbert Arthur Krause Collection, The Center for Western Studies, Augustana College.
Letters from Frederick Manfred and Bishop Hare

Jordan Dobrowski

Last January I was given the opportunity to work in the archives of the Center for Western Studies through a course offered by Professor Harry Thompson. During this time, I transcribed a total of three letters: the first from Frederick “Feike” Manfred to John R. Milton in January of 1959, and the last two from Bishop William Hobart Hare to a Reverend Heckaliah Burt and Commissioner Newton Edmunds written in December of 1882. Although the three have no true connection to the events of Wounded Knee, they do have a lot to offer. Through them we can hear the inner thoughts of a renown author and the inspiring story of how two Anglicans stood up for the rights of Natives in the Dakota Territory. Now, other than sharing a common resting place for their letters, it doesn't take long to realize that the two authors have no connection. That said, what I would like to do is begin with the fairly straight-forward correspondence between Manfred and Milton and then conclude with the much deeper context of the Hare letters.

As many of you may know, John R. Milton and Frederick Manfred are two prominent authors from the Midwestern region in the mid-twentieth-century. They both boasted numerous awards and were published across the United States.

A child of the 1920s, Milton grew up in St. Paul, and after service with the Army Signal Corps, he returned to the state to pursue an undergraduate degree from the University of Minnesota. Then, after receiving his Ph. D. in American Literature and Creative Writing from the University of Denver, Milton began his career as a professor. Although he did teach at both Augsburg and Jamestown Colleges, the author is best known for his work at the University of South Dakota. For some time, Milton treasured the idea of a journal devoted to poetry, fiction, and essays about the American West, and after facing rejection from Augsburg and Jamestown, USD finally accepted the idea. Milton took on the role as editor of the South Dakota Review and continued in his position until his death in 1995.
Manfred on the other hand, served as USD’s writer-in-residence during the 70s and 80s.¹ “I wanted to write even before I started school,” he tells Milton during a mailed interview. “My aunt Kathryn... asked me once what I wanted to be. I asked what was the greatest thing a man could become. She said, 'a poet.' 'That's what I'm gonna be,' I said. I was five then.”² According to Manfred, writing was not a skill that was “self-chosen” but rather “something or somebody else [that] chose [him].”³ He describes his fascination with the region, however, as something that happened “just because I was born here, plus the fact that I got acquainted with it, I discovered it was also a wonderfully free and beautiful place to live in.”⁴ His novels embraced many aspects of the region and although not at first, were ultimately well-received. He received two Native American names from both the Sioux and Chippewa tribes: Tatanka Hanska (tall bull) and Gitchie Niji (tall friend) respectively⁵: a great honor, no doubt.

It is well-known that Milton and Manfred shared an extensive friendship during their lifetimes. The two wrote each other frequently, exchanging not only literary knowledge and criticism, but occasional diving into deep personal questions. The Manfred article to in the coming letter is likely a reference to a piece Milton had begun researching earlier on the life of his dear friend. Milton’s idea for the project appears to have come into being at the turn of 1956 when he inquired as to whether there had been any “formal articles about Manfred's work in any of the serious magazines.”⁶ Two years later, Manfred is found responding to forty-two questions asked by Milton that ranged in theme from genealogy to his experience with tuberculosis and even encounters with such prominent figures as Hubert Humphrey and Sinclair Lewis.⁷ Little did Manfred seem to know at the time that together, Milton and him would complete the full-length Conversations with Frederick Manfred several years later.

Manfred mentions a couple novels in the following letter. It can be assumed that “HORSE” refers to Manfred’s Conquering Horse published later that year by

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² Center for Western Studies (CWS) Archives: Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD. Box 39 – Folder 26.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Manfred was over 7 feet tall.
⁶ Center for Western Studies (CWS) Archives: Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD. Box 39 – Folder 26.
McDowell/Obolensky and that “ARROW” signifies *Arrow of Love*. The latter novel, however, was not published until 1961. Manfred explains his wait in a letter to Milton on March 25, 1958. In a true display of character, Manfred writes that a man named Alan Swallow had “stumbled onto the same legend or story in history that forms the germ of my title short novel,” and that since Swallow would be publishing soon, he would delay his premiere.\(^8\) Whether or not the article mentioned refers to a precursor of *Conversations*, is unknown.

The letter reads as follows:

FREDERICK MANFRED
6717 AUTO CLUB ROAD
MINNEAPOLIS 20, MINNESOTA

January 21, 1959

Dear John [R. Milton]-

Have been here in N.Y.C. at McDowell, Obolensky Inc for almost two weeks, reading the M.S. of *HORSE* a last time, plus listening to all sorts of book and editorial talk.

John, McDowell hopes that you do not sell your article on Manfred until after book is out May 28. I agree. Why don't you wait a month before starting it – perhaps even until you have read both *HORSE* and *ARROW*? There is just a possibility that both may get top attention - this would help you with your article as well as give you another peg on which to hang it all.

I'm far behind in my work, and as of now, I don't think I'm coming in April. I'm also [illegible] my two Sioux Falls dates. I have to keep working. That's first. (over)

Traveling tires the devil out of me. I won't have an original thought for another two weeks. (though I did enjoy myself here between sessions.) (and I'm crazy about my editors and publishers.)

Affectionately,

Frederick

\(^8\) CWS Archives. Box 39 – Folder 32.
The fact that Manfred refers to himself in third-person is an interesting detail, though not entirely uncommon for the author.\(^9\) Frederick Manfred was in fact baptized under the name Frederick Feikema, but due to frequent mispronunciations his editors suggested he write his books under his nickname “Feike” — which apparently was pronounced with more frequent accuracy — in conjunction with his original last name.\(^10\) He did so for some time before growing frustrated with continuing errors. At this time Manfred looked to Professor Konstantin Reichart of the Foreign Language Department at the University of Minnesota and discovered that both “Frederick” and “Feike” shared an Indo-European root in fri-du or pri-tu and that pri signifies “love,” “friendship,” and “peace.” He also discovered that “Feikema” anglicized could be read as “Fredman” or “Manfred.” He took a likely to the last one, “Even morons couldn’t help but pronounce it.”\(^11\) It was at this time in 1951 that Manfred began using the name “Frederick Manfred” which then became his legal name.\(^12\) Even so, it is not unreasonable to conclude from this letter that he still saw “Manfred” as a sort of penname, to which he was some how separate from.

The Bishop Hare letters also raise a couple of name questions, however first, let's begin with a background: The next two letters, as mentioned, are from Bishop William Hobart Hare to Heckaliah Burt and Commissioner Newton Edwards. Each character has been duly noted throughout history in numerous books and papers and certainly have intriguing backgrounds of their own. Nevertheless what is perhaps most interesting about these letters is known history of what comes after.

William Hobart Hare was a rather remarkable character in the early Dakota region. He was ordained as a deacon on June 19\(^{th}\) 1859. Within his first years he served at St. Luke's Church in Philadelphia and St. Paul's Church at Chester Hill. In 1874 the US government ordered Hare to tour Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Agencies to investigate the cause and extent of the Native’s unrest. During this expedition, Hare came to realize that certificates of Baptism and

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9 Though not regular, it is not uncommon for Manfred to refer to himself in the third person (Thompson, Harry. "Manfred Discussion." Interview by author. January 19, 2012.)
10 "The Evolution of a Name: Frederick Feike Manfred." Names 2, no. 2 (June 1954).
11 Ibid.
12 Center for Western Studies (CWS) Archives: Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD. Box 39 – Folder 33.
Confirmation meant little if anything to the native converts who lacked literacy. Therefore, on this expenditure, he designed a cross known as the Niobrara Cross which would signify that “Christ has come to the Dakotas and gathered them under the protection of the cross, that they have accepted him, and their homes have become Christian homes.”

Bishop Hare was alas a proactive man. Even before he was officially appointed the position of Officer of the Sixth Department in 1904 – a geographical region which included present day Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Missouri and Kansas – Hare was not hesitant to engage in politics.

Here, we see his meddling ways at play as he urges Reverend Burt and Commissioner Edmunds to protect the rights of the Native Americans in the area amidst aggressive administration and legislature in the Dakota Territory.

My dear [Heckaliah] Burt:

I think it of the first importance that the Great Sioux Reservation sh’d no longer be a block in the way of civilization and sh’d be divided up among the tribes who occupy it[,] [T]hen civilization [could] penetrate into the seam which would be made by such a division. But it is also of the highest importance that the rights of the Indians shall be protected.

Ever people, the Yanktonais, have an undoubted right in the Great Sioux Reservation. Their right to the Reservation they now occupy is disputed by some. They would act unwisely if they surrendered their certain right [and] reserved to themselves only an uncertain one. Please advise some of their chief men in my name.

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14 Ibid.

15 CWS Archives. 823.

16 “Yankton Agency”

17 “should”

18 Superimposed over the word “will.”
not to surrender give up their right to their share of the Great Sioux Reserve except upon this ^as a^ condition[.] [P]recedent ^is^ that the U.S. gives them a sure title to their present Reserve or as much of it as they need.

Y – agy  DEC. 21/82

My dear Sir

I am thoroughly in sympathy with the effort now being made to divide up the Great Sioux Reservation among the several tribes, who now hold it in common. + have learned with pleasure of the measure of success wh. 19, ^according to^ current reports, has attended the efforts of the the Sioux Commission. 20 I beg leave to draw your attention to the fact that the right of the Yanktonais ^[of] the Crow Creek Reserve^ to their present home is held by some to be imperfect [illegible] + to ask whether it would not be possible for your Commission to arrange for putting their title to their [ocupan] present Reservation beyond dispute.

that, on their [illegible] ^[by] the Yanktonais of^ their rights in the Great Sioux Reserve was of the Misurri [sic] River, their title to their present Reserve, a so much of it as they need, shall be placed beyond dispute.

Very Truly

Y'r obed't Serv't 21

[crease]

to:] Honorable

Newton Edmunds

Chairman of

Sioux Commission

19 “which”

20 Bishop Hare, like many of his time, wrote densely so as to conserve paper. With this in mind, it can be assumed that such extended spaces as seen in the following letters indicate a break in the author’s thought much like paragraph formatting.

21 “Your obedient servant”
In order to gain a deeper understanding of the urgency of these letters it's necessary to elaborate on their context, for when Burt received Hare's letter in December of 1882, he had already taken some action of his own on behalf of the Natives. Earlier that April, Burt had encouraged Crow Creek\textsuperscript{22} chiefs to sign a petition “beseeching the Great Father [President Chester A. Arthur] for protection from the Dakota whites, who were everyday clamoring more loudly for the Indian lands.”\textsuperscript{23} Unfortunately, Arthur ignored the request and Agent Spencer, who had allowed the Sioux to send the petition was subsequently replaced by a man of the name W. H. Parkhurst.

When Hare sent Burt his letter on the 12\textsuperscript{th} of Dec, it appears he spurred something in Burt to try again, however, for one reason or another, Burt turns to a certain Captain W. E. Dougherty for advice. Dougherty had been watching the affairs in Dakota region from the moment Edmunds took the field\textsuperscript{24} In his own effort to instill a need for instant action, Dougherty sends a letter to Alex Rencountre, a mixed-blood interpreter at Lower Brule who Dougherty highly regarded after working with him for years. In it, we gain some insight regarding the third figure in the following letters, Newton Edmunds.

“The chief man in that commission [Newton Edmunds] is the chief robber of the Indians for the last fifteen years. He lied to the Yanktonais and Two Kettles at old Fort Sully in 1865, he divided with Livingston and Hanson when they robbed you for over ten years... Send your people to advise all the other Indians to stop the council about the land, and get an honest man to take your side.”\textsuperscript{25}

What is surprising is that it was not Dougherty’s choice words that raised hairs about this given set of correspondence at the turn of the year. Through some contortion of events, Parkhurst ends up accusing Burt of sending a wire to Dougherty and “asking him to come to Crow Creek and Lower Brule to lead the fight against the land agreement”\textsuperscript{26}.\textsuperscript{27} He suspects Burt is plotting his assassination. He sends a telegram to Hare:

\textsuperscript{22} Refers to Crow Creek Agency, where Burt carried out his assignment.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 130.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} The land agreement referenced from here on through the rest of this headnote was approved originally August 7, 1882 and refers to can be found in its later amended form at http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/vol2/treaties/sio1065.htm. Hare was one of five signers who recommended the amendments (Teller, 68).
“Burt, missionary at Crow Creek has telegraphed Dougherty to come immediately to Crow Creek and take charge. Shall send Burt off the reservation unless you take the matter in hand. Have written.”28

When Hare receives the message, he is befuddled. Burt, after all, was a “meek” little man, and certainly no one would expect such combative action from him.29 Hare begins his search for understanding by writing Burt. He summarizes – in a fairly censored manner – the telegram he received and explains that while he cannot believe it, if what Parkhurst describes is true, he, Hare, cannot provide support to Burt.30 Then, in an effort to buy time Hare writes to Hon. H. Price, Commissioner of Indian Affairs at the time, “I am at a loss to answer this telegram and beg to refer the matter to you. I cannot take the matter in hand till I hear both sides.”31 He also attempts to bring to Price’s attention the nature of the matter and his concerns about the way Parkhurst’s actions will affect “the whole religious body who Mr. Burt represents.”32 When Burt replies a few days later, Hare accepts his explanation to be true, or at least to the extent that he forwards the letter on to Price in Burt’s defense.33

In both of the transcribed letters and even his later sent to Burt pleading for answers, Hare is particularly careful to make clear his position as a cooperative and reasonable individual in white society even if he does fight to defend the rights of the Natives. Nevertheless, by summer the next year, Burt, Hare and numerous other figures are all lumped into a great list of proposed adversaries to the Commission. In correspondence from Secretary Teller to Commissioner Edmunds, Teller writes:

“I suppose you are aware...that a great number of people in that vicinity do not want the Indians to part with any portion of their land... in some cases those who profess the most love for the Indians are those who for selfish purposes prefer the Indians to remain Indians.”34

27 Ibid., 131.
29 Hyde, 131.
30 CWS Archives. Box 4 – Folder 8.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 30.
34 Hyde, 143.
Sure, that may be true if Hare informing Teller that the Sioux Commission had failed to inform the Indians that under the agreement they were to give up a great tract of land, that the commission had threatened the Sioux at several agencies, and that the names of little children were being signed to the agreement

"can be considered “selfish”. Edmunds is advised to “look into the matter” as the Senate committee would “soon be in [his] section inquiring into details,” however Hare’s overall intentions seem to be construed.

Not much information is available to judge how Edmunds read his letter from Hare. In fact, it is hard to say that either recipient fully understood who the author was due to the fact Hare abstained from signing each of the letters. We can assume that at least Burt knew his correspondent from the fact that Hare writes to advise “some of their chief men in my name.” Nevertheless, this is actually rather uncharacteristic for Hare. In fact, in the five years preceding and following the letters at hand, the collection contains less than five other unsigned, completed letters. This suggests that Hare understood the dangerous nature of the waters he was treading.

The fact that Congress met on December 19, 1882 explains to some extent the incentive behind each of the letters that frame the date. Hare knew that the politicians had their own motives for settling matters fast and without conflict. However he also knew that such a conclusion could not come without due rights being given to the Natives, in particular, the Yanktonais. Ultimately, Hare appears to play middle man, knowing where he can and cannot get too far involved yet remaining influential in both Native and governmental parties. Eventually his fair and self-less motives are seen by the larger majority as Hare is placed as presiding Officer of the Sixth Department.

The preceding transcriptions are faithful reproductions of the original letters from the William Hobart Hare Papers within the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota collection and John R. Milton Collection (#3014) on deposit in the archives of the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College. Peculiarities in spelling, punctuation and spacing have been retained with minor exceptions; editorial changes are indicated in brackets. Superscript is marked by carets and page breaks by line spacing.

35 Ibid., 142.
36 Ibid., 131.
Mary Collins Writes to Thomas Riggs May 7, 1907

Sebastian Forbush

The author of the following letter is Mary C. Collins, the assistant of Mr. Thomas Riggs to whom this letter is addressed. Despite the letter being addressed to Mr. Riggs, it could be discerned that Mary is writing to Thomas instead if any of the other numerous Mr. Riggs by looking at the content of the letter. Mary Collins writes about the mission that Thomas Riggs runs, as well some of the problems that she has encountered there. None of the other Riggs family members had direct connections to the mission, and because of Mary Collins’ professional connections to Thomas Riggs, it is logical that that is who she is writing to.

Thomas Riggs was the second son of Stephen and Mary Riggs and was born in 1847. He developed many missions throughout the Dakota Territory, one of the most important at Oahe. This mission was erected in 1877, and it was used as a school house as well. This was later moved to Standing Rock, where Mary Collins worked. Thomas Riggs was extremely involved in the church community, developing a number of missions throughout the South Dakota reservations. He had numerous missions, including ones at Oahe and Rosebud.

Riggs cared about the Native Americans on the reservation, and therefore asked permission to build the missions. This gained Riggs favor with them, allowing Mary Collins to have success with the Lakota tribe. Mary Collins worked with Thomas Riggs as his assistant and eventually ran the Missionary School at Grand River for the American Missionary Association. Mary Collins was put in charge of this school as well as the mission at Standing Rock. Thomas Riggs put Mary Collins in charge of the finances at both these places. This can be seen in the letter by Mary’s extensive knowledge about the tax situation at the mission as well as her knowledge about the Elkhorn people and their donation to the mission. By using the five dollars a month to pay the native workers instead of taking it for herself, Mary Collins proves dedication to the Native Americans on the reservation. She also writes extensively about the Dakota Association which collects money for the schools and churches in the Dakota Territory.

Mary Collins was dedicated to the church and the Native Americans on the reservation. This is evident by the names that are present in her letter. She mentions Wakutemani, which
could be either Wakutemani Leouisa or Wakutemani Huntington. These names were obtained from the ledger that the mission kept of all the people who worked at the mission or lived on the reservation from 1890 to 1910. It is impossible to be positive who exactly it is because Mary Collins only uses their first name. The other names presented similar problems, George being either George Young Eagle or George Little Eagle. Both have no references outside of this letter, but both are in the ledger, making it quite difficult to identify them. The Gabe family that is discussed lived on the reservation, Mary Gabe being married to Charles Gabe. There was no information found on Bacis or Zurve Gabe, but Mary and Charles Gabe had two children. We can guess that these two people may be their children, but nothing can be proven. Wanblihupa was probably a member of the reservation, but the name was not on the ledger. Because of this, it is nearly impossible to discover who this person was.

Mary Collins and Thomas Riggs both learned the Dakota language when they moved to the reservation. She uses a Dakota phrase in the letter, but when looking at the Dakota to English dictionary, it was still difficult to determine what it means. Onspe translates to a piece, but eni was not in the dictionary.

Mary Collins writes about the treaty that is in question at this time. In March of 1907, the United States Congress passed a bill that decreased the land on the Rosebud Reservation. This was the second of three such treaties in 1904, 1907, and 1910. These treaties were not passed with the approval of three quarters of the men on the reservation as previously agreed upon by the two parties. The government’s willingness to break the agreement brought out concern among the Natives as well as Mary. Mary Collins was concerned with these treaties for two reasons: she was a staunch advocate for the rights of Native Americans, and she was informing Thomas Riggs about the displeasure among the Native Americans because he operated a mission at the Rosebud Reservation as well. The Rosebud reservation steadily shrunk over the course of these six years, all without the consent of the Native Americans on the reservation.

Mary Collins was ordained a reverend in 1899, and spent the entire time she was at the mission to translate for the Native Americans and teach them about Christianity. Collins was documented being friends with Sitting Bull, as well as a number of other members of the Lakota tribe. Mary Collins left the mission and reservation in 1910 at the age of 63 because of her
failing health. She lived for ten years off the reservation in Keokuk, Iowa, but still fought for the rights of the Native Americans.

This transcription is a faithful reproduction of the original letter from the Riggs Family Collection, on deposit in the archives of the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College. Peculiarities in spelling and punctuation have been retained with minor exceptions; editorial changes are in brackets.

Little Eagle, SD
May 7, 07

Dear Mr. Riggs,

Snowed all night! Still snowing and the snow lies nearly a foot deep now. How is that for May[?]

We have had no rain. Not even a shower yet. I have not heard thunder yet.

The half four permits for George and Wakutemani from Glenham to Aberdeen and return have come, but none from Aberdeen on. I will take the subject at the Dak[ota]-Asso[ciation] required.

As for programs[,] I am “onspe eni”[.] I am now collecting the Dak[ota] and the General Asso[ciation] tax. We are not behind on our general asso[ciation] tax. I have the last year[’]s receipt. If I had not already given away as much this year[, ] I would give the 7.60 to the Asso[ciation] but I cannot afford it. The Indians have had no rations, nor ^no^ irregular labor since last summer and the Elkhorn people have just paid me sixty dollars to use at the rate of five dollars a month to pay their native worker. My appropriation runs so close there is no margin. The tax for the state asso[ciation] is the hardest to collect of any[;] that is why I want George and Wakutemani to go. Perhaps it will be easier. When you come this way[,] come and see us. Cannot you come in June to the YMCA meeting[?] Tho[ugh] perhaps I may not be here myself[, ] I cannot say. Zurve Gabe wants me to tell you that she would like you to tell the proper persons that she and Charles and Bacis Gabe are the only heirs of Mary Gabe and that she is the widow of Wanblihupa. It seems that the land and issue of the treaty stipulations are in question.

Yours Truly,

Mary C. Collins
Works Cited

http://search.ancestry.com/cgibin/sse.dll?gl=ROOT_CATEGORY&rank=1&new=1&so=3&MSAV=0&msT=1&gsf=ms_f2_s&gsfn=mary&gsln=gabe&mswpn_ftp=Little+Eagle%2C+Corson%2C+South+Dakota%2C+USA&mswpn=63380&mswpn_PInfo=8|0|1652393|0|2|3248|44|0|738|63380|0|0&uidh=000.


United Church of Christ Collection. Center for Western Studies, Augustana College.
A Letter from Frank Waters to John R. Milton

Sebastian Forbush

The following letter was written by Frank Waters, a distinguished southwestern writer, to John R. Milton, an accomplished professor at the University of South Dakota as well as editor of the South Dakota Review. Waters lived in Taos, New Mexico for the majority of his life, and was extremely well published. Frank Waters first met Milton in 1970, when he was 68 years old. Milton published a book entitled Conversations with Frank Waters. After this interaction, Milton and Waters had constant correspondence until the death of Milton in 1995.

This letter describes the hard summer that Milton had in the year of 1990. During the course of this summer, Milton took a trip to California to visit his daughter, Nanci. When Milton arrived in Berkley, California, where Nanci lived, he and his wife Lynn discovered that she was anorexic. This information came as a blow to Milton, causing him to stay there for an extended period of time. While on the trip from Minnesota to California, Lynn got sick with high blood pressure. This worried Milton, but after seeing the doctor, it was determined that Lynn was not in serious danger. Milton came down with pneumonia earlier in the year and was still feeling the effects on the trip. After leaving Berkley, John and his wife went to Los Angeles to visit Milton’s cousin. While there, Milton’s car was broken into, and his briefcase with all of his papers was in it. Milton expresses great exasperation at all of his work over the last year being stolen, and claims that he will never be able to replicate his work. Milton tells Waters that he is doing better now, and that most of the ailments are healing. Waters also makes a comment about the expense of California. This is because in a previous letter, Milton makes a comment about the high electric bill he is paying for Nanci in her apartment.

Frank Waters also wrote about reprinting an essay that Milton wanted to reprint. This could have been any number of essays that Waters wrote and had published by Ohio University. It is known that a number of essays that Waters wrote were published by Ohio University, so it is difficult to determine which essay it was that Milton had the desire to republish.

Frank Waters was born in 1902 in Colorado. He dropped out of college in 1924, and travelled throughout the southwestern United States and into Mexico for over forty years.
During this time, Waters began to publish his writings; essays, nonfiction, and fiction. He finally settled down in Taos in 1964 and continued to write steadily. Waters married his third and final wife in 1973 when he was seventy-one years old.

Frank also talks about his neighbors in Seco, New Mexico. This is where Frank and his wife Barbara lived later in his life. Waters was quite wealthy, and owned property that he rented out.

Frank mentions his bought of pneumonia, which he had in 1990. Waters also was diagnosed with emphysema in 1990, complicating the symptoms of his pneumonia. Frank Waters also had hip replacement surgery done in both 1982 and 1990. Because of his advanced age, the hip replacements took a while to heal.

This transcription is a faithful reproduction of the original letter from the John R. Milton Collection, on deposit in the archives of the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College. Peculiarities in spelling and punctuation have been retained with minor exceptions; editorial changes are in brackets.
Dear John,

That request for permission to reprint I forwarded to Ohio Un. Press’ Permissions Editor to handle, as the full, revised text of the essay was published & copyrighted by Ohio.

I’m sorry to hear Lynn has been having high blood pressure trouble. Maybe a bit of worry is helping to keep it up, although Nanci appears to be O.K. Only you have reasons to fret, with the bills coming in, especially from California, where prices are too high to be believed.

This has not been a good winter for us. The couple renting the house in Seco suddenly moved back to Oklahoma in January. The house was too “rustic”, the people in town too unfriendly, etc. So Barbara had to drive up there and find a new renter – who seems fine. In the meantime I’ve had another stay in the hospital here for pneumonia, for ten days just before Christmas this time, and am still on oxygen day & night. Barbara & I are now attending twice a week a pulmonary rehabilitation class of 15 people taking all kinds of exercises; and I also have a stationary bicycle at home, which I hope will strengthen my leg enough to walk without a cane. The new hip joint put in over a year ago hasn’t healed properly and gives me trouble.

Barbara has been an angel, taking care of me, the dog, and the house, in addition to taking care of her psychotherapy clients. Where she gets her vitality and patience I don’t know. But we count ourselves fortunate, compared to her clients’ horror stories.

Let’s hope we get together in the near future. Meanwhile Best,

Frank
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John R. Milton Collection. Center for Western Studies, Augustana College.

Letter Context Review—Letters from William Cleveland and Max Evans

Matthew Garred

NPST 397 - Dr. Harry Thompson

William J. Cleveland penned the first letter of this transcription review. William Cleveland was an Episcopal missionary that was working in the Rosebud Dakota Territory at the time the letter was sent. The recipient of the letter was William Hobart Hare, a bishop overseeing the Episcopal Church in the Dakota Territory.

William J. Cleveland went to Berkeley Divinity School in Connecticut. Before his graduation, he heard a sermon on the urgent need for growth in the church and the need for additional missionaries. He was an enthusiastic man who was not afraid to interact with Native Americans. Since he was not married at the time, he decided to enter the mission field after graduation. He served in multiple locations, including Rosebud, a reservation in the Dakota Territory. He also served in Madison and Flandreau in the Territory. One of his notable accomplishments was being named the first head of the St Mary’s boarding school in 1885. Even though the school had been open for only two years, it had an attendance of forty-eight students. He also served as editor of The Anpao kin, or Daybreak; it was the first church journal that was published in the state of South Dakota. In 1932, Cleveland helped publish a Dakota Hymnal with tunes and chants (Sneve 7, 29, 57, 63, 71-72, Young 20).

William Hobart Hare was born in Princeton, New Jersey on May 17, 1838. His family strongly influenced the choice he made to become a bishop. His father was a Biblical scholar, and was appointed to be a member of the American Old Testament Committee. This committee was appointed under the supervision of the Convocation of Canterbury in 1870 for making revisions of the authorized version of the English Bible. William Hobart Hare’s father taught in Philadelphia at the University of Pennsylvania and the Protestant Episcopal Academy for Boys. He was a professor of Biblical learning and Exegesis in the Divinity School in West Philadelphia. He was the first dean at the school.

Hare’s mother’s family also played a role in his career. His mother was the daughter of the Right Rev. John Henry Hobart, Bishop of New York, who in turn was the son of Rev. Peter
Hobart, the first Puritan minister of the of Hingham, MA. Even William Hobart Hare’s wife came from a family of people deeply devoted and openly public to their faith in God (Hare, William Hobart, and DeWolfe Howe).

William Cleveland and William Hobart Hare worked together extensively. They both worked for the Episcopal Church in the Northern Plains, with Hare overseeing Cleveland’s work and successes as a missionary. It is notable that Bishop Hare performed the marriage ceremony of William Cleveland to his bride, Lizzie Stiteler (Sneve 45).

One of the significant events that occurred at the time this letter was sent was the escalation of tension between Chief Spotted Tail of the Brulé Lakota and Crow-Dog, also of the Brulé Lakota. The United States had just purchased the Black Hills from the Sioux for only $6 million. After this purchase, the tribe was relocated to Pine Ridge and Rosebud in the Dakota Territory. Many Sioux Indians were angry that the Black Hills had been sold in order to end the War for the Black Hills in 1876-1877. A great number of the Sioux blamed Spotted Tail. They wanted to overthrow him and choose a new chief. Later, Spotted Tail was put on trial for eloping with the wife of a man named Uriah. Before Spotted Tail could make amends for wrongdoing against the woman’s first husband, Uriah, Crow-Dog shot and killed Spotted Tail as he left his home at Rosebud atop a horse on August 5, 1881 (Sherrow, Waldman).

Although some Sioux disapproved of Spotted Tail’s choices at the end of his life, his family and friends mourned his death. He was buried in his specially beaded buckskin at the local agency. He was later reburied in a cemetery north of Rosebud with a white marble monument on top of his grave. Crow-Dog was not viewed as a murderer by his tribe, but rather viewed as an executioner serving justice. The South Dakota court required him to be given a trial and was sentenced to death. Ultimately, Crow Dog’s sentence was lifted in the case, Ex parte Crow-Dog. The federal court ruled that it had no jurisdiction over crimes committed on the reservations (Sherrow, Waldman).

Another significant event happened during the time this letter was written. A new St. Mary’s school was constructed to replace the St. Mary’s girl’s school that burned down previously in February of 1884 in Santee. The new school was constructed in 1885 in Rosebud at Antelope Creek for both boys and girls. It was the biggest missionary enterprise undertaken in Rosebud up to that time. The school averaged an attendance of forty-five, and the academic
courses included reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and domestic skills (Sneve 101-102). “St. Mary’s was again destroyed by fire in August, 1910, but classes continued in a barracks until the new building, this time of cement block, was ready the next year” (102).

In this letter, Cleveland discusses a number of topics with Bishop Hare. These topics include the burial and details of Chief Spotted Tail’s trial and murder due to the hand of Crow-Dog. Cleveland also asks whether he should start the undertaking of building a new school, which I believe to be the St. Mary’s Boarding School. Changes and difficult transcriptions have been placed in brackets, and punctuation and paragraphing have been changed to fit the modern style of writing.

Rosebud D.T. 8-6-81

Dear Bishop:

I have just returned from burying the Great Chief Spotted Tail. The growing hatred and jealousy of him among the people here finally culminated in his being shot ostensibly for having stolen another man’s wife. He ran off with her several days ago & meanwhile word came for him to hurry to [the Yankton Agency] to join the delegation there collecting to go to Washington- but he was nowhere to be found. Yesterday, he came home & a grand council was held at the Brulé Camp in which he [spoke to] them about his [proposed] visit to Washington. Afterwards they tried to [induce] him to give poor Uriah [?] back his wife and offered him nine horses [& other items,] but he positively refused. After the council broke up he was shot & instantly killed by Crow-Dog [,] a man who has been jealous of him [, but] no relation of the stolen woman. There is great excitement here. The affection and respect of the people was so thoroughly estranged from him [,] especially by his last dirty deed [,] that no one seemed to be surprised that he was shot and I do not think there will be serious trouble though there is talk of it. Mr. Cook is absent and Mr. LeCar at once sent for troops. Crow-Dog has been arrested.

Now is the time: If the [government] wants to break up this Head-Chief foolishness. I was asked to bury him but of course could not. [Our] so with the [Christian] service or in our burying a friend. The funeral however is quietly over now.
We are well and I regret very much, as I have no doubt you do also, that you cannot come here. The class is ready now[,] but where they may be scattered to when you [illegible] come who [knows?] I want to go and meet Mrs. Cleveland (probably as far as Cleveland, Ohio) about the middle of September so as to get the little ones out of here before there is any danger of cold weather, if possible. As no school children are wanted, I departed, about Sept. 10th. I had thought I would combine getting them safely down and going after Mrs. C. Shall I go ahead and try to build a schoolhouse? I do not think the Church will answer [well,] at all. Your telegram [received] just in time [, but] not our letter yet. My sister joins me in kindest regards.

Sincerely go out in [peace,]

W. J. Cleveland

Max Evans wrote the second letter, and the recipient was John R. Milton. Max was born August 29th, 1925 in Ropes, TX and was the son of W.B. and Hazel Evans. He studied art privately with Ida Strawn Baker, Woody Crumbo and Dal Holcomb. He married Pat James on August 4th, 1949, and they had a set of twins named Charlotte and Sheryl (“Max Evans,” Vinson 278).

Max Evans was a colorful character. The New York Times classified Evans as a “hard-drinking and brawling ex-cowboy, painter, prospector, land trader, used car dealer, gold-smuggler and seer” (Blumenthal). Evans is even regarded as a “range-land Mark Twain” (Champlin). He was known mostly for his books, some of which have been made into motion pictures. “A University of New Mexico history professor, Paul Andrew Hutton, [has written] a screenplay for a four-hour mini-series based on Mr. Evans’s 2002 biography of Silver City Millie, a legendary New Mexico madam” (Blumenthal). His main writing focus had been about the vanishing West as portrayed in “The Rounders” and “The Hi-Lo Country” (Blumenthal). His novels and stories were humorous, but also had some tragic parts and wrote as if “the antics themselves [were] compensations for pains of a grueling life in unyielding country” (Champlin).

There are numerous descriptions of Evans and details of the inspirations for his works. He had a more flattened nose than a normal person due to a number of “bar-room differences
of opinion” (Blumenthal). His paternal grandfather was a cattle rancher, and Max was brought up by “old time cowboys, whose own roots reached back to the 1880’s” (Blumenthal). Max enlisted in the Army after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and he fought on the beaches of Normandy on the 2nd day of combat. This part of his life was portrayed in “Bluefeather Fellini.”

He later became friends with Woodrow Wilson Crumbo, an artist who later joined Evans in prospecting. It was claimed that the two men made a fortune in copper and uranium mines (Blumenthal).

In 1957, Evans decided to give up art so he could pursue writing full time. He believed that this action directly correlated with the loss of his psychic powers, which he had inherited from his Cherokee grandmother (Blumenthal). After this decision, he published “Bluefeather Fellini in the Sacred Realm” in two parts; part one in 1993 and part two in 1994. The University Press of Colorado published both parts (Blumenthal).

Evans received a number of awards throughout his career. Some of these awards include a commendation from the City of Los Angeles by being named an honorary member of the Board of Chancellors. He also received the Saddleman Award from the University of Texas ("Max Evans").

John R. Milton was born on May 24th, 1924 in Anoka, Minnesota. He grew up in the St. Paul area and entered into the Signal Army Corps from 1943-1946 and worked in Okinawa in the South Pacific (Gasque 259). He later married Lynn Hinderlie on August 3, 1946. They had one daughter named Nanci. After his service in the Corps, Milton enrolled in the University of Minnesota and received both his BA an MA there. He later journeyed to the University of Denver and earned a doctorate in American literature and creative writing in 1961. Afterwards, John taught in a variety of places, including at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, Jamestown College in North Dakota, and the University of South Dakota.

Milton is also known for being an editor and a writer. He started the South Dakota Review, which earned national recognition. He has critiqued a number of articles and authors, who really appreciate his insight on their publications. David Allan Evans, a fellow author, wrote this about Milton:

John Milton was, in my opinion, an important editor with high standards. When I was in my 30’s and just beginning to publish some of my work, John was one of
the first editors who encouraged me. Not only did he publish some of my poems, but he helped me see that the local[e] is important; he showed me, by his good example and his extensive knowledge of Midwestern and Western American literature, that writers must write out of what they know, and must not overlook their roots. I know he would have agreed with William Stafford’s statement that “all art is local.” Midwestern writers tend to have an inferiority complex, and I was definitely one with a complex. John helped me understand that my Sioux City, Iowa roots are the stuff that poems can be made out of, and so I believe his opinions and suggestions to me have been a positive influence on my writing. (Evans)

Milton wrote over two hundred publications, including *This Lonely House*, *The Novel of the American West*, and *The Literature of South Dakota*. The *Inheritance of Emmy One Horse*, a short story written by Milton, won a “Best American Short Story” award in 1969. He was also known for writing five volumes of poetry from 1962 to 1974. He read his work “The Legacy” at a memorial in Pierre, South Dakota to honor Governor George Mickelson after his death in 1993 due to a plane crash. Milton was also known for two biographies, one dedicated to Crazy Horse and the other to Oscar Howe, an artist. Despite all of these successes, Milton only published one novel called *Notes to a Bald Buffalo* (Milton).

Dennis and Gayle Lynds had this to say about Milton after his death due to a heart attack:

John did not finish all he wanted to do, but, then, nothing really worth doing is ever finished. What did he do and leave is far more than most, and it will say new things to all of us over the years to come. But for we two the most important legacy was his friendship, his insights into our common art, and those long dinners and talks here where The West finally ends. (Lynds, Dennis, and Gayle Lynds 175)

In the following letter, Max writes to John, inquiring if he has received a copy of his latest book, “The White Shadow.” This book is about a white doe, which survived for 13 years while living next to a major freeway in San Diego (Vinson 280). Max also highlights some of the comments he has received from his latest work, leading to extreme praise and criticism, and even threats. Max does not feel confident that many people will appreciate his work.

Max also goes on to tell John that he is going to see his in-laws for Christmas. He does not seem to be thrilled about the situation. He also talks about his wife and how much she
enjoys a new job in real estate. He does not spend a whole lot of time in Hollywood anymore because Westerns have lost their popularity in show business.

He concludes his letter with considering the idea of selling his homestead in the spring for a smaller place to live in. When he mentions that it is too much to keep tidy and such, I believe that he is getting older and cannot physically move as well to keep up with all of the necessary chores. It also might be that the idea of maintaining the homestead is just too stressful. Modifications to the letter are in brackets, and punctuation and paragraphing have been modified to fit into the modern writing style.

Dec. 6, 1977

Howdy John--

I sure hope you received your copy of “The White Shadow” which was dedicated in part to you. Anyway [I’m] beginning to know how Al Van Gogh [must have] felt. We only sent out eight review copies since Joyce is such a small press. The results have been rather amazing so far. Out of the five papers that have reviewed it- 3 were raves and two the most violently destructive I’ve ever read. We usually sell less books in N.M. than anywhere else. This one has been on the bestseller list here for weeks and is moving moderate[ly] to show on the west coast. One man here who has been a rather close friend for nine years refuses to speak to me- and he has threatened to ‘beat the shit’ out of me. Others call and say it’s my best book yet. What a bloody stupid mess our entire entertainment world is in/ I was right several years ago when I threatened going back to punchin’ cows. I feel T.W.S. is fated- like your very fine novel “A Bold Buffalo”- to be read and appreciated by about 13 people total.

Well we’re gonna have to go to Texas to Pat’s folks for Christmas. I don’t like Christmas to start with- much less the idea of spending it in Salhort[,] Texas. Ol’ Santa lost the map to that place about time the [EXIT sign showed]. Sure [e]njoyed the issue on Frank [Waters]. One has a tendency to forget how much he’s done.

Pat is doing quite well in [r]eal [e]state. She really enjoys it. So do I.
Haven’t been fooling around Hollywood much, as westerns are mostly dead. Less than 1% of the production charts are westerns—and only bankable stars can get those made. It’s too bad—there’s no one left that knows how to make them but Peckinpah—and he’s gone crazy for real. We’re thinking of selling this ol’ homestead this spring, and getting a smaller place. It’s just too much for us to keep up now.

Sure would like to see you guys—
Our love to all
Ol’ Max
Works Cited


Cleveland, William J. Letter to Bishop Hare. 6 Aug. 1881. MS. Augustana College: Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.


“On my honor, I pledge that I have upheld the Honor Code, and that the work I have done on this assignment has been honest, and that the work of others in this class has, to the best of my knowledge, been honest as well.”
Wounded Knee 1973: Forty Years Later
A Journalist Reminisces

Richard Muller, M.S.S
Westreville, SD

SLIDE: A Journalist Reminisces

Journalists, correspondents and reporters tell stories for a living. Readers, listeners and viewers, read, listen and watch them.

These aren’t the only stories they tell. Journalists also tell stories to each other, reminiscing, sharing memories and observations of events covered, often for years after an event and most of the time the stories are true. They are usually too good not to be.

This Journalist’s reminiscences of non-news and news events that occurred around and during the coverage of the 71 day occupation of Wounded Knee South Dakota in February of 1973, are likely not what you think and know about the event, and certainly not what you think you know about it. Here we share some of the back-stories, the incidents, coincidences and consequences that heretofore only fellow Journalists have been privy to.

No sacred journalistic trust is violated in the retelling of these tales, they are all true. The names of minor players will not be divulged so as to maintain focus on the circumstance and effort spent on reporting the events to the public.

Some of these stories are based on coincidence, being in the right place at the right time, the wrong place at the wrong time, the right place at the wrong time, and of course, the wrong place at the right time. As a result, in some of these stories you may encounter humor, disappointment or relief.

I was a reporter for KELO-TV from 1970-1974.

I was at Wounded Knee.

SLIDE: Why Was KELO There?

Why was KELO TV one of the first news agencies at Wounded Knee?
It was a matter of logistics. KELO TV had stationed me as the first full-time TV reporter in Pierre in 1970 and that made it only a few hours’ drive to Wounded Knee. Then why was KELO TV in Pierre?

MidContinent Television through SD Partner Joe Floyd, had expanded their broadcast signal to Central South Dakota from the home station in Sioux Falls around 1968 in an effort to reach more potential advertisers and in turn their potential customers by using a re-broadcast of the original Sioux Falls signal.

Through that year, the KELO sales team would have worked over all the businesses and likely sponsors in every county west of Mitchell all the way out to Rosebud and up to McLaughlin.

Local Television ads in the KPLO-TV area as it was called were crude at best and not seen in the other markets (KELO and KDLO-Garden City). There would be a break in programming away from the Sioux Falls station, and the local spots would be inserted for broadcast to the two satellite stations.

KELO-KPLO and KDLO were all licensed by the FCC to Midcontinent Broadcasting. As part of that licensing privilege they had a responsibility to the viewers to provide complete television coverage of the area.

It didn’t take long for viewers West River to recognize that while their entertainment programming was augmented by local advertiser support, there was a noticeable lack of any news content on local broadcasts in the area. The Sioux Falls newscasts might contain AP or UPI stories about the area that an anchor would read, but no locally produced content was broadcast.

A legal aid lawyer on the Rosebud was familiar enough with FCC licensing procedures to initiate a complaint against KELO-TV. The complaint was simply that the broadcaster was happy to take the money of local advertisers, but hard pressed to provide viewers any news coverage for the privilege. KELO couldn’t defend their position.

One point of the settlement of the complaint was that KELO-TV was required to station a full time news office to cover West River events. That office was in Pierre, and the job was mine…and it was only a few hours’ drive to Wounded Knee in the middle of the night in February 1973.
As an aside, for the next forty years the story of how the legal aid attorney brought media giant KELO-TV to their knees and how it created the start of my long career in television was told often with great delight by the lawyer. The last time I saw him, back in spring of 2011, we were both laughing at how the years had played out, and he confessed how much he enjoyed telling and retelling the story. It was the last time I saw him.

He never missed an opportunity to remind me and others, how, as he used to tell it, he got me my first job in news. That’s just how Bill Janklow was.

**SLIDE: Early Morning Phone Call**

I don’t really remember much about the evening of February 27 that makes it stand out from any other winter night in Pierre. I don’t recall there being any snow on the ground, I could be wrong or that it was particularly cold, in fact is was 10-12 degrees.

I do remember a premonition that was shared with me. Several months earlier KELO Vice President Evans Nord made a rare trip to Pierre, designed largely to show face in town to demonstrate involvement in the community. While taking him back to the airport, he asked me for a personal favor. If in my travels on the Rez I should make contact with any genuine Native American artifacts or art, I should buy them for him and he would reimburse me. “Yes sir, of course” I said.

There was a long silence and he said “be careful out there, there’s something going to happen in Indian Country that’s gonna be big and it won’t be pretty.” Again, “Yes sir, of course.” I didn’t think about that conversation again until sometime after Wounded Knee.

My recollection of that February night is a call from the KELO News Director in Sioux Falls telling me AIM had taken over Wounded Knee, pack your gear and get down there now if not sooner. The call came around 1:00 a.m. Feb 28, by 3:00 am I was in the shared Capitol news office with the rest of the Pierre Press Corps (as we called ourselves), comprised of 3 United Press reporters, 2 from Associated Press and myself. Membership in the Pierre Press Corps required three things: you had to be a working newsman, you had to understand sarcasm and you had to attempt to excel at one-ups-man ship. To say we were competitive would be an understatement, we were all friends.
At the Capitol that morning not one of us had any more details to share, all we could do is round up our gear, and head out. All of us in our own vehicles.

I was finishing up packing my film gear and film stock when it happened.

**SLIDE: Error in Judgment**

Everything we shot then was on 16mm film. (Film can). The cameras we used were heavy but somewhat portable when put in a back and shoulder harness. I’d say the camera, its battery, the audio mixer weighed in around 45 lbs. That’s me at one of the many press conferences in Pine Ridge during the takeover.

Back to packing to go to Wounded Knee that morning. I had maybe 40 rolls of film in my supply, 400 foot each, sound-on, about 12 minutes of running time in each, loaded into a magazine like this. (magazine) Easily a month’s worth of film. The two minute news story might take 4 minutes of film, about 200 feet.

We finished our packing in the news bureau. The last thing I always packed was my film stock. I picked up about 10 rolls, looked at it, did the calculations of how much time I’d have. About 2 hours.

One of the other reporters asked me (in the required sarcastic tone) “how much film are you taking ?” A normal news story might take one roll. I grabbed 4 cans of film, an hour’s worth, and said...“this is it” adding “this thing is gonna be over in three days”, my contribution to one-ups-man ship. Nobody argued with me.

Although my press colleagues would tell you my record for sizing up a news story was nearly impeccable...to this day, they won’t let me forget that rare error in journalistic judgment. It’s a story they all still tell.

**SLIDE: That’s Your Job**

I arrived in Pine Ridge around daybreak Feb 28, in the unmarked station wagon KELO had assigned me. I had been to the Ridge many times over the three years I had been at KELO. This time I was struck immediately by the foreboding omnipresent image of sandbag bunkers
and snipers on every corner of the BIA Building. The place was electric. I was one of the first journalists to arrive.

There were two kinds of press at Wounded Knee, Inside Press and Outside Press. Exclusive elite Inside Press were actually in Wounded Knee, the rest of us, the Outside Press were outside the roadblocks which had already been set up less than 8 hours after the takeover.

The Federal Marshalls were in charge. Clearly to get enough Marshalls to Pine Ridge that fast created some interesting logistical issues. Every Marshall, FBI Agent and Secret Service Agents in the Dakotas and surrounds was quickly pressed into service. The military was there, still not enough. The effort was staffed by “volunteers” from other Federal jobs in the area: Postal Employees, even IRS Agents.

I shot film all that first day and sent it off to KELO by air from Rapid City for that night’s news cast. I was already Outside Press. I needed to be Inside.

I had some maps and found a back road in, the Danby Road. All the back roads were gravel then, they probably still are. At 3:00 in the morning under the cover of darkness I left the village of Pine Ridge for Wounded Knee.

I was running fast with the lights out, probably going too fast.

The gravel road rose a bit then ended in a T junction, which I hadn’t anticipated and barely saw. I hit the brakes and spun the front end of the car to the west, toward Wounded Knee. Skidding sideways to a stop, I caught my breath looked up and faced barbed wire across the road. Instinctively I reached for the door handle to get out and open the gate, when from behind me (as they always do) standing right in the door was an agent in plain clothes. My stomach turned.

“Where do you think you’re going Muller?” He called me by name in the pitch black dead of night, right out of the blocks, damn they were good.

What was I going to say? “Going Inside.”

“I don’t think so...you’re done for the night. See I understand it’s your job to get in, and it’s my job to keep you out. I win this one Richard. Good Night.” He slipped back into the darkness. Dazed and confused I limped back to Pine Ridge.

Twenty years later, I was participating in a charity bike ride, a bike trek, in the Black Hills. The organizer, a very close friend, introduced me to a fellow Trekker. I had seen this guy
somewhere before. We chatted a while before the ride started. I had to ask him... “I’ve met you before? Were you at Wounded Knee?” He grinned and rode away on his bike.

For the next six years in the mid-90’s retired Secret Service Agent Gene Heller and I had Thanksgiving Dinner with the family of our mutual friend. For six years after dessert we argued death, politics and religion. Our discussions were so animated it became a regular treat for the other guests gathered around our friend’s Thanksgiving table.

We never talked about Wounded Knee.

SLIDE: Most Unusual Expense

The Feds had a standing offer to AIM holdouts in Wounded Knee. Anyone inside, could come outside between the hours of 8am and 6pm, lay down their arms, be escorted away, not be immediately arrested or immediately charged and they weren’t allowed back in. One day either the offer was revised, misinterpreted or cranked out as a rumor, but the feeling inside the village was that the standing offer had been rescinded and by 4:00 that afternoon the village was to be vacated, by force if necessary.

The Feds periodically allowed outside press inside, providing we submitted to vehicle inspections and pat downs at both the Federal checkpoints and the AIM checkpoints, and on the condition that we came back out. That day I was inside. On camera I asked Russell Means about the reported “offer”. He said he thought it meant that after 4:00 that day the Feds were going to come in and clear the village. “How?” I asked. “I suppose they will use gas” was his reply.

As a good student of the 60s, I knew by way of hearsay that one efficient means of fending off a gas attack, especially if you had to be filming it, was a thick Turkish towel, soaked in fresh lemon juice, worn over the nose and mouth. The towel wasn’t hard to get, I don’t remember were in Pine Ridge I found a dozen fresh lemons in mid-March, but I know they weren’t cheap. Both ended up on my expense account for that week. I was reimbursed. There was no gas attack. I still believe the lemons would have worked.

SLIDE: Coates Farm
The siege of Wounded Knee ran 71 days. That’s a long time to live inside a Federal roadblock. Wounded Knee is small, there’s a church and the graves of the 1890 victims. The Gildersleeve family had a trading post with some supplies, they were commandeered early on by AIM. It is possible supplies were brought in prior to the take over and held for later. There are several canyons and back-ways into the village that supporters could have used as supply lines in the cover of darkness moving on foot.

The road blocks presumably kept supplies from getting in. George Coates, a local rancher, lived inside the Federal Roadblock, within easy walking distance of the village. During the periodic cease-fires arranged by the Feds the AIM’s (as George called them) would raid the Coates’ ranch for cattle and poultry to slaughter and other supplies to sustain the combatants in the village. In April it turned ugly....

ROLL Coates Film.

George died in 2003 at age of 78. I never did find out if he received any reparations for his home, the 63 head of cattle, numerous chickens, ranch equipment and personal possessions he lost. And I always wondered how long AIM could have held out if the Feds hadn’t arranged the cease-fires that enabled the raids on the Coates Ranch. Maybe it wouldn’t have lasted 71 days...what do I know?

SLIDE: A Deal with Means

May 8, the 71 day siege of Wounded Knee ended. By the fall of 1973 Russell Means and company faced a list of charges.

An entry level reporter does not make the big money. But we do have access to great opportunity. One of them is selling news footage to agencies other than your primary employer. I rationalized that as long as KELO got the best footage first, anything else I could scrape up was mine. I did some business with Walter Cronkite on CBS and did steady business with UPI-TN, the United Press International Television Network.

I had one sound camera and one silent camera. My standard practice was to shoot sound-on B-roll (what we call cutaways, reverse shots of the scene, setting the visual scene)
while at the same time shooting the same things with the silent camera. Then I would ask my first question on the sound camera which completed one news package on my first magazine. Then I would switch magazines and ask the question again. Combining the silent footage I had with the second interview I had produced another package.

Sometime in September, Russell was called in for a hearing or testimony of some sort related to Wounded Knee in Federal Court, Pierre. My backyard. I covered the story, the press did their interviews outside the courthouse, I did my double shooting routine again.

I had one interview completed, changed magazines and asked the question a second time, when Russell stopped before answering and asked me why I always asked the same question over? Implied either I was fishing for a different answer, or I was inept and never got it shot right the first time. I told him I was shooting for two news agencies and sent them both the same package. Not missing a beat, he asked “Do you get two paychecks?” “Yes, I do”. “OK then” he said with a smile in his eyes and half a laugh in his voice “Let’s go, ask your question again.”

I had made a deal with Russell Means that got me two paychecks and for him, twice as much news coverage.

That day we were just two guys at work making a deal.

SLIDE: still on Means

AIM left Wounded Knee May 8. By late June, in a letter to tribal leaders, the Feds called for a treaty conference in South Dakota to be held sometime in September. Indian headmen were invited. It was the Feds way of opening negotiations after the longest armed standoff in American History.

Crow Dog’s Paradise, on the Rosebud Reservation, was the site of many religious rituals and native counsel conducted by Medicine Man Henry Crow Dog and his son Leonard. At a planning meeting there in July in response to the offer from the Feds, Russell Means told the assembled Indian leaders what they should be prepared to do when the treaty meeting came around. I was there.

ROLL Crow Dog Video
I went back to Crow Dog’s for the Sundance in August. I had been a guest there once before, behaved myself, and I thought I might be able to witness some aspects of AIM leadership preparing themselves for the upcoming treaty meeting with the clarity and purpose of the Sundance.

I was no stranger to Sundances. Deep down, I knew I was not going to be granted access, but it was worth a shot to be there, in the vicinity, to keep communication lines open with the key players.

I met Henry Crow Dog just off the road on the hill before you turn off the highway into Crow Dog’s Paradise. It was around noon, the August sun was already a furnace. I wasn’t particularly good in making small-talk with tribal elders, mostly I knew to stay quiet and wait for them.

In a heat cracked, elder Native American voice, Leonard began telling me about the proceedings.

My boys are singing, they sing all day, in the heat. They sing at night, all night, and then they will sing again. It is very hot, they are tired and thirsty (he rubbed his fingers up and down his throat)...maybe you have something for them? A long pause. Maybe you have some whiskey?

Before I spoke, I thought to myself...so all I need to do was locate some whiskey, return with it, and I might get some access to the Sundance, without a camera of course. The Sacred Sundance. The non-native reporter brings the whiskey for the singers? Was he testing me?

I told Henry I would see what I could do. I struggled with the request. It was reasonable enough, he had asked me as a trusted outsider. Ultimately I didn’t see my role as the one that brought the whiskey to the AIM Sundance. I respected the ceremony and the participants too much to do that.

Henry and I did not make a deal.
I returned to Wounded Knee at a couple of times the summer of ‘73. I was traveling with one of my journalism colleagues on this particular trip and I managed to break a story that went national on Tourist traffic at the Wounded Knee site. While there I found an old woman who lost her mobile home during the siege.

ROLL TAPE Nettie Too Too

I always struggled with Nettie’s last sound bite. It almost comes off as if she didn’t get any help from the Government. Yet, when she was reminded, she managed to get it straight.

Remember, this is an old woman, living in rural Pine Ridge all her life. She has gone through the events of Wounded Knee, lost her home and is now being asked questions by a stranger, hollered at her from behind the 45 pound camera he has on his shoulder, pointed right at her. I think she handled it well. It would have been easy to edit her off when she said she got no help. The whole story would have changed. It would have been easy, but not right.

In closing, one thing has become clear to me and the journalistic colleagues who helped with fact checking this reminiscence, the value of accurate history.

My colleagues and I have been telling the story of Nettie Too Too for 39 years. Up to this point, we remembered it with her sitting in her living room, answering those same questions, and when she was asked what she got she said “all we got was this lamp” and she points to it next to her. The same reminder/follow up was asked and again she closes with...“and this trailer”.

Maybe we did the interview twice, we might have moved outside, sometimes a better location can make a subject more comfortable.

But by going through the archives at KELO-TV (access to which I am extremely grateful for) we discover we have been telling the story a little wrong. Now we have the facts and conditions straight. Yet little, if any, of the meaning has changed.

There is great value in reminiscing and telling stories, even if time does distort the lens a bit. There is great value in preserving our history. There is great value in the Center for Western Studies.

Thank you.
Peter Norbeck
Brought Artesian Water to the Prairie and Common Sense to Washington
Jean Rahja

Peter Norbeck’s father, George Norbeck, was born in Sweden in 1836.⁴ At the age of eighteen, he went to Norway. There, he found employment as a carpenter, painter, fisherman and part-time preacher. In 1859, he was converted at a revival meeting sponsored by a faction of the Lutheran church.²

George Norbeck and a group of his friends from Norway emigrated to Wisconsin in 1866. In 1868, George Norbeck and a group of his Scandinavian friends moved to Sioux City, Iowa in search of work. He preached to his countrymen at every opportunity even though he was not an ordained minister.³

While George Norbeck was in Sioux City, he met Karen Larson who was also from Norway. They were married in November, 1870. After their marriage, they left by team and wagon for their new home in Clay County, Dakota Territory.⁴ The previous fall, George Norbeck had dug a cellar and had started to build a frame house over the cellar. The cellar was their home the first year of their marriage. It was here that their first son, Peter Norbeck was born on August 27, 1870.⁵

In the summer of 1885, George Norbeck received a “call” to preach for a congregation in Charles Mix County 130 miles to the west. Peter was sixteen years old. Neighbors and member of the congregation helped build the home.⁶

Peter had an intense desire to receive additional education. He memorized long passages from the Old and New Testament. The family saved $25.00 which enabled Peter to attend the University of SD in 1887.⁷ He worked at odd jobs around Vermilion to help pay for his education. He returned in 1889 for his second term at the University.⁸

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⁵ Ibid. p. 11.
⁷ Ibid. p. 13.
⁸ Catalogue, *University of South Dakota*, 1888-89
One of the greatest problems for pioneer families on the Great Plains was finding an adequate water supply. West of the ninety-eighth meridian there was a marked deficiency in rainfall. In the summer of 1892, Reverend Norbeck purchased an old well-drilling machine while visiting friends in Clay County. Farmers there were drilling wells and he thought maybe he could do the same on his Charles Mix Country land. Shallow wells there were drying up. There was an artesian water basin from the James River valley to the Missouri River. If that could be tapped, the water problems for hundreds of farmers would be solved. Peter and his cousin, Peter Erickson, worked on the well rig tirelessly. After drilling between 200 to 300 feet and still found no water, they gave up.

At the age of 22, Peter was elected township constable. During the prohibition it was almost impossible to enforce the law. He became discouraged with his efforts as the county constable and with well drilling, and decided to return to the University. After completing that term at the University, he returned home where he and his cousin again tried to drill wells with no luck.

Peter’s next endeavor was farming. The fall of 1894, he sold wheat for forty cents a bushel, hogs brought three cents a pound, cows sold for ten to fifteen dollars a head. Besides that he disliked farming although it was more lucrative that drilling dry holes in the ground. After his disappointing experience with farming and the severe drought of 1894, Peter decided to work at perfecting the well rig so that he could make the jetting process drill much deeper with additional power. After making these improvements, he and Erickson took the rig to a farm about ten miles north in Davison Country. They drilled a successful 2 inch diameter well which was 420 feet deep. It was his first. Other settlers heard of their success and the following year Norbeck reported ten successful wells to the United States Geological Survey. In 1896, Norbeck drilled a successful well on his parent’s farm that was 830 feet deep.

While drilling in Davison County Peter became acquainted with Charles and Oscar Nicholson who showed great interest in well drilling, so he took them into his business.

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10 Ibid. p. 16.
bought a second well rig and soon after, a prairie fire burned his first well rig. This proved to be a blessing in disguise. After making the necessary financial arrangements, Peter left for Aurora, Illinois, the home of American Well works. Peter presented his plans for his new machine to the president of the company. The company complied and the new machine was ready in the spring of 1899. Not counting the cost of the gasoline motor, the machine cost $270.00. The new machine provided more strength and power and was designed to drill a small bore well. With the new machine, Norbeck was able to drill to a depth of 1700 to 1800 feet.\textsuperscript{13}

Norbeck’s business had taken up most of his time. Lydia Anderson was a friend of his sister’s and he thought she would not be interested in him although he liked her. It was not until a couple of other young men took notice of her that he seriously sought her attention. They were married on June 7, 1900. For the wedding, Peter was attired in a well tailored black suit, new black shoes, a new white shirt topped by a Scottish plaid silk cravat. Few would have recognized him as Peter Norbeck, the well driller. After their honeymoon to Niagara Falls, the couple returned to Peter’s homestead.\textsuperscript{14}

By 1905, Norbeck had twenty-five artesian well rigs in operation. He worked long hours in his office in Redfield directing an operation that covered the Dakotas, and parts of Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, Wyoming, and Montana. That number soon grew to forty machines. By November 1, 1905, his assets had doubled what they had been in 1903.\textsuperscript{15}

Life was not all well-drilling for Norbeck by 1906. He began extensive reading in history, philosophy, religion, science, and many special works on the history and folklore of the Scandinavian countries. Men with more formal education were usually surprised at his broad knowledge. He read slowly, but had an uncanny knack of remembering facts. He gave generously to Our Savior’s Lutheran Church at Redfield, but did not attend as regularly as his wife.

In 1905 Norbeck, along with Ole Iverson and Oscar Nicholson drove a single cylinder, nine horsepower Cadillac over unmarked trails to the Black Hills. While in the Black Hills Norbeck

\textsuperscript{13} M.W. Greene, Traffic Manager of American Well Works, Interview by author, August 24, 1944.
\textsuperscript{15} Norbeck and Nicholson, Annual Statement, 1904. Norbeck MS.
became interested in developing a state game park in Custer County. Norbeck and Nicholson made another trip in 1906 to the West Coast and Alaska. Although they did not go farther north than Juneau, Norbeck became interested in creating a game preserve in the territory of Alaska.

Peter Norbeck was a man of multiple interests. He left the raising of their family that consisted of Nellie, Ruth, Harold, and Selma, up to his wife.

As Norbeck traveled around the rural areas he became increasingly aware of the disparity between the income of farmers and big business. The Progressive Movement grew out of the unrest among rural people. Farmers criticized the high freight rates and interest rates that were as high as ten or twelve percent and higher. Another problem of the newly created Northwest was insufficient credit available.

Peter Norbeck aligned himself with the Progressive Movement of the Republican Party. He announced his candidacy for the state senate on May 9, 1908. In a letter sent to the voters of Spink County he state: ‘I am anxious to do all I can to promote the cause for which the Progressive republicans stand.’ He added that he had no political debts to pay, no political enemies to punish. Before election day, Norbeck wrote to Lars Swanson to have as many of the crew as possible in Redfield on election day. In November he beat his Democratic opponent by 700 votes.

When Norbeck arrived in Pierre in January 1909, the new capitol building was almost completed. He was appointed chairman of the Committee on Railroads. He helped obtain a great deal of regulatory legislation regarding railroads. Norbeck advanced into a leadership role in the state senate. Soon his name was being mentioned as a possible candidate for governor.

A new faction of the Republican Party came into being in 1911. It was named the National Republican Progressive League. Peter Norbeck was elected president. After Norbeck made the decision to support Theodore Roosevelt he became a most exuberant Roosevelt supporter.

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17 Norbeck to J. A. Mc Cartney, January 22, 1903.
18 Form Letter, Norbeck to voters of Spink County. May 9, 1908. P. 33. Norbeck MS
19 Records of the Spink Country Auditor, Redfield, South Dakota. P. 34.
20 Op Cit. Fite, p. 43.
Several friends urged him to run for governor. He said he had worked too hard to develop his business to abandon it altogether for politics. Oscar Nicholson spoke to Norbeck about oil possibilities in Wyoming. Peter hired J. E. Todd, State Geologist to study the oil sands in Wyoming. For four or five years he spent time on this profitable venture.

Peter Norbeck formally announced his candidacy for governor on the Republican ticket on February 24, 1916. The leading plank in his platform called for a state rural credit system. It was a measure that he had advocated since 1912. He proposed an extensive highway building program and legislation permitting the state to receive federal funds for road construction on a matching basis.  

One South Dakota newspaper called him a “clean-living, clear-headed, red-blooded and ruggedly honest citizen. Another apposing paper referred to him as “the Machine.” Another paper stated, “The only machine operated by Norbeck, is one capable of tapping artesian water and oil strata...” Norbeck campaigned in every country in the state. William H. McMaster, a Yankton banker and Progressive, was Norbeck’s running mate. They won by a large margin.

Mr. and Mrs. Norbeck and family arrived in Pierre on December 31, 1916. Since South Dakota did not have a governor’s mansion yet, they moved into a suite in the St. Charles Hotel. Presiding judge J. H. Gates of the Supreme Court administered the oath of office before a few officials and the Norbeck family. After the ceremony, the Norbeck children returned to Redfield to finish their year of school.

Norbeck’s dream of striking oil happened in summer of 1917. A gusher was struck about twenty-five miles north of Lander, WY. Norbeck was eventually forced to sell his property in Wyoming because of the big oil companies. Norbeck and Nicholson owned 160 acres together there. By 1917, Norbeck had purchased extensive farm land in SD. The United State’s declaration of war on Germany in 1917 created problems for all state governors. The editor of the Pierre Daily Capital Journal pleaded with the people to give the governor “a breathing spell occasionally so he can catch up in his office.”

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24 Norbeck to Royal C. Johnson, August 27, 1917 p. 57
Peter Norbeck had more ideas for South Dakota. He favored a state owned cement plant and coal mine as well as state owned hail insurance for farmers. Geologists found that best source for coal was across the border into North Dakota along a main railroad line. The mine near Haynes, North Dakota was purchased. State owned facilities received coal for $2.00 a ton. The cement plant sold 8,000,000 barrels of cement over a two decade period. The cement plant was entirely free of debt by 1944, and the state had a surplus of $9,000 from the plant’s operation. The state hail insurance started as a success, but grew less successful though the years, but it had forced private companies to sell hail insurance at a more reasonable rate.²⁶

In the November election Peter Norbeck won the South Dakota senate seat. Norbeck went alone to Washington in March, 1921. His family remained in Redfield where the children were attending school. On April 11, 1921. Peter Norbeck took the oath of office with Senator Sterling at his side. He hoped to play a leading role in framing badly needed farm legislation.²⁷

Peter found a modest eight room house that was quite a distance from the capitol, but close to a school. In September his family joined him in Washington. Their two younger children, Selma and Harold still live with their parents. The oldest daughter, Nellie, registered at Goucher College in Baltimore, and Ruth remained in South Dakota to attend college.²⁸

In Washington he found all kinds of Progressives but few of them were looking out for the farmer. He considered the McNary-Haugen bill the best solution to the problem.²⁹ Norbeck said the best solution to the farm problem was to figure out some way to get rid of the surplus.

In 1924, Norbeck supported legislation which the Northwest Agricultural Conference submitted to control the farm surplus and recommended to the passage of the McNary-Haugen bill, which had reached Congress for the first time.³⁰

In April after his return to Washington, Norbeck organized a series of one o’clock luncheons which he called an “educational school” on farm problems. He invited several senators to come and hear lobbyists discuss the benefits of the McNary-Haugen plan. More than

²⁶ South Dakota Session Laws, 1919.. p. 72
²⁸ Norbeck to Harry King, November 6, 1921. P. 98.
half of the Senators had been present for those discussions. Both the Senate and the House passed the bill but Coolidge vetoed it.\textsuperscript{31}

Doan Robinson was the first person to conceive the idea of carving national figures on some of the mountains in the Black Hills. Robinson sent a letter inquiring about the feasibility of such an undertaking to Norbeck who thought it was a great idea.\textsuperscript{32}

Norbeck decided that if Coolidge visited the state, he might better understand the farmers’ problems. He invited Coolidge to come and use the Custer State Game lodge as his summer residence. Norbeck actually had three reasons for inviting Coolidge to the state. First, it would bring national publicity to South Dakota. It would allow Coolidge to see first hand the problems of the state, and he was hopeful that he could get the president’s support for carving giant figures of Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson and Roosevelt on Mount Rushmore.\textsuperscript{33} After returning to Washington, Coolidge announced that he did not choose to run for another term. He had never indicated to Norbeck that he was contemplating that decision.\textsuperscript{34}

In May of 1928, Norbeck suffered from ill health for about the first time in his life. He went to Rochester for a complete physical. The doctors kept him there until June 7\textsuperscript{th} when he left for the Republican National Convention in Kansas City.\textsuperscript{35} Governor McMullen of Nebraska called for 100,000 militant farmers to march on the convention carrying banners. Norbeck fought a losing battle in the push for surplus-control of farm commodities. He did obtain national aid for the carving of Mt. Rushmore.

As a member of the committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Public Lands, Norbeck was in a position to be influential in many laws related to conservation. He became director of the National Council on State Parks. He followed a path created by Theodore Roosevelt. He was influential in extending the size of Custer State Park making it the largest state park in the nation.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{31} Congressional Record, 69 Congress, 2 session, Feb. 11, 1927, p.3518. p.124.
\textsuperscript{32} Norbeck to Doan Robinson, January 4, 1924. P.125.
\textsuperscript{33} Norbeck to George A. Starring, June 1, 1927. P.128.
\textsuperscript{34} Claude M. Fuess, Calvin Coolidge, \textit{The Man From Vermont} (Boston, 1940), p.393. p.130.
\textsuperscript{35} Op Cit. Fite, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid. Fite, p. 144.
After money was secured for the completion of Mount Rushmore, Norbeck began the task of securing funds for Iron Mountain Highway. In order to lay out the most artistic trail, he walked and rode over the terrain more than twenty times. His ideas brought him in conflict with the engineers several times. He insisted that none of the Hills’ natural beauty be destroyed. The Iron Mountain Road was completed in 1932. It passes through three solid rock tunnels, each framing the spectacular view of the faces carved on Mount Rushmore.  

The farm depression had become worse. Norbeck introduced a modified form of the domestic allotment plan. It was an emergency measure because he knew no permanent plan would be enacted by Congress because of Hoover’s opposition. The bill was recalled. All of Norbeck’s plans for farm aid were thwarted. His plan to balance farm production with consumption did lay the groundwork for Roosevelt’s New Deal.  

When Norbeck arrived in Washington in 1921, he was appointed to the Banking and Currency Committee. By 1926, only Chairman McLean outranked him. McLean chose to retire, leaving Norbeck in line to be Chairman McLean outranked him. McLean chose to retire, leaving Norbeck in line to be chairman of the committee. He had read widely on the subject of banking. Norbeck announced a full inquiry of short selling that was being done on Wall Street. President Hoover invited Norbeck to the Whitehouse to discuss an investigation of Wall Street. Norbeck endured some jokes and sneers from Wall Street insiders, but insisted on a complete probe of trading on Wall Street. He involved several trusted congressmen in the investigation. He announced to newspaper reports, “We are going to carry this investigation through to the end.”  

Congress moved rapidly to enact laws to correct many of the abuses revealed by the investigation. One lawmaker praised Norbeck’s contributions and described how the well-driller foiled the plans of those who opposed the complete probe. Others received credit for the successful investigation of Wall Street as well as Norbeck. He told an old friend that he learned “from long experience it is more important to get results than to get credit for results.”

37 Ibid. Fite, p. 151.
38 Ibid. Fite, p. 167.
40 Norbeck to George Anderson, April 4, 1934. P. 183.
Norbeck’s opponents began to lay the groundwork for his defeat in 1932. Several people stepped up to speak for Norbeck. His opponents received a lot of newspaper coverage as well. Considering all this, Norbeck did not expect to receive the tremendous victory he was about to win in the primary.\footnote{South Dakota Legislative Manual, 1937, p.369. 9. 186.}

Democratic strength was sweeping across the nation and Norbeck had failed to get real farm relief in Washington. He decided to steer a middle of the road campaign. A South Dakota slogan became “Elect Norbeck and Roosevelt.” Roosevelt won by 84,000 votes. Norbeck won over his opponent by 26,000 votes. The election showed that the voters had confidence in the integrity and honesty in Norbeck. The editor of the Sioux City Journal expressed a widespread attitude when he said, “Pete Norbeck’s greatest charm is his willingness to be himself.”

Soon after the election, he left for Rochester for another physical checkup. He had been suffering from chronic mouth cores that had become malignant. They were not particularly painful but had begun to interfere with his speech.\footnote{Op Cit. Fite, p. 190.}

During 1934, Norbeck was in Minnesota and South Dakota most of the time in compliance with his doctors’ orders for more rest and fresh air. He did not feel as comfortable in Washington because the Republicans thought he was too friendly with the New Deal and the Democrats had little use for him because he was a Republican. When asked about his life, he said, “I enjoyed well-drilling as much as I ever did politic. I am proud of the twelve thousand artesian wells (and a few oil wells).”

It is not clear when he finally decided to make a public statement in support of Roosevelt’s re-election, but by September he decided to follow that course. Later that month, he returned to Rochester. The malignancy in his mouth and jaw had grown worse. S. X. Way, publisher of the Watertown paper, joined him there and together they decided to release a joint statement endorsing Roosevelt’s re-election. They declared that “the Republican Party was controlled by large industrial interests and Roosevelt had actually helped the farmers by devaluing the dollar. They charged that the Republicans had adequate farm program … we are
going to vote for one Democrat, Franklin D. Roosevelt.” The reaction ranged from warm praise to violent criticism.

After the November election, Norbeck rested at his brother, George’s Redfield home. He was making plans to return to Washington after Christmas. On December 20, 1936, Peter Norbeck quietly died of heart failure, a condition complicated by the growth of cancer. His son, Harold, brother George, a secretary, and his doctor P. R. Scallin were at his bedside. No one expected his death to be so soon. Mrs. Norbeck was attending a church service at the time. He was buried at Bloomington Cemetery beside his parents at Platte.

Peter Norbeck developed a state coal mine, and cement plant. He envisioned South Dakota’s farms and villages lighted by electricity form government-owned plants on the Missouri River. He sponsored railroad legislation, a good roads program, and help for veterans. He brought artesian wells to South Dakota and surrounding states.

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The impact of the 1960s New Left movements spread not only among the student and black communities; it also affected American Indians, and in particular, the birth and subsequent rise of the American Indian Movement. The ideologies and more specifically, the activities of the New Left participants had a profound influence on the AIM leaders. These New Left movements accomplished national policy-changes that led to improvements in housing, employment, and voting rights. Watching these changes, AIM leaders probably concluded that an organized effort, involving support that began at the grassroots level, could possibly influence national policy makers and perhaps change U.S. government policy affecting American Indians.

Vine Deloria Jr., first spoke the words “Red Power” at the 1966 convention of the National Congress of American Indians. Deloria gave voice to a feeling, and ultimately a movement, that had been growing among various American Indian groups throughout the decade. The changes in the structure of American Indian communities provided the rationale and the launching pad for Red Power activism.

This activism received national attention on November 20, 1969. Eighty-nine American Indians landed on the Island of Alcatraz and identified themselves as “Indians of All Tribes.”

They claimed the island under the terms of an 1868 Sioux treaty that granted Indians the right to unused federal property on Indian land. The group occupied the island for 19 months.

“Red power, in the form of the Alcatraz occupation, challenged the [stereotypical] cultural depictions of Indians as victims of history, as living relics, powerless and subjugated,” according to Nagel.\(^1\) At Alcatraz, “the activists controlled the language, the issues, and the

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\(^1\) Nagel, 131.
\(^2\) Ibid., 133.
attention. Many individuals were not ashamed to be Indian anymore. People who had relocated in the cities were reidentifying themselves as Indians.”

And, more important, the occupation had an impact on the future course of AIM. According to Nagel, “AIM was essentially an Indian rights organization, mainly concerned with monitoring law enforcement treatment of native people in American cities. Alcatraz captured the imagination of AIM, and as a result, AIM embarked on an historic journey into Indian protest activism.”

AIM began as an “offshoot of a Minneapolis OEO anti-poverty program which had been funded for over $100,000,” wrote Dewing. The program was designed to parallel the Black Patrol, which was organized in 1966 to counsel groups of black youths in efforts to prevent potential violence. The Indian patrols were also intended to stop police brutality.

Dennis Banks, Clyde Bellecourt, and George Mitchell, all Chippewa from Minnesota, claim to be the founders of AIM. Banks and Bellecourt met while both were on the staff of a Minneapolis anti-poverty program called Citizen’s Community Centers (CCC). The new movement was originally called “Concerned Indian Americans” or CIA, but the leaders quickly changed the name to American Indian Movement because leaders did not want the organization to be confused with the U. S. government Central Intelligence Agency.

AIM stressed “Pan-Indianism, meaning loyalty to race over loyalty to a specific tribe, which was best suited for the mixed group of urban Indians,” wrote Dewing. Further, Bonney writes, AIM sought to “re-establish a sense of awareness in Indian identity and a pride in the Indian heritage and to facilitate adjustment to living with the dominant society.” This drive to re-establish a new Indianness is evident in the basic goals of the organization, which included improvement of Indians’ economic and educational status through the creation of well-paying jobs, decent housing, educational programs that stressed the Indian heritage, pride in the Indian heritage, and the creation of a positive Indian image.

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3 Ibid., 133.
4 Ibid., 167.
5 Dewing, 21.
6 See Means, Dewing, and Smith and Warrior.
7 Dewing, 22.
8 Bonney, 212.
9 See Dewing, Matthiessen, and Bonney.
By September 1971, AIM boasted over 60 chapters, and the rapid growth led AIM to seek a more unified approach for the purpose of coordinating funding requests, issuing policy statements and developing a philosophy. AIM members met at Camp Owendigo, an Episcopal summer camp on Carver Lake near Minneapolis, wrote Dewing, to “re-mold AIM into a national body with a group of national directors.”10 The group adopted articles of incorporation and bylaws, elected a national coordinator, and named Dennis Banks interim executive director. AIM adopted a simple policy: “We would be advocates for any Indian man or woman, any Indian family, any Indian community, or any Indian nation. All they had to do was call us, and we would respond.”11

AIM’s focus shifted from local to national concerns, which included sovereignty, broken treaties, and the validity of tribal governments as outlined in the Indian Reorganization Act. “For AIM, these issues are closely related, because treaties were signed by tribes as sovereign nations and the recognition of those treaties is essential for the validation of Indian sovereignty,” according to Bonney.12

Because AIM could not be labeled either left or right, the group appealed to Indians of all ages, male, and female, urban and reservation, traditionalists and progressives. According to Smith and Warrior, “The American Indian Movement was perfection itself. Perfect because it sounded authoritative and inclusive. Perfect because it suggested action, purpose, and forward movement.”13

According to Smith and Warrior, AIM’s major weakness was lack of a solid connection to reservations, but that “changed as the organization began reaching out toward a traditional Indian past, and becoming a warrior society of old.”14 A meeting with Leonard Crow Dog brought a new spiritual direction to the organization—a vital direction that leaders had realized was so vitally missing.

This spirituality provided the link between urban and reservation Indians and became the cement that formed a cohesive relationship among the various tribes. Also, this spirituality

10 Dewing, 29.
11 Means, 175.
12 Bonney, 215.
13 Smith and Warrior, 127.
14 Smith and Warrior, 138.
helped define a new image AIM leaders presented to the world. Kills Straight, an Oglala Sioux from Pine Ridge, S.D., stressed it when he expressed the movement’s purpose in a letter published in the Rapid City Journal in April, 1973: “AIM is first a spiritual movement, a religion’s rebirth, and then a rebirth of Indian dignity. AIM succeeds because it has beliefs to act on. AIM is attempting to connect the realities of the past with the promises of tomorrow.”

This spiritual guidance also inspired a return to traditional values, beliefs, language, and culture. Male AIM members began wearing their hair long, and usually braided. Their clothes were adorned with feathers. However, this also helped perpetuate for white Americans the myth of the feathered savage, whooping and galloping across the plains.

The events at Wounded Knee did not fit prevailing public perceptions of American Indians. “Wounded Knee, people say, must be a bad dream—probably done by ‘bad Indians,’ influenced by ‘outside agitators,’ and unrepresentative of native people,” according to Murphy and Murphy.

Thus these images of AIM at the takeover and subsequent 71-day occupation of Wounded Knee show a group that is portrayed as either a villain or as a hero. These contradictory images raise the question: what factors contributed to these two opposite images that appeared in newspaper coverage of the event?

The purpose of research for this study was to explore how mainstream and American Indian newspapers reported the same events involving American Indian challenges to the mainstream culture. It is assumed here that reporters construct news stories to be understandable to reading audiences. In other words, constructions of news accounts by journalists must conform to their audiences’ knowledge of their cultures for reports to have meaning.

This study examines coverage by two mainstream newspapers, the New York Times and the Washington Post, and two American Indian newspapers, Akwesasne Notes and the Wassaja. All stories beginning with the initial takeover on February 28, 1973, through the signing of the peace accord on May 8, 1973, are examined. The New York Times and Washington Post are

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15 This letter appeared in a pamphlet AIM developed “to aid in the spreading the word about the courageous struggle of the Oglala Sioux Nation” during the Wounded Knee occupation.
16 Murphy and Murphy, 8.
daily newspapers while both the *Wassaja* and *Akwesasne Notes* are published every two months. But, because constructions reflect culture, one would expect constructions of the events to be relatively consistent—at least, over short periods of time—regardless of proximity of publication to the dates of the events. Details, of course, would likely differ between immediate coverage and later coverage of events. But, again, differing details would not likely significantly alter the constructions.

Framing analysis helps identify frames reporters from the four newspapers used to tell the story. This method assumes media texts function both to convey facts and shape knowledge about the facts appearing in newspaper coverage. Therefore, news reportage can frame a protest in several ways: by ignoring it; burying news about it; focusing on events rather than the group’s goals; trivializing the protesters by ridiculing their dress, language, age, style, or goals, or by marginalizing viewpoints through associating them with social deviance.17

**Findings**

Frames in the four newspapers’ coverage of the early 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee, S.D., differ regarding the events and participants. The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* both identified the American Indian Movement planned, coordinated and maintained leadership throughout the occupation. Also neither newspaper did not provide context to the story or explained the reasons why the Oglala Sioux had called for AIM’s help in dealing with reservation concerns. *Akwesasne Notes* and the *Wassaja* both provided extensive coverage of the events leading up to the occupation, including detailed coverage of the impeachment proceedings of tribal chairman Richard Wilson.

Both the *Times* and *Post* framed the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation as an armed confrontation by reporting roadblocks set up, the gunfights that erupted at various times, and reactions of occupiers to the April 5 peace accord. Both newspapers also unfavorably framed AIM, American Indians and the occupation in general while favorably framing the U. S. government.

The first *Times* story of the Wounded Knee occupation, March 1, began with “(M)ilitant Indians held at least 10 persons hostage, exchanging gunfire...and firing on cars.” Later the

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17 See Ashley an Olson.
same story calls Indians “embattled.” “Militant” recurs, especially in leads, in many of the stories. Such phrases as “militant American Indians,” “militant Indians,” “militant American Indian Movement,” “armed Indians,” “dissident Indians,” “the dissidents,” and “the insurgents” were usually the first references to AIM and American Indians in the Wounded Knee stories, whether in a lead or several paragraphs into a story.

The March 25 New York Times story reported that “members of the militant American Indian Movement have held the village as a hostage for their demands.” The March 30 New York Times reported that “the 100 Indians calling themselves the Independent Oglala Sioux Nation are willing to surrender” but were being prevented from doing so by 60 AIM members.

Coverage in the Washington Post mirrored this image. The newspaper reported “Indian protestors took over the historic hamlet of Wounded Knee...(and) that the Indian force of about 200...included members of the American Indian Movement.” Later in the same story, the reporter wrote that tribal chairman Richard Wilson “was in sharp conflict with AIM members.”

The Post continued to follow this controversy in several other stories. For example, the newspaper reported “One of the most abrasive issues in the Wounded Knee controversy centered on tribal chairman Dick Wilson, who was attacked by AIM leaders as a puppet of the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs).”

On March 25, Dennis Banks was referred to as “war chief of the militants,” and Pine Ridge Reservation leaders were quoted as referring to the occupiers as “outlaws.” [With the signing of the peace accord on May 7, however, the story lead treated the sides equally by reporting that “federal and Indian negotiators” had reached the agreement. Also, Dennis Banks was now identified as a “top leader” of AIM.]

Frames of American Indian participants in the mainstream newspapers were as protesters not to be taken seriously, and frames of U.S. government representatives were as responsible, effective, organized, unified, stable, orderly individuals who were in charge. Frames of American Indians in the two American Indian newspapers were of active, purposeful people who were champions of their race. Frames of the U.S. government ranged from a mere presence to embodiment of power (in control, in charge), to opponent to trivial and deceitful.

Identifiers used for participating groups also reveal the frames. Although many terms in the Times and Post seem neutral—for example, “federal officials,” “government officials,”
“spokesmen” for various governmental departments, “police,” “negotiators” and “federal government”--adjectives applied to American Indians in the same stories point up such “neutral” terms as part of positively framing the U.S. government. That is, American Indians are framed as not to be taken seriously, which, by default, helps frame the government as responsible and effective.

The frame of the protesters as not to be taken seriously in appears in the March 29 Times report that about half of the approximately 300 Indians who initially took over Wounded Knee village “had left or slipped away at night.” In addition, Times stories indicated that the marshals and FBI agents at Wounded Knee were better equipped than the Indians. According to the March 5 story, federal authorities wore flak jackets, carried M-16 and other high-powered rifles, and had submachine guns, armored personnel carriers, night-vision Starscopes and powerful searchlights. The American Indians had a few .22 rifles. The final sentence of that paragraph reflects the frame of the occupation as insignificant and marginal: “the situation would have the ludicrous aspect of a Western ‘Mouse That Roared’ movie.”

The Post coverage reiterated this frame but in much stronger language. On March 3, the Post reported that “what may have been a theatrical protest led by the militant American Indian Movement...could turn into a debacle of almost comparable ugliness.” On March 5, the Post reported that “what passes for civil authority in Wounded Knee is being exercised by a group of leaders of the insurgent American Indian Movement, veteran militants....” This image became even more negative as the occupation continued. On March 18, the Post credited a government source who viewed “Dennis Banks as representing the most militant faction of the AIM leadership and they are attempting to access his influence on (Carter) Camp and the other leaders.”

Government forces are framed in coverage by both mainstream newspapers as a responsible, organized, cohesive in-charge group that followed orders. For example, Ralph E. Erickson was referred to as “in charge of operations” and Horace Webb as “a spokesman for the United States Marshal force.” U.S. marshals and FBI agents were reported as manning roadblocks and determining who was allowed to enter the village, including media representatives and food deliverers. Federal officials were quoted as saying they were willing to negotiate “only the terms of surrender” and not other demands.
In the February-March 1973 Wassaja, the account of the Wounded Knee hostage story framed American Indian demonstrators as fiercely loyal to their race. Calling the hostages, who represented the entire white population in Wounded Knee, “the most peculiar hostages known in history,” the reporter wrote, “For, upon their release, they refused to leave, and some made statements in sympathy and support of the Oglalas occupying Wounded Knee.” The same story later, in describing conditions in Pine Ridge and the mood of the reservation residents, framed American Indians as determined: “An atmosphere of fear pervades this community. . .fear of the tribal officers, fear of the BIA, fear of the Federal Marshalls [sic], and fear of reprisals against themselves. Judging from the mood and the words of those American Indians with whom I talked, the violence will continue.” The same frame appears in the February 28 Akwesasne Notes story, which directly quoted one leader that “AIM and Oglala people stand firm” in their resolve, although Federal officials at Wounded Knee seemed determined to minimize publicity by keeping newsmen away from the village.

The frame of the U.S. government as opponent also appears in Akwesasne Notes. That coverage began with the statement that “many observers believed newsmen’s presence prevented attack by U.S. agents.”

The March 20 Akwesasne Notes story framed the government as deceitful in reporting that U.S. officials began a campaign to woo away support for the Oglala occupation force by saying the militants were hurting the reservation. Coverage of a reported split among the leaders of the occupation force in late March stories also framed the government as deceitful. According to the March 26 story in Akwesasne Notes, a U. S. government spokesman “implied” a serious split and reported that “observers close to the scene” showed a videotape of AIM leader Dennis Banks and Pedro Bisonette, vice chairman of the Oglala Civil Rights Organization, smiling and talking. Inclusion of the videotape’s existence in the news story provided evidence for readers that there was no split in leadership. The report directly quoted Ted Means as saying the U.S. government was spreading rumors of a split. The New York Times, Washington Post and Wassaja reported as fact the rumored split of the Wounded Knee occupiers into two factions with no mention that the split was just a rumor.

Coverage in the Times and Post framed Wounded Knee occupiers as insignificant and marginal, as a defiant, confrontational group that was determined to remain until their demands
were met by reporting in several stories that the Indians vowed to remain or die. An AIM coordinator was directly quoted as stating: “We will occupy this town until the Government sees fit to deal with the Indian people, particularly the Oglala Sioux tribe.”

But a frame of a group that pledged no intentional harm also appeared. “The protesters vowed they would stay in Wounded Knee until they got answers from the Federal Government, but pledged that no harm ‘by Indians’ would come to the hostages.” The Akwesasne Notes, which reported that American Indian participants had taken over the village with some show of force, described “armed guards outside the store”—indicating the guards are protective rather than hostile.

New York Times coverage stressed physical descriptions of American Indians but rarely described government representatives’ appearance. For example, the New York Times described Dennis Banks appeared at a news conference with “a pistol on his hip and wearing a black beret with a Playboy bunny patch.” The March 8 New York Times reported “four Indians lounged” at the roadblocks; and an April 6 story called signers of the peace agreement “beaded and feathered Sioux” (a direct reference to Russell Means who appeared in the photo taken of the signing).

After the signing of the peace accord on April 5, Akwesasne Notes provided more extensive coverage of the hearings in Washington, D.C., than either of the three other newspapers. In particular, the April 9 story reported the “verbal attack” on Russell Means by Rep. James Haley of Florida: “Means remained placid during the abuse” while Haley “shouted” during the questioning of Means. Akwesasne Notes also extensively reported Leonard Crow Dog’s vision for a peaceful end to the occupation, but no mention of this aspect of the negotiations was found in the other three newspapers. Akwesasne Notes provided more extensive coverage of the final May 7 peace agreement ending the Wounded Knee occupation, including details leading up to it, names of those involved in the peace process, details of the final negotiations and how the arrangements came about. None of those details were found in neither the mainstream newspapers nor Wassaja, all of which reported only the government side.

Conclusions
Findings support the assumption that images of AIM in the two mainstream and two native newspapers would differ. The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* coverage framed AIM as the villain and not to be taken seriously. When mentioned in the native newspapers, AIM was referred to as a sponsoring group and organization that helped the protesters.

The term “militant” was found consistently in the two mainstream newspapers to describe AIM members and leaders. Both newspapers treated AIM as the central “culprit” in the Wounded Knee occupation. The *Times* reported on two occasions that AIM may have slowed the peace process or hindered the surrender of other occupation members. Generally, other references throughout coverage by both mainstream newspapers framed AIM as the power behind the occupation.

Coverage in both American Indian newspapers framed AIM as a sponsoring group for the protest and, overall, as a hero. The initial *Akwesasne Notes* story of the Wounded Knee occupation reported that Oglala Sioux had called for AIM’s assistance in dealing with reservation problems. Its coverage throughout consistently stated that Oglala Sioux AND AIM leaders were participating in negotiations on an equal footing. It never reported that AIM had taken control of the leadership. Many *Akwesasne Notes* stories during the Wounded Knee occupation reported that the protesters were “defending” the village or Oglala fortifications and that AIM members served as advisers to the Oglalas “occupying the village.”

Stories from March 1 through March 6 included references that included both “Oglala Sioux and AIM advisers” as engaged in talks with government representatives. In later stories, AIM leaders were mentioned as “advising Oglala leadership.”

The mainstream newspapers constructed a negative image of AIM that reinforced the dominant white cultural hegemony. Both newspapers trivialized and marginalized AIM, and American Indians by association, by portraying it as a defiant, militant group. This negative coverage may only serve to reinforce the image of a group that remains in the past, unable to fully accept, and subsequently adapt to white culture.

More importantly, all four newspapers constructed stories and images of the Wounded Knee occupation that reflected knowledge and beliefs shared with their respective audiences. For the mainstream readers, this image tapped into the stereotypical Indian on the war path. For the American Indian readers, the protests possibly reinforced the distrust and betrayal they
had of the U. S. government because of broken treaties and unfilled promises during a centuries-long encounter with the government.

Newspapers should report the who, the what, the where, the when, the why and the how of an event. All four newspapers gave their respective readers the who (AIM), the what (takeover), the when (February 28 – May 7, 1973), the where (Wounded Knee, S.D.) and the how (invading village, securing area). However, the two mainstream newspapers failed to provide their readers the “why.” Little to no coverage of the events leading up to the takeover, full listing of demands nor the existing conditions on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The two American Indian newspapers did provide the “why” with extensive coverage of the events that preceded the takeover and listing of demands. Ultimately, the coverage by the two mainstream newspapers only reinforced the stereotypical image of “savages on the warpath.”
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Books and Articles


It seemed like just another day for Steve as he made his rounds at 6:30 p.m., locking up buildings for the evening. But as he soon discovered, this was not going to be like every other day. When he tried to lock up one of the housing units which he expected to be vacant, Steve found about 40 American Indians, some of the most recent guests to stay in the building, who had decided to stay another night. Four hours later, it became clear they were not simply staying an extra day. They had locked themselves in the building and maintained they would not leave until their demands were met.¹ We have heard stories such as this one before. But this is not a story of Alcatraz or the Bureau of Indian Affairs Building in Washington, D.C., or Wounded Knee. This is a story of Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD.

This paper is about the four-day American Indian occupation of Bergsaker Hall at Augustana in August of 1970, an event little known to this writer’s generation but remembered very well by older members of the campus community. The resources for this paper came from the Augustana and Lutheran Social Services archives at the Center for Western Studies (CWS). This is important because the information at CWS about the takeover admittedly presents the story from a specific set of perspectives—those of people outside of the demonstration. Consequently, this paper will focus on the sit-in as it was understood and recorded by the people viewing it from the outside including campus administration, Lutheran church officials, the media, and the citizens of South Dakota.

The first question that undoubtedly comes to mind is—why did this happen at Augustana? Discovering the answer to that question begins with understanding the relationship between the Lutheran Church and Indian communities in the 1960s. The Lutheran Church had been very involved in civil rights movements and social justice issues, including topics specifically of Indian concern. There were dozens of church groups dedicated to these efforts on which Lutherans spent hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. But Indians were beginning to ask

¹ Handwritten notes taken by unknown author during phone call with Jean Helland, August 2, 1970, Augustana College Archives, Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.
for more say in the administration of Lutheran ministry and mission to their people. And church leaders were beginning to listen. They started creating opportunities where Indians could participate in, and even lead, the decision-making.

Such an opportunity came in 1970, when Lutheran church bodies planned a gathering for Indians and Lutherans to come together and work toward their common goals. They scheduled a conference at Augustana College in Sioux Falls for July 31st through August 2nd. The Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. (LCUSA) and three of its constituent Lutheran bodies—the American Lutheran Church (or ALC), the Lutheran Church of America, and the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod—co-sponsored the event with a group called Lutheran Church and Indian People (LUCHIP). During the months leading up to the conference, the original registration cost of $20 per participant was dropped to $2.50, and it was even further subsidized to encourage and allow the greatest Indian participation possible. The college agreed to house all conference attendees requesting housing in Bergsaker Hall for a fee of $2.00 per night per person.

On July 31st, 1970, 300 people, including 200 Indians from throughout the United States, most of whom were not Lutheran, converged on the Augustana campus. For the next three days, these conference attendees discussed the relationship between the Lutheran church, Indian ministry, and Indian sovereignty. Specifically, the 1970 conference concerned itself with the reaction of Lutheran church bodies to the “Challenge to the Churches,” a list of seven actual challenges which members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) presented at a similar conference on Augustana’s campus the previous year. During this earlier event, administrators set aside the scheduled agenda after the AIM presentation and allowed conferees to discuss the implications of the statements made. Ultimately, attendees endorsed the seven challenges and selected representatives to formally present them to leaders of the LCUSA and three of its constituent Lutheran bodies in the months to come.

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6 “Historical Background of National Indian Lutheran Board,” Lutheran Social Services Collection, Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.
The challenges discussed what the 1969 conference attendees desired from the Lutheran church bodies in the United States. The first of these challenges, and the one that the others centered upon, was the creation of a National Indian Board, 75% of whose members would be Indian, including its chairman. The remaining challenges described the function of this proposed board in more detail. The board was to support Indian groups as they worked to prioritize their own needs and plan their own actions and would lobby for legislation created or supported by Indians regarding their welfare. Members were to condemn the “criminal actions” of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and call for its restructuring. Finally, the board would use its influence to pressure churches to meet the need for “adequate housing” for Indians and to make all church properties freely available to all minorities equally.7

To accomplish all this, the board was to be funded by the constituent bodies of the LCUSA. Collectively, the three Lutheran synods were to provide annual funding to the board for ten years in the amount of $1 for every American Indian, a sum equal to $750,000 in 1970.8 Given that there were approximately eight million Lutherans in the United States at the time, this expenditure would have equaled less than ten cents per member.9 Such were the demands agreed upon during the 1969 Lutheran Conference on Indian Ministry and Mission.

By the conclusion of the 1970 conference, some of these challenges had already been met. Attendees of this latest event established the National Indian Lutheran Board (NILB) and elected twenty-four members to serve on it, twenty of whom were Indians representing both reservation and urban living situations and all age groups.10 Charles Deegan, a graduate of Flandreau Indian School and researcher for the Lutheran Deaconess Hospital in Minneapolis, was elected temporary chairman of NILB, pending official election at the board’s first meeting planned for a later date.11 Conferees approved an NILB resolution that gave the Lutheran

7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.; Osgood Magnuson to “Gentlemen,” August 5, 1970, Augustana College Archives, Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.
9 “Six Ministers Say Indian Move ‘Not a Crisis in Our Community,’” Sioux Falls Argus-Leader, August 4, 1970.
10 “National Indian Board Created at Conference,” LUCHIP Spearhead 3, no. 3 (December 1970): 7; “National Indian Lutheran Board Anniversary Booklet Commemorating Ten Years of Building Partnerships,” Lutheran Social Services Collection, Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.
11 “Cooperation Praised in Ending Barricade”; “Indian Board Elects Leaders,” LUCHIP Spearhead 3, no. 3
synods until November 1, 1970, to provide written commitment of a combined $750,000 of funding for the board’s use.\textsuperscript{12}

The Lutheran bodies also agreed to establish and fund a Secretary of Indian Services within LCUSA who would facilitate Indian programs through the Lutheran churches, assist Indians in securing their needs, and serve as executive director for the NILB. It is worth noting here that Eugene Crawford, a Sisseton Sioux, later became the first Secretary for Indian Services on January 1, 1971.\textsuperscript{13} In discussing the Lutheran Church’s response to the challenges of 1969, it should also be remembered that the Lutheran synods funded the 1970 Lutheran-Indian conference at Augustana with enablement financial grants to allow for the greatest possible attendance.

Dissatisfied with these solitary outcomes and the speed of church body reaction to the remaining challenges, forty-two Indian conference attendees took the matter into their own hands. Instead of vacating at the conclusion of the conference on Sunday evening, they decided to remain on campus and locked themselves in Bergsaker Hall. The group included Dennis Banks, founder and chairman of AIM, and five members of the newly created NILB. On Monday morning, the media reported that the occupiers had chained the doors shut from the inside and no one had been allowed to enter.\textsuperscript{14}

In an official statement released early in the demonstration, the Bergsaker occupiers condemned the previous weekend’s conference on several points: that the synods had failed to meet all the challenges presented to them and were thereby also failing to live up to their Lutheran theology regarding the alleviation of human suffering; that they had rejected Indian requests; and that their attitudes and actions were exploiting Indians and destroying their efforts at self-determination.\textsuperscript{15} Later comments reveal the main issue to have been that the synods had not yet provided funds for NILB. On the one hand, the amount sought, equal to $1 per American Indian, was not a very large sum to employ in providing a year’s worth of

\textsuperscript{12}“Indian Power for Lutheran Indian Efforts,” \textit{LUCHIP Spearhead} 3, no. 3 (December 1970): 2.
\textsuperscript{13}“Historical Background of National Indian Lutheran Board.”
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid.
programming for even a single person. The cost from each Lutheran to achieve this sum, around ten cents, did not seem like an exorbitant amount for an individual to give. Yet during this initial year of effort regarding the challenges, the synods had trouble securing funding for the new board, explaining that their organizations typically funded more specific projects than broad programs.\footnote{16}

Looking at the records, it would be unfair to characterize the Lutheran synods as unwilling to fund Indian mission and ministry. In 1968, the ALC issued a $5,000 grant to AIM to assist members of the organization with their newsletter and other communication strategies. The following year, ALC contributions alone to Indian groups and issues totaled $380,000, an amount typical of their annual donations to topics of Indian concern.\footnote{17} And to support the 1970 conference at Augustana, LCUSA and its three Lutheran synod constituents paid $5,000, an amount equal to seventy-five percent of the conference’s total costs.\footnote{18}

Yet the occupiers demanded an immediate response to the request for NILB funding, not even allowing for the 90-day time extension agreed upon during the conference itself. Claiming they would not leave the college dorm until all seven challenges from 1969 were met, the occupiers also demanded that construction on all Lutheran churches be stopped until the seizure’s end. Dennis Banks threatened that if officials forcibly evicted them, the various Indian groups represented amongst the occupiers would take actions to remove Lutheran churches from Minnesota reservations.\footnote{19}

At no time did the Indians place demands on the college. In fact, during the occupation, Dennis Banks lamented the fact that the stand was taking place at a college dorm. He acknowledged that the seizure should have been of a Lutheran church considering it better represented the ones responsible for the failure to meet the seven challenges.\footnote{20} Consequently, the protestors took much care during the occupation to maintain the dorm and its rooms and

\footnotetext{16}{“National Indian Board Created at Conference.”}
\footnotetext{17}{David A. Wilson, “Ministry to Indians, Eskimos, Both Innovative, Traditional,” \textit{LUCHIP Spearhead} 3, no. 2 (June 1970): 4.}
\footnotetext{18}{Itemized budget for LUCHIP/LCUSA Indian Conference, 1970, Lutheran Social Services Collection, Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.}
\footnotetext{19}{Renshaw.}
\footnotetext{20}{Ibid.}
hallways. Banks knew that damaging college property would only hinder their serious effort; even going so far as to state “We don’t want people outside saying ‘They’re at it again.’”

Augustana was no stranger to public demonstrations, especially in recent years. In March of 1965, the college’s Student Committee on Human Rights led about 200 people, most of them Augie students, on a six-mile civil rights march through Sioux Falls in blizzard conditions. In the fall of 1969, Augustana students joined fellow undergraduates from other area colleges for an anti-Vietnam march in Sioux Falls. And in the spring of the same school year, hundreds of Augie students and faculty staged a rally on campus and then joined Sioux Falls College students in a “March for Sanity” after violence at a Kent State University anti-Vietnam protest left four students dead.

But this was different. This wasn’t Augie’s own students. This was guests of the college who had simply rented the facilities. And whereas Augie students sought permission for their demonstrations, applied for parade permits, and publicized their intentions, this event seemingly materialized from out of nowhere. Administrators struggled with how to handle the occupation, their struggles compounded by the fact that Augustana’s President, Dr. Charles Balcer, was at Ft. Benjamin Harrison in Indiana serving two weeks of active duty with the Army Reserve at the time. As the sit-in occurred in early August, it was outside of the normal school year, and even summer school had recently concluded. So Augustana officials had the luxury of knowing that this occupation was not immediately affecting school operations. They decided as long as college property was not damaged, they were content to allow the occupiers to remain in the building so that negotiations could bring the matter to a peaceful resolution. Kent Scribner, the college’s director of public relations, stated the occupiers would be allowed to stay for “a reasonable length of time.”

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21 “Six Ministers Say Indian Move ‘Not a Crisis in Our Community.’”
26 Handwritten notes by unknown college official, Augustana College Archives, Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.
27 Smith.
The negotiations to end the seizure hinged on the arrival of Charles Deegan, the temporary chairman of the NILB. Attendees of the weekend conference designated Deegan as chairman of the new organization only days earlier. Now, this sudden change of events challenged the authority of his fledgling position. Having just returned to Minneapolis, Deegan found himself leaving again for Sioux Falls. After his arrival on Monday evening, Deegan met with church representatives, college officials, and Sandra Waubanascum, a member of the occupying group, to discuss the condition of the building.\textsuperscript{28}

The sit-in continued on Tuesday, August 4th. Dennis Banks reported that the occupiers’ ranks had swelled to 60, and they were hoping to reach 150.\textsuperscript{29} Sioux Falls Mayor M. E. Schirmer met with about fifteen of the students at 5 p.m. that evening and told them while the city did not plan to evict them, he did not support their action in seizing the dorm.\textsuperscript{30} Deegan spent the day contacting his fellow members of the NILB, confirming that he could represent them at whatever negotiations took place.\textsuperscript{31}

During the occupation, Sioux Falls police commented in the media that they were not overly concerned about the situation.\textsuperscript{32} But campus safety kept a watchful eye on the procedures, partly to protect campus assets but also to protect the occupiers themselves. There was at least one campus safety officer staked out in the Solberg parking lot during the overnight hours of Monday and Tuesday evenings. From this position, Harold G. Hanson, Chief of Security at Augustana, observed several people leaving the dorm early Tuesday morning and concluded they were likely “do-gooders lending a sympathetic ear.”\textsuperscript{33}

The following night, Sioux Falls police received a complaint that three cars of drunken white militants were disturbing the occupiers at Bergsaker. Hanson was on the scene at the time and later wrote in his security report that he saw no such disturbance, offering the names of a few unbiased witnesses who could attest to the same. But later that evening, he observed

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Associated Press, “Schirmer Tells Indians City Plans No Eviction Action,” \textit{Sioux Falls Argus-Leader}, August 5, 1970; “Six Ministers Say Indian Move ‘Not a Crisis in Our Community.’”
\item \textsuperscript{30} Associated Press, “Schirmer Tells Indians.”
\item \textsuperscript{31} Smith.
\item \textsuperscript{32} “Six Ministers Say Indian Move ‘Not a Crisis in Our Community.’”
\item \textsuperscript{33} Campus Security report by Harold G. Hanson, August 4, 1970, Augustana College Archives, Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.
\end{itemize}
something that did concern him. Around 2:30 on Wednesday morning, four Indians left the
dorm to patrol the grounds, two of them carrying tire irons. Hanson exited his car and
introduced himself to the members of the patrol, one of whom was Charles Deegan. The
campus security officer explained he was merely observing the grounds to protect the buildings
and ensure that angry citizens would not attempt to interfere with the sit-in. Satisfied with this
answer, the patrol returned to the dorm. Hanson wrote in his report of the night’s activities
that the police should be informed of the tire irons as they were considered a dangerous
weapon.34

Hanson’s concerns were unfounded, because on Wednesday, day four of the
occupation, the negotiations which had just begun reached a speedy and successful conclusion.
Of course, no one knew that such would be the case; with the eight-month occupation of
Alcatraz still ongoing, it was hard to discern the possibilities. The records at Augustana do not
demonstrate specifically what was said to the occupiers or what changed their minds. But
leaders of the sit-in claimed that the president of the one of the Lutheran synods phoned
Tuesday evening, promising his organization’s share of funding for the board. They declined,
however, to identify the synod for which he worked.35 As this was only a small part of what the
occupiers wanted, it is hard to discern why they altered their original plans of staying “until [the]
challenges are met or the sun stops shining.”36

Regarding the rest of the seven challenges to the Lutheran church bodies, the Indians
decided to pursue legal means. Clyde Bellecourt, executive director of AIM and spokesperson
for the occupiers, said Wednesday that Minneapolis attorney Douglas Hall would be filing a $1
billion breach of promise lawsuit against LCUSA. Specifically, they intended to ask for $250
million for violations of the Ten Commandments, $450 million for alienation of ecumenical
affections, and $325 million for punitive damages. When Argus Leader reporters contacted Hall,
he claimed not to know about the plans, but said he would become involved if asked. It would
be interesting to pursue what happened with this lawsuit, but regardless, the last of the

34 Campus Security report by Harold G. Hanson, August 5, 1970, Augustana College Archives, Center for
Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.
35 Tom Brettingen, “Indians Leave Dormitory at Augustana College,” Sioux Falls Argus-Leader, August 6,
1970.
36 “Six Ministers Say Indian Move ‘Not a Crisis in Our Community.””
occupiers left Bergsaker Hall Wednesday night.\textsuperscript{37} Many praised Charles Deegan for his negotiating efforts and the officials of Augustana College for allowing time for negotiations to occur.\textsuperscript{38}

Thus the occupation ended as quickly as it had begun. People had mixed attitudes about the event both while it was happening and in the following years. Some championed the occupiers’ efforts. After meeting with the Indians for two hours on the second day of the occupation and confirming that the dorm was being maintained, six local ministers decided to support their actions and encouraged others to do the same. They declared for the local paper that this action was “not a crisis in [the] community.” Throughout the occupation, sympathetic citizens dropped off food for the students.\textsuperscript{39} At its conclusion, Osgood Magnuson, the on-the-scene representative for LCUSA, expressed his satisfaction that the new National Indian Lutheran Board had already demonstrated its effectiveness.\textsuperscript{40} In the December 1970 edition of the \textit{LUCHIP Spearhead} newsletter, Magnuson referred to the sit-in simply as “extracurricular activity” and felt it simply joined with the debates and decisions of the weekend conference in emphasizing the need to help Indian people.\textsuperscript{41} Pastor W. Walter Weber expressed his sentiment that the sit-in be viewed as a demonstration of the participants’ willingness to continue to take the Lutheran church’s role in Indian sovereignty seriously, even after facing years of disappointment with white people and their institutions.\textsuperscript{42}

Certain church groups used the demonstration as an opportunity to reiterate established procedures regarding such protests. The Lutheran Human Relations Association of America based at Valparaiso University reacted with a newsletter sent to church leaders and church educational institution administrators. It discussed the specific circumstances at Augustana, warning that such an action could indeed occur anywhere. The newsletter then provided guidelines to church-affiliated officials regarding how to react to demonstrations of

\textsuperscript{37} Brettingen.
\textsuperscript{38} “Cooperation Praised in Ending Barricade.”
\textsuperscript{39} “Six Ministers Say Indian Move ‘Not a Crisis in Our Community.’”
\textsuperscript{40} “Cooperation Praised in Ending Barricade.”
\textsuperscript{42} “1970 LUCHIP Conference Capped by Indian Lock-In.”
any ideology, stressing the importance of negotiations as opposed to calling the police or waiting out the protestors.43

Other public reactions ran the gamut from indifference to outrage. The ranks of the occupiers swelled, but only minimally, and never as much as they desired though they claimed otherwise.44 The Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Council, represented by Chairman Andrew R. Estes, passed a resolution on Wednesday of the occupation stating they opposed the actions of the group at Augustana and would not become involved with it or any other militant group in the future.45

Early campus administration reaction seemed to hinge on the treatment of the dorm, at least as long as negotiations still remained possible and the sit-in did not affect normal school functions. Even so, a copy of Augustana’s official “Student Conduct Policy” was given to Charles Deegan on Monday, August 3rd, to be presented to Dennis Banks. The policy stated that persons engaging in obstructive behavior on campus who were not enrolled students would be turned over to authorities and charged with trespass and disturbing the peace on private property.46 It is unclear whether Banks ever received this notice, or what his reaction to it was. But by mid-week, President Balcer’s patience with the occupation was beginning to wane. During a phone call on Tuesday, August 4th, he instructed campus officials to give the NILB only two more days to resolve the matter and then seek a court order for eviction. He wanted the protestors out of the dorm by the end of the week.47 It is unclear whether the occupiers knew of this plan or what effect, if any, it had on the abrupt ending of the sit-in.

Individual citizens also expressed their irritation with the occupation and the goals for which it stood. Charles D. Anderson of Rapid City wrote President Balcer on Wednesday, August 5th, demanding to know who promised money to the group, the sum guaranteed, the “real

43 Lutheran Human Relations Association of America to “church body presidents, administrators of church education institutions, district and synod presidents, and other church leaders,” 1970, Augustana College Archives, Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.
44 “Cooperation Praised in Ending Barricade.”
45 Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Council, “Resolution No. 71-9,” August 5, 1970, Augustana College Archives, Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.
46 “Student Conduct Policy,” Augustana College Archives, Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.
47 Handwritten notes by unknown author regarding telephone call with Dr. Charles Balcer, August 4, 1970, Augustana College Archives, Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.
reason” of the Indian meeting at the school, who called the meeting, and under whose authority it was called. He stated that he was against such sit-ins and that the persons involved should have been removed immediately before they had the opportunity to receive reinforcements. Anderson further suggested that had the occupiers not cooperated with removal, the college should have cut off the telephones, water, and electricity to the dorm.\footnote{Charles D. Anderson to Charles Balcer, August 5, 1970, Augustana College Archives, Center for Western Studies, Sioux Falls, SD.} In an anonymous editorial in the \textit{Argus Leader} on Friday, August 7\textsuperscript{th}, a citizen admonished that the occupiers were asking for trouble and their actions had negatively impacted the image of their community, all the while acknowledging that the occupiers themselves might not represent the entire Indian community.\footnote{“Indian Episode Stirs Reflection,” \textit{Sioux Falls Argus-Leader}, August 7, 1970.} It is likely that additional citizens felt anger or frustration concerning the events at Bergsaker Hall, but no other such reactions are recorded in the Augustana archives.

Looking back at the occupation so many years later, there is an important question that remains to be answered—why is this event significant? It certainly received attention in the local media at the time it was happening, but only sporadic coverage nationwide. Articles appeared in the \textit{Milwaukee Sentinel}, \textit{Corpus Christi Times}, and the \textit{Evening News} in Newburgh, New York, but there was no mention of it in the \textit{New York Times}.\footnote{See Ron Morose, “Indians Demand Church Aid,” \textit{Milwaukee Sentinel}, August 5, 1970; “Indians Seize College Building,” \textit{Corpus Christi Times}, August 3, 1970; and “40 Indians Lock Selves into College,” \textit{The Evening News}, August 3, 1970.} Augustana College’s permanent record on the subject consists of a single folder, and the school’s own historian, Donald Sneen, devoted only one page to the matter in his title, \textit{Through Trials and Triumphs: A History of Augustana College}. Even Dennis Banks, AIM founder and participant in the Bergsaker occupation, neglected to discuss the event in his autobiography, \textit{Ojibwa Warrior}.

Given this level of inattention, why does the occupation of Bergsaker Hall even matter? What can be taken away from this short, seemingly insignificant demonstration that happened in our own backyard? It is events like this little-discussed one which help explain the context and organizational development behind those major actions which did garnish nationwide attention. The occupation of Alcatraz in 1969-1970, the Trail of Broken Treaties in 1972, the occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973, these events did not develop from out of nowhere.
There were many warning signs, like the occupation of Bergsaker Hall, that at least some American Indians were prepared to take increasingly drastic actions to call attention to their needs and treatment. Maybe they did not achieve everything they set out to accomplish in such demonstrations. But they learned how people would react to them. And now we remember what people thought about, and how they reacted to, the Indian occupation of Bergsaker Hall in August of 1970.
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Dancing With Ghosts: Wounded Knee 1890, Forty Years Later

Blair Tremere

I learned about the 2012 Dakota History Conference theme while researching archived files about missionaries in South Dakota. My attention had been focused on accounts of events during the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century and first third of the Twentieth Century. I was examining correspondence by and published materials about persons who lived and worked in the territory before, during, and after the deadly incident at Wounded Knee Creek in 1890.¹ Their perspectives reflected the personal and policy biases of individuals and institutions dedicated to the religious and cultural conversion of Indians. It seemed that a study of some first-hand material from that period could be helpful toward a better understanding of the forty years since the 1973 Occupation at Wounded Knee.

My sources have been mainly found in the Archives of the Episcopal Church in South Dakota at the Center for Western Studies. I consulted numerous books and articles about the 1890 Wounded Knee incident, and I have drawn from personal files developed during genealogical research about Rev. Edward Ashley, my maternal great-grandfather.

Rev. Ashley was one of a number of prominent whites and Indians of that era. Accounts of his seventy-seven year life, including fifty-seven years in Episcopalian missionary work, are found in many publications covering Dakota Territory and South Dakota.² He arrived in Yankton from England via Michigan in 1874. He died in Aberdeen, S.D. on March 31, 1931, a few months after the fortieth anniversary of the original Wounded Knee Creek incident. The examination of materials produced by him and others provides insights that can at the same time be viewed as interesting personal vignettes and as confirmations of various influences upon Indians and whites. One influence was Ghost Dancing.

One definition of “ghost dance” is, “a ritual dance intended to establish communion with the dead, especially such a dance as performed by various messianic western American

¹ Numerous terms, including, but not limited to, “outbreak,” “massacre,” “battle,” “calamity,” “trouble,” and “event” are used to describe Wounded Knee Creek of December 29, 1890; informed with the benefit of hindsight, I use “incident” as an all-encompassing term.

² South Dakota was granted statehood in November, 1889.
Indian cults in the late 19th century (1885-1890). Historical accounts about events preceding the 1890 incident at Wounded Knee Creek, and some observers writing at the time attributed it as a cause. Reports of performances of the Ghost Dance (and other dance rituals) during the forty years after Wounded Knee 1890 are common. Many followers saw it as a religion. It had a lingering influence on those who administered Indian affairs for many years despite official claims that ghost dancing also died at Wounded Knee Creek.

The ritual was messianic and the dancing was frequently described by witnesses as a "frenzy." The cultism became widely known as the "Messiah Craze." Both clerical and secular officials who were guiding the settlement of the country viewed it as an activity that was a competitive and counter-productive---a waste of time and energy. They feared and targeted ceremonial dancing as a threat to religious and cultural conversion.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to analyze or evaluate the Ghost Dance, per se. There were and, arguably, are, allegorical "ghosts"—influences rather than apparitions---that continued to haunt Indians and non-Indians. These ghosts include the causes and consequences of the 1890 incident at Wounded Knee Creek---the persistent tensions of conversion and assimilation. Both clergy and government personnel used the reported incidence of public displays of ceremonial dancing and of native customs and dress as one measure of the progress of their respective missions.

The corresponding allegorical “dance” represents the intended actual efforts to manage the ghosts, i.e., to ignore, to rationalize, and to eradicate them. The figurative dancers, for purposes here, are the religious and federal officials whose assigned work encompassed the reservations—the so-called “Indian Field.” The dance around the ghosts might be viewed today as rhetorical “spin.”

4 There were a variety of opinions about the extent to which the Ghost Dance could be cited as a cause of the incident on December 29. See: Mooney (p. 828) who personally believed it was a symptom of the causes. Mooney includes reports which concur, but also includes the report from Commissioner [of Indian Affairs] Morgan who ranks “The Messiah Craze” eleventh of twelve causes (p. 831). Ashley refers to it as a cause.
5 The Episcopal Church referred to much of the area as “The Niobrara Deanery.” Correspondence shows frequent use of “Indian Field” often to distinguish church activities for whites.
Ashley dealt with these ghosts throughout his professional life which was spent almost exclusively in South Dakota. He and many of his clerical and secular contemporaries strived to cope with the challenges of reconciling several major forces. There was the plight of the Indians among whom they lived and worked; there was the unyielding press of religious missions to convert and civilize Indians; and, there were government policies and programs to conquer the Indians and virtually eliminate their culture. This period was at once exciting with industrial and technological advances, and depressive with systemic corruption, incompetence, treaty violations, and the prevailing racism.

Ashley’s official and personal correspondence and general writing are guides for the period. He produced several drafts of an autobiography which has been only partially published in articles—most posthumously. One chapter, entitled, “Treaty,” contains a glimpse of life on the Plains near Wounded Knee Creek:

“The priest [and] missionary-in-charge of the Cheyenne field died in 1888 leaving the mission without a head. The Christian Indians of the Mission having petitioned Bishop [Hobart] Hare for me to become priest-in-charge; he consented, and while I was reluctant to give up the Sisseton Mission which I had begun, yet realizing the great need, I accepted the appointment and took charge the first of July, 1889. I entered the field just at the time when the Crook Commission was holding councils with the Indians at old Fort Bennett for the purpose of obtaining their agreement to the Act of March 2, 1889.6 As a listener, it was interesting to hear the proceedings and the statements of Indians and the white men. General Crook, in addition to the provisions of the Act, made certain promises other than provided in the Act, which had he lived, might have been carried out. Unfortunately, his death prevented [that,] and the seeds were sown for what was afterward known as the Ghost Dance or Messiah Craze.” [emphasis added]

“During my time as Priest-in-charge of the Cheyenne Mission, I also for a time had charge of the Standing Rock Mission...[and] a number of things happened in the history of the Sioux Indians.

“First, the Ghost Dance of Messiah Craze culminating in the Wounded Knee battle, so called when Big Chief Foot and his band were almost entirely wiped out. This band was from Cheyenne River Reservation and by their deaths the Cheyenne Indian population was reduced four or five hundred. Many of those who escaped, wounded or otherwise were ministered to, and afterwards several were baptized by me. When Big Foot and his band went from Cheyenne to Pine Ridge all the Indians living up and down the Cheyenne River were in one camp near the mouth of the Cheyenne River under the surveillance of

6 This federal law, among other things, reduced the area of and split The Great Sioux Reservation into the five smaller reservations including Pine Ridge and Cheyenne.
the Military Authorities and with some other Christian Indians. I frequently visited the camp for religious services and to show my friendly feeling toward them. During the Ghost Dance or Messiah Craze, as it is well known, Sitting Bull was killed on the Grand River on the Standing Rock Reservation and the members of his band fled southward to the Moreau River to St. Thomas Station.”

Ashley continues: “the Christian Indians did everything they could to promote peace among the[m], urging them to go back to their own country. But blood having been spilled over the land, they said they could not return, and went on still southward to what is known as Cotton Wood Creek, where the Military authorities took charge of them, and took them to old Fort Sully where they remained the following winter. During the winter I visited them and had many interviews with them, counselling [sic] them for their future good and later when they were released they came back across the Missouri River to the Cheyenne side on the way back to Standing Rock. Many of the men and women were baptized by me before their departure.”

Ashley kept a diary of events at and near his home at the Cheyenne Agency, in late 1890 and early 1891. Selected entries included here are from the manuscript of his unpublished autobiography.

“September 3: Rumors have come in that one Bear That Kicks having returned from the west has stirred up some trouble regarding the Ghost Dance. It seems that he got permission last fall to go visiting and spend the winter with other tribes. Of course not being able to converse with them by speech, he did so by signs. He claimed to have seen the spirits of his father and mother, also the son of God. He reported that the earth would soon shake and that the spirits or ghosts will come back to earth again. We heard the same thing last winter on his return from Utah and where he had intercourse with some Latter Day Saints. After his return in company with some Oglalas, he organized the Ghost Dance at Rosebud. The dancers join hands and then form a circle. Some of the dancers become so weak and dizzy that they fall to the ground, and in their hallucination say that they have seen the spirits of their relatives. On the Cheyenne, near the mouth of Cherry Creek, where this has happened, the people have gone wild with excitement. This was reported to the Agent and he sent policemen to order the Oglalas to go back to their homes and bring Bear That Kicks to the Agency which was done. He was ordered by the

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7 St. Thomas mission is one of several that Ashley had established.
8 The Winter of 1890-91 was unseasonably mild with a few exceptions, such as a major blizzard at the end of December.
9 Some were also included in an article published in the April, 1932 edition of The South Dakota Churchman, “CHEYENNE---Autobiography of the Late Rev. Edward Ashley, D.D. From His Diary of the first Two Years”
10 This is the person also known as Kicking Bear. Ashley was fluent in the native language and frequently uses more literal names and terms as he interpreted—and used—them.
court to quit his foolishness and he says that he will. **What is the cause of this Ghost Dance?** It would seem from all that I hear that Bear That Kicks in his visits to the western tribes must have come in contact with some religious body, and possibly through misunderstanding has mixed his idea of heathen customs with the Christian idea of the second advent. Here is a great opportunity for the gospel to be preached as St. Paul did on Mars Hill. I believe a great deal could be accomplished if some of our Dakota clergy could make a tour around the camps preaching out of doors as need be and tell those who will not go inside the Church about Christ and his salvation.”

“November 4: In the morning started with Joseph [one of Ashley’s few assistants] for the Cheyenne River to Cook’s Camp. He had just returned from Cherry Creek where the Ghost Dance was located. He said that Bear That Kicks had been there dancing Saturday and Sunday and up to Monday noon, when he left for the Rosebud Country. Low Dog seems to have been left to take his place as chief of the Dance. We held service in the government school house.”

**November 16—22:** Visiting stations for the Bishop on the Rosebud Reservation, and I wrote the Bishop as follows:

‘My dear Bishop: I now write you as I promised of my trip from Rosebud Agency to the stations visited... We drove [to] St. Paul’s Station on Black Pipe Creek... This is the Camp where Short Bull has been holding his revels. No dance went on while we were in camp. In the morning before we were up, we heard a herald go around the camp warning the people to keep away from the strangers (Clark and me), who were in the camp. We held service in the school house and more came than I expected. Indeed, the room was pretty well packed, some standing inside and out on the porch. Among them was one man with a war club in his hand, but as he was not painted, I did not fear him and we cordially shook hands as I did with all the Indians after the service. In my address I took the same line of argument which I told you I had used in the Cheyenne River Mission adding some few points exposing the craze.”

“November 25: Went to the Agency this morning to see the agent. He had just finished talking to some Indians about the Ghost Dance and asked me to add a few words. An Indian was present dressed in an English soldier’s coat of bright red.

“November 26: I started this morning for up country and arrived at St. Paul’s Station where I held service....I spoke to the congregation regarding the Ghost Dance.

“November 27: Thanksgiving Day. Went on to St. Andrew’s Station where I held service and spent the night at Chief Charger’s house. Charger told me how the people on the

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11 A biblical reference, Acts 17:16-21; Paul spoke to Greek Pagans in Athens. Analogical references from biblical and more contemporary literature regarding communicative techniques are found in Ashley’s correspondence and essays.
East side of the river were scared of the Ghost Dance; also, how N. B. and A.T. had been on the East side [of the river] drinking and had been locked up.

“Dec. 25.—Morning service in English. Christmas feast at Little Bull’s house. Many of the Indians from the Cheyenne River were invited. Among them, Low dog, High Bear, and Yellow Thunder were present.


“Dec. 27.—After cleaning up the Church in the morning, I visited the two camps of Indians in the afternoon, taking with me some articles of clothing for Cheyenne Indians, and candy and apple for Hunkpapa, namely, the Sitting Bull people.\textsuperscript{12}

“Dec. 29.—I wrote letters and talked with some Indians about the Church work to be established at Cherry Creek.

“Dec. 30.—Making reports. Low Dog, the chief Dancer of Cherry Creek, came in for a conference.

“Jan. 2.—News has just reached us that Big Foot and his whole band have been killed on Wounded Knee Creek near Pine Ridge. [emphasis added]

“Jan. 5.—Not much of interest except that news from the so-called hostiles at Pine Ridge still comes in. [emphasis added]

“Jan. 7 and 8.—Indians constantly coming in to talk about matters, especially the present trouble. [emphasis added]

“Jan. 9.—This morning I went up to the camp for a meeting with Chief Charges and [Chief] No Heart. Addresses were made, after which Little Bear, Low dog, and Harry Hand spoke. There was much wailing in the camp on account of what had happened at Wounded Knee. Indeed, I never heard so much wailing before. [emphasis added]

“Jan. 10.—This morning I intended to go to the Post to make some calls, but Lieuts. McCarthy, Carnaham, and Dr. Wronton called. They inquired of me what was the feeling of the Indians in regard to Wounded Knee occurrence. I gave my opinion that while the Indians were very sorrowful in the death of their relatives, they had no intention of making any further trouble. They informed me that Capt. Hurst had been called to Pine Ridge by General Miles. I suggested that they ask the Captain to take with him the request made by the Indians. [emphasis added]

\textsuperscript{12} Sitting Bull, his fourteen year old son, and others were shot and killed on December 15, as Indian police and white military personnel arrived at his home to arrest him. This is the only chronological entry by Ashley that was found regarding Sitting Bull after December 15.
“Jan. 12.—Went down to the agency with my wife to make some calls. At the Agency I met Inspector Scissions. He said that I was making martyrs of the Indians. He poses as a reformer of the abuses of the Indian agents etc., etc.!” [emphasis added]

“Jan. 23.—Learned that Captain Hurst had returned from Pine Ridge with a list of killed at the Wounded Knee Affair. The Captain having sent me word to do so. I went to the Post where the Indians from the Camp on Cheyenne River were gathered together to meet the Captain and to hear what he had to say. At this request I read the list to the Indians. After reading it, the Captain gave an explanation of the killing of the women and children. Namely, that the Hotchkiss and Gatling guns which had been placed on the top of the hill while the Indian were scattering five hundred Brules were coming up the Creek and the firing was intended for them, but hit the women and children who were fleeing for safety! I have not read in the papers of these Brules coming at that particular time and place. My opinion is that the Rosebud Indians were trying to stay close to home. [emphasis added]

A heightened awareness of the influence of ghosts that lingered after World War I is evident in Ashley’s papers from the 1920’s. Clergy and government officials continued to be haunted, even as the trappings of the new century---wider access to consumer goods, electrical technology, and mechanized transportation---were routinely adopted, at least by those who deemed themselves “civilized.”

Conquering Indians in physical battles may have ended by the end of the Nineteenth Century, but the federal government’s intent to assimilate Indians persisted, perhaps to a greater extent than the dedication of churches and their missionaries to convert heathen spiritual beliefs to Christianity. Ashley had been appointed Arch-deacon of Niobrara in 1916 and was in charge of the Episcopal missions. He routinely received copies of federal communications which he was often asked to review. He distributed information through the missionary channels realizing government agents were presumably doing that, too.

Officials dancing around ghosts, is evident in the following examples that were addressed from and to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles H. Burke. The first, addressed to “All Superintendents,” is dated February 14, 1923:

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13 The message to Superintendents, dated February 14, 1923, refers to a Circular which our research of other correspondence retained by Ashley indicates has content similar to that in “Letter to All Indians.” The February 24, 1923 letter presented here was printed at The Indian Print Shop at Cillico, Oklahoma on February 17, 1923.
“Supplement to Circular No. 1665. Indian Dancing. At a conference in October, 1922, of the missionaries of the several religious denominations represented in the Sioux country, the following recommendation were adopted and have been courteously submitted to this Office:

1. That the Indian form of gambling and lottery know as the ‘ituranpi’ (translated ‘give away’) be prohibited.

2. That the Indian dances be limited to one in each month in the daylight hours of one day in the midweek, and at one center in each district; the months of March and April, June, July, and August being excepted.

3. That no one take part in the dances or be present who are under 50 years of age.

4. That a careful propaganda be undertaken to educated public opinion against the dance and to provide a healthy substitute. [emphasis added]

5. That a determined effort be made by the Government employees in cooperation with the missionaries to persuade the management of fairs and ‘round-ups’ in the towns adjoining the reservations not to commercialize the Indian by soliciting his attendance in large numbers for show purposes.

6. That there be close cooperation between the Government employees and missionaries in those matters which affect the moral welfare of the Indians.” [emphasis added]

“These recommendations, I am sure, were the result of sincere thought and discussion, and, in view of their helpful spirit, are worthy of our careful consideration. They agree in the main with my attitude outlined in Circular No. 1665 on Indian dancing.

“Probably the purpose of paragraph 2 can be better fulfilled by some deviation from its specific terms according as circumstances of conditions vary in different reservations. Likewise, the restriction in paragraph 3 may reasonably depend upon the character of the dance, its surroundings and supervision. I would not exclude those under 50 if the occasion is properly controlled and unattended by immoral or degrading influence. [emphasis added]

“The main features of the recommendations may be heartily endorsed, because they seek lawful and decent performances free from excess as to their length, conduct, and interference with self-supporting duties; because they urge cooperation towards something better to take the place of the vicious dance, and because they suggest the need of civilizing public sentiment in those white communities where little interest is taken in the Indians beyond the exhibition for commercial ends of ancient and barbarous customs. [emphasis added]
“After a conscientious study of the dance situation in his own jurisdiction, the efforts of every Superintendent must persistently encourage and emphasize the Indian’s attention to those practical, useful, thrifty, and orderly activities that are indispensable to his well-being and that underlie the preservation of his race in the midst of complex and highly competitive conditions. The instinct of individual enterprise and devotion to the prosperity and elevation of family life should in some way be made paramount in every Indian household to the exclusion of idleness, waste of time at frequent gathering of whatever nature, and the neglect of physical resources upon which depend food, clothing, shelter, and the very beginnings of progress. [emphasis added]

“Of course, we must give tact, persuasion, and appeal to the Indian’s good sense a chance to win ahead of peremptory orders, because our success must often follow a change of honest conviction and a surrender of traditions held sacred, and we should, therefore, especially gain the support of the more enlightened and progressive element among the Indians as a means of showing how the things we should correct or abolish are handicaps to those who practice them. We must go about this work with some patience and charity and do it in a way that will convince the Indian of our fidelity to his best welfare, and in such a spirit we may welcome cooperation apart from our Service, especially from those whose splendid labors and sacrifices are devoted to moral and social uplift everywhere. [emphasis added]

“I feel that it will be much better to accomplish something in this way than by more arbitrary methods, if it can be done, and therefore desire you after one year’s faithful trial to submit a special report upon the results with your recommendations. The accompanying letter should be given the widest publicity possible among the Indians, and if necessary additional copies can be supplied for that purpose. Please acknowledge the receipt hereof. Sincerely yours, CHAS. H. BURKE, Commissioner.”

The second example is a February 24, 1923 letter entitled, “A Message,” from Commissioner Charles Burke. It was addressed from Washington, D.C., “TO ALL INDIANS.”

“Not long ago I held a meeting of Superintendents, Missionaries and Indians, at which the feeling of those present was strong against Indian dances, as they are usually given, and against so much time as is often spent by the Indians in a display of their old customs at public gatherings held by the whites. From the views of this meeting and from other information I feel that something must be done to stop the neglect of stock, crops, gardens and home interest cause by these dances or by celebrations, pow-wows, and gatherings of any kind that take the time of the Indians for many days. [emphasis added]
“Now, what I want you to think about very seriously is that you must first of all try to make your own living, which you cannot do unless you work faithfully and take care of what comes from your labor, and go to dances or other meetings only when your home work will not suffer by it. I do not want to deprive you of decent amusements or occasional feast days, but you should not do evil or foolish things or take so much time for these occasions. No good comes from your “give-away” custom at dances and it should be stopped. It is not right to torture your bodies or to handle poisonous snakes in your ceremonies. All such extreme things are wrong and should be put aside and forgotten. You do yourselves and your families great injustice when at dances you give away money or other property perhaps clothing, a cow, a horse or a team and wagon, and then after an absence of several days go home to find everything going to waste and yourselves with less to work with than you had before. [emphasis added]

“I could issue an order against these useless and harmful performances, but I would much rather have you give them up of your own free will and, therefore, I ask you now in this letter to do so. I urge you to come to an understanding and an agreement with your Superintendent to hold no gatherings in the months when the seed-time, cultivation of crops and the harvest need your attention, and at other times to meet for only a short period and to have no drugs, intoxicants, or gambling, and no dancing that the Superintendent does not approve. [emphasis added]

“If at the end of one year the reports which I receive show that you are doing as requested, I shall be very glad for I will know that you are making progress in other and more important ways, but if the reports show that you reject this plea, then some other course will have to be taken. “With best wishes for our happiness and success, I am Sincerely yours, /s/ Commissioner.”

The third example is a joint letter to the Indian Affairs Commissioner from the “Continuation Committee,” an inter-denominational group of missionaries who organized to better deal with large issues, e.g., the haunting ghosts, and other institutions, e.g., the federal government. This June 10, 1923 letter, handwritten by Ashley, was addressed to “Mr. Burke.”

“The undersigned, active missionaries of the various churches working among the Sioux or Dakota Indians, have noted with regret the many protests in the press of the country to the recent circular letter of the commissioner of Indian Affairs addressed to the Indians, in which he pleads with them to give up those features of their amusements and feasts that are useless & (sic) harmful.
“Some of the friends of the Indian seem to fear that the Commissioner and we who are supporting him in this policy are trying to make white people out of the Indian. Far be it from us! We know very well that that is an impossible (sic) and in fact, an undesirable task. The white man himself is a long way yet from that goal which we believe God has set for all races—to work happily together with Him and each other develop all the resources latent in themselves, and in their environment. Whatever interferes with our pushing on toward that goal, whatever is less than our best, we believe we ought to dispense with in order that we might make a real contribution toward world civilization. This standard we are willing to apply to ourselves and we believe the Indian must apply to himself not that he might become a white man, but that, out of his rich past, and promising present, he might contribute what is most worthwhile. [emphasis added]

“We are well aware that the road toward this goal entails many sacrifices for all (sic) races. It means that we must give up not only what is positively bad, but many things which we have considered good, but which, measured by this standard prove to be less than the best. The Commissioner’s letter was right in line with this ideal! He advised the Indians to eliminate those parts of their native custom that are not worthy of the highest & (sic) finest in them. We commend Mr. Burke for his letter, and, pledge him our hearty co-operation. Signed by the “Continuation Committee” of the Inter-denominational Mission Council. /s/ William Holmes; F.B. Riggs; A.F. Johnson; Jesse P. Williamson; Rudolf Hertz; (and) E. Ashley, Chairman (sic).” [emphasis added]

Ashley’s death was widely reported. The New York Times obituary printed in April, 1931 is instructive, not so much for the biographical information but, rather, for the characterization of the period. It was slightly more than 40 years after Wounded Knee Creek of 1890, and before the 1973 Occupation.

The article has the headline, “REV. DR. ASHLEY DIES; INDIAN MISSIONARY / Since 1874 He Had Been Friend and Adviser to Tribal Leaders in West. / HELPED DRAW 1876 TREATY /
Played Vital Part in reconciling the Red Man to White Man’s Invasion---Was 77 Years Old.”

The largely urban readership, far removed from the Niobrara Deanery, was informed that Ashley, “who, as an Episcopal missionary in the American west, probably developed a wider friendship among Indians than any other white man.” He “was a personal friend and confidant of such Indian leaders as Rain-in-the-Face, Sitting Bull, White Bear, Bad Lodge, Dull Knife, and Drifting Goose. He was also a friend of [General George] Custer and [President Theodore] Roosevelt.”

“During his long sojourn in the West, Dr. Ashley saw the intimate life of primitive Indians until they gradually became absorbed by the ever-progressing white race. He was the last survivor of the framers of the Treaty of 1876 which opened the Black Hills country to gold seekers and which proved to be the forerunner of Indian uprisings, since it stripped the Indians of the hunting grounds. This led to the Custer Massacre at Little Big Horn. [emphasis added]

“Later he was present on Cheyenne Reservation during the Ghost Dance of [the] Messiah Craze, which culminated in the Battle of the Wounded Knee, where the Federal troops avenged the slaughter of Custer and his men. Subsequently, Dr. Ashley succeeded in leading Chief Gaul, one of the perpetrators of the Little Big Horn massacre, to Christianity. [emphasis added]

The Times summarized his tenure from 1874: “During that time he gave counsel and aid to the Indians, acted as intermediary for them in their relations with the Federal Government, served on their tribal councils, ministered to them during sickness, acted as inter-tribal peacemaker and acquainted them with the ways of civilization.” [emphasis added]

Postscript

What can 2012 Dakota History Conferees conclude, upon reflection of Wounded Knee, 1973? The conference was historic in itself, as several principals of the Occupation attended. Many of us may remember the Occupation. Those who lived the forty years since then have, perhaps, prior to the 2012 Dakota History Conference, thought about the circumstances that led to the Occupation and its significance.

None of us experienced or witnessed the incident at Wounded Knee Creek in 1890, nor did we achieve adulthood during the subsequent forty years. We must depend upon public and private records and interpretive accounts. What did those who lived then learn by 1931?
The period between 1931 and 1973 deserves examination. It was when a new
generation set and implemented policies to manage U.S. Indian affairs. What influenced the
religious and secular officials during that period?

Did we learn from the history of 1890 and of 1973, or are we bound to repeat it? Are
we, too, dancing around ghosts that haunt us?

Blair Tremere
Golden Valley, Minnesota
April, 2012
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SELECT READING

“Voices of Wounded Knee” By William S. E. Coleman University of Nebraska Press [Bison Books], Lincoln, NE © 2000


Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, what I’m about to share with you is troubling, but it’s also documented. So bear that in mind as we go through this; listen to what we have to say and make up your own minds.

Let me begin by making you a promise. We promise we won’t lie to you. Now you’d expect that but the reason I say that is because there are other speakers who can’t make the same claim because they have a vested interest in keeping you in the dark. You see, there are really two histories about Wounded Knee ’73. There’s the history you’re supposed to believe, the one I call, OPIATE PABLUM FOR THE MASSES, the story of how brave Indians held off the might and power of the US government during 72 days of very public gunfire, and there’s the other history of what happened inside Wounded Knee, the history you’re not supposed to know.

You’re not supposed to know that people were abducted and interrogated at Wounded Knee. You’re not supposed to know that people were beaten and tortured at Wounded Knee. You’re not supposed to know that people were raped and murdered at Wounded Knee, all of it behind the barriers and all of it instigated or condoned by the American Indian Movement (AIM) leaders, people like Dennis Banks, Russell Means, Leonard Crow Dog, Carter Camp and Stan Holder. So that’s one reason why we call American Indian Mafia the history book they do not want you to read.

Now, almost 40 years later, the cover-up has corrupted academia, where once again, you simply won’t read about AIM’s dirty little secrets from Wounded Knee. Here’s one of them: Before the invaders could pose as aggrieved villagers, they first had to evict the real villagers, their fellow Indians, and make it appear as though it was their village and that they lived there all their lives. This is part of the con.

Not to take issue with the conference flyer, but it is really not correct to say that 200 Oglala Lakota took over their own town. Only about 10%, approximately 20 people, were from Pine Ridge and agreed to invade their neighbor’s community and vandalize their property. The rest of them were reservation outsiders. So they really were invaders who broke into people’s
homes, stole their personal possessions, wore their clothes, ate their food, slept in their beds, drove their cars, and eventually destroyed their village, all under the approving eye of the TV news people, some of whom actually participated in the first village assault on the night of February 27, 1973.

That’s when about 50 cars drove into the village under cover of darkness. They shot out the streetlights, smashed open the doors of people’s homes, started fires, looted the trading post, took hostages, and shot at responding emergency vehicles. By the time it was over, the village lay in ruins. I know this because my father was there.

Joseph H. Trimbach was the FBI agent in charge who became the on-scene commander that night and who made the fateful decision to erect roadblocks around the village in an effort to cordon off the violence. Little did he know at the time what sort of violence he was attempting to contain.

As time wore on, and numerous ceasefires were broken, and thousands of rounds were fired in both directions, Wounded Knee became more and more dangerous for the people inside the village. It wasn’t just because of the government riflemen, which was an on-again, off-again threat. It was because AIM leader Dennis Banks became increasingly paranoid about spies in his midst. That’s why Carter Camp, Stan Holder, and Leonard Crow Dog, among others, chained people to beds or otherwise confined and interrogated them. Some of the people who didn’t pass the test ended up dead. We estimate that half a dozen people were murdered inside the village versus the one casualty (Frank Clear) who died from a stray government bullet.

Here’s a picture of one of the secret murder victims from Wounded Knee. His name is Ray Robinson. He was a civil rights activist under Martin Luther King. Cris Westerman allegedly dumped Ray’s body in a hole somewhere near what are now the village ruins. This was after he was shot in the leg and carted off to the makeshift infirmary staffed by Madonna Gilbert Thunder Hawk and Loreli DeCora Means, allegedly the last people to see Robinson alive before he bled to death. Ray’s widow is here today, Cheryl Robinson. If there’s anyone here who knows something about where her husband was buried, please help her. Cheryl just wants to give her husband a proper burial. You know, that is the Indian way. To repatriate the remains of the fallen, after the battle is over. And by the way, real warrior women would cooperate in that effort. Real warrior women wouldn’t participate in the cover-up of murder. But then, real
warrior women would not have lined up against Anna Mae Aquash as members of the AIM pie patrol and help condemn Anna Mae to death after she was interrogated, tortured, and raped.

Anna Mae was a prominent figure at Wounded Knee; she was married there. She was an emerging leader of the movement, murdered two years later likely because she found out about the secret murders and because Dennis Banks mistakenly believed Anna Mae was an FBI informant. Anna Mae was never an FBI informant. I’ll leave the rest of that story to Anna Mae’s daughter, Denise.

The point I want to make is this: the murder of Anna Mae, the secret murders at Wounded Knee, the murders of FBI agents Ron Williams and Jack Coler in 1975, along with other murders Paul DeMain will talk about, they’re all connected. If you don’t understand that, then you won’t understand the information in American Indian Mafia and you will be ripe for being conned about the real legacy of Wounded Knee and the American Indian Movement, perhaps the most falsified chapter in recent American history.

Just so you know, our beef is not with the AIM membership, most of whom were well intentioned people trying to improve the lives of their fellow Indians. People like Anna Mae, who embodied the true ideals of the movement the AIM leaders proved they could not live up to. Had they allowed her to live, the real legacy of Wounded Knee might have had a chance to make an appearance in the history books.

Sadly, most of what you’ll read about Wounded Knee or see on TV is a whitewash of history, a farce, a cover-up. You see, the media and academia are both complicit in the cover-up. That sort of explains why academics, historians, and so-called investigative journalists are not very interested in interviewing my father, the one person who could have told them what really happened those first two weeks. But then, they wouldn’t have had a romanticized story about brave Indians holding off the modern-day equivalent of the cavalry.

In fact, the first time anyone contacted Joe Trimbach wanting to interview him on film about Wounded Knee was a few years ago, when Stanley Nelson was working on his PBS documentary, We Shall Remain, Part V, Wounded Knee. I’m working on a book called We Shall Defame, How PBS Ignored the Real Victims of Wounded Knee, the people who lived there and the people who died there, because it will expose Nelson’s film as just another Wounded Knee makeover.
I guess you could say I had a hand in the production of this film. You see, my father, regretfully, put me in charge of negotiating with Nelson about our participation. I had only one stipulation. My father would agree to sit down and answer any question Stanley wanted to ask him about Wounded Knee, or anything else for that matter, and use that footage in his film. In return, Nelson agreed to interview former AIM member Richard Two Elk, who witnessed Ray Robinson getting shot at Wounded Knee and who could have steered Nelson towards the ugly truth. But Nelson, like those before him, had an agenda and it became obvious he was going to stick to it. You see, Nelson wanted to interview only the perpetrators from Wounded Knee, not the victims, even after I told him what really happened. Nelson reneged on our agreement, failed to interview Two Elk, and used my father’s footage anyway.

As a final thank you from PBS, their official website contains discussion questions and a study guide for school children designed to indoctrinate them into what to believe about Wounded Knee. It also contains a rather lengthy bibliography of source documents and suggested reading material used in the film. Can you guess which book they omitted from their list?

So now, we have Stanley Nelson, with the help of PBS, erase any trace of the Wounded Knee victims and the Wounded Knee murders. They eventually added our book to their list, with a typo, after our lawyer contacted their lawyer. But then one of their paid experts, Professor Russell Edmunds (University of Texas) said of our complaint about the dishonest premise of the film, “I believe that Trimbach’s protest reflects the perspective of a very small group of people with a particular agenda, and will be generally ignored by almost everyone else.” You hope so, Professor Edmunds.

PBS Executive Mark Samels wrote, “Our producers took great pains to be even-handed in the portrayal of the siege at Wounded Knee.” Really? This film shows none of the village destruction, none of it.

Here is one of the AIM criminals Professor Edmunds helps elevate to hero status in the film, Carter Camp. Camp has been repeatedly caught in a lie about knowing Ray Robinson although he was allegedly present when Robinson was shot. If you ask him today, Camp will say he never heard of the guy.
You know, what’s interesting is PBS never interviewed Adrienne Fritze who, unlike Professor Edmunds, actually lived in Wounded Knee; who watched her village be systematically destroyed; and, who was prepped by the TV news people about the questions she would be asked and the answers she was to give in front of the cameras. So I ask you, who is the real expert on Wounded Knee? Adrienne Fritze, whose family is just as native as Russell Means’ clan; or, Professor Edmunds, the paid expert who dismisses our research and who now fronts for murderers?

I’ll make you another promise, ladies and gentlemen. You read American Indian Mafia and Adrienne’s book, Quest for the Pipe of the Sioux, and you’ll know more about Wounded Knee ‘73 than most professors of Indian Studies, and certainly more than Professor Edmunds. Adrienne is here today with her book and can dispel many of the Wounded Knee myths the media and academia have been peddling for the last 39 years.

I’m afraid the people behind the PBS film, and others like it, merely exhibit the same interest in the truth about Wounded Knee as most other historians and self-described experts. The question is, why do they further the lies?

Well, one reason is they probably think it is somehow beneficial to Native Americans, which of course it isn’t. What they don’t understand is that when you promote liars, thieves and killers as worthy role models and heroes of Indian Country, you do a huge disservice to Native Americans everywhere.

You know, that sounds pretty basic but these people, these very opinionated academics and their friends in the media, just don’t get it. So our book is ridiculed, ignored, or simply disposed of. Like this guy, Jim Page, who claims to be open-minded and tolerant but who told us with pride that our book disappeared from the Seattle Public Library.

What they especially don’t like is that American Indian Mafia dispels conspiracy theories and myths about Wounded Knee and related events. Dozens of them. Here are just a few of the falsehoods we expose that pertain to just the FBI. The Myth that the FBI:

- Backed roving death squads on the reservation.
- Used a COINTEL (counter-intelligence program) against AIM.
- Had a contract out on Dennis Banks.
• Tried to assassinate Leonard Peltier, behind bars.
• Failed to investigate murders on the Pine Ridge reservation.
• Was guilty of misconduct in the Wounded Knee trial.
• Framed Leonard Peltier for the murders of FBI Agents Coler and Williams.
• Was behind the Reign of Terror on the reservation (actually instigated by AIM thugs).
• Was behind the murder of Anna Mae and the ensuing cover-up.

You want to know who was really behind the murder of Anna Mae? It wasn’t just Arlo and John Boy, both of them convicted. How about the AIM leadership? How about AIM lawyer, Bruce Ellison, a named co-conspirator who allegedly interrogated Anna Mae as she sat tied up in his office?

Ellison once testified before a UN Human Rights Committee about the horrible things the FBI did to Anna Mae. And for the last 37 years, Ellison, who repeatedly chose to “plead the Fifth” before a grand jury, has conspired with this guy, former AIM spokesman John Trudell, in spreading the story that the FBI was behind the murder they themselves were involved in covering-up.

Trudell, I believe, could have put a stop to it but he couldn’t stand up to Dennis Banks. Arlo testified that this guy, Charlie Abourezk (son of Senator James Abourezk) was at Bill Means’ house the night they brought Anna Mae there. This was before the others took her out and shot her in the head.

And this guy, AIM lawyer Ken Tilsen, has trouble explaining how he ended up owning Anna Mae’s billfold. Tilsen won a Lifetime Achievement award from the ACLU, which is ironic given the lifetime taken from Anna Mae. It is interesting that Tilsen’s legal records from the period of Anna Mae’s disappearance have also disappeared.

Today, Tilsen presides over the extensive Wounded Knee collection at the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul, a propagandized assortment of sanitized material, paid for by the taxpayers. But it is possible they missed something. At a smaller collection at the University of South Dakota, my father and I found this document which indicates that Federal Judge Miles
Lord was in cahoots with his fellow judges to prevent other Wounded Knee cases from coming to trial. So you never know what you’ll find.

*American Indian Mafia* also makes the case that the corruption of today’s media had its roots in Wounded Knee, the first large-scale historical event where the media aided and abetted the criminals. And the cover-up continues.

We asked the director of the National Museum of the American Indian, Kevin Gover, if he would allow our book to be sold in the museum bookstore as a counter-balance to the AIM propaganda that he now sells. Gover won’t even return our phone calls or answer our letters. And I hear that ABC/DISNEY has bought up all the old Wounded Knee footage and won’t allow some people to view it. So you have to wonder: what are they afraid of?

Quickly, as I’m up against the clock, here are some of the newspapers that declined to review *American Indian Mafia* even after receiving a complimentary copy from our publisher: Midwest Book Review; The Salt Lake Tribune; The Washington Times; SD State Historical Society; The Arizona Republic; The Toronto Star; Capital Journal Book Review; Rocky Mountain News; Chicago Sun-Times; Kansas City Star; Cincinnati Enquirer; Minneapolis Star Tribune; and, my favorite, the Rapid City Journal, which has been known to give libelous headlines to the people involved in Anna Mae’s murder. This paper has had numerous opportunities to interview Joe Trimbach—not interested. Perhaps it’s because we destroy, either in whole or in part, the credibility of several established and sanctified accounts of Wounded Knee, such as those that follow.

*Native North American Biography, Unquiet Grave*—A few choice revelations but mostly political bile.

*The Encyclopedia of North American Indians Vol VII*—This college text is full of falsehoods about AIM leaders with several references by Bruce Johansen, University of Nebraska. Professor Johansen is perhaps the greatest academic falsifier of AIM history because he recycles the same old lies over and over, most of which were hatched by the perpetrators.

*In The Spirit of Crazy Horse*—This book, built around the rehabilitation of convicted killer Leonard Peltier, is considered the undisputed bible of the AIM legacy among most academics. I took the liberty of highlighting Matthiessen’s tribute to Anna Mae’s killers. Blue indicates political views masquerading as history. Yellow is for yellow journalism, that is, distortions and
obfuscations. Orange is for not-so-little white lies and falsehoods. Red is for boldfaced
whoppers. So there are lies, damn lies, and Peter Matthiessen’s lies.

Native North American Biography (Gale Research).

More propaganda and historical revisions can be found in the following.

Ghost Dancing the Law—This is a somewhat farcical look at the Wounded Knee trial of
Means and Banks. It tries to make the case that the defendants were misunderstood in the
same manner as Yasser Arafat and Moammar Gadhafi. What it doesn’t tell you is how the
presiding federal judge, Fred Nichols, made sure that justice had no chance to prevail in his
courtroom.

One by one, Judge Nichols jettisoned the charges Means and Banks stood accused of
committing. To give you one example, Judge Nichols ruled that Molotov cocktails, AIM’s
favorite weapon of mass destruction, might also be used for lighting purposes, so that charge
had to be dropped. He also ruled that there was no proof of larceny or arson or even that
Means and Banks knew what was going on. The trial became a circus.

Before it even began, Judge Nichols invited Dennis Banks and his lawyer to his house
where Banks made the judge’s wife an honorary member of AIM. Nine months later, when the
jury was finally allowed to deliberate, Judge Nichols called a secret ex-parte meeting with the
defense team where together they drew up the dismissal order.

Interesting side note: my father believes he had a mole in his office or possibly Judge
Nichols’ office. I believe that it could have been the judge himself. After he learned that FBI
informant Douglas Durham was also at his house with Dennis Banks, the judge blew his top.
That’s when somebody blew Durham’s cover.

Durham had been Dennis’s right-hand man. He barely escaped with his life because
somebody ratted him out to Dennis and Russell. But then Durham did a very smart thing; he
called a very public news conference where he basically said that if anything happens to me,
you’ll know where to look. That was his life insurance.

Soon after that, Banks turned his paranoia to Anna Mae. One by one, the people closest
to Anna Mae lined up against her. Approximately 20 people were involved in her murder and
the ensuing cover-up.
So in a very real sense, some liberal do-gooder, perhaps Judge Nichols himself, helped get Anna Mae killed because Durham, the guy closest to Banks, wasn’t there to warn his FBI contact that Anna Mae was in deep trouble.

*Loud Hawk* is the story about Dennis Banks firing his gun from this motor home in the direction of his wife and child in order to escape a highway patrol officer on the night of November 14, 1975, just a few weeks before he allegedly signed off on Anna Mae’s execution. Banks and Leonard Peltier escaped, leaving the weapons behind and the women holding the bag and blaming Anna Mae for tipping off the police.

*Loud Hawk* is built around the falsified account of how the police kicked, beat, and swore at the women. A story likely fed to Ken Stern, the author, by Russ Redner, a pathological liar and the guy driving this vehicle carrying 350 pounds of dynamite. Redner was also arrested at the scene. Anyway, Stern proceeded to write the entire book around the falsified account of police brutality, and then constructed an entire career around the falsified book. Stern is a self-described expert on race relations. Nice work if you can get it.

Then there is Ward Churchill. I could do a whole seminar on the fraudulent research of this guy. A quick example: The caption reads that my father was somehow responsible for Frank Clearwater’s death at Wounded Knee. Churchill has the wrong date, the wrong guy (Joe Trimbach was long gone by then) and three bogus claims. One photograph, five errors. And that’s not even a picture of Frank Clearwater!

Churchill should be the laughing stock of his peer group. Sadly, a group of academics vigorously defends his bogus research, particularly as it relates to Wounded Knee and the FBI.

*Ojibwe Warrior*—This is Dennis Banks’ autobiography. Banks is now touting his new film, *A Good Day to Die*. I call it “A Good Day to Lie” because there’s never been a finer propaganda film made and designed to cover up one’s role in several murders. Banks recently inaugurated a walk across America on behalf of another murderer, Leonard Peltier. So I have to ask the question, is this the best we can do for Indian role models and heroes? It’s pretty sad when you think about it.

I recently received an e-mail from Agnes Gildersleeve’s daughter, JoAnn. Agnes and her husband Clive lived in Wounded Knee village and ran the Trading Post. Agnes is often described as a white woman by the so-called historians. What they don’t tell you is that she was a
Chippewa Indian enrolled in the same tribe as her oppressor, Dennis Banks. JoAnn’s e-mail mentioned her mother’s wedding rings, stolen by Banks when he moved into their home at Wounded Knee, and where he proceeded to steal their cash, their personal belongings, their family heirlooms, their car keys, and pretty much anything a petty thief could get away with stealing. Message to Dennis from JoAnn: you can keep everything you stole from my parents but I want the wedding rings back.

According to Leonard Peltier’s cousin, Bob Robideau, and other people familiar with the facts, Banks was undoubtedly involved in the murder of Anna Mae, which explains why he knew she was dead a week before the FBI identified her remains. I believe Banks was also behind the murders of Ray Robinson and the other victims at Wounded Knee, including the murder of Buddy Lamont, made to look like he was hit by a government bullet.

Lamont was shot in the chest during one of the fiercest gun battles of Wounded Knee. Banks claims Lamont was shot in the back. Soon after Lamont was hit, the record shows that the government called for a ceasefire. Banks refused. He let Lamont lay out there for two hours before agreeing to stop shooting. While I’m on the subject, here’s how Jane Fonda would have us believe Buddy Lamont was deprived of his life (scene from Lakota Woman).

I recently heard from another woman who tells me Banks threatened her if she did not turn over control of a fund she had set up to help impoverished Indians, after which, he raided the fund. I’ve also been told that Banks used to fleece rich old widows for income. This is the hero often praised and promoted by Native News Network. I understand you will have a chance to view his over-the-top film. I guess it really is, “A Good Day to Lie”.

One of Dennis’ buddies is, of course, Russell Means. In his book, Where White Men Fear to Tread, Means talks about wanting to murder many people, and he’s not joking. Although most of this book is a bunch of hot air, I believe Russell when he says he and Dennis could make people disappear.

If you look at the FBI Wounded Knee reports of March, 1973, you’ll see where Means and Banks were seen leaving the village. Leo Wilcox, a tribal council member and an outspoken critic of AIM, is found dead, burned alive in his car, just outside the village. Immediately after which, the report says Means and Banks slip back into the village. Go figure.
Means claims to be a big supporter of women, but during the Wounded Knee occupation, one of his goons sexually assaulted 12-year-old Adrienne Fritze. And this woman, Suzanne Dupree (aka Looking Back Woman), ceremonial steward of the Cannunpa Wakan, says Russell Means raped her when she was 17 at a Catholic girl’s school in Spokane, WA. In his book, Means admits he was ready to murder the female juror foreman in the Martin Mountileaux murder trial, after which he wrote about this plan, had the jury come back with the wrong verdict.

Then there is Means’ involvement in the murder of Anna Mae. He says he had no part in it, although he threw his brother Bill and Clyde Bellecourt under the bus in 1999 (video of Means implicating Bill and Clyde). How is it that just about every member of the Means clan: Bill, Ted, Loreli, Madonna, Aunt Theda, Troy Lynn, along with Clyde, were all involved but not their leader? If Russell was not a part of it, why is he so chummy with Dennis who many believe was? And isn’t it interesting, that in Russell’s huge autobiography, there is not a single mention of the woman whose funeral he boycotted. You see, at the time, they still believed Anna Mae was a traitor to the cause. But who is the real traitor? After reading our book, you’ll wonder why a couple of retired killers are honored, not reviled, at a historical conference.

Next you’re going to hear from Paul DeMain and Denise Maloney. I want you to know that I consider Paul my brother and Denise my sister. We probably don’t agree on all issues but we are united in bringing the truth to light. When I wrote American Indian Mafia and the screenplay, Squaw Peak, I felt we had Anna Mae’s blessing. I felt her presence. If you were in the courtroom at the John Graham trial, you know what I’m talking about. Squaw Peak is based on a true story, which means some people won’t like it. But, if you honor the truth, I think you’ll find it very interesting.

There is a lot more I’d like to tell you, but we’re out of time. You can find it in this book. Perhaps now you understand why American Indian Mafia is the history book they really don’t want you to read. That is because it tells the truth about what happened at Wounded Knee. And, along with Quest for the Pipe of the Sioux, it is the only book that tells the truth about what happened at Wounded Knee ‘73, which is why the academics and so-called experts hate it. So they ignore it, disparage our conclusions, or question our motives but the one thing they cannot do and have not done is refute our research. Why do they persist in defending the falsified
history of Wounded Knee? Perhaps they do not want you to know the truth in order to protect their precious reputations, their petty insecurities, and their investment in wholesale academic fraud. And they believe they can get away with it. Prove them wrong, ladies and gentlemen. Help us expose their hypocrisy and above all, respect the truth.

One other thing; and, this is very important. There is little doubt that AIM tore a wide path of destruction that left the Pine Ridge reservation in historical shambles, the effects of which are still felt today. According to native journalist Tim Giago, over the last five years, Pine Ridge has received one billion dollars in government aid. One billion. Yet, Pine Ridge still has unemployment of over 80 percent; an alcoholism rate close to 90 percent; and, we estimate that half the children are sexually abused by the alcoholic adults. Every year, there’s a celebration of the destruction of Wounded Knee village. They call it the liberation of Wounded Knee. There was nothing left to liberate.

Until the real legacy of Wounded Knee, the American Indian Movement, and the truth is acknowledged, there is little chance for a much-needed spiritual revival on the reservation. The children of Pine Ridge certainly deserve better than what we’ve given them. I encourage you to read the epilogue in *American Indian Mafia* to find out what you can do to help. Thank you.
During November of 1890 General Nelson Miles sought to recruit Jules Sandoz to join his forces as a scout to find Ghost Dance participants and bring them by persuasion or force to the reservation. Sandoz said to the General: “I have no lost Indians. You lose any, you hunt for them.”¹

In 1880 Jules Sandoz had completed four years of medical school in Switzerland. In 1884 he arrived in Valentine, Nebraska and the land office. His attitude toward the Lakota and Cheyenne people he met was unusual among new arrivals to the region. From them he got the region’s operating instructions.² The relationship was collaborative. He hunted across the region with native people. He became acquainted with the flora and fauna. He learned how to navigate through the Sand Hills in good weather and blizzards. Jules Sandoz learned to not make offensive eye contact as he entered a lodge. Lakota and Cheyenne were welcome to pitch their lodges on his property. His daughter Marie, later Mari, found these people to be a haven from her father’s temper.

His neighbors, including those he had recruited from Switzerland, knew Jules as contentious. Simultaneous with Ghost Dance events he was embroiled in feuds along the Niobrara River. He was repeatedly arrested and jailed. In autumn of 1891 he was in court on a charge of grain burning. He offered a vigorous defense in English, German and French making “a plea for the settler, for protection against the cattlemen and their outside money, a plea for the little fellow in a world of powerful, selfish privilege, of gross corruption and graft.”³ The judge dismissed the case.

On the morning of the Wounded Knee massacre of Big Foot’s band Jules Sandoz was in Rushville, some thirty miles south. The temperature hovered around twenty degrees below

³ Sandoz, op. cit., p. 143.
zero. He set out into the face of a blizzard circling around to a hill on the north of the site. “He looked down over the desolate battlefield, upon the dark piles of men, women, and children sprawled among their goods.” The next morning he wrote a letter at the Rushville post office saying that “There was something loose in the world that hated joy and happiness as it hated brightness and color, reducing everything to drab agony and gray.”

Here is a paradox. His neighbors surely saw him in just this way, as a cantankerous man loose in the world. In contrast he was an attentive and responsive participant in native communities where he found a share of brightness and color. There is no evidence that he had a personal relationship with Big Foot and his people. The journey to Wounded Knee was not a matter of a particular friendship. His motivation began to emerge during an examination of marginalia in selected volumes of the Mari Sandoz Collection at the University of Nebraska Love Library.

On an opening page of Bertrand Russell’s *A History of Western Philosophy* there is this notation: “Tom Walker Library.” The *Tom Walker* is Sandoz’s novel about wars woven through three generations of a family. She includes a quotation from an interview with He Dog in 1931 explaining Oglala religion: “Man is a part of the Great Powers which are in everything—the sky, the earth and the four great Directions. His brother, the buffalo, gives some of his living to feed man, and man, the brother of grass, feeds it to grown strong and make the buffalo fat and many, to circle in his time in the great path that all things living will walk.” There are extensive markings throughout the book in crayon and pencil which she read as a review. In the section of Catholic Philosophy Sandoz marked this:

...the followers of Peter Waldo, an enthusiast who, in 1170, started a “crusade” for observance of the law of Christ. He gave all his goods to the poor, and founded a society called the “Poor Men of Lyons,” who practised poverty and a strictly virtuous life. At first they had papal approval, but they inveighed somewhat too forcibly against the immorality of the clergy, and were condemned by the Council of Verona in 1184. Thereupon they decided that every good man is competent to preach and expound the Scriptures; they appointed their own ministers, and dispensed with the services of the Catholic priesthood. They spread to Lombardy, and to Bohemia, where they paved the

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way for the Hussites. In the Albigensian persecution. . . many fled to Piedmont; it was their persecution in Piedmont in Milton’s time that occasioned his sonnet “Avenge, O Lord, they slaughtered saints.” They survive to this day in remote Alpine valleys and in the United States. ⁶

In the margin Mari Sandoz wrote, “That was us! Only we added tyranny to the charge.” On an opening page of Henry Charles Lea’s The Inquisition of the Middle Ages⁷ she wrote “For Peter Waldo and his followers. Add to Old Jules Library.” Mari learned about the Waldensians from her father.

The Waldensians and the more radical Cathars were considered heretics guilty of treason to Christ while they thought of themselves as walking in the path of the Apostles. Pope Innocent III and King Phillip of France launched the Crusade against the Albigenses in 1209, those heretics resident in the area of Languedoc in southwest France with the town of Albi at the center and the city of Toulouse just to the west. The Pope and the King sought to establish exclusive Papal and French authority. Numerous barons provided troops. The Crusade was led by Baron Simon de Montfort a friend of Dominic de Guzmán, later St. Dominic, who was to found the Inquisition. It is reputed that St. Dominic said, “For several years now I have spoken words of peace to you. I have preached to you; I have besought you with tears. But as the common saying goes in Spain, where a blessing fails, a good thick stick will succeed.”⁸

The town of Béziers was considered a stronghold of Catharism. As the Crusade approached the inhabitants took refuge in the church. The doors were forced open. “All inside were slaughtered wholesale—women, invalids, babies, and priests, the latter clasping the chalice or holding aloft a crucifix.”⁹ Waldensians were a minority among the Cathars here and elsewhere. In 1210 the town of Bram was captured after resisting three days. “Simon de Montfort seized the garrison, over a hundred men in all, and had their eyes gouged out and their noses and upper lips cut off. One man only was left with a single eye; and Simon gave him the task of leading his blinded comrades to Cabaret, in order to create panic among those

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defending the Chateau." The inhabitants of Albi surrendered. Simon de Montfort entered Toulouse in 1216 and took the title of Count. In 1218 he died after being hit in the head with a rock. The succeeding Count of Toulouse was recalcitrant at first. In 1227 the French troops set up camp outside Toulouse. They demolished vineyards, cornfields and orchards. They demolished farms and villas. Toulouse became Inquisition headquarters for four hundred years.

The Cathars retreated to the fortress of Montségur which the Count brought under a nine month siege in 1244. Upon surrender more than two hundred Cathars were burned inside a palisade on a pyre of firewood, straw and pitch. There were not enough stakes for everyone.

The sick and wounded must have simply been thrown on to the faggots. Perhaps the remainder were able to seek contact with their kinsmen; perhaps the Lady of Montségur contrived to die beside her aged mother and her invalid daughter, and the two men-at-arms’ wives beside their husbands. Perhaps the Bishop managed a few last words of exhortation to his faithful followers, though what he said would be half-drowned by groans of misery and the chink of weapons, by the shouts of the executioners as they set fire to the palisade at each of its four corners, by the clergy chanting their psalms.

Communities were destroyed. The Crusade and Inquisition leaders cultivated fear as a lasting element of everyday life. The result was collective trauma, the loss of communality. What was said for Buffalo Creek, West Virginia after it was destroyed by a mining disaster surely also applied to the population of Languedoc. “People are grieving for their lost friends and lost homes, but they are grieving too for their lost cultural surround; and they feel dazed in part because they are not sure what to do in the absence of that familiar setting. They have lost their navigational equipment, as it were, both their inner compasses and their outer maps.”

Their cultural surround had been one of many strands for some time. Culture is our background and consists of all the laws, habits, customs, manners and fashions which characterize a group at the moment. Not long ago an anthropologist was visiting a university in Vienna. She asked Austrian students how many Americans were attending. Rather than say they invited her to lunch. Meals were served family style. It was arranged for pie to be

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10 Ibid., p. 136.
11 Ibid., p. 363.
delivered around tables with the point away from diners. As she watched from the balcony, Americans, knowing that pie cannot be eaten in that way, all turned the pie. Everyone else ate pie as it was delivered. Such customs go unnoticed until conflicts occur and subtle differences become evidence identifying the enemy. A multitude of cultures had been flowing from as far away as Bulgaria through Venice along the Po River Valley in northern Italy over mountains and into the Rhone River Valley and throughout the Languedoc region. The cultural flows had tributaries from the north, the south and the Atlantic. Urbanization is the process of cultures rubbing up against each other and exchanging traits. It is the movement of goods and habits. Everyday life had been unsettled for centuries by the time of the Albigensian Crusade. There were a multitude of life worlds to choose from and numerous heresies emerged out this flow with the Waldensians and Cathars being prominent.

Venice is on the delta of the Po River. In 1100 Venice had emerged as the lagoon capital and a sea power. The dynamic of the city was reflected in the commercial communes systematically devoted to trade and finance activities. Cultural dynamics exist that are later reflected in a comment by Shakespeare’s Shylock: “I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you.” The Goths, Celts and Romans had already traveled along the Po to the Atlantic. In 900 the Cathedral at Santiago de Compestella in Spain was under construction. One day a small group of Chinese men appeared. This Cathedral that houses the remains of the Apostle James and would soon become the goal of pilgrimages across Languedoc has a pagoda roof over a portion of the structure.

Modena is to the west. The Archbishop founded a Benedictine abbey there in 996, built the Cathedral in 1066 and established the University in 1175. The Catholic Church was asserting itself in the face of diversity. A function of Universities was to undermine heresy. Modena was a city state in the possession of Countess Matilda of Tuscany. City states protected their autonomy. Between city states there was no law. Within city states there were investiture

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13 Chaco Canyon and Mesa Verde in the Southwest were inhabited during the centuries around 1000.
conflicts regarding who would have the right to dress and license others in authority, the Noble or the Pope? Within this conflict was the ownership of land and the accumulation of wealth.

Further west and south of Milan was the city state of Pavia, the capital of the Lombards from 774 to 1004. The University was founded in 825 and the Basilica was under construction in 1132. The Sandoz’s trace their heritage to Lombardy. These medieval communities featured relationships between nobles, ecclesiastical as well as secular, and peasants. Peasants value subsistence and reciprocity. Peasants consider that they have a right to a minimum subsistence. Nobles must insure the average welfare. When that is the case the wealth of nobles is acceptable. The loss of minimum food and shelter results in anger. In contrast the relationships between peasants are characterized by reciprocity. Service is valued according to the intensity of need at the time of giving. In the case of hunger a branch of the family may share their surplus of foodstuffs. It may be a matter to going to the larder. Later the family that received sustenance may spend weeks helping to construct a house for those who gave. Reciprocity is not quantifiable. If, in a crisis, nobles require more and less is given anger results.

In city states there is tension between competing authorities, Church and State, and tension between nobles and peasants who live in villages administratively connected to authorities who are distant. Our present is not remote from this tension when we consider that roughly ten percent of the global population has seen the inside of an airplane.

To the north and west is Lyon in the Rhone valley. By 1100 it was in the Kingdom of Arles and only became a part of France in the 14th century. Peter Waldo, sometimes Valdes, lived here from roughly 1140 to 1218. He was a wealthy merchant who became disenchanted with Church practices, gave his property to his wife and distributed the balance to the poor, and became the leader of a sect known as the Waldensians as well as the Poor of Lombardy. Details of his life and the origin of the sect are obscure. The sect may have existed prior to his leadership. Waldensians were ultimately established throughout the Po Valley, along the Rhone, into Languedoc as well as northern Europe.

It is said that during the famine of 1176 Peter Waldo operated a soup kitchen. “What distinguishes him from earlier wandering preachers. . .is his concern as a layman for self-

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instruction through vernacular translations of Scripture.\textsuperscript{16} He commissioned translations, commenced preaching and encouraged followers to do likewise. Women also became preachers and were regarded as equals with men. The Waldensians were initially recognized by the papacy but the preaching without a license, without investiture by the Church, was among the principal reasons for Waldo’s ultimate excommunication and the persecution of the group.

Waldensians largely followed church doctrine unless it was not in harmony with the Scripture. Men and women preachers were committed to celibacy and the care of the sick. Homes were visited for scriptural reading, preaching and the provision of medical services. Home rather than Church was the focus. Among Waldensians there was a lack of distinctive ranks. The resulting companionship was welcomed by peasants for whom the Church and it’s hierarchy frequently produced discomfort if not abuse. The durability of the movement “. . .lay pre-eminently in the faults of the clergy, which form a strange blend of ignorance and superstition, personal, especially sexual, laxity, and excessive claims for themselves and their parishes; the flavour is rustic and backward, with some pseudo-miracles being claimed and parishioners being told that to go to another church would be adultery.”\textsuperscript{17} Waldensians would not take oaths and prohibited killing others under any circumstance. Waldensian groups were found throughout Europe and formed lasting communities in the Italian and French Alps. Families that so identified married within the group.

Mari Sandoz was committed to writing history in the vernacular with little regard for the forms required of academic historians. Jules Sandoz often provided medical services for Sandhill residents and formed an enduring friendship with Doctor Walter Reed. Jules also provided essential funding for the construction of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in which he never set foot.

The Languedoc region, having been on the path of Moors and Jews as well as Visigoths, Celts and Romans, was notable for a general toleration of the diverse cultures including heresies that met in the markets. The prevailing language was Occitan and its several dialects related to Catalan, the official language of eastern Spain today. Troubadours originated in the region.


\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 167.
writing secular poetry and song in Occitan. Waldensians were a significant minority among the Cathars.

The Cathar movement is similar to the Waldensian in many ways with the exception of their commitment to hierarchy organized in Bishoprics and a clear connection to the Gnostic religions of the eastern Mediterranean, to the Bogomils of Byzantium, and the foundations of Christianity.\(^\text{18}\) There is a radical dualism in which this world is the domain of Satan. To accept the Cathar discipline was to pass out of the power of Satan into the world of the Spirit. Such a person became a perfect, a good man.

The preliminaries to attaining the status were usually arduous. The candidate had to be approved by other perfect and have shown fitness to undertake the life by a year’s probation, in which he fulfilled the fasts of the perfect on every Monday, Wednesday and Friday as well as during three penitential seasons—all on bread and water—and at all times observed the prohibition of the products of coition: meat, milk, eggs, cheese. In effect both candidate and perfect observed the dietary regime, made more rigorous by days and weeks of bread and water, of the modern vegan who declines any aid to life from the animal kingdom at all. The one exception to the rigor of this rule was the consumption of fish, which the Cathars, in common with many orthodox, believed to be the product not of coition, but of water itself. Naturally all sexual contact was forbidden and, especially in the last days of the movement, even the most harmless physical contact between man and woman was rigorously excluded. If married, a candidate had to abandon his or her partner; if not, lifelong celibacy was the rule.\(^\text{19}\)

Any breach of the code resulted in the loss of consolation with the spirit world for the sinner as well as for the guiding perfect and all others thus consoled by him. The perfect was constantly on the move preaching and encouraging his fellow perfects to follow the path of the Apostles. A principal service to the community was consoling the sick. Women also became perfects, members of the Cathar nobility. “The woman perfect, no less than the man, possessed the Spirit.”\(^\text{20}\) They lived simply and earned their own way. “Catholicism revolved around the


\(^{19}\) Lambert, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

Church building; Catharism round the household.” The Franciscan and Dominican orders were organized as alternatives to the heresies. The Dominicans were committed to the inquisition that followed the Crusade. Fortress cathedrals were built throughout Languedoc.

The Inquisition kept records. Between May 1245 and August 1246 five thousand four hundred and seventy-one men and women from the region around Toulouse were questioned about the heresies of the “good men” and “good women,” and the Waldensians. Forty claimed to have known a Waldensian. An individual accused of heresy might be incinerated. Those who were imprisoned likewise ceased to exist. Inquiries were complicated by the fact that the “good man,” the gentleman or gentlewoman, was a common courtesy of address in the region. Everyday woodlands, fields, streams, and vineyards became suspicious spaces under the Inquisition, places where evidence might be found. “Sins could smoothly flow into (and through) objects like houses, a dish of chestnuts, a recently built wall, wooden tables, an old fur pelisse, a sack of wriggling eels, cornices, stones, even a Romanesque cloister.” Accusations sometimes appear to have had more to do with nobility needs for revenue rather than the practice of belief.

The term “Languedoc” has had no official significance since the French Revolution which resulted in a political reorganization and a new nomenclature. Inhabitants of towns and cities continue to understand themselves as living in a place called Languedoc in which some people speak Occitan as well as French. Up through the sixties speaking Occitan in school was punished. In Toulouse many street signs are in French and Occitan and official announcements are made in both languages. The favored sport in the region is rugby rather than futbol (soccer). It has been a region of significant wine production for centuries. Beginning in the early 1500s the French State came to certify the origin and quality of wines. This certification is the basis for criticism and promotion. Vineyards in the Languedoc region only came to accept French formal

21 Ibid., p. 152.
24 Ibid., p. 44.
standards in 1999. In a liquor store with a significant stock of French wines an inquiry after their Languedoc selection may result in perplexity, searching and conversation.

At the turn of the twentieth century Jacob Burckhardt, the Swiss historian, wrote, “. . .in the Middle Ages Innocent III called the temporal lords to arms with threats, and preached a crusade against the heretics, with grants of land and indulgences, as if it had been for the Holy Land. It is true that the adversary—heathen or heretic—was actually only disposed of by virtual extermination. The Albigenses were exterminated.” Burckhardt was notably doubtful about any permanent progress—that accomplishments are lost, sometimes for centuries, and must be regained. This view is echoed in Albert Camus’s essay on the myth of Sisyphus who gets the rock to the top of the mountain only to have it fall back. For Camus this is not frustrating but is in the nature of absurd reality for which creative people must be conscious. There are no enduring solutions. “The Church has been so harsh with heretics only because she deemed that there is no worse enemy than a child who has gone astray. But the record of Gnostic effronteries and the persistence of Manichean currents have contributed more to the construction of orthodox dogma than all the prayers. With due allowance, the same is true of the absurd.”

The following letters have a common recipient: Mrs. Louisa Irvine Riggs. The letters are from various Dakota (Sioux) Indians who lived on the Cheyenne River Reservation in central South Dakota, where Mrs. Riggs primarily served as a missionary and school teacher at the Oahe Industrial School. Mrs. Riggs wrote to all Indian servicemen and women from the Cheyenne River Reservation during World War II, and many of these letters indicate their responses, although some are from regular citizens. The letters included are a mere sampling from the large collection of responses Mrs. Riggs received during the war and provide insight into her life, as well as a larger view of Indian life at the time.

Margaret Louisa Irvine was born in 1859 in Beloit Minnesota to Margaret L. and Javan B. Irvine. In 1885, Louisa married Thomas Lawrence Riggs after the death of his first wife Cornelia seven years earlier. Thomas had one child with Cornelia, and together he and Louisa had four more children.

Thomas and Cornelia founded the Oahe Mission in 1874 and began building a chapel on the site of an old Arikara Indian village named Ti Tanke Ohe (shortened to Oahe) at that time. The chapel was finished in 1877 and served the dual purpose of religious center and schoolhouse on the mission. In 1883, the mission opened the Oahe Industrial School for young Indian children. In a pamphlet published in 1911, the Oahe Industrial School declared its purpose: “This school is for those who believe in Christian teaching and wish such for their children; those who are learning to be citizens, and to support themselves will be glad to help it.” The price for one child’s attendance was twenty dollars a year, and a family with two children attending the same year was charged thirty dollars for both children. The pamphlet also stated that young women who were looking to learn more of the Bible were welcome to attend as well.

The Oahe Industrial School taught practical skills as well as general education to the children. Children learned different duties around the school, which they performed in six week
rotations. The students learned many tasks, including engineering, farming, tailoring, shoemaking, gardening, cooking, baking, and dressmaking. The purpose of these tasks was to not only teach the children but also to lighten the work load for teachers as the school was frequently looking for ways to conserve resources.

These letters also provide insight into another curious occurrence during the World War II era involving enlistment among Indian men. In March 1941, 1500 of the 7500 eligible Indians from the Great Plains registered for the draft. On the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, some elders even complained about the draft’s age limit. Many Indian men viewed the Army as a way to make better lives for themselves. The Army offered a guarantee of adequate food, health care, and income. All three of these aspects surpassed what was available on the reservations. However, sometimes these Indian men were rejected by the military due to inadequate health care, nutrition, and hygiene because of their lifestyles on the reservations. In fact, fifty per cent of the men from the Tolten and Standing Rock Reservations failed their physicals because of these factors and were subsequently rejected from service.

However, despite this desire to use the army as a vehicle to a better life and the link between reservation conditions and the rejection rate of Indians from the army, Indian tribes still strove to keep themselves autonomous. After the United States declared war on Japan in December 1941, many Indian tribes followed suit, including the Cheyenne and Ponca Tribes. As R. Douglas Hurt writes in his book *The Great Plains during World War II*, “Declarations of war and condemnation of the Axis powers were important symbolic acts that proclaimed the loyalty of the Indians to the United States and encouraged pan-Indian unity against America’s enemies. Such actions reaffirmed the tribes’ political autonomy and their intent to retain it” (365). This action demonstrates the interesting dynamic between Indian tribes and the rest of society, for the tribes were eager to demonstrate their support for the war while simultaneously emphasizing their autonomy.

Following the war, the Indians returning home to reservations experienced a great change in outlook and desires. The war opened up many opportunities for each tribe’s members and changed their lives forever. Wages skyrocketed, people received greater job training during the war than ever before, and migrating from the reservations was easier than it had been
previously. As Hurt writes, the war brought a sense of optimism and hope regarding assimilating into the broader American society (371).

Great numbers of Indian women also served during the war, even though they could not be recruited by the War Office. These women sought out employment with the army for many of the same reasons as the Indian men: job opportunities, status, and a steady income. Roughly eight hundred Indian women served during the course of the war. Many of these women had been educated in federal boarding schools or mission schools, both of which had very strict discipline, making their transition into army life much easier than it was for many white women (Hurt 365). This trend is seen explicitly in one of the letters in Louisa Riggs’s collection from Estella West. Estella served in the Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps, or the W.A.A.C. Estella wrote about discipline to Louisa: “This W.A.A.C. Corp reminds me of the days in 1926 and 27 when I first went to school in Pierre Indian School. That time the school was strict and every thing was just so. We use[d] to drill and march to school and meals. Only the army has a more strict military discipline.” Estella does not specifically compare her transition into the W.A.A.C.s to that of white women, but her description shows her transition was not overly difficult.

While the majority of this collection is responses to letters Mrs. Riggs wrote, it includes one letter in her own hand. This particular letter is, in many ways, the most revealing of the entire collection because it provides the context the reader needs when reading the other letters. Also, it shows Mrs. Riggs’s specific voice and conveniently explains the circumstances of the vast number of responses from such a wide variety of men and women. In the letter, Mrs. Riggs writes to an army chaplain searching for one specific serviceman who had been injured. In the course of her question, Mrs. Riggs reveals her mission to the chaplain: “I am writing to those who have gone into the Armed Services of the U.S. from this particular district,—the Cheyenne River Reservation and have had replies from all over the world.” This letter not only reveals Mrs. Riggs’s considerable project but also her character. She wrote to dozens of men and women, most of whom acknowledged how thankful they are to receive letters. In one of his numerous letters back to Mrs. Riggs, Owen Slides Off thanks her not only for writing but also for praying for him and his fellow servicemen: “Also I appreciate that you folks are doing a fine job for the boys in the Armed forces I mean that you pray for our safety, welfare and our coming home. That’s what I always like to hear and I thank you.”
Alex V. Center, a paratrooper, also wrote frequently to Mrs. Riggs and thanked her profusely. He acknowledged that the act of writing itself helped him: “There isn’t much that I can tell you at the present but I am always willing to write to any body. Because the letters really are a lot of help.” Estella West wrote that “Getting letters sure makes a person happy, especially when [you’re] in a situation like this.” In fact, most of the letters Mrs. Riggs received back thanked her for writing, even those from men and women who did not know her personally. In one such case, Clarence E. Runs After wrote immediate that he did not know Mrs. Riggs, yet he closed his letter with: “I’ll be expecting to hear from you soon. From your friend” and signed his name. This action reveals not only Runs After’s desire to hear from Mrs. Riggs, but also a broader trend within the Indian peoples. Many of the return letters signify a desire to be closer with Mrs. Riggs and a profound appreciation for what she did. One man, Owen Slides Off, even thanked Mrs. Riggs for her missionary work: “I guess you’re the peoples are the one that taught us in [C]hristian’s way and now that the [I]ndian people are willing and very glad to work for God what they haven’t known him before. If it wasn’t for you people I won’t know where I am today.”

The letter collection also shows other trends, the two most pervasive of which are the influence of the armed forces on the servicemen and women’s lives and their frequent mention of religion. Many of the letters were written on letterhead from the writer’s specific branch of the armed forces. Alex V. Center, the paratrooper, wrote on specific paratrooper letterhead and even sent Mrs. Riggs a personalized Christmas card with the pre-set caption: “Merry Christmas from a United States Paratrooper.” Clarence E. Runs After sent Mrs. Riggs a card picturing his military base in Idaho. Estella West wrote on W.A.A.C. letterhead. One letter writer even asked Mrs. Riggs if she received his Christmas head shot, taken by the army.

Most of the letters in the collection contain at least a cursory discussion of religion. Several letters contain allusions to church services or the style of churches on their military bases; some letters even included church bulletins. Other writers included discussions of the religious nature of their families. Owen Slides Off editorialized his father in the middle of one of his letters: “My father is one of the outstanding church member in our dist. before he died. He always loves church and like to work for it. And he wants me to do the same thing but I made a big mistake.”
The letters in the collection from ordinary citizens share similarities with those from servicemen and women. One example is from Regina Spotted Horse. She seamlessly switches between Lakota and English when writing and even apologizes for her mistakes in English: “Mrs. Riggs excuse my mistakes as I never hardly write.” Her letter also shows the disparity in grammatical skill between the letter writers. Many of the letters were brilliantly executed, grammatically correct, and easy to read. However, some, like Regina Spotted Horse’s below, revealed that some of the Indians on the reservation or students at the Oahe Industrial School did not properly learn English grammar. No conclusions are made here regarding this, but the sampling below provides a clear picture of the differences in skill.

These letters included here represent only a small portion of a large collection that reflects the importance of personal contact during a time of war. All the letters written back to Mrs. Riggs demonstrate the desire for human interaction and to relate to her, as most of the writers discuss religion, which was her life’s passion. The letters also reflect the importance of education, as Mrs. Riggs taught at the Oahe Industrial School and the morphing lives and opportunities of Indians on the Great Plains.

These transcriptions are faithful reproductions from original letters housed in the Louisa I. Riggs collection (50010.10) of the Oahe Industrial School portion of the United Church of Christ records in the Center for Western Studies. Errors in spelling and punctuation have been retained except where editorial changes are indicated by brackets.
Hello,

My Dear friend,

Received your letter that mail you wrote on Dec 8th has reach me on 1-1-44 an was every glad to hear from you. But I’m sorry didn’t answer you right away cause I was busy at those days. So here I’m answering you in my spare time. Well for my part I’m in best of health hope this short letter may reach you the same of all. And I don’t hardly remember Williams family, that they use to lived on the Moreau. But I remember Mrs. Maud Smith sure I remember her an the place she use to make her living along the Moreau I always remember her when ever I pass by her old place. And I think I remember Mr. Olive Claymore. So they all working along the Pacific Coast in Washington State that’s good glad to hear that.

Oh yes my bro Henry writes to me often so I always hear from home so far. Mrs. Riggs it has been so cold to rite but I’m doing my best I could to answer your letter cause I’m always glad to hear from you. Well I’m praying and hoping that may god give us victory & a world’s peace so that us soldiers could come home an visit our people that have praying an proud of us to see. I hope the war will be over soon cause I’m anxious to be in the states now. I kinda believe that it will be over any time this year the way the situation is going on now so let’s hope that god will bring world’s peace. It hasn’t rain ever since the first of Jan but there’s plenty snow on the high mountains an cold at nites. But we had turkey supper on New Year’s Eve an we were surprise to get it to. Also we had turkey on Xmas eve to. Hope you have a swell supper on those days an I sure hope I’ll spend my next Xmas with my folks. Because I spend two Xmas in the service an hate to spend another one in service. I don’t hate the food or nothing but I wanta be with my folks sure again. Some times we have bad weathers but we keep our planes in the air all the time. It don’t make any difference what kind of the weather is we keep em flying for a world’s peace this year of 1944 so hope it will be soon all over with a big joy to our poor aching hearts.

Well hope you got that Christmas greetings picture of my self in time. It cost me 2 dollar & 50 cents to have them made like that. Well Mrs. Riggs I like to rite you a longer letter but
haven’t anything else to say an beside it’s kinda cold to rite so may I now come to a close with love an best of luck to all.

May God Bless you all from your friend

Pvt Jess S. Janis A.S.N. 37249816
303rd Service Squadron
A.P.O. 528 c/o P.M.

New York City, N.Y.

11 A/B Division
Philippines April 27 1945

Dear Mrs. Riggs—

Received the “link” magazine the other day and it sure is great to get a magazine like that. I read most of the stories in it and sure do enjoy it in every way— We aren’t doing much at the present, so can’t write much—I am getting along fine and sincerely hope that all is the same with you all— The weather here has been rather hot for a while now, but don’t mind it so much— I hope that all is well back there in the Dakota’s—we are kept pretty well informed on the European war fronts and boy the way the Yanks and Russians are doing, things look great— My brother was killed over in Germany—He was 2 yrs older than me at the time of his being killed— He was oversea’s over two years. And I was wounded and received the order of the award of the Purple Heart and also the “Bronze Star Medal.” The latter for exposing myself to enemy fire so as to draw enemy fire, so we can knock out the weapons that were holding us up in one of our drives—This will be all, so good luck to you Mrs Riggs—

a friend

Alex V. Center
Camp Mackall
Dec. 1943

Dear Mrs. Riggs—

Just received your Xmas card and letter and sure was glad to hear from you. Was especially glad to hear that you are well. I am getting along very well myself. There isn’t much that I can tell you at the present but I am always willing to write to anybody. Because the letters really are a lot of help. We are still here in camp Mackall N.C. but we are moving out of here very soon. But we don’t know when and where we are going. It snowed here last week, we had about 3 inches of good snow. This was the first time they ever had snow here since 1933. One of our packing sheds burned down here. It destroyed about 1,200 parachutes. The estimated price was way over 2 million dollars. So we aren’t making any jumps for a long while. Well Mrs. Riggs that’s about all I can write for now so I better close my short letter with lots of luck to you all and a Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year.

A friend
P.t.c. Alex V. Center
Co. D. 511 Parht. Inf.

Oahe.
October 4, 1943

To the Chaplain,
Camp Rickett Virginia

My dear Sir:

I write to ask you if you can find out anything about Frank Ambrose Dog Eagle, a Dakota (Sioux) Indian, whose number was 37028729, address Hg.Lo. 157th Infantry care A.P.O. #45. His family was informed that he had been wounded, and was in a Hospital at Camp Rickett Virginia: but they have heard nothing of him since last March. I myself wrote him c/o of the Hospital, asking some nurse to write me if he was not able to do so, but I have had no reply. If you or the
Red Cross can find out anything about him, we will all be very grateful. I have been a missionary (now retired) for sixty-five years, among these Dakota Indians, and they seem like my children and grand-children. I am writing to those who have gone into the Armed Services of the U.S. from this particular district,—the Cheyenne River Reservation and have had replies from all over the world.

Ft. Des Moines  
June 3rd, 1943

Dear Mrs. Riggs,

I certainly was glad to get your letter, I appreciated it very much. Getting letters sure makes a person happy, especially when your in a situation like this. You mailed your letter the 22nd of May, but I just got it the other day, your address was not quite correct. When the Sergeant says “mail call” they all rush to the day room and of course we don’t expect a letter everyday, but it’s kinda disappointing if your name is not called.

Mother use to talk about Miss Price but I never had the privilege of meeting her. I was in school and when I did come home she was gone.

This W.A.A.C. Corp reminds me of the days in 1926 and 27 when I first went to school in Pierre Indian School. That time the school was strict and every thing was just so. We use to drill and march to school and meals. Only the army has a more strict military discipline.

We had a play day about two weeks ago, celebrating the W.A.A.C.’s one years anniversary. You just ought to have seen it. 7,000 W.A.A.C.s in their green and white seersucker dresses tan anklets and white tennis oxfords out on the parade ground. They had the Garrison Flag up, it’s a special day flag, it flew right above the tree tops and oh, it was big and beautiful. I felt like little bells were ringing inside of me, to see so many girls marching and flags passing by in the parade. I like the W.A.A.C.’s very much. I hope to stick to the finish.

We have two churches, one for the Protestants and one for the Catholics.

When I’m on breakfast and Supper shift I usually to go church. I finished my basic training almost five weeks ago and now I’m in Bakers & Cooks school. I have just ten more days
to go. When I finish I don’t know where they’ll send me. About a month ago, they send 400 B & C girls to London. 500 to Hawaii, to do different jobs and I don’t know how many to Africa.

W.A.A.C’s are being sent out all over the United States and I hope they send me out soon as I get through with my schooling.

Ft. Des Moines is a beautiful place and a very large place too.

I know and met quite a few Indian girls since I’ve been here. Girls I went to school with. I meet all kinds of girls here.

I have the New Testament and thank you very much for the Gospel of St. John.

As ever a friend

Estella

Farragut Idaho
Camp Scott Co 487-43
August 8th, 1943

Dear Mrs. Riggs,

I received your most welcome letter and was sure glad to hear from you.

I have never seen you, although I often hear my grandparents talk about you folks and the wonderful work you are all doing.

I have attended the Pierre Indian Industrial School when I was in the third grade and stayed there till I finish the 9th grade.

We, my two brothers and I entered the Cheyenne River Boarding which is located at the Agency on the Cheyenne Reservation.

I can talk the Indian language and is familiar with the words, that is I mean in reading it.

My brother graduated here at one of the Camps (Camp Bennion), and after his leave left for the West Coast but I have not heard from him as yet.

I like the Navy life and the Navy ways of doing things. I was famili[ar with the things they do so it makes it that much easier for me.
It’s nice of you to write me because I like to hear from the people back home and what they are doing.

I am closing here as I have duties to perform.

Good bye –

I’ll be expecting to hear from you soon.

From your friend

Clarence E. Runs After

Co. 487-43 Camp Scott a/5

Eagle Buttte
South Dakota
Dec 6, 1945

Dear Mrs Riggs:

I thought I let you know I am home now for good & it’s quite nice to be with my family again.

The kids are really big nice and very happy to see me back again. There think I am pretty fat well I guess I have gained & weight 170 now. I have been traveling since Nov 7th. I left Marshall IA, and get in at Seattle, Wash, the 21st and get my discharge Dec 1st an Saturday. I guess every one around are doing very nice. I am hoping you are doing the same too, I do hope you have nice Christmas at home.

I am sure wishing we have white Xmas this year. It’s been a long time since I have seen snow. Oh say, do you know anything about Missouri River project around there, maybe I thought you will heard something about it, and if you do wish u let me know, well, I really have much to say.

Close here with best wishes. May God Bless you,

This year friend,

Reuben West
North Africa
May 10, 1943

Dear Mrs. Riggs:

As I received your letter and was very surprised that I got a letter from you. I’d never expected this letter until today. I have heard about you and your husband lot of times but never got a chance to go to Oahe to see you. But here’s my hope that when I get back I’ll come over to see you.

Well first I must say that I am very glad to hear that you are still living healthy even if you are sixty four yrs old. I wish you more luck that you may [have] many more years to come. Also I appreciate that you folks are doing a fine job for the boys in the Armed forces I mean that you pray for our safety, welfare and our coming home. That’s what I always like to hear and I thanks you.

My father is one of the outstanding church member in our dist. before he died. He always loves church and like to work for it. And he wants me to do the same thing but I made a big mistake. But my wife and I made a promised that we will work for our God who has given us everything we wished for. We have now two childrens and married for five years. Living at north of Dupree on the Moreau River of Cheyenne River Indian Reservation. Lot of our old church members have passed away and just what of us left are all young folks. I guess my mother is the only one that’s left, she about your age she is the only one from the old member. If we the young ones could only cooperate, we will the best member and besides we already got a nice looking church build along side of Moreau River in the year of 1933. So all we need is if our church member only get to-gether we will have everything and won’t need to worry over anything. At one time Rev Rudolf Hertz of Eagle butte S.D. sent me a pamphlet about Mr. Riggs history. How he went out with the indians for buffalo hunting in early days. I guess you’re the peoples are the one that taught us in christian’s way and now that the indian people are willing and very glad to work for God what they haven’t known him before. If it wasn’t for you people I won’t know where I am today.

I must close here wishing you a good luck and much of happiness which God has given. May God bless you I’ll be very glad to hear from you again.
Mrs. T.L Riggs
Mitakuye.

I recived your letter yesterday and was very glad to hear from my friend. Well we came home alright & Joshua was anxious to come as he didn’t walk for 10 mos. of course he was pretty tired but he’s alright now, he eats good. We are coming over to have his treatment in Nove. 13 so I’ll try and visit you at your place.

The weather today is very bad not very cold but it’s snowing. 1 feet and heavy. I sure miss my work.

Winyan omnicye ki wana wotanin waste $30.00 okiyape
They will have a meeting here at my place as I invite them, this coming We[d]nesday.
Yes Mis Cesilia Thunder-Shield is my sister.
I have told the sociaty that the white ladies had nice meeting. So they know what you are doing for the missionaries. Mrs. Riggs excuse my mistakes as I never hardly write.

Thank for your pray and for the soldiers too. I have two from my family.
Edwin Brown 17005536
Cfo P.M. Sattle, Was.
Ernest Iron
San Francisco Caf.
They are glad to get letter from home, maybe if you have time write to them.
I got a letter from Dr. Davis so I answered him, too.

Tell tiolowan lila pila maye, I sure thankful for what they have done for me.

Enclose my letter sending my best regards.
   Nape ciyuza pe
   Your friend

   Regina Spotted Hors[e]
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Print.
As the War of 1812 began, Great Britain and the fledging United States of America prepared to do battle across vast distances. War raged from the Eastern seaboard to the edge of the frontier, including the area that eventually became South Dakota. In this wild area, action centered around the dominance of the lucrative fur trade. Competition and conflict with the British who wanted a portion of the revenues of the South Dakota fur trade was fierce and sharp.

The conflict between the British traders and the Americans had high stakes beyond simple business: governments seemed to follow in the footsteps of the fur traders, and whichever side won the contest for the fur trade in the Dakota area would eventually have the opportunity to introduce their own laws, boundaries and even settlers. That the political ramifications of this battle for dominance in the fur trade eventually tilted in America’s favour was due to the mountain men – men such as Manuel Lisa. As Alpheus Favour observed: Any fair student of this period and territory must acknowledge that these mountain men performed a service to their country [The United States] which was very considerable, a service which in the rapid march of events has been almost forgotten ... The English lost control of the country occupied by the Hudson’s Bay Company largely by reason of these men. Had there been no mountain men the English influence would have lasted on the West and Northwest, so much so that the present boundary of this country would have been a line further south. 1

The time of greatest danger for American interests occurred during the War of 1812. It appears from observations and letters by American traders and officials that the British intended to create an Indian uprising along the Missouri River and in doing so unify the Sioux and other Indians against the American fur traders and merchants who had been plying their wares along this great river.

The primary individual concerned in this affair was Col. Robert Dickson. Dickson was a fur trader, based out of Prairie Du Chien (now in Wisconsin) who had connections with the Sioux Indians, and thus, by extension, with South Dakota. Dickson had a post near Lake Traverse, close to the present day Sisseton South Dakota. His principal assistant was a half breed trapper named Joseph Renville. This post functioned as the Hudson’s Bay Company Sioux District Headquarters and was operated by Duncan Graham and John Bourke until they were replaced by Renville in 1821.

The Hudson's Bay Company's (and Dickson's) association with South Dakota came about because of the energetic activities of an eccentric Scottish earl, Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk. Lord Selkirk was interested in settling Scottish highlanders in the wilderness regions of Canada and saw potential in the charter granted to the Hudson’s Bay Company over vast regions of North America. After failing to buy out the existing stockholders of the HBC, he was eventually successful in dominating the affairs of the company through stock purchases. He proposed a colonization scheme to the directors of the HBC involving the settlement of a colony along the Red River Valley in Canada and North and South Dakota. At first hesitant to back this unusual proposal, the directors were won over by Selkirk’s agreement to use his own funds for the venture. Dickson assisted Selkirk by attempting to convince settlers to locate in the new colony. Dickson’s intentions towards the United States were certainly hostile. Historian Doane Robinson declares that, “He certainly very frankly, while trading on American soil, entered into the employment of the mother country (England) and did what he could to further the English cause at our expense.” At any rate, Dickson also began efforts to recruit Sioux Indians for the British cause.

Dickson’s efforts were noticed by American officials. The British were already in South Dakota working with the Sioux against United States’ interests, a position confirmed by

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3 Information taken from Fur Trade Exhibit, Old Courthouse Museum, Sioux Falls, S.D., April 2008. See also Donald Parker, “Early Explorations and Fur Trading in South Dakota”, *South Dakota Historical Collections*, XXV (1951), 179. Parker believes Dickson was Bourke’s superior from 1819-1821.
5 Robinson, p.88.
Superintendent William Clark when he wrote to the Secretary of War from St. Louis, on 13 February 1812:

Mr. Dickson and those British traders who are also Agents who have smuggled an emince [sic] quantity of goods through that Chanel [sic], this year, and now in the Mississippi, could be caught on their return as they go out in the Spring – This description of people grasp at every means in their power to waive the affections of the Indians from anything that is American, having it in their power to make large presents to the Indians the most of whom [sic] are to be bought and by this means create great difficulty wherever they have an influence.⁶

Indeed, fears about the British incitement of Indian tribes extended to the highest reaches of the American government. President James Madison mentioned this issue in a message to Congress:

In reviewing the conduct of Great Britain toward the United States our attention is Necessarily drawn to the warfare just renewed by the savages on one of our extensive frontiers – a warfare which is known to spare neither age nor sex and to be distinguished by features peculiarly shocking to humanity. It is difficult to account for the activity and combinations which have for some time been developing themselves among tribes in constant intercourse with British traders and garrisons without connecting their hostility with that influence and without recollecting the authenticated examples of such interpositions heretofore furnished by the officers and agents of that Government.⁷

**Manuel Lisa and the War of 1812 in South Dakota**

At the time of the outbreak of war with Great Britain in 1812, the most prominent fur trader on the Upper Missouri was Manuel Lisa. Lisa was exceptionally daring and successful. He had been able to maintain fur posts in the Upper Missouri country in North and South Dakota where no one else had yet ventured. Thus it was fitting that he served as the principal force for

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⁶ Letter from William Clark to Secretary of War, February 13, 1812 found in Territorial Papers of the United States, XIV, 520 quotes in Donald Parker “Early Explorations and Fur Trading in South Dakota”, *South Dakota Historical Collections*, XXV (1951), 124. ⁷ Message of President James Madison to Congress 1 June 1812, Messages and Papers of the Presidents (New York, Bureau of National Literature Inc. 1897), Vol. II, pp. 488-489.
the United States’ efforts opposing Dickson and the British traders in the Upper Missouri and South Dakota.

The success of Lisa’s efforts was recognized at the time and thereafter by the British. When Doane Robinson conducted an interview with the Rev. John B. Renville, the son of the notorious Joseph Renville, the half-breed British trader at Lake Traverse, in 1901, he had this to say:

> During the war (of 1812) the Americans from St. Louis stirred up much trouble between the Teton and the Santees, and it seemed as if there was to be civil war in the Dakota Confederacy. Manuel Lista was the American agent and he set the Teton against the Santees because the latter supported the English. That is the reason the Santees could not help the English more. Every time they started out to go to the lakes and Canada, runners would come and tell them the Teton were coming to destroy their families and they were compelled to return to their homes to protect their women and children. Lisa had his post either on American Island, were Chamberlain now is, or on Cedar Island above the big bend of the Missouri [near present day Pierre South Dakota]. He had a big post there and the Teton were not nearly so poor as were the Santees, for they had plenty of buffalo meat and Lisa bought all their furs. Lisa was a very smart man, and he managed things so that all of the money and work of Dickson to get the Santees to fight the Americans was lost. He got one of our men [Tamaha, the one eyed Sioux] to spy on his own people and let him know all that was being done. Father met Lisa several times after the war and he boasted about the way he managed the Teton. 8

One can only surmise what would have happened had Lisa not been available to restrain the scalping knives and tomahawks of the Sioux – if Dickson and Renville had been successful in uniting the tribes against the American interests in the Upper Missouri. Almost assuredly, all American traders would have been killed and outposts burned. There is also the possibility that Dicksons’ work against the United States’ interests in the Great Lakes regions would have been greatly strengthened if he had been able to rely on the added forces of the Santee Sioux along with the Sissetons and Yanktons he was able to recruit and use in the battles around Detroit. Lisa had always been an adroit observer of Indian sign and wrote a letter to Governor William Clark in St. Louis dates 1 July 1817, describing his role in the War of 1812:

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Sir, I have the honor to remit to you the commission of sub-agent, which you were pleased to bestow on me in the summer of 1814, for the Indian nations who inhabit the Missouri River, above the mouth of the Kansas and to pray you accept my resignation of that appointment. The circumstances under which I do this demand me some exposition of the actual state of these Indians and of my own conduct during the time of my sub-agency. Whether I deserve well or ill of the government depends upon the solution of these questions: 1st. Are the Indians of the Missouri more or less friendly to the United States than at the time of my appointment? 2. Are they altered, better or worse, in their own condition during this time? To the first proposition I have to say, that I received this appointment when war was raging between the United States and Great Britain, and when the activity of British emissaries had armed against the Republic all the tribes of the Upper Missouri and of the northern lakes. Had the Missouri Indians been overlooked by British agents? No. Your excellency will remember that more than a year before the war broke out I gave you intelligence that the wampum was carrying by British influence along the banks of the Missouri, and that all the nations of this great river were excited to join the universal confederacy then setting foot, of which the profit was the instrument and the British traders the soul. The Indians of the Missouri are to those of the Upper Mississippi as four to one. Their weight would be great, if thrown into the scale against us. They did not arm against the Republic; on the contrary, they armed against Great Britain, and struck the Iowas, the allies of that power. When peace was proclaimed, more than forty chiefs had intelligence with me and together were to carry and expedition of several thousand warriors against the tribes of the Upper Mississippi and silence them at once. These things are known to your excellency.\(^9\)

Lisa had in fact been named as a sub-agent for the Indian tribes on the Upper Missouri by General Clark in the summer of 1814, when it appeared that the entire group of tribes in the Upper Missouri might be willing to join themselves to the British cause (of course no one involved in these various machinations knew that a peace treaty was in the offing and the War of 1812 would end in December 1814 with the Treaty of Ghent). At the time, Governor Clark had written to the Secretary of War:

Sir you would have no doubt been informed by Gen. Howard that the U.S. troops surrendered the post at Prairie Du Chien to the combined army of the British and Indians on the 19\(^{th}\) after an obstinate resistance of three days and before the reinforcement reached them which were within 80 leagues. The

\(^9\) Ibid, pp. 92-93, letter from Manuel Lisa to Governor William Clark, 1 July 1817.
possession of that post and Mackanack has enabled the British to supply the Indians on the Mississippi and towards the Lakes and they are spreading their influence on to the tribes of the Missouri – I have sent out the Shoshones and Delaways on the Northern frontiers and policy obliges me to encourage the Osage and the tribes of the Missouri to wage war on the Mississippi Indians and those Missouri tribes must be either engaged for us or they will be opposed to use without a doubt. I have appointed August P. Chouteau Sub Indian Agent for the Osage and Manuel Lisa Esq. Agent for the tribes on the Missouri above the Kanzies, until your approbation is obtained or they are rejected – Mr. P. Chouteau and the Osage agent is furnished with Merchindized [sic] to the amount f $2964 – and Manuel Lisa Agent for the Missouri tribes with goods to the amount of $1335. 10

One of Lisa’s first actions was to send a Sioux Indian named Tamaha (referred to in the Robinson interview with Rev. Renville above) to travel via a circuitous route to visit the pro-British Sioux who were encamped with the British at Fort Meig. Rev. Renville recollected that Tamaha told these Sioux Indians that unless they returned to their homes, the Tetons would attack and destroy them. 11

Apparently, Dickson somehow knew of Tamaha’s commission from Lisa and tried every conceivable means to “persuade” him to tell all he knew:

It appeared that on his arrival there, Dickson maltreated him, threatened him with death, imprisoned him and tried in every way to extract information, but the Indian remained firm and would disclose nothing. He was then liberated and made his way to the Sioux tribes, whence he returned to Prairie du Chien and remained until the British evacuated that place. He came back to St. Louis in June 1815. He had promised General Clark to visit the various tribes and he kept his word. 12

According to Doane Robinson Lisa spent most of his time at his fur posts (one in South Dakota). His main contributions to the war involved keeping the Indians contented by purchasing their furs and so forth.

11 Statement of Rev. Joseph Renville, S.D. History Collections, XII, p.95, quoted in Parker, p.134
Most of his time was spent at these establishments, where he had from one to two hundred men in his employ. He had horned cattle [perhaps the first in South Dakota], hogs, and domestic fowl and he supplied the seed and instructed the Indians in the cultivation of vegetables, which supplied a considerable part of their subsistence. He loaned them traps, bought their furs and made his establishments asylums for the old and decrepit. Thus he retained their friendship and held their allegiance to the United States.\textsuperscript{13}

Robinson’s summary of Lisa’s activities is taken from Lisa’s letter of resignation to William Clark detailing his methods of dealing with the Indians:

I have had some success as a trader and this success gives rise to many reports. ‘Manuel Lisa must cheat the government’, ‘Manuel Lisa must cheat the Indians’ ... ‘Cheat the Indians.’ The respect and friendship which they have for me, the security of my possessions in the heart of their country, respond to the charge, and declare, with voices louder than the tongues of men that it cannot be true .... Ten months in the year I am buried in the forest, as vast distance from my own house. I appear as the benefactor, not as the pillager of the Indians. I carried among them the seed of the large pumpkin, form which I have seen in their possession fruit weighing one hundred and sixty pounds. Also the large bean, the potato, the turnip; and these vegetables now make a comfortable part of weak and of the old men no longer able to follow their lodges’ and by these means I have acquired the confidence and friendship of these nation ...\textsuperscript{14}

Lisa’s successes in the War of 1812 were endorsed in later letter from Governor Clark to the Secretary of War:

Sir, as you may not have been made acquainted with the perils and difficulties under which this territory labored [sic] for the two last years, the great exertions made by the British to engage all the Indians in war against us and the steps taken to counteract the British influence which was beginning to spread amongst the numerous tribes of the Missouri – I beg leave to observe that after using such military means as was under my control which in its effect did not sufficiently check that influence which threatened every part of the scattered population of this territory with a destructive warfare. I adopted the only expedient in my power calculated to check the British influence and the

\textsuperscript{13} Robinson, \textit{South Dakota Historical Collections}, XII, p.96, quoted in Parker, p.136.

extension of British warfare which was to set some of the large tribes of the Missouri nearest our southern frontiers at war against the tribes of the Mississippi who were our most destructive enemies. To effect this I furnished suitable merchandise to P. Chouteau Esq. the Osage agent and sent him to that nation, he succeeded in sending a party to war with good effect – Manuel Lisa Esq. a Spanish gentleman of property, in this place and some influence amongst the Indians of the Missouri, a man of good sense and great perseverance, I appointed subagent, furnished him with some merchandise and sent him to the Sioux, Mahaws and Pawnees, He exceeded my expectations and has produced valuable changes in the dispositions of those tribes as per his report enclosed.

As Robinson noted, there would no doubt be much more material available to report on these various intrigues except the British army burned the White House and other government structures on 23 August 1814, which housed the Bureau of Indian Affairs, where most of the official government records of 1812-1813 were kept. Robinson concludes: The British defeat in the lake region was due to the defection of the Sioux ... due in large measure to the loyalty of the Sioux of the Missouri, in South Dakota, to the American cause. Out of the bounds of South Dakota came an influence that was very material to the final issue. Within our section was domiciled a master mind whose wise strategy was of great significance .... In view of these facts, it is not too much to say that South Dakota was an important element in the determination of the War of 1812.

Here is certainly ample support for the contention that the fur trade and fur traders like Manuel Lisa, who worked in South Dakota, were decisive elements in quite important international affairs. Lisa played his part in winning the struggle against British interests and securing the territory that later became South Dakota.

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16 Parker, footnote, p.135.

17 Robinson, South Dakota Historical Collections, XII (1924), 98, quoted in Parker, p.138.