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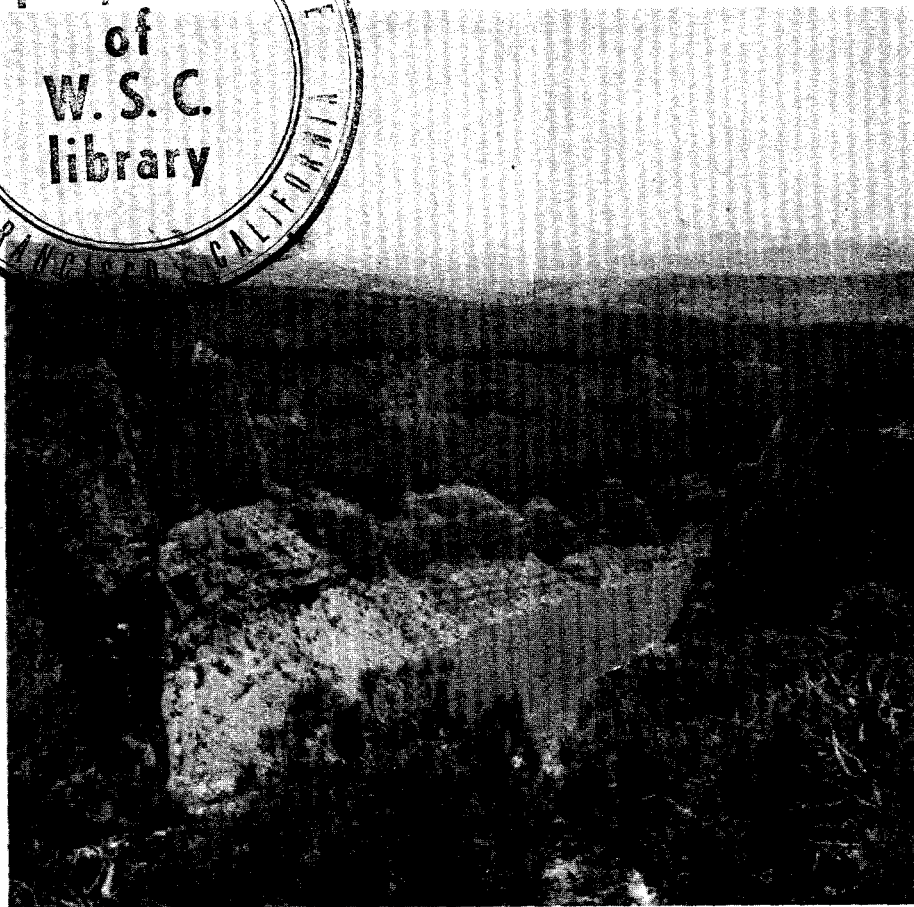
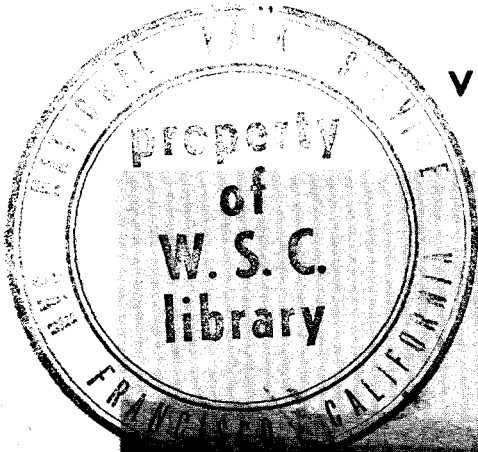
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In Two Volumes

VOLUME 1



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BIGHORN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

MONTANA-WYOMING

HISTORY BASIC DATA

by

EDWIN C. BEARSS

VOLUME 1



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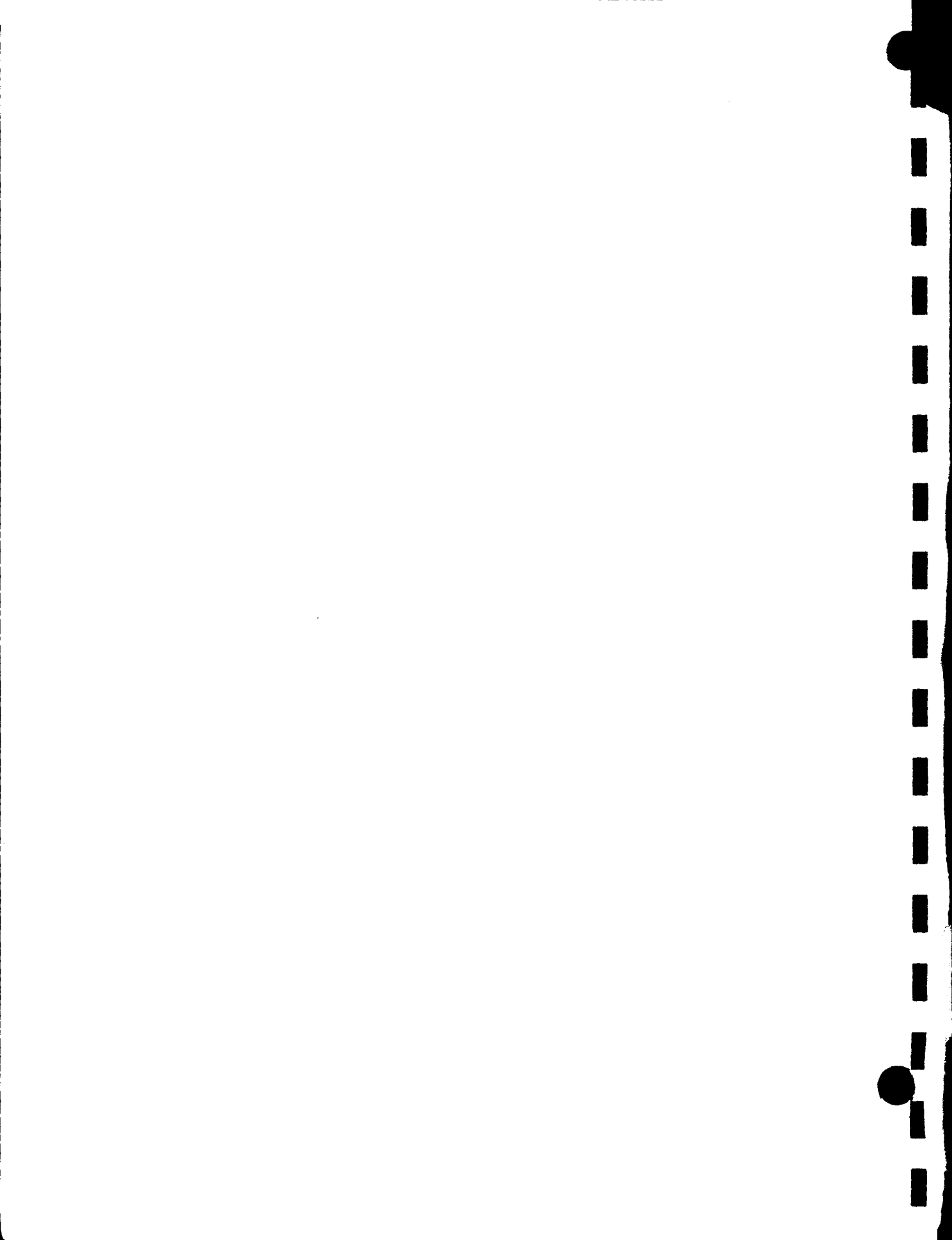
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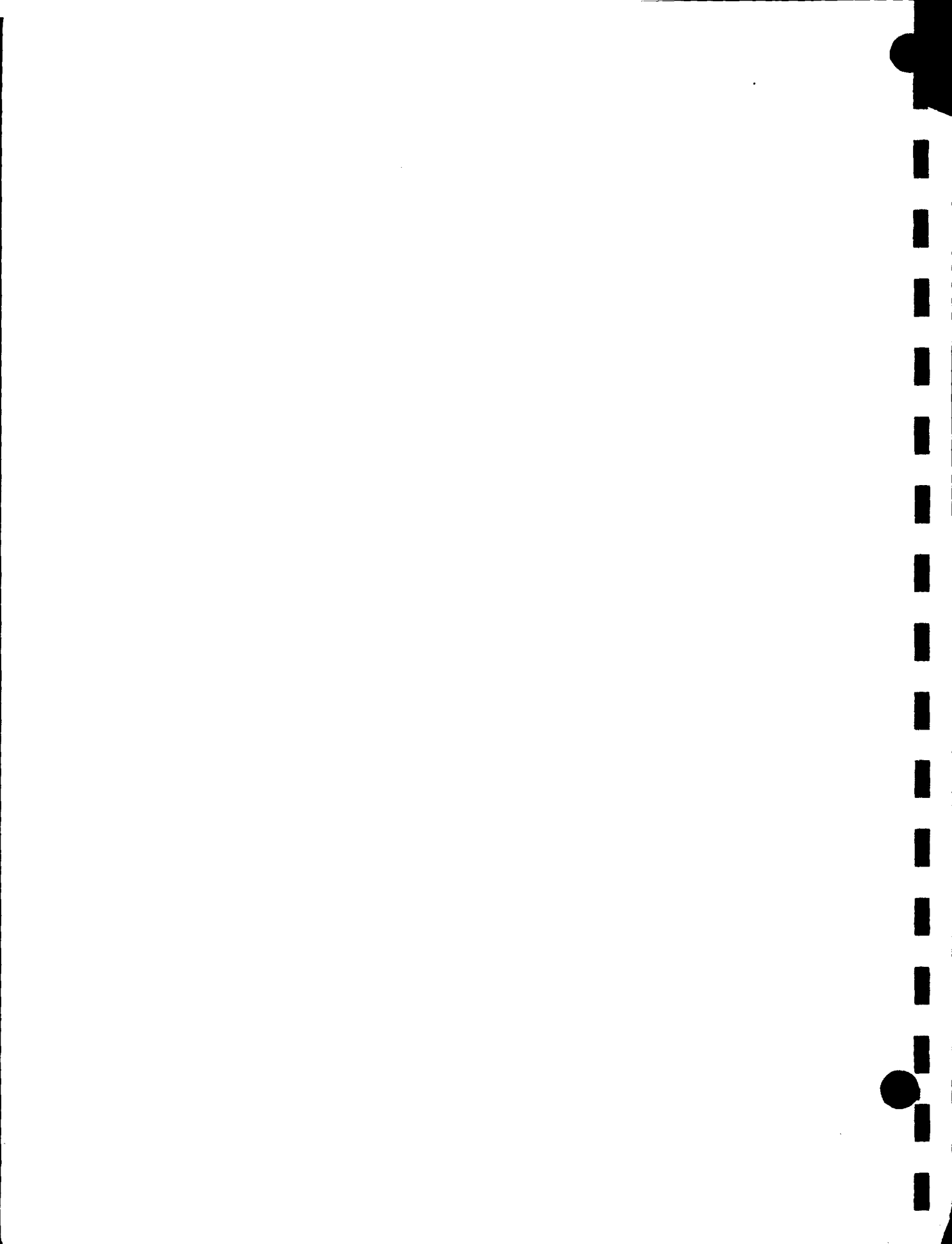
BIGHORN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

by

Edwin C. Bearss

In Two Volumes

VOLUME 1



FOREWORD

This report has been prepared to satisfy research needs enumerated in Historical Resource Study Proposal BIHC-H-1, Basic Data Study, the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. The area's many and diverse historic sites have been identified, evaluated, and plotted on Historical Base Maps. Structures that are to appear on the list of Classified Structures have been identified, as well as lands and resources to be designated Class VI in the Land Classification Plan. National Register Forms have been prepared for structures and sites nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. These forms have been submitted to the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation.

The Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area is rich in history, with two sites--the Bozeman Trail and Fort C. F. Smith--possessing sufficient significance to be considered for possible inclusion in the Service as a National Historic Site. As I spent the first 18 years of my life in Big Horn County, I have found this to be an especially interesting and challenging undertaking.

A number of persons have assisted with the preparation of this report. Particular thanks are due Superintendent Bruce W. Shaw and his staff. While I was in the area a jeep was available for my transportation, and the staff stood ready to answer any questions I had. District Ranger Donald R. Harper, although not a trained historian, displayed a deep knowledge and appreciation of historical and archeological sites in his district. Mrs. Helen Peterson, editor and publisher of the *Hardin Tribune-Herald*, an old friend, was a goldmine of information, as was Harold Stanton, a Hardin attorney. Stuart W. Conner, a Billings attorney and archeologist, shared with me his archeological site reports. The staff of the Montana Historical Society, especially Mrs. Harriet C. Malloy, went out of their way to make my stay in Helena profitable. At the Billings Public Library, the research librarian exerted himself to help me locate items in their extensive and valuable clipping file. Mr. Matt P. Lowman, II, of the Newberry Library of Chicago made available a typescript of the Templeton Diary, which added life and interest to the Fort C. F. Smith section. Ralph M. Shane of the Bureau of Indian Affairs provided me with copies of his Historical Maps of the Crow Reservation, which are works of art.

My colleagues Erwin Thompson and Jack D. McDermott shared their vast knowledge of the fur trade with me, while Merrill Mattes of the Western Service Center and author of *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, provided information as to the whereabouts of valuable manuscript collections. Don Rickey, former historian at Custer Battlefield and now Assistant Director, Military History Research Collection, U.S.A. War College, Carlisle Barracks, and Chester Brooks, first superintendent of Bighorn Canyon NRA, briefed me on the area and contacts.

Elmer Parker, Sara Jackson, Kristine Zornig, David A. Gibson, and Robert Kvasnicka of the National Archives were helpful in suggesting and relocating unpublished documents. Superintendent James Jackson of the Crow Reservation provided me with a pass to visit restricted tribal lands in the Bighorn Mountains.

To Frank Sarles I wish to extend thanks for proof-reading the final draft, and to three persons for assistance above and beyond the call of duty I wish to extend special recognition: They are: Joe Medicine Crow, Roy Appleman, and Mrs. Lucy Wheeler. Joe Medicine Crow took the time to point out, personally, several sites that I would have otherwise missed; Roy Appleman read my manuscript and made a number of good suggestions that strengthened the final product; and as always, Mrs. Wheeler took charge of the typing, and possessing an inquiring mind, made valuable and appreciated editorial suggestions.

#

NOTE*: Asterisks indicate Site, Structure, or Trails referred to in National Register Inventory Nomination forms beginning with page 427, *Volume 2*.

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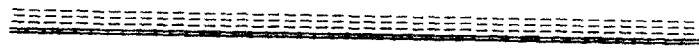
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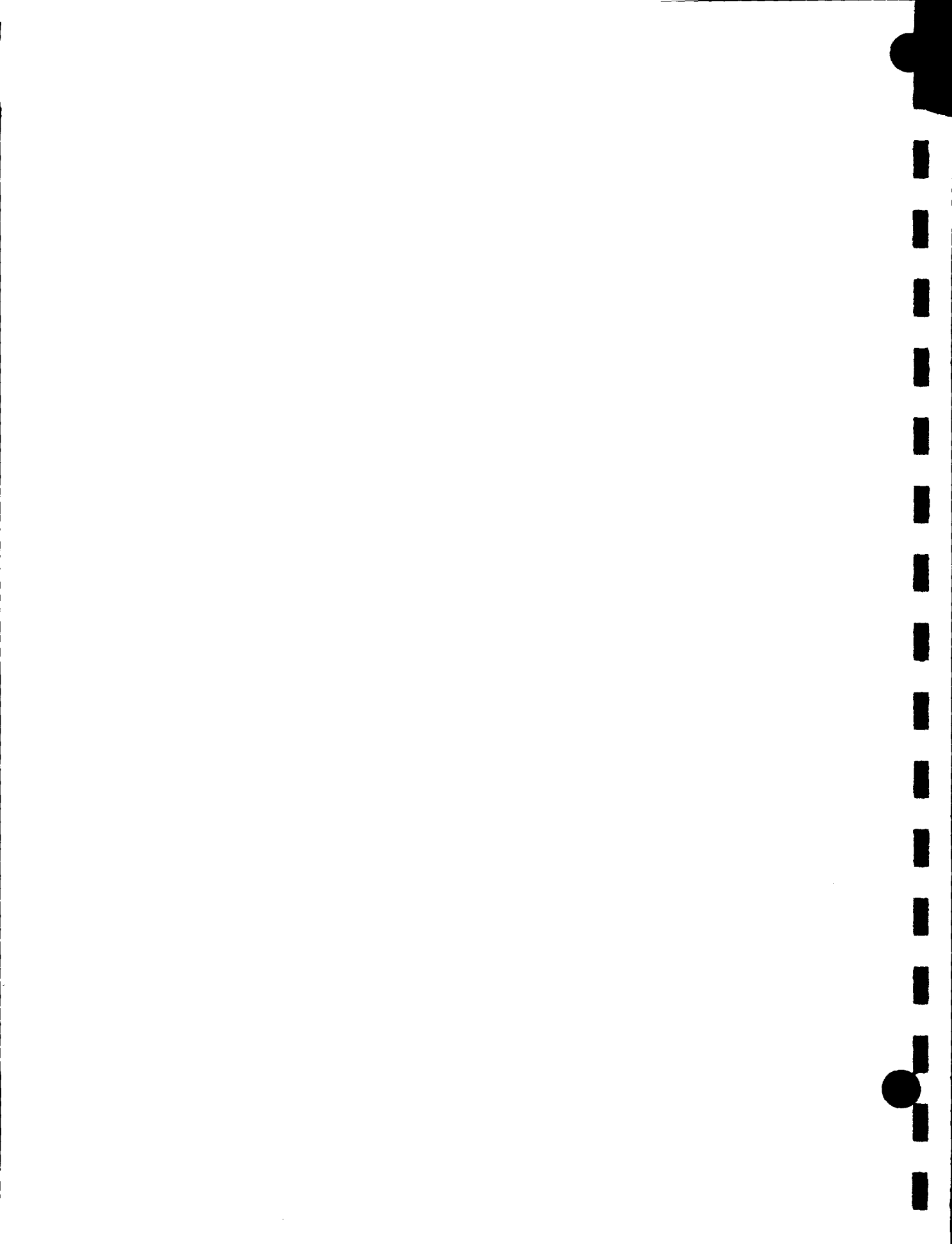
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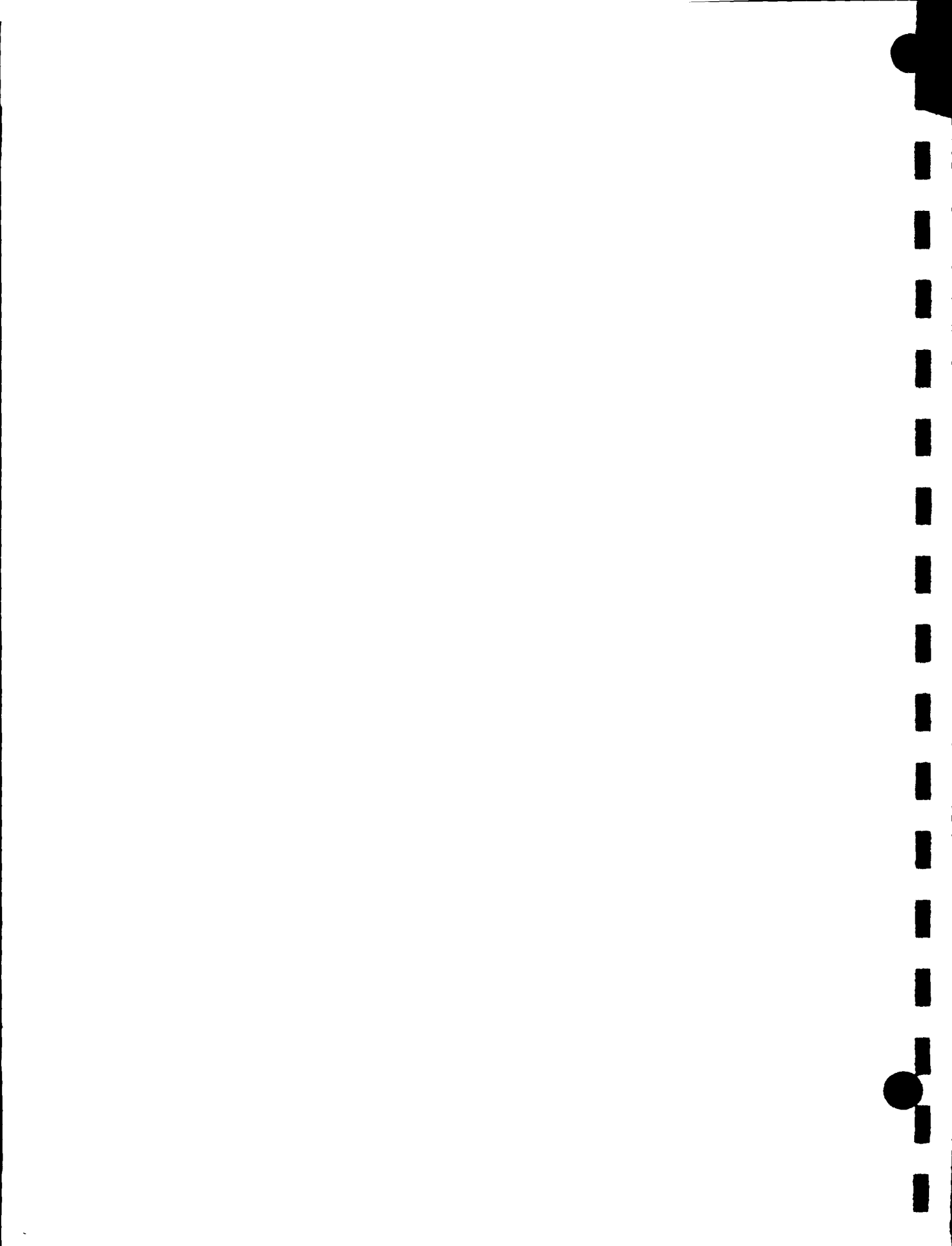


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I. THE CROW AND THE BIGHORNS

A. Statement of Significance

The Crow have lived in and cherished the Bighorn Country for almost 250 years. They constitute the central and dominant theme that gives unity to the Story of Man and the Bighorns, and as such their history must play the leading role in interpreting the area to their two hundred million fellow Americans.

B. Early Migrations

Crow traditions tell us that in the dim past their ancestors lived in "a land of forests and many lakes." There were two bands, one of which were hunters while the other subsisted by farming. This ancestral home was near Lake Winnipeg. About 1550 the tribe migrated southwestward, across the plains. Joe Medicine Crow, the distinguished Crow historian and anthropologist, attributes this movement to one of several factors: either the tribe was seeking better hunting territory and agricultural country, or they were compelled to move by the pressure of hostile tribes from the east.

At Devils Lake a halt was made while the medicine men called on the great spirit for guidance. The great spirit told the farmers to settle down and raise corn. The hunters were given a sacred tobacco seed, with instructions "to go west to the big mountains and plant the seed, and in time they would receive a good land, where they would grow strong and wealthy."

Pressing westward, the tribe by 1600 had occupied the area near the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers. Here the tribe separated, the ones interested in agriculture ceased migrating for the time being, while Chief No Vitals led about 400 people northwestward in search of the promised land.

No Vitals' band paused near the headwaters of Bow River. The cold winters with their deep snow forced the hunters to travel southward through the Rocky Mountains. After passing Great Salt Lake, they migrated southeastward, visiting the region where the Arkansas and Red rivers headed. Eventually, they returned to the area about Devils Lake, where their grandfathers had sought the great spirit's guidance. By 1700 the tribe was on the upper Missouri, and the leaders determined that here was the promised land, and here the medicine men planted the sacred tobacco seed.¹

1. Personal Interview, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 25, 1969.

C. The Secession of the Crow from the Hidatsa

By 1735 the tribe had acquired horses and soon became great horsemen. Not long thereafter, about 1750, the tribe known today by anthropologists as the Hidatsa, separated, and the faction that is known to history as the Crow, withdrew. According to Edwin T. Denig, the Hidatsa had heretofore been divided into two factions, "each headed by a separate chief, both of whom were desperate men, and nearly equal in the number of their followers." For several years, the older chiefs were able to council moderation and a final rupture was forestalled. The break was precipitated at a great buffalo hunt at which both chiefs and a large number of their followers were present. The wives of the two leaders quarreled over the "manifolds or upper stomach of one of the cows." First, hot words and then blows were exchanged. One of the wives was knifed to death. Whereupon, the two factions took up arms, and in the ensuing clash, several men were killed. Because of this blood feud, about one-half the nation left the Missouri and migrated to the Rocky Mountains and Bighorns.²

Dr. John Ewers has pointed out, however, that "mere separation from the Hidatsa does not explain the Crow abandonment of the semi-sedentary life typical of the Missouri River horticulturalists in favor of the nomadic-hunting existence characteristic of "the tribe as first described in detail by François Larocque in 1805. Ewers maintains that "this Crow cultural transition was part of a more widespread movement that witnessed a similar change in the culture of the Arapaho and Cheyenne, and that it followed the introduction of horses into the area northeast of the Black Hills."³

The Crow referred to themselves as "Absaroga," which meant bird-people. The earliest mention of the Crow by that name occurs in the journal of the fur trader, Jean Baptiste Trudeau, in 1795. He reported that on June 5 a war party of Arikara arrived with "the scalp of a man of the Crow Nation, a people who live near the Rocky Mountains." In addition, Trudeau learned that "a Canadian, named Menard, who, for sixteen years has made his home with the Mandan . . . has been several times among the nation of the Crow" in company with the Hidatsa.⁴

2. Edwin T. Denig, "Of the Crow Nation," *Anthropological Papers*, John C. Ewers, editor, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 151 (Washington, 1953), 19. Denig, who spent 23 years among the Indians of the Upper Missouri, is rated by Dr. John Ewers as a leading authority on the ethnology of the Indian tribes of the northern plains. "Of the Crow Nation," from internal evidence, was written in the winter of 1856.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

4. *Ibid.*; "Journal of Jean Baptiste Trudeau, Among the Arikara Indians

Denig, like other fur traders, remarked on the similarity that existed between the language of the Crow and Hidatsa, who seemed to experience little difficulty in conversing, although their languages had undergone some changes in the years since the secession. Larocque, 50 years before, had likewise taken cognizance of the resemblance and listed a "comparative Hidatsa-Crow vocabulary of 21 words to illustrate the point."⁵

D. Numbers

Larocque in 1805 estimated the Crow to number 300 lodges, having been reduced from 2,000 lodges by a succession of smallpox epidemics.⁶ A rivalry between two chiefs, Arrapooash and Long Hair, caused the tribe in the 1820s to divide into two, the River and the Mountain Crow. Zenas Leonard, a fur trader, in the autumn of 1834 found the Crow in "two divisions of an equal number in each." Denig, in 1856, reported that there "were formerly about 800 lodges or families, but from the usual causes of diminution, sickness, and war, are now reduced to 460 lodges."

Since the Treaty of Laramie, in 1851, the Mountain Crow led by "The Big Robber" habitually made their winter hunt on the head of Powder River. The Mountain Crow were accustomed to taking their pelts and buffalo robes in the spring to trading houses on the Platte, and, after receiving trade goods in exchange, returning to Powder River by fall. Two Face with his River Crow frequented the Wind River country and traded at the American Fur Company's Fort Sarpy, on the Yellowstone. Another village, headed by Bear's Head, moved up and down the Yellowstone Valley. This band traded at Fort Union and was known to winter with the Assiniboin.⁷

E. Way of Life

1. Warfare Among the Plains Indians

Warfare as practiced by the Indians of the northern plains came to be governed by a code of ethics, and "was probably the finest sport known in the world," so wrote Sitting Bull's bio-

in 1795," Mrs. H. T. Beauguard, editor, *Missouri Historical Society Collections* (St. Louis, 1912), 4, 22, 175.

5. François Larocque, *Journal of Larocque from the Assiniboine to the Yellowstone, 1805*, Publications Canadian Archives, No. 3 (Ottawa, 1910), 21.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

7. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, p. 24.

grapher Stanley Vestal. "No Man," he continued,

who loves horseflesh and the bright face of danger but must long to have shared its thrilling chances. It had all the dash and speed of polo, the informality of a fox hunt, the sporting chance of sudden wealth afforded by the modern horse race, and danger enough to satisfy the most reckless. And it was no game for weaklings, for the Plains Indians seldom gave, and never expected, quarter.⁸

The greatest feats a warrior could perform was to capture by stealth a foe's prized stallion or fleet hunter picketed in the very front of his lodge, or to count coup, the touching or striking the enemy alive or dead. As a war honor, counting coup ranked far above the killing of a foe. Rescues, wounds, and captured horses or weapons counted as battle honors, but the coup was an honor all strove for.⁹

The taking of scalps was not too important--the Teton Sioux and Cree alone regarded the scalp as a first-class trophy. Before the coming of the whites, scalping was uncommon. Scalp bounties paid by the whites caused the spread of the practice across the northern plains.¹⁰

2. Indian Siege Site on Dryhead*

On the north rim of Dryhead Canyon and west of Pitchfork Creek in the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area there is a mesa where Indian fought Indian. As Joe Medicine Crow knows no Crow tradition telling of a fight at this site, this engagement must have taken place many years ago, before the coming of the white man.

A reconnaissance of the area and an examination of the remains--a low rock wall, tipi rings, logs laid end to end along the military crest of the mesa, and thousands of stone chips and cores left from lithic manufacture--tells an interesting story. Medicine Crow and I speculated that perhaps scouts from a village hunting buffalo on Dryhead sighted a large hostile war party. The villagers moved onto the mesa and erected fortifications--a rock wall and log barricades. An attack was made and repulsed. The village then braced for a siege. Tipis were

* see National Register forms, p. 429

8. Stanley Vestal, *Sitting Bull, Champion of the Sioux* (Boston, 1932), p. 142.

9. Ibid.; William Brandon, *The American Heritage Book of Indians* (New York, 1961), pp. 336-337.

10. Brandon, *American Heritage Book of Indians*, p. 337.

put up and food stockpiled. Under the cover of darkness, daring warriors slipped across the barricades and down into Dryhead to bring back buffalo stomachs filled with water. Unfortunately, the outcome of the siege must remain a mystery.

In 1964, the site was vandalized by pot-hunters employing mechanized equipment. It is probable the vandals were employed in erecting the power transmission line, one-fourth mile north of the site.¹¹

3. Treatment of Prisoners

The Crow were more humane in their treatment of captives than most other Plains Indians. They and the Hidatsa were the only tribes of the region, who, in battle, would take women and children prisoners. The others would dash out the captives' brains.

For example, the Crow in 1845 smashed Small Robe's 45-lodge Piegan village. All the men were dispatched, and 150 women and children taken prisoner. The Piegan women "were made to work like their own wives--perhaps a little more--'tho not abused," while the children were adopted into the Crow tribe. Given the opportunity, after one year, to return to their own people, most of the Piegan women refused, preferring to remain with the Crow.¹²

The male children were encouraged to become Crow warriors. This was especially important, because the loss of a boy or warrior was a great misfortune to the village, for there would be one less to defend the village or participate in the hunt. These children were not always adopted by those capturing them. This only happened "when those who had taken them . . . [had] recently lost by sickness some of their own children, to which the prisoner child . . . [was] supposed to bear a resemblance." Those not adopted were treated kindly, and their feelings toward their masters soon became similar to those of a child toward his parents.¹³

4. Crow-White Relations

In the years between Larocque's 1805 visit and 1856, few if any whites lost their lives to the Crow. The Mountain Men, a breed that "imposed upon and ill-treated them on all occasions," were permitted to trap and hunt in their country. Fear played

11. Personal Interview, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 29, 1969; Archaeological Site Report 24BH408, prepared by Stuart W. Conner, Sept. 18, 1964.

12. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, p. 28.

13. *Ibid.*

no part in this toleration, because they could have attacked at any time the small parties of trappers operating on the Yellowstone and Bighorn. Between the other tribes of the Northern Plains (the Assiniboin, Sioux, Blackfoot, and Cree) and the Mountain Men there was war, in which many on both sides lost their lives.¹⁴

5. Law and Order

Although the Crow, like other tribes, did not have a code of laws, the bloody tribal feuds characteristic of other Plains Indians were absent . Within the period 1844-1856, Denig knew of only one incident in which a Crow had murdered one of his people. This killing had been precipitated when one warrior struck another's wife across the face with a whip. Whereupon the husband knifed him to death. The deceased's kin took up arms, but the husband's friends hid him until dark, when he fled to the Snake. After 12 years he returned, but finding that the murder had not been forgotten or forgiven, he was compelled to go into exile once again.¹⁵

As to be expected, while disputes did not lead to blood feuds, there were frequent differences. When these arose, the Crow struck back with either personal abuse or by stealing each other's horses. Denig knew of cases where a Crow had taken off with the wife of another, and the husband had retaliated by running off the seducer's horses. Should he have none, the husband would raid those of his relatives. The aggrieved would be supported in this action by not only his family, but by most of the villagers.

When retaliation was thus taken, the man who had made off with the wife kept her, and his relatives were permitted to buy back the horses. In fact all crimes, except murder, were habitually settled through the gifts to the offended party of horses or weapons.¹⁶

Petty theft and minor differences were settled by the parties "heartily abusing each other." Both males and females were skilled at this, "and their language affords a fine variety of beautiful epithets." A warrior, when engaged in this practice, would count each coup on his fingers, calling upon his antagonist to match him. As to be anticipated, in the heat of one of these confrontations, many warriors were prone to exaggerate their accomplishments, which caused "no further notice than sending the like back" with the epithet of coward, liar, or thief.¹⁷

14. Ibid., p. 29.

15. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

16. Ibid., p. 30; Larocque, *Journal*, pp. 58-61.

17. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, pp. 30-31.

F. Morality and Customs

1. Philandering

The younger men, Denig reported, made it their "business . . . to run after the women, who, whether married or not, appear to be perfectly unaware that virtue or chastity has any existence even in the imagination." The Crow were proponents of sexual freedom, and made no effort to hide "any and all transactions between the sexes." Because of these loose morals, their appearance to be a large number of unmarried women about the village, while those who were married were neglected by their women-chasing husbands. Most of the women had had several liaison before marriage.¹⁸

2. Petty Theft

Most whites complained that the Crow were adept at petty theft. When camped near a trading post or fort, the Crow would "torment all the domestic animals, and steal everything they can lay their hands on." Tin cups, knives, spoons, clothing, etc., disappeared. So skilled at this were they that they could make off with an item even when the victim was on guard. The Crow generally shunned stealing valuable property, such as small-arms and horses, probably because they would be difficult to secrete. To friends and relatives, the Crow were generous. If a man had lost all his horses, someone would voluntarily give him several mares, the benefactor expecting to be reimbursed at a future date.¹⁹

3. Juvenile Delinquency

Denig believed that "the greatest nuisance in creation is Crow children, boys from the ages of 9 to 14 years." They were allowed by their doting parents to do as they pleased, being permitted to engage in "all kinds of mischief without either correction or reprimand." While other northern plains tribes kept their children under control and secluded, the Crow placed "them before themselves in every crowd or assembly."²⁰

4. Polygamy and Division of Property

Many of the men had a number of wives. Larocque in 1805 reported that "some of them have 8 or 10 and 12 [wives], but in

18. Ibid., pp. 31-32; Robert H. Lowie, *Social Life of the Crow Indians* (New York, 1912), p. 245.

19. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, pp. 31, 32.

20. Ibid., pp. 32-33.

such cases they do not all live with . . . [the husband], some are young girls that are only betrusted. But by far the greatest part have only 2 or 3 wives; some have only one."²¹

There was no common property, the husband and wives owning in their own right horses, ornaments, etc. Thus when a marriage was dissolved, there was no quarrel over community property. When a man and wife separated, the boys, unless they were too young to wean, went with the father, and the girls with the mother. Implements of war and the chase belonged to the husband, while the items of the hearth and the lodge were the female's.²²

5. Sickness and Death

No expense was spared in arranging for the care of the sick and infirm. A family would surrender much of its wealth for the services of a medicine man. The death of a member of a family frequently resulted in the close kin (parents, brothers, and sisters) practicing self-mutilation by scarification and amputation of the fingers at the joints. Zenas Leonard recalled that the men were careful to preserve "the first two fingers of the right hand . . . for the purpose of bending the bow."²³ So common was this practice that Denig, in the 1850s, was able to report that "there is scarcely an entire hand among them."²⁴

In amputating a finger, the Crow never tied-off the stump. After smearing blood on their faces, they staunched the bleeding by holding a handful of sagebrush against the stump. The blood was permitted to dry and then wear off their faces. During the period of mourning, which could last for one year, the facial blood stains, when no longer visible, were renewed by slashing one's legs. Hair was likewise cut short or torn out by the handful. With his or her hair in disarray and a blood-stained countenance, the mourner went into the hills" howling dismally every day or so for a year or more, clothed with an old skin, bare feet and legs, wading through snow or mud and crying until they were so hoarse as not to be heard."²⁵

21. Larocque, *Journal*, p. 57.

22. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, p. 34.

23. Zenas Leonard, *Adventures of Zenas Leonard, Fur Trader and Trapper, 1837-1836*, W. F. Wagner, editor (Cleveland, 1904), pp. 271-272.

24. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, p. 35.

25. *Ibid.*

6. Infanticide

According to Denig, many Crow women aborted themselves or destroyed their babies "as soon as brought forth." To abort themselves the women followed one of two methods: (a) by raining blows on the abdomen; or (b) by pressing upon the stomach with a stick, and "leaning their whole weight thereon and swinging to and fro." These abortions usually took place from the third to seventh month of pregnancy. The women were unaware of the danger involved, and many died from the complications. By the 1850s the men of the tribe, who had formerly suffered this practice, raised their voices against it, and there was a "great decline in abortions."²⁶

7. Unnatural Sex Practices

During the first decades of the 19th century, the number of "Berdèches or homosexuals" was commented on by visitors to the region. Alexander Henry wrote in 1806, "I am informed they are much addicted to unnatural lusts, and have no scruple in satisfying their desire with their mares and wild animals fresh killed."²⁷ Prince Alexander P. Maximilian in 1833 reported, "They have many berdaches, or hermaphrodites, among them, and exceed all other tribes in unnatural practices."²⁸ Father Pierre J. De Smet knew of a warrior who "in consequence of a dream had put on women's clothing and subjected himself to all the labors and duties of that condition, so humiliating to an Indian."²⁹

Denig attributed this practice to childhood habits. There were occasions when a boy, on reaching ten or 12, could not be prevailed upon to join in the activities of his comrades, and instead associated with girls. By this age the activities of the children had diverged--the boys being taught the use of weapons, horsemanship, and the skills of the chase, while the females learned household crafts. By the time a boy had reached puberty, his habits had been formed, and those who had associated

26. Ibid., pp. 57-58. All tribes of the upper Missouri practiced abortions.

27. *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*, Elliott Coues, editor, (3 vols. New York, 1897) 1, 399.

28. Prince Alexander P. Maximilian, *Travels in the Interior of North America . . .*, In *Early Western Travels*, Reuben G. Thwaites, editor (Cleveland, 1906), 22, 354

29. *Life, Letters, and Travels of Father Pierre Jean De Smet*, H. M. Crittenden and A. T. Richardson, editors, (4 vols. New York, 1905), 3, 1017.

with the girls and failed to learn the arts of the warrior were now dressed in women's garb and their lives hereafter "devoted to the labors assigned to females."

By the 1850s, Denig knew of only two or three "berdêches," although oldtimers claimed that in the past the habit had been more prevalent.³⁰

G. Ceremonies

1. Tobacco-Planting Ceremony

This ceremony originated with No Vitals, and among the Crow the Tobacco Planters were the most powerful medicine men. Although they dressed and conducted themselves in the same fashion as their fellow tribesmen, the Tobacco Planters were believed "to have control over events, seasons, the elements, animals, and all things usually attributed to the works of an overruling Providence."

The Crow believed that as long as they perpetuated the seed given to them by the Great Spirit, they would continue to flourish as a people. If the sacred seed should disappear, the tribe "must pass away from the face of the earth." It was believed that the Tobacco Planters, in following No Vitals' dictates, were "endowed with supernatural powers, to bring rain, avert pestilence, control the wind, conquer disease, make the buffalo come near their camp, and increase the number of all kinds of game."³¹

When a new man was initiated into the cult of Tobacco Planters, he was compelled to submit to a trying ordeal. "His flesh was cut and burned in large and deep furrows around the breast and along his arms, leaving for a long time dangerous and disgusting wounds difficult to heal." He had to fast several days. After passing through this ordeal, he was given some sacred tobacco seed, in exchange for his worldly possessions.³²

30. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, p. 58. S. C. Simms in 1902 was informed that there were three berdêches in the tribe and that "a few years ago an Indian agent endeavoured to compel these people, under threat of punishment, to wear men's clothing." But his efforts were unsuccessful. S. C. Simms, *Crow Indian Hermaphrodites*, *American Anthropologist* (Lancaster, 1903), 5, 580-581. A berdêch was a male who dressed as a woman and who performed those labors usually associated with females.

31. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, p. 59.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

In the mid-1850s a favored site for the Tobacco-Planting Ceremony was on Wind River.³³ Sometime during the second half of April, the entire tribe would assemble. As soon as the camp had been established, the women cleared about one-half acre of ground. They worked to an accompaniment of drums, singing, and smoking. On the second day, the area was hoed, either with sticks or scapula hoes--made from the shoulder blades of buffalo. The third day was commenced by "loud haranguing, feasting, and singing" by the Tobacco Planters. All the married men and women then mounted their horses and rode out of the village, single file, to the nearest woods. There they each cut and gathered a fagot, and remounting, returned to the clearing. The women took the lead, and it was understood that "the female who brings in the first bundle of wood must be one who has had no illicit connection with any man but her husband." A man, who could swear that he had never slept with any of his relatives' wives, brought in the second fagot.³⁴

After the first two fagots had been cast on the clearing, the rest followed, one at a time, urged on by the singing and drumming of the Tobacco Planters. Next to each of the medicine men was placed bowls of cooked meat, buffalo tongues, pemmican, and dried berries. After ridding themselves of the fagots, the men and women sat down about the bowls and gorged.³⁵

The fagots were now stacked in four piles, one in each corner of the square patch. After the piles were "separately smoked to and invoked," the wood was scattered over the one-half acre and burned. The patch was then rehoed and beaten with willows. All the while, the Tobacco Planters conducted ceremonies over the seed. After being mixed with rich earth and ashes, the seed was board-cast over the patch. To bury the seed, the ground was harrowed with brush.³⁶

A grand medicine lodge next received the attention of the tribe.³⁷ The interior of the lodge was bedecked with varicolored cloths, beads, and various ornaments. Several hundred Crow now sat down to feast, to a wild accompaniment of drums, rattles, bells, and whistles. After they had eaten, dancing commenced. These dances were "conducted with strict decorum, as they, with all the rest of the ceremony, . . . [were] supposed to bring about a state of happy and prosperous national affairs." While the dance was in

33. If the village were a considerable distance from Wind River when the planting season arrived, a nearby site could be substituted.

34. Ibid., pp. 60-61.

35. Ibid., p. 61.

36. Ibid.

37. The grand lodge was formed by connecting eight or ten lodges with poles.

progress, some of the participants became so entranced that they mutilated themselves. Others, refusing food and drink, continued to stamp and shout until they fainted from exhaustion.

At the end of three days, the lodges were taken down and the village moved off about one-half mile. The next day they traveled a mile, and like distances on the third and fourth days. If they went faster, the Crow feared that the tobacco would think they were running away from it.³⁸

In late August, the village returned to the tobacco patch, and the plants were pulled up and packed into sacks. The seed was separated and preserved, while the stem and leaves were stored "to be used on great occasions such as peacemaking with other nations, and religious rites of a national character."³⁹

2. Vision Quests*

The boys of the tribe listened for hours to stories of the deeds of brave warriors. They were taught to run, swim, wrestle, hunt, and ride. They learned the secrets of nature. Finally, as they approached puberty they were taught to be warriors. But before becoming a warrior, a boy must seek a vision and find his "medicine," those spirit helpers who protected and aided the warriors of the plains.

When the boy was ready to make his vision quest, he went alone into the mountains. Popular quest sites for the Crow were in the Bighorn, Crazy, Pryor, and Wind River Mountains. Here the boy would take a sweat-bath, select a spot overlooking a canyon or cliff, and erect an oval-shaped rock enclosure. The rocks would be piled one on another until they had reached a height of one foot or more. He would then take position inside the oval, and continue his fast that had commenced on his departure from the village. He would remain inside the oval until he had a vision and found his medicine.

According to Joe Medicine Crow, his grandfather, Medicine Crow, went on three vision quests. For his first quest he chose a peak in the Crazy Mountains. His second quest occurred in the Pryor Mountains, on "the sacred tribal fasting grounds" overlooking the Bighorn Canyon. The site of his third quest is clouded by time. Because of his visions, which came to pass, his people revered him "as a visionary type of medicine man." Medicine Crow saw "something black with round legs puffing smoke and pulling box-like

* see National Register forms, pp. 12,13.

objects behind it coming down the valley of the Greasy Grass (the Little Bighorn)." This was 30 years before the track of the Big Horn Southern Railroad reached Crow Agency in 1895.⁴⁰

Within the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area there are several vision quest sites. At Hole-in-the-Rock are two quest sites, about 50 feet apart. The one nearest the canyon appears to be undisturbed, while the other has been vandalized. The well-preserved one consists of an oval-shaped enclosure of rocks, piled to a height of about one foot. From these sites, one is able to look down into the canyon.⁴¹

On a point overlooking the confluence of Bighorn and Black Canyons is the quest site used by Chief Pretty Eagle. Here, inside the rock oval overlooking the wild canyons, he fasted until a pretty eagle spoke to him and gave him his medicine.⁴²

3. The Fort Smith Medicine Wheel*

The Fort Smith Medicine Wheel was built about 1850 by a Crow named Scarface. As a boy he had fallen head first into a fire-pit and was terribly burned. He recovered, but his face was horribly scarred. The other children called him Burnt Face or Scarface, and he fled into the Bighorns. There he lived in a cave as a recluse on Medicine Mountain, the site of the Medicine Wheel.⁴³ When discovered and prevailed upon to rejoin his village, Scarface

* see National Register forms, p. 547.

40. Personal Interview, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 25, 1969; Joe Medicine Crow, *Custer's Last Stand* (Hardin, 1967), pp. 4-5; Frank B. Linderman, *Plenty-Coups: Chief of the Crows* (Lincoln, 1962), pp. 57-59.

41. Archaeological Site Report 24CB411, prepared by Stuart W. Conner, Aug. 8, 1962.

42. Personal Interview, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 25, 1969.

43. Atop Medicine Mountain, about 13 miles southeast of the Devils Canyon Overlook, is the historic Medicine Wheel, 70 feet in diameter, with 12-foot hub, and 28 spokes. The Crow say the wheel was there when they came to the Bighorns. It resembles the "Houses of Dawn" built by sunworshippers of Mexico and the Aztec religious structures. Archeologists, who studied the site in 1958, found objects, but no artifacts that would enable them to identify the people who built the Wheel. Timber embedded in rock cairns has been carbon-tested, and dated about 1770, which would be after the Crow entered the region. "Historical Map of the Crow Indian Reservation: Home of the Crows or Absarokee Children of the large beaked bird," Ralph M. Shane, compiler and draftsman (Billings, Montana, 1968).

built the Fort Smith Medicine Wheel. This wheel is much smaller than the one on Medicine Mountain and has only six spokes.⁴⁴

4. The Grave of Big Iron (Big Metal)

In the days soon after the Crow came to the area, a step-father and his boy went into the mountains to hunt bighorn sheep. While the boy was looking down into the canyon, near Hole-in-the-Wall, the step-father pushed him over the brink. The boy disappeared from view, and the cruel step-father returned to the village and told the mother that the boy had started for home earlier. A search was made by the warriors, and, when no sign of the boy was found, it was assumed that he had been captured by another tribe.⁴⁵

The boy, however, was safe. His fall had been broken by an outcrop of cedars thrusting out from the canyon wall. Here, from a precarious perch several hundred feet above jagged rock, he waited, hoped, and cried. On the fourth day, he was rescued by seven bighorns led by Big Metal, the chief of the bighorns. Big Metal had horns and hooves of glistening metal, and he gave the boy his name and powers. The seven sheep, each in turn, gave the boy a power that each possessed--"wisdom, sharp eyes, sure-footedness, keen ears, great strength, strong heart." They then told him:

We seven rule these Big Horn Mountains. That river down there in the bottom is the Big Horn River. Whatever you do, don't change its name. It shall be known as the Big Horn River. If you ever change the name of the river, there will be no more Absaroga. The Absaroga will be nothing.⁴⁶

Other animals, as urged by Big Metal, then gave the boy "the right to practice their powers by calling upon them." He was told by the badger to build a sweat lodge on his return to the village.

When he returned to his people, the step-father fled and his mother cried. He told his people about the bighorn sheep and cautioned them that "if the name of the mountains or the river were changed, the Absaroga would be nor more." He also instructed them in how to build a sweat lodge.⁴⁷

44. Personal Interview, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 25, 1969.

45. Henry Old Coyote, "Big Metal for the Crows," *Custer's Last Stand* (Hardin, 1969), pp. 4, 5, 7.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9.

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

When Big Iron (Big Metal) grew to manhood, his people observed that he had "unusual powers--keen eyes, a fine sense of humor, a sharp mind. He was physically very active and strong . . . He became a good Warrior." Big Iron lived to a great age, outliving four generations. Before he died, "he told his people that he desired to be buried next to the Bighorn River, because his fathers, the sheep, would come for him."⁴⁸

One day Big Iron wrapped his blanket about himself and died. His people buried him on the east side of the Bighorn, about two miles above the mouth of the Rotten Grass. In death, Big Iron continued to be venerated. Many Crow, even today, make pilgrimages to his grave and leave gifts for his spirit.⁴⁹

H. Personal Appearance and Dress

1. Physical Appearance and Dress of the Warriors

Both Mountain Men and artists considered the Crow warriors exceedingly handsome. George Catlin wrote that the warriors of the tribe were as "handsome and well formed set of men as can be seen in any part of the world." The faces of most of them were "strongly marked with a bold and prominent antiangular nose, with a clear and rounded arch, and a low receding forehead."⁵⁰

Denig echoed Catlin's sentiments. He reported that the warriors were "tall, straight, well formed, with bold, fierce eyes, and as usual good teeth." The men were neat, clean, and well-groomed. They wore their hair long, separating it into "plaits to which other hair is attached with gum, and hangs down their backs to several feet in length in a broad flat mass which is tied at the end and spotted over with white clay." In front, the hair was cut short and roached. On each side of the head, they wore frontlets of beads or shells, and alongside each were suspended several inches of wampum. Usually they painted their faces red, varied with a tinge of yellow on the eyelids. Their ears were slit to allow them to wear seashells cut into angular shapes.⁵¹

48. Ibid., p. 10.

49. Personal Interview, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 25, 1969.

50. George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians*, (2 vols. London, 1841), 1, 49, 143.

51. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, p. 33.

The warriors wore as little as possible, especially while hunting. Their every day costume, during the warmer months, often consisted of no more than a breech clout. Sometimes they wore deerskin tunics, or shirts of flannel or calico bartered from white traders. During cold weather, they bundled themselves in buffalo robes.

The Crow's ceremonial garb was highly decorative, and the finest looking of all the northern plains tribes. Warriors' shirts and leggings did not tell as much of a story as their headdresses. Their battle shirts were interesting, their design determined by visions was intended to prevent wounds. Some of the patterns were simply painted horizontal stripes. Others were elaborately made with quills, beads, or skins.⁵²

2. Physical Appearance and Dress of the Women

The white men's comments on the appearance of the Crow women was unflattering. Denig reported, "It would seem that nature . . . [that] has done so much in favor of the Crow men . . . [has] entirely neglected the women." They had bad features, worse figures, and filthy habits. Their dresses and persons were smeared "with dirt and grease, hair cut short and full of vermin, faces daubed over with their own blood in mourning for dead relations, and fingers cut off." The young women, Denig continued, "were hard, coarse-featured, sneaky looking, with sharp, small noses, thick lips, red eyelids . . . , and bare arms clothed with a coat of black dirt so ground in as to form a portion of the skin." The older women he compared to "witches and deamons." Some of them were very gross weighing between 250 and 300 pounds. To Denig it seemed strange that such "handsome men would be satisfied with such ugly women," but he allowed that the Crow must have different values as to female beauty.⁵³ The artists, George Catlin and Rudolph Kurz, echoed Denig's views. Catlin described the Crow women as "not handsome,"⁵⁴ while Kurz wrote, "Women of the Crow tribe are known rather for their industry and skilled work than for beauty of face and form."⁵⁵

Many of the women's ceremonial dresses were handsome, being decorated with elks' teeth. Only two teeth from one animal were

52. Eugene Rachlis, *Indians of the Plains* (New York, 1960), p. 40.

53. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, pp. 33-34.

54. Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, 1, 50.

55. Rudolph Kurz, *Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz*, J. N. B. Hewitt, editor, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 115 (Washington, 1937), p. 184.

used for dress decoration. This meant that only the wives of great hunters could decorate their dresses with many of these. Nevertheless, some dresses boasted as many as 300 teeth worked into a pattern. Less fortunate women used designs featuring porcupine quills or beads, or with imitation elk teeth made of bone. After trade commenced with the whites, many of the women decorated their dresses with swatches of red flannel.⁵⁶

I. Tribal Migrations

When the village was migrating, the Crow presented "a gay and lively appearance." Both men and women were garbed in their finest clothes. The warriors wore their "richly garnished shirts, fringed with human hair and ermine, leggings of the same, and headdresses of various kinds, strange, gay, and costly." Younger men, who had not yet distinguished themselves in battle, wore "bright-colored blankets," loaded with beadwork, and scarlet leggings. Many of the women, by the 1850s, were clad in scarlet or blue dresses, while the others wore cotillions made of dressed bighorn skins, which were decorated across the bosom and back with rows of elk teeth. These frocks were fringed along the side seams and bottoms with porcupine quills and varicolored feathers.

The women, when the village was in motion, affixed to their saddles their warrior's medicine bag and shield. The warrior carried his weapons, so he would be prepared for battle on an instant's notice. Baggage was packed on their horses. Kettles, pots, and pans were sacked and tied to the saddles. Older children guided the pack horses, while the younger ones were tied in the saddle. Denig had seen "the heads of children . . . popping up alongside of pup dogs and cub bears on the same horse." The lodge required one horse and the poles of the tipi formed a travois for a second. Meat and other foodstuffs were baled and lashed to the travois.

As to be expected, the Crow could round up their horses, strike their lodges, pack, and be in motion rapidly. Denig had seen them accomplish all this in less than 20 minutes. The large number of horses, "decked out with highly ornamented saddles and bridles," with scarlet collars and feathers on their manes and tails, was a sight not soon forgotten. Both sexes were excellent riders. The younger men, as they trotted along, showed off their horsemanship for the benefit of the women.

Unless they were pressed for food, the village averaged ten to 15 miles per day. If they needed meat, the march was made at a trot, and the day's ride would vary from 20 to 40 miles. When

⁵⁶. Rachlis, *Indians of the Plains*, pp. 40-41.

they halted in the evening, the horses were unloaded, sites for lodges cleared, and within a few minutes the tipis set up, the mounts turned loose to graze, and each family had a kettle of meat on the fire.⁵⁷

J. The Crow and Their Horses

The horse changed the Crow from farmers to hunters. Nomadic life became attractive. With horses, they could travel vast distances to keep pace with the buffalo migrations. The buffalo could now be found by far-ranging scouts, surrounded at a gallop, and chased down if they stampeded.⁵⁸

Before receiving the horse, the Crow had moved their possessions with the assistance of dogs, bearing small packs or dragging travois. With horses the size of the lodge was increased, and the lodge poles of the tipi constituted the travois.

After the coming of the horse, dried meat and pemmican could be kept and transported by the ton. There was now time to perfect other pursuits. Warfare became an intriguing game. Horses gave it a method as well as a purpose. A warrior's fortune was counted in horses, a young man's future depended on horses, and horses accordingly became a common goal in war. The Crow were extraordinarily successful in stealing and breeding horses. Denig believed them to be the "richest" northern plains Indian in horseflesh. One hundred-horse families were not uncommon. Most middle-aged men had from 30 to 40. Larocque in 1805 reported, "He is reckoned a poor man who has not 10 horses in spring before the trade at the Missouri takes place and many have 30 or 40."⁵⁹ In the 1850s the Crow, Denig found, valued their horses at from \$60 to \$100 each.⁶⁰

Of all the plains tribes familiar to Denig, only the Gros Ventres took better care of their horses. The Crow pastured their horses as much as ten miles from the village, where they were guarded by the young warriors. Each family watched its own. When near enemy country or while unfriendly war parties were known to be in the area, the best horses were brought in and tethered in front of the lodges, in readiness for pursuit of anyone making off with the herd during the night.⁶¹

57. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, pp. 35-37; Larocque, *Journal*, pp. 65-66.

58. Rachlis, *Indians of the Plains*, pp. 22,24; Brandon, *The American Heritage Book of Indians*, p. 336.

59. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, p. 25; Larocque, *Journal*, p. 64.

60. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, p. 27.

61. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

K. The Buffalo Hunt

I. Background

Before the advent of the horse, the Plains Indians employed several methods to hunt buffalo. In doing so, they took note of several factors: (a) the buffalo was not a very intelligent animal; and (b) they had poor eyesight. One way was to surround the herd, and compel the beasts to mill about. The buffalo then became easy targets for the bow and arrow. The Crow favored the buffalo jump, in which the animals were stampeded over a cliff. Another way was impounding. First a corral was built. Leading to an opening were fences which narrowed in toward the corral in the shape of a large V. After the herd was pinpointed, it was sometimes decoyed toward the corral by an Indian wearing a calf-skin and imitating the bleating of a young buffalo. Occasionally, fire was used. Once the herd was in motion, other warriors would appear from behind to keep the beasts headed in the right direction.⁶² The Crow also killed buffalo by stampeding the herd into deep snow drifts or onto ice.⁶³

Not until the introduction of the horse were the plains Indians able to kill buffalo in sufficient numbers to guarantee a surplus of food and hides. With the horse, far greater numbers of buffalo could be slain on one hunt. The horse likewise afforded the Indian an opportunity to demonstrate his valor while on a hunt. Mounted on a fleet pony a Crow warrior could overtake a stampeding animal, shoot it with bow and arrow, and set out after another victim.⁶⁴

Because of the number and quality of their horses, the Crow seldom suffered for want of meat. They were able to move out in search of buffalo, when the herds disappeared from the vicinity of the village. As their country produced little beyond chokecherries, plums, bullberries, service berries, together with some esculent roots, the Crow largely subsisted on meat.

As late as the 1850s, the Crow preferred to hunt buffalo on horseback with the bow and arrow. They seldom employed firearms for hunting, except when compelled to hunt afoot by deep snow.⁶⁵ The hunts were regulated by the "soldiers' lodges." After a successful hunt, the meat and hides were divided.⁶⁶

62. Rachlis, *Indians of the Plains*, pp. 30-33.

63. Personal Interview, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 25, 1969.

64. Rachlis, *Indians of the Plains*, p. 33.

65. Denig, *Of The Crow Nation*, p. 37.

66. Larocque, *Journal*, p. 65; Leonard, *Adventures*, p. 257.

2. Buffalo Jumps

There are a number of Buffalo Jumps in and adjacent to the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. Joe Medicine Crow, tribal historian and anthropologist, has made a study of Buffalo Jumps. Tribal tradition has Old Man Coyote, "creator of the world and teacher of the people," imparting to the Crow knowledge of how to hunt buffalo. This was before they left Devils Lake. In accordance with Old Man Coyote's instructions, the Crow searched out sites where there were box canyons and sandstone cliffs, near good pasture. The Indians then piled up lines of rock or brush, extending from a cliff toward the grazing ground. This line of brush and stone might be almost a mile in length. There, depending on the terrain, might be two lines of stone and brush converging on the jump.

When all was ready, the medicine men took their stations at key points along the barricade, while scouts, attired in animal hides and horns attached to their heads, eased the herd from the grazing ground toward the Jump. After the buffalo had entered the rock-lined lanes, the hunters, who were crouching behind the barricade, leaped to their feet, shouting and waving buffalo robes. The herd was stampeded over the cliff, and the animals either killed, or so seriously crippled that they could be easily finished off.

Moving in, the women and children killed the animals and cut them up. Some of the meat was eaten fresh, but most was preserved as pemmican.⁶⁷ The hides were tanned and used for clothing, for the covering of the tipi, shields for warfare, thongs, etc. The bones of the buffalo were used as farming implements; the sinews as thread and bowstrings; the horns as ladles and cups; and the stomachs as bags for transporting water.⁶⁸

According to Medicine Crow, who speaks with authority on the subject, there were more buffalo jumps in Montana than in the rest of the states combined. He attributes this to the number of box canyons; the prevalence of sandstone cliffs; the huge herds of buffalo; and the natural appetite of the Crow.⁶⁹

67. Personal Interviews, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 25 and 29, 1969. Pemmican was made by pounding the sun-dried meat with stone hammers into a pulp. This pulp was mixed with fat from the buffalo and stored in buffalo skin bags. Meat was also preserved by drying long, thin strips in the sun. These were then packed with alternate layers of uncooked buffalo fat and berries, and stored in a buffalo skin packet.

68. Rachlis, *Indians of the Plains*, pp. 28-29.

69. Personal Interviews, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 25 and 29, 1969.

Within and adjacent to the National Recreation Area are a number of buffalo jumps. Several of these are located on Grapevine* Creek, which the Crow called, "The Place Where Men Get Their Meat." There was an important buffalo jump at the junction of Dryhead and Hoodoo Canyons.* Dryhead received its name from the huge number of buffalo skulls piled up by the Crow. As the pile grew, the area became known as the place of Dry Skulls or Dry Heads.* Unlike the buffalo jumps on Grapevine, the one on Dryhead did not have the V-shaped line of barrier rocks. The buffalo were stampeded over the cliff by mounted warriors. Medicine Crow's aunt, on his maternal side, has participated in buffalo hunts in which the jumps were used.⁷⁰

L. Pictographs

1. Pictograph Cave on Frozen-Leg Canyon*

Within the boundary of the National Recreation Area, but on deeded land, is a cave with pictographs that may date back 1,000 years. There are five picture panels. The largest containing many figures in yellow-ochre and reddish black is 25 feet long by six feet high. What the figures, some human, some animal, and some a composite, are meant to represent is debatable. Many have horned headdresses; some have three-fingered hands; others have what one observer calls feathers and the next insists are elongated floppy ears. There are handprints and smears.⁷¹

Dr. Carling I. Malouf, anthropologist at the University of Montana, has visited the cave. He found points of resemblance with designs made by the Flathead of northwestern Montana. But there were some drawings similar to the Frémont culture. Malouf was unable positively to date the pictographs. Some, he said, may be of recent origin, perhaps 200 years, while others could be as much as 1000.

Signs of tribal or family occupancy were few. A wood pile indicated that somebody had sought to keep warm. There were animal bones. Dr. Malouf speculated that the cave may have been used as a site for vision quests, and some of the drawings might represent dream-figures.⁷²

* see National Register forms, pp. 453, 429, 443, 467.

70. Ibid.

71. Helen M. Peterson, "Discovery High Within a Rocky Wall," *The Billings Gazette Sunday Magazine*, Oct. 3, 1965; Personal Interview, Harold Stanton with Bearss, July 24, 1969. Mr. Stanton, a Hardin attorney and historian, owns the land where the cave is located.

72. Peterson, "Discovery High Within a Rocky Wall," *Billings Gazette*, Oct. 3, 1965.

2. Hoodoo Creek Pictograph*

Hoodoo Creek is named for a pictograph of a face painted on a rock overlooking the stream. The Crow believe that it is unwise to look at this pictograph. If a person looks at the face and sees a frown, his medicine will be bad and ill-fortune will dog him.

Joe Medicine Crow recalled that several years ago, he and a white companion were traveling through the area, and he told his friend about the Hoodoo Pictograph. His friend said that he would like to see it. Medicine Crow sought to dissuade him. The white man discounted the story as an Indian superstition. Medicine Crow remonstrated, but finally yielded and accompanied his friend to the site. The face frowned, and they departed. Motoring on, they started for Camp 4. While en route, their vehicle struck a rock and knocked the bottom out of the oil pan. Stranded, they returned to Tschargi's line camp and spent the night.⁷³

M. Comments and Recommendations

The story of Man and the Bighorn Canyon, with emphasis on the Crow, is one that will fascinate the visitor. Considerable space in the Visitor Center should be devoted to interpreting the role of the Crow. Both objects and graphics are available, and the opportunity to use them to create outstanding exhibits will intrigue the Museum specialists. There is an opportunity to create an outstanding audio-visual program.

Within or adjacent to the National Recreation Area are a number of sites closely associated with the Crow that will be nominated for inclusion on the National Register. As most of these sites are subject to vandalism, it will be unwise to attempt on-site interpretation until such time as they can be adequately protected.

Archeological investigations should be programmed for the Dryhead and Grapevine Buffalo Jumps and the Dryhead Siege Site. The Pictograph Cave on Frozen Leg Canyon should be studied by Service Archeologists. Because of Crow traditions, visits to Big Iron's grave should be discouraged.

* see National Register forms, p. 479

73. Personal Interview, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 29, 1969.

II. THE COMING OF THE WHITE MAN

A. Chevalier de la Vérendrye

1. The Frenchmen Start for the "Sea of the West"

A number of historians, the most recent being Mark H. Brown, have written that Chevalier François de la Verendrye and his brother, Louis-Joseph, and two others in 1742-1743 penetrated the Yellowstone Basin and crossed the valley of the Little Big-horn.¹ We can not agree with this conclusion. It is known from Chevalier de la Vérendrye's journal that they left Fort la Reine on the Assiniboine River on April 29, 1742, "to discover the Sea of the West beyond the Mandan" villages. The travelers reached the Mandan villages on May 17. Here they remained until July 23, "awaiting the arrival of the Horse Indians, which kept us hoping from day to day."² According to the traders' informants the Horse Indians usually came to the villages every spring to trade. When they failed to show up, Chevalier de la Vérendrye, taking cognizance of the lateness of the season and not wishing to give up the enterprise, employed two Mandans to lead them to the country of the Horse Indians.³

The explorers now moved out, and "marched twenty days west-south-west," which to the Chevalier did not "seem a good omen of our route." No Indians, not even a solitary traveler, were encountered. As they pushed onward, the Frenchmen saw in many places "soils of different colors, as azure, a sort of vermillion, grass-green, shining black, a white as of chalk, and also the color of ochre." Finally, on August 11 the weary explorers reached the "Mountain of the Horse Indians." Their guides not wishing to proceed any farther, the Vérendryes built a hut and prepared to await the first Indians who might discover them. To attract the expected redmen, they built signal fires.⁴

1. Mark H. Brown, *The Plainsmen of the Yellowstone: A History of the Yellowstone Basin* (New York, 1961), pp. 22-23.

2. The Mandan villages, at the time of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, were located at the confluence of the Knife and Missouri. Charles DeLand, however, is of the opinion that in the 1740s the Mandan villages were located at and opposite the mouth of Heart River on the Missouri. Charles E. DeLand, "The Vérendrye Explorations and Discoveries," *South Dakota Historical Collections* (Pierre, 1914), 7, 198.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200. The varicolored soils seen by the Vérendryes were probably discolorations in soil and stone formations found between

2. They Encounter the Beaux Hommes

By September 10 there remained with the party only one Mandan, the other having left to return to his village, ten days before. Daily, either the Chevalier or one of the other Frenchmen scaled the butte to scan the horizon for the Horse Indians or some other tribe. On the 14th the lookout sighted smoke to the southwest, and the Chevalier sent one of his men with the remaining Mandan. They soon found a village of *Beaux Hommes*. They were well received. The next day they returned to the butte, accompanied by two young men of the tribe. On September 18 the explorers reached the village, where they "were received with demonstrations of great joy." The remaining Mandan now returned to his people.⁵

The Verendryes remained with the *Beaux Hommes* three weeks. While with them, the Chevalier sought to make them understand that he desired guides "to lead us to the Horse Indians." They were agreeable, and said several young men would guide us to the first people they should meet. On October 9 the Frenchmen left the village of the *Beaux Hommes*, their guides leading them to the south-south west.⁶ As they pressed on, they encountered villages belonging to the nation of Little Foxes and Pioyas.⁷ A village of the Horse Indians was reached on October 19. Here they found great desolation, and there "was only tears and cursing, their whole village had been destroyed by the *Gens du Serpent*." The Horse Indians explained to the Frenchmen that the Snake, be-

Fort Lincoln and White Butte, and the "Mountain of the Horse Indians" was probably White Butte. White Butte, with an elevation of 3,530 feet, is the highest point in what is today North Dakota. Ibid., p. 200.

5. Ibid., pp. 206-207. Deland has suggested that the *Beaux Hommes* were probably the Crow, who at this time were found as far east as the Little Missouri. G. Hubert Smith, however, questions this assumption. To support his contention, he notes that the language of the Crow is closely related to the Hidatsa and Mandan, and that the three were Siouan dialects. As one of the Mandan was still with the party, he feels that there would have been no difficulty in conversing with the *Beaux Hommes* if they had been Crow. It was only after they had spent 20 days among the *Beaux Hommes* that they began to understand the tongue. Smith speculates that the *Beaux Hommes* may have been a wandering band of the Siksika, who spoke a "distantly related dialect of Algonquian stock." G. Hubert Smith, "Explorations of the La Verendryes, 1738-1743, with Special Reference to Verendrye National Monument," unpublished monograph, files OAHF, National Park Service.

6. Deland, "The Verendrye Expeditions and Discoveries," *South Dakota Historical Society Collections*, 7, 198.

7. Ibid., pp. 208-209.

sides being brave were wise in the ways of war. Unlike most of the plains Indians, they waged war from spring until autumn. As they were numerous, it was woe to those whom they found in their way. The Chevalier's informants told him that the previous year, the Snake had "entirely defeated seventeen villages, had killed all the men and aged women, made captives of the young women and had sold them on the sea for horses and merchandise."⁸

3. The Explorers Penetrate the Black Hills

When the Chavelier de la Vérendrye inquired if they knew of a nation that lived on the western sea, the Horse Indians replied that none of them had been there, because the road was barred by the Snake. After distributing gifts, Vérendrye engaged the Horse Indians to guide him to the home of the Bow Indians, the only nation that did not fear the Snake.⁹ The Bow, they said, would be able to provide the explorers with information about the sea.

Leaving the village of the Horse Indians, the Vérendryes pushed on to the southwest. On November 18 they found themselves in a "village containing a great number of Belle Riviere Indians." From them Vérendrye learned the whereabouts of the Bow Indians. Three days later they reached their village, "which we saw was very great." The village had a great many horses that were used "to carry their luggage and for mounts, more for the hunt, however, than for their travels." Escorted by the chief, the Frenchmen proceeded to their lodge.¹⁰

8. Ibid., pp. 209-210. Doane Robinson has pointed out that all Indians, "almost universally" called their enemies "snakes." He felt that the character assigned to these *Gens du Serpent* did not comport with what is known as the "degenerate Shoshoni," but better fitted the fierce Kiowa, whom Robinson believed inhabited the Black Hills region at this time. Doane Robinson, "La Vérendrye's Farthest West," *Wisconsin Historical Society Proceedings* (Madison, 1913), pp. 146-150. Smith, in his massive study, feels that the *Gens du Serpent* may have been the Comanche or Shoshoni. The Comanche had been encountered by the Mallet brothers on the Arkansas River in 1739, and were hostile. Smith, "Explorations of the La Verendryes, 1738-1743," pp. 149-150.

9. DeLand, "The Vérendrye Explorations and Discoveries," *South Dakota Historical Society Collections*, 7, pp. 210-211.

10. Ibid., p. 213. The Bow Indians, *Gens de l'Arc*, were probably the Cheyenne or Arapaho. The French, it has been pointed out, would hardly have found friends among any branches of the Sioux, even among distant relatives of the bitter enemy of the woodlands previously exploited. Almost every reference to the historic Dakota in period documents testify to the enmity of the French for that proud and warlike nation. Smith, "Exploration of the La Verendryes, 1738-1743," pp. 147-148.

The Chevalier was impressed with the chief of the Bow. When asked if he knew the whites of the sea (the Spaniards) and if his people would be able to lead the explorers there, he replied, "We know that from what the prisoners of the Snakes have told us that we ought to meet shortly. Do not be surprised if you see all the villages assemble with us. Word has been sent on all sides for the tribes to join us." His plan, as soon as the tribes assembled, was "to march to the side of the great mountains which are nearer the sea, in order to seek the Snakes."¹¹

The allies, with whom the Vérendryes now traveled, moved out. The direction of march was usually south-southwest, sometimes northwest. As they pressed ahead, the army increased in size. On January 1, 1743, they found themselves in sight of the mountains. The number of warriors by this time had passed 2,000, "which with their families made a considerable army, moving steadily over the great praries where the wild game is in abundance." The march was continued until the 8th.¹²

On the 9th the women, children, and old men were left in the village, along with Louis-Joseph Vérendrye to guard the baggage, and the warriors continued the advance toward the mountains. In three days' time, the army reached the mountains, which were found "well wooded with all kinds of timber, and appeared very high." Not far distant was said to be the greatest village of the Snake. The scouts now returned and reported that the Snake had abandoned their lodges. This word terrorized the allies, because they feared that the Snake, learning of their advance, had gone out to burn and ravage their villages. The Chevalier and his two men had joined the war party, hoping to climb the mountains to view the country beyond. Now this was impossible, and during the two-day retreat they became separated from the Indians and only returned to the camp with considerable difficulty.¹³

11. Deland, "The Vérendrye Expeditions and Discoverers," *South Dakota Historical Society Collections*, 7, 213. Robinson demonstrates that the group's rate of travel was very slow, and that it was unlikely that they could have reached the Bighorns in the time available. He is of the opinion that the explorers went no farther west than the Little Missouri, before turning in a more southerly direction, and at no time did they travel beyond the present-day western boundaries of the Dakotas.

Robinson identifies the Belle Riviere as the Cheyenne, whose northern fork is known as the Belle Fourche, or Beautiful Fork. Robinson, "La Verendrye's Farthest West," *Wisconsin Historical Society Proceedings*, p. 149.

12. Deland, "The Vérendrye Expeditions and Discoveries," *South Dakota Historical Society Collections*, 7, 218-219. The Chevalier sighted the Black Hills on January 1, after fording the Belle Fourche east of present day Sturgis. *Ibid.*, p. 222.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 222-223.

4. The Return to Fort la Reine

A blizzard now swept out of the northwest, and the explorers cast their lot with the Bow. The Bow traveled slowly "east-south-east." By March 1 they had reached the village of the Little Cherries, on the banks of the Missouri. While here they buried a lead plate on a hill just west of today's Fort Pierre, South Dakota.

This plate was rediscovered on February 16, 1913. After burying the plate bearing the names of the King of France, the Governor of New France, Pierre la Vérendrye, and the members of the expedition, the explorers left the Little Cherries. Traveling up the Missouri to the Mandan Villages, they were back at Fort la Reine on July 2, 1743.¹⁴

The expedition of the Chevalier de la Vérendrye, his brother, and the two "engagés" must have been a personal disappointment, because their "search for the Western Sea" was a failure. But as one historian has written:

It is a great pity that a natural interest in whether the La Verendrye group did or did not reach the Rocky Mountains [Bighorns] in their journeyings has tended . . . to obscure the importance of their having placed the Missouri and the great rivers of the North-West in their proper relation.¹⁵

Although it is impossible to plot definitely the route traveled by the La Vérendryes in 1742-1743, it is significant that in discussing the expedition with the Swedish scientist and traveler Pehr Kalm, that they said nothing about having "approached any high mountains, or of their discovery of a River of the West."¹⁶

After evaluating all the evidence, much of which is open to various interpretations, we are compelled to accept the Robinson-Deland-Smith thesis that the westernmost point reached by the La Vérendryes in 1743 was the Black Hills. If so, they never saw the Bighorn Mountains.

14. Ibid., pp. 229-234. The Little Cherries, *Gens de la Petite Cerise*, have been identified by Robinson as the Arikara. Robinson, "La Verendryes' Farthest West," *Wisconsin Historical Society Proceedings*, pp. 149-150.

15. John B. Brebner, *The Explorers of North America, 1492-1806* (London, 1933), p. 359.

16. Pehr Kalm, *En Resa Till Norra America*, edited and translated by Adolph Benson, (2 vols. New York, 1937), 2, 440-442.

B. François Antoine Larocque Visits Bighorn Canyon

1. With Lewis and Clark at the Mandan Villages

Six decades were to pass before the first white man saw the Bighorn Mountains and reconnoitered the Bighorn River from the Canyon to its confluence with the Yellowstone. Twenty years after the Vérendryes reached the Little Missouri and penetrated the Black Hills, France secretly ceded Louisiana to Spain, expecting to get it back later. Great Britain, the victor in the French and Indian War, allowed the cession to stand in the 1763 Treaty of Paris, but stipulated that Louisiana's eastern boundary must be the Mississippi, except for New Orleans. In 1783 by another Treaty of Paris, Great Britain, after eight years of war, recognized the independence of "the Thirteen United States."

In 1801 Thomas Jefferson, who had been recently inaugurated as President, voiced the opinion that the United States already possessed enough territory to satisfy its expanding population for a hundred, perhaps for a thousand, generations. He was also committed to reducing the national debt. But by 1803 he was to nearly double the area of the United States by the Louisiana Purchase.

The key to this shift in policy was New Orleans, which Jefferson called the "single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy." Settlers living west of the Appalachian Mountains were in the habit of floating their produce down the great rivers of the American Heartland to New Orleans, there to be transhipped on ocean-going vessels to the Atlantic Seaboard and world markets. Spain, after having agreed to return Louisiana to France, in 1802 canceled the Americans' right of deposit at New Orleans. Jefferson was forced to act. He now offered to buy New Orleans. The French countered by offering him all of Louisiana for \$15,000,000. Jefferson agreed, and in 1803 the Louisiana Purchase was consummated.

Much of Louisiana was unexplored, and Jefferson, already intensely curious about the Trans-Mississippi, ordered out several expeditions. The best known of these, and the only one to penetrate the Yellowstone Basin, was led by Capts. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Leaving Camp Wood May 1804, the Lewis and Clark party ascended the Missouri to the Mandan Villages, where it wintered in 1804-1805.

Officials of the British North West Company, whose people had been trading on the upper Missouri since the mid-1780s, were taken unaware by word that the United States had purchased Louisiana. Before many weeks had passed, they were further disconcerted to learn that an expedition was ascending the Missouri and reconnoitering the vast region heretofore monopolized by their fur traders.

The officers in charge of Fort Montagne a la Bosse ordered out a party to investigate.¹⁷ François Antoine Larocque, whose brother Joseph held responsible positions at various times with the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies, was placed in charge of the group. François was a born leader, well read, studious, and could converse in both French and English.

Pushing southward 150 miles from his base, Larocque, in late November 1804, reached the Mandan Villages, where the Lewis and Clark expedition was spending the winter. On the 29th Larocque and one of his men visited Fort Mandan. Captains Lewis and Clark were not particularly glad to see Larocque. The previous day they had learned from the Indians that Larocque and his six companions had arrived in the area and had "attempted to distribute medals and flags among them." Lewis had cautioned the Indians that if they accepted these gifts from the British, they would incur "the displeasure of their great father the president."¹⁸ After several days, mutual suspicions vanished, and relations became cordial. One of Larocque's associates, Charles MacKenzie, wrote in his journal that "the gentlemen of the American expedition . . . on all occasions seemed happy to see us, and always treated us with civility and kindness." The British liked Clark's frank and pleasant ways, but Lewis' "inveterate disposition against the British stained, at least in our eyes, all his eloquence."¹⁹

Larocque and his men appeared to be helpful and to desire the success of the expedition. On one occasion, Clark reported that one of them, Hugh Henney of the Hudson's Bay Company, was a "Verry intelligent Man." There is little doubt, however, that this desire to be of assistance stemmed from a selfish interest, because the British fur companies wanted to exploit this vast, unexplored region. Nor is it surprising that the North West Company wished to have one of its traders accompany Lewis and Clark, when they moved on toward the Pacific coast.

On January 30, 1805, Larocque visited Fort Mandan and asked permission to accompany Lewis and Clark on their "journey westward." They declined his request, explaining that there were certain governmental regulations against his joining the expedition.²⁰

17. Fort Montagne a la Bosse was on the Assiniboine River, about two miles east of today's Virden, Manitoba.

18. Meriweather Lewis, *The Lewis and Clark Expedition*, (3 vols. New York, 1961, 1, pp. 117-118. These volumes are an unabridged edition of the 1814 Nicholas Biddle publication.

19. L. R. Masson, *Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* (Quebec, 1889), 1, 273.

20. Lewis, *Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 1, 137.

Following this rebuff, Larocque on February 2 started back to Fort Montagne a la Bosse, where he arrived on the 12th. His superiors were understandably distressed to learn of the Americans' plans. Undaunted, however, officials of the North West Company planned an expedition of their own. Already, they probably had as much, or more, information about the country west of the Mandan Villages as Lewis and Clark. Clark made no record of being given any information about the Yellowstone country, but Larocque or one of his companions, or both, had spoken with a "voyager" who had been to "La Roche Jeune."²¹

While his superiors were perfecting their plans, the vigorous Larocque, having secured a large quantity of trade goods, returned to the Mandan Villages. On March 2 Captain Lewis reported that "Mr. Laroche one of the N.W. company's traders has just arrived with merchandize from the British establishments on the Assiniboin." Larocque remained in the area, trading with the Indians until Saturday, March 23. He then returned to his base. Sixteen days later, on April 7, 1805, Lewis and Clark broke up their camp at Fort Mandan and resumed their journey up the Missouri.²²

2. Larocque Starts for the Rocky Mountains

The decision having been made to send an expedition to open trade with the Indians of the northern Rockies, Larocque, with his background, was the logical man to head it. Two months after his latest trip to the Mandan Villages, Larocque on June 2, 1805, rode away from Fort Montagne a la Bosse. He was accompanied by two men, each having two horses," one of which was laden with goods to facilitate an intercourse with the Indians we might happen to see on our road." As they took leave of their friends, those remaining behind gave the impression that they did not believe they would return from their "voyage of discovery to the Rocky Mountains." Larocque, although he sought to cloak his emotions, admitted that he "left the fort with a heavy heart but riding at a good speed I soon got cheerful again."²³

Traveling by way of the Souris River, and White Rock Hill, Larocque crossed the Missouri on the 12th and stopped at the Mandan Villages.²⁴ Here he waited two weeks for the arrival of the "Rocky

21. Larocque, *Journal*, pp. 1-5; Lewis, *Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 1, p. 137.

22. Lewis, *Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 1, 145-146, 151-153.

23. Larocque, *Journal*, pp. 11-12.

24. The Mandan Villages in the last quarter of the 18th century and the first decade of the 19th century were located at the confluence of the Knife River with the Missouri.

Mountain Indians." Good use was made of this period in persuading the chiefs that he should be allowed to proceed to the land of the Crow. When Larocque countered one argument, they raised another, and in the end they told of the harassment suffered by a Canadian, Menard. A trader with 40 years' experience on the Missouri, Menard, several years before, had traveled westward to trade with the Crow. He had been well-received, and had secured nine horses and two female slaves, in addition to many beaver hides. Menard left the village, well pleased, but he was followed by several young warriors, who under the cover of darkness stole seven of the horses. The two slaves then disappeared with the other mounts. Subsequently, he was robbed of all his possessions, and returned to the Mandan Villages, "almost dead having but his robe to make shoes . . . which he tied about his feet with cords." ²⁵

The reluctance of the Mandan to help Larocque and his men visit the Crow is understandable. The Crow were in the habit of making annual visits to the Mandan and Hidatsa villages to barter horses for various goods, including articles secured from white traders. These goods then became the property of the Crow, when they called on the Flathead, from whom they secured horses. Consequently, the Mandan and Hidatsa looked with scant favor on traders dealing directly with the Crow, and thus eliminating them as middlemen.

3. The Arrival of the Crow

On June 23 four Crow, three men and one woman, reached the Mandan Villages. From them, Larocque learned that the rest of their people were nearby. Two days later the rest of the Crow arrived and camped a short distance from the village, where Larocque was staying. "The warriors, to the number of 645, passed through the village on horseback with their shields & other warlike implements." Charles MacKenzie, who was present, recorded:

They consisted of more than three hundred tents, and presented the handsomest sight that one could imagine; all on horseback, children of small size were lashed to the saddle and those above the age of six could manage a horse. The women had saddles, most of the men had none. There was a great many horses for the baggage and the whole, exceeding two thousand, covered a large space of ground, and had the appearance of an army. They halted on a rising ground behind the village, and, having formed a circle, the chief addressed them; they then descended full speed, rode through the village, exhibiting their dexterity in horsemanship in a thousand shapes. I was astonished to see their

25. Larocque, *Journal*, p. 17. Menard had been murdered by the Assiniboin in 1803, while en route to the Missouri.

agility and address, and I do believe they are the best riders in the world. They were dressed in leather and looked clean and neat; some wore beads and rings as ornaments. Their arms were bows and arrows, lances and round stones enclosed in leather and slung to a shank in the form of a whip; they made use of shields, and they have a few guns.²⁶

Larocque on June 26 met with the Crow chiefs and distributed presents. The pipe was smoked, and Larocque made a speech, telling them that "the chief of the White people . . . was desirous of making them his children & Brethern." Moreover, he knew that they "were pitiful and had no arms to defend themselves from their enemies, but that they should cease to be pityful as soon as they would make themselves brave hunters."

He explained that he and his two men would accompany them, when they returned to their homes. After chiding them for the way they had treated Menard, he stated that he wished to visit their country. If the Crow behaved and killed many beaver, otter, and bear, "they would have white people on the lands in a few years, who would winter with them and supply them with all their wants." After he had finished his harangue, the chiefs smoked the medicine pipe and presented Larocque with six buffalo robes, one puma hide, four shirts, two cotillons, two dressed elk hides, three saddles, and 13 pair of leggins. Larocque thereupon clothed the principal Crow chief, and handed him a flag and belt of wampum.²⁷

4. The Journey from the Mandan Villages to the Bighorn

Having secured permission to accompany the Crow, the traders saddled their horses on June 29 and rode out of the Mandan Village. Meanwhile, the Crow had taken down their tipis and moved out, following the trail up the valley of the Knife.²⁸ The Crow pushed ahead rather rapidly, and on July 13, having crossed the divide and entered the Badlands, they forded the Little Missouri. The trail traveled by the Crow now turned south and paralleled the Little Missouri for miles. On the 21st the trail left the river and bore to the southwest. In the fourth week of July, the divide separating the watersheds of the Little Missouri and Powder rivers was crossed. At noon on the 27th Larocque reached Powder River, "about 3/4 of an acre in breadth, its waters middling deep, but it appears to have risen lately as a quantity of leaves and wood was drifting on it."²⁹

26. Ibid., pp. 21-22.

27. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

28. The trail was on the north bank of the Knife.

29. Ibid., pp. 25-30. The trail followed by the Crow struck the Powder, about 20 miles west of today's Ekalaka, Montana.

After stopping a day on Powder River, the march was resumed toward the southwest. The terrain near the river was rough, but to the north the hills were rolling. About two miles from camp on the 30th, a "range of high hills" veering off toward the north was encountered. Questioning the Crow, Larocque learned that Tongue River was on the far side of the ridge. These hills were "high, rugged, and barren mostly rocks with beds of loose red gravel on their tops or near it, which being washed down by the rain water give the hills a reddish appearance."³⁰

The Crow continued up the valley of the Powder until August 5. During this time there was a cloudburst on the 1st, which caused the river to rise about six inches and the current to accelerate. Now the valley began to narrow, and the bottoms were not so large or "well wooded and the grass entirely eat up by the Buffaloes and Elk." The river's course became tortuous. The bends were very short, not exceeding two miles across and many less than one. On the 4th Larocque ascended a hill and sighted the Bighorn Mountains. With his spyglass, he was able to distinguish cliffs and hollows.

The next day, August 5, they reached the confluence of Clear Creek with Powder River. Here the Crow turned into a trail ascending the former stream, the water of which was "clear and good issuing from the Mountains . . . , while that of the Powder River was so muddy that the Indians were under the necessity of making [holes] in the Beach and drink[ing] the water that gathered in them."³¹

On the 6th the Indians traveled the trail paralleling Clear Creek, having the Bighorn Mountains to their front and in sight throughout the day. The Crow, now that Larocque had seen the Bighorns, seemed anxious for him to leave the village. But he declined. The Crow continued up the valley of Clear and Piney creeks until making camp on the evening of August 8, at the foot of the mountains. While a party of young warriors reconnoitered a route, leading to the northwest and skirting the Bighorns, others went hunting. On the 9th the hunters brought in nine beaver pelts, which they bartered to Larocque for beads. The country was full of bear, and one of the Crow and his horse were mauled by a grizzly. Once again, the Indians inquired of the whites as to their plans. Larocque told them that he would "remain with them 20 or 30 days more," that he would like to see the Yellowstone, "and the place they usually habit," otherwise he would be unable to return and bring them trade goods.

30. Ibid., pp. 31-32. Present day U.S. Highway 212, connecting Broadus with Ashland, crosses these hills, which are known as Home Creek Buttes.

31. Ibid., pp. 32-33. Clear Creek heads in the Bighorn Mountains, about 20 miles west of Buffalo.

The young men sent to reconnoiter returned on the evening of August 12 and reported that they had seen large herds of buffalo, and that the berries were ripe on the Tongue and Little Bighorn. A council followed. After several harangues it was determined to break camp in the morning and strike out for the Yellowstone.³²

By 8:30 a.m. the Crow had taken down their lodges and had moved out,

following a West Course along the mountains, through Creeks and hills such as I never saw before, it being impossible to climb these hills with Load[ed] Horses we were obliged to go round them about the middle of their high from whence we were in imminent danger of rolling down[. They] being so steep that one side of the horse's load rubbed against the side of the hill. One false step of the horse would certainly have been fatal to himself and rider.

Having crossed the divide separating Piney Creek from the watershed of the Tongue, the Crow camped for the night on the head - waters of Little Goose Creek. Two bear were killed during the day, and Larocque saw several crows, the first birds, except woodpeckers, he had seen since leaving the Missouri.³³

It took three additional days for the Indians to complete the passage of the streams flowing into Tongue River. At this season of the year, many of these watercourses were dry, but the bottoms were heavily wooded with white willow. On the 15th the Crow killed a number of buffalo and several bear. Larocque was surprised to learn that the Indians hunted bear for sport, as except in emergencies they disdained to eat the flesh. Late on the afternoon of August 16, the Crow forded Tongue River and encamped. To the north-east Larocque could see the Wolf Mountains.³⁴

32. Ibid., pp. 34-35. The camp site occupied from August 8 to the morning of the 13th was near the site of Fort Phil Kearny.

33. Ibid., pp. 35-36.

34. Ibid., pp. 36-37. At this point the Tongue was about 20 feet wide, with two feet of water at the deepest point. The Tongue was forded between Dayton and Ranchester. A careful study of the "Larocque Journal," along with a detailed knowledge of the geography of the region, has enabled me to identify many of the sites mentioned by Larocque and to trace his route from Tongue River to the Yellowstone. I lived in Big Horn Country from 1923 until 1942, and in the summer of 1969 I reconnoitered the area to identify and locate many of the sites mentioned in this report.

Here the village halted for 24 hours. Large numbers of bear, attracted by chokecherries, were about. Larocque saw that the wooded area bounding the river was as "thickly covered with Bears Dung as a Barn floor is that of the cattle, large Cherry trees are broken down by them in Great number."³⁵

At 7 o'clock on August 18 the Crow broke camp and rode north-westward, and by noon had crossed a divide and reached Twin Creek, a tributary of the Little Bighorn. A stop was made while most of the Indians rode ahead to hunt. The march was resumed at 2:30 p.m., and, after crossing the Little Bighorn, they camped. Here they were joined by the hunting party, their horses laden with fresh meat. As they were near the Bighorns, many women had deserted the village and gone with "their lovers to their fine tents that are across" the mountains. As there were no buffalo in the mountains nor in the Bighorn Basin, the warriors were "loth to go that way," although "the desertion of their wives strongly Call them there." Harangues were twice made by Spotted Crow, as he urged the tribe to travel that way to the Yellowstone. Those who opposed crossing the mountains successfully challenged Spotted Crow, and it was agreed to "follow the time-honored route."³⁶

The next day, August 20, the Indians moved up the Little Bighorn about three miles, and camped "on a beautiful spot where there was plenty of fine grass for the horses." Here they remained for two days. On the 22d Larocque attended a council, where Spotted Crow yielded his authority to regulate the marches. His replacement explained to Larocque that he planned "to pursue their old course" to the Yellowstone. When the village rode out on the 23d, the Crow crossed a divide and camped on Lodge Grass Creek. On questioning the chiefs, Larocque learned that the "only roads practicable to" cross the Bighorns were by way of Lodge Grass and Tongue River Canyons.³⁷

Several scouts on the morning of the 24th galloped into camp, shouting that they had seen three Blackfoot on one of the foothills, and that two shots had been heard in the direction of the Bighorn River. Thirty warriors mounted their horses and galloped off to investigate, while the rest prepared to follow if needed. The patrol returned in several hours with information that they had seen 35 Blackfoot walking on the banks of one of the tributaries of the Bighorn. All the tribe, except a few old men and women, quickly began to turn out, with Larocque accompanying them.

35. Ibid., p. 37.

36. Ibid., pp. 37-38.

37. Ibid., p. 38.

"Nor could we all keep together," he recalled,

as some horses were slower than others but the foremost stopped galloping on a hill, and continued on with a small trot as [the] people came up. They did the dance when the Chief arrived. He and his band or part of it galloped twice before the main body of the people who still continued their trot intersecting the line of their course[,] while one of his friends . . . harangued.

They were all dressed in their best Cloths. Many of them were followed by their wives who carried their arms, and who were to deliver them at the time of Battle. There were likewise many children, but who could Keep their saddles. A head of us were some young men on different hills making signs with their robes which way we were to go.

As soon as all the Chiefs were . . . up, and had made their harangue everyone set off the way he liked best and pursued according to his own judgement. The Country is very hilly and full of large Creeks, whose banks are Rock so that the pursued had the advantage of being able to get into places where it was impossible to go with horses & hide. . . . All escaped but two of the foremost, who being scouts of the party had advanced nearer to us than the others and had not discovered us. They were surrounded after a long race, but killed and scalped.

When I arrived at the dead bodies, they had but taken his scalp and the fingers of his right hand. Men, women, and children were thronging to see the dead bodies and taste the blood. Everyone was desirous of stabbing the bodies to show what he would have done had he met them alive[,] and insulted & fretted at them in the worst language they could give. In a short time the remains . . . [were] hardly distinguishable. Every young man had a piece of flesh tied to his gun or lance, with which he rode off to the camp, singing and exultingly showing it to every young woman in his way. Some women had whole limb[s] dangling from their saddles.³⁸

A scalp dance was held on Sunday, August 25, and the next morning the Crow again moved out, riding toward the northwest. Camp was pitched for the evening on Rotten Grass Creek, "in which there was little running water, but an amazing number of Beaver Dams." The Crow remained in camp the next day, while ten warriors were sent to scout for the Blackfoot. They returned with news that no sign of hostiles had been seen, but that a large number of buffalo were on the Bighorn.³⁹

38. Ibid., pp. 39-40.

39. Ibid., p. 40.

5. Larocque Reaches Bighorn Canyon

Fearing an attack, the Crow on the 28th turned out long before daybreak. The horses were saddled, the smaller children tied to saddles, along with treasured possessions. With their mounts tethered in front of their lodges, the Crow sat inside with their arms at the ready. No attack coming, the Indians at sun-up took their children and unpacked the horses. At 9 o'clock four scouts thundered up on sweat-flecked horses and reported they had seen nothing of the Blackfoot, and that again there were large numbers of buffalo between the Bighorn and Yellowstone.⁴⁰

On the 29th camp was broken. The trail led northwest. Night-fall found the Crow, having made a 20-mile march, camped on Soap Creek. The next day the village rode five miles in a westerly direction and encamped on the Bighorn, "close to the foot" of the mountains.

Larocque on Saturday, August 31, entered in his journal the first recorded eye witness description of the Bighorn and its Canyon. "The river," he wrote, "is broad deep and clear water, strong courrant, bed stone and gravel." About one-half mile above the encampment, the Bighorn passed between two huge rocks and lost "2/3 of its breadth but gains proportionally in depth." There was no beach at the foot of the rocks, as they dropped perpendicularly down to the water. Climbing the east wall of the canyon, Larocque observed, "it is awful to behold and makes one giddy to look down upon the river." From this height, the Bighorn appeared to be "quite narrow," and flowed with "great rapidity immediately under our feet, so that I did not dare to look down, [until] I could find a stone behind which I could keep and looking over it . . . see the foaming water without danger of falling in."

From the Crow, Larocque learned that the Bighorn did not rise in the Bighorns, but in the mountains beyond--the Wind River Range.⁴¹ On either side of the canyon, the rock walls were "bare and naked." Here and there were to be seen a few pine. The walls of several of the canyons, branching off Bighorn Canyon, were "as smooth and perpendicular as any wall, and of an amazing height; and in places there are holes in those perpendicular rocks resembling . . . niches in which statues are placed." Others had the appearance of church doors and vaults. Larocque and his companions, 'because of the sheer walls, were unable to reach key vantage points.

40. Ibid., pp. 40-41.

41. Ibid., pp. 40-42. The Crow camped on August 30 on Lime Kiln Creek, near the site of Fort C. F. Smith.

From the heights at the mouth of the canyon, they could follow, with their eyes, the course of the Bighorn as it meandered northward toward its confluence with the Yellowstone.⁴²

Several Crow told Larocque that about 30 to 40 miles upstream, in the Canyon, there was a waterfall where a Manitou resided. This Manitou was a werewolf, dwelling in the falls and raising out of it to devour any man or beast that approached. As the werewolf was invulnerable to bullets, it could not be slain.

The village on September 1 moved down the east side of the Bighorn and pitched their tipis. Here there were several sand islands in the river. On the banks were cottonwoods, from which the leaves were beginning to fall. While camped, the Crow were joined by a Snake, who had been in contact with Spanish traders. He showed Larocque a Spanish bridle and battle axe, a striped blanket, and several other trade goods, including beads.⁴³

On the 4th the Crow broke camp, forded the Bighorn, and rode to the northwest about 15 miles. They halted on Beauvais Creek, a tributary of the Bighorn.⁴⁴ The next day found the village continuing its journey to the northwest. Camp was again made on a tributary of the Bighorn, Woody Creek. Crossing a divide, the Crow reached Pryor Creek by 11 a.m., on September 6. As soon as the lodges were put up, the Indians rode out to hunt buffalo. A good kill was made, and the women on the 7th spent the day drying tongues and other choice cuts, and dressing the skins.⁴⁵

Accompanied by two Crow, Larocque on Tuesday, September 10, set out to see the Yellowstone,

where we arrived at two in the afternoon distant 16 miles[.] We forded into a large Island in which we encamped. This is a fine large River in which there is a strong current, but the Indians say there are no falls. Fordable places

42. Ibid., p. 42.

43. Ibid., pp. 42-43. Camp was pitched on September 1 somewhere between the mouths of War Man and Soap creeks.

44. After leaving the Bighorn, they scaled an escarpment, crossed a bench that was about five miles in width, and then entered a hilly sterile area. Today this bench is part of the giant Campbell Corporation's wheat farm.

45. Ibid., p. 43. The Pryor Creek camp would be a short distance upstream from where U.S. Highway 87 crosses the creek.

are not easily found[,] although I believe the water to be at its lowest. The bottoms are large and well wooded.⁴⁶

6. Larocque Returns to His Base

Larocque had now completed his mission. He had reconnoitered the land of the Crow to investigate the beaver population, and found that besides beaver, bear was plentiful. The Crow had drawn a map for him locating the sections of their country, where they could be found at various seasons of the year. It was now time to return to Fort Montagne a la Bosse. As the traders and chiefs smoked a few pipes, Larocque promised to return next year with trade goods to exchange for beaver and bear hides. The Crow, in turn, promised that their young men would not follow and rob the little party as they had Menard. Larocque, however, took no chances; he put 20 miles behind him and the village, and kept watch at night.⁴⁷

On his return, Larocque continued down the Yellowstone to its confluence with the Missouri, and then down that river to the Mandan Villages. There he took the trail to the post on the Assiniboine. For the most part, the return trip was routine, and the explorers traveled 13 to 37 miles per day. They reached the Missouri on September 30, and on October 17 were safely back at Fort Montagne a la Bosse.⁴⁸

Larocque had discovered the Bighorn River and Bighorn Canyon, and he had penetrated the Yellowstone country a year before William Clark. A keen observer, Larocque kept a journal that provides us with our first descriptions of a vast area in southeastern Montana and northeastern Wyoming, and of the Crow Indians. Especially valuable are the portions of his journal detailing his travels with the Crow. Unfortunately, Larocque's name has been largely lost to history. The reason for this is not difficult to determine. He was a Canadian, an employee of the North West Company, intruding into a region at that time but recently acquired by the United States. As his activities occurred at the same time as the Lewis and Clark Expedition, they were thus overshadowed. While publications in the United States gave great publicity to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, they either did not know of Larocque's activities, or ignored them. British authorities

46. Ibid., pp. 43-44.

47. Ibid., pp. 45-46. The Crow told Larocque that in the winter, "they were always to be found in a Park by the foot of the mountains a few miles from this [mouth of Pryor Creek] or thereabouts. In the Spring and fall they are upon this river [the Yellowstone] and in the summer upon" Tongue River and Pryor Creek.

48. Ibid., pp. 46-54.

certainly would not publicize his expedition, as he was operating in territory belonging to another power. Finally, the North West Company made no effort to exploit Larocque's initial contract with the Crow by sending him and other traders back into their country with trade goods to exchange for furs.

C. William Clark Sees the Bighorn River

1. Clark Descends the Yellowstone

Meanwhile, the Lewis and Clark Expedition had reached the Pacific. After spending the winter of 1805-1806 at Fort Clatsop, the Americans started back. The party, after crossing the Bitter Root Mountains, divided. Captain Lewis with one detachment was to strike out by the most direct route for the falls of the Missouri, and explore the Marias River country, before pushing down the Missouri to rendezvous with Clark and his party at the mouth of the Yellowstone. Captain Clark's detachment was to ascend the Bitter Root, cross to the headwaters of the Jefferson, and descend that river to the Three Forks.

From the Three Forks, which was reached on July 13, 1806, Clark and his men pushed eastward and crossed the Gallatin Range, by way of what is now known as Bozeman Pass. The Yellowstone was gained nine miles east of the summit. Clark advanced down the Yellowstone Valley a number of miles, before he found trees of sufficient size to permit his people to build canoes.

Meanwhile, Clark on the 18th had sighted smoke clouds to the southeast. He believed these to be raised by the Crow, who had mistaken the explorers for their enemies, or as a signal to friends with whom they wished to trade. No Crow were seen, however. Under cover of darkness on the night of the 20th, 24 of the horses disappeared. Three hunters were sent to look for the missing stock, but they were unsuccessful. Fears were voiced that the Crow might have run off the horses.

On the 23d, Sergt. Nathaniel Pryor, while looking for the stock, found a moccasin and a piece of a robe near the camp. The moccasin was still wet, and Clark feared that the Crow had been prowling about the camp, looking for an opportunity to run off the rest of the horses. One of the men now found the hoofmarks left by the stolen horses. All hopes of recovering the missing animals were now abandoned. Orders were given for Sergeant Pryor to take two men and the rest of the horses and proceed overland to the Mandan Villages.⁴⁹

49. *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806*, R. G. Thwaites, editor, (8 vols. New York, 1905), 5, 273-281.

On July 24, having completed the canoe, Clark embarked his command. Pompey's Pillar was reached and reconnoitered on the 25th. Nightfall found the explorers camped at the mouth of Spring Creek.

2. Clark at the Bighorn.

Early the next morning, July 26th, the run down the Yellowstone was resumed. The river was full of islands, and the current, though swift, was regular. To the north there were extensive bottoms, while the south bank was "formed of high cliffs of a whitish gritty stone." In the distance, to both north and south, could be seen pine-clad hills. A run of 25 miles brought the Americans to the mouth of the Bighorn. Clark, seeing that the point between the two rivers was "composed of soft mud and sand" and likely to be flooded, had his men pole the boats up the Bighorn about one-half mile. Here the craft were beached and camp pitched on the east bank.⁵⁰

Clark then walked upstream. He reported that at a distance of two miles, "a creek twenty yards wide, which from the colour of the water he called Muddy Creek, falls in on the northeast, and a few miles further, the river bends to the east of south."⁵¹

Returning to camp, Clark observed that the current of the Bighorn was rapid and regular, and like the Missouri, constantly shifting "so as to wash away the banks on one side, leaving sandbars on the other." Its bed contained less gravel than that of the Yellowstone, but it carried more silt. At the confluence the two rivers were nearly equal in width, being between 200 and 220 yards. The soundings, however, demonstrated that the Yellowstone had much the greater flow, it being 10 to 12 feet deep in mid-channel, while the depth of the Bighorn varied from five to seven feet.

Clark had been told by Indians that the Bighorn had its source in the Rockies, not far from where the Yellowstone and the North Platte headed. After debouching from the Rockies, it flowed to the northward and passed through "the eastern range of the Rocky mountains [the Bighorns]." The Bighorn, they said, was unobstructed by falls, was navigable by canoes for a great distance, passed through a "rich open country, supplied with a great quantity of timber, and inhabited by beaver." Among other species of animals found in great numbers along its watershed were Bighorn sheep, from which the river derived its name.

50. Ibid., pp. 760-761.

51. Ibid., p. 761. Muddy Creek is today's Tullock Creek.

The Bighorn Country was reportedly the hunting grounds of the Crow and the Snake.⁵²

Clark and his people re-embarked at daybreak on July 27. On pulling out into the Yellowstone, Clark, looking off to the south, watched as the Bighorn Mountains faded from view. As he did, he noted in his journal, that he had "a last look at the Rocky mountains, which had been constantly in view from the first of May."⁵³

3. Clark Meets Dixon and Hancock

Clark's detachment reached the designated rendezvous at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri on August 3, four days ahead of Captain Lewis' detachment. After leaving a message for Lewis, Clark pushed slowly down the Missouri. On August 11, near the mouth of Goatpen Creek, Clark encountered two Illinois frontiersmen, Joseph Dixon and Forrest Hancock, headed for a "trapping expedition" up the Yellowstone. They explained that they had left the Illinois in the summer of 1804, and had spent the previous winter with the Teton-Sioux.⁵⁴ The next day, the 12th, Lewis and his party overtook Clark.⁵⁵

D. The Missouri Fur Trading Co. on the Bighorn

1. The Colter, Dixon, & Hancock Partnership

Dixon and Hancock traveled with the explorers to the Mandan Villages, questioning the members of the Lewis and Clark party about what they had seen. John Colter, one of the expedition's hunters, was invited to join them. Clark, in commenting on this suggestion, wrote, they "offered to become sheerers with [him] and furnish traps &c.," and as Colter was a faithful employee, Lewis gave him his release and wished him "every suckcess."⁵⁶

The partnership of Dixon, Hancock, and Colter began with about 20 traps, tools for building canoes, a two years' supply of ammunition, and other essentials. The principal asset of the three men consisted of their position, just before the fall trapping season, within a few weeks' journey of the richest beaver streams in the Rockies.⁵⁷

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., pp. 767-773.

55. Ibid., p. 739.

56. Burton Harris, *John Colter: His Years in the Rockies* (New York, 1952), p. 33-36.

57. Ibid., p. 37.

On August 17, 1806, the three trappers headed up the Missouri in their canoes, while the Lewis and Clark Expedition pushed on for St. Louis. Unfortunately, Colter could not write, so no journal or private papers of his have survived. Therefore what we know of this undertaking, and others in which he participated, comes from the writings of literate men who published accounts of their experiences in the mountains and on the Missouri. Ascending the Missouri to the mouth of the Yellowstone, the trappers pushed up the latter river. There is no record of where the partners went to trap in the Yellowstone Valley. Hubert H. Bancroft, in his *History of Wyoming*, has written that they wintered on the headwaters of Pryor Creek. As the Mountain Crow preferred to pass the winter months in this area, Bancroft's statement, although he fails to document, represents a logical conclusion.⁵⁸

There is reason to believe, however, that the trappers spent the coldest part of the winter of 1806-1807 on Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone. J. K. Rollinson, a Wyoming historian, recalled that in 1902 he met Dave Fleming, an early Cooke City prospector. Fleming, who was then in his 70s, told Rollinson that he was a stepson of either Dixon or Hancock. Continuing, he said that when he was about ten years old, his stepfather took him into the mountains. One day young Fleming accompanied the men to the mouth of Clarks Fork Canyon. Here the party camped, and Fleming's stepfather told him "that on that very spot Colter and his two associates had spent the winter." They had built a combination lean-to and cabin by erecting two walls against the side of a cliff.⁵⁹

Colter soon became disenchanted with the partnership. Loading a canoe with his share of the furs and traps, Colter set out in the spring, as soon as the ice on the upper Yellowstone had broken up, for St. Louis. At the mouth of the Platte, Colter sighted several keelboats tied to the bank and the smoke of campfires. Pulling into the shore the solitary traveler was hailed by a number of men, including three friends who had been with the Lewis and Clark Expedition--George Drouillard, John Potts, and Peter Wisner. They told Colter that the leader of the party was Manuel Lisa, a swarthy and ambitious Spaniard. Drouillard was an officer in the expedition, as he was acting as proxy for two of the regular partners of the Missouri Fur Trading Co. of St. Louis.⁶⁰

58. Ibid., pp. 38-40, 53-54; Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming*, p. 675. Lewis and Clark reached St. Louis, on their return, on September 23, 1806.

59. Harris, *John Colter*, 54.

60. Ibid., p. 59. Lisa had been born in New Orleans of Spanish parents.

As Lisa's company was headed for the country from which Colter had just come, Lisa recruited him. What inducements were tendered are not recorded, but, for the second time in two years, Colter turned his back on civilization and headed for the Yellowstone Country.⁶¹

2. The Establishment of Fort Raymond

When the Lewis and Clark Expedition had returned to St. Louis in September of 1806, Manuel Lisa had listened eagerly to their stories of abundant beaver on the headwaters of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers. Impressed with what he heard, Lisa formed a partnership with William Morrison and Pierre Menard, with a capital of \$16,000. An expedition composed of 42 men, 37 of whom were French-Canadians, was organized, and had sailed from St. Louis on April 19, 1807, in four keelboats.

The hostility of the Blackfoot and Colter's experiences on the Yellowstone determined Lisa to ascend that river, rather than the Missouri as planned.⁶² It was October before the trappers reached the mouth of the Bighorn, or La Corne as Lisa called it. The first permanent building in what is now the state of Montana was erected on a wooded point between the two rivers, just above their confluence. It was a two-room log cabin with a loft. Lisa named the post, Fort Raymond, after his son, though it soon came to be known as Manuel's Fort.⁶³

Fort Raymond was well located, being in the heart of the land of the Crow, a tribe known to be friendly to whites. The Sioux, Cheyenne, and Blackfoot, all migrated to the Yellowstone Valley to hunt buffalo, and they could be expected to visit the post. In addition, Nez Perce, Shoshone, and Bannock, during the early years of the 19th century, crossed the Rockies to make late summer and

61. Ibid., pp. 60-64; Evan Jones, *Trappers and Mountain Men* (New York, 1961), pp. 80-81.

62. The Blackfoot were plains Indians, warlike and self-reliant. They roamed a vast territory, extending northward from the Three Forks of the Missouri to beyond the Saskatchewan River. Like the Crow, they followed the migrations of the buffalo, and being supplied with most necessities of life by that animal, they were hostile to trappers, but friendly with traders from the North West Company, from whom they secured firearms. Indeed, the North West Company was known to have incited the Blackfoot against American traders, as a means of preserving their monopoly. Richard E. Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa and the Opening of the Missouri Fur Trade* (Norman, 1963), p. 57.

63. Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, p. 54; Harris, *John Colter*, pp. 64-70.

fall hunts along the Yellowstone. In theory the post should prosper, but as many of these tribes were blood enemies of the Crow most of the trade was with that nation.

The Bighorn River, between the mouth of the Canyon and the Yellowstone, was described by Nathaniel Wyeth, nearly 26 years afterwards, as providing the best trapping on a large stream that he had ever seen in the mountains. Thus the party's hunters were for some time able to use the fort as their base camp.⁶⁴

With winter closing in, the only certain way for the company to commence quickly the business of laying in a stock of furs was by trading with Indian tribes of the region, especially those that did not know that a post had been erected at the mouth of the Bighorn. At least three men--John Colter, George Drouillard, and Edward Rose were sent out that winter to find Indians and guide them to the post.⁶⁵

3. John Colter's Journey

Colter's journey, made during the winter of 1807-1808, was a remarkable feat of exploration. The nearest approach to a written account of Colter's trip is that by H. M. Brackenridge, found in *Views of Louisiana Together with a Journal of a Voyage up the Missouri River in 1811*. This brief account reads:

He [Lisa] continued his voyage to the Yellowstone River, where he built a trading fort. He shortly after dispatched Colter, the hunter . . . to bring some of the Indian nations to trade. This man, with a pack of thirty pounds weight, his gun and some ammunition, went upwards of five hundred miles to the Crow Nation; gave them information, and proceeded from them to several other tribes. On his return a party of Indians in whose company he happened to be was attacked, and he was lamed by a severe wound in the leg; notwithstanding which, he returned to the establishment, entirely alone and without assistance, several hundred miles.⁶⁶

To plot Colter's route it is necessary to refer to "Clark's Map," found in the Biddle edition of the Lewis and Clark narra-

64. Harris, *John Colter*, p. 71; "The Correspondence and Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 1831-36," F. G. Young (ed.), *Sources of the History of Oregon*, 1, 210.

65. Harris, *John Colter*, p. 72.

66. H. M. Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana Together with a Journal of a Voyage up the Missouri River in 1811* (Baltimore, 1815), p. 91.

tive, and to have a knowledge of the geography of the region. An error on Clark's part in beginning the dotted line indicating Colter's route halfway up Pryor Creek, instead of at the mouth of the Bighorn, the only possible starting point, causes a problem. Because of this oversight, we do not know whether Colter on departing from Fort Raymond headed directly across Pine Ridge toward the Pryor Mountains, or if he ascended the Yellowstone to the mouth of Pryor Creek.

The trails ascending Pryor Creek were heavily traveled, as both the Mountain and River Crow frequented the area. From Pryor Gap he pushed on into Sunlight Basin, by way of Clarks Fork. Turning to the southeast, Colter struck the Stinking Water (Shoshone) at the "Boiling Spring." After visiting a Crow village in the area, he worked his way southward, probably by way of the headwaters of the Greybull River and the Owl Creek Mountains, into the Wind River Range. Here he found a big Crow village.

When Colter left the Wind River Country, he did so by way of Togwotee Pass. He was now in Jackson Hole, with the towering Tetons in front of him. After crossing Teton Pass, Colter retraced his steps into Jackson Hole, and then struck out toward Fort Raymond. Instead of returning the way he had come, he turned into an Indian trail which led to Tower Falls, by way of Yellowstone Lake. Here he crossed the Yellowstone River, and, turning into the Bannock Trail, ascended Lamar River and Soda Butte Creek to their headwaters. Crossing Cooke Pass, Colter descended Clarks Fork. When he reached Sunlight Basin, he doubled back onto his outgoing route and proceeded to the Stinking Water, then down that river, over Pryor Gap, and down Pryor Creek to the Yellowstone and Fort Raymond.⁶⁷

4. Drouillard's Explorations

George Drouillard made two trips from Fort Raymond as an emissary to drum up business with the Indians. The only information available on these trips is that found on the map drawn by William Clark. This data was provided to Clark by Drouillard on his return to St. Louis in August 1808.

On the first day of his initial journey, Drouillard proceeded up the south bank of the Yellowstone to "Pot's Establishment." This may have been a small trading post commanded by John Potts. Pressing onward another ten miles, he camped for the night on Smalea Creek (probably Sand Coulee). The next day he passed Pom-

67. Harris, *John Colter*, p. 83-114; Brown, *Plainsmen of the Yellowstone*, pp. 38-39; Stallo Vinton, *John Colter: Discoverer of Yellowstone Park* (New York, 1926), pp. 58-65; Mark Boesh, *John Colter: Man Who Found Yellowstone* (New York, 1959), pp. 130-147.

pey's Pillar, from where the trail followed bore away from the Yellowstone. Fly Creek was forded, and Drouillard rode on to Pryor Creek, where he found a Crow village. From the Indians, he learned that Colter had ascended the Pryor, so he continued up the south bank of the Yellowstone to a point a short distance east of today's city of Billings. Here he forded the Yellowstone and camped.

Drouillard now followed the trail paralleling the north side of the Yellowstone to opposite the mouth of Clarks Fork. Here he recrossed to the south bank of the Yellowstone and traveled up the trail on the east side of Clarks Fork (which the Crow called As-kis-pe-pah-awn-zhah) to its confluence with the A-sah-roo-ka (Rock Creek). A Crow village was found at this point. He spent the night with the Indians. The Crow, who were talkative and cooperative, told Drouillard that they were in the habit of wintering here because their horses thrived on the plentiful supply of sage which grew here. Large herds of elk, buffalo, and antelope also grazed the area.

Drouillard continued up Clarks Fork to the mouth of Dry Branch Creek, (Pat O'Hara Creek), where he stopped for the night. During the day, he had crossed an unfrozen river, along which, the Crow informed him, one might obtain "gras and shelter all winter."⁶⁸ Instead of ascending the Clarks Fork Trail, which the Crow said led to the "Blue beads mountain," where they obtained "a clear and solid substance like glass which they manufacture into pipes," Drouillard pushed up Pat O'Hara Creek. At the close of a hard day's journey, he stopped near Heart Mountain.⁶⁹

The next night found the explorer near the confluence of Valley river (South Fork of the Shoshone) with the Stinking Water. Here, in the shadow of Mah-ha--ah-mah-pah (Cedar Mountain), Drouillard contacted a large Crow village. Besides informing him that Colter had passed up the South Fork, they told him that 14 days' journey up the same river was a salt cave; that from this cave an eight-day march across the mountains would bring him to the Spanish settlements.⁷⁰ The salt cave was on the north side of the

68. The "unfrozen river" was probably Bluewater Creek, which heads in the Pryor Mountains.

69. To plot Drouillard's route, I have relied on the "Map and Notes by William Clark, based on information provided to him by George Drouillard, 1809," a personal knowledge of the area's geography, and a field reconnaissance made in July and August 1969.

70. To reach the nearest Spanish settlements at Santa Fé and Taos, the Crow would have to travel south, passing to the east of the Rampart Range, through Raton Pass, and on to the Rio Grande settlements. Such a trip would take much longer than 22 days. Either Drouillard misunder-

mountains. It contained a superior salt, and the Spaniards were said to secure the salt by passing over the river "Collarado." The Stinking Water (Shoshone), they said, headed in the mountains, a 12-day ride to the west. Drouillard's eyes probably sparkled when the Indians spoke of the great number of beaver to be found on the headwaters of Stinking Water.⁷¹

When he left Cedar Mountain, Drouillard rode down the north bank of the Stinking Water to its confluence with the Bighorn. Both here and opposite the mouth of Gap Creek (Sage Creek), he found Indian villages. The village at the mouth of Stinking Water was inhabited by Es-cup-scup-pe-ah's band. Drouillard estimated the population of the two villages at 280 lodges, or 2,240 souls. The Indians told him that by traveling up the Bighorn, they could reach the Spanish settlements in 18 days.⁷²

Leaving the village of Es-cup-scup-pe-ah, Drouillard retraced his route up Stinking Water to Sage Creek. He then ascended Sage Creek, crossed Pryor Gap to the headwaters of Pryor Creek, which he descended to its mouth. The ride across from Stinking Water to the Yellowstone took three days. Drouillard followed the trail along the south bank of the Yellowstone to Fort Raymond.⁷³

Drouillard's second patrol in search of Indian customers was made in the spring of 1808, before Colter's return to the post at the mouth of the Bighorn. Upon leaving Fort Raymond, Drouillard again headed up the Yellowstone to the mouth of Smalea Creek (Sand Coulee), a day's journey upstream. He then left the Yellowstone, taking the trail ascending Smalea Creek and passing over Pine Ridge to the confluence of the Little Bighorn with the Bighorn. There he saw a large herd of antelope and named the area, where Hardin now stands, Antelope Bend. A two-day journey up the little Bighorn brought him to the mouth of Lodge Grass Creek. Here there was a large encampment.

stood the Crow or they were purposely deceiving him.

71. Both the North and South Forks of the Shoshone head in the Absaroka Range.

72. Drouillard was the first white man to visit the southern district of the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. Once again, he had either misunderstood the Crow, or they had deliberately misled him as to the distance to the Spanish settlements on the Rio Grande.

73. "Map and Notes by William Clark, based on information furnished to him by George Drouillard, 1809," Courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis; M. W. Skarsten, *George Drouillard: Hunter and Interpreter for Lewis and Clark and Fur Trader, 1807-1810* (Glendale, 1964), pp. 259-270.

He continued up the west side of the Little Bighorn another day's journey, and found good beaver country. Turning eastward, he forded Owl Creek, made his way through the Wolf Mountains, and reached the headwaters of Minna-e-sal (the Rosebud). Drouillard then crossed another divide and reached Tongue River, where he found an Indian village. Learning of good beaver country on Neahpah-to-awn-zhah or Otter Creek, Drouillard struck cross-country. After exploring the headwaters of Otter Creek, he returned to Tongue River, gaining that stream some distance below the Indian encampment. Forging the Tongue the next day, he again crossed the divide to the Rosebud. He camped for the night on the west side of that stream. Three days were required to reach Fort Raymond from the Rosebud. To do so, Drouillard crossed a pine- and cedar-clad range of mountains, which he called "Chatish or Woolf teeth mountains" (today's Rosebuds), the Sarpy Basin, and descended Tullock Creek to its confluence with the Bighorn.

He had been absent from Fort Raymond for at least 15 days, and longer if he stayed more than one night at any of the Indian villages. Drouillard had traveled upwards of 200 miles, as against 300 on his first trip. He had visited several Indian villages, and had reconnoitered a number of good beaver streams.⁷⁴

5. Edward Rose Visits the Crow

Edward Rose, who was sent from Fort Raymond to contact the Crow, was a mixed blood--Negro, white, and Cherokee. According to his biographer, Capt. Reuben Holmes, he had "black hair, changeable eyes, and a fiendish countenance when he chose it." Before being recruited by Lisa, Rose had lived with the Osage. Shortly after the arrival of the company on the Bighorn, Rose had been sent by Lisa to barter with the Crow for furs.

Observing that the native custom was to respect that man most who unselfishly gave away his possessions, Rose by the spring of 1808, "became the best loved man in the Crow village by giving away all his trade goods." Returning to Fort Raymond, he was unable to account to Lisa for the loss of his goods. A bitter argument between Rose and Lisa ensued. Lisa would have been killed by the powerful mulatto, but for the intervention of Potts. While Potts restrained the powerfully-built Rose, Lisa boarded the keel-boat which was waiting to take him to St. Louis.

As the craft uplled away from the shore and out into the channel, Rose broke loose from Potts. He dashed outside, and "infuriated with passion, and almost blind with rage," he seized a swivel

74. Clark's Map; Skarsten, *George Drouillard*, pp. 265-270.

gun. He pointed the piece toward the craft, and "touched it off" with his pipe, just as a man was passing in front of the muzzle. This man, it so happened, was long-legged, and he was just taking a step. The charge passed harmlessly between his legs, causing him to leap several feet into the air.

His comrades now rushed Rose, and he was prevented from getting off a second round at the fast disappearing keelboat. A few days later, Rose left Fort Raymond with all the trade goods he could buy, borrow, or frighten away from the men and headed back for the Crow village, where he had wintered.⁷⁵

6. Lisa Organizes the St. Louis Missouri Fur Co.

George Drouillard headed for St. Louis soon after his return from his second scout, while Lisa dispatched Colter to trade with the Crow. Near Three Forks, Colter fought with the Crow and Flathead against the Blackfoot. In the autumn of 1808 Colter was again near Three Forks. This time he was accompanied by Potts. The two trappers were attacked. Potts was killed, while Colter was captured, and, after being stripped of his clothing, told to run for his life. He was pursued by a number of fleet warriors. Barefooted, Colter sped across the cactus-covered flats, heading for the Madison River five miles away. Although his feet and legs were cut and bleeding, he raced ahead, his lungs feeling as if they were about to burst. He outdistanced all but one of the Blackfoot. As he was pushed to the limit of his endurance, Colter stopped and awaited his pursuer, calling to him in Crow for mercy. The Blackfoot rushed at Colter with his spear. The trapper seized the spear, near the head, and wrestled the Indian to the ground. As the Blackfoot fell, the shaft snapped, leaving Colter in possession of the head, which he drove into the vitals of his foe. Colter, having dispatched the warrior, dashed on. Reaching the Madison, he dove in, and when he surfaced for air, it was under the refuse of a beaver dam. He remained hidden for the rest of the day, as the Blackfoot vainly beat up the area in their search for him. As soon as it was dark, Colter emerged from his hiding place, swam downstream, and climbed up onto the bank. He then started out, still naked, for Fort Raymond, 220 miles to the east.⁷⁶

Manuel Lisa was back in St. Louis in the summer of 1808, and the next year he organized the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company, which included such associates as Jean Pierre Chouteau, William Clark, and Andrew Henry.

75. Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, pp. 61-62; Harold W. Fenton, *Edward Rose: Negro Trail Blazer* (New York, 1967).

76. Thomas James, *Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans* (New York, 1962), pp. 29-33.

7. The 1809-1810 Expedition to the Three Forks

In June 1809 Lisa left St. Louis with 13 keelboats and barges. It took six weeks to ascend the Missouri to the mouth of the Platte. There was dissension between the Canadians and Anglo-Saxon members of the expedition. Thomas James complained of discrimination against the Americans by the "bourgeoise," as his crew ran short of provisions and was compelled to subsist on boiled corn and salt. Many of the Americans deserted, and only ten Anglo-Saxons were left with the expedition by the time it ascended to the Mandan Villages.⁷⁷

James now procured his discharge from Lisa and prepared to push on to the Three Forks. He would be accompanied by two others, Miller and McDaniel. They resumed their run up the Missouri in a canoe, but they soon found their way barred as cold weather caused the river to freeze over. Landing, they erected a cabin. James now froze his feet, and soon thereafter his friends determined to return for supplies to the fort the company had erected at the Mandan Villages. When they failed to return as scheduled, James on February 3, 1810, joined forces with two Canadians and an American who were en route for Fort Raymond.⁷⁸

The horses they were to use were weak, and the men were compelled to beat their way through heavily crusted snow. They followed the south bank of the Missouri as far as the mouth of the Little Missouri, which they ascended on the advice of some Indians encountered en route. As directed by the redmen, they traveled up the Little Missouri for two days, and then struck northward. A blizzard swept the area; game disappeared; and James and his three companions suffered from the cold and hunger as they struggled cross-country toward the Yellowstone. The Yellowstone was reached on the sixth day, after leaving the Little Missouri. Pushing on, the weary adventurers, after 15 days of painful travel, arrived at Fort Raymond. Here James found his crew and a small detachment of Company men. Col. Pierre Menard was in command.⁷⁹

After remaining at Fort Raymond for several days, James and his friends joined a 32-man company that Colonel Menard was leading to the Three Forks. With Colter as guide, they arrived at the forks by way of Bozeman Pass and the Gallatin. Three Forks

77. James, *Three Years*, pp. 6-13.

78. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-18.

79. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-21. James had expected to find Lisa in charge at Fort Raymond, but he had sent Menard instead, because, as James reported, threats had been voiced against his life by one of the Anglo-Saxon hunters. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

was reached on April 3. Two parties of trappers were organized, one to descend the Missouri to the Great Falls and the other to ascend the Jefferson, while Menard and a small detachment built a combination fort and trading house. An attack by the Blackfoot, which took the lives of five of the men who had started up the Jefferson, caused the recall of the trappers.⁸⁰

The hostility of the Blackfoot compelled the trappers to curtail their activities. While many remained close to the fort, the more daring continued to operate at some distance from the post. George Drouillard was one of these. He was ambushed and killed on the Jefferson. Several of the hunters were mauled by grizzlies. Dismayed and discouraged by the prospects, most of the Americans prepared to return to St. Louis, while Col. Andrew Henry and the greater part of the Canadians got ready to cross the Continental Divide to operate on the Snake. Several men now arrived from Fort Raymond, and reported that they had cast off from that post with a keelboat loaded with trade goods. The current of the Yellowstone had proved too swift, and they had cached the goods near the mouth of Clarks Fork and had proceeded overland. Menard organized a party to bring up the supplies. James accompanied Menard.⁸¹

Near the mouth of Clarks Fork a Crow village, en route to attack the Blackfoot, was encountered. Here James had an opportunity to observe how the Crow forded a river. After stripping, the Crow divided themselves into ten-man detachments and stacked their arms, accoutrements, and clothing

on a tent skin made of buffalo robes, and tying it up in a large round bundle, threw it into the river and plunged after, some swimming with these huge heaps, floating like corks, and others riding the horses or holding by the tails till they had crossed the river. Arrived on the opposite bank, . . . they dressed and mounted their horses, and marched off two and two . . . and were quickly out of sight.⁸²

At the mouth of Clarks Fork, the detachment separated. While one group took the trade goods and returned to Three Forks, Colonel Menard, James, and others continued on to Fort Raymond. Here they remained for several days to repair a keelboat, after which they cast off for St. Louis. They returned to St. Louis in August 1810, after an absence of 14 months.⁸³

Colonel Henry, following the arrival of the men with the supplies, abandoned the Three Forks post. Crossing the Continental

80. Ibid., pp. 22-25, 36-42.

81. Ibid., pp. 42-49.

82. Ibid., pp. 48-50.

83. Ibid., pp. 50-54.

Divide at the head of a small party, he wintered on the north fork of the Snake, hereafter called Henry's Fork. Some of Henry's people during the winter entered the Green River Valley and Jackson's Hole from the west. Henry returned to St. Louis in 1811, the same year that the Missouri Fur Company abandoned Fort Raymond.⁸⁴

E. The American Fur Co. Moves In

1. The Founding of Astoria

John Jacob Astor, who had organized the American Fur Company in 1808, now moved to secure a monopoly of the fur trade in the Pacific Northwest. The keystone of Astor's empire would be trade with China, where furs were in great demand. But if Astor's plan were to succeed, the American Fur Company would have to have a post on the Pacific coast. Sea otter pelts from the northwest coast and furs brought down the Columbia River could then be shipped across the Pacific in Astor's ships to Canton. These vessels would return to United States ports on the eastern seaboard with silk and other trade goods purchased from the Chinese.

Astor first sought to get the North West Company to join him in this endeavor, but he was refused. Undaunted, Astor, on June 23, 1810, organized a new company--the Pacific Fur Company. Many of its best men had worked for the North West Company.

Astor now dispatched two expeditions. One group led by Lt. Jonathan Thorn sailed from New York aboard the barque *Tonquin*. Thorn and his people were to sail around Cape Horn, up the west coast of Latin America, and enter the Columbia River. There they were to construct a trading post, subsequently called Astoria. A second company led by Wilson P. Hunt was to advance overland, following the route pioneered by Lewis and Clark.⁸⁵

2. The Astorians Cross the Bighorns

Accompanied by Donald MacKenzie, Hunt traveled to St. Louis, by way of Montreal, where he hired a number of *voyageurs*. After reaching St. Louis, in September 1810, Hunt sought to hire additional experienced men. This activity aroused the ire of Lisa and his partners. They did what they could to discourage recruiting. The season was late by the time Hunt was ready to start up the Missouri, and by the time the expedition reached the mouth of

84. Bernard DeVoto, *Across the Wide Missouri* (Cambridge, 1947), p. 387.

85. Evans Jones, *Trappers and Mountain Men* (New York, 1961), pp. 81-83; De Voto, *Across the Wide Missouri*, p. 387.

the Nodaway, the river had frozen over. While his men went into camp to await the spring break up, Hunt returned to St. Louis to perfect his arrangements. Before Hunt returned to his up-river camp, on March 12, 1811, he had additional trouble with Lisa.⁸⁶

Lisa, who had planned an expedition for 1811, left St. Louis 19 days after Hunt. His party sailed aboard a barge rigged with mast and sails. This craft, "the best that had ever ascended the Missouri," had a deck and cabin and was equipped with a 400-foot towrope to use on reaches of the river impossible to navigate with sails, oars, or poles. There were oars forward of the cabin, and a sweep for steering astern.

Although Hunt's people had a big head start, Lisa's barge overtook them on June 2. In catching up with the Astorians, Lisa's men established a record for keelboats on the Missouri--nearly 1,200 miles in 63 days. Together the two companies made their way past the Sioux to the Arikara Towns, where they separated. Hunt, having heard stories that the powerful Blackfoot had closed the upper Missouri, brought horses from the Arikara and veered from the Lewis and Clark route to strike overland toward the Columbia by a new and more southerly route. Lisa remained on the upper Missouri as its principal trader until his death in 1820.⁸⁷

Before leaving the Arikara Towns, Hunt hired Edward Rose as guide and interpreter.⁸⁸ As the Astorians approached the Little Missouri, in early August, Hunt became suspicious of Rose's loyalty. He told the powerfully-built mulatto that having engaged his services through the land of the Crow, they could dispense with his assistance once they had crossed the Bighorns. Whenever he wished, Rose was at liberty to remain among his adopted people. On parting, Hunt would pay Rose one-half year's wages in consideration of his past services, give him a horse, and three beaver traps, as well as other trade goods. This unexpected liberality on the part of the Astorians, "which made it nearly as profitable and infinitely less hazardous" for him "to remain honest than to

86. Jones, *Trappers and Mountain Men*, p. 83.

87. *Ibid.*, pp. 83-85.

88. In the fall of 1809, Colonel Henry had encountered Rose at the Arikara Towns and had taken him along to the mountains as interpreter and trader. There Rose again cast his lot with the Crow, adopted their dress, and "exchanged a favorite rifle and accoutrements for a wife, and became . . . one of them." It was during this period that he accomplished a feat which caused the Crow to change his name from "Cut Nose" to "Five Scalps." This feat of bravery was probably performed during a fight with the Blackfoot.

play the rogue," seemingly disarmed Rose. His deportment took a turn for the better, and he "forgot his sullen skulking habits."⁸⁹

Passing to the north of the Black Hills, the cavalcade struck westward, following the watershed separating the Little Missouri and Yellowstone. On August 22 the Astorians crossed an Indian trail, over which a large Crow village had recently passed. Hunt turned his company into this trail, which was followed for two days. Since the 17th, when Mackenzie had sighted the mountains, the company had been directing its march toward the Bighorns.⁹⁰

Soon after camping on August 22, two "wild-looking beings scantily clad in skins, but well armed and mounted on horses as wildlooking as themselves were seen." Rose was sent to parley. He invited them to visit camp. They were found to be scouts from the village trailed by the traders for several days past. The Crow scouts, who were well received, told Hunt that their band was camped nearby.

The next day, a large number of Crow warriors galloped up with an invitation from their chief to visit the village. After striking their tents and packing their horses, the Astorians moved out, escorted by the Crow. A 16-mile ride brought them within sight of the village, the tipis were pitched beside a mountain stream. Hunt presented the chief a scarlet blanket, a quantity of powder and ball, and a number of knives and trinkets to distribute to his warriors. The following days were passed in trading with the Crow. Trade goods were exchanged for buffalo robes and beaver pelts, while jaded horses were bartered for fresh ones. Some of the Astorians purchased horses on their own account.⁹¹

Their wants satisfied, the Astorians ceased trading, much to the displeasure of the Crow. The Crow now assumed an "insolent attitude," which was attributed by Hunt "to the perfidious instigations of Rose."

Hunt and his people, on the morning of September 2, prepared to resume the march. Rose, in accordance with their agreement, was discharged. Moving out, the Astorians rode toward the southwest, skirting the Bighorns, as they searched vainly for a pass.

89. Washington Irving, *Astoria; or Enterprize Beyond The Rocky Mountains* (Paris, 1836), pp. 147-149.

90. *Ibid.*, pp. 148-149. There were 82 horses in the cavalcade, most of them heavily laden with trade goods, traps, ammunition, Indian corn, corn meal, and other necessities. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

91. *Ibid.*, pp. 158-162. As a result of these purchases the number of horses belonging to the expedition was increased to 121. The Crow village visited was probably on Piney Creek or one of the southern tributaries of Tongue River.

Fifteen miles were made, and camp pitched on a stream. That evening the Astorians were surprised by an unwelcomed visit by several Crow, belonging to a different village, who told Hunt their people were camped in the mountains.

As the traders rode forward on the 3d, they saw that the Bighorns presented a continuous barrier. An attempt was made to force a passage, but the Astorians soon found themselves "entangled among the rocks and cliffs." After spending a half day in a futile effort to ascend the Bighorns, the company returned to their camp of the previous evening. The next morning, September 4, Rose rode up, accompanied by a number of Crow. His visit aroused the suspicions of the Astorians, but their spirits soared, when he announced that he was an emissary of the chief. And he had been sent to guide them to "a nearer and better" route over the Bighorns.

Turning his men out, Hunt followed Rose. Before traveling very far, the Astorians fell in with the Crow village. The two ethnic groups, red and white, pushed ahead into the mountains, presenting "a wild and picturesque spectacle as, equipped with various weapons and various garbs, with trains of packhorses, they wound in long lines through the rugged defiles, and up and down the crags and steeps of the mountains."

The Crow traveled faster and left the Astorians behind. As soon as the Indians were out of sight, the traders camped.⁹² Here they remained for one day. The march was then resumed. They now fell in with a village of Flathead and Shoshoni, with whom they traveled until the morning of September 9. Having crossed the Bighorns and the Bighorn Basin, the Astorians during the day made 30 miles and camped on Wind River. Hunt now turned his company up Wind River.⁹³ After the Continental Divide was crossed, the Astorians made the mistake of attempting to navigate the Snake in *voyageur* canoes. In January and February 1812, Hunt and his men straggled into the log stockade Thorn's men had erected at the mouth of the Columbia.

The War of 1812, as to be expected, caused the fur companies to curtail operations. In the fall of 1813 the British compelled Astor's men to sell Fort Astoria to the North West Company. During the war years, as well as those immediately following, there were no major expeditions into the Bighorns or to the land of the Crow. A few independent traders and trappers, who have left no

92. They had made 16 miles on the 4th. The route followed ascended either Clear or Crazy Woman Creek, crossed Powder River Pass, and descended into the Bighorn Basin through Tensleep Canyon.

93. *Ibid.*, pp. 162-165.

written accounts, undoubtedly trapped the region and traded with the Crow.

F. Comments and Recommendations

Although the La Vérendryes probably never saw the Bighorn Mountains, and certainly never saw the Bighorn River, they may have come in contact with the Crow. In the last quarter of the 18th century, the Crow made annual treks to the Mandan Villages to trade with the Indians and Canadian traders. We know that at least one of the Canadians, Menard, accompanied the Crow on their return to their homes, but unfortunately Menard left no journal.

In 1805, the year Lewis and Clark reached the Pacific, Larocque and two traveling companions accompanied the Crow on their return from the Mandan Villages to the Bighorn Country. Larocque, who was a good observer, kept a journal and has left us the richer because of his brilliant descriptions of the migrations of the Crow, the Bighorn Mountains, Bighorn Canyon, and the Bighorn River. The Larocque story merits exhibit space in the Park Visitor Center, as well as an on-site interpretive marker, commanding the mouth of the canyon and describing what Larocque saw on August 31, 1805.

As they are intimately associated with the story of the Crow and Bighorn Country, the activities of Clark at the mouth of the Bighorn, the establishment and operation of Fort Raymond, and the explorations of Colter and Drouillard must be interpreted to the visitor. These activities, except those of Drouillard, will have to be interpreted at the principal Park Visitor Center. Drouillard's first journey should be interpreted on-site at the mouth of the Shoshone, as he was the first white man to penetrate that portion of the National Recreation Area in Wyoming.

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III. THE MOUNTAIN MEN AND BAD PASS *

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A. The Ashley-Henry Partnership

1. Pilcher Heads the Missouri Fur Company

It was 1818, four years after the Treaty of Ghent had ended the War of 1812, before there was a revival in the fur trade. The next year the Missouri Fur Company was reorganized, and the leadership passed from Manuel Lisa to Joshua Pilcher. By the fall of 1821, the company had another party back at the mouth of the Bighorn, where they built a new post, Fort Benton. In his first 18 months as manager of the company, Pilcher strengthened the partnership. His subordinates at Fort Benton were Robert Jones, a "gentleman of cleverness" and a stockholder in the company, and Michael E. Immell, a "trader of some distinction." The latter had held a commission in the army but had resigned and had gone up the Missouri with Lisa in 1809. Jones and Immell spent 1822 on the Bighorn and Yellowstone, feeling out the Crow trade before advancing into the dangerous Blackfoot country around the Three Forks.¹

Although competition was bitter, 1822 was a profitable year for the Missouri Fur Company. Pilcher sent nearly 300 traders into the field. As soon as the snow had melted in the spring of 1823, Jones and Immell, who had wintered at Fort Benton, rode westward with 27 men to the Three Forks area. They were under instructions "to obtain a friendly interview with the Blackfoot Indians . . . and to impress them with the friendly disposition of American citizens toward them."²

2. An Important Advertisement

Meanwhile, General William Ashley and Maj. Andrew Henry moved to challenge the Missouri Fur Company. With their preparations far advanced, Ashley in February and March 1822 advertised in the St. Louis Newspapers:

To Enterprising Young Men

The subscriber wishes to engage one hundred men to ascend the river Missouri to its source, there to be employed for one, two, or three years.--For particulars, enquire of Major

* see National Register form, p. 645.

1. John E. Sunder, *The Fur Trade on the Upper Missouri, 1846-1865*, (Norman, 1965), pp. 35-36. Fort Benton was named for Thomas Hart Benton, who had been elected to the United States Senate from Missouri in 1821.

2. Ibid.

Andrew Henry, near the Lead Mines, in the Country of Washington, (who will ascend with, and command the party) or to the subscriber at St. Louis.

Wm. H. Ashley³

Ashley's advertisement was extremely effective, because it brought together many of those who were to gain fame as Mountain Men. It brought into the fold the God-fearing and ambitious Jedediah Smith, and legendary individuals such as David Jackson, William Sublette, Jim Bridger, and Tom Fitzpatrick. "The men are generally speaking untried and of every description and nation," a member of the competing Missouri Fur Company wrote his partner:

I am told the hunters and trappers are to have one half the furs &c They make the Company furnish them with Gun Powder Lead &c &c, they only are to help build the fort & defend it in case of necessity, the boat hands are engaged as we engage ours, the Clerks are also the same . . . this kind of business of making hunters will take some time and much trouble.⁴

3. The Arikara War

On April 3, 1822, Major Henry's company, taking equipment and trade goods, departed St. Louis in a 65-foot keelboat. After an arduous journey, Henry and his people in late August reached the mouth of the Yellowstone. Here the men were put to work constructing a post--Fort Henry.⁵ Back in St. Louis, General Ashley had received a shipment of firearms from New Mexico and on May 8 had dispatched a second keelboat up the Missouri. This craft ran into disaster. Near present-day Lexington, it capsized and its cargo valued at \$10,000 was lost. Within three weeks, Ashley had loaded another vessel, with which he started up the Missouri.

While en route upstream, General Ashley participated in a horse-trading peace parley with the Arikara on September 8. His boat tied up at Fort Henry, at the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone, about October 1. "After furnishing the mountain parties with their supplies of trade goods, and receiving the furs of

3. Jones, *Trappers and Mountain Men*, p. 96. Ashley, who was 44 years old, had recently been elected lieutenant governor of Missouri and also had previously been advanced to the command of the Missouri militia. Both he and Henry were in the lead mining and powder-manufacturing business.

4. J. Cecil Alter, *Jim Bridger* (Norman, 1962), 13; Jones, *Trappers and Mountain Men*, p. 96.

5. The crude stockade was located between the Missouri and Yellowstone, and about one mile above the confluence.

the last hunt, General Ashley returned to St. Louis in a "large pirogue."⁶

About the same time, Captain Perkins of the Missouri Fur Company sailed by Fort Henry. When hailed, he reported that he had left Fort Benton several days before with 28 packs of fur, valued at \$14,000 in St. Louis. A second consignment of 20 packs, worth \$10,000, was following.⁷

Major Henry in the spring of 1823 led a party up the Missouri. A short distance above the Great Falls, they were assailed by a Blackfoot war party. Four of Henry's men were killed, and the survivors, having stirred up a hornets' nest, retired to the post at the mouth of the Yellowstone.⁸

Meanwhile, the Missouri Fur Company people from Fort Benton led by Jones and Immell had been trapping the Jefferson without seeing any hostiles. Although the country had been "almost trapt out by the Indians, they succeeded in taking about 20 packs." As they were returning to the Yellowstone, they encountered 38 Blackfoot, headed by a chief with a letter in English attesting to his good character. The Mountain Men and Indians camped together for one night, but Jones and Immell becoming suspicious left them and headed east. Returning to their village for reinforcements, the Blackfoot raced ahead and prepared an ambush, a short distance east of where the Yellowstone debouches from the mountains. In the surprise attack, Jones and Immell and five of their men were killed and four others wounded. The rest of the party built a raft and escaped across the Yellowstone. Upon reaching the mouth of Pryor Creek, the men turned to building bullboats to bring down the autumn's catch, while William Gordan hastened ahead to carry news of the disaster to Pilcher.⁹

While Pilcher and his partners in the Missouri Fur Company struggled to recoup from this disaster, Major Henry sent Jedediah Smith down the Missouri with the furs on hand at Fort Henry. Smith was to contact General Ashley and tell him of the trouble with the Blackfoot. General Ashley, having returned to St. Louis the previous autumn, had laid the ground work for a second expedition up the Missouri. On March 10, 1823, he had sailed from St. Louis with 70 men and two keelboats. By May 29 the fleet was near the Arikara Towns, where Smith was encountered.

Before continuing up the Missouri, Ashley traded the Arikara out of a number of horses. Biding their time, the Arikara on June 2 attacked and routed the men from the camp Ashley had established.

6. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 13-21. 7. *Ibid.*, p. 21. 8. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-24.

9. Sunder, *Joshua Pilcher*, pp. 39-40; Brown, *Plainsman of the Yellowstone*, pp. 62-63.

The whites retreated 25 miles downstream and buried their 14 dead. After Jedediah Smith had given a "powerful prayer" over the remains, Ashley sent him back up the Missouri to tell Major Henry of the fight with the Arikara, and to request assistance in smashing their blockade of the river.

Smith made his way to Fort Henry, and within a month Major Henry, accompanied by a score of men, reinforced General Ashley at the mouth of the Cheyenne.¹⁰

Word of Ashley's defeat had reached Col. Henry Leavenworth at Fort Atkinson on June 18. About the same time news was received telling of the deaths of Jones and Immell. Leavenworth determined to chastise the Arikara, and on June 22 he started up the Missouri with six companies (220 officers and men) of the 6th Infantry. Joshua Pilcher of the Missouri Fur Company followed with 40 men and 300 Sioux.¹¹

Leavenworth's summer campaign against the Arikara failed. The foe disappeared, the Sioux sulked, the infantry withdrew to Fort Atkinson, Ashley retired to Fort Kiowa to review his trading plans, and Pilcher returned to Fort Recovery. Each of the allies had lost something: Ashley--men, supplies, and time; Leavenworth--equipment and the confidence of his soldiers; and Pilcher--the loyalty of his Sioux allies.¹²

4. Jedediah Smith Crosses the Bighorns

The Arikara War had important repercussions on the fur trade. General Ashley, on reflecting on the situation, was cognizant of several factors. Unless the government sent troops up the Missouri as far as Fort Henry to overawe the redmen, American traders would have to abandon the area. The loss of keelboats with valuable cargoes must be guarded against--surely, he reasoned, there must be a less hazardous method of transporting trade goods and furs. His partner, Major Henry, had penetrated the country of the Blackfoot twice, only to be forced to retire. Finally, he recalled survivors of the Jones-Immell party reported the Three Forks area trapped out. Major Henry had told Ashley of his expedition across the Continental Divide of 14 years before and of the beaver-rich streams.¹³ Ashley was likewise aware of the great

10. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 25-27. Among the men who accompanied Henry to the mouth of the Cheyenne were Jedediah Smith and Jim Bridger.

11. Ibid., p. 27; Sunder, *Joseph Pilcher*, pp. 40-50.

12. Sunder, *Joshua Pilcher*, pp. 40-50. Fort Kiowa was on the west bank of the Missouri, near today's Pierre, South Dakota.

13. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, p. 33.

profits being reaped by trappers and traders of the North West Company beyond the Rockies. To one particular region rumor had ascribed a fabulous beaver population. This was the Green River Basin in what is today western Wyoming. Ashley, having recognized the hazards to be encountered on the upper Missouri, boldly determined to attempt to send a party overland to investigate and exploit the Green River Basin. This party would advance westward from Fort Kiowa to the land of the Crow, and then cross the Big-horns and the Continental Divide to Green River.

A keyman in this project would be the ubiquitous Edward Rose. Both his knowledge of the region and his friendship with the Crow would be useful, because the Crow at this time enjoyed a reputation as freebooters, given to plundering whites and Indians. In 1806 the Crow had run off Captain Clark's horses, and six years later, one of their bands had robbed Robert Stuart and his east-bound Astorians of their horses, compelling them to complete their journey back to Missouri afoot. They had since plundered and robbed other trappers. Rose, Ashley believed, would assure the party protection.¹⁴

Having made the necessary arrangements, Ashley returned to St. Louis to perfect his logistics, while two parties prepared to move out. The one led by Jedediah Smith would strike overland, while the other in the charge of Major Henry was to ascend the Missouri and Yellowstone. It was the end of September 1823 before Smith's company which included Thomas Fitzpatrick, William L. Sublette, James Clyman, Thomas Eddie, Edward Rose, and about a dozen others rode away from Fort Kiowa. Traveling by way of Medicine Creek, Bad River, and the South Fork of the Cheyenne, Smith's company passed to the south of the Black Hills.

On Powder River, they rendezvoused with Rose, who had been sent ahead to establish contact with the Crow. Accompanied by 15 or 16 Crow warriors, Rose rode into camp, and told Smith they had been watching his party for several days to assure themselves that there were no Cheyenne with the trappers. The Crow had with them several extra ponies, which the company was able to trade for, and thereby relieve themselves of the animals which had broken down.¹⁵

14. Le Roy R. Hafen and W. J. Ghent, *Broken Hand: The Story of Thomas Fitzpatrick, Chief of the Mountain Men* (Denver, 1931), pp. 31-32. Since being discharged by the Astorians in 1811, Rose had married a Crow. In 1815 he was reportedly taken to New Orleans a prisoner on a liquor charge. He had returned up the Missouri and had joined the Arikara in 1819.

15. James Clyman, *Frontiersman: The Adventures of a Trapper and Covered-Wagon Emigrant as Told in His Own Reminiscences and Diaries*, edited by Charles L. Camp (Portland, 1960), pp. 17-20.

Smith and his companions trapped their first beaver on Powder River. Joseph L. Meek, in his reminiscences given to Mrs. Frances F. Victor for her book, *The River of the West*, gives perhaps the best description of the art:

He [the trapper] has an ordinary steel trap weighing five pounds, attached to a chain five feet long, with a swivel and ring at the end, which plays around what is called the float, a dry stick of wood about six feet long. The trapper wades out into the stream, which is shallow, and cuts with his knife a bed for the trap, five or six inches under water. He then takes the float out the whole length of the chain in the direction of the center of the stream, and drives it into the mud so fast that that the beaver cannot draw it out; at the same time tying the other end by a thong to the bank. A small stick or twig, dipped in musk or castor [taken from the long glands just beneath a beaver's skin in front of the genital organs] serves for bait, and is placed so as to hang directly above the trap, which is now set. The trapper then throws water plentifully over the adjacent bank to conceal any footprints or scent by which the beaver would be alarmed, and going to some distance wades out of the stream.

In setting a trap several things are to be observed with care: first, that the trap is firmly fixed, and the proper distance from the bank--for if the beaver can get on shore with the trap he will cut off his foot to escape; secondly that the float is of dry wood, for should it not be the little animal will cut it off at a stroke and swimming with the trap to the middle of the dam be drowned by its weight. In the latter case, when the hunter visits his traps in the morning, he is under the necessity of plunging into the water and swimming out to dive for the missing trap and his game.¹⁶

Usually the beavers were skinned at the pond where they were trapped, and only the pelt, castor glands, and tail were taken. The tail was considered a great delicacy, but only when meat was short would the trappers eat any other part of the body.¹⁷

Before crossing the Bighorn Mountains, Smith's company traveled down the Powder to its mouth, where it rendezvoused with Major Henry's company. Henry and his people had ascended the Missouri to Fort Henry, where they learned that Indians, within the past several weeks, had run off about 30 horses. Henry thereupon de-

16. Frances F. Victor, *The River of the West* . . . (Hartford, 1870), p. 64.

17. Hafen & Ghent, *Broken Hand*, p. 37.

terminated to abandon the post. The men loaded their supplies and gear into a keelboat, which they towed up the Yellowstone. At the mouth of the Powder, Henry found Smith, a Crow village with horses to trade, and the packhorse detachment sent cross-country by way of Grand River. After a busy weekend, the company again split. Major Henry continued up the Yellowstone to the mouth of the Bighorn, where he planned to winter; three men led by Moses Harris headed downstream for St. Louis in a pirogue with 28 beaver packs and the mail; Smith's detachment ascended the Powder, preparatory to crossing the Bighorns; while Capt. John H. Weber, accompanied by Jim Bridger and others, started trapping the Powder River Country.¹⁸

Smith's command soon crossed a divide and struck Tongue River, where they found the "old Crow Trail." This led them up into the Bighorns and down Shell Creek Canyon. They crossed the Bighorn River, at the mouth of Greybull River, and pushed on to Wind River. Traveling up the latter, they found a Crow village near the foot of Frémont Peak, where they wintered.¹⁹ Here they were joined by Captain Weber and his men. Weber, disappointed with the number of beaver dams found on the Powder and its tributaries, had crossed the southern Bighorns and entered the upper Bighorn Basin. Traveling by way of "a boiling spring at the foot of a small burnt mountain about two rods in diameter [Thermopolis Hot Springs]," Weber's company ascended the Bighorn by way of a much-used Indian trail.²⁰

Couriers were dispatched to Major Henry by Captain Weber. One of these riders may have been Jim Bridger. Proceeding by way of Bad Pass (Bighorn Canyon), the riders reached the post Henry had erected on the Yellowstone, two miles below the mouth of the Bighorn. The couriers were back at the Wind River rendezvous before Christmas 1823, with several packs of trade goods. They also had a note from Major Henry, suggesting a rendezvous after the spring hunt at the Wind River-Bighorn elbow.²¹

5. Major Henry Crosses Bad Pass

Major Henry in the spring of 1824 headed up the Bighorn, crossed Bad Pass, and followed the Smith-Weber parties through South

18. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 34-36, 50.

19. Hafen & Ghent, *Broken Hand*, pp. 37-38; Clyman, *Frontiersman*, pp. 17-21. The trail followed by Smith's company probably ascended the Bighorns by way of Tongue River Canyon. The Mountain Men ascended the Greybull as far as today's Fenton, where they turned south, striking Wind River near present day Pilot, Wyoming.

20. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 50-51.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 51.

Pass. Men were dispatched in all directions to take beaver. The hunting was good. Meanwhile, Smith and Fitzpatrick had shifted Henry's proposed June 1 rendezvous to the Sweetwater. When they gathered on the Sweetwater, after a successful hunt, they came up with a revolutionary plan. A flotilla of bullboats was built and loaded with beaver packs. With Fitzpatrick in command the boats cast off for the Platte. Most of the cargo was lost on the Platte, and the rest cached. Fitzpatrick and his traveling companions reached Fort Atkinson that fall in "a pitiable state of physical exhaustion."²²

Weber and his people were waiting when Major Henry arrived. After being told about the bullboats, Henry hastened to organize a pack train. Fitzpatrick was attempting one route, Henry would go another. As soon as the horses were loaded with beaver packs, Henry led his caravan northward, by way of Bad Pass, to the mouth of the Bighorn. There the valuable cargo was loaded on a keel-boat and taken to St. Louis. On September 21, 1824, the *Arkansas Gazette* carried an item datelined St. Louis, August 30:

An arrival from the Mountains; After an absence of nearly three years, we are happy to announce the safe return of Major Henry (of the firm of Ashley and Henry) with a part of his company, from the Rocky Mountains. He descended the Missouri in boats to St. Louis, with a considerable quantity of valuable furs.²³

B. General Ashley Heads the Company

1. The 1825 Rendezvous

Major Henry, a disappointed and embittered man, now withdrew from his partnership with Ashley and settled in Washington County, Missouri. Undaunted by this development and his defeat for the governorship of Missouri, General Ashley in the autumn of 1824 outfitted another expedition. Shortly before Christmas, he rode out of St. Louis at the head of a 30-man company with a 50-horse pack train. Traveling by way of Fort Atkinson and the Platte,

22. Ibid., p. 51; Hafen & Ghent, *Broken Hand*, p. 48.

23. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 55-56; *Arkansas Gazette*, Sept. 21, 1824. It was the first week of July when Henry left the mouth of the Bighorn. A number of trappers, including Caleb Greenwood and Daniel Potts, who had accompanied Henry from the rendezvous, headed back up the Bighorn, across Bad Pass, and on to the headwaters of the Sweetwater. Charles Kelly & Dale Morgan, *Old Greenwood: The Story of Caleb Greenwood: Trapper, Pathfinder, and Early Pioneer* (Georgetown, 1965), pp. 69-71.

Ashley was on Cache La Poudre by February 4, 1825. His company pushed on, across South Pass, as Ashley led it on a trapping expedition covering much of today's western Wyoming, northern Utah, and nearby portions of Colorado and Idaho. On July 1, 120 men assembled at a rendezvous on Henry's Fork of Green River. Here Ashley purchased furs from the free trappers and deserters from Hudson's Bay Company. General Ashley's own men were credited as follows: Fitzpatrick, 140 skins; Gardner, 132; Sublette, 166; Clyman, 155; Zachariah Ham's total was 461 skins; Jedediah Smith's 668, and Smith's men 675.²⁴

2. Ashley Crosses Bad Pass

The furs thus secured had to be taken to St. Louis, and Ashley determined to use the route pioneered the previous year by Major Henry. This year the river route would probably be the safer, because it was known that Brig. Gen. Henry Atkinson with a formidable military force planned to ascend the Missouri during the summer to negotiate treaties with the Indians. If Ashley were fortunate in his timing, he could expect to fall in with Atkinson's soldiers as they returned to their base. There was an additional consideration: he was short of men and horses. If he descended the Bighorn, 50 men would be sufficient to get the beaver packs to a navigable point on the Bighorn, where they could be loaded into bullboats. Then he could send one-half his force back into the Green River Basin with all the horses--some of which had been borrowed.²⁵

Ashley, in the meantime, had determined to take Jedediah Smith into the company as a partner. Necessity had brought Ashley to the Rockies, but his entire life was oriented to Missouri. Someone else would have to be the field captain. While at the Henry's Fork rendezvous, Ashley broached the subject to Smith, and he agreed to join Ashley's company. Somebody had to return to the Rockies in the autumn with trade goods ordered by the free trappers, and it was agreed that Jedediah would be the man.²⁶

Ashley broke camp on July 3. Twenty men accompanied Ashley to pick up 45 packs of beaver hides cached on the Sweetwater. Jedediah Smith with another 30 men took the direct route toward the Bighorn. After picking up the cache, Ashley rode on to overtake the main party. Before rejoining it, Ashley's detachment was twice attacked by Indians, the first time by 60 Blackfoot. The

24. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 69-71.

25. Dale L. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith: And the Opening of the West* (Indianapolis, 1953), p. 172.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

warriors made their appearance at daybreak, "yelling in the most hideous manner and using every means in their power" to frighten the horses. The horses, although closely hobbled, broke loose and stampeded. As many of them were mounted, the Blackfoot succeeded in running off all the horses but two, and wounding one man. The Indians attempted to storm the camp, but they were repulsed.

Ashley, on the following night, sent a rider to secure horses from Smith's detachment. Within two days a reinforcement rode up with enough horses to replace those stolen by the Blackfoot. Ashley now rode on, and, after making about ten miles, "encamped on an eligible situation." About midnight the camp was attacked by a Crow war party. The mullato Mountain Man, James P. Beckwourth, who was with Ashley's troupe, helped beat off the attackers. The next morning, when the trappers reconnoitered the ground over which the Crow had charged, they found two bodies.

Beckwourth, years later, claimed that he and his boy, Baptiste, had killed the two Indians, because they were slain with rifle balls, rather than pellets. He and Baptiste, so he boasted, had used rifles while the others had employed shotguns. Ashley's party on the next day overtook Smith's, and the trappers rode on toward the Bighorn.²⁷

While en route to the Bighorn, Ashley recorded that he "discovered nothing remarkable in the features of the country, it affords generally a smooth way to travel over." The only rugged terrain encountered by the company was the Bighorn Mountains. To get across the mountains, the trappers followed an Indian trail leading through Bad Pass.

While scouts rode ahead, Jim Bridger, alone on a small raft built of driftwood, attempted to navigate Bighorn Canyon. He succeeded, performing a feat unequalled in western travels except by Ashley's descent of Green River and John Wesley Powell's voyage much later down the Green and Colorado. Capt. W. F. Reynolds reported in 1859:

Bridger claims to have descended the lower Big Horn Canyon some years since on a raft, during his service as a trapper.

27. *The West of William H. Ashley . . .*, Dale L. Morgan, editor (Denver, 1964), pp. 129-130; James P. Beckwourth, *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth*, T. D. Bonner, editor (New York, 1931), p. 48; John E. Sunder, *Bill Sublette Mountain Man* (Norman, 1959), p. 60. The cache of 45 beaver packs was at the confluence of Henry's Fork and Green River. Beckwourth had been born in 1798 in Fredericksburg, Virginia, the son of a land and slave owner. Beckwourth had gone west, and was in St. Louis when he read Ashley's 1822 advertisement.

His descriptions of the grandeur of the scenery along its banks are glowing and remarkable. He portrays a series of rugged canyons, the river foaming among jagged rocks, between lofty overhanging precipices, whose threatening arches shut out all sunlight; interspersed with narrow valleys, teeming with luxuriant verdure, through whose pleasant banks the stream flows as placidly as in its broad valleys below.²⁸

Bridger's companions meanwhile had spent a night near Bad Pass, where several of the company went hunting. One of the men, Baptiste, had a quarter of buffalo thrown behind his saddle. As his horse approached a stream intersecting the trail, he dismounted to drink. Here he was attacked and fearfully mauled by a grizzly. Beckwourth happened upon the wounded man and tenderly carried him back to camp. Soon after he reached camp, Beckwourth heard a great clamor, and, looking in the direction of the noise, he saw a party of breeds charging toward him, driving before them a huge grizzly. The trappers scattered and took to the trees. Beckwourth remained with the wounded man until it was too late. The bear was upon them. When the grizzly saw the wounded man, covered with gore, he paused. Beckwourth took advantage of the situation to bring his rifle to his shoulder and fire. General Ashley shot at the same instant, and the grizzly dropped, dead.

The next day the company, carrying their wounded comrade on a litter, crossed Dryhead. Descending Grapevine, Ashley's men regained the Bighorn on August 7, just below the mouth of Bighorn Canyon. Here Ashley turned his people to building bullboats. Within five days the craft had been completed and loaded. Part of the company led by Bill Sublette then returned to the Green River Basin with the horses, while Ashley, Smith, Beckwourth, and the others headed down the Bighorn. The run down the Bighorn and Yellowstone to the Missouri was uneventful.²⁹

Ashley's 23-man company encountered General Atkinson and Indian Agent Benjamin O'Fallon at the mouth of the Yellowstone on August 19. Atkinson had departed Council Bluffs on May 16, and, as he and his troops had proceeded up the Missouri, had concluded treaties with the Ponca, Cheyenne, Arikara, Hidatsa, Mandan, Crow,

28. William F. Reynolds, *Report of the Exploration of the Yellowstone River, 1859-1860* (Washington, 1868), p. 56.

29. Beckwourth, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 50-52; *The West of William Ashley*, p. 130; Sunder, *Bill Sublette*, p. 60. Ashley recorded that the journey from the Green to the Bighorn was an easy route, except for the Bighorns, which were about 30 miles across.

and several divisions of the Sioux.³⁰ The trappers on the 27th transferred their 100 packs of beaver pelts, valued at \$50,000, to an army keelboat. The run down the Missouri was commenced, and on October 4 Ashley was back in St. Louis.³¹

Ashley's expedition of 1825 perfected the rendezvous which had been started the previous year by his former partner, Major Henry. For the next 12 years, until 1837 the rendezvous served as a central point to which in summer, when the beaver left the streams, the trappers could bring their annual catch, and to which supplies from St. Louis could be carried during the season when overland travel was easiest. No longer would the fur trade of the Bighorn and Green River Basins be tied to water routes and fixed headquarters such as Forts Raymond, Henry, and Benton. Many of the free trappers became so attached to the region that they had wanted to spend the entire year in the "Big Sky Country," and the rendezvous made this possible. No longer was the American fur trade, in the Rockies, dependent on the Indians. More skins were now gathered by free trappers, who traveled in small groups and trapped the streams more efficiently than the redmen.³²

C. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company Takes Charge

1. Ashley Sells Out

General Ashley sponsored his second and final rendezvous in June and July 1826. When he left St. Louis on March 8 Ashley was accompanied by 25 men and a large pack train. For Robert Campbell, David E. Jackson, and several others it was their first trip to the Rockies. The route traversed was via the North Platte, across South Pass, and on to Bear Lake.

On July 18 "near the Grand Lake [Great Salt Lake] west of the Rocky Mountains," Ashley sold his "mountain interests and activities" to Jedediah Smith, David E. Jackson, and William L. Sublette. He retained the right to supply with trade goods the new company, known to history as the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. By its agreement with Ashley, the partnership secured the services of the 42 contract trappers, and \$16,000 worth of merchandise unsold at the

30. The treaty signed with the Crow at the Mandan Villages was the first of many treaties the Crow were to sign with the United States.

31. *The West of General William T. Ashley*, pp. 130-131; Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 74-75. Atkinson's command did not ascend the Yellowstone.

32. Brown, *Plainsmen of the Yellowstone*, p. 68; Jones, *Trappers and Mountain Men*, p. 97.

1826 rendezvous. General Ashley then returned to St. Louis, overland, bringing with him 125 beaver packs valued at \$60,000.

2. Jedediah Smith Returns to the Bighorns

The rendezvous had brought other changes, No longer were the trappers limited in their movements, and they now adopted the nomadic habits of the plains Indians. Jedediah Smith in 1827 and 1828 demonstrated that the only western limit to their wanderings was the Pacific Ocean. Now the entire region was frequented by Mountain Men.

Smith's party in July 1828 had been ambushed and routed by Indians in the Oregon Country, Smith barely escaping to Fort Vancouver with his life. It is therefore not surprising that in the autumn of 1829, Jedediah Smith and one of his partners, William Sublette, determined to return to the Bighorn Basin. After the summer rendezvous in Pierre's Hole, they worked their way up Henry's Fork, through North Pass to Missouri Lake. It was November before they reached the head of the Madison, having been harassed by Blackfoot much of the way. Crossing the Madison Range to the Gallatin, they eventually reached the Yellowstone, about 30 miles above present day Livingston. In crossing the Beartooth Mountains the trappers fought their way through huge drifts, losing at least 100 head of horses and mules. Breaking out of the mountains, they reached the Stinking Water (Shoshone). Describing this region as the "back door to the country divines preach about," they pushed on to the Bighorn.

Here they encountered 40 men belonging to Milton Sublette's command. Smith and William Sublette cached the proceeds of their fall hunt, and the united companies headed south. The trail up over the Littlehorns brought them to Wind River, and just before Christmas, they went into winter quarters, having had a successful fall hunt.³⁴

Smith, Jackson, and Sublette now gave serious consideration to the prospects of their partnership. The autumn hunt had been a trial balloon to decide whether or not a supply expedition should be organized in 1830. They determined that the proceeds justified another year's operations, despite Smith's losses, and that William Sublette was to return to St. Louis and organize a train to bring out supplies.

After nearly four years of partnership, the firm was barely solvent. It had lost 44 men during those years, and by July 1830 its

33. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 87-89; DeVoto, *Across the Wide Missouri*, p. 388; Charles Lindsey, *The Big Horn Basin* (Lincoln, 1940), p. 38.

34. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, pp. 307-308.

losses in horses, mules, furs, traps, and equipment would total at least \$43,500. Their margin of profit had suffered from the increased cost of trapping and trading, from higher merchandise prices and transportation costs, from regular salary outlays, from business competition, and from the depletion of some of the best hunting grounds. They were still in debt to Ashley for a small sum, as their entire fur return for the years 1826-29, amounted to \$87,000, which was not sufficient to cover costs and losses.³⁵

From Robert Campbell they heard additional grim tidings. He reported that during the spring hunt on the Bighorn, the company had lost four men (Ezekiel Able, Peter Spoon, Philip Adam, and Luke Lariour) killed by Blackfoot at Bad Pass.³⁶

In most years Wind River was a good place for the Mountain Men to hole up, but December 1829 was unseasonably cold and game exceptionally scarce. Early in January 1830, Jed Smith had his people break camp, and he led them toward the buffalo country on Powder River, 150 miles to the northeast. Jim Bridger accompanied Smith's party as guide. The company proceeded to the Powder by way of Clarks Fork, Pryor Gap, and the Yellowstone. This movement did not improve the situation, as the horses and mules had to be subsisted on bark. To collect the bark, the men carried limbs of the cottonwood to camp, where, beside the campfire, they shaved off the sweet, green bark, with a hunting knife transformed into a drawing knife by fastening a piece of wood to its point. This roughage was tied into bundles or blankets for use as needed.³⁷

With the approach of spring, Smith determined to take his command into the country of the Blackfeet, "a region abounding in the riches which he sought, could they only be secured without coming into too frequent conflict with the natives: always a doubtful question concerning these savages."

The first stop after leaving the Powder was Tongue River. Pushing on toward his goal, Smith led his people over to the Bighorn. While camped on Beauvais Creek, the company was caught in a blizzard. Travel became difficult at best. A chinook now bore in; the snow disappeared within hours, and the dry washes and creeks ran bank full. In attempting to fort Beauvais Smith saw 30 of his horses and 300 traps swept away. This was a severe loss in the beaver trade.

35. Sunder, *Bill Sublette*, pp. 83-84.

36. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, p. 306.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 313; Victor, *River of the West*, p. 82. The Mountain Men took two weeks to reach the Powder.

Undaunted, the company moved on trapping as it went, passing through Pryor Gap, down to Clarks Fork, and up the Yellowstone to its great bend. Bullboats were built to cross the Yellowstone, after which the Mountain Men headed north to the headwaters of the Musselshell. They trapped the Musselshell to its mouth. The Blackfoot were hostile, and Smith, seeing that to remain would involve the company in incessant war, determined to "get safe out of the Blackfoot country with their harvest of furs."

The return march was by way of Pryor Gap and up the Bighorn to Wind River, where the cache had been made the previous December. The pelts were taken out and pressed, ready for transportation across the plains. A party was also dispatched, under Samuel Tullock,³⁸ to raise the cache on the Bighorn. Among this party was Joseph L. Meek and a Frenchman named Ponto. While digging to get at the fur, the bank caved, falling upon Meek and Ponto, killing the Frenchmen. Meek was rescued, while Ponto was "rolled on a blanket, and pitched into the Bighorn."³⁹

3. The Partnership Sells Out

William Sublette in the meantime had returned to St. Louis and undertook an innovation. He purchased ten heavy-duty wagons and two Dearborn buggies. On April 10, 1830, he left St. Louis with his wagon train and 80 handpicked men. Sublette's wagons, the first wagon train across the northern plains, reached the Popo Agie rendezvous on July 16, having averaged about ten miles per day on the trip.

Fifteen days later, on August 1, the partnership was dissolved, and Smith, Jackson, and William Sublette sold their mountain interests to Thomas Fitzpatrick, Milton G. Sublette, Henry Fraeb, Jean Baptiste Gervais, and Jim Bridger for \$15,523.23. The new firm was to be known as the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.⁴⁰

38. Unknown to the partners, Tullock was employed by the rival American Fur Company, and had been sent to spy on their operations. DeVoto, *Across the Wide Missouri*, p. 388.

39. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, pp. 313-315; Victor, *River of the West*, pp. 82-83, 88-89; Alter, *Jim Bridger*, p. 110. A popular method of caching fur was to dig a pit to a depth of five or six feet in which to stand. The men then "drifted" into this bank of solid earth, and excavated a room of "considerable dimensions" in which the pelts are deposited, and the tunnel closed. The pit was then backfilled with earth, and the traces of digging obliterated. Victor, *River of the West*, p. 80.

40. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 110-111; DeVoto, *Across the Wide Missouri*, p. 388.

D. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company and the Bighorns

1. The American Fur Company Throws Down the Gauntlet

The years immediately following found the Rocky Mountain Fur Company in bitter competition with the reorganized American Fur Company. In the autumn of 1829, hard-driving Kenneth McKenzie of the latter company established Fort Union, on the left bank of the Missouri, a short distance above the mouth of the Yellowstone.⁴¹ From this post McKenzie in 1830 sent an agent (Jacob Berger) to bring in a village of Blackfoot, and the next year the American Fur Company built a post, Fort McKenzie, near the mouth of the Marias River, deep in Blackfoot Country. At Fort Union in 1831 McKenzie negotiated a treaty of peace and friendship with the Piegan and Assiniboin. The following year Fort Cass was laid out at the mouth of the Bighorn. Like Lisa's post and Fort Benton, which had disappeared, Fort Cass was founded for trade with the Crow. McKenzie had been ordered by his superiors "to crush the opposition," the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.⁴²

2. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company Accepts the Challenge

To challenge the American Fur Company, Fitzpatrick, Bridger, and Sublette in August of 1830 organized a 91-man company, not counting freemen, to trap the Blackfoot country. Heading northward from the Popo Agie rendezvous, they crossed Bad Pass, passed through Pryor Gap, waded Clarks Fork, and forded the Yellowstone.⁴³ Advancing boldly toward the Missouri, they trapped the Smith River to its mouth, and then moved up the former to the Three Forks. Heavily armed patrols kept a sharp watch for Blackfoot. With the approach of winter, the company crossed Bridger Pass and wintered on the Yellowstone, where game and forage were plentiful.

Early in the spring of 1831, Fitzpatrick started for St. Louis to bring out a supply caravan, while Bridger and Sublette led the company down the Yellowstone to Tongue River. One dark night, the Crow slipped by the guards and ran off, by one report, 300 head of stock, and by another, 57. A strong force of Mountain Men

41. Erwin Thompson, *Fort Union Trading Post - Historic Structures Report* (Washington, 1968), pp. 11-15.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

43. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, p. 113. Clarks Fork was crossed near present-day Bridger and the Yellowstone above the mouth of the Boulder.

moved out. The trail left by the Crow was followed for three nights and two days. On the third day they sighted the Crow on a tributary of the Bighorn. The trappers advanced cautiously. Being on the opposite side of the stream, on a wooded bluff, they looked down into the village, and counted 60 Crow. Covered by their comrades, Antoine Godin and Robert Newell slipped forward, as soon as the Indians had retired for the night, and cut loose the horses. The Crow awakened by stampeding stock sprang to arms, while the Mountain Men posted on the bluff blazed away. Not waiting for the Crow to recover, the trappers remounted, and drove off the stock, leaving the "ambitious braves to finish their excursion on foot."⁴⁴

The company separated. Sublette proceeded with one detachment to the South Platte, while Bridger's made its way to the head of Laramie Fork. Two years were to pass before the men of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company returned in force to the Bighorn Country.

3. Zenas Leonard Winters on the Bighorn

A company of free trappers, however, spent the winter of 1832-1833 on the Bighorn, near the mouth of Stinking Water. Capt. John Gantt's company, having crossed to the Pacific coast, had left the Willamette Valley in the Oregon Country in September. Riding eastward they reached the headwaters of the Missouri, where they lost five horses to the Crow. Zenas Leonard subsequently recalled that they pursued in hopes of recovering the stock. Reaching the Bighorn, they rode down that river several days, until they reached a Crow village at the mouth of Stinking Water. In the village they found a Negro, probably James Beckwourth, as Edward Rose had died several years before.⁴⁵ Leonard reported that the Negro "has acquired a correct knowledge of their [the Crow] manner of living, and speaks their language fluently. He has rose to be quite a considerable character, or chief, in their village; at least he assumes all the dignities of a chief, for he has four wives with whom he lives alternately."

44. Ibid., p. 114; Victor, *River of the West*, pp. 97-98.

45. On July 25, 1969, I discussed Edward Rose and James Beckwourth with Joe Medicine Crow. He told me that tribal history tells of a black-white-man, the Crow's description for a Negro, but it fails to differentiate between them. For the Crow, Rose and Beckwourth, as well as any other Mountain Man possessing the characteristics of a Negro, have lost their identity.

They asked the Negro about the stolen horses. He explained that the Crow had them; that the reason they were taken was because the trappers were in Blackfoot country; and they supposed Gantt planned to trade the Blackfoot firearms and ammunition. After the whites had given the chief several trifling gifts, the horses were returned.

About January 1, 1833, game starting to get scarce, the village broke camp and moved across Bad Pass. The Mountain Men remained at the mouth of Stinking Water until February 20, when they set out for the spring hunt on the North Platte.⁴⁶

4. Sublette and Campbell form a Partnership

William Sublette and Robert Campbell, who had close connections with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, formed a partnership in 1832 aimed at carrying the war to the American Fur Company by erecting a competing post close to Fort Union.⁴⁷ Biding their time, they prepared to strike in 1833. At the rendezvous, Campbell would prevail on those in attendance to send their beaver packs to the St. Louis market by the way of Bad Pass, and the Bighorn, Yellowstone, and Missouri rivers. This would be the first time since 1825 that this route had been exploited for this purpose, and Campbell and Sublette felt it would serve as a cover for their scheme.

5. The 1833 Caravan Crosses Bad Pass*

Nathaniel J. Wyeth, a New Englander, had read with interest of Ashley's successes, and he determined to enter the fur trade. The competition, which had been keen between the British and Americans, was becoming increasingly intense. In 1829 Capt. Benjamin L. E. Bonneville of the 7th Infantry secured a leave of absence from the War Department, and led a band of trappers into the Rockies. Competition was pushed to the point where rival trappers were encouraged to destroy the traps set by their rivals.

When the trappers began gathering at the Green River rendezvous in 1833, Captain Bonneville determined to make arrangements to get the pelts he had collected safely transported to St. Louis. Robert Campbell was at the rendezvous of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, having brought up their year's supplies. Bonneville learned that Campbell was about to start east with the year's catch of furs; that he planned to cross Bad Pass to the head of navigation on the Bighorn; and that he would descend the Bighorn

* see National Register forms, p. 645.

46. Zenas Leonard, *Adventures of Zenas Leonard: Fur Trader*, John C. Ewers, editor (Norman, 1959), pp. 51-52.

47. Thompson, *Fort Union Trading Post*, p. 29.

and Yellowstone in bullboats to the Missouri. The previous year the shallow-draft steamboat *Yellow Stone* had reached Fort Union, and no longer would the trappers be dependent on keelboats for navigating the upper Missouri.

Bonneville would forward his peltries by the same route, in charge of a trusted employee, Michel S. Cerré. He would accompany Cerré to the point of embarkation, and then make an autumn hunt in the land of the Crow.⁴⁸

The rendezvous began to break up in the last week of July. The Indian tipis were struck and the redmen rode off. The free trappers started for their hunting grounds, which were always kept secret.

Bonneville on July 25 broke camp and started for the Bighorn, at the head of a party of 56 men, including those who were to embark with Cerré. Crossing the valley of Green River, Bonneville rounded the Wind River Range and soon came upon the trail left by Campbell's party, which had preceded him by one day. This he pursued, until he saw that it veered to the southeast toward the Sweetwater. He then turned his company to the northeast and soon reached the Popo Agie. Riding down the Popo Agie, he passed through the Littlehorn Mountains. On August 4, soon after debouching from the gap in the Littlehorns, Bonneville's company fell in with that of Campbell.⁴⁹

With Campbell were members of a party from the Rocky Mountain Fur Company led by Thomas Fitzpatrick and Nathaniel Wyeth and his people. Charles Larpenteur, one of Campbell's young recruits, recalled that Campbell's company was much reduced when it started for the Bighorns, as many members had remained on Green River "with the intention, according to custom, to set out through the mountains so soon as trapping time commenced." Fitzpatrick and Dr. Benjamin Harrison, accompanied by 20 men, rode with them. Two days after leaving the Sweetwater, they reached Wind River. The previous evening, the scouts who had ridden ahead to find a good camp site had been fired on by Indians, and one of them had been hit twice--a ball striking him in the ear had emerged under the jaw, while he had taken an arrow in the shoulder blade. Dr. Harrison extracted the arrowhead and dressed the wound, which he pronounced not dangerous.⁵⁰

48. Washington Irving, *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U. S. A., in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West*, Edgeley Todd, ed. (Norman, 1961), p. 163.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 171-174.

50. Charles Larpenteur, *Forty Years a Fur Trader on the Upper Missouri: The Personal Narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-1872*, Elliott Coues,

The rival companies determined to form a joint-camp. Bonneville, however, soon began to suspect Fitzpatrick's motives. Fitzpatrick and his men maintained a silence as to their future movements. Bonneville suspected that they intended to trap the same area west of the Bighorn that he had selected for his autumn campaign. Before reaching the Bighorn Mountains, Bonneville detached several of his trappers, with orders to steal a march on Fitzpatrick. He would rendezvous with them at the end of August at Medicine Lodge.⁵¹

By August 8 the Mountain Men had reached the Stinking Water (Shoshone), near its confluence with the Bighorn. The next day, Wyeth recorded in his journal, they rode northward ten miles and camped on a small stream (probably Crooked Creek). On this day as on the previous one, they had traveled "over ground naked of vegetables in which the animals sank nearly six inches deep at every step." The soil resembled lime, except for the color. On the 10th the trail bore away from the river and led through a range of rocky hills. Wyeth made a detour to reconnoiter the river and found that it flowed through a chasm with steep rocky walls. He recorded that the river looked "tranquil, but flows between two perpendicular banks of stone perhaps five hundred to eight hundred feet high." Even at the top the chasm had no great width. One Bighorn was killed during the day by hunters, and Wyeth rationed the meat to feed his men.⁵²

Hunting was good on August 11, as the trappers crossed a "fine grass country," where they saw hundreds of buffalo, six of which were killed. Twenty miles were covered during the day, and the only difficulty encountered was fording three streams. While the creeks were small, they had steep banks.⁵³

The Mountain Men on the 12th made a four-mile march, and, descending Grapevine Creek, came out on the Bighorn, within sight of the mouth of the canyon. For the third time since 1824, a pack train heavily loaded with beaver packs had crossed the Bighorns by "a rugged and frightful route . . . called the 'Bad Pass.'" While Campbell and Wyeth sent out men to shoot buffalo to get

editor (2 vols. New York, 1898), 1, 38-40.

51. Irving, *Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, p. 163.

52. "The Correspondence and Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 1831-36," F.G. Young, editor, *Sources of the History of Oregon* (Eugene, 1899), p. 209. The trail followed by the companies, after bearing away from the Bighorn, crossed Dryhead near the site of today's Dryhead Ranch. Wyeth had reconnoitered Bighorn Canyon somewhere between its junction with Devils Canyon and the mouth of Hough Creek.

53. These streams were probably Spring, Pitchfork, and Hoodoo.

hides to construct bullboats, Bonneville detached ten men with orders to join their comrades at the Medicine Lodge rendezvous.⁵⁴

A number of buffalo were killed and skinned, and as luck would have it, Louis Vasques, Mountain Man and clerk, shot "one of the fattest buffalo ever seen." The companies remain in their camp at the mouth of Grapevine until August 15, building bullboats, "A light fragile kind of bark, characteristic of the expedients and inventions of the wilderness: being formed of buffalo skins, stretched on frames."⁵⁵

Wyeth's craft (18 feet long, about five and one-half feet wide, sharp at both ends, and with a round bottom) cast off first. Milton Sublette took passage in Wyeth's boat. The other companies followed. Captain Bonneville's convoy consisted of three bullboats, in which he embarked all his peltries, and placed them in charge of Cerré and 36 men. Campbell followed in his boats. Before leaving the camp, Campbell had detached Vasquez with four men to bring down the mules and cattle.⁵⁶

All the vessels were under way by noon on August 15. Although Wyeth's craft leaked, it answered its purpose. The current was rapid, but there were many shoals with a depth of two feet. After a three-mile run, Wyeth, observing that a number of his men had got into the whiskey and were dangerously drunk, steered for a bar, where they spent the night.

An early start was made on the 16th, although many of the men had frightful hangovers. The run down the Bighorn was "quite pleasant," but, because of the many snags and bars, it called for considerable skill on the part of the navigator. Whenever there was an inland, a choice had to be made as to which channel to take. Occasionally he guessed wrong, and the craft, which drew one and one-half feet, grounded six times during the morning. Wyeth was surprised "how hard a thump these bull Boats will stand." On the banks of the Bighorn were seen three grizzly bear and a number of bull buffalo.

54. "Correspondence and Journal of Captain Wyeth," *Sources*, p. 209; Irving, *Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, pp. 176-177.

55. Irving, *Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, p. 177; Larpenteur, *Forty Years*, 1, 41-42. The rawhides, stretched over a green-willow frame, were dried over a slow fire, and the seams water-proofed with elk tallow.

56. Irving, *Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, pp. 177-178; "Correspondence and Journal of Captain Wyeth," *Sources*, pp. 209-210.

Wyeth, checking his compass, found that the direction of the river's course was generally north by east. At 11 o'clock, having been under way six hours, the traders put into shore to eat. It was estimated that during the six-hour run, they had covered about 36 miles.⁵⁷

One hour after they resumed descending the Bighorn, the travelers passed a point which they believed to be the mouth of the Little Bighorn. Here a stream came in from the southeast, but Wyeth admitted, "it is difficult to tell a returning slew from a river." The Mountain Men were impressed with the number of beaver they saw, and concluded that here is the best trapping country "ever found on so large a river." Below the mouth of the Little Bighorn, the river was "about 100 yards wide when all together but is much cut into slews which makes the navigation very difficult." Mosquitos were out in force, and Wyeth complained that they effect "me almost as bad as a rattle snake." Having made about 24 miles during the afternoon, the trappers camped.

An early start was made on August 17. About 9 o'clock, after having traveled about 24 miles, several persons were sighted on the river bank. They at first believed them to be whites from Fort Cass, but they soon saw that they were Crow. The red men shouted to the trappers that their entire nation was nearby. Wyeth was anxious to avoid the Crow, but the Bighorn afforded no hiding place. The Crow motioned for the bullboat to pull into shore. Before the day was over, the Mountain Men was compelled by the Crow to land six times.

Reaching the confluence of the Bighorn with the Yellowstone, Wyeth saw that the latter stream, unlike the former, was clear. About three miles below the mouth of the Bighorn, they sighted the American Fur Company's Fort Cass. The manager of the post was Samuel Tullock, who received Wyeth and his people with "little or no ceremony." Wyeth attributed his actions to his being a sick man.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, he permitted Wyeth and his people to trade "10 packs of Beaver and 150 to 200 pack robes."⁵⁹

57. "Correspondence and Journal of Captain Wyeth," *Sources*, pp. 209-210.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 210. Fort Cass was located on the north side of the Yellowstone. It was about 130-foot square, built of cottonwood pickets, with two bastions at the extreme corners. The post had been erected in the fall of 1832. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 210. Trade goods were brought up to Fort Cass in keel-boats, and two of these craft were tied up at the post.

Before they started down the Yellowstone on August 18 some Gros Ventres arrived at Fort Cass. Seven days later, Wyeth, Cerré, and Campbell's boats reached the junction of the Yellowstone and Missouri, and the crews poled their boats four miles up the latter to the American Fur Company's greatest post, Fort Union.⁶⁰ At the mouth of the Yellowstone, Campbell met his partner, Sublette, who had come up the Missouri by steamboat with supplies and trade goods. Near the confluence, on the same side of the Missouri as Fort Union, the partners began building Fort William, named for Sublette.⁶¹

6. Vasquez's Party Meets the Crow

On August 16, the day after the bullboats had cast off from the mouth of Grapevine, Vasquez and his drovers started for the mouth of the Bighorn. Among those with Vasquez was Charles Larpenteur, a young man of French birth, who had signed up "for 18 months, for the sum of \$296 and such food as could be procured in the Indian Country." For the first two days, Larpenteur recalled, we traveled slowly and quietly. They purposely held down the pace, because the cattle's hooves were worn and tender. Before they had gone very far, Vasquez, who had gone ahead to scout, returned and warned that he had sighted three Indians on the east side of the Bighorn. Vasquez suggested that they move closer to the river and build a fort. As they neared the Bighorn, they saw that the opposite shore was red with Indians. Vasquez shouted for them to take cover in a grove of cottonwood and to load and prime their rifles, but not to shoot until he gave the word. The trappers felt certain the Indians were Blackfoot.

A tall Indian now advanced brandishing a white flag, and making signs for the whites to hold their fire. Paulette Desjardins, an old Mountain Man, understood a few words of Crow, and as the redman called the name of his people, the old trapper muttered, "They are Crows--there is no danger for our lives, but they are great thieves." Lowering their rifles, they permitted the Crow to approach. The trappers, having a large supply of buffalo meat, invited the Crow to a feast.⁶²

60. En route down the Yellowstone, one of Cerré's three bullboats was upset, and he lost some of Bonneville's furs, while Campbell's "capsized in the [Big] horn, lost two packs of beaver," and came near losing his life. Lindsey, *Big Horn Basin*, pp. 39-40.

61. Thompson, *Fort Union Trading Post*, p. 29.

62. Larpenteur, *Forty Years*, 1, 42-44.

The Crow, after feasting, made it clear that it was trade or else, and Larpenteur was compelled to part with his new blankets and his \$21 sky-blue capote. Many younger warriors had a reputation for bullying small parties of traders, but usually the chief would call on them to behave and have his police beat them off if they delayed. This chief, however, boasted that he loved his white brothers so much that they ought to be overjoyed to trade on his young men's terms.

Upon resuming their drive down the west bank of the Bighorn, the Mountain Men had not gone three miles, when ten Indians came galloping toward them. They halted and permitted them to approach, and found that they were the principal chiefs of the Crow nation, headed by Arrapooash. The Crow were splendidly dressed and mounted on fat ponies. Arrapooash was a great warrior, and the upper part of his shield was blackened to represent a storm cloud and carried the head and claws of a thunderbird he had seen in his vision quest.

After greetings were exchanged, the Crow invited the traders to their village, comprising 400 lodges. Arrapooash, to protect the whites, invited Vasquez and his men to share his lodge. He advised them to remain so that he could protect them from a band of Blackfoot known to be en route to the area to make peace with the Crow. The guests of Arrapooash took his advice, and stayed until the peacemakers arrived. Apparently, Larpenteur had not been away from St. Louis long enough, because he was not ready to accept the Crow women. He reported that the females were too fond of white men, "rather too much so to preserve their honor."

Upon departing from the village of Arrapooash, the traders pushed on to Fort Cass, one day's journey to the north.⁶³

7. Captain Bonneville and the Blackfoot

Captain Bonneville, upon the departure of Cerré, was left to conduct his fall hunt without a rival. Accompanied by four men, on August 17 he started back over the Bighorns en route to the Medicine Lodge rendezvous. Besides their mounts, they drove a herd of 41 horses. During the afternoon as they rode up Grapevine, they sighted a smoke cloud. A halt was called to allow Bonneville to study the situation, and he concluded that it indicated a large encampment, perhaps Blackfoot. To avoid the village, a circuitous detour was made, and the trappers reached the divide without being discovered. Here they found a deserted Blackfoot fort and took cover.⁶⁴

63. Ibid., pp. 44-45.

64. Irving, *Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, pp. 178-179. This

Early the next morning, the Bonneville party completed its passage of Big Pass and returned to the Bighorn Basin. On August 29 they reached Medicine Lodge, where they found the two detachments that had preceded.⁶⁵

Here Bonneville learned that the ten men he had detached while the bullboats were building had had an encounter with the Blackfoot. While pitching camp near the head of Grapevine, one of the Mountain Men took his mule and went to set traps in a nearby stream. He soon discovered an Indian fort and returned to warn his comrades. He was jeered at for his alacrity in retreating; his report was treated as a false alarm; and his fellow trappers contented themselves with reconnoitering the fort from a distance and pronouncing it deserted.⁶⁶

Shortly before daybreak, the Mountain Men were awakened by shots, shouts, and the pounding of horses' hoofs. The men turned out under arms, and several moved to quiet the horses and mules, and tether more strongly those that had not broken away. A breastwork was thrown up of saddles, baggage, and camp furniture, and all hands awaited the dawn. The Blackfoot rallied on a neighboring hill and kept up a frightful clamor in hopes of panicking the trappers and stampeding their mounts. As soon as it was light, the trappers attacked the Indians and routed them from the commanding ground. The Blackfoot "went off, uttering the wildest denunciations of hostility, mingled with opprobrious terms in broken English, and gesticulations of the most insulting kind." In this melee, one of the trappers was wounded and two horses killed.⁶⁷

As the Blackfoot rode away in the direction the trappers had intended to travel, the latter changed their route, and pushed ahead through Bad Pass.⁶⁸

8. The Crow Plunder Fitzpatrick

After parting with Bonneville on the banks of the Bighorn, Fitzpatrick's company headed southeastward to trap on the Little Bighorn, Tongue, and Powder. Fitzpatrick had between 20 and 30

fort may have been the one presently existing in excellent state of preservation near Grapevine Dome, on the divide separating Grapevine and Muddy creeks.

65. Ibid., p. 179

66. Ibid., p. 181.

67. Ibid., pp. 182-183.

68. Ibid., p. 183.

men and about 100 horses. He claimed he was searching for the Crow to obtain permission to make his fall hunt in their country. He had determined to challenge the American Fur Company, and see if an aggressive campaign would cut the ground out from under Samuel Tullock's business at Fort Cass. It was customary to pay a moderate fee to Indians whom one met when trapping in country they had a recognized claim to. The Crow, who had a rudimentary idea of conservation, did not want to see their country trapped out. Moreover, they had so far forsworn alcohol.

Fitzpatrick hoped to regain the Crow trade during his fall hunt for his Rocky Mountain Fur Company, while Campbell and Sublette forced the American Fur Company at Fort Union to pay higher prices for beaver pelts. Besides Samuel Tullock at Fort Cass, the American Fur Company had at least two resident agents with the Crow. One was S. P. Winter, the other Jim Beckwourth, who had crossed Bad Pass with General Ashley in 1825. Tullock, Winter, and Beckwourth had been instructed to make permanent Company customers of the Crow.⁶⁹

The Crow soon learned that Fitzpatrick's company was operating in their country. A large Crow village on September 5 came up with the trappers, just as they reached Tongue River. The Crow chief approached with a great display of friendship and proposed to Fitzpatrick that they camp together. Fitzpatrick, not having any faith in the Crow, refused, and the Mountain Men camped three miles away. Accompanied by several men, Fitzpatrick rode over to visit the Crow chief, by whom he was received with great cordiality. Meanwhile, a number of young braves dashed into the trappers' encampment. Capt. William G. D. Stewart, who had remained there in Fitzpatrick's absence, conducted himself with great spirit. But there were too many Crow. They took possession of the camp, and soon made "booty of every thing-- carrying off all the horses." On their return to their village, they met Fitzpatrick, and finished their "exploit by rifling and nearly stripping him."⁷⁰

Fitzpatrick now attempted to negotiate with the triumphant Crow. What eloquence and management Fitzpatrick made use of we do not know, but he succeeded in getting the Crow chiefs to return the horses and many of the traps; together with his rifles and a few rounds of ammunition for each man. Fitzpatrick then led his company out of the Crow country as rapidly as possible, before he encountered any more embarrassment.⁷¹

69. DeVoto, *Across the Wide Missouri*, pp. 122-125.

70. Irving, *Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, pp. 207-208.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

The robbery, in Fitzpatrick's opinion, was inspired by the American Fur Company. Writing General Ashley, he accused the trust, pointing out that a Company agent, undoubtedly Beckwourth, was present when it was carried out. The stolen pelts promptly found their way to Tullock at Fort Cass. Tullock forwarded to Fort Union 43 beaver pelts with the RMF Company's mark. If Fitzpatrick were to complain, Tullock was directed by his superiors to tell him to go to Fort Union, where they would sell him the skins for the price of the goods traded for them to the Crow at Fort Cass, plus an equitable fee for transportation to Fort Union and for taking care of them. McKenzie was in the trading business and as such he was willing to deal with Fitzpatrick, "if I get my price. I make this proposal as a favor, not as a matter of right, for I consider the Indians entitled to trade any beaver in their possession to me or to any other trader."⁷²

E. Comments and Recommendations*

Though the Bighorn River helped provide practically an all-water route to St. Louis from the heart of the beaver country, it never became a popular highway for the fur traders. It offered problems that were to be avoided. The rapids and swift water of the canyon, despite Bridger's passage, were obstacles that were to be avoided. Added to the dangerous rapids was the inconvenience of building bullboats and transferring cargo from horses. The bullboats were short-lived; the hides soon rotted in the water, and they did good service if they lasted through a trip without repair. Once on the river with the valuable cargo, the opportunity to defend it from Indians along the route was lessened. The Crow, who frequented the Basin to hunt in the fall, were ready to levy tribute, especially when frail river craft promised easy prey. Finally, the cross-country route was a good 500 miles shorter.

With the opening up of the fur trade in the mountains came the rediscovery of South Pass. There was now little thought of toiling up a stubborn current to bring supplies to the Mountain Men. Once they were equipped with horses the stock used thereafter to bring their provisions and trade goods need not all be left in the mountains. After the gaps in the trains left by death and Indian thefts had been filled, the rest could profitably be used in returning a year's catch to the east by the route over which the trade goods had come out from St. Louis.⁷³

* see National Register forms, p. 645

72. Hafen & Ghent, *Broken Hand*, pp. 110-111; DeVoto, *Across the Wide Missouri*, pp. 125-127.

73. Lindsey, *Big Horn Basin*, pp. 41-42.

During the years that the fur trade was at its apogee, the Indian * trail leading across Bad Pass was frequented by the Mountain Men. On three occasions--following the rendezvous of 1824, 1825, and 1833--the beaver packs were sent to St. Louis by way of Bad Pass, and the Bighorn, Yellowstone, and Missouri rivers. Major Henry in 1824 pioneered the route; General Ashley in 1825 packed pelts valued in the amount of \$50,000 over the pass; and in 1833 three companies, traveling together, negotiated this route. Bad Pass was also used by the trappers in their movements to and from the Bighorn Basin to the land of the Crow and Blackfoot.

The story of the Mountain Men and their travels through Bad Pass* merits considerable attention at Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. It should be interpreted both at the Visitor Center and on-site. An interpretive marker should be erected on-site at the mouth of Grapevine to tell the story of the construction of bullboats and the river route from there to St. Louis. Between the Devils Canyon Overlook and Barry's Landing traces of the old trail, known locally as the *Sioux Trail*, can be easily identified. Piles of rocks mark the trail. The Service should take steps to interpret and protect these fragile remains.

If the road leading northward from Horseshoe Bend to Barry's Landing is improved and hard-surfaced, the Service must be vigilant to protect this valuable historic resource from bulldozers and other powerful earthmoving equipment. Extant traces of the old trail across Bad Pass will be recommended for inclusion on the List of Classified Structures.

In discussing Bad Pass with Joe Medicine Crow, he informed me that this name for the area did not originate with the Crow.⁷⁴ The route was therefore named by the Mountain Men. A map prepared in Washington in 1839, has a label marked, "Bad Pass," with the notation, "Here for 40 miles the river runs through a narrow gap in the mountains, the precipices on both sides 1,000 feet high."⁷⁵

* see National Register forms, p. 645.

74. Personal Interview, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 25, 1969.

75. "Burr Map, Washington, 1839," Library of Congress.

IV. THE CROW FROM 1820-1857

A. The Rise and Fall of Arrapooash (Rotten Belly)

1. The Tribe Divides

Two formidable chiefs rose to positions of power among the Crow in the second and third decades of the 19th century. Their rivalry led to a division of the tribe into two factions. Arrapooash (Rotten Belly) became the leader of the River Crow, while the principal chief of what became known as the Mountain Crow was Long Hair.¹ The larger number of Crow followed Long Hair, but those following Arrapooash numbered more than one-third of the tribe. For a number of years after the schism the two bands continued to dwell together, but eventually the friction reached a point where they went their separate ways. Arrapooash's people frequented the rolling hills between the Yellowstone and Missouri, while Long Hair's village roamed the Bighorn Country.

James H. Bradley, a cavalry officer who spent many years among the Crow in the 1870s, reported:

The vice of intemperance is prevalent among the River Crows and they are poorer in horses and all the necessities of their condition, which induces the Mountain Crows to regard them with contempt, while the former are jealous of the greater wealth of the latter, and besides there are many renegades among them from the Mountain Crows who are ashamed to return to their own band, and exert themselves to keep alive the feeling of envy, jealousy and mistrust. The two bands have their distinguishing names and, had the advent of the white man among them been deferred a few years, they would now be probably recognized by us as two distinct tribes.²

Edwin Denig and Lieutenant Bradley disagreed as to the relative ability of Arrapooash and Long Hair. The army officer, while admitting that Arrapooash was "a great chief and medicine man," held that he was not as powerful as Long Hair.³ Denig dis-

1. Most white authors refer to Arrapooash as Rotten Belly, but Joe Medicine Crow has informed me that the correct translation of his name Arrapooash is Rotten Tail. In this study we shall refer to him as Arrapooash. Personal Interview, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 25, 1969.

2. James H. Bradley, "Arrapooash," *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana*, 9, 312-313.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 299.

agreed. He argued that Arrapooash was the foremost Crow warrior, and held that given the same opportunity he would have rivaled Tecumseh and Pontiac.⁴

2. The Medicine of Arrapooash

Like all Crow boys, Arrapooash at the age of puberty made a vision quest, and he dreamed of thunder which became his medicine. He was soon participating in and then leading pony-stealing forays against the Blackfoot, Sioux, Arapaho, and Cheyenne. As he was invariably successful in these raids, his fame spread, and by the time he was 30 he was one of the principal Crow chiefs.

The power of his medicine added to the prestige of Arrapooash. Once, while encamped on Stinking Water, the Great Spirit appeared to him in a dream and told him to raid the Piegan, and that he would make many prisoners. A number of warriors joined him and they rode northward into Judith Basin. Here they sighted 60 persons approaching on foot. These Arrapooash claimed were the ones promised by the Great Spirit. It was discovered that the newcomers were Piegan women. They were easily captured, and with the 26 youngest and handsomest the Crow returned to their village. Some of the women escaped, but the rest were adopted into the tribe. In 1875 three of these women were still living with the Crow.⁵

Another, more striking example of the powerful medicine of Arrapooash occurred on a visit of the River Crow to the lower Gros Ventres. There the chief's favorite bay pony was stolen. When it was not returned on his demand, Arrapooash chided the Gros Ventres that they would not have done this had they known who he was:

I am Arrapooash; you know my name but are ignorant of what I am able to accomplish. I shall leave you now but know that I am angry with you and ere long you shall learn my power and what it is to incur the displeasure of Arrapooash.

The River Crow then moved a day's march from the Gros Ventres' village. Although it was a beautiful day, Arrapooash called on his people to secure their tipis with stay ropes. All was quiet for a number of hours, and the Crow began to fret that the medicine of their chief had deserted him. Then from the interior of his lodge came four loud blasts made upon the large bone horn he carried.⁶

4. Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, p. 38.

5. Bradley, "Arrapooash," *Contributions*, 9, 299-300.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 302. Bradley's informant, Little Face, told him that

Moments later, a wild wind came whipping across the prairie and made the Crow lodges sway like the boughs of a tree, but thanks to the medicine of Arrapooash, not a tipi was overthrown. A cloudburst drenched the area, to be followed by a terrible hail-storm. Sheltered in their lodges, the Crow "feared nothing."

Arrapooash, as soon as the storm passed, told his people that perhaps now the Gros Ventres would return his pony. All now understood that the storm had been brought by their chief to punish the thieves. Early the next afternoon, a large number of Gros Ventres approached the camp. Their chief, who was at their head, was leading Arrapooash's bay, and behind came a number of men with pack animals loaded with robes and other presents. These were spread before Arrapooash, and the Gros Ventres chief pled:

We have done wrong and have been punished. Your horse was taken and we refused to return it. You left us in anger yesterday morning and last night there came upon us a furious storm . . . that soaked our houses so that many of them fell in and are destroyed, while others were filled with water and their occupants forced to seek shelter where they could. The hail beat down our corn and pumpkins . . . But we do not complain for we deserved it. We now return your horse and bring you besides a large present of robes and other things, which we expect you to accept and turn from your anger against us that we receive no further punishment.

Arrapooash replied that he bore the Gros Ventres no ill will, and that he wished to regard them as brothers. "I will accept your presents, and injure you no more, but you did well to curb my displeasure, for this winter I should cause such storms to come upon you as you never witnessed."⁷

Another instance of the power of the medicine of Arrapooash occurred when he dreamed about two ponies in a Piegan camp. One was a pinto with a large black spot on each flank, with sorrel-colored ears, and the other a grey with distinctive markings. These horses, he said, must be captured, and he started northward, accompanied by several warriors. They approached the sleeping village in the dark. Creeping in, they cut loose and made off with two ponies. When day started to break and it was light enough to distinguish the animal's markings, they were as Arrapooash had described.⁸

although the noise made by the army's bugles was loud, it was nothing compared to a blast from the horn of Arrapooash.

⁷ Ibid., p. 303.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 303-304.

3. Arrapooash Wars Against the Blackfoot

Arrapooash, like all the Crow, loved the Bighorn Country. He told Robert Campbell of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company that the Great Spirit had put it "exactly in the right place." When he traveled south he encountered great barren plains with bad water; to the north the winters were long and bitter; westward the Indians of the Columbia were poor and dirty, and paddled about in canoes and lived on fish; and although Indians to the east lived well, they had to drink the muddy water of the Missouri, which a Crow's dog would not do. It was inevitable that Arrapooash, steeped as he was in these feelings, became a great Crow warrior.⁹

The first major battle with Arrapooash as war leader of the Crow was against the Blackfoot on the Musselshell. Crow scouts had been watching their foe's movements for months, and having rallied a strong force of warriors Arrapooash was careful to screen the movements of his village so as not to arouse any suspicions. As soon as he learned by runners that the time for attack was propitious, he advanced with 400 warriors under the cover of darkness. The Crow took cover near the foe. Early the next day, while the 80 Blackfoot lodges were being moved to the next camp ground, the Crow struck. Terrible was the storm that then engulfed the Blackfoot. The Crow, unencumbered with women, children, or baggage, were mounted and well-armed. The victory was complete: upwards of 100 Blackfoot were slain, 230 women and children captured, while more than 500 ponies and all the lodges and camp equipage were taken as booty. Only twenty-two Crow lost their lives in this fight.

Although others counted coup, it was Arrapooash, the leader, who received the glory. His name was sung in the villages for months; his tipi was decorated with drawings of the fight. The scalps, after having been danced, were suspended from his lodge pole. His shirt, leggings, and his buffalo robe were fringed with the hair of his enemies. The latter was "the most distinguished mark that can be borne on the dress of a warrior, and one never used but by him who has killed as many enemies as to make a robe with their scalps."¹⁰

9. Bradley, "Arrapooash," *Contributions*, 9, pp. 306-307. The Crow Country, Arrapooash told Campbell, had "snowy mountains and sunny plains, all kinds of climates and good things for every season." When the summer heat scorched the prairies, they went to the mountains; with the coming of autumn they returned to the plains to hunt; and during the winter they found shelter in the woody river bottoms.

10. Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, pp. 39-40.

4. The Cheyenne Feel the Wrath of Arrapooash

Soon after this signal victory, the Crow divided into several villages, each going its separate way. In the first two decades of the 19th century, Crow villages, on several occasions, visited the Spanish settlements at Taos and Santa Fe to trade. In the course of one of these migrations, 30 Crow lodges, while camped on the headwaters of the Cheyenne, were attacked during the night by Cheyenne. Only two Crow escaped the destruction of their village. They succeeded in returning to the Crow Country with news of the disaster.

Arrapooash at this time was with the Flathead, but within a month he had rallied the tribe and was ready to take the war path. Several of the chiefs wished to permit young men and women to accompany them.¹¹ But Arrapooash refused to lead them into battle, because he believed the "giddiness" of the "many boys and young women . . . will be productive of mischief."

"But you must go," they pleaded, "we can not succeed without you and we will not listen to a refusal."

"Well," replied Arrapooash:

as you insist and as I wish the Crow success over their enemies, I will go with you, but only on one condition--no one must kill or injure a single bird during our march upon the enemy's village, otherwise harm will befall us.¹²

The requested promise made, Arrapooash at the head of 600 picked warriors prepared to seek out the Cheyenne. He now called the chiefs into council, where he explained his battle plan. They were to leave the village, along with the old men, women, and children, and pursue the Cheyenne to the death, even if it took them beyond the Spanish settlements. An oath was taken not to return until they had avenged themselves for the loss of their relatives and friends. Two days were given over to harangues and getting ready for the anticipated hard rides. On the third day, the warriors, accompanied by the young men and women, rode rapidly toward the Cheyenne Country.

As they neared the scene of the massacre, Arrapooash called for night marches, the warriors resting themselves and their ponies during the day. Scouts were advanced. They soon returned with word that the Cheyenne village had moved, leaving a well-

11. Ibid., pp. 40-41. Among the chiefs who joined Arrapooash for the war against the Cheyenne were: Long Hair, The Little White Bear, Yellow Belly, and Two Face.

12. Bradley, *Arrapooash, Contributions*, 9, 304-305.

marked trail. Before riding on, they collected and buried the remains of the slaughtered Crow.¹³

The Cheyenne were trailed to the Arkansas. On the march, one of the young girls thoughtlessly struck at a bird with her whip and killed it. When this was reported to Arrapooash, he accosted the girl and glared at her. "It might have been more serious," he chided, "but I divine that for the killing of the bird that one life shall be lost; but this girl's brother will fall in the battle we are to fight at the village."¹⁴

The Cheyenne village was pinpointed by the scouts, and Arrapooash, under the cover of darkness, posted his warriors in the timber, one mile away. As soon as it was light, seven Crow advanced down the creek, and running between the Cheyenne's ponies and their lodges, drove the stock slowly toward Arrapooash and the waiting Crow. The Cheyenne gave chase afoot and blundered into the ambush. There was one volley, followed by a wild whoop, and the Cheyenne were encircled and butchered. Others now sallied from the village, only to meet a similar fate. Arrapooash now led his warriors in a wild charge on the village. The result was a sweeping victory for the Crow. Between 100 and 200 Cheyenne were killed, 220 women and children taken prisoner, and more than 1,000 horses, besides the camp equipage, divided among the Crow.

According to Crow legend only one warrior was lost in the battle on the Arkansas--the brother of the girl who killed the bird. Denig, however, reported the Crow had five killed and ten to 15 wounded in the fight.¹⁵

5. A Plague Visits the Crow

In the summer and fall of 1833, Denig has written, smallpox swept the Crow Country, claiming the lives of about one-half the tribe.¹⁶ Neither Prince Maximilian, who was on the upper Missouri in 1833-1834, nor Zenas Leonard, who was among the Crow in 1834-1835, has written of such an epidemic. Arrapooash to partially nullify the disaster had a census taken of his people. Then he

13. Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, pp. 41-43. This treatment of the dead was contrary to Crow custom of enveloping them and placing them in trees. But as all that remained were the bones, there was no other method of disposing of them.

14. Bradley, "Arrapooash," *Contributions*, 9, 305.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 305; Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, pp. 43-44; Lovie, *The Crow Indians*, pp. 230-236.

16. Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, pp. 44-45.

counted those able to bear arms and listed unmarried adults. The latter were counsiled to seek wivies and husbands without delay. The Cheyenne women proved an asset in this respect.

Arrapooash held the whites responsible for the scourge, and he determined to move against the post established by the American Fur Company on the Missouri, near the mouth of the Marias River. He argued that this post, Fort McKenzie, supplied the Blackfoot with firearms, ammunition, and knives. It was known that Blackfoot war parties, en route to attack the Crow, had purchased weapons at the post and that many a stolen Crow pony had been purchased by the traders. Since their arms were buried with the deceased, the Crow needed more weapons if they were to cope with Blackfoot raiders. At the council Arrapooash scored with these points, and it was determined to capture Fort McKenzie. However, the other chiefs, while willing to plunder the post--could not consent to slaying the traders. It was agreed to besiege the fort, and after compelling the whites to evacuate, to share the plunder.¹⁷

6. The Crow Move Against Fort McKenzie

The Little White Bear with 30 warriors was sent to reconnoiter Fort McKenzie, while the rest of the nation braced itself for the expedition.¹⁸ The scouts penetrated as far as the fort without encountering any Blackfoot, most of whom at this season were on the Saskatchewan. After examining the post and satisfying themselves as to its strength, the scouts started back to report. The Little White Bear became careless, and the most routine security measures were forgotten. The Crow were sighted by Spotted Elk, a veteran Blackfoot warrior, and 160 of his men. A dawn attack on the Crow camp with the predictable results ensued. The Little White Bear and all his men but four met death. These survivors carried word of the fight to Arrapooash. News of the disaster enraged Arrapooash, and he "harangued through the camp his firm determination either to leave his body in the Blackfoot Country or to take ample revenge."¹⁹

Arrapooash--at the head of 1,100 warriors, accompanied by the village--now invaded the Blackfoot Country. About June 1 the Crow

17. Ibid., pp. 46-47. Fort McKenzie, built as the successor to Fort Piegan, was on the north bank of the Missouri, six miles above the mouth of the Marias.

18. Ibid., p. 47. So certain of success were the Crow that they made about 1,000 packsaddles on which to bring off the booty.

19. Ibid., pp. 47-48.

camped on a pine mountain, 20 miles east of the post.²⁰

Fort McKenzie was under the command of Alexander Culbertson at this time. As recently as late May three Blood warriors and a squaw had stopped at the post, saying that they were en route for the Crow Country to steal horses. Major Culbertson sought in vain to talk them out of attempting such a rash act. After crossing the Missouri and reaching the Cracon Du Nez, they were attacked by The Little White Bear and his scouts. Two of the Blood warriors were killed but the third was only wounded. The surviving warrior felled one of the Crow and escaped to the fort on his pony. Major Culbertson then accompanied him to the scene of attack and returned the bodies to the post for burial.²¹

Several days later, Major Culbertson, as he was sitting in front of the fort in early evening, saw a figure in the underbrush on the opposite side of the Missouri. He crossed in a skiff and found the Blood woman who had been kidnaped by the Crow. Except for the protection afforded by sagebrush tied about her person, she was naked. She told Culbertson that she had escaped from the Crow but not before she had learned of the plan of Arrapooash to sack Fort McKenzie, and she told Culbertson what she knew.²² The Major, because the Crow war party was still at large, invited the squaw to return with him and remain in safety at the fort.

Almost immediately thereafter, 30 to 40 Crow slipped forward under cover of darkness, and took position below the river bank, 100 yards from the fort's front gate. When the horses were turned out to graze at daybreak, the Crow rushed between them and their guards and drove the horses off. Major Culbertson now put his 20 men under arms. The two 3-pounders, one in each bastion, were loaded and primed. A close watch was kept. The fort was prepared, save for provisions, to defend itself against a Plains Indian attack lacking artillery and sappers.

Buffalo had been scarce in the area during the winter of 1833-34. Little pemmican had been made by the Blackfoot and still less traded at the fort. All flour, bread, and pork had been ex-

20. Here, according to Denig, they encountered Jim Coats, a white trapper. Having trapped Crow Country, Coats spoke their language and had friends among them. Arrapooash--fearful that if Coats were allowed to proceed he would alert the post--forced him to remain. This led to subsequent stories that Coats was in league with the Crow. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

21. Bradley, "Affairs at Fort Benton," *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana*, 3, 210-211.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 211-212.

pended several months before. Now with the horses run off, it would be impossible for the hunters to procure game to subsist the garrison.²³

7. The Siege of Fort McKenzie

The entire village now made its appearance and camped in three divisions covering the fort's land fronts. Accompanied by several other chiefs, Arrapooash now approached the gate and asked permission to enter. Major Culbertson replied that the Crow had driven off his horses without provocation; that this signified a declaration of war; and that he could not admit them as Fort McKenzie was open only to friends. Arrapooash answered that he had come to talk about the horses, and that if they were permitted to enter and hold a council everything could be settled and the horses returned to him.

"Bring the horses to the gate and leave them," was Culbertson's reply, "then we can believe that the Crows do not come for war." This Arrapooash declined to do. Seeing that nothing was to be gained by negotiations, Culbertson ordered the Crow away, warning them that "if in the future they came armed to the fort he would fire upon them, whereas without arms they could come and go at pleasure." Culbertson now called for the Blood squaw and had her paraded on the stockade to let the Crow know that he was aware of their intentions.²⁴

On the second or third day of the siege, Jim Coats came to the fort, told Culbertson of the Crow plans, and warned him not to them. Evidently Coats was playing both sides because before returning to the Crow village he sought--vainly--to learn the condition of Culbertson's commissary.²⁵

Both belligerents continued to hold their fire. The besieged dug a well on the parade from which they secured water. Within a day or two the fresh meat gave out, then the pemmican was consumed, and "after four days the few dogs at the fort were killed and eaten." Next the parfleches were boiled until soft, "when they had about the appearance of carpenter's glue." While this was disgusting food it sustained life.²⁶

23. Ibid., pp. 212-213; Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, pp. 50-51.

24. Bradley, "Affairs at Fort Benton," *Contributions*, 3, 212-213. Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, p. 51; Bradley, "Lieut. James H. Bradley's Journal," *Contributions*, 2, 181.

25. Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, p. 51.

26. Bradley, "Affairs at Fort Benton," *Contributions*, 3, pp. 213-214; Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, p. 52. Parfleches were raw buffalo hides in which pemmican was stored.

The Canadian engagees became disheartened and called on Culbertson to evacuate Fort McKenzie before they starved to death. Several of the men urged Culbertson to permit them to open fire. Culbertson, although he was only 25, kept his head. He knew that, if they persevered a few days longer, the Blackfoot--who were overdue already--would be returning from the Saskatchewan, or that the keelboat from Fort Union would arrive with supplies. He also saw the necessity of cultivating the good will of the Crow. Although they did not trade at Fort McKenzie, they were frequently in the area on raids against the Blackfoot, and as they were formidable warriors their enmity was to be avoided. Finally, he knew that Indians, of whatever tribe, from their nature were unlikely to prosecute a siege to a successful conclusion.²⁷

At the end of ten days the last parfleche had been consumed, and Major Culbertson learned that a number of his men planned to slip away during the night. He accordingly determined to make a sally at noon the next day. All hands were supplied with ammunition. The next morning, while the whites were making preparations to carry the fight to the Crow, the sentries in the bastions reported an unusual commotion in the villages. Ponies were being rounded up, warriors dashing about, while scouts rode out. Looking to the northwest, the sentries saw "small blue wreaths of smoke," rising above the horizon. They gave shouts of exultation, "The Blackfoot camp, our friends, our friends!"

Crow scouts were seen to return, having themselves verified the news, and at once the Crow women began to take down their lodges, packing their gear on travois. By noon the tribe had forded the Missouri to the south bank. Several warriors fired harmlessly at the fort from the far side of the river as the last of their tribe rode off. That evening Blackfoot runners arrived, and by the next day there were 800 friendly lodges encamped at Fort McKenzie.²⁸

27. Bradley, "Affairs at Fort Benton," *Contributions*, 3, 214.

28. Ibid., p. 215; Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, pp. 53-54; Bradley, "Lieut. James H. Bradley's Journal," *Contributions*, 2, p. 181. Lieutenant Bradley was told by Culbertson in 1876 that the siege was terminated when he had frightened them into raising the siege by firing a projectile from one of the 3-pounders into the Crow camp. Before doing so, he had warned Arrapooash that if the Crow did not decamp by noon, "the garrison would open war and hurl thunderbolts among them." Arrapooash had laughed and dismissed the threat. We would question this story, because undoubtedly the Crow were now quite familiar with cannon and their capabilities.

Extracts from Culbertson's journal copied by John J. Audubon in 1843 indicate, contrary to Denig and Bradley, that the siege lasted only two days, June 25 and 26, ending when a party of Blood Indians brought meat to the defenders on June 30. John J. Audubon, *Audubon and His*

8. The Death of Arrapooash

En route back to the Bighorn Country, once his people were several days' march from the Blackfoot, Arrapooash called a halt. Since recrossing the Missouri the chief had been "dressed in his most gay and costly war suit. He wore his shirt and leggings fringed with human hair, his war eagle feather bonnet, and his robe of state covered with the scalp locks of his enemies hung over his shoulders," but he had failed to keep his vow to leave his body in the land of the Blackfoot, should the Crow fail to capture Fort McKenzie. Chance was to give him an opportunity to redeem this lost prestige.

Scouting with several of his warriors, Arrapooash encountered a war party of 20 Blackfoot. They charged the foe, killing two, and forcing the rest to take refuge in a stronghold, where Arrapooash would have followed them but for the restraining hands of his friends who seized his horse's bridle and held him back. All save Arrapooash protested that it would be foolish to assault the survivors.

Arrapooash continued to argue violently with his warriors for a few moments, and then suddenly agreed to return to the village. As soon as the grip on his pony was relaxed, he wheeled his horse about and shouted, "One last stroke for the Crow Nation! Two Blackfoot cannot pay for the loss of The Little White Bear!" Arrapooash drove his horse toward his foe and the animal cleared the breastwork at one jump. With his lance Arrapooash skewered a Blackfoot warrior. Then a dozen arrows ripped into the body of the great chief and he fell to the ground. His men followed Arrapooash into the stronghold and slaughtered the remaining Blackfoot. In accordance with the vow of their fallen leader, they wrapped his body in a warrior's shroud and placed it in "a tree in the country of the Blackfeet to be, as he said, a terror to them even after his death."²⁹

"The loss of Arrapooash," Denig reported, "was deeply felt and regretted by the Crow, perhaps more than that of any other man either before or since his time." As late as 1856, 22 years after his death, Arrapooash was "spoken of as the Chief, or the Great Chief."³⁰

Journals, edited by Maria R. Audubon and Elliott Coues (2 vols, New York, 1897), 2, 178-180.

29. Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, pp. 54-55; Bradley, "Lieut. James H. Bradley's Journal," *Contributions*, 2, 181-182.

30. Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, p. 56.

B. The 1825 Treaty with the Crow

In the summer of 1825 the Crow chanced to be at the Mandan Villages at the time Brig. Gen. Henry Atkinson's expedition ascended the Missouri, with the mission of making treaties with the Indian tribes and impressing them with the power of the United States. The Crow and their leaders, Long Hair and Arrapooash, viewed the United States infantry "with interest and curiosity but without awe." They had with them a half-breed woman and child, whom General Atkinson wished "to liberate." At the ensuing conference, Indian Agent Benjamin O'Fallon lost his head, when taunted by one of the Crow chiefs. He snapped his pistol in the Indian's face, and when the redman refused to be intimidated, he struck him with the butt on the head, inflicting a severe wound.

The chief received the blow with contempt. When his followers, outside the tent, learned what had transpired, they were enraged and threatened to attack the troops. In the ensuing confusion they spiked the military's cannon with sticks and clods. Edward Rose intervened and through his action peace was preserved.³¹

The Crow now surrendered the half-breed woman and child, and General Atkinson rewarded them with presents of firearms and ammunition. A treaty of friendship, the first of many, between the United States and the Crow was then signed on August 4, 1825. Long Hair signed first for the Crow, but Arrapooash refused to add his mark to the document.³²

C. The 1834 Crow-Blackfoot Fight on Nowood Creek

1. Zenas Leonard Sees a Battle

Col. Joseph Walker's company on its return from California in October 1834 trapped beaver in the Crow Country. The winter came early that year, and Walker and his men were compelled to suspend activities, having made a fair catch. To increase their store of pelts, they began trading with the Crow. Zenas Leonard and two men remained with Long Hair's village, when Walker on November 1 headed for Wind River with the rest of his company to put it into winter quarters.

31. Bradley, "Lieut. James H. Bradley's Journal," *Contributions*, 2, 180.

32. Ibid.; Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, p. 63; Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian* (New York, 1909), 4, 47-48.

Leonard, like Larocque 30 years before, was a good observer. He reported that the Crow were a powerful nation of from 7,000 to 8,000 people and divided into two divisions--the Mountain and River Crow. Long Hair, the leader of the Mountain Crow, was between 75 and 80 and very proud of his hair, which was snow white and had never been cut.³³

While on a buffalo hunt on November 20, 1834, Long Hair's village encountered Blackfoot on Nowood Creek. The intruders were afoot and, seeing that flight was impossible, they took up and fortified a strong position. Whereupon the Crow called up reinforcements from the village. The Blackfoot had chosen their ground wisely. It was on the brow of a hill, partially enclosed by a horseshoe-shaped barrier of rocks. There was a ledge of rocks, three to four feet in height, on each side. Across the open end of the horseshoe, the Blackfoot erected breastworks of logs and stone.³⁴

The first Crow attack, prior to the arrival of reinforcements, was repulsed, the Crow losing three dead. Leonard now took position in some cedars on a hill 200 yards from the fort, where he commanded a good view of the fight. The Crow now advanced on the fort 200 to 300 strong and abreast. As soon as they closed within range, they retired. Next they formed on a trail along the top of a ridge and in rotation they would gallop past the breastwork, firing as they thundered by. They would then throw themselves to the side of their ponies away from the fort, exposing to the foe nothing beyond an arm and a leg. Several horses were killed in this harassing action.

Confused by the resistance, the Crow broke off the attack and held a council. Several of the Crow, unnerved by the wails of those who had lost loved ones, were in favor of abandoning the siege; others argued that, although it would be costly, the fort must be stormed. Harangues were made and the pipe smoked.

33. Leonard, *Adventures of Zenas Leonard*, pp. 138-139. Denig, writing in 1856, reported that the chief's hair was 36 feet in length. When he had made his "vision quest," as a youth, Long Hair had learned that "he would become great in proportion to the growth of his hair." To encourage its growth, he tied weights to it, and every "few months separated the locks into small parcels which were stuck together with the gum of the pine tree." Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, p. 63. Leonard reported in 1834 that the chief's tresses were not "less than nine feet eleven inches long."

34. Leonard, *Adventures of Zenas Leonard*, pp. 144-145.

Those in favor of continuing the fight championed. Several more charges were made on the breastworks, only to be repulsed. Many of the Crow were now ready to abandon the struggle. Now a black-white-man, perhaps Jim Beckwourth, advanced a few steps and climbed onto a rock.³⁵ He harangued the Crow as cowards with whom the whites would now disdain to trade, while the Blackfoot would return to their country and boast to their people that 3,000 Crow could not defeat a handful of them; that they as a result would be laughed at, scorned, and treated with contempt. While the Crow might be cowards, a black-white-man was not. Leaping from the rock, he charged the fort. The Crow stormed forward. The barricade was crossed and the surviving Blackfoot sought to flee. They were unsuccessful, and all the warriors--69--were killed, and their camp captured. Long Hair's people had paid a heavy price for the victory--30 dead and many wounded.³⁶

The village now left Nowood Creek and traveled southwestward, camping on the night of November 30 at the confluence of the Popo Agie and Wind River. Here Leonard and his two men left the Crow and headed up Wind River, reaching Walker's camp on December 4.³⁷

2. The Grapevine Dome Fortifications

Located on the Crow Reservation, near the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, are some well-preserved fortifications. These circular- and horseshoe-shaped rock breastworks (23 in number) are on a knoll near the Grapevine Dome. These fortifications were first visited by an anthropologist on July 8, 1964, when Joe Medicine Crow, having heard the site described by a brother Crow, reconnoitered the area.

3. Crow Traditions

According to Medicine Crow's informant, a Piegan hunting party about 60 strong, out after buffalo, had sighted a Crow village on Hoodoo Creek. The intruders, sensing that they had been seen, retired to the watershed between Muddy and Grapevine creeks and fortified.

35. Tribal Historian Joe Medicine Crow discussed with the author on July 25, 1969, Crow traditions regarding Rose and Beckwourth. There is nothing in Crow traditions about Beckwourth's claim to be a tribal chieftan. Beckwourth, Medicine Crow speculated, knew Rose and of his activities, and when Rose died he took over his stories. The Crow referred to Negroes as "black-white-men."

36. Leonard, *Adventures of Zenas Leonard*, pp. 145-149.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

Crow scouts had seen the Piegan and sounded the alarm. The Crow warriors turned out in force. Several attacks on the Piegan stronghold were made and repulsed. As the Crow fell back, the Piegan shouted indignities and gestured for them to try another charge. There was a dark Crow named Stumpy Horns and he made "medicine," then charged the fortifications. He was armed with a spear made of elk horns. Other Crow followed. Stumpy Horns leaped into one of the fortifications, which resembled a rifle-pit, and routed the Piegan. Having breached the defenses, the Crow drove the Piegan from their stronghold. In the fight all the Piegan but two, who escaped, were slain.³⁸

4. Comments and Recommendations

Certain similarities between the story told by Medicine Crow's informant and the battle described by Leonard in 1834 are noted. Among these are: the number in the hunting party; the retreat into a stronghold; the repulse of the initial attacks by the Crow; the activities of a black-white-man or dark Indian; and the result.

Although this site is not within the Park boundary, Service archeologists, in cooperation with the Crow Tribe, should make a thorough investigation in an effort to unravel the mystery. The site is so well preserved and unusual that the Service, in cooperation with the Crow Tribe, should take steps to protect and interpret it. In this respect, the need for protection should be emphasized, because of recent experiences with vandals who have operated in the area with metal detectors and have destroyed several archeological sites.

D. Father De Smet and the Crow

1. Father De Smet Visits the Bighorn Country

Father Pierre-Jean De Smet, the Jesuit priest, who spent much of his life among the Indians of the Northern Rockies was known to the Crow. On August 27, 1840, Father De Smet left his Flathead mission and started for St. Louis. Traveling by way of Bozeman Pass and the Yellowstone, De Smet's party on September 5, near where Billings is now located, fell in with a Crow war party. The Crow were "returning to their camp, after having paid the tribute of blood to forty of their warriors, massacred two years before by the Blackfeet." As they were currently allies of the Flathead, they eagerly received De Smet. He traveled with the village for

³⁸. Personal Interview, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 25 and 29, 1969; Archeological Site File Index Number 24 BH 266 prepared by Stuart W. Conner, Aug. 19, 1964.

two days. One afternoon the priest was invited to 20 banquets--fortunately he had the foresight to take several "eaters" with him to empty his dishes and thus avoid offending his hosts.

From this camp, he made his way to the Bighorn, which he described as a "broad river, whose waters are pure as crystal." The Bighorn flowed through "extensive plains, well wooded on both banks, and offering beautiful grazing grounds."

De Smet ascended the Bighorn and found a large Crow village, numbering about 1,000 men, women, and children. The villagers greeted the Jesuit with the greatest demonstration of friendship, and "again it was necessary to pass the day in going from one feast to another." He took advantage of the situation to speak to them upon various points of religion. As he was depicting to them the torments of hell, and telling them how the Great Spirit had prepared it for those who evade the laws, one of the chiefs exclaimed:

I think there are only two in all the Crow nation who will not go to that hell you speak of; those are the Otter and the Weasel; they are the only ones I know who have never killed, nor stolen, nor been guilty of the excesses which your law forbids. Still I may be mistaken about them, and in that case we will all go to hell in company.

When Father De Smet left the village, he headed for Fort Van Buren. There the priest and his traveling companions were received by the American Fur Company traders with a "great deal of benevolence and friendliness." On September 13 De Smet said good-bye to his faithful Flathead escort and headed for St. Louis.³⁹

2. Site of Father De Smet's Sermon

Tradition places the site of Father De Smet's sermon before the 1,000 Crow as beneath a three-branched cottonwood, on the east side of the Bighorn, three miles below the mouth of Bighorn Canyon.⁴⁰ This is disputed by several local historians who locate the cottonwood on the Archie Wilson Ranch, near St. Xavier.

39. *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet, S. J. 1801-1873* . . . edited by Hiram M. Chittenden & Alfred T. Richardson (4 vols. New York, 1905), 1, 233-240.

40. Mrs. Bridgett C. Keough, "St. Xavier Once Boomed with Oil Strike," *Hardin Tribune-Herald*, 50th Anniversary Edition, May 16, 1957.

3. The De Smet Cross-Comments and Recommendations

Located on the Crow Reservation, near the unimproved road paralleling the east rim of Black Canyon, is another site tradition associates with Father De Smet. This is the Father De Smet Cross, and it is said to have been laid out on the ground to commemorate the priest's missionary activities among the Crow. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to document any De Smet association with the stone cross. Additional study of the De Smet sites by historians and archeologists is warranted. If the De Smet Cross is found to possess integrity, it should be entered on the National Register of Historic Sites, and the Service, in cooperating with the Crow Tribe, should protect and interpret the site and its relation to the Father De Smet story.

E. The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851

1. The Indians Assemble on Horse Creek

The United States government in 1851 sponsored an Indian peace parley near Fort Laramie. Although the council would not begin officially till September 1, several villages of Plains Indians reached the area by early August. Less than 300 soldiers were present to preserve order, but it was apparent that they could maintain the peace only if Indians chose to behave themselves. Throughout the month other villages and tribes arrived and camped near the fort. Jim Bridger came in with the Shoshoni on August 28. When the last detachment of soldiers came up the Oregon Trail from Fort Leavenworth, on September 1, without the anticipated gifts, it was determined by those in charge to move the encampment to Horse Creek, 35 miles down the North Platte. Here there was better forage and campsites. This was done on September 4 and 5.

Robert Meldrum arrived with the Crow on September 10, to be followed the next day by Father De Smet, Alexander Culbertson, and a few Sioux from Fort Union. Horse Creek for the next several days was the scene of the greatest assembly of Indians in plains history, the number present being estimated by Father De Smet at 1,000 lodges or 10,000 persons. Among the tribes represented besides the Crow were the Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Shoshone, Arikara, Assiniboin, and Atsina. Some of these peoples having never met in the memories of the oldest men except in war.

2. The Provisions of the Treaty

The council lasted about a week and the treaty was completed on September 17. Superintendent of Indian Affairs David D. Mitchell, who headed the government delegation, saw that the most

difficult task of the council would be delineating the boundaries of the territory claimed by each tribe. He turned this task over to a three-man committee--Tom Fitzpatrick, Jim Bridger, and Robert Campbell. The final draft of the treaty was signed on the 17th, and two days later the eagerly awaited wagon train loaded with presents rolled in. To the Indians this was all-important.⁴¹

A number of important provisions were included in the treaty: (a) the Indians recognized the right of the United States to lay out roads and establish posts in Indian country; (b) there were solemn promises to maintain the peace, and to reimburse the whites for any damage as a result of Indian depredations; (c) an annual indemnity of \$50,000 was granted in return for damages done by white travelers to game, pasture, and timber; (d) the United States agreed to pay the \$50,000 annually in goods useful to the Indians and to continue payment for 50 years; and (e) the territory of each tribe was delineated, although it was recognized that hunting parties did not have to be limited by these boundaries.

Congress approved the treaty, but modified it to reduce the period of annuity payments from 50 to 15 years, a change acquiesced in by all the tribes except the Crow. In the end, the Treaty of 1851 was never officially proclaimed by President Millard Fillmore, and the Indians soon forgot their pledges of friendship toward the other tribes and whites.

3. Crow Tribal Boundaries as Established by Treaty

One provision of the treaty is vital to an understanding of events in the Bighorn Country during the next 26 years. This was the boundary of the area conceded to the Crow. As defined by the Fort Laramie Treaty and confirmed in its northern limits by the Blackfoot Treaty of 1855, the land of the Crow was bounded on the west by the Yellowstone River and the Continental Divide, on the north by the Musselshell River and a line drawn from the mouth of the Musselshell to the mouth of the Powder, on the east by the Powder, and on the south by the Rattlesnake Mountains, which separated the watershed of the northward flowing Bighorn and Powder from the Sweetwater and North Platte.⁴²

⁴¹ Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 240-243; Brown, *Plainsmen of the Yellowstone*, p. 128; Brandon, *American Heritage Book of Indians*, pp. 340-341. Robert Campbell was now the editor of the *Missouri Republican* and a leading St. Louis banker while Fitzpatrick was identified with the Indian agencies for the upper Platte and Arkansas.

⁴² Lindsey, *Big Horn Basin*, pp. 20-21.

The Crow were undoubtedly pleased with the treaty, because it confirmed them in possession of the "best game country in the world." Great herds of buffalo were found on the rolling hills east of the mountains, while along the Yellowstone elk were seen in droves of several hundred at a time. There were large bands of mule and white-tailed deer. Antelope covered the prairies, and "in the badlands near the mountains" were found bighorn sheep and grizzly bear. The rivers and streams teemed with beaver and fish, while coveys of prairie chicken and grouse inhabited the draws.⁴³

Indian Agent Alfred J. Vaughan echoed these sentiments, when after delivering the annuity goods to the Crow in 1859, he wrote:

No country I have examined seems to me more adapted to the wild Indian than this. There is game in abundance for his subsistence, grass for animals, and wood enough for his fuel, and the red man asks nothing more. But from its very nature the hand of civilization will leave it undisturbed forever.⁴⁴

Vaughan was mistaken, because within several years two events took place which had a deep and lasting effect on the Crow Country. First, the Sioux began to seriously encroach on the land of the Crow, and then gold was discovered on Grasshopper Creek in what is today southwestern Montana.

4. The Role of The Big Robber

At the Fort Laramie Treaty, the United States commissioners had recognized The Big Robber as the principal Crow chief. This proved to be a big mistake, first because the Crow were divided into two factions, the Mountain and River, and second because The Big Robber refused to exert himself to assume the leadership of his people. Instead of joining the major villages, he was content to remain near the Oregon Trail with a few lodges that made it their principal business to beg and steal from passing emigrants. By 1856, Denig reported, The Big Robber "is now despised by the other bands. He has no command, is not respected as much for seeking other districts as for not remaining and assisting in defending his own country."⁴⁵

43. Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, p. 21.

44. Brown, *Plainsmen of the Yellowstone*, p. 128.

45. Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, pp. 63-64. The River Crow led by The Big Robber habitually made their winter hunt on the head of Powder River, and in the 1850s took their surplus furs and buffalo robes to Fort Laramie and other posts along the North Platte. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

F. The Crow Trading Posts: 1832-1860

1. The American Fur Company Moves to Monopolize the Crow Trade

To tap the Crow trade, the American Fur Company and its successors erected and manned five trading posts on the middle reaches of the Yellowstone between 1832 and 1860. Before this, except during the years that Fort Raymond and Fort Benton were in existence, the Crow carried their beaver pelts to the Mandan Villages to exchange for trade goods. After the establishment of posts on the Yellowstone, they turned their attention increasingly to preparing bulky buffalo robes for sale. With the receipts from these sales, the Crow equipped "themselves better for hunting and war than heretofore and tended considerably to restrict their wandering habits." The villages during the fall and winter months usually remained near the posts while the Crow killed buffalo, dressed hides, and exchanged them for items needed for defense or convenience, or to barter for horses with the Nez Percé, Shoshoni, and Flathead. Here they were harassed by their foe (the Blackfoot first and then the Sioux), who hovered in the vicinity to kill stragglers and steal horses. With the advent of spring, Crow war parties rode out intent on revenge.⁴⁶ Soon thereafter the villages started westward to trade merchandise obtained at the posts to the mountain Indians for horses and ornaments.

In 1832 the American Fur Company's Kenneth McKenzie sent Samuel Tullock up the Yellowstone to establish Fort Cass, three miles below the mouth of the Bighorn. This post was in the heart of the Crow Country.⁴⁷ Six years later, in 1838, following an outbreak of smallpox the post was abandoned. In 1839 Fort Van Buren was erected on the south side of the Yellowstone, near the mouth of the Rosebud. Three years later, in 1842, Fort Van Buren was abandoned and burned by Charles Larpenteur, who then erected Fort Alexander on the Yellowstone, opposite the mouth of Armells Creek. It was used by the American Fur Company until 1850, when Fort Sarpy was built on the north bank of the Yellowstone, a short distance below the mouth of the Rosebud. This site was subject to flooding, and in one year the post was inundated and much merchandise and many pelts destroyed. The first Fort Sarpy was abandoned and destroyed in May 1855, and a second post erected in 1857 on the right bank of the Yellowstone, at the mouth of Sarpy Creek. This second Fort Sarpy was the last post to be built in the Crow Country, and it was occupied for three years before abandonment.⁴⁸

46. Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, pp. 56-57.

47. De Voto, *Across the Wide Missouri*, p. 70.

48. Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, p. 23; Hiram M. Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, (2 vols. New York, 1902), 2, pp. 964-965; Larpenteur, *Forty Years*, 1, 115, 170-175; "The Fort Sarpy Journal, 1855-56," edited by Anne McDonnell, *Contributions to the Montana Historical*

2. Hazards Faced in the Crow Trade

The Crow trading posts were difficult to supply and dangerous to man. Supplies were sent up the Yellowstone from Fort Union in Mackinaw boats cordelled by 15 to 20 men, some of whom remained to bring down pelts the following spring. The Yellowstone was difficult to navigate at all seasons. During the spring run-off, the banks caved, the current was swift, and the river carried along great quantities of drift. In low water the hazards were sandbars, snags, and rock ledges. Boats attempting the river during this season had to be unloaded frequently and the trade goods carried and the boats dragged upstream. Downriver navigation was equally dangerous, and many boats were damaged in the rapids. The wooded river bottoms afforded lurking Blackfoot and Sioux opportunities to fire into the boats as they passed or to ambush the traders as they stepped ashore.⁴⁹

Those posted to the forts were subject to attack whenever their work compelled them to go beyond the stockade. When the Crow were camped near the post, they intercepted and retaliated to these attacks by Blackfoot and Sioux raiders. But when the Crow were absent, the attacks fell on those assigned to cut wood, guard the horses, or hunt for food. Daily these "civilians" faced death. Denig voiced the opinion that between 1832 and 1855 those persons attached to the Crow Country posts lost from five to 15 individuals annually. The Blackfoot viewed these posts in the same light as Arrapooash saw Fort McKenzie--as a source of weapons to be used against their blood enemies.⁵⁰

By the late summer of 1854 these attacks had become so commonplace that Indian Agent Vaughan, on his visit to the Bighorn Country, complained:

Scarcely a day passes but the Crow country is infested with more or less parties of Blackfeet, who murder indiscriminately any one that comes within their reach. At Fort Sarpy so great is the danger that no one ventures even a few yards from his own door without company and being well armed.⁵¹

In May of 1855 the American Fur Company was finally compelled by hostile pressure to withdraw its traders from the Crow Country and Fort Sarpy was burned. Vaughan that summer was prevented from visiting the Crow by Sioux war parties on the lower Yellowstone. When he re-established contact with the Crow in the summer of 1856,

Society, 10, 282-283.

49. Denig, *Of the Crow Nation*, p. 68-69.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

51. *Annual Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1854*, p. 85.

they had been without annuity goods for two years. Their chiefs complained to the agent that "they preferred to go without the goods, rather than run the risk of passing through a country beset by their deadliest enemies, the Blackfeet and Blood Indians of the north." Vaughan succeeded in persuading 350 Crow to accompany him to Fort Union to secure the annuity goods for the entire nation.⁵²

Even before the abandonment of the first Fort Sarpy, the River Crow were in the habit of taking their robes to Fort Laramie to trade. Additional competition came from the Portuguese Houses of Antonio Montaro on Powder River. In 1855 the Mountain Crow, led since Long Hair's death by Two Face, still traded at Fort Sarpy. The next year a trader named Scott convinced Two Face that the government annuities at Fort Union were contaminated by smallpox, and advised him to take his trade to the North Platte posts. Agent Vaughan sent runners to urge his return. They were successful, and Two Face agreed to receive the annuities for the Mountain Crow at Fort Union.⁵³

G. Comments and Recommendations

The history of the Crow in the years 1820-1857, will be interpreted at the Visitor Center. Themes to be emphasized should be the story of the great chiefs (Arrapooash and Long Hair), the siege of Fort McKenzie, and the establishment and maintenance of the American Fur Company posts on the middle reaches of the Yellowstone. If additional research discloses that the Father De Smet Cross and the Grapevine Siege Sites possess historical integrity and significance, the Service should cooperate with the Crow Tribe in protecting and interpreting them as representative of this era in Crow history.

52. *Annual Report Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1856*, p. 81.

53. "The Fort Sarpy Journal, 1855-56," *Contributions*, 10, 120-122, 176, 186-187. The Mountain Crow at this time roamed the Bighorn Country from Fort Sarpy to the Wind River Range. A village led by The Bear's Head traveled the Yellowstone from its mouth to the Big Bend, sometimes passing the winter with the Assiniboin and trading at Fort Union and Fort Sarpy.

V. THE BOZEMAN TRAIL--HIGHWAY TO MONTANA
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A. The Reynolds-Maynadier Expedition of 1859-1860

1. Captain Reynolds Gets His Orders

The United States government for over half a century, after Capt. William Clark's detachment had worked its way down the Yellowstone in 1806, made no effort to explore the area. Trappers and traders during the period 1806-1859 had reconnoitered every stream large enough to shelter beaver, penetrated the mountain passes, and wandered over the prairies and across the badlands. Except in a few cases knowledge acquired in this fashion was not broadcast, because trappers who shared their knowledge of the location of choice beaver streams with rivals were the exception. Clark, while governor of Missouri Territory, had secured from Colter, Drouillard, and others information that enabled him to add much detail to his maps of the region. But by the late 1850s Clark's maps, as well as the one prepared in 1839 by David H. Burr, were inadequate to meet the needs of a nation becoming increasingly interested in the Rocky Mountains and the routes to the Pacific Northwest.

In 1859 the War Department alerted two of its officers, Capt. William F. Reynolds and Lt. H. E. Maynadier, to prepare to lead a surveying party to explore and map the Bighorn and Yellowstone Country. They were

to ascertain, as far as practicable, everything relating to numbers, habits and disposition of the Indians inhabiting the country, its agricultural and mineralogical resources, its climate and its influences which govern it, the navigability of its streams, its topographical features, and the facilities or obstacles which the latter present to the construction of rail or common roads, either to meet the needs of military operations or those of emigration through, or settlement in, the country.

Particular attention was to be given to determining the most direct and feasible routes from: (a) the neighborhood of Fort Laramie to the Yellowstone, in the direction of Fort Union and the Missouri; (b) the vicinity of Fort Laramie northwest, skirting the foot of the Bighorns, toward Fort Benton and the Bitter Root Valley; (c) the Yellowstone to South Pass; and (d) to ascertain the practicability of a route from the source of Wind River to the Three Forks.¹

1. "Report of the Secretary of War, communicating the report of Bvt. Brig. Gen. W. F. Reynolds, on the Exploration of the Yellowstone and

The route which the Reynolds-Maynadier Party was to follow was worked out in some detail by officers in the office of Secretary of War John B. Floyd. From the source of Powder River, the expedition would proceed down that stream to its mouth; thence along the Yellowstone to the mouth of Tongue River, up which a detachment would be sent to its source. The remainder of the group would continue on the Yellowstone to the mouth of the Bighorn, and ascend the latter to the mouth of the canyon. Here the two divisions would reunite. The approach of winter might require the expedition to pass the season in this neighborhood, or if time sufficed, it could ascend the Bighorn to Wind River, where a favorable wintering place could be found.

The second season should be spent in examining the mountainous region about the sources of the Yellowstone and Missouri; and in ascertaining the character of the routes leading south and west from the navigable reaches of these rivers. On returning one party should descend the Missouri, using bullboats to Fort Benton, where a Mackinac boat would be in readiness. The other detachment should descend the Yellowstone, in bullboats, to its mouth, where it would rendezvous with the Mackinac boat-party and all return to St. Louis.²

To assist with the undertaking, Reynolds was authorized to employ eight technicians, while \$60,000 was budgeted to fund the expedition. A 30-man detachment commanded by Lt. Caleb Smith from the 2d U. S. Infantry was detailed by the officer in charge of the Department of the West to accompany the party as an escort. Reynolds, on his arrival in St. Louis, called upon Pierre Chouteau and others familiar with the region. At their recommendation, he employed Jim Bridger as the "best guide available." The scientists and guide were each to be paid \$125 per month.³

2. From St. Louis to Fort Sarpy

On May 28, 1859, the explorers left St. Louis aboard the steamboats *Spread Eagle* and *Chippewa*. Both boats were heavily laden, having on board not only trade goods for the fur companies, but also annuity goods for the Sioux and the equipment of Reynolds' party. At Fort Randall, on June 13, a stop was made to take aboard Lieutenant Smith and his footsoldiers, along with draft

the Country drained by that River," in *U. S. Senate Executive Documents*, 2, 40th Congress, 2d Sess., 1867-68, 4.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19; Alter, *Jim Bridger*, p. 282.

mules and a number of carts and wagons. Fort Pierre was reached on June 18, and here the expedition disembarked. Ten days were spent at this point, while the annuity goods were issued and Reynolds perfected his plans for the overland march.

The column finally moved out on June 28, guided by a Sioux employed by Reynolds to accompany him as far as the Black Hills, the boundary between Sioux and Crow country. There, on the north slope of the Black Hills, Reynolds noted on July 20 "our guide was missing," together with a mule, bridle, and saddle. He was fearful of the Crow, the hereditary enemies of his people.⁴

On July 21 the expedition crossed the divide separating the headwaters of the Little Missouri and Little Powder. Jim Bridger and several of the soldiers rode out and killed three buffalo cows each. Reynolds was impressed with his guide and wrote, "My American Guide, Bridger, is now on familiar ground and appears to be entirely at home in this country."

The explorers now turned down the Little Powder, and then the valley of the Powder. Reynolds was unimpressed with the rolling sagebrush-covered hills. Good pasture was hard to find, quicksand made the river crossings hazardous, while the water in the smaller streams was tainted with alkali. On July 25 a scarcity of forage compelled the soldiers and teamsters to be turned "to hewing down cottonwood trees and allowing the animals to feed on the bark." Bridger was heard to remark that, if need be, the animals could be "subsisted on this bark an entire winter." Reynolds recorded in his journal, "The entire district is unfit for the home of white men."⁵

If anything the route became more difficult. On July 31 Bridger told Captain Reynolds that it would be impossible for the heavily loaded wagons to proceed much farther down the Powder. He recommended that they strike cross-country for Fort Sarpy, on the Yellowstone 18 miles below the mouth of the Bighorn. There they would meet their supply boats. Reynolds agreed, and the column turned west, crossed two ranges of hills, and traveled down Pumpkin Creek to its confluence with Tongue River. Bridger, after telling Reynolds that they were within 12 or 15 miles of the junction of the Tongue and Yellowstone, suggested that they "travel up Tongue River some distance, before crossing to the west, for the purpose of avoiding the bluffs on the Yellowstone." While this was contrary to instructions, Reynolds accepted Bridger's advice in "deference to his remarkable knowledge of the country."⁶

4. *Raynold's Report*, pp. 19-36; Alter, *Jim Bridger*, p. 282.

5. *Raynold's Report*, p. 39.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-40.

The expedition ascended Tongue River to the lower "Canyon," where Bridger pointed it into a route paralleling the Yellowstone, but some ten to 20 miles to the south. The Rosebud and Armells creeks were forded. Bridger turned the column down the latter stream and on August 15 reached the Yellowstone. Here Raynolds camped for 12 days, preparing reports and maps and writing letters, while awaiting the arrival of the American Fur Company's keelboats bringing up additional supplies. Robert Meldrum, the factor at Fort Sarpy, came to visit. From him, Raynolds secured valuable information about the Crow, as well as possible routes. On the second day in camp, two Crow rode in to be followed within several days by a village.⁷

The Crow, Raynolds reported, were

lighter in color than the Sioux, and have a less savage and repulsive expression. They are well formed and of medium height. In their costume the most striking feature is a cap made of par fleche, or prepared buffalo hide, consisting of a large visor shading the eyes, with the addition of a band of the same material encircling the head, the upper edge of which is cut into points, imparting a decidedly regal appearance. It is entirely crownless, however, and thus affords no protection whatever to the head. They are well mounted and armed with both guns and bows and arrows. They do not present a very formidable appearance, but have the reputation of being as good warriors as any tribe in this region.⁸

On August 29 the explorers moved up the Yellowstone to Fort Sarpy, which was an

inclosure about one hundred feet square, of upright cottonwood logs fifteen feet high, the outer wall also forming the exterior of a row of log cabins which [are] occupied as dwelling houses, store houses, shops and stables. The roofs of these structures are nearly flat, and formed of timber, covered to the depth of about a foot with dirt The entrance is through a heavy gate.⁹

Life at Fort Sarpy was dangerous, because of the hostility existing between the Crow and Blackfoot. The latter were opposed to the Crow having an opportunity to secure weapons which would give them an advantage in battle, and they regarded the American Fur Company employees at Fort Sarpy as enemies because

7. Ibid., pp. 40-46.

8. Ibid., p. 46.

9. Ibid., pp. 47-49.

they provided the Crow with firearms and ammunition. The Crow viewed the posts in the Blackfoot Country in a similar manner.¹⁰

When the party moved to the vicinity of Fort Sarpy on the 29th, Raynolds' perspective of the importance of his expedition received a jolt. Everything at the post was in confusion, and the necessary supplies were intermixed with trade goods. He was vexed to discover "the agent of the Fur Company had promptly commenced traffic with the savages, considerately allowing our matters to take care of themselves." 11

3. With Raynolds from Fort Sarpy to Bighorn Canyon

At 10 o'clock on August 31, 1859, the explorers left Fort Sarpy. They continued up the valley of the Yellowstone for nine miles "over a barren, dusty plain, with scarcely the semblance of vegetation upon it, the soil resembling the dry bed of a stream, and the dust raised by the train filling the air." Jim Bridger then pointed the column to the left, and it ascended a small valley "which looked as unpromising as any that could be imagined."¹² After an advance of three miles, a small spring surrounded by a tolerable supply of grass was found, and camp pitched.¹³

The next day, September 1, the explorers bore up Box Elder Creek. "The traveling was detestable," Raynolds wrote, "although our previous experience has reconciled us to the worst roads and given confidence in our power to overcome all obstacles." A sandy stretch was encountered into which the wheels of the heavily-laden wagons sunk deeply, sorely trying the strength of the jaded teams. When the stream forked, Bridger led the column up the western draw, which soon became so narrow that the wagons were compelled to take to the hills. Camp was made beside an oozing spring. By digging the men were able to secure sufficient water for themselves, but none for the stock. Bridger, however, was able to locate an abundance of water in a valley two miles off, to which the animals were herded.¹⁴

On September 2 the party continued up Box Elder, then along a ridge for a mile, after which it turned down a draw leading into Tullock Creek. A frightful seven-mile march brought the soldiers out on Tullock Creek, where Captain Raynolds divided his force. Lieutenant Maynadier was detached with orders to

10. Brown, *Plainsmen of the Yellowstone*, p. 78.

11. *Raynolds' Report*, pp. 47-49.

12. The route on the 31st led up Box Elder Creek.

13. *Raynolds' Report*, p. 52.

14. *Ibid.*

ascend Tullock Creek and Tongue River and to rejoin the main column on the Middle Fork of Powder River.

Guided by Bridger, Reynolds led his party down Tullock Creek seven miles to its junction with the Bighorn. Camp was pitched for the night on the east side of the Bighorn.¹⁵ There had been dark clouds scudding across the sky throughout the day, and a cold wind now began to blow from the northeast. While the men huddled around campfires, it commenced to rain. It was 10 a.m. the next day before the rain ceased. When Reynolds checked the ground, he found that the gumbo soil would be too hard pulling for the teams, and he ordered the command to remain in camp. Calvin Wilson, who had been sent after a stray horse, returned with the animal which he had found at Fort Sarpy. He had spent the night in a Crow village as guest of Red Bear, the head chief. Wilson reported that the entire village, 130 lodges, was on Reynolds' trail, and the Crow wished to accompany the whites as far as the headwaters of Powder River.

This Reynolds considered overdoing "amicable relations." Although one guide would be invaluable, he reasoned, the

continual company of 500 savages of all ages and both sexes, devoid of any strict ideas of property, expecting to be allowed free access to our stores, and with a general friendship for our portable articles rather than our persons, can hardly be esteemed one of the leading advantages, to be derived from amity with the aborigines.

As the Crow were not yet in sight, Reynolds trusted that "their usual lack of veracity will not fail in this instance, and they will break the promise made Mr. Wilson."¹⁶

Jim Bridger having told him that the best route up the valley of the Bighorn was some distance west of the river, Reynolds sent a patrol to pinpoint a ford. Such a crossing was found above camp, but it was quite deep. Reynolds determined to remain where he was for another day in hopes that the Bighorn would crest. September 4 was Sunday, and while Reynolds caught up on his paperwork, the men took it easy. The day was cool, and in the morning the thermometer stood at 34 degrees.¹⁷

15. Ibid., pp. 52-53. The route traveled between Box Elder and Tullock creeks had been frightful; the hills were so rugged that they were almost impassable by wagons.

16. Ibid., p. 53 .

17. Ibid., pp. 53-54. With one-half the footsoldiers with Lieutenant Maynadier's patrol, Captain Reynolds was obliged to detail from his

Before the company moved out on the 5th, several men located a "good ford" about midway between camp and the mouth of the Bighorn. Raynolds accordingly turned the wagons in that direction. The crossing was excellent, the water not rising above the axletrees of the wagons. Within 15 minutes of the time the first team entered the water, the last was on the west bank, having passed over a firm, stony bottom.¹⁸

The wagons now rolled rapidly up the valley. About ten miles above the ford, a bend in the Bighorn compelled the party to cross a spur of Pine Ridge. "Both the ascent and descent [were] . . . accomplished with difficulty by reason of the steepness of the slope, and the heavy loads in our wagons." After returning to the valley, a scarcity of grass compelled Raynolds to push on four miles before halting for the night. Camp was made on the river bank, the low ground providing scant pasturage for the animals, "which we were compelled . . . to eke out with the bark of young cottonwood trees."

As yet the Crow had not overtaken the party, and as Raynolds wrote, "our grief thereat is not wholly inconsolable."¹⁹

On September 6 the explorers continued up the Bighorn valley. Steep bluffs bounded the river on the east. About three miles from camp, the valley widened and the traveling was easy though hampered by sagebrush. The hills to the east and west became gentler, and ahead they seemed to disappear. In the distance the Bighorn Mountains were visible, like "faint blue clouds."

About 11 o'clock a herd of buffalo was encountered, and Jim Bridger killed two cows. Within the hour the mouth of the Little Bighorn was sighted. Here the Bighorn swept off to the east and doubled back, and as the route would take them some distance from the river, Raynolds called a halt, as "we were in possession of the three great requisites for camping--wood, water, and grass." Although they had been in the saddle only six hours and had stopped to butcher the buffalo, they had traveled almost 14 miles.²⁰

teamsters and packers for guard duty, and to employ the scientists as officers of the guard. As expected, this caused some grumbling.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., p. 54. During the day, after fording the river, 16 miles were logged.

20. Ibid. Camp was three miles below the mouth of the Little Bighorn. The Crow name for the Little Bighorn, Raynolds reported, was Ets-pot-agie-cate, or Little Mountain Sheep river.

The route on the 7th continued up the broad valley of the Bighorn. Upon starting Raynolds plotted a course directly for the bluffs, thus leaving the river nearly two miles to the east. The mouth of the Little Bighorn was passed, and about six miles from camp, they crossed a dry wash--Williams Coulee. Men turned to with pick and shovel to make the crossing passable. Four miles beyond, the explorers found a bluff abutting on the river's west bank.²¹ A good ford having been found, Raynolds pointed the wagons across the Bighorn. On the east side they found the best grass they had seen in several months. But it did "not extend over one-fourth of a mile from the river the balance of the valley being clay covered with the interminable" sagebrush. Corals and remains of lodges proved that this was a popular camp site with the Crow. Camp was pitched three miles above the ford.²²

The Bighorn Mountains were now in plain sight, an estimated 20 miles to the south. After dark a wild wind storm whipped in from the west and blew down several tents. Whereupon, Captain Raynolds turned out his men to lengthen the cords and reinforce the stakes. The gale was accompanied by a few drops of rain, but by 11 p.m. the sky had cleared.²³

4. Captain Raynolds at Bighorn Canyon

The wagons on the 8th rumbled up the valley of the Bighorn, the first nine miles over as excellent a route "as could be desired." It was "almost level and with very little sage to obstruct our progress." Rotten Grass was forded, and the terrain became "a little rougher, but still good." Six miles farther Soap Creek was crossed, and two miles above the explorers halted for the night on the bank of the Bighorn. Here grass was plentiful but wood scarce.

Although they had logged 17 miles during the day, the mountains, because of the clear air, seemed no nearer. As he studied them, Raynolds could

trace the Bighorn up its valley to this immense wall, rising over 3,000 feet in height, and crossing the course of the stream at right angles. The river here is large, deep, and nearly 300 feet in width, and yet at this distance there is no evidence of its cutting its way through this rocky barrier, and nothing in the conformation of the hills and spurs in the remoter ranges indicates the course of its channel. Its remarkable cañon is famous throughout the west.²⁴

21. This bluff abuts on the Bighorn at the mouth of Two Leggin Creek.

22. Ibid., pp. 54-55.

23. Ibid., p. 55.

24. Ibid., pp. 55-56.

As his instructions called for him to skirt the eastern front of the Bighorns and to direct his march to the North Platte, not to penetrate the Bighorns, Reynolds determined to make a flying visit to the canyon. Accompanied by Dr. F. A. Hayden, Antoin Schonborn, and Calvin Wilson, Reynolds rode on as his men put up the tents. They continued up the river bank until a sharp bend in the Bighorn a short distance above the mouth of War Man Creek compelled them to turn to the east. After an hour's ride, the apparent smooth face of the lofty mountain wall "began to afford evidence of being broken." Another hour in the saddle brought them to the mouth of the canyon. During the latter portion of the ride, they passed over "luxuriant meadow land, whose rank, and rich vegetation rose to our stirrups, while the soil was manifestly of extraordinary fertility."

Bighorn Canyon, Reynolds wrote, is "one of the most remarkable sights upon the continent." Here the river, less than 150 feet wide, bursts "out through reddish tinted walls of perpendicular rock over 300 feet in height." While the current appeared sluggish, he knew from what Jim Bridger had told him of his amazing exploit of 1825 that the river's course through the canyon was marked by "successions of rapids and cascades." They advanced into the Canyon until their way was barred by an "impassible wall of perpendicular rock." After taking time for making sketches and geological observations, the quartet returned to camp.²⁵

5. The March from Bighorn Canyon to West Pass Creek

On Friday, September 9, Reynolds' party left the valley of the Bighorn, and moving off to the southeast, ascended Soap Creek, hugging the foot of the mountains. The rain of the previous evening had fallen in the Bighorns as snow, warning of the approach of winter. The morning was cloudy and disagreeable, but the men "seemed to regard this as a turning point in the expedition, and as we were facing towards civilization jubilancy of spirits universally prevailed." The route, however, became abominable. Short, deep ravines were crossed. While not so abrupt as to require work with pick and shovel, they slowed the wagons.

For most of the day, the column kept on the west ridge to avoid bad traveling in the narrow valley. About eight miles from the previous night's camp, a deep ravine barred the way. To pass it the teams had to be doubled, and even then a portion of the loads had to be hand-carried. Another mile was made, and the party camped on Soap Creek.

25. Ibid.

Much of the countryside had been recently burned over, and Reynolds considered it an attempt by the Indians to delay his timetable.²⁶

One of the mules was stolen by Indians during the night. This kept the company in camp later than usual on the 10th. When the wagons finally rolled, they were driven up a ridge separating a dry gully and Soap Creek. The ridge route was followed for four miles, when the company descended and forded Soap Creek, "a clear mountain brook five or six feet wide, flowing over a gravel bottom." A steep hill was then passed, and the explorers descended into the valley of the Rotten Grass. The grass was excellent and the temptation to halt was difficult to resist, but Reynolds, taking cognizance of the snow in the mountains and the lateness of the season, determined to push on. Crossing the next divide, he was disappointed to find no water and the grass burned. A second ridge was crossed with similar results. Another divide, having more gentle slopes, was passed, and the company entered the valley of Lodge Grass.²⁷

Reynolds had preceded the wagons, and he was dismayed on topping the ridge to see a black swath left by a prairie fire west of Lodge Grass. But on reaching the east side of the stream, they found a good camp site. While the men were putting up tents, Bridger rode out in search of game. About a mile away he shot a bull elk, which he declared to be one of the largest he had seen. The head and antlers had to be cut off to get the carcass in a cart. As it lay on the grass "it seemed longer than that of any mule in our herd."²⁸

Sunday, September 11, was a day of rest. On the 12th the march was resumed. The route took the company up a "continual ascent," which severely taxed the teams. After climbing about 500 feet, they gained a plateau about two miles across. This open ground terminated in an abrupt slope into the valley of the

26. Ibid., p. 56. During the evening Reynolds, by triangulation, established the elevation of one of the peaks in the Bighorns at 8,318 feet above sea level, which was 4,818 feet above camp. This peak was probably on the ridge separating the headwaters of Black Canyon and Bull Elk.

27. Ibid., p. 57. The first watercourse crossed after leaving Rotten Grass was a tributary of that stream, while the second was a tributary of Lodge Grass.

28. Ibid.

Little Bighorn. The vertical descent was nearly 700 feet. Upon reaching the river, which was bordered by a thick growth of bushes and briars, they saw that it was a "beautifully clear stream of about 20 yards in width, and, at the point at which we crossed it, 15 inches deep."²⁹

Departing from the Little Bighorn Valley, the explorers ascended the hills to the east. Here a deep gully temporarily barred their way. In the ravine was a plum thicket, and while the men were picking plums, one of them, James Stephenson, was attacked by a female grizzly and knocked down. The wagonmaster rushed to his assistance, and the bear retreated. A "grand hunt" was organized. "The sportsmen attempted to obtain a shot at the bear, but the moment they came in sight through the bushes she would make a vigorous charge and scatter the crowd." She would then retreat to her lair. After these sorties alternating between the hunters and the hunted had been repeated several times, the grizzly failed to respond to another approach. Some of the more daring crept into the edge of the bushes to reconnoiter. They failed to locate her. She was finally sighted crossing the crest of a nearby hill with her three cubs, and just beyond rifle range. Inasmuch as she had earned her right to escape, her flight was heartily cheered.

The grade was finally topped, and the expedition descended onto West Pass Creek. Here they camped, having covered 13 long, hard miles.³⁰ The drive was continued to Tongue River, which was forded on September 14. Skirting the northeastern front of the Bighorns, the column passed Lake De Smet, a body of water three or four miles long, apparently without an outlet. September 26 found the explorers near the Middle Fork of Powder River. A halt was made to await the arrival of Maynadier's detachment. Captain Reynolds took advantage of the stop to accompany Jim Bridger to "the ruins of some old trading posts, known as the Portuguese Houses." According to Bridger these had been erected a number of years before by a Portuguese trader Antonio Montaro. Only one side of the stockade was still standing.

On the 28th, after Bridger had reconnoitered to select the route, a patrol rode down Middle Fork to look for Maynadier. It returned two days later with word that they had been unable to contact him. Reynolds determined to wait no longer, and on October 1 the march resumed. The main column reached the North

29. Ibid. The Little Bighorn was forded about five miles below the Montana-Wyoming boundary. The route followed from Rotten Grass to the Little Bighorn was parallel to and north of today's unimproved road.

30. Ibid., p. 58.

Platte on the 11th at the Red Buttes. Here it was overtaken by Maynadier and his men.

Raynolds led his reunited force eastward, along the Oregon Trail, past Richard's Trading Post at Platte Bridge to the Indian Agency on Deer Creek. Here Raynolds put his command into winter quarters.³¹

6. Lieutenant Maynadier's Explorations

Lieutenant Maynadier's detachment meanwhile had traveled up Tullock Creek. The valley was narrow and the channel tortuous, so it was difficult to find a way for the wagons. Maynadier's people found it necessary to cross the stream frequently, and to cut roadways through cottonwood groves and willow thickets.

Except for the waterholes, Tullock was dry, and the explorers found the surface water impregnated with alkali. Their success in obtaining water by digging was precarious. At one camp an abundance was had at a depth of a few feet, at the next, 12 miles above, a pole sunk 19 feet failed to procure a drop. The creek bottom was stiff blue gumbo, varying in thickness and resting on sand and gravel, from which water could be obtained when the clay was removed.³² When they halted on September 6, they discovered a pond of "beautiful clear water, and were congratulating ourselves upon the discovery, when on trial the water was found to be bitter with alkali, and produced violent nausea upon all who drank it."

Near its head, Tullock Creek divided into three forks, and the configuration of the terrain changed. The hills lost their ridge-like, precipitous character, becoming "gently sloping declivities, clothed in lucuriant grass, and dotted here and there with groves of pine trees." On the 7th Maynadier left Tullock Creek, and following its east fork via an old lodge-trail, crossed the divide and descended onto the Rosebud, "whose clear, running water and beautiful valley formed a delightful contrast to what we had left behind." After resting a day, Maynadier led his little column up the Rosebud, the lodge-pole trail their guide. The route paralleled the Rosebud until the 11th, and Maynadier waxed enthusiastically, "a finer road cannot be found." The Rosebud Valley, he reported,

traverses two ranges of the Wolf mountains almost at right angles, and is sometimes in its abrupt turns to all appearances closed by some lofty peak, but only in appearance, for it has a uniform width of about half a mile, and is level and free from ra-

31. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 285-286.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 127.

vines. The stream runs in a deep, narrow bed, fringed with willow and box-elder, the only timber, and would be difficult to cross with wagons. This, however, can easily be avoided, without materially lengthening the road, and in fact it was necessary to cross it but twice in the 30 miles which we travelled on it.³³

The Rosebud, near its head, divided into a number of branches, some dry and others constant. Before leaving the Rosebud, the trail entered a canyon. The tops of the hills were now covered with a dense growth of pine, "alternating with bare castellated cliffs of red clay and sandstone, presenting in the combination of dark rich green and glowing scarlet a contrast of color highly pleasing."

Where his wagons left the Rosebud on the 11th, the course of the stream changed abruptly to the west, while the trail continuing to the southeast ascended a ridge and led the explorers over to Tongue River.³⁴ Maynadier's detachment advanced up the Tongue. He then crossed over to the Powder, having been delayed too long on Tullock Creek, he failed to reach the designated rendezvous as scheduled. Observing that Reynolds' column had continued on to the North Platte, Maynadier resumed the march. Reynolds had too great a headstart, and Maynadier was unable to overtake him short of the North Platte.

7. Reynolds' Operations in 1860

During the winter of 1859-1860, Captain Reynolds reported what may have been the first Protestant effort to establish a mission on the Bighorn. The Reverend Bryninger and three companions stopped at Deer Creek on their way to establish a mission among the Crow. They were German Lutherans, and had been sent by the German Evangelical Synod of Iowa. Reynolds found them devoted, God-fearing men, "but ignorant of the world as well as of our language, and in consequence poorly fitted for the labors they had undertaken."

The captain gave them some provisions and persuaded them to winter at the agency. In the spring they left to found their mission, near the mouth of Bighorn Canyon, a site Reynolds had recommended. Late the following summer, Reynolds learned that the missionaries had gone as far as Powder River, where the Reverend Bryninger became separated from his companions and was killed by the Sioux. The others, left without a leader, became discouraged and returned to Iowa.³⁵

33. Ibid., p. 128.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

The explorers again took the field on May 10, 1860. As they did, they were confronted by two formidable deterrents: a record-breaking winter; and Reynolds' choice of the shortest but most difficult route to the Yellowstone. Traveling up the Sweetwater and crossing the divide, the party on May 22 reached the confluence of the Popo Agie and Wind River. Here the captain divided the expedition. His detachment ascended Wind River, and from its head passed to the west of the Tetons, descending the Madison to the Three Forks. Lieutenant Maynadier's proceeded down the Bighorn to Nowood Creek, then struck cross-country to the Yellowstone, and on to the rendezvous. The two parties spent July 4 at the Three Forks, consolidating reports and making plans. Reynolds now headed down the Missouri for Fort Union, by way of Fort Benton.

At Fort Benton, Reynolds detailed Lt. John Mullins of his military escort to take 20 men, including Jim Bridger and three of the scientists, and map the divide separating the Missouri and Yellowstone. While Reynolds and a second detachment descended the Missouri to Fort Union in a Mackinaw boat, Lieutenant Maynadier's party returned to the Yellowstone and made their way down that river in bullboats. The three detachments rendezvoused at Fort Union, and on August 15 the equipment was loaded aboard two special keelboats christened *Jim Bridger* and *Bob Meldrum*. Captain Reynolds and most of the men, with Jim Bridger as guide and interpreter, traveled overland. Proceeding by way of Fort Pierre, the column reached Omaha on October 4, where Reynolds disbanded the expedition.³⁶

8. The Expedition's Accomplishments

Reynolds' expedition added greatly to the knowledge of the region's geography. The Bighorn River, Reynolds reported, is formed by the junction of the Popo Agie and Wind River. Thirty miles below the confluence, the Bighorn entered the Owl Creek Mountains, passing through a canyon 20 miles in length, after which it flowed among broken and barren hills, occasionally interspersed with "small level valleys." Below the mouth of the Stinking Water (Shoshone), the Bighorn again entered the mountains, and passed through "a second cañon of 25 miles in length, emerging in latitude 45° 10'. The peculiar topography of this region," Reynolds wrote, "whereby the same river flowing to the north cañons twice through the same mountain range," had been well put by Bridger, who said, "The Bighorn mountains are just the shape of a horseshoe, and the Bighorn river cuts through both sides, dividing the heel from the toe." Bridger had told

³⁶. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 288-294. Mullins had replaced Smith as commander of the escort during the winter.

Raynolds that the gorge of Bighorn Canyon could not be less than 3,000 feet in depth.³⁷

Below the canyon the Bighorn flowed 10° east of north for about 70 miles to its confluence with the Yellowstone. This valley was open, and from two to five miles across, being bounded on either side by rolling hills. Near the Yellowstone it was crossed by Pine Ridge, "on top of which is found a stunted and straggling growth of pines."

The fords were well marked by Indian trails giving access to them, and "are the principal if not only crossings, as repeated attempts made at other points by naturalists, hunters, and other members of the party uniformly failed." The depth of water and rapidity of the current deterred the most daring. At the fords the water was from two to two and one-half feet deep.³⁸

At the eastern foot of the Bighorns was a belt of country, 20 miles in width, well-suited for the construction of a wagon road, which Raynolds believed would "become the great line of travel into the valley of the Three Forks." This plateau was watered by streams that disappeared into the country beyond. Finally, "the upheaval of the mountain crest [was] so uniform in direction that a comparatively straight road" could be laid out close to their base without encountering grades too steep to be pulled by teams.³⁹

Raynolds was impressed with the area near the mouth of Bighorn Canyon. Foreseeing the Bozeman Trail, he forecast, "not many decades will elapse before it shall become a thriving and important point on a road connecting the Platte with the three forks of the Missouri, and skirting in its course the Big Horn Mountains."⁴⁰

Reports submitted by Lieutenant Maynadier caused Raynolds to question the value of the Bighorn Basin for agricultural pursuits. The rainfall was too slight and the soil seemingly poor. But he continued, "the geological structure of the mountains would lead us to expect valuable mineral deposits in the ridges." Traces of gold had been found in the Bighorns.⁴¹

Discussing the Crow, Raynolds reported that in 1859 they occupied the country between the Powder on the east and the valley of the Three Forks on the west, on both sides of the Yellowstone. They heretofore had had little or no intercourse with the whites, except traders, and were divided into three bands--mountain, low-

37. Raynolds' Report, p. 9. 38. Ibid. 39. Ibid., p. 13.

40. Ibid., p. 55.

41. Ibid.

er, and middle--all told about 3,000 people. As they were "disposed to be peaceable," they had had no trouble with the whites. Raynolds believed they occupied "the best buffalo ground in the west, but are jealous of intrusion." While they were willing for him to pass through their country, they were "careful to add that they could not consent to my remaining." As game became scarce, the territory claimed by the Crow was subject to encroachments, and this led increasingly to war with the other tribes. Although few in number, the Crow were "noted warriors," and so far they had been able to ward off invaders. Though they had seen little of "civilized life, they had learned all its vices. Nothing was safe that they could steal and their licentiousness was beyond conception."⁴²

B. Capt. James Stuart and the Bighorn Expedition of 1863

1. The Grasshopper Creek Gold Strike

One month after Captain Raynolds disbanded his command, Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States. A sectional crisis ensued, and the seven states of the Lower South withdrew from the Union and formed a Confederacy. Fort Sumter came under bombardment on April 12, 1861, and surrendered the next day. President Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers was followed by the secession of four states of the Upper South. For the next four years, the Federal government was compelled to devote most of its energy to crushing the Confederacy. Until there was peace, the War Department would be unable to open the road from the North Platte to the Three Forks championed by Captain Raynolds. In fact, Raynolds' comprehensive report of his expedition was not published by the government until three years after Appomattox.

Although the Federal government was unable to act, the discovery of gold in what is now southwestern Montana focused attention on the Bighorns. In July 1862 the first of the great Montana gold strikes was made on Grasshopper Creek by John White. He, along with a party of Colorado prospectors, had left Denver in 1861 en route to the Idaho diggings. They had arrived too late and found Lemhi Pass choked with snow. The following summer, White made the strike that resulted in a rush into the region and the growth of Bannack from a camp into a city, destined to become Montana's first territorial capital. By October the new diggings had a population of over 400 and by April 1863, in excess of 1,000.⁴³

⁴². Ibid., pp. 13-14.

⁴³. The Idaho Territory organized in 1863 included the Montana area, but access to the capital at Lewiston was difficult for the miners in

2. Stuart's Company at the Mouth of the Bighorn

The richness of the discoveries on Grasshopper Creek brought thousands of eager adventurers and deserters from the Confederate and Union armies to the Montana Mountains. They spread out seeking other rich lodes. A large and well-equipped party started from Bannack in the spring of 1863 to reconnoiter the headwaters of the Yellowstone and adjacent territory. This party soon separated, and 15 men led by Capt. James Stuart advanced down the Yellowstone. In the vicinity of Pompey's Pillar, they encountered a band of belligerent Crow. Successfully avoiding combat with the Indians, Stuart's company rode on, and on May 5 reached the mouth of the Bighorn.

Examining the area, Stuart found the soil of sufficient fertility to produce bumper crops if irrigated. From the crest of the divide between the rivers, Stuart could see the snow-covered Bighorns to the south. The river bottoms were filled with cottonwoods, while the buttes to the east had some scrubby yellow pine. In the evening, several of the prospectors washed a few pans of loose gravel from a bar on the Bighorn, and found from ten to fifty very fine colors of gold in every pan. They also tried a gravel bank about 50 feet above the river, and obtained several colors to the pan. All agreed that they would find good diggings up the river.

One of the men, Henry T. Geary, went swimming in the Bighorn, and was swept downstream by the powerful current and into a whirlpool, at the confluence of the two rivers. He at first tried to reach the west bank, but discovering that it was impossible he swam to the other shore, which he reached in an exhausted condition. After resting and catching his second wind, he walked upstream a short distance above camp, and swam back to the other side. If he had not been a good swimmer, Geary admitted to Stuart, he would have drowned.⁴⁴

On May 6 five men were detailed to cross the Bighorn and survey a town-site and ranches. To guard against a repeat of yesterday's near tragedy, they built a raft and crossed safely. Simultaneously, four men were sent to prospect. The prospectors returned first, and reported only "a few colors or specks of gold." The surveyors located a town-site of 640 acres which they desig-

the camps east of the Continental Divide. Consequently, on May 26, 1864, the Territory of Montana was created with Sidney Edgerton as governor. The first territorial legislature met at Bannack.

44. James Stuart, "The Yellowstone Expedition of 1863," *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana* . . . (Helena, 1876), 7, pp. 180-181.

nated Big Horn City, and 13 ranches of 160 acres each. Meanwhile, Stuart surveyed and platted two ranches in the bottom between the Bighorn and Yellowstone.⁴⁵

3. The March from Big Horn City to the Canyon

Stuart's party started up the west side of the Bighorn on the 7th. As they rode ahead, they saw numerous white-tailed deer, buffalo, and elk, and thousands of prairie dogs. Along the river there was an abundance of cottonwood, while the rocky buttes to the east were pine-clad. Two miles above the mouth of the Bighorn, they sighted Tullock Creek coming in from the east. It was bounded by "plenty of cottonwoods." A strong wind from the northwest raised a cloud of dust, making travel very disagreeable. After camp was pitched, Stuart rode out a short distance and killed a buffalo. With game plentiful, the men lived high, on "marrow-bones, tongues, liver, sweetbreads, and catfish."⁴⁶

The prospectors, following the route pioneered by the army four years before, logged 15 miles on May 8, halting for the night opposite the mouth of the Little Bighorn. The day's journey had been across desolate country: to the west was a sage-covered bench about five miles across; to the east and the south-east across the Bighorn were rolling plains as far as the eye could see; to the northeast were low hills; to the northwest Pine Ridge; and to the southwest the Bighorns and Pryors. The wind, which was from the east, was cold, and the men wore their greatcoats.

Two men sent to prospect the Little Bighorn returned and reported, "a stream of clear water twenty-five yards wide . . . moderate current." Like all the streams in the region it was bordered by cottonwoods. Some colors, although very fine, were found on a bar.⁴⁷

Numerous Indian signs were seen near camp, and Stuart alerted everyone to be on the lookout. He would refuse to allow any red-men to enter camp, as he "would rather fight than have friends steal everything we have; and it is impossible to let more than

45. Ibid., p. 182. Stuart engraved his name, with the date, on a sandstone about three-quarters of a mile above the camp on the Bighorn. That evening four of his companions cut their names into a perpendicular sandstone between the Yellowstone and Bighorn.

46. Ibid., p. 183. Like the lower Missouri, the Bighorn was muddy, but its water had a good taste.

47. Ibid., pp. 183-184.

two of them come in without their stealing." Two men would be on guard at a time, while the night was divided into two watches. Stuart admitted that it takes

all the romance out of traveling in the mountains to have to leave a warm comfortable bed at one a.m. on a cold, windy, rainy night, and stand guard until six next morning, the weary hours cheered by the infernal howling of coyotes, buffalo, wolves, and pleasing thoughts of Indians crawling around camp, and the probabilities of hearing their arrows and bullets come hissing through the pitchy darkness.⁴⁸

A 15-mile ride was made on May 9. There was a cold wind out of the north with occasional showers during the morning, but by noon it began to rain so hard that Stuart had his men camp. After the company had halted, Stuart killed a black-tailed deer, the first he had seen since leaving the Yellowstone. Thousands of buffalo were sighted, the hills five to ten miles back from the Bighorn seemingly alive with them. The remains of an Indian burial up in a tree were found. Stuart supposed "it to be a Sioux," and wished "they were all up trees." As this was the first burial of this type encountered, he was inclined to believe that the Crow did not bury in this fashion.⁴⁹ Soon after breaking camp on the 10th, Stuart called a halt to permit his men to chase buffalo. A good time was had by all except the horses:

Over one hundred shots fired and only two buffalo killed dead but plenty went off mortally wounded. It was a shame to kill them, but it was the first time that it was a free thing for all that wanted to take a chance, and they improved the opportunity. It was an exciting sight to see the stampede of buffalo, men, and horses going furiously in every direction over the plain.

There was more good news. Several men reported they had prospected and found "plenty of colors to a pan along the river." When we get into the Bighorns, Stuart forecast, "we have got dead wood (may be)."⁵⁰

48. Ibid., p. 184. Before bedding down, the fires were put out. Camp was habitually made on level ground, and the horses tethered two to a picket. As the pickets were driven only ten feet apart, the horses were grouped. Despite these precautions, an Indian slipped by the guards and made off with one of the horses.

49. Ibid., p. 185. Camp on May 9 was pitched several miles below the mouth of Woody Creek.

50. Ibid., pp. 185-186.

Traveling on the west side of the river had become difficult, because of the deep coulees crossing the line of march. Several of these contained water. Stuart, seeing that the country was open on the east side of the Bighorn, sent two of his men to look for a ford. They found a place where the party could cross by raising their packs.⁵¹

As Stuart and his people were preparing to ford the Bighorn on the 11th, they sighted, across the river and about a mile above, three riders. From the way they sat their horses they had to be whites. They were coming downstream, and Stuart waited until they were opposite, before calling to them. The newcomers, although the prospectors did not establish identity for months, were John M. Bozeman, John Jacobs, and the latter's eight-year-old daughter. They had been pursued by Indians several days before, and when hailed by Stuart they mistook his party for hostiles and fled.

Stuart rushed Drewyer Underwood and George H. Smith across in advance of the column "to overtake them and hear the news, and also to ask them to come back to the crossing, and we would camp all day with them." After the last wagon had forded the river, Stuart and A. Sterne Blake rode to meet the strangers, never doubting that Underwood and Smith had overtaken them. After riding down the Bighorn about five miles, they met one of the men returning without having seen a trace of the newcomers. Stuart thereupon concluded that they must have turned up Rotten Grass Creek, and he proceeded in that direction. Before traveling very far, he picked up their trail, which he followed for ten miles. It was apparent that the strangers had kept to the creek bottom for about three miles, before they broke for the hills. A frying pan and a deck of cards, abandoned by them, were picked up. While returning from the chase Stuart killed a buffalo.

After fording the river, the company camped one mile above the mouth of Rotten Grass. Before retiring for the night, the members of the party carved their names into the bark of a giant cottonwood.⁵²

51. Ibid., pp. 185-186. Woody and Beauvais creeks had been crossed during the day, the company probably camping a short distance above the mouth of the latter. Since crossing Two Leggin Creek on the 9th, the route followed by Stuart's party was on the opposite side of the Bighorn from the one pioneered by Reynolds. In the evenings the men went fishing, and good catches of catfish were made.

52. Ibid., pp. 187-189. Stuart's company was again on the route traveled four years before by Captain Reynolds' detachment.

On the 12th the Stuart party continued up the east side of the Bighorn. Six miles above where they had camped, they forded Soap Creek, "a small stream coming from the southeast; no willows or cottonwoods on its banks but plenty of box-elder trees and bushes." Six miles beyond they reached the mouth of Bighorn Canyon and camped. The mouth of the canyon was "old red sandstone, in perpendicular walls, two hundred feet high. On the west side of the river the red sandstone crops out for several miles, and can be plainly seen for a long distance."

While some of the men were pitching tents, others prospected the river bars and banks. Some "very fine float gold" was found. Although few buffalo were seen during the day, there were "plenty of fresh Indian signs near camp." They were able to count tracks left by 16 horses. When they bedded down, Stuart warned the guards to "look out for squalls, as there is evidently a war party in the neighborhood."⁵³

4. The Night Attack on Stuart's Camp

James Stuart and George H. Smith had the first watch. Before retiring, the prospectors carried in all their flour and most of their baggage, including their saddles, which they positioned next to the tents, thus creating a barricade of sorts. The men took their rifles and revolvers to bed.⁵⁴

About 11 p.m. the horses at Stuart's end of the picket line became frightened, but it was too dark for him to see anything. He suspected a wolf might be circling the camp. A few minutes later, Stuart sat up and struck a match to check the time and to light his pipe. He then lay down.

The two men hugged the ground and continued to peer into the darkness. Smith now whispered that something was approaching his end of the picket line. Seconds later, a terrific volley crashed into camp. Stuart was lying between two horses, both of which were killed and nearly fell on him. Four other horses were killed and five more wounded. Smith shouted, "Oh, you scoundrels!" and fired both barrels of his shotgun at the flashes. Stuart could not shoot, because the surviving horses were in his

53. Ibid., pp. 189-190. The prospectors' camp was located at the mouth of Lime Kiln Creek, and it is now flooded by water backed up by the Yellowtail Afterbay Dam.

54. Ibid., pp. 190, 193-194. Drewyer Underwood and Samuel T. Hauser slept under the same blankets in one tent, which was also occupied by James N. York and Richard McCafferty. Henry T. Gerry, Ephraim Bostwick, George Ives, and Cyrus D. Watkins occupied the second tent; Henry A. Bell, John Vanderbilt, and A. Sterne Blake shared a third; and James

field of fire. He called for someone to pull down the tents, "to prevent their affording a mark for the murderous Indians a second time." James N. York rushed out and tore them down. Stuart bellowed for all who were able to take their arms, crawl from the tents and hug the ground.⁵⁵

Sam Hauser was awakened by the shots and shouts. His first realization of what had happened was when he heard Underwood call, "I'm shot through and through!"

"My God, this is awful," Hauser answered, "so am I!" for he now felt the shock and sting of a ball and blood trickling down his side. He believed the end was at hand. Thrusting his hand inside his shirt, he "drew a sigh of relief," because he found that the ball had not gone through him. It had struck a thick memorandum book in his left pocket, passed through, and flattened and lodged against a rib near the heart.⁵⁶

After the initial volley, the Indians put aside their firearms and took up bows and arrows. One of the prospectors recalled:

We could hear them [the arrows] whizzing through the air every second, and so near that we often felt the wind; and so close were the Indians that we could hear the twang of their bow-strings. Too shrewdly the cowardly murderers had resorted to their bows and arrows, after they had emptied their double barreled guns, knowing well that if they used their guns after we were aroused, that the flash would afford a mark for us to return their fire; but the arrows gave no guide, and they were safe in the ravine and darkness.⁵⁷

In accordance with orders from Captain Stuart, Underwood and Hauser crawled forward and took position between the camp and the river. There they waited for several hours, when to their surprise they saw Stuart walking toward them. In a whisper Hauser inquired, "What are you walking for? Why don't you get down and crawl? You will be killed!"

Replying, Stuart spoke, "Oh, I'm going around to see how the boys are, and to get some water for Bell and Bostwick. There's enough of us left to give them a lively rattle in the morning." Whereupon, an arrow came so close they felt the wind from it. Once again, Houser begged Stuart to crawl. He answered, "I was

Hauxhurst and William Roach slept in the open.

55. Ibid., pp. 190-191.

56. Ibid., pp. 194-195.

57. Ibid., p. 195.

not born to be killed by these red devils," and calmly walked down to the Bighorn and returned with a cup of water for the wounded.⁵⁸

The prospectors, when day dawned, sighted a few Indians among the rocks and pines and on a hillside 500 to 600 yards away. Stuart now examined the wounded, while his comrades watched the Indians. He found that C. D. Watkins had been shot in the right temple, the ball existing through the left cheekbone. Although he was breathing, he was unconscious. E. Bostwick was shot five times: once in the shoulder, three times in the right thigh, and once in the left thigh. He was sensible and "suffering dreadful agony." H. A. Bell was shot twice in the ribcage. Underwood was hit once, but the ball had made six holes: it had passed through the left arm above the elbow, just missing the bone, and then ripped through both breasts, which were large and full, just grazing the breastbone. H. T. Geery had been struck in the left shoulder with an arrow; George Ives had a flesh wound in the hip; while Houser's left breast had been injured.⁵⁹

The men now gathered to discuss their next move and drink the coffee they had been able to make. Stuart told them that it would be hopeless to attempt to return to Bannack through the Crow Country, as "we would not only have the blood-hounds up on the side of the mountain after us, but the whole Crow nation." He suggested that they return by way of South Pass and Fort Bridger. The rest agreed, and it was determined to abandon

all our outfit but five or six days' rations, to lighten up the packs, for the purpose of riding our horses seventy-five miles the first twenty-four hours, the object being to get the Indians following us too far from their main camp to return for reinforcements, should they succeed in surrounding us and compelling us to entrench ourselves.⁶⁰

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 195-196.

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 191-192. George Ives subsequently became a road agent and a member of the notorious Henry Plummer gang. He was executed by the vigilantes on December 19, 1863, at Nevada City, Idaho Territory.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 192, 199. Stuart, as they were in Crow Country, mistakenly assumed that their attackers were Crow. He was wrong. In all probability, the Indians who had attacked the camp were Sioux. While the meeting was taking place, Hauser collected 48 arrows within a radius of 30 to 40 feet of where he and Underwood had bunked. The tents were riddled.

Watkins was still breathing, but happily he was unconscious. Bostwick was alive and conscious, but gradually failing and in great agony. He insisted on his companions abandoning him to his fate, as it was impossible to evacuate him, and equally impossible for him to recover. Bostwick groaned that "if we remained with him it would only result in all of us falling victims to the fiendish savages." He asked for his revolver, swearing he would "get even on the red devils when they came into camp." Stuart handed it to him. A few minutes later all were startled by the report of a pistol. Filled with horror, they saw that Bostwick had blown out his brains.⁶¹

5. The Flight Across the Bighorns

Bell, who refused to have his wounds probed, now decided that he would attempt to accompany the party. He was put on a horse, and the prospectors trotted out a few minutes before noon. Stuart now had to abandon his plan of traveling fast. As they rode along, the Indians mounted their ponies, and moved along parallel to the miners, but well beyond gunshot range. They proceeded slowly to the southeast five miles, then east a similar distance, and finally south ten miles to camp at ten p.m. in the Bighorn Mountains.⁶²

On May 14 the prospectors rode 20 miles, the general direction toward the southwest. The countryside was rugged, and the Indians abandoned the pursuit. When they stopped at 4 p.m. to camp, a "very difficult and tedious descent into a gorge" was made to fetch water. While unpacking the horses, some blankets were thrown upon the small-arms, and Geery in picking his up, took it by the muzzle, and drew it toward him. The blankets or something else drew back the hammer sufficiently to discharge the piece, and the ball struck him a little above the left pap, shattering his shoulder. Despite the pleas of his comrades, he blew out his brains. After burying Geery, the company pushed on three miles and camped, hiding their horses in the pines. Since leaving "Bloody Camp," Stuart had adopted a plan of "camping before sundown, and getting supper, and then packing up and traveling several miles in the dark." He would then turn his men off the trail a mile or so, and go into camp without any fires.⁶³

61. Ibid., pp. 192-199.

62. Ibid., pp. 192-193. The company's probable route was by way of War Man and Soap creeks to Lodge Grass Canyon.

63. Ibid., pp. 200-203. The camp where Geery committed suicide was probably on the divide between Trout Creek Canyon and Lodge Grass Canyon.

The next day, although a 20-mile ride was made, Stuart estimated the distance covered was about 12 miles as the "crow flies" in a northwesterly direction. They were "badly deceived in the country today." From their camp it looked as if they would have to cross about four miles of rugged terrain, beyond which there appeared to be "open country, with no rocks or pines." They found that they were mistaken, because the open ground "was cut up with tremendous chasms of perpendicular rock, from one to eight hundred feet in depth, and in one instance one reached the enormous depth of fifteen hundred feet." They suffered for water, although there was plenty in sight at the bottom of the canyons. They camped for the night in a "bad cañon, being compelled to descend to get water."⁶⁴

On May 16 they made 15 miles. In general the route bore to the east. They reached the top of Devils Canyon in the morning without accident, although they saw many rattlesnakes. After avoiding a war party of Indians, the prospectors fought their way around Medicine Mountain through deep snow. Pushing on they gained the Oregon Trail, on May 28, near Pacific City. They returned to Bannack on June 22, 1863, "so delapidated generally, that scarcely anyone knew us at first."⁶⁵

Stuart's Bighorn Expedition of 1863 is significant in the history of the area, because the prospectors returned to Bannack with reports that, prior to the Indian attack, they had found traces of gold on the Bighorn. This information served as a magnet to draw goldseekers into the Bighorns for the next 30 years. No major finds were made, however, until the Bald Mountain strike of 1891. In addition, Stuart's party on its retreat made the first recorded crossing by white men of the rugged portion of the Bighorns between Lodge Grass and Bighorn canyons.

6. The Discovery of Gold on Alder Gulch

The six men who were supposed to rendezvous with Stuart's company were more fortunate. Their horses were stolen by the Crow, and they started back in disgust to Bannack. Two of the men, William Fairweather and Henry Edgar, camped for the night on one of the headwaters of the Jefferson. After supper Fairweather said he was going to try the sands of this stream to see whether he could get "tobacco money." Before he had finished panning out the first few shovels full he had made a strike. Further investigation next morning confirmed the initial impressions that this

64. Ibid., pp. 203-204. Stuart's party, during the day, penetrated Garvin Basin and saw Devils Canyon.

65. Ibid., pp. 205-207.

was a rich find. Claims were staked and notices posted by all members of the party for themselves and for others who were absent. They then returned to Bannack for needed supplies. Within a short time the secret was out. A stampede to the new diggings, Alder Gulch, was on.

The camp on Alder Gulch was named Virginia City, and the population of Bannack, along with thousands of newcomers, thronged to the new Golconda. Before the new camp was a year old, it had a population of over 10,000. Virginia City in 1865 became the territorial capital of Montana.

C. John Bozeman and the Bozeman Trail*

1. Bozeman Comes to Bannack

The three horsemen sighted by Captain Stuart's Company on May 11, 1863, and vainly pursued up Rotten Grass were John M. Bozeman, John M. Jacobs, and the latter's eight-year-old daughter. They were en route to the Missouri settlements to scout a favorable route over which to bring back an emigrant train to the Bannack diggings.

Bozeman, with whom history has been kind, was born in Pickens County, Georgia, in 1837. His father had deserted the family in 1849 to search for gold in California, and John was to do the same in 1860. In that year Bozeman left his wife and three young children in Coweta County, Georgia, to shift for themselves as he headed for Colorado to prospect for gold. By the time he reached the Colorado diggings, the best claims had been staked, so he joined Granville and James Stuart's expedition to the Idaho Country. Bozeman spent the summer of 1862 in the Deer Lodge Valley, but failed to strike it rich. He joined the rush to Grasshopper Creek in January 1863. Once again, he was too late and failed to secure a profitable claim. Bozeman now lost his enthusiasm for prospecting and became a promoter.⁶⁶

The development of the Idaho mines and the discovery of gold in what, in 1864, was still to become Montana Territory, focused attention on the region. There would be an influx of emigrants, and they, as well as the former residents, would need supplies. At this time there were two routes to these mining camps. One was by way of the Oregon Trail to Fort Hall and north. But on this roundabout route the Continental Divide had

* see National Register forms p. 663.
66. Merrill G. Burlingame, "John M. Bozeman, Montana Trailmaker," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 27, March 1941, 541-542.

to be crossed twice before reaching the Bannack diggings. The other way was via Missouri River steamboats to Fort Benton and then overland.

Bozeman sensed the need for a better route, one which was shorter and well supplied with those prerequisites--wood, water, and grass. In Bannack, Bozeman encountered a kindred spirit, John M. Jacobs, described as "a red-haired Italian from the Valley of the Deer Lodge." Jacobs was a squawman and had been in the Northwest for about 21 years. He had engaged in the cattle trade with his headquarters in the Deer Lodge Valley. In the spring of 1862 he had guided a 40-wagon train from Soda Springs to Walla Walla, so he had had some experience in this type of work.⁶⁷

2. Bozeman and Jacobs Scout a Route

In the spring of 1863, Bozeman and Jacobs, with Jacobs eight-year-old daughter, left Bannack to scout a new route for emigrants. Traveling by way of the Three Forks, they crossed the Gallatin Valley, then a gap subsequently named Bozeman Pass, and descended the Yellowstone to the Bighorn Country. Several days before encountering Stuart's company at the mouth of Rotten Grass, Bozeman and Jacobs had been chased by a Sioux war party. When Stuart hailed them, they mistook the prospectors for Indians and fled.

Two days later, on May 13, they met 75 to 80 Sioux warriors. Knowing that they would be plundered of everything, if not murdered, Jacobs dropped his rifle and bullet-pouch into the sagebrush before the Indians got to them. He was correct. The Indians stripped them of "almost everything, and many were for killing them." Finally the Sioux gave them three "Miserable ponies" in exchange for their horses, and turned the trio loose half-naked and without anything to eat. Jacobs, as soon as the Indians disappeared, retrieved his rifle and pouch, which contained five balls. Overcoming numerous hardships, they eventually arrived at the North Platte in a famished condition.⁶⁸

3. The First Train is Turned Back

On the North Platte and along the Oregon Trail, Bozeman and Jacobs, despite their narrow escapes, promoted the new route

67. Ibid., pp. 541-542; Grace Raymond Hebard and Earl A. Birminstool, *The Bozeman Trail: Historical Accounts of the Overland Routes into the North West, and the Fights with Red Cloud's Warriors*, 1 (Cleveland, 1922), 214.

68. Stuart, "The Yellowstone Expedition of 1863," *Contributions*, 1, 188.

to the Bannack diggings. Many were eager to attempt this route, which Bozeman and Jacobs promised was considerably shorter, besides having good water, grass, and wood. By July 1, 1863, a train had assembled on the Oregon Trail, near Richard's Bridge, ready to start for Bannack.

Samuel Word and his company had left Fort Laramie on June 23. At Richard's Bridge they rendezvoused with a train that had been forming there for two weeks. From some of those already in camp, Word heard stories of the difficulties to be encountered on a new route where there was no marked trail, and trouble with the Sioux and their allies could be anticipated. He, however, was impressed by Bozeman's and Jacobs' stories of good grass, and their assurance that the cut-off shortened the route to Bannack from 800 miles via the Oregon Trail and Fort Hall to about 450 miles. This saving of a month to six weeks in travel time decided Word and his friends. They cast their lot with Bozeman and Jacobs.⁶⁹

By July 3, 41 wagons had assembled on the left bank of the North Platte, and on July 6 Word recorded:

Broke camp this morning at about 8 o'clock and started on the new route to the headwaters of the Missouri--Beaver Head Country. We left the [North] Platte about 8 miles above Deer Creek and moved across the Sand Hills in a northwest direction, more north than west. We have 3 guides, John Jacobs, Bozeman, and Rafeil, the latter is particularly our guide to the Big Horn, the others will assist him and then take us on.⁷⁰

James Kirkpatrick, a member of the train, recalled Jacobs as entertaining the members of the party with lively tales of the gold diggings, Indian encounters, and other phases of life in Idaho Territory. Of Bozeman, he wrote that he

was not as valuable as Jacobs, was a tall, fine-looking Georgian of somewhat light complexion, a tinge of red in

69. Burlingame, "John M. Bozeman," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 27, 543; Hebard & Brininstool, *Bozeman Trail*, 1, 59.

70. Burlingame, "John M. Bozeman," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 27, 544; "Diary of Colonel Samuel Word," *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana*, 8, 59-60. Word identified Jacobs "as a mountaineer who has spent 21 years of his life in this region, and who came through Bannack City especially to guide immigrants through. Bozeman is a Georgian who has been here only about four years."

his cheeks. He wore a fine suit of fringed buckskin, and had the looks and ways of a manly man.⁷¹

By July 20 the train had reached Clear Creek, where 150 Sioux and Cheyenne warriors were encountered. So far the wagons had followed the route surveyed by Captain Reynolds in 1859. The redmen told the whites that the train must not go on, and that no road would be opened through their country. No attack would be made, provided the wagons turned back, Persistence in going forward would lead to their destruction. One Indian remained behind to receive the whites' reply. Bozeman advised going on because they were well armed--they had sufficient strength to protect themselves; the number of wagons was small enough to be managed; the draft stock being oxen they could not easily be stampeded or stolen. The captain of the train agreed. Many of the men, however, questioned the wisdom of going ahead. Rafeil advised caution. The Indian who was awaiting their answer was then sent off with word that the whites would take three days to make their final decision.

On the 21st the train retired four miles. Retreats of 12 to 15 miles were logged on succeeding days. While they debated their next move, they stalled for time. They hoped that a 75-wagon train known to be en route to Bannack would take the new cut-off, and with these reinforcements they could proceed. Several scouts were sent back to the North Platte to urge this train forward, and to telegraph from Deer Creek a request for aid from the military.

Sunday evening, July 26, found the train corraled on the North Fork of the Powder. The next day a young lady who had left her husband on the Platte and had traveled with the company was married to a young man by the name of Beaumont by Bozeman. Although he was not a preacher and had no authority to perform the rites of matrimony the parties insisted on his marrying them, and he complied, getting Word to make out the certificate.

On Tuesday, the 29th, the scouts returned and reported that they had been unable to secure any assistance from the army, and that the other train had continued along the Oregon Trail to Fort Hall. The majority now prevailed, and the train, on the 31st, turned back, preparatory to re-entering the Oregon Trail. Ten men, however, pushed on. Word, who remained with the wagons, noted in his journal, "Ten of our boys started out this morning, going through to Bannack on horseback, packing

71. Burlingame, "John M. Bozeman," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 27, 545.

their grub. Think it dangerous, doubt their getting through with their horses, if they do with their scalps."⁷²

These men (which included Bozeman, George W. Irwin, and Mike Knoch) were well-mounted and carried as little gear as possible. Only one pack horse was taken for the entire party. They planned to travel by night and hole-up during the day. On the second day out, the pack animal fell into a deep ravine, and all the supplies were lost. The horsemen crossed the Bighorns by way of Powder River Pass, and rode across the Bighorn Basin. Near present-day Thermopolis they turned northward. On the headwaters of Clarks Fork, Bozeman killed an eagle, and for the first time in four days the men had food. Finally reaching the Yellowstone, they ascended that river to its great bend and then crossed the low divide to the Galatin. Irwin named the gap between the Yellowstone and Gallatin valleys Bozeman Pass.⁷³

4. Bozeman Leads the First Train Over His Route

John Bozeman in the autumn of 1863 moved from Bannack to the new mining camp that had sprung up at Virginia City. That winter he joined a small train en route from Virginia City to Salt Lake City.⁷⁴

In June 1864 Bozeman was again on the North Platte promoting his route to the Montana goldfields. Word of the rich strike on Alder Gulch had had the anticipated effect. Thousands of emigrants were headed for Virginia City. Jim Bridger and John Jacobs, both with more experience than Bozeman, were also on the North Platte. Bridger advocated a shorter, easier, and safer route west of the Bighorns to avoid the Sioux. A company consisting of 62 wagons and about 300 persons was organized at Fort Laramie and hired Bridger as a guide.

Bridger's train followed the Oregon Trail to Red Buttes, where it turned north and headed for the Bighorn River. While en route across the Bighorn Basin, Bridger's train encountered the Shoshone led by Chief Washakie, an old friend of the guide's. To cross the Bighorn, which was at flood stage, a ferryboat had to be built. The Yellowstone was forded on July 4, and the Brid-

72. Ibid., pp. 545-546; Word, "Diary of Colonel Samuel Word," *Contributions*, 8, 61-67.

73. Burlingame, "John M. Bozeman," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 27, 546-547; Hebard & Brininstool, *Bozeman Trail*, 7, 215-216.

74. Burlingame, "John M. Bozeman," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 27, 548.

ger Range Crossed via Bridger Pass. Bridger's train, which had been overtaken by several others, reached Virginia City in the second week of July.⁷⁵

Jacobs had left Fort Laramie several days after Bridger with another train. Disenchanted with the route he and Bozeman had reconnoitered in the spring of 1863, Jacobs led the train across the Bighorn Basin over the route pioneered by Bridger. After leaving the Yellowstone, Jacobs bore to the south and entered the Gallatin Valley over Bozeman Pass.⁷⁶

The train Bozeman organized did not leave the Oregon Trail until several weeks after Bridger's and Jacobs'. John T. Smith recalled that he met Bozeman at Richard's Bridge, where he had formed a company with the goal of "viewing [a] route east of the Big Horn Mountains to Idaho, and in which enterprise he was to receive \$5 for each wagon."⁷⁷ Bozeman invited Smith to join his company, but as his train was to start the next morning and Smith's stock needed rest, he declined. Smith, however, was agreeable to taking the same route. Three days after the departure of Bozeman's train, Smith started north. Smith's train overtook Bozeman's on the North Fork of Powder River. Bozeman told Smith that he had been waiting two days for him, as he needed help in marking the route, and he had heard that Smith and several of his men were good woodsmen. Bozeman proposed that the two trains join forces, but Smith declined. They, however, agreed that the two trains, for mutual protection against Indians, would travel in close supporting distance and camp together at night.⁷⁸

The two trains rolled out the next morning and crossed the North Fork. On Big Piney a man was mauled by a grizzly. Skirting the Bighorns, they pushed on across beautiful country. Thousands of buffalo were seen. Forging Goose Creek, Tongue River, Little Bighorn, and Lodge Grass Creek, the emigrants reached the Bighorn, a short distance below the mouth of the canyon on July 4, which the "boys celebrated by killing 100 buffalo." The Bighorn was crossed the next day. As they headed down the valley of the Clarks Fork, the wagons turned into the trail left by Bridger's

75. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 304-307. Bridger, on leaving the great bend of the Yellowstone, traveled up Shields River and Brackett Creek, and down Bridger Creek.

76. Ibid., pp. 307-308; Burlingame, "John M. Bozeman," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 27, 550-551.

77. "John T. Smith's Reminiscences of a Trip to Virginia City in 1864," unpublished manuscript, Montana Historical Society.

78. Ibid. Mitch Bowyer had joined Smith between the North Platte and the North Fork.

and Jacobs' trains. Near the mouth of Shields River, the trains went their separate ways. Smith's followed Bridger's route and Bozeman's crossed Bozeman Pass. Bozeman's train reached Virginia City on August 3, three weeks after Bridger's, thus discrediting the story that the two trains had raced to Montana.⁷⁹

5. The Townsend Train Travels the Bozeman Trail

Although Hebard and Brininstool indicate that Bozeman guided two trains over the Bozeman Trail in 1864, the time factor makes this unlikely. Indeed, it is known that in September 1864 Bozeman was more interested in promoting the settlement, Bozeman City, which he had established on the Gallatin, a short distance west of Bozeman Pass. In that month a traveler reported that he had passed through Bozeman City, which consisted of a half dozen huts. There he was introduced to Bozeman to whom "belongs the credit of having laid out the Bozeman Cut-Off, on the road from Fort Laramie to Virginia City."⁸⁰

It is known, however, that a third train consisting of 350 men, 32 women, 42 children, 817 cattle, 10 mules, 57 horses, 141 wagons, and valued at \$130,000 traveled Bozeman's route to Montana. Accompanying this train were two diarists, T. J. Brundage and Benjamin W. Ryan.⁸¹

Ryan's wagons were at Richard's Bridge on June 29, 1864, where they turned off the Oregon Trail and into "the Bozeman Cut-Off." On July 1 they were on the Dry Fork of Powder River. Here they found 84 wagons "waiting for us to organize a stronger train." A meeting was held, and A. A. Townsend was elected captain. The trek was resumed, and about 30 miles beyond Richard's Bridge,

79. Ibid.; Burlingame, "John M. Bozeman," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 27, 550-551; Hebard & Brininstool, *Bozeman Trail*, 1, 219; Olin D. Wheeler, *The Trail of Lewis and Clark, 1804-1904 . . .*, (2 vols. New York, 1904), 1, 219.

80. Edward B. Neally, "A Year in Montana," *The Atlantic Monthly: A Magazine of Literature, Science, Art, and Politics*, August 1866, p.244.

81. T.J. Brundage's Diary, March 15-August 25, 1864, files of Montana Historical Society, and "The Bozeman Trail to Virginia City, Montana, in 1864, A Diary by Benjamin William Ryan," *Annals of Wyoming*, 19, 86. According to Brundage, the train included 369 men, 36 women, 56 children, 150 wagons, 636 oxen, 194 cows, 79 horses, and 12 mules. Brundage had left McCutchenville, Ohio, on March 15, 1864, and traveling by way of Grinnell, Iowa, Omaha and Fort Kearny, Nebraska Territory, reached Fort Laramie on June 17. Ryan and two others had left Sheffield, Illinois, on April 13, with two yoke of oxen.

another train was overtaken. It was agreed to consolidate the trains. After officers were elected, two guides (Raphael Gogear and John Bouyer) were employed at four dollars per wagon to lead them to the Bighorn. For this fee the guides agreed to find the emigrants "plenty of grass, wood and water and a passable road and act as interpreters with Indians." ⁸²

On July 7 the train was attacked by Sioux, and in the ensuing fight four men were slain. Three days later, the wagons were corraled on Crazy Woman Creek, where the emigrants found good water and lots of grass, but no wood. The latter presented no problem as there was a good substitute, thousands of buffalo chips. On the 11th the wagons covered 15 hilly miles and camp was made on Sand Creek. Once again, water and grass were plentiful, but buffalo chips had to be used instead of wood. Sixteen miles were logged on July 12. Despite a "few steep pitches and ascents" the road was good. About noon the train passed to the west of Lake De Smet. The camp on Big Piney had good water, while the grass was "middly good."⁸³

July 13 found the long train rumbling up and down hill. Great clouds of dust billowed up to mark the progress of the wagons. Little Goose and Hanna creeks were forded, and at dusk the train, after covering eight miles, was corraled on Beaver Creek. The next day the trace led down Beaver Creek seven miles, and the emigrants camped on Goose Creek, where there was plenty of wood, grass, and water. Large numbers of antelope were seen during the day, 15 being killed by the hunters. The women and children were able to gather huge quantities of gooseberries. On the 15th the train continued toward the northwest. Wolf Creek and Little Tongue River were passed, and camp made on Tongue River. Tongue River teemed with trout, while the ravines were full of gooseberry and current bushes. The company remained camped on the 16th, while 75 men prospected Tongue River Canyon without finding any colors. Many of the others took the day off to go fishing and caught hundreds of trout.⁸⁴

Captain Townsend had the wagons on the road early on July 17, and by the time they were corraled for the night on Twin Creek, 16 miles had been made. Great numbers of buffalo and antelope were seen, and the hunters killed and butchered a dozen of the

82. "The Bozeman Trail to Virginia City," *Annals of Wyoming*, 19, 87.

83. *Ibid.*, pp. 87-89. Two of the four men killed in the fight with the Sioux on July 7 were Frank Hudlemyer of Canada and A. Warren from Missouri.

84. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

former. The next day the train forded Pass Creek and the Little Bighorn, and camped on Lodge Grass. Although the weather had turned cool, the emigrants were plagued by dense clouds of red dust. On the 19th the train crossed Rotten Grass and at 11 a.m. was on Soap Creek. Nightfall found the wagons, after a rough drive over a number of hills, corraled on the Bighorn River. A diarist noted that the Bighorn "is as large as the Platt at the bridge & runs very rapid."⁸⁵

Considerable difficulty was encountered in fording the Bighorn. The emigrants had to raise their wagon boxes about a foot to keep the water from sweeping over the floorboards. One wagon was swept downstream, but it was saved. T. J. Brundage, as he was leading a team across, was swept off his feet. Fortunately, he was able to regain his footing, otherwise he might have been drowned. The train camped for the night one mile west of the ford, where there was good water, grass, and wood.⁸⁶

On July 21 the guides were paid off and the train divided, 50 wagons going ahead. While some of those who stayed behind remained in camp, others reconnoitered the mouth of Bighorn Canyon and prospected. Some colors were found but not in paying quantities. The rest of the wagons moved out on July 22. A hard pull was encountered before the bench was reached. Skirting the Gold Spring, the wagons forded Muddy Creek, and camp was made on a dry wash flowing into Beauvais. There was water standing in holes, which was satisfactory for the stock, but "poor for drinking and cooking." Twenty miles were logged on the 23d, and the emigrants halted for the night on Pryor Creek. The next day they reached the Yellowstone.⁸⁷

The wagons now moved up the south side of the Yellowstone and ascended the Clarks Fork. On July 28 the train was corraled near Rock Creek. Forty men were sent back along the Bozeman Trail to prospect the Bighorn and Pryor Mountains. The party returned from the Bighorns on August 8 and reported they had encountered a big Crow village. The Indians, after begging and taking all their provisions, told the whites that they did not want them in their country, because "they killed or scared all the game away and ate all the berries." Whereupon, Captain Townsend put his train in motion up the Bozeman Trail and it reached Virginia City on August 26.⁸⁸

85. Ibid., p. 90.

86. Ibid.; Brundage Diary.

87. "The Bozeman Trail to Virginia City," *Annals of Wyoming*, 19, 91. Leaving Muddy Creek, Townsend's train turned off the Bozeman Trail and headed directly for the Yellowstone rather than pass through Pryor Gap.

88. Ibid., p. 93; Brundage Diary. On the Clarks Fork, Townsend's train again turned into the Bozeman Trail.

6. The Coffenbury Train

Another large train reached Virginia City about ten days after Townsend's. David B. Weaver traveled with this train. It was July 6, 1864, when the wagons with which Weaver traveled reached Richard's Bridge. After crossing the toll bridge, the wagons were corraled and the emigrants rested, while awaiting others bound for the Montana mining camps. While waiting to push on they learned that Captain Townsend with a large train had started up the Bozeman Trail several days earlier.

They remained at this waiting spot until July 12, by which time 68 wagons had assembled, and the train was organized. Cyrus C. Coffenbury of Kansas, elected major, organized the train into four companies. Company A was commanded by Capt. Frederick Fridley, Company B by Captain Kremer, while Captain Lilly had either Company C or D. Weaver, many years later, was unable to recall the name of the fourth captain.

The Coffenbury train started up the Bozeman Trail on July 12, and took ten days to reach Powder River. Here they learned that Captain Townsend's wagons had been attacked by the Sioux on July 7. The Indians had been repulsed, but four men had been killed. Four empty graves near the bodies gave mute testimony to the savagery of the foe, who had not only dug up the remains, but had robbed them of their clothing and the blankets in which they had been interred.

By July 29 Coffenbury's train had crossed Tongue River, 172 miles from Richard's Bridge. On August 4 they camped on the Big-horn. Here they found colors in the sand and gravel--the first signs of gold they had seen. On they drove, reaching the Yellowstone on the 14th. They followed that river to a ford, which they crossed on the 23d, and kept up the north bank "to the first canyon," which was reached on August 25.

It was now impossible to hold the train together, as some wished to go on to Virginia City, while others were in favor of prospecting Emigrant Gulch on the Yellowstone.⁸⁹

D. The Bozeman Trail in 1865

1. The Missouri River and Rocky Mountain Wagon Road & Telegraph Co.

By 1865 Montana Territory had a population of 120,000 whites. Most of these people were interested in gold, and therefore de-

89. David B. Weaver, "Early Days in Emigrant Gulch," *Contributions to*

pendent on imports for their clothing, their mining machinery, and much of their foodstuffs. The residents of Virginia City were understandably interested in improving the routes to Montana. During the winter of 1864-1865, a company was "organized for the purpose of opening a road and building a telegraph line from Virginia City to the States." This company was incorporated under the name of the "Missouri River and Rocky Mountain Wagon Road & Telegraph Co." was consolidated with the "Bozeman City & Fort Laramie Wagon Road & Telegraph Co."⁹⁰

Bridger and Bozeman had been contacted and they had agreed to pool their interests in their respective roads with those of the company. In addition, they had been employed to conduct emigrants from Fort Laramie to the Montana mining camps in 1865. Ferries would be established across the Bighorn, Clarks Fork, and Yellowstone, while bridges were to be erected where needed. A road would also be opened to the mouth of the Yellowstone, with feeder roads to Fort Benton and the mouth of the Milk.⁹¹

Personal experiences, reinforced by reports of others, had satisfied the residents of Virginia City that the development and the improvement of the Bozeman Trail was vital. Over this route, it was forecast, would roll a tide of emigration drawn by the recent Montana gold strikes. It was pointed out that it required the better part of the season for one traveling by way of Fort Hall to reach Virginia City from the States. For those coming via the Bozeman Trail there would "be a saving of 700 miles," thus permitting them to reach the digging "in the midst of the mining season." Moreover, grass, water, and game were abundant.

Montanans were hopeful that their territorial delegate would be able to prevail on Congress to have the Postmaster General establish the Bozeman Trail as the mail route. According to the editor of *The Montana Post*, mail could be brought over this route from Omaha in eight days in the summer and ten days in the winter.⁹²

On May 15 the company sent one of its agents, M. Cortright, down the Yellowstone with two ferryboats. One was to be placed at the Bighorn crossing and the other on the Clarks Fork. The

the Historical Society of Montana, ?, 75-77.

90. *The Montana Post* (Virginia City), April 15, 1865. Company officers were: N. P. Langford, president; Samuel Word, secretary; Samuel T. Hauser, treasurer; and the board of directors, H. L. Hosmer, W. B. Dance, A. S. Potter, Henry Burns, N. P. Langford, Colonel Foster, and Captain Kercheval.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.

ferrys, along with a man to operate them, were placed at the crossings, and Cortright and his men, having exhausted their supplies, headed for the Bridger road. At the junction of the Bozeman and Bridger Trails, on June 9, they encountered 100 Sioux. Mitch Bouyer, who was with Cortright, recognized the leader of the Sioux as a childhood playmate. The Sioux were friendly at first, but the chief warned Bouyer that "he was in a bad place and was sorry for him."

The Sioux now stampeded the horses and opened fire, killing Smith and wounding Bouyer. Cortright's clothing was pierced, and he swore he saw at least 100 arrows. Bouyer, who was hit in the hip, yelled, "Run for the brush; it is our only show for our lives!" They fled into the brush, forded the creek, and dashed up a narrow canyon. They kept going until they reached the Crazy Mountains, where Bouyer gave out. He was left with a rifle and ammunition, and the others pushed on to Emigrant Gulch. There they were rejoined by Bouyer on June 14.⁹³

2. General Connor and the Battle of Tongue River

In 1864 Indian warfare along the Platte had caused an outcry that reached all the way to the nation's capital. The Cheyenne, enraged by the Sand Creek Massacre, made life dangerous for those traveling the Oregon Trail between Fort Kearny and the Sweetwater. The unrest and hatred spread from the Cheyenne to the Sioux and the Arapaho. To cope with this situation reinforcements were ordered to Fort Laramie, while Brig. Gen. Patrick E. Connor was transferred from Camp Douglas, Utah Territory, to the command of the newly constituted District of the Plains. Connor's mission was to bring peace and order to the region.

Col. Thomas Moonlight, a veteran of border warfare against the Confederates in Arkansas and Missouri, rode out of Fort Laramie on May 3, 1865, with 500 cavalry. Moonlight's instructions from General Connor were to pacify or punish the hostiles. The horsed soldiers advanced westward into the Wind River Country. Moonlight, like many Civil War veterans was to discover much to his discomfiture, that fighting Indians was different from battling Rebels. The Indians successfully avoided contact with the army, crossed the Bighorns, and spread out over the Powder River Country. From villages, estimated to number 1,500 to 2,000 lodges, the redmen (Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho) harassed traffic over the Oregon Trail and all but closed the Bozeman Trail.

To cope with this situation, the War Department, with the Civil War over, planned an ambitious campaign for the summer of 1865. Brig. Gen. Alfred Sully was to march westward from Fort

93. Ibid., June 24, 1865.

Pierre and to establish a post in the Powder River Country, 150 to 200 miles north of Fort Laramie. General Connor was to cooperate with Sully.⁹⁴

General Connor's column, 875 fighting men with 185 supply wagons, marched from Fort Laramie on July 31. Advancing via the Bozeman Trail, Connor reached Powder River by August 14. Here on a mesa rising about 100 feet above the river's east bank, a site for a fort and supply depot was selected. General Connor detailed Col. James H. Kidd of the 6th Michigan Cavalry to take charge of the detail assigned to erect the post, while he continued the march up the Bozeman Trail with the main column.

By August 22 Connor was on Crazy Woman Creek. The advance was continued, and on the 29th Connor pinpointed the Arapaho village of Black Bear and Old David on Tongue River, opposite present day Ranchester, Wyoming. In a slashing surprise attack, the soldiers swept through the village, killing 35 warriors, capturing 18 women and children, and 500 ponies. After burning the 250-lodge village, Connor led his column on a sweep down Tongue River.⁹⁵

3. The Expedition from the Niobrara River to Virginia City

a. The Federal Government Takes Action

Pressured by the Montana and Idaho territorial delegates, and an Iowa Congressman the Federal government, with the end of the Civil War in sight, took steps to shorten and improve the road from the States to the Montana mining camps. The Congress on March 3, 1865, made an appropriation for the survey of a wagon road from the Niobrara River in Nebraska Territory to Virginia City. James Sawyer on March 14 was given responsibility by the War Department for carrying out this project. It was the last day of the month, before he received detailed instructions as to how he was to proceed.⁹⁶

94. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 310-311; Brown, *Plainsmen of the Yellowstone*, pp. 140-149. Col. Nelson Cole, acting under orders from General Sully, started from Omaha with a mounted column and passed to the north of the Black Hills. There he encountered a force led by Lt. Col. Samuel Walker that had marched north from Fort Laramie. The soldiers on August 29 struck the Powder about 50 miles downstream from its mouth. Their rations having been exhausted, Cole--after burning his wagons--retired to Fort Laramie.

95. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 311-314; Robert W. Frazer, *Forts of the West* (Norman, 1965), pp. 180-181.

96. Sawyer's Report found in *House Executive Documents, No. 58, 1st*

After posting his bond and filing his oath as Superintendent and Disbursing Officer, Sawyer began organizing his outfit. As the route he was to reconnoiter and open was "to a great extent entirely unexplored," he laid in six months' supplies. Teams, wagons, and tools necessary for road construction and bridge building were purchased. Arrangements were made with the commander of the Department of the Missouri, Maj. Gen. John Pope, for a military escort--200 cavalry and two mountain howitzers.⁹⁷

At Sioux City, Iowa, in early May, Sawyer was disappointed to learn that instead of cavalry, the army had given him as an escort two companies of the 5th United States Volunteer Infantry. The Galvanized Yankees, with little transportation and rations to last for three months, were waiting for him at Niobrara City. Sawyer lost no time in calling this situation to the attention of General Pope. The general, in turn, called upon his immediate subordinate, General Sully, to detail Sawyer 25 men of Company B, 1st Dakota Battalion. These horsesholdiers were to remain with the expedition for six months.⁹⁸

b. From the Niobrara to Fort Connor

Sawyer's column started westward from Niobrara City on the 13th of June, 1865. The expedition consisted of 53 men, including guides, scouts, pioneers, herders, drivers, and a physician. There were 45 yoke of oxen, five saddle horses, five mules, and 15 wagons loaded with chains, tools, tents, camp equipage, and subsistence stores for six months. The 118-man military escort had 25 six-mule wagons.⁹⁹

Traveling with the Sawyer expedition for protection were five emigrant wagons and a private freight train of 36 wagons. The freighters' wagons were coupled so as to be pulled by 18 teams of six yoke of oxen each. These wagons were heavily loaded. Subsequently, Sawyer boasted, in pointing to the practicability of his route, that not one of these wagons had to be uncoupled during the journey to pass any obstacles.

Session, 39th Congress (Washington, 1866), p. 10. (Cited hereinafter as *Sawyer's Report*.) Sioux City, Iowa, business interests who could see no reason why Omaha should enjoy all the financial benefits of outfitting emigrants bound for Montana, had pressured their Congressman for this action.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

98. *Ibid.*, p. 11. Galvanized Yankees were captured Confederates who, to secure their release from prison camps, had volunteered to serve in army units assigned to the Indian frontier.

99. The military's teams were "small and thin."

To insure a "permanent well-marked road," Sawyer issued instructions for the wagons to form one column. To afford maximum protection, a platoon of infantry with one of the howitzers took the advance, next came the escort's wagons, followed in turn by a second infantry platoon, the expedition wagons, a third platoon of footsoldiers, the emigrant and freight train, while a fourth platoon of the 5th Infantry with the other howitzer then brought up the rear. The cavalry, guides, and pioneers kept well in advance of the main column, searching out the best route, guarding against Indians, and improving the road where necessary.

Paul Dorien, the Indian guide, deserted soon after leaving Niobrara City, and Sawyer hired Baptiste Defond, a Yankton half-breed. Defond served faithfully until his discharge at the Bighorn crossing. The chief guide, Ben F. Estes, accompanied the column all the way to Virginia City.¹⁰⁰

The column, traveling by way of the Niobrara and passing to the south of the Black Hills, reached the Powder River Country in the fourth week of August. On the 23d Sawyer's scouts rode up to Fort Connor to learn from Colonel Kidd that General Connor had led his column northwestward toward Tongue River.¹⁰¹ The next day the wagon train struck the Powder, and Sawyer had it camp on the east side of the river, one mile below the fort. Here he found plenty of water and wood, but the grass was withered and burned. He remained camped on the 25th to rest the stock, and await instructions from General Connor. A Sioux war party swept down, drove in the herders, stole one horse, and killed two oxen. Orders were now received by Colonel Kidd from General Connor, to provide Sawyer with a cavalry escort to the Bighorn.¹⁰²

The Galvanized Yankees of the 5th Infantry and the Dakota volunteers were detached at Fort Connor, along with their wagons, their place being taken by a 40-man escort from the 6th Michigan Cavalry. When the march resumed, the train consisted of 57 wagons with 350 head of cattle. The wagons, besides tools and gear, were loaded with sugar, coffee, apples, canned fruits, candles, soap, kerosene, etc.¹⁰³

100. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

101. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

102. Ibid., p. 24. The Powder, Sawyer reported, was about 150 feet wide and a foot deep.

103. The *Montana Post*, Oct. 14, 1865.

c. From Fort Connor to the Bighorn

It was 26 miles to the next water on Crazy Woman Creek, so Sawyer, in view of the hot weather, determined to make a night march. His column would be traveling the Bozeman Trail, as well as the route taken by Connor's command, so Sawyer anticipated no difficulty. The wagons rolled out at 4 p.m., on August 26, forded the Powder and headed northwest. They traveled until 11 p.m. when a halt was called, the wagons corraled, and the stock rested. The trek was resumed after a four hour break, and the expedition reached Crazy Woman Creek at 10 a.m. on the 27th. Once again, as they were in hostile country, the wagons were corraled.¹⁰⁴

The teams were hitched and the wagons again under way at 3 p.m. Eighteen hours later, the train was corraled on Clear Creek. The 23 miles covered were across rolling hills. Where the Bozeman Trail crossed dry washes, the pioneers worked with pick and shovel to adjust the grade so the freighters' double wagons could cross without uncoupling. On August 29, despite a heavy rain, the column made a 16-mile march, camping on Big Piney. About noon they had passed one-half mile west of Lake De Smet, "a fine sheet of water about one mile long by half as wide." The route paralleled the Bighorns, at distances varying from five to eight miles.¹⁰⁵

Sawyer's train on the 30th forded Big Piney, crossed several divides, and corraled on Beaver Creek. Although the countryside was hilly, the 15 miles traveled were easy on the oxen. The scouts out in front of the train sighted some Indians. The last day of August found the train traveling up the Bozeman Trail a respectable 22 miles. In the course of the day's march, Goose and Wolf creeks, as well as Little Tongue River were forded. The pioneers at each of these streams improved the approaches to the fords. Soon after camp was pitched on Little Tongue River, Capt. O. F. Cole, late of the 6th Michigan Cavalry and a volunteer serving with the escort, was ambushed and killed by Indians.¹⁰⁶

Captain Sawyer had his train on the road early on September 1. A two and one-half mile drive brought the wagons to Tongue River. Immediately after fording, the rear guard was assailed by Arapaho, and the "loose" cattle stampeded. Sawyer ordered the advance continued, but he found the nearby bluffs alive with well-armed redmen. Seeing that his 35-man escort was too weak to protect the train, Sawyer had the wagons corraled in the bottom. Two men were killed as they formed the corral.¹⁰⁷

104. *Sawyer's Report*, p. 23.

105. *Ibid.*

106. Cole had lost an arm in the Civil War.

107. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24. The dead were James Dillelend, a driver, and an emigrant, Merrill. Thirty head of cattle were lost to the Arapaho.

On the 2d the Indians advanced a white flag and asked for a parley. They told Sawyer that they were Arapaho and that four days before General Connor's column had surprised their camp. In the ensuing fight, their village had been burned, and they had lost many warriors and ponies. What they wished now was peace, and the return of their horses. Sawyer, satisfied that he was outnumbered, also wanted peace. It was agreed to send three Indians and a similar number of whites to see General Connor to arrange a settlement. To guarantee against treachery on the part of the redmen, several stayed at the corral as hostages. The Arapaho also agreed to allow the whites to turn out their stock to graze.

Two days later, on the 4th, the Arapaho, who had ridden out to contact General Connor, returned and reported that they had sighted a strong column of whites approaching. The truce was terminated and the hostages released. On September 5, Capt. J. H. Kellogg of the 6th Michigan Cavalry rode in with 27 men. He had been carrying mail to Connor's column and had been attacked by Indians. Kellogg told Sawyer that he had seen the three men who had gone out with the Indians, and they were en route to Connor's camp somewhere down Tongue River.¹⁰⁸

The train was still corraled on Tongue River on the morning of the 12th, with the Arapaho camped nearby. Meanwhile, Sawyer had a mutiny on his hands. His teamsters and pioneers had held a meeting and elected a spokesman. Sawyer, on questioning the escort, had learned that their orders prohibited them from crossing the Bighorn. When the mutineers learned this, they proposed to burn all but 13 wagons and employ the teamsters thus freed as an escort. Sawyer refused to listen to this, and it was determined to retreat to Fort Connor.

On September 13 the train recrossed Tongue River and started back down the Bozeman Trail. As the wagons were being corraled at the end of the day's drive the scouts reported approaching horsemen. The newcomers were reinforcements (Company L, 2d California Cavalry and Capt. A. E. Brown's company of Indian scouts) sent by General Connor in response to Sawyer's call for help. Their march, Captain Brown explained, had been delayed by cloudbursts which had caused the streams and dry washes to run bank full.

Two days later, the 15th, the wagons again rolled toward the northwest. Camp was made at 4 p.m. near Tongue River. Several Indians had been seen by the scouts, but they kept their distance. A 19-mile march on the 16th brought the train to the

108. Ibid., pp. 24-25.

Little Bighorn. "The country," Sawyer reported, "is very rolling, but hard and good to travel over; and the creek valleys are fine land, with plenty of timber and grass and the purest water."

Sawyer's train on the 17th traveled to the northwest across rolling terrain. Camp was made on Lodge Grass.¹⁰⁹ Sixteen miles were logged on September 18, the wagons being corraled on Soap Creek at 3 p.m. Much hard work and heavy grading by the pioneers was required to get the wagons down off the bluffs and into the Bighorn Valley. The valley, Sawyer wrote, was

about two or three miles wide, and has much fine grass in it, and considerable timber in the bends of the stream; immense herds of buffalo and large numbers of antelope range in every direction; while elk, deer, bears abound and make the area a hunter's paradise.

On September 19 the train advanced up the Bighorn Valley six miles to the Bozeman Trail ferry. Here the river was about 400 feet across. Because of recent rains considerable difficulty was experienced in finding a ford with a depth of three and one-half feet. The pioneers were turned to improving the approaches to the crossing, while the rest of the hands worked to get the wagons across. By 11 a.m. all the teams were on the west bank and the wagons corraled. Captain Brown's orders from General Connor did not permit him to proceed any farther, because the west bank of the Bighorn was Crow Country and outside the war zone. He prepared to report back to Fort Connor. Sergt. James Youcham and seven men of the 2d California, however, were detailed by Brown to accompany the train to Virginia City.¹¹⁰

d. From the Bighorn to Virginia City

The next day, September 20, the teams pulled the heavily loaded wagons up the steep escarpment and gained the bench. Rolling to the northwest, the train crossed two creeks, one by fording and the other by bridging, and corraled for the night on Beauvais Creek. Many buffalo were seen, while the pioneers kept busy cutting down banks and grading the road. Nineteen miles were logged the next day, and the train halted on Pryor Creek, 11

109. Ibid., p. 26. Two unnamed creeks were crossed on the 17th, over which the pioneers improved the fords.

110. Ibid., pp. 26-27. Sawyer reported that the current of the Bighorn was very rapid; that many men were swept "some ways downstream;" but that all crossed in safety.

miles from Yellowstone River. Like Captain Townsend's train, Sawyer's had veered away from the route leading through Pryor Gap, after crossing Muddy Creek. Sawyer's wagons reached the Yellowstone on September 22. The final five miles down through the bluff was difficult and required hard work on the part of the pioneers to make it passable.¹¹¹

On the 23d Sawyer turned his wagons up the Yellowstone Valley, and after traveling 18 miles, reached the mouth of the Clarks Fork. Three weeks were required to cover the 223 miles between the Clarks Fork and Virginia City. The citizens were impressed with the train's appearance. Although it had covered 1,022 miles since leaving Niobrara City on June 13, the wagons were in perfect order and none of the stock crippled.

Sawyer was pleased with the route and his accomplishments, and on his arrival in Virginia City on October 12, he boasted that the only delays encountered were because of Indians. Indian attacks had lengthened his travel time by 25 to 30 days. As soon as the "savages" were defeated and peace restored to the northern plains, his route would be the most popular one from the Missouri to Montana, because it crossed no mountain barriers and with the construction of stations would make year-around traffic practicable.¹¹²

Montanans were delighted to learn that, although the train had had 600 head of stock with it as far as Powder River, at only one point (Pumpkin Butte) was there insufficient grass. Game and timber were plentiful. There was very little alkali, and what there was could be avoided. Only one breakdown had occurred, and that was when a spindle snapped as a wagon was carelessly cramped. The only objection to the route that he could foresee, once the Indian menace was dealt with, was the soil, which after a rain turned into black gumbo. But, he explained, in dry weather this type of soil was very easy on the oxen's cloven hooves.¹¹³

Other trains probably traveled the Bozeman Trail to Montana in 1865, prior to General Connor's August campaign. Unfortunately, no accounts have been found detailing their movements.

111. Ibid., p. 27. The point where the train reached the Yellowstone was a short distance east of Billings.

112. *The Montana Post*, Oct., 14, 1865.

113. Ibid. Even at Pumpkin Butte water could be secured by sinking wells.

E. The Bozeman Trail in 1866

1. The First Trains Reach Virginia City

The first train to reach Virginia City in 1866, via the Bozeman Trail, arrived on July 17. It consisted of 17 wagons captained by Orville Royce of Wisconsin. Royce told the editor of the *Montana Post* that a short distance behind was Capt. John Zeigler's 45-wagon train with 200 persons from Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin.¹¹⁴

Royce's train had left Richard's Bridge on June 6. Grass had been good, and they would have made the trip in record time but for the unseasonably high water in the rivers. Most of them were unfordable. At the Bighorn, a man named Whiston had been drowned while scouting for the crossing. Dr. Storer had been drowned at the same point, when his raft was upset. Mrs. Foster and her nine-year-old son were swept downstream, when her husband's wagon was tipped over, but, keeping their wits, they clung to the wagonbox and were rescued by Captain Royce. The box finally grounded three miles below the crossing. Another man was lost from Royce's train on July 3, as he swam his mule across the Clarks Fork.¹¹⁵

2. The Army Escorts a Train From Fort Phil Kearny to the Bighorn

In the final days of July 1866 three trains were corraled on Big Piney, a short distance from where Col. Henry B. Carrington's soldiers were erecting Fort Phil Kearny. These trains were: Capt. Hugh Kirkendall's mule train, Captain Tootle's ox train; and the Todd-Parker train. On August 2 the trains numbering 110 wagons, with 171 men, six women, and five children broke camp and started up the Bozeman Trail. Knowledge that two companies of infantry had been alerted by Colonel Carrington to proceed to the Bighorn crossing to build a fort caused the wagonmasters to call a halt and to corral the wagons, after they had traveled three miles.¹¹⁶

The wagons made an early start the next day, and passed the site where Louis Gazzous and four others had been killed by Indi-

114. Zeigler was a resident of the territory who had returned to the States the previous year in a boat he had built at Fort Benton.

115. The *Montana Post*, July 21, 1866. The Fosters were from Wisconsin.

116. "From Illinois to Montana in 1866: The Diary of Perry A. Burgess," Robert G. Athearn, editor, *The Pacific North West Quarterly*, 41, 59-60.

dians on July 17.¹¹⁷ They had been hastily buried in shallow graves by the soldiers, and their remains had been uncovered by coyotes and wolves. A brief halt was made to allow some of the emigrants to reenter them. Word that the two companies were still at Fort Phil Kearny caused Kirkendall to halt the wagons on Peno Creek.

On August 4 the train moved ahead slowly, and during the day it was overtaken by the soldiers. The emigrants were glad to have the army along, especially after they passed a wagon that had been captured and plundered by Indians. Nightfall found the wagons corraled on Beaver Creek. Eight miles were logged on the 5th. A diarist, Perry A. Burgess, was deeply impressed with the area. The weather was wonderful and the mountain scenery splendid. In the distance hundreds of buffalo could be seen grazing the hills. Breaking camp on Goose Creek at 5:30 a.m. on August 6, the train made Tongue River. Some of the men went fishing that evening and caught a number of trout, several weighing as much as three pounds. Diarist Burgess saw the Tongue River country, as a prime ranching and farming area.¹¹⁸

On August 7 the train and its escort made 20 miles, camping on the Little Bighorn. Thousands of buffalo were scattered across the valley. Hunters rode out and killed a number for sport, the carcasses being left to rot. When they stopped at noon, the emigrants found the grave of George Pease killed by the Indians from the train that was several days ahead of them. Some of the emigrants took tools and shoveled more dirt upon the grave to keep the coyotes from devouring the corpse. An eight-mile drive on the 8th enabled the train to corral on Lodge Grass Creek. As on the previous day, the hills and prairies were "dotted over with buffalo on all sides as far as" the eye could see. A huge bull charged the wagons and forfeited his life.¹¹⁹

The wagons were driven 18 miles on August 9. Rotten Grass was forded and a dry camp made five miles from the Bighorn on

117. Gazzous was a trader and married to a Sioux. This had not saved him from Red Cloud and his warriors, when they visited his trading post on wheels. Dee Brown, *Fort Phil Kearny: An American Saga* (New York, 1962), pp. 78-79.

118. "From Illinois to Montana," *Pacific North West Quarterly*, 41, 60; Diary of Lt. George M. Templeton, Aug. 2-7, 1866, Newberry Library. Burgess had left Lena, Illinois, on March 29, 1866, with two wagons.

119. "From Illinois to Montana," *Pacific North West Quarterly*, 41, 60.

the divide between Rotten Grass and Soap Creeks. Once again, Burgess reported the day pleasant, the country beautiful, and buffalo abundant. Jim Bridger, who was scouting for the army, had ridden ahead to the ferry and found two parties: the first a group of miners who had come down from Virginia City to prospect for gold; and the other the preceding emigrant train, which had had most of its oxen run off by Indians and was awaiting replacements from the Gallatin Valley.¹²⁰

An early start was made on the 10th, and after logging a mile, a halt was made on Soap Creek for breakfast. It started to rain, and the emigrants did not resume the march until afternoon, when they drove on four miles and camped near the Bighorn. The river was deep and swift. The next morning an effort to pinpoint a crossing ended in disaster when McGear, partner of Captain Kirkendall, was drowned. His body was recovered after a two-hour search, and buried in an old gun box.¹²¹

The trains on the 12th moved up the Bighorn five miles to the ferry. Already the soldiers had determined to erect their fort on the bench commanding the ferry. On the far side of the river were the emigrants contacted by Bridger two days before. Burgess pronounced the ferryboat a "sad affair," as it was built of "rough planks hewn from cottonwood logs, corked with rags and barely large enough to carry one wagon." A team of carpenters was turned out to strengthen the boat.¹²²

Kirkendall's wagons were ferried across the Bighorn on the 13th. Four of his mules were drowned in swimming the river. Tootle's train was crossed on the 14th, while the Todd-Parker wagons reached the west bank on the 15th. To get the heavy freight wagons on the little ferry, they had to be lightened. Dugouts lashed together were employed to ferry some of the freight across. Before the last Todd-Parker wagon had been landed on the left bank, several other trains came rumbling up the Bozeman Trail from Fort Phil Kearny. While most of the men worked, a few prospected for gold, but they were unable to find any colors.¹²³

On August 16 the Todd-Parker train rolled out early. In ascending the escarpment to gain the bench, one of the big freight wagons broke down. This caused considerable delay, and the train

120. Ibid., pp. 60-61.; Templeton Diary.

121. "From Illinois to Montana," *Pacific North West Quarterly*, 41, 61. When McGear's body was recovered, his watch was still running and the cartridges in his revolver were fired.

122. "From Illinois to Montana," *Pacific North West Quarterly*, 41, 61.

123. Ibid.

logged only ten miles before stopping for the night on Beauvais Creek. Several men were met during the day with oxen en route to the Bighorn to get the stranded wagons. The next two days, August 17 and 18, found the train pushing on toward Pryor Gap. Although the weather was beautiful, the road was terrible. On the 19th the wagons passed through Pryor Gap and continued on to the Clarks Fork and Virginia City, where they arrived in the second week of September.¹²⁴

3. The Richard Train

Joseph Richard started up the Bozeman Trail in the third week of August with 52 wagons, divided into two wings. One of those traveling with this train was Thomas A. Creigh of Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. After being discharged from the Union army, Creigh had been employed by some of his Franklin County friends to develop mining claims in the Montana diggings. Creigh, with equipment for two stamping mills, had left Omaha on June 12.¹²⁵

August 22 found the train camped on Crazy Woman Creek. Whereas there had been too much water in June and early July, there was now not enough in the streams and the oxen suffered. Breaking corral at 5 a.m. the wagons rolled out, but before they had gone very far the vehicles transporting a boiler for a stamping mill upset. This accident delayed the train three hours, and only 14 miles were made before a halt was made on Clear Creek. Two days were required to travel from Clear Creek to Big Piney, the train being corraled on Peno Creek. Earlier in the day, the wagons had been parked for a number of hours on Big Piney, and many of the emigrants had visited Fort Phil Kearny, a mile and one-half away.¹²⁶

Twelve miles were logged on August 26, as the train creaked up the Bozeman Trail. Captain Richard habitually had his wagons in motion by 5 a.m. They traveled until mid-morning, then corraled until mid-afternoon, when the journey was resumed. A halt for the night was made between 5 and 7 o'clock, whenever a good supply of water was found. Diarist Creigh on the 26th reported that they saw the cone of an extinct volcano and lots of red scoria. On Monday, the 27th, the train forded Goose Creek, and the hunters shot and killed their first buffalo. That evening many of the emigrants ate buffalo steak.¹²⁷

124. Ibid.

125. "From Nebraska City to Montana, 1866: The Diary of Thomas Alfred Creigh," James C. Olson, editor, *Nebraska History*, 19, 212.

126. Ibid., p. 230.

127. Ibid., pp. 230-231.

A dry camp having been made on the evening of the 27th, Richard had his wagons on the road at 4 a.m. A halt was made on Tongue River at 9 o'clock and the wagons corraled. When the drive was resumed at 4 p.m., three cattle were missing. Captain Richard sent a trio to search for them. They soon sighted the missing stock being driven along by Indians, and the redmen chased the trio back to the wagons. Alerted by the shouts and shots, the teamsters corraled the wagons. A number of shots were exchanged, before the 50 Arapaho, discovering they had stirred up a hornet's nest, retired down Tongue River.¹²⁸

By 8 a.m. on August 30 the train was corraled on the west side of the Little Bighorn. About noon, the camp was aroused when Indians swept down and attempted to stampede the stock. Once again, the redmen were repulsed. The march was resumed at 1 p.m. and camp pitched at 6 o'clock. On the 30th there was a heavy rain, and the wagons remained corraled until 11 a.m. A short drive brought the train to Lodge Grass Creek, where it stopped until 5 o'clock, when it again moved out. Ninety minutes later, a halt for the evening was made. It rained throughout the night, and on the morning of September 1, the emigrants awakened to see that snow had fallen in the Bighorns.

The steep grade leading across the divide to Rotten Grass was so muddy that Captain Richard held the wagons in camp until 9 a.m. When they did move out, the slippery road caused hard pulling, and two hours were needed to cross the divide and reach Rotten Grass. After corraling for several hours, the wagons started down Rotten Grass valley. On the 2d they crossed Soap Creek, and at 8 a.m. corraled on the Bighorn, three miles south of Fort C. F. Smith.

Captain Richard hoped to avoid paying the heavy fee of five dollars per wagon demanded for the use of the ferry and sent out scouts to search for a ford. The river was too high to be forded, and on September 3 the train broke camp and drove to the ferry. Two days were required to get all the wagons across the Bighorn. While waiting their turn to cross some men went prospecting and found colors.

The train left the Bighorn Valley on the afternoon of September 5. Traveling by way of Beauvais Creek, the wagons, after passing over a "miserable hilly road," corraled on Pryor Creek at noon on the 7th. Before continuing that afternoon, the emigrants saw a number of Crow passing on the bluffs one-half mile away. Soon after Richard's train debouched from Pryor Gap, it was overtaken by 20 Indians. These redmen, although they wore war paint, claimed they were friendly. As they begged tobacco,

128. Ibid., p. 231. In the attack the Indians captured one mule, which the whites subsequently recovered.

it was observed that: they were riding shod horses; they were wearing clothing issued by the United States Quartermaster; cavalry sabers were girded to their waists.¹²⁹

Richard's train reached Virginia City on October 2. In announcing its arrival, along with 26 other wagons, the editor of the *Montana Post* reported, "These parties passed through the Indian Territory with over 100 wagons and the savages made no attack. They succeeded in stealing one mule."¹³⁰

4. The First Texas Trail Herd to Montana

The first trail herd of Texas cattle brought to Montana came over the Bozeman Trail in the fall of 1866. These cattle belonged to Nelson Story, who had moved to Montana from Colorado in 1863 with two wagons and a mule pack-train. He had settled near Alder Gulch. In 1864 he joined the vigilantes, and at the same time worked his claim for \$30,000. With \$10,000 in greenbacks sewed in his clothes, Story in 1866 traveled to Fort Worth, Texas, where he bought 1,000 longhorns at \$10 per head.¹³¹

Story trailed his cattle northward from Fort Worth, across the Indian Territory, and on to St. Joseph, Missouri. There he bought "a stock of goods, broke a sufficient number of oxen to yoke to pull the 12 wagons" and started overland for Montana. Turning into the Oregon Trail, Story, his teamsters, and drovers reached Fort Laramie in September.¹³² Here Story was joined by John B. Catlin, formerly a major in the Union Army. After being mustered out, Catlin had struck out for the west in the summer of 1866. He joined a wagon train, and at Fort Laramie signed on with Story. The outfit now continued up the Oregon Trail as far as Richard's Bridge, where it turned into the Bozeman Trail.

129. Ibid.

130. The *Montana Post*, Oct. 6, 1866. The other trains arriving at Virginia City during the week ending October 6 were: six wagons in charge of J. F. Wheeler with goods for Kiskadden & Brendlinger; 13 wagons in charge of George Matthews with supplies for F. R. Merk; and seven wagons under Alfred Myers.

131. Byron Story, "Nelson Story, Sr., was one of Montana's First Gold Miners," *Billings Gazette*, undated, Clipping File, Billings Public Library. Nelson Story is a member of the Cowboy Hall of Fame.

132. Mrs. Granville Stuart, "Nelson Story First to Bring Texas Cattle into Montana," *Billings Gazette*, Oct. 27, 1924.

"The country," Catlin recalled, "was alive with Indians. There were signs of fighting--burned wagons and dead stock." Story's scouts, riding ahead, caught an occasional glimpse of Indians. Not until the train had penetrated to within ten miles of Fort Reno was any open hostility encountered. Here at the edge of the badlands, the train was attacked. As 30 redmen swooped down and released a shower of arrows to stampede the longhorns, they encountered a withering fire. The Indians fled, but not before running off several head of stock. Story followed the redmen into the badlands, and he and his cowboys recovered the stock before it was butchered.¹³³

From Fort Reno the trail herd moved on to Fort Phil Kearny. In accordance with the orders from Colonel Carrington, camp was pitched three miles from the fort, as the military wished to save the meadows for the army's stock. Story's company remained camped near the fort two weeks, while awaiting permission from Colonel Carrington to proceed. Finally Story proposed that they push on without a permit, remarking that "if they started at night, they would be so far from the fort by morning that none of the soldiers would dare come after them."

After discussing Story's proposition, the men voted on it. There was only one vote, by George Dow, against it. Dow was confined to prevent him leaking word of their plans. There were 27 men in Story's company and, as Catlin recalled,

300 soldiers at Fort Phil Kearney, but the Indians were more afraid of us than they were of the soldiers. We were armed with Remington breech-loaders and the troops had only the old Springfield rifles. The little brush we had with the Indians below Reno had taught them something of the effectiveness of our fire, and I guess they were a little superstitious. Twenty-seven of those Remingtons were enough to stand off the 3,000 reds with bows

133. Hebard & Brininstool, *Bozeman Trail*, 1, 212-213; Story, "Nelson Story, Sr.," *Billings Gazette*, Clipping File, Billings Public Library. About an hour before the fight, the drovers had encountered a Frenchman and a boy. They were unharnessing their team preparatory to camping. Catlin and his companions warned them that the country was alive with Indians, and invited them to turn back and camp with them. The Frenchman answered that "he wasn't half as much afraid of Indians as he was of white men." The drovers rode on. After the fight, several of the cowboys rode back to the camp, and found the bodies of the man and boy, scalped and mutilated. "Their wagon was burned; their horses were gone; their provisions were scattered over the ground." Before returning to their corral, the drovers buried the bodies. Hebard & Brininstool, *Bozeman Trail*, 1, 213-214.

and arrows, after we had got them scared. But the troops had never scared them and they were bold enough around the fort.¹³⁴

On the night of October 22, Story's herd moved out. So successful was the first night's drive that Story determined to make it the standard operation. They would travel by night and rest during the day. Two or three half-hearted attacks, easily repulsed, were made on the outfit as it drove northwestward. As the longhorns and cowboys approached the Bighorn Country, these attacks ceased.

The night marches continued as far as the fort on the Bighorn. Once across that river and in the land of the Crow, Story dispensed with many of his security measures. Passing through Pryor Gap, the longhorns forded the Clarks Fork. Here a score of hostiles ambushed and killed Captain Story's hunter. The Yellowstone was crossed at the site where the army hoped to erect Fort Fisher. Then by easy stages, the outfit continued up the north side of the Yellowstone to the mouth of Shields River. Here Story established a permanent cattle camp. Thomas A. Thompson, a Canadian, was left in charge of the camp, and Story came on to Bozeman City with his 12 ox teams and supplies, arriving on December 4, 1866. After unloading, he pushed on to Virginia City.¹³⁵

Story's outfit was the last one to reach the Gallatin Valley or Virginia City over the Bozeman Trail.¹³⁶ Throughout 1867 and the first seven months of 1868, attacks by the Sioux and their allies closed the Bozeman Trail to through traffic. In July and August 1868 a war weary United States confounded by the hit-and-run tactics of the redmen, withdrew its garrisons from Forts C. F. Smith, Phil Kearny, and Reno. The Bozeman Trail, along with the Bighorn and Powder River Country, for the time being was abandoned to the Indians. When the Sioux and their allies were vanquished in the late 1870s other routes of travel were opened into the region.¹³⁶

134. Hebard & Brininstool, *Bozeman Trail*, 1, 215. Dow accompanied the trail herd to the Galatin Valley and lived there until his death in 1914. In his declining years, Story sent him five dollars a month. Story, "Nelson Story, Sr.," *Billings Gazette*, Clipping File, Billings Public Library.

135. Story, "Nelson Story, Sr.," *Billings Gazette*, Clipping File, Billings Public Library. This herd of longhorn became the foundation for Story's Ox-yoke spread, which by 1885 ran 17,000.cattle.

136. Ltr., Nelson Story to University of Wyoming, Aug. 25, 1920, files Montana Historical Society.

F. Comments and Recommendations

In the Bozeman Trail,* the National Park Service and the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area possesses a historical resource of national significance--a site which, on its own merit, could be considered for inclusion in the Service as a National Historic Site.

The route subsequently followed by much of the Bozeman Trail between the Bighorn and North Platte was reconnoitered by Captain Reynolds in 1859. Reynolds at that time reported that the area at the mouth of Bighorn Canyon will "become a thriving and important point on a road connecting the Platte with the three forks of the Missouri, and skirting in its course the Big Horn Mountains." In 1863 Bozeman and Jacobs examined the route from Bannack to the North Platte, but the hostility of the Sioux compelled the train they sought to lead over the trail, to turn back. During the next three years, 1864-1866, thousands of emigrants en route to the Montana diggings traveled the Bozeman Trail. Peter Koch, who emigrated to Montana at this time and wrote of his experiences, recorded that in the years 1864-1866 "the principal immigration into Montana was by the Bozeman road and Bozeman Pass."¹³⁷

In a vain effort to keep the Bozeman Trail open in face of determined attacks by the Sioux and their allies, the United States sent troops into the region and established posts along the route at key points. The Red Cloud War resulted in defeat for the United States and the abandonment of the posts and the Bozeman Trail. In the words of Hebard and Brininstool, the "Santa Fé Trail was a road of commerce; the Oregon Trail, the path of the homeseeker; the Overland Trail, the route of the mail and express; and the Bozeman Trail . . . the battleground of the fighting Sioux."¹³⁸

A review of diaries and journals of men who traveled the Bozeman Trail, a field reconnaissance, and discussions with Joe Medicine Crow and local ranchers has led to certain conclusions as to the location of the route east and west of the Bighorn. Prior to the establishment of Fort C. F. Smith, and for weeks afterwards, the Bozeman Trail, after crossing the divide from Rotten Grass, descended Soap Creek into the Bighorn Valley. If the Bighorn was fordable, the wagons crossed the river above the mouth of Soap Creek and traveled westward up the escarpment, across the bench, by Gold Spring, and on to Beauvais Creek. If the Bighorn were too high to be forded, the train drove up the valley to the ferry, a short distance below the mouth of Lime Kiln. A

* see National Register form p. 659.

137. Peter Koch, "Historical Sketches by Peter Koch," Contributions to the *Montana Historical Society*, 2, 135.

138. Hebard & Brininstool, *The Bozeman Trail*, 1, 232-233.

ferryboat had been in operation here as early as 1865. After ferrying the Bighorn, the trains drove to the northeast, converged with the trace leading to the ford, and ascended the escarpment.

After the establishment of Fort C. F. Smith, a cut-off was opened by the army. Instead of descending Soap Creek, the trail, after it reached Soap Creek, headed directly toward Fort Smith and the Bighorn ferry. To do so, the trail crossed the headwaters of Soap Creek, descended War Man Creek several miles, and then bore off across the bench. Passing the west side of Fort C. F. Smith, the Bozeman Trail struck the Bighorn River one-half mile below the mouth of Lime Kiln Creek.

Within the National Recreation Area, it is possible to trace the Bozeman Trail for a considerable distance on both sides of the Bighorn River. These historic remains will be included on the Historic Sites Inventory and will be recommended for designation as Class VI Land.

The Bozeman Trail and Captain Reynolds story should be interpreted both in the Visitor Center and on-site. Captain Stuart's expedition and fight with the Sioux at the mouth of Lime Kiln will have to be told at the Visitor Center, as the scene of the engagement has been flooded by the afterbay of the Yellowtail Dam.

Because of its historical significance, the Service in cooperation with the Crow Indian Tribe, State and Local Historical Societies, and landowners, should identify and mark the Bozeman Trail in areas adjacent to the National Recreation Area.

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VI. THE ARMY COMES TO FORT C. F. SMITH

A. The Montanans Call for Troops

Attacks on emigrant trains rolling up the Bozeman Trail by the Sioux and their allies in 1864 and 1865 demonstrated that the provision of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, establishing Powder River as the eastern boundary of the Crow Country, was dead. During the 110 years between the La Vérendrye expedition and the Fort Laramie Treaty, the Sioux had advanced westward from the upper Mississippi Valley and had occupied the region east and southeast of the Crow hunting grounds.

The Sioux were a numerous, proud, and warlike people. Following the establishment of Fort Laramie in 1834, the post factor invited the Sioux to come to the North Platte to hunt and trade. Bull Bear and about 100 lodges of Ogalala Sioux came. Within a short time they began encroaching on the southeastern borders of the Crow Country. In the years after the Treaty of 1851, pressure by the Sioux on the Crow increased. Other bands of Sioux, finding that it was becoming more difficult to hunt buffalo in their country, pressed westward and came in contact with the Crow along the Powder and lower Yellowstone.

The defeat and expulsion of the Santee Sioux from Minnesota in 1862 and 1863 increased the pressure on the outnumbered Crow. Unable to resist so formidable an invasion, the Crow withdrew to the north and west, leaving the Sioux in possession of the lower Yellowstone, and the valleys of the Powder, Tongue, and Rosebud. By 1865 few Crow ventured east of the Bighorn.¹

By 1865 the United States government was prepared to sanction the Sioux land grab. In the autumn of that year, on receipt of news of the failure of General Connor's campaign, treaties were effected at Fort Union with several bands of Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Crow. The United States promised to respect tribal rights to the Powder River Country in exchange for a right-of-way and unmolested travel via the Bozeman Trail. The commissioners, however, failed to comprehend that most of the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho chiefs, who made their marks, were those who had already abandoned the warpath and were content to camp near the white man's forts and live off their annuities.

When the raids continued, the United States in the spring of 1866 sent E. B. Taylor to Fort Laramie to negotiate a new treaty with the Sioux to allow passage over the Bozeman Trail.²

1. Bradley, "Lieut. James H. Bradley's Journal," *Contributions*, 2, 182.

2. Dee Brown, *Fort Phil Kearny: An American Saga* (New York, 1962), 15;

Meanwhile, the United States government was being pushed by Montana territorial officials to employ troops against the Indians. First, Governor Sidney Edgerton and then Acting Governor Thomas Meagher wrote the War Department, requesting that soldiers be stationed in the territory.³ These letters arrived at a most embarrassing time for the War Department. The Civil War had ended, and as has happened after every conflict in the nation's history, there was a rush to discharge the volunteers, and to disband what by 1865 had become the most formidable army in the world. While Civil War volunteers were being discharged by the tens of thousands, Congress had not yet determined the strength of the post-war military establishment. If past experiences were a guide, the peacetime army would be small.

Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton referred the Edgerton-Meagher correspondence to Lt. Gen. William T. Sherman, who as a reward for his Civil War victories had been named to head the vast Military Division of the Mississippi. From his St. Louis headquarters, Sherman wrote Meagher on February 17, 1866, explaining that until Congress acted, it would be "idle" for him to make any troop assignments. If he were "to grant one-tenth of the calls" for troops received from the great expanse of country between the Rio Grande and Canada, 100,000 men would be needed.

Commenting on the Montanans' request for a regiment of cavalry, Sherman pointed out that he had one regiment of regulars, the 2d, in his Division, and it was foolish to expect him to throw all his horse-soldiers into "one remote territory, leaving all the others without any, and leaving the roads this side unguarded."⁴

As a former soldier, Meagher must have realized that after Congress designated the strength of the regular army, time would be required to recruit personnel. In addition, recent debates in Congress regarding the reconstruction of the South troubled Sherman, and he expressed concern that if the Radicals prevailed, we may have "all the white people of the South as permanent enemies, to be watched and kept in subjection by a military force." As soon as these questions had been determined by Congress, Sherman would come up with an estimate of the number of troops that could be sent to Montana.

Another problem confronting Sherman was the instructions from the War Department directing him to discharge "every volunteer on the Plains and in the remote territories." Already his commander of the Department of the Missouri, with headquarters at St. Paul, Minnesota,

Roy E. Appleman, "Action on the Bozeman Trail, 1866-67," in *Great Western Indian Fights* (by Members of the Potomac Corral of Westerners) (New York, 1960), 109. Cited hereinafter as Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*.

3. *The Montana Post*, Dec. 23, 1865. 4. *Ibid.*, March 17, 1866.

Maj. Gen. John Pope, was striving diligently to replace the "essential garrisons with regulars." About all he could promise was that the army would see that the Missouri River was kept open to navigation to Fort Benton and that traffic over the Bozeman Trail was protected.⁵

General Sherman, on learning that Father De Smet was about to depart from St. Louis for the Rocky Mountains, released additional information regarding plans to protect the routes to Montana. The few regulars that were available for deployment were under orders to relieve the volunteers at Forts Randall, Rice, Sully, and Berthold on the Missouri River. Already the Platte River route was well-guarded as far as Fort Laramie. To shield the Bozeman Trail there was Fort Reno, formerly Fort Connor, and two or three additional forts were to be "established this summer."⁶

Acting Governor Meagher was understandably miffed by Sherman's inability to provide the military force requested. He accordingly informed the territorial legislature on March 14 that "Montana will have to depend on herself, for some months, for protection against the enemies of her peace and progress." He called for an appropriation of \$25,000 for a military force to cope with emergencies. This money would be left in the treasury, subject to the order of the chief executive.⁷

B. The 18th Infantry Takes Position on the Bozeman Trail

1. The March from Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie

To implement General Sherman's instructions providing for the relief and replacement of volunteers by regulars and the protection of the Bozeman Trail, General Pope on March 10, 1866, ordered:

The 2nd Battalion, 18th U. S. Infantry, will constitute the garrison of Fort Reno on Powder River, and the two new posts on the route between that place and Virginia City in Montana At these posts the battalion will be distributed as follows: Four companies at Fort Reno and two com-

5. Ibid.

6. Ltr., Sherman to De Smet, April 9, 1866, a copy found in the *Montana Post*, June 30, 1866. Sherman also planned to open a road from Minnesota by way of the Big Cheyenne, to pass north of the Black Hills, and to intersect the Bozeman Trail on Powder River. Two posts would be erected to protect this route. Heavy commitments elsewhere compelled Sherman to abandon this part of his plan.

7. Meagher to President of Council, March 14, 1866, found in the *Montana Post*, March 17, 1866.

panies at each of the other posts. The Colonel of the Regiment will take post at Fort Reno.⁸

The 2d Battalion, 18th U. S. Infantry, was currently posted at Fort Kearny, Nebraska Territory. One of the Regular Army's three-battalion regiments, the 18th, had fought with the Army of the Cumberland in the bloody Middle Tennessee and north Georgia campaigns of 1863 and 1864. Before marching westward from Fort Kearny, the regimental commander, Col. Henry B. Carrington, received orders establishing the Mountain District, with himself in command. He would report to Brig. Gen. Philip St. George Cooke, commanding the Department of the Platte. It would be hard to find two more diverse personalities than Cooke and Carrington.

Carrington's column consisting of more than 700 soldiers, 260 non-combatants, and 226 wagons, left Fort Kearny on Saturday, May 19, 1866. The column on June 12 neared Fort Laramie where the peace commissioners were negotiating with the Sioux. In attendance were the Oglala and Miniconjou chiefs who had baffled General Connor's converging column's in 1865. Even the sworn enemy of the whites, Red Cloud, was there. Superintendent Taylor was optimistic about the success of his mission. He knew the winter of 1865-1866 had been a difficult one for the Sioux, and he believed they would make concessions for presents and a promise of \$70,000 a year in annuity goods. While speaking of these--the carrot--he avoided talking about the desired concession of safe passage of the Bozeman Trail and the forts and garrisons--the stick--to be established for its security.⁹

The Sioux were understandably angered, when they learned of the approach of Carrington's column. Chief Standing Bear of the Brulé Sioux, on learning of Carrington's mission, told him, "There is a treaty being made in Laramie with the Sioux that are in the country where you are going," but, "the fighting men in that country have not come to Laramie and you will have to fight them."¹⁰ Carrington's arrival at Fort Laramie on June 14, en route to the Powder River and Bighorn Country, exposed Superintendent Taylor's intentions. Red Cloud exploded, "Great Father sends us presents and wants new road, but white chief goes with soldiers to *steal* the road before Indians say yes or no."¹¹ Red Cloud and most of the chiefs withdrew from the council and on June 15 broke camp and started back with their people for the Powder River Country.

8. 50th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Executive Document 33, p. 51.

9. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, pp. 111-112; Brown, *Fort Phil Kearny*, pp. 18-19, 25, 33-35.

10. 50th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Executive Document 33, pp. 3-4.

11. Margaret Irvin Carrington, *Absaraka, Home of the Crows* (Philadelphia, 1878), pp. 79-80.

Undeterred, Superintendent Taylor, on the 16th, met with the chiefs who remained--Spotted Tail and Standing Bear of the Brûlé, and the leaders of the "Laramie Loafers." These were middle-aged men, and it must have been apparent to the informed white men present that they were not representative of the Sioux nation. In the difficult period that ensued most of the Brûlé warriors deserted Spotted Tail, and fought with Red Cloud.¹²

After the treaty had been signed, granting the United States the desired concessions, the commissioners distributed presents, and Superintendent Taylor telegraphed his superiors in the nation's capital, "Satisfactory treaty concluded with the Sioux and Cheyenne. Most cordial feeling prevails."¹³

2. Colonel Carrington Establishes Fort Phil Kearny

Like Captain Reynolds in 1859 and 1860 and General Connor in 1865, Carrington had secured the services of Jim Bridger as guide. On June 17 Carrington left Fort Laramie with the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry. One hundred and thirty-five miles west of the fort, the column turned off the Oregon Trail and started up the Bozeman Trail. On June 28 Carrington halted at Fort Reno, where he detached one company to relieve the men of the 5th U. S. Volunteers scheduled for early discharge from the service. The command remained at Fort Reno for 12 days, as Carrington made several decisions. Instead of abandoning the post as directed, it would be relocated.

Carrington, on July 9, resumed the march, and on the 13th encamped on Big Piney. After a thorough examination of the area, he selected this site for his headquarters post. It was designated Fort Phil Kearny in honor of the one-armed hero, Brig. Gen. Philip Kearny, who had been slain at the battle of Chantilly on September 1, 1862.¹⁴

Meanwhile, Acting Governor Meagher and the territorial authorities had learned of the army's plans from Inspector General Delos Sackett, who had been sent to Virginia City to discuss plans for defense of the frontier. Sackett's huge size impressed the Montanans, and he told them that on his recommendation, General Sherman had ordered the establishment of "military posts at such points in the Territory, and along such routes leading to it, as will

12. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, 111-112; Brown, *Fort Phil Kearny*, p. 45.

13. *50th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Executive Documents*, 33, 3-4.

14. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, p. 113; Brown, *Fort Phil Kearny*, 54-63.

afford the most certain protection to settlers and immigrants." The Bozeman Trail, he explained, would be guarded by detachments of the 18th Infantry stationed at Fort Reno, and the crossings of the Bighorn River and Clarks Fork.

The 13th U. S. Infantry had been alerted to garrison Forts Sully, Rice, and Berthold, along with such points in Montana as Col. Isaac V. Reeve might designate. In 1867 it was proposed to establish a post at the mouth of the Musselshell and open several military roads to provide rapid communication between the Montana forts.¹⁵

Colonel Carrington, prior to his arrival on Big Piney, had determined how he would dispose of his seven remaining companies. Capt. Tenodor Ten Eyck with three companies and the regimental band would be assigned to the headquarters post. The two forts to be erected in Montana, of which Sackett had spoken, would be established by the other companies. Capt. Nathaniel C. Kinney with two companies would build and garrison the post at the Bozeman Trail crossing of the Bighorn, while Capt. Henry Haymond with two companies would proceed to Clarks Fork. In carrying out this ambitious plan, the eight companies of the 2d Battalion would be scattered, thus violating the established military principle of keeping your force concentrated to avoid being beaten in detail. Carrington's superiors should have known better, but Congress was unwilling to provide them with the necessary manpower, and Sherman and the other generals who had crushed the Confederacy were unimpressed at this time with the combat capabilities of the Plains Indians.

By the end of July, work on Fort Phil Kearny had progressed to the point, where Colonel Carrington was able to redeploy his battalion to implement his orders to establish a post at the Bighorn crossing of the Bozeman Trail. A manpower shortage for the time being had compelled the army to abandon plans for the fort on the Clarks Fork. Instructions having been received from General Cooke to retain Fort Reno as a two-company post, Carrington ordered F Company to join Company B. Companies D and G were alerted to be prepared to march northwest to build and garrison the new fort. In accordance with instructions from the War Department, this post would be designated Fort C. F. Smith, to honor the Mexican and Civil War hero Brig. Gen. Charles F. Smith.¹⁶

15. *Montana Post*, July 21, 1866. One of these roads would link the proposed post on the Musselshell with the Mullan road, while the other was to connect the projected fort on Clarks Fork with the one scheduled to be erected by the 13th Infantry at the mouth of Sun River.

16. C. F. Smith had been commandant of cadets at the United States

Capt. Nathaniel C. Kinney, as senior captain, would be in command of the new post. Kinney, like his junior officers, was a veteran of the Civil War. He had joined the service from New Jersey in July 1861, and was commissioned a 1st lieutenant in the 18th United States Infantry. Acting as a company commander, he had fought at Mill Creek, Kentucky; the Siege of Corinth, and at Perryville. Soon after Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans assumed command of the Army of the Cumberland, Kinney was assigned as a staff officer to Col. Oliver L. Shepherd, the leader of the Regular Brigade. Kinney was at Stones River, where the brigade took frightful casualties, but blunted Rebel attacks on December 31, 1862, in the cedars south of the Nashville Pike. In March of 1863 Kinney was notified that he had been promoted captain, to rank from November 25, 1862. Soon thereafter he was assigned to recruiting duty and served as commandant of Camp Thomas, Ohio, from May 7, 1863, to May 7, 1864, when he was named mustering and disbursing officer for Kentucky. One year later, after the fighting was over, Kinney rejoined the regiment and resumed command of Company D.¹⁷

The 31-year-old Kinney should have been a good choice for the commander of an isolated post in hostile territory, because he had had extensive experience, both as a leader of troops in combat and as an administrator with considerable responsibility. He, however, was becoming disenchanted with life in the army. Men junior to him in rank and with less experience were majors, so he was beginning to think seriously of resigning his commission unless the War Department took corrective action.

3. Captain Kinney Establishes Fort C. F. Smith

Fatigue details were turned out by Captain Kinney on August 2, 1866, to load at Fort Phil Kearny, the wagons that were to accompany his battalion. Jim Bridger reported to Kinney to act as

Military Academy. At Fort Donelson, he had commanded one of Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's divisions, and had led the attack which captured the Confederate rifle-pits guarding the western approaches to the stronghold. Prior to the battle of Shiloh, Smith was hospitalized with blood poisoning, and he died on April 25, 18 days after that bloody struggle.

17. Kinney to Carter, April 18, 1866, National Archives, RG 393. While in command of Camp Thomas, Kinney, in the last week of July and the first week of August 1863, led 350 men in pursuit of Brig. Gen. John H. Morgan and his feared Rebel raiders. Kinney's provisional battalion had skirmished with Morgan twice and was present when the Confederates surrendered. Lt. Eugene Carter was assigned to the War Department in Washington. Kinney's letter of April 18 was in answer to a request by Carter for an outline of his military service.

guide, and plans were made to put the column in motion the next morning. 1st Lt. George M. Templeton, who was to be Kinney's chief of quartermaster and subsistence, was unable to get his 17 wagons ready to roll in time, and the march had to be delayed 24 hours. As the big emigrant train that was to accompany the soldiers to the Bighorn had already started, a courier was sent up the Bozeman Trail with a message for the wagonmasters to corral and await the escort.¹⁸

Reveille sounded early in the battalion camp on August 4. After the troops had wolfed down a hurried breakfast, the column marched. In addition to Kinney's battalion, mustering 166 effectives, there was a 30-man mounted detachment, provided by Colonel Carrington, to scout and escort the wagons on their return, and 38 wagons, two of which were ambulances. Lieutenant Templeton encountered difficulty in getting his wagons down the grade leading to the Big Piney crossing. Two of the heavily loaded vehicles upset, one of which was so badly wrecked that Templeton had to send back to Fort Phil Kearny for a replacement.

Despite this delay, 12 miles were logged during the day, and having overtaken the emigrant trains, the battalion camped on Peno Creek.¹⁹

Shortly before reveille the pickets fired on 30 Indians lurking near camp. This awakened both troops and emigrants, and the column was soon back on the road. The line of march continued to parallel the Bighorns. Several buffalo were sighted and one killed and butchered. Soon after camp was made on Goose Creek, a thunderstorm swept across the Bighorns, blotting from view towering Cloud Peak.²⁰

On August 6 a 15-mile march to Tongue River was made, and the next day the battalion camped for the night on the Little Bighorn. A vast herd of buffalo, the biggest yet seen by most of the soldiers and emigrants, caused spirits to soar. Riding up onto a butte, Lieutenant Templeton swore that he could see at least 10,000 bison grazing peacefully in the magnificent Little Bighorn Valley. Not long after the wagons had been corraled, a number of buffalo approached and one of Templeton's teamsters killed one. Accompanied by four of his teamsters, Templeton followed the buffalo.

18. Templeton Manuscript Diary, Aug. 1-4, 1866, Newberry Library.

19. *Ibid.*, Aug. 4, 1866; Post Returns for the 27th Infantry, August 1866, National Archives, Microcopy 665, Returns for Regular Army Infantry Regiments, June 1821-Dec. 1916, 27th Infantry.

20. Templeton Diary, August 5, 1866.

The lieutenant killed his first buffalo, and had a narrow escape when charged by a wounded bull.²¹

Buffalo retarded progress on the 8th to Lodge Grass Creek. Captain Kinney, fearful that the bison might disrupt the march, deployed his troops to the left and right of the wagons as flankers. A soldier's dog caused a few anxious moments, when she dashed out among the grazing buffalo and chased a calf between two wagons as they rumbled along. Several thousand bison prepared to follow, but when deterred by the flankers, "they ranged up in line like soldiers, facing the wagon train, giving a stupid, angry stare, with much snorting and pawing of the earth."²²

A 15-mile march on August 9, with Jim Bridger leading the way, brought the Regulars into camp on Rotten Grass. While the wagons were being corraled, a huge bull bison charged the sutler's wagon. When shouts failed to turn the enraged bull aside, the soldiers of the rear guard blazed away, riddling him with a dozen balls.²³

On the 10th the column reached the hills overlooking the Bighorn Valley. The valley at this point was about five miles across. Looking up the valley toward the mountains, the soldiers, if they knew where to look, could see the mouth of the canyon. A belt of green, cottonwoods and underbrush, in a sea of brown grass, bounded the river. Some difficulty was experienced in getting the heavily-loaded quartermaster wagons down off the hills and into the level valley. Camp for the night was made on the Bighorn, four miles below the ferry.²⁴

While the wagons were being corraled, Captain Kinney, accompanied by Bridger and others, rode out to reconnoiter and to select a site for Fort C. F. Smith. On Lime Kiln Creek, within three miles of the ferry, he found a good stand of pine, a prerequisite for the construction of a fort. Two days later, on August 12, Kinney, having closely examined the area, chose the ground for his fort. It was on a commanding bench, 400 yards from the ferry and two miles below the mouth of Bighorn Canyon. A nearby spring would provide water for the garrison, while the stock could be watered in the river.²⁵

21. Ibid., Aug. 6-7, 1866. Templeton had expected to find the buffalo in a vast herd, but they were scattered across the countryside.

22. James D. Lockhart, *Life and Adventures of a Drummer Boy* (Albany, 1893), pp. 150-151.

23. Templeton Diary, Aug. 9, 1866.

24. Lockhart, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 151-152.

25. Templeton Diary, Aug. 10-12, 1866; Post Returns for the 27th

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Templeton, as post quartermaster, had his men break out and assemble a mowing machine. After pickets were posted, he put a fatigue detail to work cutting and raking hay for the public livestock. Haying with his revolver belted to his waist reminded him of stories his father had told of life on the Pennsylvania frontier 80 years before. Amid good-natured banter, the emigrant trains left the corral and drive to the ferry, where they commenced crossing the Bighorn. They hoped to clear the area before the first of the 256 wagons known to be en route up the Bozeman Trail arrived on Thursday, August 16.²⁶

4. Construction Begins on Fort C. F. Smith

The battalion on August 12 broke camp and marched up the valley four miles to the site selected for Fort C. F. Smith. A working party was turned to unloading the 26 wagons that were to be returned to the Fort Phil Kearny quartermaster. The next morning these vehicles started back to the headquarters post, escorted by the mounted detachment. To protect the quartermaster and commissary supplies until storehouses could be erected, two temporary shelters covered with tarpaulins were put up. Fatigue parties were organized. One detail was sent up Lime Kiln Creek to get out pine logs for building timber and the stockade; a second group, as soon as the outline of the post had been traced and staked, went to work with pick and shovel digging a trench around an area about 330 feet square. A third detail continued to make hay four miles down the valley. Men skilled as carpenters and blacksmiths, along with a few laborers, were placed on special detail and paid an extra 40 cents per day.²⁷

On August 15 Captain Kinney reinforced the working parties getting out timber, and Quartermaster Templeton contracted with Mr. Marr for 200 tons of hay. The army would provide the mowing machines and a guard detail, and Marr the labor. By the 17th there were enough logs on hand to begin hewing those to be used

Infantry, August 1866, NA; Lockhard, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 152-153. Lieutenant Templeton liked Captain Kinney's choice of ground for the post.

26. Templeton Diary, Aug. 10-12, 1866. James J. Brannan, one of Colonel Carrington's guides, had brought the news regarding the approaching trains. He had been sent by Carrington to look for nine men who had deserted the Fort Phil Kearny garrison and were said to be en route to Virginia City and the Montana goldfields. The deserters were captured at the ferry on August 12 by a detachment from Company D.

27. Lockhard, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 153-154; Templeton Diary, Aug. 12-14, 1866.

in the construction of quarters to be built against the stockade and fronting on the parade. Only one side, the one to face in side, was hewn. As the timber was "quite rough" much chinking was needed. With quarters ready to be put up, the blacksmith was employed fabricating fixtures. To keep his forge roaring, wood for charcoal was hauled and burned. So well did Captain Kinney organize the work that he soon forwarded a request to Colonel Carrington to send him the Fort Phil Kearny sawmill.²⁸

5. Captain Kinney Sees Black Canyon

Much of the best timber having been felled on Lime Kiln, Captain Kinney rode out on August 30 to scout for a new source. His patrol ascended Lime Kiln and gained a grass-covered plateau. Riding on, they came out on the rim overlooking Black Canyon, "one of the grandest cañons in the world." Lieutenant Templeton observed:

It must be a thousand feet . . . down, almost perpendicularly, to water. Most of the banks are densely studded with pines, but are inaccessible, except to Rocky Mountain sheep wolves &c. Then there are bluffs jutting out into the cañon composed of the redish gray rock which abounds in this country. These washed by rains and worn by winds resemble castles. I think it is the grandest and most impressive scene I ever saw.²⁹

6. Heavy Traffic Continues on the Bozeman Trail

The expected 260-wagon train reached the ferry on August 16 and took several days to cross the Bighorn.³⁰ The presence of the train and the clatter of the mowing machines caused the buffalo to leave the immediate vicinity. To kill a bison on August 21 the post sutler had to ride out seven miles.³¹

On the afternoon of the 27th, ten prospectors came down out of the Bighorns. They informed the soldiers that they belonged to a 34-man company that had left Helena four weeks before. Although they had found good colors on the Bighorn, at no place did it yield more than a cent to the pan. They had given up on the Bighorns and were now en route to the Wind River Range, where they

28. Templeton Diary, Aug. 14, 15, 23 & 24, 1866. It has been impossible to identify Marr.

29. Ibid., Aug. 30, 1866. Lieutenant Templeton, two teamsters, and 12 soldiers accompanied Captain Kinney on the Black Canyon patrol.

30. Ibid., Aug. 16-17, 1866.

31. Ibid., Aug. 21, 1866.

hoped to strike it rich.³² The next evening a train en route to Virginia City reached the fort and began ferrying the Bighorn. When questioned by the military, the emigrants reported that although they had seen no Indians since leaving Fort Laramie, the garrison at Fort Phil Kearny seemed paralyzed by fear, and they doubted whether any supply trains would be coming up until the situation improved.³³

Fear of Indian attacks now brought traffic up the Bozeman Trail to a stop. Only one more train, besides Nelson Story's, passed the fort in 1866 en route to the Montana mining camps. The high tide of emigration over the Bozeman Trail had passed almost before the United States had deployed the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry, and had established Forts C. F. Smith and Phil Kearny.

32. Ibid., Aug. 27, 1866. Gold had been discovered at Last Chance Gulch in July 1864, and on October 30 the mining camp which had sprung up on the gulch was named Helena.

33. Ibid., Aug. 28, 1866.

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VII. THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS AT FORT C. F. SMITH

A. The Mountain Crow Visit Fort C. F. Smith

It was August 17, 1866, five days after Kinney's battalion had camped on the bench and commenced work on Fort C. F. Smith, before any Indians were seen. Commissary Sergt. William H. Riley had ridden out to shoot buffalo. Before he had gone very far, he sighted Indians and returned to camp. Captain Kinney to verify Riley's story ordered out a patrol. When it returned the officer in charge reported that they had found pony tracks but no Indians.¹

On the 24th Captain Kinney made a patrol and sighted Indians about five miles from his fortified camp. That evening he again fared forth, crossed the Bighorn, and rode up to the canyon. On this sweep, Kinney believed he glimpsed a lurking redman. If true, the Indians were getting bolder, and it would not be long before they closed in.²

The soldiers did not have long to wait. At 6 a.m., on August 27, the sentries reported seven horsemen approaching on the west side of the Bighorn. Alerted by the officer-of-the-day, Captain Kinney sent Lieutenant Templeton to ascertain the newcomers' identity. He went down to the ferry, and, seeing that they were Indians, called "How!" The headman answered "How!" and added "Saronka." Having read *Astoria*, Templeton knew they were Crow and would be friendly. He crossed to their side of the river on the ferryboat, and discovered that their number had increased to about 60 warriors and squaws. Accompanied by three warriors and their squaws, he recrossed the Bighorn and proceeded to the camp. Jim Bridger had gone on to Virginia City, so Captain Kinney had difficulty communicating with the Crow. He was able to ascertain, however, that they were friendly and belonged to a large village camped a short distance downstream. Meanwhile, the rest of the Crow had forded the river. Their way of doing so amazed Lieutenant Templeton, and he wrote in his journal:

They stripped and tying their clothes either on their heads or in packs enclosed in a robe they would swim over and bring them out dry. The packs were fastened by a lariat to the horse's neck and being very light floated nicely. They would start into the river on the horses' backs and after they had got them well started they would slide off and catch their horses by their tails and in that way, whooping and yelling they came ashore.

1. Templeton Diary, Aug. 17, 1866.

2. Ibid., Aug. 24, 1866.

After being given rations by Captain Kinney, the Crow headed back to their village. Lieutenant Templeton was impressed with both their conduct and appearance, considering them to be "the finest looking indians" he had yet seen.³

The next day, while the soldiers were shooting at two buffalo, several Indians galloped up the valley and started in pursuit of a wounded bull. Bold and reckless horsemen, they overtook the bison and dropped him with a number of arrows and two shots. Soon thereafter, a number of Mountain Crow came up "singing one of their songs." With them was a French Canadian, Peter Shane, of Fort Benton. He had served as interpreter for the Crow the previous year at the Fort Union Council. Captain Kinney and his officers met with the Crow. Shane, before introducing the chiefs, told Kinney that they had just come from Fort Benton, where the Crow and Gros Ventres on July 19 had signed a treaty. All the chiefs (White Mouth, White Horse, Long Horse, Iron Bull, Pretty Bull, and The Boy Chief) presented papers signed by the commissioners attesting to their good intentions, while White Mouth displayed a medal engraved with President Andrew Johnson's bust.⁴

From the Crow, Kinney learned that there were 1,500 Sioux determined to stop traffic on the Bozeman Trail, camped on Tongue River. Emissaries from the Sioux and Arapaho had visited the Crow village and had urged them to join in the war against the whites. Kinney told the Crow "not to make peace with the Sioux until *they* should make peace with the whites." He promised to be good friends with the Crow and hinted that the army would back them against the Sioux.

The council broke up with many "Hows" and much shaking of hands. The Boy Chief, who was about 70, took off Lieutenant Templeton's hat, put his arm around his neck, and expressed his love for him. He repeated the ceremony with the other officers.

After drawing rations from the post commissary, the Crow rode over to the sutler's tent and had a lively trading session, exchanging buffalo robes for beads and blankets.⁵

3. Ibid., Aug. 27, 1866.

4. Ibid., Aug. 28, 1866. At Fort Benton the Crow had agreed to permit the United States to build a public road "through the valley of the Yellowstone, and ceded ten-mile square tracts at each station necessary on this route." This treaty was never ratified by the United States. "Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Nov. 23, 1868," found in *House Executive Documents, 40th Congress, 3d Session* (Series 1366), p. 638.

5. Templeton Diary, Aug. 28, 1866.

B. The Sioux Claim First Blood

1. Sutler Leighton Loses His Mules

September 7 was unseasonably cold, and the garrison received a warning of what they would have to guard against. A party of Indians galloped up and ran off five mules belonging to the sutler, Jim Leighton. Marr and a few men gave chase, and after following the thieves for 12 miles, came upon 100 redmen. Seeing they were badly outnumbered, they wheeled their horses about and returned to the post. The next day, Marr, accompanied by Leighton, again searched for the missing stock. They sighted a large number of Indians on Rotten Grass, eight miles from Fort C. F. Smith, and hastened back to tell Captain Kinney that the redmen were coming his way.⁶

2. Templeton and Beckwourth Have a Narrow Escape

Five days later, on September 13, the sentries called out that a score of Indians had ridden down off the hills west of the Bighorn. Several of them came down the road to the ferry, and Lieutenant Templeton, who was officer-of-the-day, and Jim Beckwourth went to meet them. Beckwourth called to one of the redmen on the far bank, but he fled into the brush, when he saw one of the soldiers, who had accompanied them, shoulder his rifle-musket. Beckwourth told Templeton that they were Crow, and suggested that they cross the Bighorn. Templeton agreed, and taking four soldiers they rowed across.

Several of the Indians now reappeared, and after Beckwourth had spoken with them, he whispered to Templeton that he had been mistaken and they were Sioux. Templeton suggested that they recross the Bighorn, but the old Mountain Man shook his head. He said they were safe and he wished to talk. Through Beckwourth, Templeton invited several of them to visit the camp, but they refused saying that "the whites didn't love the Sioux." They explained that they had come to the land of the Crow in search of peace, as they believed that nation could serve as intermediaries. They explained that one of the Crow chiefs was with them. Templeton asked to see the Crow. While the Sioux conversed, he saw that several others had appeared and were trying to slip between them and the landing. He now told Beckwourth that "he must cut his talk short."

Moments after they had re-embarked, the Sioux rode off about 200 yards and killed a miner, Charles Bowman, who was coming down the Grapevine Trail with two horses loaded with game. They sought

6. Ibid., Sept. 7-8, 1866.

to get his horses, but fled when they sighted the prospector's two companions. They then rode downstream, and after fording the river, stole a horse and snooped around Marr's haying party. When the soldiers discussed the day's events, they admitted that the Sioux had played "a treacherous, cunning game."⁷

The next morning shots were heard in the direction of the woodchoppers' camp. Lieutenant Templeton turned out the guard on the double. When they reached the camp, the Indians were gone. From Marr it was learned that the savages had jumped one of his men. He had lost his horse but had escaped into the underbrush, although he was slightly injured by an arrow. En route back to the post, Templeton deployed his detachment as skirmishers and swept the woods, but he failed to make any contact with the hostiles.⁸

The Sioux continued their harrassment. They swooped down on a train bringing commissary stores as it descended Rotten Grass. The rear wagon was cut off, the driver murdered, and the vehicle plundered of flour, cornmeal, and sugar.⁹

3. The Attack on Whalen's Haycutters

On the 20th John Whalen had charge of a haycutting party three miles from camp. Two of the men, Cpl. A. H. Staples and Pvt. Thomas Fitzpatrick, with Whalen's permission, left the detail to go after buffalo. Soon after they disappeared shots were heard from the direction they had gone. Several Indians were seen. When Whalen reported what had occurred, Lieutenant Templeton and ten volunteers went to search for the missing soldiers. Through a misunderstanding, they did not go far enough, but as the hour was late it was deemed best to wait until morning before resuming the search.

Immediately after reveille a 25-man patrol moved out and soon found the bodies of the missing soldiers. They had been ambushed as they were passing a large rock. Staples had apparently been killed by the first shots, but Fitzpatrick had fled about 100 yards before he was killed. He had been "horribly mutilated, having his skull crushed in and a number of arrows shot into him."

That afternoon the battalion was turned out, and the two soldiers buried with military honors in the little cemetery Captain

7. Ibid., Sept. 13, 1866. Jim Beckwourth had been recruited as guide and interpreter by Colonel Carrington at Fort Laramie. Because of his previous friendship with the Crow and his knowledge of their language, the old mulatto had been sent to Fort C. F. Smith in the first week of September. Brown, *Fort Phil Kearny*, pp. 97-98.

8. Templeton Diary, Sept. 14, 1866.

9. Ibid., Sept. 15, 1866.

Kinney had established on a knoll, 300 yards west of the camp. These were the first two soldiers to die at Fort C. F. Smith.¹⁰

4. The Attack on Murphy's Mail Party

Sergt. John Murphy's mail party, along with 15 prospectors, returned from Fort Phil Kearny on September 22. While the trip down had been routine, the journey back had had enough danger to satisfy the men for months. Almost before they were out of sight of the fort on Big Piney, they came under attack. The ambulance broke down, and after loading the mail and extra ammunition on their horses, they sent it back. On the second day out from Fort Phil Kearny, they were chased by 200 Indians. In this running fight, Pvt. Charles Haskett of Company D was badly wounded in the head and legs. Harassed as they were by hostiles, Murphy had to push on; the wounded man was held in his saddle by two men riding on either side."¹¹

C. The Death of Jim Beckwourth

Jim Bridger stopped at Fort C. F. Smith on his way back to Fort Phil Kearny from Virginia City. He had been sent to examine the route, to make recommendations as to possible cut-offs, and to ascertain the sentiments of the Mountain Crow. On Clarks Fork he had visited a large Crow village, estimated to number 500 warriors. The chiefs, White Mouth and Black Foot, told Bridger that they were peaceful, although some of the younger warriors wished to "join the Sioux, and compromise their old title to this country, of which they had been robbed by the Cheyennes and Sioux."

Red Cloud had visited their village in an effort to sway them, but they had held firm even when compelled by young firebrands to return his visit. The Sioux village on Tongue River was so large, the Crow told Bridger, that it took one-half day to pass through. Red Cloud and his chiefs had boasted to the Crow that they would destroy Forts C. F. Smith and Phil Kearny.¹²

10. Ibid., Sept. 20 & 21, 1866; Post Returns for the 27th Infantry, September 1866, NA.

11. Templeton Diary, Sept. 22, 1866; Post Returns for the 27th Infantry, Sept. and Oct. 1866, NA. Private Hackett died on October 4 from his wounds. The prospectors remained at the post until September 27, when they joined a party of emigrants en route to western Montana.

12. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, pp. 324-325. With Bridger were Henry Williams, a guide, and John Richard Jr., and Thomas Coover. The former was a half-breed Sioux and the latter a Gallatin Valley merchant. Richard had with him three wagon loads of potatoes which he sold to the post commissary, while Coover inquired into the possibility of supplying the government

Prior to Bridger's return, Jim Beckwourth on September 18 had approached Lieutenant Templeton with a worried look. He explained that "something bad" was going to happen "as his medicine did not act right last night." This disturbed Templeton, as the old mulatto had "some of the indian ideas of premonition and dreams, and a good deal more cunning."¹³ When nothing happened during the next 48 hours, Templeton was ready to dismiss his conversation with Beckwourth, but on the 20th tragedy struck, and Staples and Fitzpatrick lost their lives.

When Bridger returned from the Crow village on Clarks Fork on the 29th, he told Beckwourth that his people wanted to see him.¹⁴ That evening Beckwourth, accompanied by Pvt. James W. Thompson, crossed the Bighorn and started for the Clarks Fork.¹⁵ Years later one of the soldiers recalled that Beckwourth had been

a chief in the Crow tribe . . . , spending many years of his life with them, but had left them 'under a cloud,' on account of a superstition of the Indians to the effect that he was responsible for the outbreaking of a loathsome disease [smallpox] among them . . . , and he was compelled to flee for his life.¹⁶

Before they had ridden very far, Beckwourth complained to Thompson that he was unwell. The next day, as they crossed the Pryor Country, he was troubled by nose bleeds. On their arrival in the village of the Mountain Crow on the Clarks Fork, they were taken in and welcomed by Iron Bull. Beckwourth told the Crow chiefs that he wanted 100 young warriors to go with him next spring to fight the Sioux. But before the chiefs had made a commitment he died, and was buried as was customary with the Crow on a platform in a tree.¹⁷

with lumber and flour. Having taken care of their business, Richard and Coover recrossed the Bighorn on October 1 en route back to Bozeman. Templeton Diary, Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 1866. Lieutenant Templeton paid Richard 24 cents a pound for the 6,450 pounds of potatoes.

13. Templeton Diary, Sept. 18, 1866.

14. Ibid., Sept. 29, 1866.

15. Ibid., Oct. 1, 1866.

16. Lockhart, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 156-157. Colonel Carrington, for one, questioned Beckwourth's influence with the Crow, as he believed he talked too much. Alter, *Jim Bridger*, p. 325.

17. Templeton Diary, Oct., 30, 1866; Lockhart, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 157-159. Lockhart recalled Thompson telling him that the Crow were greatly grieved by Beckwourth's death, and painting their faces black, mourned him as they would one of their own people--with much wailing, tearing of hair, and self-mutilation. For his services as guide and interpreter, the army paid Beckwourth \$150 per month.

D. An Exciting Autumn at Fort C. F. Smith

1. Winter Comes Early to the Bighorn Valley

Eight miners, who had been prospecting the Wind River Range, reached the post by way of Bad Pass on October 9. One of them, W. Bruce Smith, had been critically wounded in a brawl and was hospitalized at Fort C. F. Smith.¹⁸ Smith failed to respond to treatment, died, and was buried in the post cemetery.¹⁹

Although there had been snow at the higher elevations, the season's first snowfall at the post occurred on the night of October 14. When the soldiers turned out for reveille, they found two inches of snow on the ground. Most of it melted during the day, but on the following night it snowed again. When the battalion fell out that morning, it found about four inches on the ground.

The guard had some interesting information for Captain Kinney. During the night they had seen a number of mysterious fires out on the benches and down in the valley. Evidently, Indians had been about, because the logging party, as it went to work, found an arrow along the road.²⁰

Most of the snow disappeared from the bench and valley by dark on October 16, but it stayed on in the mountains, forcing thousands of buffalo down into the Bighorn Valley, where they remained until the 19th. By then, snow on the higher elevations had melted sufficiently to permit the shaggy beasts to work their way up Grapevine and Lime Kiln to the higher ground. Their instincts played them false, however, because it snowed that night. By daybreak there was four inches at Fort C. F. Smith, with much greater depths in the mountains. A warm front moved in, and by dark most of the snow had disappeared from the valley.²¹

18. Templeton Diary, Oct. 9, 1866. The wounded miner was transported on a litter made of two poles pulled by two horses.

19. Ibid., Oct. 18, 1866. Before dying, Smith had called in Captain Kinney and his officers and exonerated the man who shot him.

20. Ibid., Oct., 14-15, 1866.

21. Ibid., Oct. 17-20, 1866. The snow on the night of the 19th did not extend down the valley below Fort C. F. Smith more than two miles.

2. Colonel Hazen Visits Fort C. F. Smith

General Cooke, in his capacity as commander Department of the Platte, sent Col. William B. Hazen, a Civil War general and hero, to inspect and report on the posts in Colonel Carrington's Mountain District. Colonel Hazen and his escort reached Fort Phil Kearny on August 27. He spent two days inspecting the post, expressed satisfaction as to Carrington's progress, and was very complimentary about the eight-foot stockade. "The best stockade I have seen," he reported, "excepting one in British American built by the Hudson's Bay Company."²²

On the 29th Hazen announced that he would leave in the morning for Fort C. F. Smith, and would need a cavalry escort. Colonel Carrington detailed to Hazen, Lieutenant Bradley and 25 mounted infantry. Jim Beckwourth would go along as guide as far as the Bighorn.²³

Hazen's party traveled hard and reached Fort C. F. Smith on the evening of September 1. That night Hazen ate dinner with Captain Kinney and his officers. Most of the talk was of Civil War campaigns in Kentucky and Tennessee in which the two senior officers had fought. The next day Hazen inspected the battalion and the post. While examining Lieutenant Templeton's inventory, he inquired of the post commissary, "How many cattle do you have?"

Templeton told him, whereupon he asked, "How many buffalo?" "Innumerable," was the reply.
"Put down 10,000 " Hazen added, with a grin.²⁴

Although General Cooke had suggested that Fort C. F. Smith be abandoned, Hazen disagreed. While recognizing that the post was isolated, he agreed with Colonel Carrington that it should be held. What he had seen so far satisfied him that travel over the Bozeman Trail was safe, and that there was little danger to companies that were well organized and did not straggle. Having made his decision, Hazen, accompanied by Lieutenant Bradley and his escort, left the fort on September 4 for Fort Benton, by way of the mouth of the Bighorn. Beckwourth guided Hazen as far as the Yellowstone.²⁵

22. *Penny-An-Acre Empire in the West*, collected and edited by Edgar I. Stewart (Norman, 1968), pp. 6-7.

23. Brown, *Fort Phil Kearny*, p. 105.

24. Templeton Diary, Sept. 1, 1866.

25. Ibid., Sept. 2-5, 1866; *Penny-An-Acre*, pp. 6-7. To supply them on their way to Fort Benton, Hazen's party picked up a packtrain at

There was excitement at the post on October 20. Before reveille the seven miners, having started for Helena after the burial of their comrade, returned down the Bozeman Trail. They reported that about 11 p.m., the previous evening, Indians had shot into their camp. They had shot back, doused their campfire, mounted their horses, and retreated to the fort.

Along toward dusk, the sentinals called out that a number of horsemen and a wagon could be seen descending the bench west of the Bighorn. As they came closer, it was seen that they were soldiers. This detachment was Lt. James Bradley's en route back to Fort Phil Kearny, after having escorted Colonel Hazen and his inspecting party through to Fort Benton.²⁶

Bradley, on his return to Fort C. F. Smith from Fort Benton on October 20, told Captain Kinney and his officers that, except for one tragedy, his mounted detachment had been a pleasant and educational experience. No hostiles had been encountered until the 19th. On that day, 30 miles from the post, about 60 Indians had jumped James J. Brannan, the guide, and Surgeon B. M. McCleary, who had ridden ahead. Brannan was killed by the first volley, but McCleary had escaped by wheeling his horse about and galloping back toward the main party. Bradley, on hearing the shots, had increased the gait, so he and his men came up in time to rescue the surgeon. One mounted infantryman was wounded in the running fight that ensued, before the Indians withdrew.²⁷

After resting for a day, Lieutenant Bradley's detachment prepared to continue on to its home base. It would be accompanied by Captain Kinney, Guides Bridger and Williams, a 20-man detachment from Fort C. F. Smith, and three of the miners. Reports that Indians were lurking in the woods caused Kinney to change his mind, as he believed this might signal the arrival of a supply train.

Later in the day, one of the soldiers, Pvt. Robert Hoover, had a narrow escape. Without permission, he had gone hunting on War Man Creek. Two Indians rode out of the creek bottom to cut him off. Fortunately for Hoover, they were sighted by Corporal Thomas and a miner, who rushed to his relief and frightened the Indians.

Fort C. F. Smith, their wagons having continued up the Bozeman Trail to Virginia City. Beckwourth, having seen Hazen across the Yellowstone, was back at the post on the 9th.

26. Templeton Diary, Oct. 20, 1866. Hazen and his party had proceeded onto Helena and Virginia City.

27. Templeton Diary, Oct. 20, 1866. The wounded soldier was Pvt. John Brooks of Company H.

About 40 redmen then attacked the wood party, and before they could take cover, captured two of their horses.²⁸

3. Captain Burrowes Takes Command

Captain Kinney, now satisfied that no train was coming, started for Fort Phil Kearny at 4 a.m. on the 23d. The next senior officer, Capt. Thomas H. Burrowes, would be in charge during Kinney's absence. Captain Burrowes had had a stormy military career. But for the political influence of his father back in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, his service in the army would have ended in March 1862. For at that time Burrowes, then a 1st Lieutenant in the 18th Infantry, was convicted by a Court Martial of charges of disobedience of orders and absence without leave, and sentenced to be dismissed from the service. The Adjutant General, on reviewing the proceedings, confirmed the sentence on June 17, 1863.²⁹

Burrowes' father, operating through the Republican wheelhorse Simon Cameron, brought pressure on Secretary of War Stanton to revoke the order of dismissal. This was done on February 27, 1864, and orders issued for Burrowes to rejoin his regiment at Chattanooga. This news caused a storm of protest by the regimental officers, who protested that Burrowes had never seen any combat; that he failed to pay his debts; that he was in the habit of borrowing money from enlisted men and refusing to pay it back; and that he handled the truth recklessly.³⁰

Burrowes rejoined his regiment before Kennesaw Mountain in June. He had reformed, and he soon won the respect of his brother officers. Severely wounded in the right arm at the battle of Jonesboro, on September 1, 1864, he was sent home to recuperate. Burrowes, on his return to duty in March 1865, was detailed to Indianapolis as a mustering officer, until April 1866, when he rejoined

28. *Ibid.*, Oct. 22 & 23, 1866; Post Returns for the 27th Infantry, October 1866, NA.

29. General Orders No. 177, AGO, Washington, June 17, 1863, NA, RG 393. Lieutenant Burrowes had repeatedly refused to close the recruiting station at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and report to regimental headquarters in Columbus, Ohio.

30. Smith to Goddard, Oct. 13, 1863, and Petition signed by 20 officers of 18th Infantry, March 12, 1864, NA, RG 393. The petitioners pointed out that Burrowes "is totally unworthy [of] all trust and confidence, that he is wanting in all those qualities, which make the soldier and the gentleman, and that his character is such that we cannot associate with him, without loss of honor or self respect." Their protests were ignored.

his regiment at Fort Kearny. Burrowes was still troubled by his wound which continued to suppurate.³¹

4. The Mountain Crow Return to Fort C. F. Smith

At 2 p.m. on the day of Kinney's departure, three Indians appeared on the opposite side of the Bighorn and discharged their guns into the water, frightening the pickets posted at the ferry. Lieutenant Templeton, as officer-of-the-day, rode to investigate. With the departure of Bridger, Williams, and Beckwourth, there was no one at the fort who could speak Crow, so Templeton was at a disadvantage in communicating with the redmen. After calling across the river and employing the little Crow he had picked up, he satisfied himself that they could talk that language. He would have to be careful, however, so he shouted for the Indians to go down to the island ford.

The Crow, who were afoot, waded the river. Between them the officers understood enough Crow to learn that their village would be at the fort in five days. Captain Burrowes, uncertain whether they were Crow or Sioux spies, determined to hold the three Indians, one a boy of 12, until the village arrived.³² On the 26th, however, he relented and agreed to allow one of them to return to their village. He was provided with a horse by the army. Even so it would be dangerous, because hostiles continued to prowl the area. That very morning, the wood choppers had seen many pony tracks down in the woods, while at the same time the post's cattle had disappeared.³³

On the night of the 24th shots were heard down at the ferry. When the army investigated, they found it was three of the prospectors who had stopped by in August en route to the Wind River Range. They had been attacked on the 23d by about 25 Indians and had lost five horses and their Bannock guide.³⁴

31. T. B. Burrowes, Sr., to Secretary of War, Jan. 12, 1866, Burrowes ACP File, RG 393, NA.

32. Templeton Diary, Oct. 24, 1866. The Crow were out on a horse stealing expedition against the Sioux.

33. Ibid., Oct. 26, 1866.

34. Ibid., Oct. 24, 1866. Before being killed the Bannock had identified the attackers as Crow. This identification can be questioned, because it is unlikely that a small Crow war party would have penetrated an area in which large numbers of Sioux and their allies were operating.

About 60 Crow, accompanied by Private Thompson and Interpreter Shane, reached the fort on the evening of October 30 from the Clarks Fork. Thompson reported to Captain Burrowes that Beckwourth was dead.³⁵ Lieutenant Templeton believed it "strange that he should die among the indians with whom he spent the better part of his life." While he had his faults, he was "a man of some talent, and was . . . decidedly smart." The lieutenant regreted his passing as "he was a very pleasant man and one who would interpret for the best interests of the government, and would fight besides."³⁶

Captain Burrowes met with the chiefs on the last day of October. The Crow did most of the talking and gave the impression that "if the government does not take decided measures very soon in regard to the Sioux," they would join Red Cloud and for "the first time wage war with the whites." If the garrison were reinforced, however, the Crow would be "glad of an opportunity to pitch into the Sioux." But as the situation now stood, they were badly outnumbered and afraid to go to war against Red Cloud and his people.³⁷

The Crow, during the next several days, remained nearby, trading with the sutler and Mr. Smith and hunting buffalo. On the evening of November 3 large numbers of bison were seen crossing over the divide from Soap Creek. Experience had demonstrated that such a movement usually preceded by one day the arrival of a train. And such was the case. The next morning the lookouts sighted wagons coming down off Big Hill six miles away.³⁸ Several hours passed, and when no wagons were seen rolling across the bench, fears were voiced that the train had encountered Indians. Smoke puffs reinforced this opinion. Captain Burrowes ordered out a relief column, and it soon encountered Nelson Story's trail herd, and a number of wagons loaded with corn for the post quartermaster. Lt. Thomas H. B. Counselman, who was in charge of the 15-man escort, reported that there had been no trouble and the smoke that had

35. Ibid., Oct. 24 & 30, 1866. The three Crow, who had reached the post on the 24th had sought to tell the garrison that Beckwourth was dead, but lacking an interpreter, the army had misunderstood them.

36. Ibid., Oct. 30, 1866.

37. Ibid., Oct. 31, 1866.

38. In the autumn of 1866, a cut-off on the Bozeman Trail had been opened by the army. Instead of descending the Soap Creek watershed, the wagons now crossed Big Hill and made their way down the valley of War Man Creek to gain the bench on which Fort C. F. Smith was located. Field Reconnaissance by Bearss, July 23, 1969, reinforced by a study of the Templeton diary and other contemporary journals and diaries.

caused the alarm was from cooking fires; a halt to eat having been made.³⁹

While Story's wagons ferried the Bighorn, the soldiers unloaded corn into the quartermaster storehouse. Lieutenant Templeton was disappointed to see that much of the corn was in "poor condition," but he was delighted to be relieved of his duties as post quartermaster by Lieutenant Counselman. At noon on the 8th the wagons that had brought up the corn started back to Fort Phil Kearny.⁴⁰

5. Captain Kinney Resumes Command

Captain Kinney and Paymaster Henry Almstedt escorted by 30 troopers of Company C, 2d Cavalry, reached Fort C. F. Smith on November 9. Although the soldiers were glad to see the paymaster, the sutler in such an isolated post had little to arouse their interest.

At battalion muster, Kinney announced that the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry, in accordance with legislation enacted in July, had been reorganized and redesignated the 27th United States Infantry. Col. John E. Smith of Galena, Illinois, Civil War general and hero and personal friend of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, would command the new regiment.⁴¹

The paymaster and his escort started back to Fort Phil Kearny at noon on the 12th. For several days, before and afterwards, Captain Kinney met with the Crow chiefs, both at the fort and in their village. On the 16th the Crow village moved off about 20 miles. They had been joined by 76 lodges of Arapaho and a number of Cheyenne. These people had told the Crow that they intended to trade with Mr. Smith, and the Crow replied that the Cheyenne would not be permitted to trade unless Captain Kinney gave permission to do so.⁴²

39. Templeton Diary, Nov. 1-4, 1866. Lieutenant Counselman told Captain Burrowes that he had seen a number of Arapaho and Cheyenne while en route from Fort Phil Kearny. They had met Captain Kinney on Goose Creek, and when he returned he would bring the paymaster.

40. Ibid., Nov. 5-8, 1866.

41. Ibid., Nov. 9, 1866. Company C, 2d U. S. Cavalry, had reached Fort Phil Kearny on November 3. Colonel Carrington proposed to employ the horsesoldiers to carry the mail in both directions--to Fort C. F. Smith to the northwest and to Fort Casper, 160 miles to the south. Brown, *Fort Phil Kearny*, p. 152.

42. Templeton Diary, Nov., 10-19, 1866.

Two Nez Percé visited Fort C. F. Smith on the 22d, and told Captain Kinney that there were 20 lodges of their people on the Yellowstone. The rest of the villages expected to visit the fort soon. Shortly afterwards, Chief White Mouth arrived with a note signed by Mr. Smith, announcing that the Crow village would arrive tomorrow and camp on the west side of the Bighorn.

6. The Mountain Crow Take Position Near Fort C. F. Smith

On November 23 the Mountain Crow came up the valley. Private Lockhart recalled that "there seemed to be a never-ending stream pouring over the hills . . . and down into the valley." Lieutenant Templeton recorded that in moving, the camp "extended over several miles of country and formed quite a procession." By dark they had put up their tipis, and "during a great part of the night they kept up a great singing and shouting, and their dogs (of which they have great numbers) kept up the tune the rest of the time."⁴³

Two days later, Chief Iron Bull came to the fort with his wife and young daughter to visit his "Father," as he called Captain Kinney. The officers sought to entertain their guests and gave the girl some trinkets.⁴⁴ On December 2, the weather having turned cold, the Crow village moved a short distance up Grapevine, where their camp would be sheltered by the hills and they would be closer to the box canyon buffalo jumps.⁴⁵

7. The Last Mail Reaches the Post

The mail arrived on November 28 from Fort Phil Kearny. Lt. Horatio S. Bingham, the officer in charge of the escort, told Captain Kinney that he had left Fort Laramie on the 22d and the Big Piney on the 26th. With the mail party was Jim Bridger, who was to remain at Fort C. F. Smith for the time being. Mail call, next to pay call, has always been the most popular formation in the armed services, and at the remote outpost on the Bighorn this was especially true. The official dispatches, however, caused the officers to put in many hours making out reports. The military has always had its share of red tape. Now to make matters more difficult, they would have to file a number of duplicate returns to replace those for August-October that had gone astray en route to Department Headquarters in Omaha.⁴⁶

43. Ibid., Nov. 22 & 23, 1866; Lockhart, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 160-161. A number of the Crow, along with the Arapaho, had started on the 21st for Clarks Fork to trade buffalo robes to the Nez Percé for horses.

44. Ibid., Nov. 25, 1866.

45. Ibid., Nov. 26 and Dec. 3, 1866.

46. Ibid., Nov. 27-30, 1866; Brown, *Fort Phil Kearny*, p. 147. Within a month, Bingham and most of his horsesoldiers would die in the Fetterman Fight.

The army thrived on rumors. Before starting back to Fort Phil Kearny on December 1, Bingham told the officers of the camp talk he had heard en route up from Fort Laramie. It had been determined, he said, to undertake a late winter's campaign against the Sioux and their allies. Reinforcements were on the march to the region, with Lt. Col. Henry W. Wessells en route from Omaha to Fort Reno with two companies.⁴⁷

8. Captain Kinney Prepares for an Attack

There was snow with a cold, driving wind out of the northeast on December 4. Winter closed in. The next day Smith, the Crow Trader, forwarded a note to Captain Kinney, informing him that several Crow had arrived from the Sioux village. War parties were reportedly returning with large numbers of livestock (horses, mules, and cattle) and mountains of groceries and dry goods; Fort Reno and Bridger's Ferry were said to be in the hands of the Sioux. Boasts had been heard that Red Cloud and his chiefs were ready to storm Fort Phil Kearny, after which they would ride against Fort C. F. Smith. The Crow had been warned to clear out of the war zone or suffer the consequences. They did not panic easily, and many of their chiefs had spoken in council that they were on the side of the whites and would be their allies if the Sioux came.⁴⁸

Although he discounted the stories of the sweeping successes claimed by the Sioux, Captain Kinney had the post strengthened. Log barricades were erected "around the front and left of camp on the inside of the stockade." To guard against surprise, reveille for the next several days was sounded an hour earlier than customary and the battalion formed.⁴⁹

During the second week of December, the weather moderated, and another Crow village arrived from the Yellowstone. With it came several Nez Percé lodges. Six warriors from that tribe met with the post commander on the 10th. They were well dressed and rode the best ponies of any Indians, Lieutenant Templeton had seen. After walking about the post, the visitors told Kinney that if the Sioux sought to make good their boast, "they would have their hands full."⁵⁰

47. Templeton Diary, Dec. 1, 1866. Colonel Wessells was under orders from General Cooke to replace the ailing Capt. J. L. Proctor as commandant at Fort Reno.

48. Ibid., Dec. 5, 1866.

49. Ibid., Dec. 5 & 6, 1866.

50. Ibid., Dec. 7 & 10, 1866. A third Crow village, probably the River Crow, was said to be en route from the Yellowstone to the Gallatin to trade with John Richard, Jr. The Nez Percé wore "much clothing," had good mackinaw blankets, and California Saddles.

Lieutenant Templeton visited the Crow village up Grapevine on December 18. He was impressed by the size of their lodges, the number of dogs, and the method by which they dressed their buffalo robes. An inventive Yankee, he conjectured, should visit the Crow and invent for them better instruments for working the hides. The Crow believed Captain Kinney good medicine, as great numbers of buffalo were continually coming down Bad Pass, and they were killing great numbers near their village.⁵¹

December 25, 1866, was a white Christmas at Fort C. F. Smith. It snowed all day, and by nightfall there was six inches of snow on the level. The commissary storeroom had issued large quantities of oysters and other delicacies, so the messes feasted. To commemorate the day, Captain Kinney had his artillerists fire a three-round salute from the mountain howitzer.⁵²

51. Ibid., Dec. 18, 1866. The Crow call Grapevine Creek, The Place Where the Men Get Their Meat, and there are a number of box canyon buffalo jumps in the area. Personal Interview, Medicine Crow with Bearss, July 25 & 29, 1969.

52. Templeton Diary, Dec. 24 & 25, 1866.

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VIII. THE ARMY HAS DIFFICULTY SUPPLYING FORT C. F. SMITH

A. Fort C. F. Smith Is Cut Off

1. The Garrison Learns of the Fetterman Fight

The garrison received news of the Fetterman Fight on December 28, 1866, from a Crow warrior who had just returned from the Sioux village. He told the soldiers that the Sioux had sent a small party racing toward Fort Phil Kearny as a decoy. They had then retired, leading the column sent in pursuit into an ambush. Fifteen hundred Sioux had destroyed this detached force, killing about 113 whites. Two days later, on the 30th, two more Crow came up from Tongue River with additional details of the fight on December 21. The number of soldiers killed was 97, they said, the Sioux having cut off that number of noses and carrying them off in a buffalo robe. Twelve Sioux were said to have been killed in the fight, with four more--since--dying from their wounds.¹

Subsequent to the battle, the Sioux had told the Crow that the army had evacuated Forts Phil Kearny and Reno. News of the defeat caused great excitement in the Crow village on Grapevine. A council met to discuss what they should do in view of the Sioux boast that 35,000 warriors would attack Fort C. F. Smith in January. As the Sioux had warned the Crow to leave the area or be prepared to fight the whites, it placed the chiefs in a quandry. They feared to disobey, but they also would like to remain and help the soldiers. By January 3, 1867, the Mountain Crow had made their decision: they would go to the Wind River Country. Captain Kinney, however, prevailed on Shot-in-the Face, Amahare, The Black Eagle, and three or four others to remain at the post to serve as scouts and couriers.²

2. The Mountain Crow Withdraw From the Area

On January 4 the Crow took down their lodges, packed their horses and travois, and the next day left the area. The Indians left behind were outfitted in uniforms by Lieutenant Templeton.

1. Templeton Diary, Dec. 28 & 30, 1866. In the Fetterman Fight on December 21, Red Cloud's Sioux and their allies had wiped out Capt. William J. Fetterman and his 80 officers and men. Details of the fight, as sketched by the Crow, are correct. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, pp. 117-131.

2. Ibid., Dec. 29-31, 1866, and Jan. 1 - 5, 1867; Post Returns for the 27th Infantry, Jan. 1867, NA.

Although they were very proud of their uniforms, Templeton believed they spoiled their appearance and made "them look just like mulattoes."³

Meanwhile, Captain Kinney kept his troops employed strengthening the fort and preparing to withstand a siege. Ice, to serve as water, was cut and stockpiled. The guard was doubled. Lieutenant Counselman kept a close tab on rations. As there had been no communications with Fort Phil Kearny since November 28 and consequently no mail, Captain Kinney, to keep up morale, had a bulletin board erected on the parade ground, and upon this he and his officers

would daily post clippings from old newspapers, which they happened to have in their baggage; this served to break the dull, gloomy monotony which seemed to pervade everything, and in some measure to distract their attention from their desperate situation.⁴

The winter of 1866-1867 became increasingly severe. January 14 was one of the worst days Lieutenant Templeton had ever experienced. There was six inches of snow on the level, with a strong wind howling out of the northeast. Drifts up to 15 feet in depth were built up; the post hospital was snowed in; and in places the snow was banked against the stockade to its top. The blowing snow reduced visibility to several feet.⁵

All the Crow scouts, except two, satisfied that the terrible weather would keep the Sioux in their camps left the fort and rejoined their village.⁶ A half dozen River Crow stopped at the post on January 23. They were en route from the Missouri to visit the Mountain Crow, and they had bad news for the army. Near the mouth of the Bighorn, they had stopped with the Arapaho, where they had visited with several Cheyenne who had come over from Tongue River. The Cheyenne told them that Fort Phil Kearny had been abandoned and burned by the troops. Some credence was given this story by Captain Kinney and his officers, because the Crow, prior to their departure, had reported smoke off to the southeast.⁷

3. Templeton Diary, Jan. 4-6, 1867. The Crow camped on January 4, just above the fort.

4. Lockhart, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 166-167. There is no record of Captain Kinney making any effort to communicate with Fort Phil Kearny in the period November 28-February 7.

5. Templeton Diary, Jan. 10-14, 1867. 6. *Ibid.*, Jan. 17-18, 1867.

7. *Ibid.*, Jan. 23, 1867. The River Crow attempted to reach the Wind River Country by way of Bad Pass but were forced, by the deep snow, to turn back and camp near the mouth of the Little Bighorn.

There was warmer weather in the final days of January. By the 30th the snow, except on the north slopes and where huge drifts had built up, had disappeared from the Bighorn Valley and benches. Jim Bridger's views worried the army. He told Captain Kinney the reason they failed to hear from Fort Phil Kearny was that the snow lay deeper in that area, and it would be impossible for a relief column to travel. To the soldiers it seemed that Bridger might be ready to admit that Fort Phil Kearny had been abandoned.⁸

3. Colonel Carrington Is Sacked and Communications Are Reopened

Meanwhile, news of the Fetterman disaster had reached Omaha, and the commander of the Department of the Platte, General Cooke, determined on Colonel Carrington's immediate relief. His replacement would be Colonel Wessells, en route to the Mountain District with reinforcements--three companies of infantry and two of cavalry. Wessells had reached Fort Reno by the time Cooke's orders overtook him. Pushing on, in bitter weather, he arrived at Fort Phil Kearny on January 16, "with but one casualty, a man being frozen to death."⁹ Wessells assumed command of the district from Carrington, who, six days later on January 23, departed the post for Fort Casper, just as a blizzard roared in out of the northwest. On the same day, in Omaha, Brig. Gen. Christopher C. Auger replaced Cooke as commander of the Department of the Platte.

Colonel Wessells was dismayed to learn that there had been no communication with Fort C. F. Smith since December 1. A veteran campaigner who had fought both Indians and Confederates, Wessells first sought to send several citizens through, tempting them with large bounties. They had difficulty breaking their way through the crusted snow drifts and turned back when they saw they were being trailed by Indians. A small force of cavalry led by Capt. David S. Gordon made the attempt on the 23d but likewise failed.¹⁰

Undaunted by these failures, Wessells ordered out his second in command, Maj. James Van Voast, with 50 cavalry, 20 footsoldiers, and six six-mule wagons. Voast's task force left Fort Phil Kearny at daybreak on January 29. The column advanced about 11 miles

8. Ibid., Jan. 29-30, 1867.

9. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, p. 130-131; Brown, *Fort Phil Kearny*, p. 208.

10. Wessells to Headquarters, Dept. of the Platte, Jan. 26 & 29, 1867, NA, Register of Letters Received, Dept. of the Platte; Robert A. Murray, "The Long Walk of Sergeants Grant and Graham," *The Army on the Powder River*, (Bellevue, Neb., 1969), p. 31

up the Bozeman Trail by which time Major Voast had seen enough to conclude that he had been given an impossible assignment. The road, if that was what it was called, was terrible. His men had to shovel a route for the wagons through mountainous drifts. Returning to the fort that evening, he told Colonel Wessells that he considered it "unwise to expose so small a command . . . to so many probable dangers--dangers arising from the difficulties of the road, from the elements of this season . . ., and from a confident and successful foe." To be successful, a relief column should consist of not less than 350 men and be rationed for 25 days.¹¹

Colonel Wessells now made a final effort to communicate with his isolated post. A call for volunteers went out. Sergeants Joseph Graham and George Grant responded, and on February 3 they started for Fort C. F. Smith with official dispatches, addressed to the post commander.¹²

On February 2, the day before the two sergeants walked away from Fort Phil Kearny, the Fort C. F. Smith sentries called that two wagons were descending the escarpment west of the Bighorn. The garrison, anxious for news, turned out on the double. When they crossed the river, the newcomers were found to be John Richard, Mitch Bouyer, and nine men. Loaded in the wagons were fresh vegetables and butter from the Gallatin Valley for sale to the post commissary. Richard told Captain Kinney that they had been on the road for 30 days, and because of the snow had been compelled to cache two wagons on Clarks Fork. As they had no news later than December 15, they were unable to confirm the stories told by the Crow regarding the fight at Fort Phil Kearny and their tales of its abandonment.

With Richard were two men--one was an individual having the franchise for the ferry and the other a settler who wished to take up farming near the fort.¹³

Sergeants Graham and Grant reached the fort on the 7th, having been on the road five days. They confirmed the destruction of Captain Fetterman's command, but reported that with the arrival of Wessells and his reinforcements, the garrison was stronger than before the December 21 fight. The men of Kinney's and Burrowes'

11. Voast to Starring, Jan. 29, 1867, NA, RG 393. Lt. W. S. Starring was Wessells' adjutant.

12. Wessells to Headquarters, Dept. of the Platte, Feb. 12, 1867, NA, RG 393, Register of Letters Received.

13. Templeton Diary, Feb. 2, 1867.

companies pumped the couriers for news of their friends, details of the Fetterman Fight, and of Carrington's replacement by Wessells.¹⁴

The two sergeants, accompanied by Mitch Bouyer,¹⁵ started for Fort Phil Kearny at tattoo on February 9. With them they took the mail, which included an important dispatch from Captain Kinney addressed to Colonel Wessells. From several Crow who had stopped at the fort in January, it had been learned that two Sioux chiefs (Roman Nose and One Horn), with 100 lodges, each, were encamped near the mouth of the Bighorn. They had told the Crow that they liked the whites and were going to pull out of the war. When John Richard returned to the Gallatin, he would contact One Horn and encourage him and the other Sioux leaders to make peace.

Kinney cautioned his superior that he had difficulty evaluating and interpreting the reports he received from the Crow of the Sioux's movements and intentions. The Sioux and their allies were said to be moving their camps from Tongue River into the Yellowstone Valley.¹⁶ Two reasons had been ascribed for this movement: (a) the desire to provide for their lodges' security when the snow melted and active hostilities were resumed; or the fear of retaliation by the army. All reports, however, concurred that the Sioux leaders were striving to rally all the tribes of the northern plains to their side. Unless vigorous measures were adopted by the United States,

14. Ibid., Feb. 7, 1867. The sergeants had ridden mules as far as the Fort Phil Kearny pinery. The mules had then been sent back, and the two men struck out on snowshoes. Murray, "The Long Walk of Sergeants Grant and Graham," *The Army on the Powder River*, p. 31-32.

15. Bouyer, a half-breed, was well acquainted with the country, and would, in Captain Kinney's opinion, be "reliable if kept away from whiskey." Bouyer had been hired by Kinney to carry the mail and scout for \$150 per month. Richard started back for the Gallatin Valley at the same time. Templeton Diary, Feb. 13, 1867.

16. Two hundred lodges of Cheyenne were reportedly at the mouth of the Rosebud, with plans to cross the Yellowstone, and after concealing their lodges on the headwaters of Porcupine Creek, to take the offensive. There were 1200 lodges of Sioux at the mouth of Tongue River and 300 lodges of San Arc Sioux at the mouth of the Powder, with similar intentions. There were two other Sioux villages, one of 50 and the other of 70 lodges, on Powder River, Tongue River, or the Rosebud, who would act in concert with the other allies. The 60-lodge Arapaho village, camped on the Yellowstone, ten miles above the mouth of the Bighorn, had sent word by the Crow that they did not want to fight the soldiers, but Kinney believed they would cooperate with Red Cloud and his chiefs. Kinney to Wessells, Feb. 9, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

Kinney forecast, Sioux diplomacy promised to be successful with all the tribes except the Crow and Shoshoni.

Since the departure of the Crow in the first week of January, Kinney had been looking for a resumption of the harassing attacks that had ceased in October, upon their arrival in the immediate vicinity. He gave the Crow more credit than the weather in contributing to this situation.¹⁷

Captain Kinney apparently still had questions regarding Captain Burrowes' qualifications that dated back to his Civil War difficulties. Kinney, in November, had forwarded to the Adjutant General his letter of resignation from the army. If this were accepted, he deemed it advisable for Colonel Wessells "to send an officer of experience here."¹⁸

The two sergeants and Bouyer encountered Indians as they were returning to their base. To save themselves, they abandoned their horses, the personal mail, and provisions, and losing their pursuers in the mountains, reached Fort Phil Kearny with the official dispatches on February 13.¹⁹

B. A Hard Winter on the Bighorn

1. The Mountain Crow Return

On February 15 Bad Elk and Seven Crow reached Fort C. F. Smith from the Bighorn Basin by way of Bad Pass. They reported that to subsist the Mountain Crow had scattered, with most of the village on Stinking Water. Three days later a "few Crow

17. Ibid., Feb. 9, 1867, NA, RG 98, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte. Prior to their departure, the Crow had warned Captain Kinney that the Sioux planned to attack Fort C. F. Smith during the full moon, between January 12 and 16. Kinney believed that the severe weather had prevented the Sioux from carrying out this treat.

18. Ibid.; Kinney to Adjutant General, April 1, 1867, NA, RG 94. Kinney's letter of resignation, tendered on November 4, 1866, had been triggered by the promotion to major of an officer junior to him, and a failure to brevet him lieutenant colonel for his Civil War Service.

19. Wessells to Headquarters, Dept. of the Platte, Feb. 14, 1867, NA RG 393, Register of Letters Received, Dept. of the Platte; Merrill J. Mattes, *Indians, Infants and Infantry: Andrew and Elizabeth Burt on the Frontier* (Denver, 1960), p. 128-129. Wessells urged General Auger to see that Sergeants Graham and Grant were liberally compensated for discharging a hazardous assignment.

lodges" came across the mountains from the Stinking Water and camped near the mouth of Grapevine. The soldiers were glad to see the Crow, but they only remained in the vicinity for three days, as they traveled down the Bighorn to Beauvais Creek. They, as well as the rest of the Mountain Crow, returned to Fort C. F. Smith on February 27 and camped "all around us."

While they were in the Bighorn Basin, warriors from the village had clashed with the Shoshoni near the mouth of Shell Creek. The fight had been precipitated by the Crow stealing 50 or 60 head of horses. The thieves were followed by 11 Shoshoni, and in a fight one Crow was killed. Iron Bull had had a narrow escape, losing his weapons, and only saving his life by leaping over a cutbank.²⁰

2. The Crow as Couriers

Mitch Bouyer was expected back from Fort Phil Kearny by February 16. When he came it was hoped he would be accompanied by a relief column with commissary and ordnance stores. As the days passed and there was no sign of Bouyer, the garrison concluded that he and the two sergeants had failed to get through and had forfeited their lives. Captain Kinney now determined to employ several Crow to carry dispatches to Colonel Wessells. The subject was discussed with Chief Crazy Head, who volunteered three young warriors to serve as couriers for the army. They started for Fort Phil Kearny on March 2.²¹ Reaching Lodge Grass Creek, they saw thousands of buffalo and backtracked to tell the village. They then retraced their route, resuming their role as couriers. Such actions were beyond comprehension by the military and tried Captain Kinney's patience.²²

The three Crow reached Fort Phil Kearny on March 15. Colonel Wessells on opening the dispatches was delighted to learn that "all was well at C. F. Smith" on March 1.²³ As the security of Fort C. F. Smith depended on the attitude of the Crow, a dispatch

20. Templeton Diary, Feb. 14-28, 1867.

21. Ibid., Feb. 16-March 2, 1867. Captain Kinney on February 26 had reached an agreement with Bad Elk and two others to go down to Fort Phil Kearny, but they backed out.

22. Ibid., March 6, 1867.

23. Wessells to Headquarters, Dept. of the Platte, March 19, 1867, NA, RG 393, Register of Letters Received, Dept. of the Platte. A second party of Crow messengers arrived at Fort Phil Kearny on March 20, with mail from Fort C. F. Smith. NA, Post Returns for the 27th Infantry, March 1867.

from Captain Kinney, referring to the whereabouts of the annuities promised by the Forts Union and Benton Treaties, caught Wessells' eye.²⁴ No time was wasted in bringing this subject to the attention of General Auger, who on April 6 telegraphed the War Department. It was pointed out that so far the conduct of the Crow had been above reproach. Despite inducements and threats, they had held aloof from the Sioux and their allies. General Auger was satisfied that the United States was indebted to the Crow for the security of the isolated post on the Bighorn. He trusted these friends would not be disappointed by a failure of the government to keep its commitments.²⁵

Meanwhile, the weather had taken a turn for the worse. The first two weeks of March was unseasonably cold at Fort C. F. Smith. It was not uncommon for soldiers assigned to guard duty to come off watch with their fingers and ears frostbitten. On the 3d, most of the Crow moved some distance down the valley.²⁶

Among the few Crow that remained was Iron Bull, who on the 14th moved his two lodges near the stockade.

3. The River Crow Visit Fort C. F. Smith

During this time a number of River Crow drifted in from the Missouri Valley. They habitually told stories regarding the whereabouts of the hostiles and their plans. The one that came in on

24. Ibid.; Kinney to Wessells, Feb. 9, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records. The Mountain Crow chiefs had told Kinney, on several occasions, that they were a small nation "and at war with all the tribes around, and unless the whites are strong enough to protect them, they will be obliged . . . to join the hostile Indians for their own preservation." They had also pointed out that, in accordance with the Fort Union Treaty, they had promised to remain at peace with the whites, and the government had promised to "send \$25,000.00 worth of presents, to give them a reservation of their own selection, furnish them with implements, and men to instruct and enable them to farm." As yet, no presents had been received, and they wished Captain Kinney to tell the "'Great Father' to send word how, when, and where they can receive their presents." As for their reservation, they wished it located on the Bighorn. This treaty was never ratified by the United States.

25. Auger to Adjutant General, April 6, 1867, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Sent, Dept. of the Platte, 1866-1867.

26. Templeton Diary, March 9 & 12, 1867. At daybreak on the 12th it was 25° below zero.

the 2d reported the Sioux camped at the mouth of Tongue River, and boasting that they would move against Fort C. F. Smith within 15 days. The Sioux had called on the Arapaho to join them.²⁷

From Medicine Wolf Boy on the 10th, Captain Kinney heard that when the Sioux came, it would be to fight both the army and the Crow. Six days later the army was told that the Sioux had encountered the two sergeants and Bouyer on Tongue River and had pursued them into the Bighorns, where they had been caught in a blizzard and had perished. On the 18th they heard that the couriers had met death at the hands of the Sioux, as had 13 men of a relief column. The Sioux were reportedly moving slowly toward the Bighorn. Two days later it was told that "the Sioux are scattered to the four winds of heaven and are starving." Roman Nose had deserted Red Cloud's confederation with his lodges, joined the Crow, and had been denounced by the rest of the Sioux.²⁸

The stories told by the River Crow confused the military. At first, the soldiers took them as gospel, but by the end of the third week of March, Lieutenant Templeton tersely summed up the prevailing opinion, "Among all the stories I believe none of them."²⁹

Three weeks had passed, and the Crow couriers had not returned from Fort Phil Kearny. Captain Kinney now called for volunteers to attempt to reach headquarters by way of Bad Pass and Shell Creek Canyon. Two civilians, Finn Burnett and George _____, responded. They left the post about noon on the 22d, but were back the next evening, reporting the snow was too deep and they were being tracked by half a dozen Indians. Two days later, on March 25, Kinney sent five Crow with dispatches. Traveling by way of the Bozeman Trail, the Indians were five days on the road.

When Colonel Wessells examined the mail, he found that Captain Kinney's recent experiences with the River Crow had soured his opinion of the Mountain Crow as well. He now suspected them of "bad faith." Medicine Wolf Boy had warned him that they were preparing to cast their lot with the Sioux. If and when supplies were forwarded, they should be accompanied by a strong cavalry squadron to guard against a surprise attack. As for supplies, certain subsistence stores and tobacco were becoming scarce and rationing would soon be resorted to.³⁰

27. Ibid., March 3, 1867.

28. Ibid., March 10, 16, 18 & 20.

29. Ibid., March 20, 1867.

30. Ibid., March 25, 1867; Wessells to Headquarters, Dept. of the Platte, NA, Rg 393, Register of Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte.

On March 26 the three Crow, who had left Fort C. F. Smith on the 2d, returned from Fort Phil Kearny with the mail, having been on the road six days. Among the official dispatches were communications from the War Department, accepting Captain Kinney's resignation and announcing Burrowes' promotion to brevet major. The next day a General Order was issued, and Burrowes formally assumed command at Fort C. F. Smith.³¹

C. Spring Comes to Fort C. F. Smith

1. Captain Burrowes Has a Trying Experience

Most of the snow had melted by April 1. This enabled the Crow riders that had left the post on March 25 to make a rapid round trip to Fort Phil Kearny. They returned on the 2d "bringing considerable mail." This boosted morale; no longer did the soldiers feel so isolated. Another good effect was an intangible. The couriers were impressed by the number of troops at Fort Phil Kearny, and their stories of the white men's strength reinforced the arguments of Crow chiefs opposing the young firebrands who urged that they join the Sioux. But with the end of winter, the garrison could expect the return of Sioux war parties.³²

On April 8 the "long roll" was beaten and the garrison turned out under arms, as six Indians with "led horses" appeared on the opposite side of the Bighorn. Iron Bull said they weren't Crow. He was wrong, however, because they proved to be Crow from a village on Beauvais Creek. They informed the army that the Shoshoni had raided their pony herd during the night and had made off with some horses. They had tracked the horse thieves through Bad Pass, but they had too much of a head start.³³

Three Nez Percé and their squaws visited the fort on the 10th. They told Captain Burrowes that their camp was at the mouth of the Little Bighorn. The newcomers made good impressions. Lieu-

31. Templeton Diary, March 26, 1867; G. O. 10, March 27, 1867, Fort C. F. Smith, NA, RG 393, Post Records, 1867. Lieutenant Templeton at this time was assigned to command Company D. From the couriers it was learned that the two sergeants and Bouyer had eluded pursuing Indians and had reached Fort Phil Kearny. To reward the Crow couriers, they were issued goods by the post quartermaster, valued at \$186.96. SO 41, March 29, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

32. Templeton Diary, March 26-April 2, 1867.

33. Ibid., April 8, 1867.

tenant Templeton observed, "They seem to be a better class of indians. They make some pretence of keeping themselves clean."³⁴

On April 12 Long Horse and a number of young Crow warriors started for Fort Phil Kearny with dispatches and mail. They were five days reaching the fort on Big Piney. When they returned, they came by twos and threes. Long Horse rode up to the post on the 22d with a pair of slippers for Lieutenant Counselman but no mail. He explained to Captain Burrowes that he had left the mail at his lodge when his pony gave out. The next day a Crow straggled in with a package of mail. On the 24th, 25th, and 26th came single bags of mail, but two pouches were still missing. When Burrowes asked about them, he was told that the warriors to whom they had been entrusted had gone hunting. Bear-in-the-Water came to the fort on April 29, with the pouch believed to contain the official dispatches. When it was opened, Captain Burrowes was dismayed to see the contents--several copies of *Casey's Tactics*. It was May 1 before the last packet was delivered.³⁵ The irresponsible attitude demonstrated by Long Horse and his warriors soured Burrowes on again employing them as couriers.

Better results were obtained when Captain Burrowes employed three of Iron Bull's warriors. They left the post on April 26 and, accompanied by Mitch Bouyer, were back at the fort on the evening of May 2. Bouyer had some interesting news. Fort Phil Kearny was now almost as isolated as C. F. Smith; no mail had reached there since March 5. He had talked with several Sioux in a Crow village on the way up, and they told him that their people "were collecting on Powder River to dance the 'Sun Dance' after which they will come here."³⁶

2. Captain Kinney Has a Change of Heart

With him Bouyer brought an order signed by Colonel Wessells on April 27, directing Captain Kinney to resume command of the post. This strange situation had been brought about by a change of heart on Kinney's part. The same mail which conveyed word of the acceptance of his resignation brought news of his reappointment to his brevet rank of lieutenant colonel. He had accordingly written the Adjutant General requesting that he be retained in service until June 30, 1867, by which time reinforcements and supplies would have reached the Bighorn. He could then leave the army with-

34. Ibid., April 10, 1867.

35. Ibid., April 22-May 1, 1867.

36. Ibid. May 2-4, 1867. Iron Bull's three warriors were each issued goods valued at \$25 for having successfully discharged their mission. SO 44, May 4, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

out fear of "imputations of abandoning the service to avoid either censure, danger, hardship, or responsibility."³⁷

Colonel Wessells had concurred and asked that Kinney's resignation be deferred, pointing out that he had been in command at C. F. Smith

since its establishment in which capacity he has had constant intercourse with and is favorably known to the Mountain Crow, . . . [whose] good will is now of great value and it is important that he still remain in authority at that post.³⁸

Captain Kinney, anticipating that his request would be honored by his immediate superiors, had remained on the Bighorn, and on May 4 he issued a general order formally resuming command of Fort C. F. Smith.³⁹

Meanwhile, a number of Crow had joined Iron Bull's camp near the stockade. This movement was triggered on April 15 by a Crow riding up to the post and calling that he had seen 400 Sioux on Lodge Grass Creek, coming this way. By nightfall on the 17th, there were 30 lodges camped around the fort. When it was learned that the "Sioux" were Crow en route over from the Little Bighorn, the army suspected the Crow were "playing a game to get in to have a better chance to beg." On the 18th most of the Crow moved over to Soap Creek.⁴⁰

3. The Montanans Get Involved

What John Richard had to say about the situation at Fort C. F. Smith, on his return from the Bighorn in March, troubled the Montanans. Captain Kinney had intimated that if he weren't reinforced his troops might have to evacuate the fort. If they did he might establish another post at the crossing of Clarks Fork. The Sioux, in anticipation of the summer's campaign, were said to

37. Kinney to Adjutant General, April 1, 1867, NA, RG 94, ACP File.

38. Wessell's Endorsement, April 29, 1867, found in *ibid.* General Auger agreed with Colonel Wessells, and he cited Kinney's "judicious conduct" as saving the fort from hostiles emboldened by their success at the Fetterman Fight. Auger's Endorsement, May 22, 1867, found in *ibid.*

39. GO 13, May 4, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

40. Templeton Diary, April 15-18, 1867. The Nez Percé visitors returned to their village on April 15, when the movement of the "Sioux" toward the Bighorn was reported.

have contacted the Blackfoot and Gros Ventres. Their chiefs in turn reportedly promised to take position on the Musselshell, preparatory to waging a war of extermination against the whites.⁴¹

The Montanans were understandably worried, because a full-scale Indian war would depress the territory's booming economy. They had been encouraged to believe that hordes of emigrants and many quartz mills would be moving westward, as soon as the snow melted. With the Sioux and their allies astride the Bozeman Trail--the route used by 90 percent of those emigrating to Montana in 1866--the army would be urged to take the offensive. Moreover, if the Blackfoot, who were formidable fighters, joined the Sioux, the hostiles would control the vast region between the Rocky Mountains and the Bighorn, and the Gallatin Valley would be endangered.⁴²

John Bozeman and Thomas Coover accordingly determined to visit Fort C. F. Smith to see what Montanans could do to assist the army. Seven miles east of the Yellowstone Ferry, about 100 miles northwest of the fort, they were surprised by Blackfoot. Bozeman was killed, but Coover escaped by swimming the Yellowstone with his rifle strapped to his back.⁴³

Undaunted, Coover, on returning to Bozeman City, hired Richard as his agent and sent him to the Bighorn to ascertain what supplies were needed by the army. Accompanied by three men, Richard left the Gallatin Valley on May 1 and reached Fort C. F. Smith on the 6th.⁴⁴

Acting Governor Meagher in the meantime mobilized a regiment of Montana volunteers. The troops from Virginia City took position to hold Bozeman and Bridger Passes. On the 5th five miners reached Bozeman City with a wild tale. They said they had just come from Fort C. F. Smith, and that the Sioux had vowed to break through the passes and sweep the Gallatin Valley. The Crow, who were as bad as the Sioux, were eager to help Red Cloud's warriors.⁴⁵

Richard remained at Fort C. F. Smith about 36 hours. Having learned that the garrison was running short of rations, he started back to the Gallatin Valley, promising to return in 16 days with eight wagons. Mitch Bouyer and John Poiner rode with Richard. The trio rode like the wind, and reached Bozeman City in three days. Besides reporting that food was short at the fort, Richard

41. *The Montana Post*, March 16, 1867. 42. *Ibid.*, March 23, 1867.

43. *Ibid.*, May 4, 1867.

44. Templeton Diary, May 6, 1867.

45. Thoroughman to Meagher, May 6, 1867, found in the *Montana Post*, May 11, 1867. Thomas Thoroughman was colonel of 1st Montana Volunteers.

told the Montana Volunteers that the Gros Ventres and Arapaho had joined the Sioux, sun dances had been held, and war would begin on June 1.⁴⁶

By the end of the first week of May, the only rations remaining in the Fort C. F. Smith commissary and quartermaster storehouses was corn. This was issued to the troops, boiled, and there were no complaints. Tobacco was different, however, and the soldiers griped bitterly when they were told that there was no more. Since it was a small bulk item, Captain Kinney hoped the Indian couriers would be able to bring up some with the mail.⁴⁷

4. The Sioux Reappear

On May 15 the troops at Fort C. F. Smith also heard that the Arapaho had allied with the Sioux. A young woman from Bear Tooth's camp claimed they had taken position to intercept supplies being brought from the Gallatin Valley. Her story was contradicted the next day by two warriors from the village, who claimed to know nothing about the whereabouts or plans of the Arapaho. Captain Kinney had long ago ceased to pay much attention to the stories told by the Indians.⁴⁸

Sentries, soon after daybreak on May 17, called for the officer-of-the-day. Six men were approaching from the southeast via the Bozeman Trail. At first, it was presumed the newcomers were a mail-party, but they proved to be deserters from Company B, 18th U. S. Infantry. They had left Fort Phil Kearny on the 1st and had been wandering about the country. Six more Phil Kearny deserters were arrested that afternoon, as they sought to slip across the Bighorn. On the 23d three more, despairing of reaching the Montana goldfields, gave themselves up. When questioned, before being confined to the guardhouse, they told Captain Kinney that two others had come as far as Tongue River, but had turned back rather than chance an encounter with the Sioux. The prisoners would be held until the arrival of a train from Fort Phil Kearny, and then returned to their commands to face court martial.⁴⁹

When the battalion turned out for reveille on May 19, 1867, the soldiers were surprised to find it snowing. For the next 48 hours there was intermittent snow and rain. While no snow remained on the ground at the fort, it covered the slopes of the Bighorns to

46. Templeton Diary, May 8, 1867. *The Montana Post*, May 18, 1867; SO 46, May 7, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

47. Templeton Diary, May 8, 1867. 48. Templeton Diary, May 16 & 17, 1867.

49. *Ibid.*, May 17 & 23, 1867.

the southwest. The weather cleared on the 21st, and about sun-down Iron Bull, who had started for Fort Phil Kearny on May 12, returned with mail but no tobacco. There was some good news, however. The regimental commander, Col. John E. Smith, was en route to the Mountain District with recruits, and they learned that when he arrived, a train, escorted by five companies, would be sent up the Bozeman Trail. One of these companies would remain, when the train returned, to reinforce the garrison.⁵⁰

The Sioux, for the first time since October, struck at Fort C. F. Smith. On the morning of May 26, the guards shouted "injuns!" and as the soldiers rushed to the stockade, six or eight redmen galloped out of Lime Kiln Creek and thundered across the bench toward the fort. They swept within 200 yards of the stockade and ran off post sutler Leighton's mules and several Crow ponies.

A mounted detachment trailed the Indians as far as War Man Creek, but wisely turned back on seeing Indians approaching from several directions. Had they crossed War Man, they would probably have suffered the same fate as Captain Fetterman and his command. From the fort it was possible to count 40 Sioux, but the Crow who ventured out to talk to them, in a vain effort to get them to return their ponies, reported there were 60 in this party, with 300 to 400 more on Soap Creek.⁵¹

5. Fort C. F. Smith Is Reinforced and Supplied

It was usually feast or famine at Fort C. F. Smith. On June 10 a man reached the post about dark and reported he had left a supply train on Soap Creek, and it would "be in tomorrow about 10 a.m." The train and its large escort (two companies 2d Cavalry, three companies 18th Infantry, and Company E, 27th Infantry) arrived on time. There were nine wagons--seven loaded with commissary and quartermaster stores, and two with supplies for the sutler. The soldiers, tired of their boiled corn diet, were delighted to see that they would now have plenty of bread as well as tobacco.⁵²

50. Ibid., May 19-20. Colonel Wessells had announced that he would retire after 36 years' service, as soon as Colonel Smith arrived. Subsequently, Wessells changed his mind and did not retire until 1871. Iron Bull and Feather-in-the-Hand had been employed by Captain Kinney at \$50 each per month to carry the mail. SO 47, May 28, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

51. Templeton Diary, May 26, 1867; Post Returns for the 27th Infantry, May 1867. Leighton, at the time of the raid, was in his store with several men, but they were too surprised to open fire and possibly save the mules.

52. Templeton Diary, June 10-11, 1867.

Maj. John Green, the officer in charge, told Captain Kinney that they had left Fort Phil Kearny on June 5, and had come through in seven days. Company E was to remain at Fort C. F. Smith to reinforce the garrison, and the train, with the rest of the escort, would start back early the next morning. Captain Kinney, with the effective date of his resignation at hand, again turned over responsibility for the post to Captain Burrowes. He and Jim Bridger would accompany the train to Fort Phil Kearny.⁵³

Major Green was as good as his word, and the train started as scheduled. About noon Mitch Bouyer crossed the Bighorn and reported that he had left Richard and his train on Clarks Fork, and they should "be in day after tomorrow." The train, escorted by Company A, 1st Montana Volunteers, was sighted on the 14th, as it came off the escarpment. Since crossing the Yellowstone on May 30 the train had encountered numbers of Indians but had not been molested. This was attributed to several factors--the strength of the escort and Richard's ownership of most of the wagons. Richard and Bouyer had frequently ridden ahead to meet with the Indians. Blackfoot, a leader of the River Crow, had joined the train with his village at the Yellowstone crossing and had accompanied it all the way to Fort C. F. Smith, though most of his people remained on Clarks Fork.

Captain Burrowes and his officers found the Montana volunteers a "hard" looking group, and although they were commanded by a colonel--Walker DeLacy--they ignored his orders, and his officers', and did as they pleased. Burrowes, on observing this, issued orders prohibiting his men from fraternizing with the Montanans. Colonel DeLacy was told not to cross the Bighorn. It was evident to the Montanans that the army officers were afraid that if the men mixed, they would be plagued with desertions.

Burrowes, in the interest of public relations, thanked Colonel DeLacy for bringing the provisions, as the regulars "had been living on corn for some time."

On June 16 the supplies--flour, beans, salt, and pepper--were purchased from Richard by the army and ferried across the river.

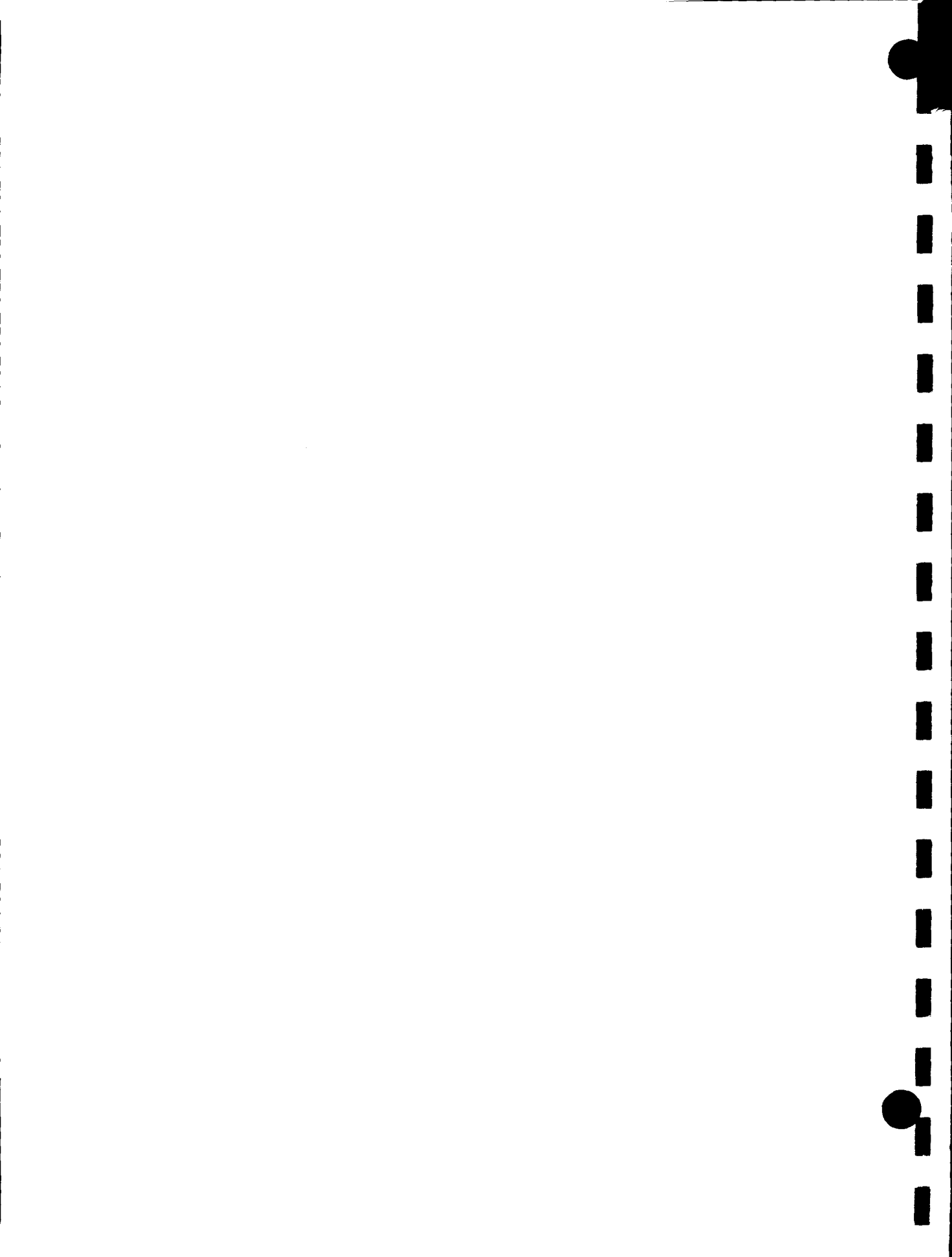
53. Ibid., June 11-12, 1867; GO 15 and SO 49, June 11, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records; Wessells to Headquarters, Dept. of the Platte, June 5 & 7, 1867, NA, RG 393, Register of Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte. Green's battalion had reached Fort Phil Kearny from Fort Laramie on June 4. Colonel Wessells, having received orders from General Auger to send a relief column to Fort C. F. Smith, directed Green to continue on with a train loaded with two months' supplies for Kinney's battalion. Auger to Wessells, May 8, 1867, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Sent, Dept. of the Platte.

Richard, however, would not accompany his wagons back to the Galatin, as he had business at Fort Phil Kearny. The train and its escort started back up the Bozeman Trail on the 18th. With them traveled 20 emigrants who had come up this far with the army's train.

Both en route to and from Fort C. F. Smith, the Montanans had to build rafts to cross the Clarks Fork and the Stillwater. By the time they reached the Boulder on their return, rations had been exhausted. An officer was sent ahead to make arrangements for their relief. By July 4 the expedition had reached Shields River, where the regiment had established Camp Ida Thoroughman. Here supplies were drawn and the march resumed, the column returning to Bozeman City on July 9.⁵⁴

54. The *Montana Post*, July 13, 1867, and Thoroughman to Beem, June 21, 1867, found in *ibid.*, June 21, 1867. Martin Beem was adjutant of the 1st Montana Volunteers. Camp Ida Thoroughman was at the mouth of the Shields River and covered the approaches to Bozeman, Bridger, and Flathead passes. SO 53, June 16, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records. From Richard, the army purchased 15,484 pounds of flour at 23¢ per pound, 116 pounds of salt at 33 12/100¢ per pound, and 44 pounds of pepper at 1 35/100¢ per ounce.

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IX. THE INDIANS MENACE FORT C. F. SMITH

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A. Captain Burrowes Meets the Challenge

1. The Sioux Score a Coup

A five-wagon wood train, early on June 25, 1867, was sent up onto the mountain by way of Lime Kiln Creek to pick up a load of timber, and returned safely. No signs of Indians were seen, and the mules, after being unharnessed and watered, were turned out to graze in the draw west of the fort. No apprehension was felt, because the pickets posted on Graveyard Hill could observe the gap in the reef through which the wood road passed. About 3 p.m. the pickets sighted eight to ten Indians, as they slipped by between the bluff and river. After shouting a warning, the soldiers opened fire. The seven herders, alerted by the shouts and shots, mounted their mules and started the herd toward the stables. A number of Crow, who had gathered near the blacksmith shop, began to yell and whoop. Some of them got in the way of the mule herd and it stampeded around the south side of the stockade. Meanwhile, the garrison had turned out under arms and a heavy fire was opened on the Sioux. The mules by this time were within 100 yards of the sutler's store. Three of the Sioux now turned the mules, and they raced northeastward across the bench.

Lieutenant Counselman, seeing that, afoot, it would be impossible to recover the 39 mules and four horses, ordered the guard to secure horses. With 15 soldiers and six civilians, the lieutenant pursued the horsethieves as far as Rotten Grass Creek. By the time they turned up into the bluffs, the Indians and stolen stock had a lead of four miles. Fearing an ambush, their horses badly jaded, Counselman called off the pursuit and returned to Fort C. F. Smith.¹

Captain Burrowes, disenchanted with the conduct of the Crow, ordered them to keep away from the stockade and outbuildings.² The sentinals were told to enforce this order.

2. The Army Gets Nervous

Six days later, on July 1, 19 Indians, soon after daybreak, galloped out of Lime Kiln Creek and pounded across the bench south of the fort. Several soldiers, including Lieutenant Temple-

1. Counselman to Burrowes, June 27, 1867, NA, RG 393; Templeton Diary, June 25, 1867. Only one of the four stolen horses belonged to the government.

2. Templeton Diary, June 25, 1867.

ton, dashed out the gate and fired at the redmen as they rode out of range. Ten other Indians now appeared on the bluffs to the southeast, observed the situation, and vanished.

John Richard returned to the post on the 3d from Fort Phil Kearny. He told Captain Burrowes that most of the Mountain Crow had been there during the last week of June to receive their annuities.³ Richard would not be returning to the Gallatin for the time being, as he had been hired by the military to stay with the Mountain Crow and spy on their plans and movements.

After dark on the 7th, Indians were heard approaching, shouting and shooting. It was assumed that they were Crow, and they were permitted to approach the stockade. A bullet now whistled overhead, and the sentries, concluding that the visitors were Sioux, returned the fire. Although the redmen disappeared, the garrison was turned out and spent the night posted along the stockade. In the morning ten Crow came in and said it was they that the army had fired upon, and they had been lucky to escape without casualties.⁴

3. Richard and the Crow Keep the Army Informed

About 40 Crow warriors from Crazy Head's village, accompanied by Richard, Raphael, and H. H. Eccleston, visited the fort on July 11. They reported that a strong force of Sioux was camped on the Rosebud; while another group was on the Little Powder, en route to reinforce the first. Between them the two villages could field from 4,000 to 5,000 fighting men. Red Cloud's allies, the Cheyenne and Arapaho, were in the Wolf Mountains. According to the Crow, the Sioux planned a two-phase campaign: they would establish a camp near Fort C. F. Smith from which to attack the post and harass reinforcements and supply trains coming up the Bozeman Trail from Fort Phil Kearny.

To avoid the Sioux, the Crow would remove their village from Rotten Grass into the mountains. Iron Bull and Crazy Head promised to keep Captain Burrowes advised of both their movements and those of the Sioux.

3. Ibid., July 1 & 3, 1867; Wessells to Headquarters, Dept. of the Platte, June 22, 1867, NA, RG 393, Register of Ltrs. Recd., Dept of the Platte. Wessells estimated that the Mountain Crow number 1,000 lodges.

4. Templeton Diary, July 7-8, 1867. The Crow were returning from a horse-stealing expedition against the Shoshoni.

Captain Burrowes entrusted this information to Eccleston who started for Fort Phil Kearny the next day.⁵

The Crow returned to their village on the 12th, and throughout the day, a number of warriors from camps west of the Bighorn crossed the river to reinforce Crazy Head, as an attack by the Sioux was feared. Not an Indian was seen on the 14th, and the soldiers speculated anxiously on what this portended. A number of Crow led by Long Horse spent the 15th at the fort, trading for tobacco. They seemed to know something but were afraid to confide in the soldiers. Along toward evening, The Swan called Richard aside and "told him that the Crow were telling lies and hiding the truth." He confided that there were 600 Sioux warriors led by Roman Nose in the Crow village, trading ponies for ammunition, and the entire Sioux nation, 3,000 lodges, was encamped on the Little Bighorn, near the mouth of Owl Creek. There they had completed their medicine lodge and were ready for war. Red Cloud and his chiefs would move against Fort C. F. Smith, while a 350-man war party rode to harass the supply train about to leave Fort Phil Kearny. The Sioux were confident that with 4,000 men they could "either take the garrison or starve it out and cut us off from water."

Before dispatching Mitch Bouyer to Fort Phil Kearny with this intelligence, Captain Burrowes took precautions. Every spare cask and barrel was filled with water, the livestock was kept in the stockade, and the troops were posted at their battle stations. When he checked with his ordnance sergeant, Burrowes learned that there were 26,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition and 50 projectiles for the mountain howitzer. He calculated that there were enough munitions on the post for his people to withstand a six-day siege, provided the firing was not continuous.

The condition of post surgeon, Dr. B. McCleary, caused Captain Burrowes anxious moments. His brain affected by rotgut whiskey, the surgeon "was a raving madman," and had to be watched constantly. In the event of fighting, the garrison would have to look to a hospital steward for medical care.⁶

5. Burrowes to Asst. Adjt. Gen., Mountain District, July 12, 1867, NA, RG 393; SO 55, July 12, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

6. Burrowes to Asst. Adjt. Gen., July 16, 1867, NA, RG 393; Templeton Diary, July 15, 1867. The Swan told Richard that if the Crow Dog Soldiers learned of their conservation, he would be flogged and his ponies killed. Bouyer was accompanied on his mission to Fort Phil Kearny by Jim Leighton.

The Crow, on the 16th, returned to their village which had been moved during their absence over to Lodge Grass Creek. Iron Bull and White Mouth spent the 17th at the fort. When questioned by Captain Burrowes, they told the same story as The Swan regarding the Sioux's intentions. News that the Mountain Crow had moved their camp closer to the Sioux village and were trading with them, caused the army to be apprehensive that they would ally with Red Cloud. Lieutenant Templeton voiced the opinion of many, when he observed, "I am not afraid of all the Sioux, but I fear the Crows, as they know so much of our Post."⁷

Mitch Bouyer had taken Captain Burrowes at his word not to spare "the horseflesh," and he made the roundtrip to Fort Phil Kearny in five days. He had good news: reinforcements and supplies were en route to the fort, and they should arrive on July 22.⁸

B. Colonel Bradley Takes Command

1. The March of Bradley's Column

The relief column was led by Lt. Col. Luther P. Bradley, a soldier with a distinguished Civil War record. The 40-year-old Bradley had entered the volunteer service in September 1861, as lieutenant colonel of the 51st Illinois. He had commanded his regiment at New Madrid and Island No. 10, and served in the siege of Corinth. At Stones River on December 31, he had led a brigade in Brig. Gen. Philip Sheridan's division. Sheridan, Bradley, and their soldiers had blunted savage Confederate attacks in the cedars south of the Wilkinson Pike, giving Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans time to reform his Army of the Cumberland along the Nashville Pike. Bradley and fellow Civil War veterans liked to tell about a bayonet charge he had led in this bloody fighting. At Chickamauga, he had received two wounds. He returned to duty in time to lead his brigade in numerous engagements in the Atlanta Campaign, and to be wounded again at Springhill, Tennessee. At the close of the Civil War, he was mustered out of the volunteer service as a brigadier general, a rank he had held since July 30, 1864.⁹

When the 27th Infantry was constituted, Bradley had been commissioned a lieutenant colonel in the regular establishment and

7. Templeton Diary, July 17-18, 1867.

8. Ibid., July 20, 1867. A man named Parker accompanied Bouyer on his return to Fort C. F. Smith on the evening of July 20.

9. Bradley to Ramsey, Jan. 4, 1866, Bradley's ACP File, NA, RG 94. Bradley had been born at New Haven, Connecticut, on December 8, 1822.

assigned to that unit. The Civil War general reached Fort Phil Kearny on July 11, with 12 officers and 104 recruits. There he reported to his regimental commander, Col. John E. Smith, who had preceded him by 11 days to the post on Big Piney. Smith wore two hats. On his arrival at Fort Phil Kearny, on July 3, he had replaced Colonel Wessells as commander of the Mountain District. As soon as the recruits had been assigned to their units, Colonel Smith drafted orders for Colonel Bradley to proceed to Fort C. F. Smith with two companies, H and I, and take command of that isolated post. Before starting the men of Companies H and I turned in their muzzle-loading rifles for new Allin modified Springfield breech-loading rifles. Chests containing new rifles, to be issued to the battalion at Fort C. F. Smith, were loaded into some of the wagons that would accompany Bradley's column.¹⁰

Colonel Bradley marched with his battalion from Fort Phil Kearny on July 17. Besides the government wagons loaded with ordnance, commissary, and quartermaster stores, the column was accompanied by a contract supply train and a small emigrant train. The latter was bound for the Montana diggings. To guard against an attack, Bradley, except when passing streams and defiles, had the wagons move in double column.¹¹

Heavy rains during the day lashed the column. Soon after they halted for the night, they were joined by Colonel Smith and the cavalry. Smith had ridden out to reconnoiter and look for hay. Mitch Bouyer and Leighton, with Burrowes' dispatch of the 16th, now rode in. Colonel Smith, taking cognizance of Burrowes' fears for the safety of the train, told Captain Gordon to accompany Bradley with his unit--Company D, 2d Cavalry--and two mountain howitzers.

The next day, the 18th, Smith returned to Fort Phil Kearny, and Bradley marched up the Bozeman Trail. Although small parties of Indians watched their movements, they made no attacks. On July 22, while the battalion was halted on Rotten Grass, several Crow chiefs (Crazy Head, Iron Bull, and White Mouth) visited the corral.

Bradley reached Fort C. F. Smith the next day, July 23, and immediately assumed command of the garrison, which he pronounced "well & in good order." Mitch Bouyer and Parker were started for Fort Phil Kearny that evening with dispatches, notifying Colonel Smith of Bradley's safe arrival.¹²

10. Smith to Asst. Adjt. Gen., Dept. of the Platte, July 17, 1867, NA, RG 393; Returns for Regular Army Infantry Regiments, June 1821-Dec. 1916, 27th Infantry, July 1867, NA.

11. Such a formation would facilitate corraling in event of attack.

12. The *Montana Post*, Aug. 10, 1867; Bradley to Asst. Adjt. Gen.,

2. Bradley's First Days at Fort C. F. Smith

The next several days were busy ones. New staff assignments were made. Lt. E. R. P. Shurly was named post commissary and quartermaster, thus relieving Counselman and Templeton of these duties. Acting Assistant Surgeon Francis Geisdorf replaced Dr. McCleary. Recruits were assigned Companies D, E, and G to bring them up to their authorized strength.¹³ Boards of Survey were constituted to examine and report on the condition of the quartermaster and commissary stores brought up by Contract Train No. 4. When the soldiers of Companies D, E, and G turned out to turn in their obsolete firearms and to receive the new breech-loaders, it was found that somebody back at the Fort Phil Kearny ordnance storehouse had blundered, and the cases earmarked for Company E had not been loaded. Colonel Bradley promised to have them sent up by the next train.¹⁴

While the soldiers unloaded wagons, the emigrants ferried the Bighorn, and on July 24 drove their wagons up onto the bench. While the emigrants continued on toward the Clarks Fork, the Mountain Crow on the 26th moved their village up to the fort. Colonel Bradley, the next day, spoke with the chiefs. He advised them to cross the Bighorn and get away from the Sioux, because he feared a close association with Red Cloud and his people would adversely effect the army's fortunes. When he accused the Crow of trading powder to the Sioux for ponies, they denied the charge, although Wolf Bow admitted they had. Though the chiefs professed friendship, many of the younger warriors were surely. It would not surprise Bradley, if the Crow allied with the Sioux, although he proposed to "do anything in my power to prevent them from taking part in the Indian war."

On his arrival, Companies H and I and Gordon's horsesoldiers camped outside the stockade. But when the Crow appeared, they moved inside to keep the Indians from fraternizing with them. Bradley feared that if his soldiers caught the Crow stealing, there would be trouble.¹⁵

Mountain District, July 27, 1867; Smith to Asst. Adjt. Gen., Dept. of the Platte, July 27, 1867; NA, RG 393; SO 59, July 23, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records. The emigrant train had originated at Fort Leavenworth.

13. SO 1, July 24, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

14. Bradley to Adjt., Mountain District, July 27, 1867, NA, RG 393; SO 2, July 25, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

15. Bradley to Adjt., Mountain District, July 27, 1867, NA, RG 393; *Montana Post*, Aug. 10, 1867.

The Crow took Bradley's advice and on the afternoon of July 30 forded the Bighorn and started for Pryor Creek. There they planned to unite with the River Crow and hunt Buffalo on the Yellowstone. With the exception of Iron Bull and his followers, Bradley distrusted the Crow. He was glad to see them go.¹⁶

Bradley, like any prudent officer, reconnoitered the Bighorn valley above and below the fort. He learned from Captain Burrowes that Richard had been awarded a contract for 350 tons of hay at \$17 per ton. Bradley, satisfied that more hay was needed, planned to contract for another 200 tons. On the 28th Richard's hay-ing party commenced mowing on War Man Creek, two and one-half miles northeast of the post.¹⁷

In regard to subsisting the garrison, Bradley learned that it was possible to contract for Gallatin Valley potatoes at 14 cents per pound, delivered, which was about the cost of freighting a similar amount from Omaha. Moreover, the Montana potatoes were better quality. He found that Gallatin Valley flour cost 23 cents, delivered, and yielded 130 pounds of bread for 100 pounds of flour. Stateside flour cost the commissary 22 cents a pound and produced 117 pounds of bread for 100 pounds of flour. In the interest of economy and to encourage local agriculture, Bradley recommended that hereafter the post be supplied with these staples by reputable contractors such as John Richard.¹⁸

C. The Hayfield Fight *

1. The Indians Shadow the Wood Train and Attack the Hay Train

Thursday, August 1, 1867, was a busy day at Fort C. F. Smith. Long before daybreak, Captain Gordon turned out his horsesoldiers, and the wagonmaster of Wells Fargo & Co., Train No. 4, had his teams hitched. The train and its escort had disappeared over the crest of Big Hill by sunrise. Soon thereafter, the timber train left the fort and proceeded up Lime Kiln. As the train was returning with a load of logs, Indians were seen. They followed the wagons closely but did not attack. Lieutenant Templeton and several men dashed out the gate and shot at the Indians with their new breech-loaders. This caused the redmen to beat a hasty retreat.¹⁹

*see National Register forms, p. 491.

16. Bradley to Adjt., Mountain District, July 27, 1867, NA, RG 393. Iron Bull had been promised employment as a courier on his return from the summer's buffalo hunt.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Templeton Diary, Aug. 1, 1867; Bradley to Adjt., Mountain District,

Colonel Bradley during the afternoon started a hay train down to the haying crew. Lieutenant Shurly with 20 mounted men took the lead as the wagoners drove down off the bench into the bottom. They had not gone very far before they encountered Indians. Shurly's patrol, badly outnumbered, started to retire. Colonel Bradley heard the shooting and shouting, and at 4 p.m. ordered Captain Burrowes to turn out Company G and march to Shurly's assistance. Burrowes' relief column moved out, with their breech-loaders at the ready. After advancing about a mile, along the Hay road, the infantry came up with Shurly's platoon. The Indians retired out of range. Just as Burrowes was re-forming his company, to get ready to return to Fort C. F. Smith, Lt. R. F. Fenton marched up with a detachment of Company H and a gun squad with a mountain howitzer.

Fenton was there because of the arrival at the fort of Private Bradley, with word that the party at the hayfield had been under attack since about noon. There had been casualties, and help was needed. This was the first news Colonel Bradley had received that the hay detail was in trouble. Bradley could move with alacrity, and Lieutenant Fenton was ordered out with his detachment. On reporting to Captain Burrowes, Fenton told him that Bradley's orders were "go to the hay corral, relieve them, bring back the killed and wounded and do whatever" he deemed best after his arrival there.²⁰

Preparatory to carrying out these instructions, Burrowes threw forward Shurly's horsesoldiers to guard his flanks, while deploying Fenton's detachment as skirmishers. The advance commenced toward the hay corral.²¹

2. The Situation at the Hayfield

Richard's men had commenced cutting hay on July 28. The scene of operations was in the Bighorn Valley, about two and one-half miles northeast of Fort C. F. Smith. To protect the mules at night and as a place of defense, a fortified corral was erected on the left bank of War Man Creek. A rectangle about 100 feet by 60 feet was laid out, and upright posts placed in pairs at six-foot intervals. Along the logs heavy pole stringers were secured to the posts about halfway to the top and at the top

Aug. 5, 1867, NA, RG 393. In addition to Gordon's cavalry, the train was escorted by Company D, 27th Infantry.

20. Burrowes to Bradley, Aug. 3, 1867, NA, RG 393.

21. Ibid.

another row of stringers were fastened. Between the stringers, green willow branches were laced, with their branches and leaves left on. There was a gap in the south side. Across it a wagon's running gears were placed, and at night the wheels were chained to the entrance posts. Inside the corral, on the west side, were four wagon boxes in a row with their bows and canvas tops. Three military tents were pitched north of the wagon boxes. A line to which the livestock was picketed, at night, ran the length of the corral on a north-south axis, 15 feet off the center line. A large tent was positioned between the picket line and the center military tent. A tent serving as a field kitchen stood just outside the corral at its southwest corner. The corral was on the west side of War Man Creek, which curved around its south and east sides. The south side of the corral was within 40 feet of the stream. A dense growth of willows bounded the creek. About 300 yards south of the corral was the bluff line, and then the bench. War Man Creek, after debouching through a 40-foot escarpment, meandered across the Bighorn bottom in a northeasterly direction. Because of the configuration of the terrain, the corral could not be seen from the fort.²²

A detachment of soldiers was detailed by Colonel Bradley to protect the haying crew. On July 30, Lt. Sigmund Sternberg of Company G was placed in charge of the armed guard. A veteran of both the Prussian and Union armies, the 29-year-old Sternberg had been at Fort C. F. Smith only seven days. After being discharged as a captain in the 82d U. S. Colored Troops, in September 1866, Sternberg had solicited the assistance of Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan and Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour in securing him a commission as 2d lieutenant in the regular establishment. On May 1, 1867, his desire was gratified, and he was commissioned and directed to report to commanding officer at Newport Barracks, Kentucky, the first stop on his road to death.²³

22. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, pp. 137-139; Field Reconnaissance by Bearss, July 23, 1969. My colleague and friend Lt. Col. Roy Appleman has written an excellent history of "The Hay Field Fight." For much of the information found in this section I am indebted to his study. When the Bighorn Canal was constructed at the turn of the century, War Man Creek was ditched and its course across the Bighorn bottom changed. The site of the corral was near the historical marker erected by Dr. Heberd.

23. Seymour to Townsend, Sept. 16, 1866; Sheridan to Townsend, Sept. 20, 1866; Sternberg to Kelton, May 21, 1867, NA, Sternberg's ACP File, RG 94. Sternberg had served five years in the Prussian Army. In the volunteer establishment, he had served from September 1862 to October 1864 as 1st lieutenant and captain in the 175th New York Infantry; from October 1864 until August 1865 as a captain in the 7th New York Infantry; and from August 1865 until September 10, 1866, as a captain in the 82d

According to Finn Burnett, who wrote about the fight long afterwards and is known often to be reckless with the truth, about 20 Crow stopped at the hayfield on the last day of July, and told the men that the Indians were preparing to attack them the next day in great strength. They reported that at the medicine lodge, the chiefs had argued as to how best to destroy the Bozeman Trail forts. Red Cloud had urged that the entire force strike Fort Phil Kearny first, and after it had been destroyed, they should assail Fort C. F. Smith. Others argued that Fort C. F. Smith, since it was closer, should be attacked first. It was finally determined to send two parties--the one under Red Cloud to head for Fort Phil Kearny and the other to move against Fort C. F. Smith. Burnett recalled that the hayers and guards dismissed the warning. The Crow then went to the fort and repeated the story, where it likewise made no impression. Doubt is cast on Burnett's recollections, because both Bradley's official report and Templeton's diary indicate that the Crow had left the area by the last day of July.²⁴

On August 1 there were 19 soldiers and six civilians at the hayfield corral.²⁵ The enlisted men were armed with the recently issued breech-loaders, while the civilians had either Spencer or Henry repeating rifles and revolvers.²⁶

As Roy Appleman has pointed out in *Action on the Bozeman Trail, 1866-67*, our knowledge of the Hayfield Fight is based on meager information. There is mention of it in the Post Returns and Colonel Bradley's and Captain Burrowes' reports, but the only detail-

U. S. C. T. He had fought at Port Hudson, where he served in a volunteer storming party, and in the Petersburg Campaign.

24. Robert B. David, *Finn Burnett, Frontiersman* (Glendale, 1937), pp. 164-166; Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, pp. 138-139; Templeton Diary, July 30-31; Aug. 1, 1867; Bradley to Adjt., Mountain District, Aug. 5, 1867, NA, RG 393.

25. Private Lockhart recalled, many years afterwards, that the guard consisted of 21 soldiers, while Burnett in his recollections placed the total number at the corral as 19, which included nine citizens. Lockhart, *Life and Adventures*, p. 182; David, *Finn Burnett*, p. 167. The figure used in this report for the number of men present is taken from the Fort C. F. Smith Post Returns.

26. David, *Finn Burnett*, p. 168. Burnett, whose story of his life is full of exaggerations and falsehoods, claimed that one of the citizens, Zeke Colvin, an ex-Confederate infantryman was armed with an Enfield rifle-musket he had picked up at the battle of Wilson's Creek in August 1861.

ed accounts are found in the recollections of the fight by Pvt. James D. Lockhard and Finn Burnett. There is general agreement between these two accounts, although Burnett, who had a vivid imagination, goes into much greater detail.²⁷

3. The Indians Attack and Are Repulsed

After an early breakfast, the civilians hitched up their teams and drove the two mowers out to where they were cutting hay. Some of the soldiers took position at previously assigned posts on the bluffs and in the valley north of the hayfield, while the rest remained at the corral, playing cards, pitching horseshoes, and bantering with one another. About noon men at the corral heard shots down the valley, where the hayers were at work. Immediately thereafter the mule teams pulling the mowers came pounding toward the corral. They were followed by Indians, some of whom were armed with firearms. At the first scattered shots, Sternberg recalled his pickets.²⁸

The Indians, at first, made several dashes at the corral and then fell back, a tactic calculated to entice the whites into venturing outside their strongpoint and into an ambush. Lieutenant Sternberg refused to fall for this ruse. All the while he kept his men employed strengthening the defenses. Crude rifle-pits were dug, the spoil being thrown into the wagon boxes, thus reinforcing them. When the Indians saw that the whites were not going to be drawn out of the corral, a large force of mounted warriors appeared in the valley toward the northeast, and cautiously approached the corral.²⁹

Lieutenant Sternberg posted his men inside the corral, soldiers and citizens intermixed. Most of the men threw themselves on the ground behind the lower logs, and using them for protection and as an arm rest, fired over them. Others crouched behind the wagon boxes. Lieutenant Sternberg posted himself at the gateway.

27. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, pp. 139-140.

28. Ibid., p. 140; Lockhart, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 182-183, 185; David, *Finn Burnett*, pp. 167-168; Templeton Diary, Aug. 1, 1867. Lieutenant Templeton gives the time of the appearance of the Indians as about noon. Templeton apparently made his entries in his diary that evening, after he had discussed, with the participants, the day's events. Although he was not in the Hayfield Fight, his account, unlike Burnett's and Lockwood's, was contemporary with the events described.

29. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, p. 140.

A veteran of many battles, he disdained to fight on his belly and drawing his revolver, "stood tall."³⁰

The redmen, after being harangued by a chief, galloped, yelling and whooping, up the valley toward the corral. They were received with a "close, regular, sweeping volley," and the charge divided--some passing to the east and the rest to the west of the stronghold. Burnett recalled a warrior mounted on a black pony, with a firebrand in his hand, thundering boldly toward the corral. Zeke Colvin dropped the horse with a shot from his Enfield. The warrior was pinned momentarily between his pony and the logs. He soon freed himself, and as he broke for the willows, he was gunned down. A desperate fight now ensued; the Indians sweeping close to the corral, firing into it, and showering the defenders with arrows. Lieutenant Sternberg was shot in the head, and killed.³¹

4. Don Colvin Takes Charge of the Defense

With Sternberg dead, Burnett recalled that Don A. Colvin, a brother of Zeke, assumed command. The 27-year-old Colvin was a born leader and fighter. Soon after the capture of Camp Jackson, Missouri, Colvin, who loved the Union, enlisted in the Missouri state militia. When his six-month term was up, he helped F. M. Thompson, recruit in Atchison County, Missouri, Company C, 5th Regiment, Missouri State Militia, and on March 22, 1862, was commissioned a 1st lieutenant and mustered into service. Company C

30. Ibid.; David, *Finn Burnett*, pp. 168. Burnett claimed that Sternberg planned to fight his command from rifle-pits outside the corral, but the rapid approach of the Indians compelled him to abandon this plan.

31. Lockhart, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 185-186; David, *Finn Burnett*, p. 169; Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, pp. 140-141; Burrowes to Headquarters, Dept. of the Platte, March 11, 1869, NA, RG 393; Sternberg's ACP File, RG 94. Among Sternberg's personal effects subsequently forwarded to Washington and turned over to the Prussian Minister for return to the deceased's family were: 1 pair of wool blankets, 2 infantry uniform trousers, 3 pair of suspenders, 1 saber belt, 1 pair of shoes, 1 uniform coat, 1 pair of slippers, 1 pair of socks, 2 uniform vests, 1 civilian coat, 1 civilian vest, 1 pair of civilian trousers, 6 pair of stockings, 1 flannel shirt, 1 sash, five handkerchiefs, 5 linen shirts, a pair of 2d lieutenant epaulettes, 1 uniform, 3 drawers, 1 pair of white pants, 1 photograph album, 1 pair wollen cuffs, 1 undershirt, six pair of gloves, 1 razor, 2 boxes of stationery, 1 hair brush, 1 clothes brush, 7 neckties, 1 silk knit purse, 1 tobacco pouch, 1 school atlas, 1 match-box, 1 sabre, 1 silver watch chain, 1 portmanteau, 1 box of memorandum books, 1 Jewish Bible, 1 pocket book, and 1 corps badge.

spent the next 18 months in southern Missouri, undertaking a number of patrols and escorting wagon trains. After his regiment was mustered out at the expiration of its term of service, Colvin was selected as a recruiting officer for the 12th Missouri, but because of his father's death he was compelled to resign and return to Rock Port to help support his mother.

In 1864 Colvin traveled to Montana, where he worked alternately as a freighter, miner, and contractor. In the summer of 1865, having settled in Helena, he was elected Recorder for newly organized Lewis and Clark County. Two years later, he had moved to Fort C. F. Smith, where he found work with the hay and wood contractors.³²

Colvin, now in charge of the defense, called for everyone to keep down and to fight from behind the lower log. Armed with a 16-shot Henry, Colvin, in the course of the fight, fired about 300 rounds and "no one knew of a shot missing its mark."³³

Their initial attack repulsed, the Indians pulled back to regroup. Those redmen armed with firearms took position on the bluffs 300 yards south and east of the corral, from where they could snipe at the defenders. A number of those with bows sought cover in the willow thicket bounding War Man Creek, and began to shoot flaming arrows into the corral in an unsuccessful effort to fire the dry willow wickerwork. Most of the mules, without cover, were killed or wounded by arrows.³⁴

32. *The Atchison County Mail* (Rock Port, Missouri), Jan. 21, 1923; *The Atchison County Journal* (Rock Port), Jan. 11, 1923; *A Biographical History of Nodaway and Atchison Counties, Missouri* (Chicago), p. 462; *The History of Holt and Atchison Counties, Missouri* (St. Joseph, Mo., 1882), p. 687; D. A. Colvin's Pension Application, NA, files 1225119 and 1054969. Colvin was born in Chautauqua County, New York, on February 24, 1840. Seven years later, his family moved to Wisconsin, and in 1859 they came to Missouri and located at Hemme's Landing, in Holt County, where Don was employed as a salesman. Colvin, after a long and distinguished career, died in Rock Port, Missouri, on January 10, 1923.

33. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, p. 141; David, *Finn Burnett*, pp. 170, 173. The author agrees with Appleman that, while this may be an exaggeration of Colvin's marksmanship, there is "no reason to doubt that he gave courageous leadership to the little band of white men and that he did fearful execution with his Henry rifle."

34. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, p. 141.

The Indians now set fire to the hay ricks to the east and windward of the corral. Private Lockhart recalled that this tactic almost succeeded, as the

fire came in rolling billows, like the waves of the ocean, the Indians whooping behind. When it arrived within twenty feet of the barricade it stopped, as though arrested by supernatural power. The flames arose to a perpendicular height of at least forty feet, made one or two undulating movements, and were extinguished with a spanking slap . . . , the wind, the succeeding instant, carried the smoke of the smouldering grass from the providentially saved encampment.³⁵

Covered by the smoke and flames, the Indians removed their dead and wounded. Subsequently, other fires were kindled in the grass at other points around the corral, but these did not burn so fiercely, and they were put out by the defenders as they neared the barricade. Whenever there was a respite, the defenders improved their position by scooping out shallow rifle-pits behind the headlogs.³⁶

The Indians, satisfied that they had softened up the defenders, made a second attack. Some of the warriors reached the corral and sought to enter, before they were repulsed. One of the red-men was slain as he tried to carry off a mess-pan of molasses. Two of the whites were casualties at this time--J. G. Hollister, a civilian, was wounded in the chest and Sergt. James Norton had a big hole torn in his shoulder. Norton was placed in one of the tents, sheltered from the hot Montana sun, but whenever the Indians pressed an attack, armed with a revolver, he took his position behind the barricade.³⁷

After the second repulse, the Indians again pulled back and resumed their harassing tactics with snipers and bowmen. During a brief respite, volunteers, with buckets and pans, dashed to nearby War Man Creek to fetch water to quench their thirst. For unexplained reasons, perhaps because they had withdrawn to regroup, the Indians did not fire on the water party.

35. Lockhart, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 187-188.

36. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, pp. 141-142; David, *Finn Burnett*, p. 183.

37. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, p. 142; David, *Finn Burnett*, p. 182; Burrowes to Bradley, Aug. 3, 1867, NA, RG 393. According to Burnett, two of the defenders, one soldier and a civilian, lost their nerve and took little or no part in the fight.

Shortly thereafter, sniping was resumed. An Indian, perhaps a chief, mounted on a sorrel pony, rode up the east side of the stream, and reining up within rifle range, studied the corral. He was unhorsed by a well-aimed shot and fell into the water, where, badly wounded, he continued to struggle until he drowned.³⁸

Two mid-afternoon charges were made by the Indians. Sweeping down from the bluffs south of the strongpoint, the redmen galloped back and forth along the west side of the corral. A chief, or possibly a medicine man, believed by Burnett to be a Cheyenne, led this assault. George Duncan, one of the hayers, dropped him with a shot from his Henry. Other warriors drove their ponies in on the gallop and snatched their fallen leader from the ground and carried him to the bluff. Watchers from the corral saw him sit up, stunned, but apparently not seriously injured.³⁹

The final attack was delivered against the south front of the corral. It was made afoot, and to reach the whites the Indians had to wade War Man Creek, beat their way through the willows, and cross a few feet of open ground. Most of the whites, suspecting where the next assault would be made, were posted on this side of the barricade. They held their fire until the Indians debouched from the willows. Don Colvin fired first, and a crashing volley was delivered by the others. The leader, believed by Burnett to be a Minneconju chief, was killed and a number of his followers sent sprawling. The survivors turned and fled. After making several vain attempts to recover their fallen leader's body, they pulled back. Soon thereafter, most of the Indians moved up the valley to engage first Shurly's patrol, and then Burrowes' column.⁴⁰

5. The Relief Column Arrives

One of the soldiers, Private Bradley, now volunteered to ride to the fort for help. Although there was no visual contact between Fort C. F. Smith and the corral, the defenders mistakenly believed the firing could be heard and wondered why help had not come. The courier, although he was chased by about 30 hostiles, reached the fort sometime after Captain Burrowes had moved out with Company G. Colonel Bradley now ordered Lieutenant Fenton to reinforce Burrowes with a detachment of Company H, and a mountain howitzer. Fen-

38. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, pp. 142-143; David, *Finn Burnett*, pp. 183-184.

39. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, pp. 142-143.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 143; David, *Finn Burnett*, pp. 187-188; Burrowes to Bradley, Aug. 3, 1867, NA, RG 393.

ton was instructed to tell Burrowes' that he was to push forward to the hay corral.⁴¹

Captain Burrowes' skirmishers brushed aside the Indians hovering on their flanks, and the relief column, 80 strong, pushed forward. At sundown, after a mile and one-half advance, Burrowes reached the corral to find that the defenders had severely punished the Indians. A glance satisfied Burrowes that the corral was dangerously exposed, because of its proximity to the underbrush-choked banks of War Man Creek. Having determined to abandon the position, he had Lieutenant Fenton throw out a skirmish line, while the two dead and four wounded were loaded into two wagons.⁴²

It was discovered that of the 22 mules, two had been killed, and 17 injured by arrows. Burrowes therefore had to abandon all the wagons but two, and the mowing machines. Most of the quartermaster and commissary stores, which might have been of value to the Indians, were loaded into the wagons with the casualties, but some had to be left behind and they were burned.⁴³

While the wagons were being loaded and the mules harnessed, Fenton's soldiers skirmished with the Indians. From 450 to 500 hostiles appeared on the bluffs south and east of the corral and another 300 in supporting distance. Burrowes, as soon as the wagons were ready to roll, had the gun squad shell the Indians with canister. The redmen scattered, and Burrowes called for Lieutenant Shurly's detachment, supported by Fenton's skirmishers, to occupy the bluffs. Covered by this movement, the Captain led his company and the wagons up the River road. Shurly and Fenton then recalled their men and followed. Only one halt was made on the return march, and that occurred when the mountain howitzer had to be unlimbered to shell the Indians off the bluff extending out from the bench, a mile and one-half northeast of the fort. Burrowes' column was back at the post at 8:30 p.m., having been absent four and one-half hours.⁴⁴

41. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, pp. 143-144; Lockhart, *Life and Adventures*, p. 189; Burrowes to Bradley, Aug. 3, 1867, NA, RG 393.

42. Besides Lieutenant Sternburg, Sergeant Norton, and J. H. Hollister, the casualties were: Pvt. Thomas Navin killed, and Pvts. Harry C. Vincent and Francis M. Larr wounded. Hollister died on the afternoon of the 2d. Burrowes to Bradley, Aug. 3, 1867, NA, RG 393.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid. The only man injured in Burrowes' command was Lieutenant Shurly, who received a slight scratch on the hand.

6. The Hayfield Fight - An Evaluation *

Many years afterwards, Finn Burnett claimed that the hayfield party learned on their return that their predicament had been known to the post commander and others early in the day. He said that Capt. Edward S. Hartz, the officer in charge of the timber train, saw the fight from upon Bighorn Mountains; that he had ridden to the fort; and that he had asked the post commander for permission to take a column to the relief of the hay-ing crew. The post commander, Colonel Bradley, had vetoed his request and ordered the gates closed and all men confined to the post. It was only after it became apparent that the party at the corral had repulsed the Indians that Bradley ordered two companies to its relief.⁴⁵

A study of Captain Burrowes' report made on August 3 and Lieutenant Templeton's diary contradict Burnett's recollections. According to Templeton, the Indians appeared in the hayfield and began to harass the timber train as it approached the fort. These two actions occurred about noon. If so, it would have been impossible for Captain Hartz to have watched the fight from the slope of the Bighorns. This writer has made a thorough reconnaissance of the area and has observed that because of the reef, the nearest point on the Wood road from where the bottom about the corral can be seen is over three miles from Fort C. F. Smith.

We know that during the afternoon, say between the hours of 2:30 and 3 o'clock, Colonel Bradley sent Lieutenant Shurly to reconnoiter the River road to see if the way was clear to permit sending down a train to bring back hay. When Shurly's detachment encountered Indians, Bradley rushed Captain Burrowes to his rescue. The arrival of a messenger from the corral, with news of the siege, caused Bradley to order out Lieutenant Fenton with a howitzer and a detachment from Company H, with orders for Burrowes to relieve the men at the corral.⁴⁶

Reports made by the army immediately after the action as to the number of Indians engaged, and the casualties, vary greatly from the stories told by "old soldiers." Captain Burrowes estimated the number of Indians at 800, and placed their dead at from 18 to 22 or 23, with "a goodly number wounded." By the time he reached the corral, the Indians had carried off all their dead, except one warrior who was sprawled about 15 paces from the bar-

* see National Register forms, p. 491.

45. David, *Finn Burnett*, pp. 183-184.

46. Templeton Diary, Aug. 1, 1867; Burrowes to Bradley, Aug. 3, 1867; Bradley to Adjt., Mountain District, Aug., 1867, NA, RG 393.

ricade. The Indian had been scalped.⁴⁷ Burnett claimed that there were at least 2,500 Indians in the fight, while Lockhart recorded that a "band of five or six hundred" made the first attack and were joined subsequently by twice as many or more. Burnett claimed that Don Colvin, alone, killed or wounded 150 hostiles. Once again, the prudent historian must discount the stories told by Burnett and Lockhart, long after the event, and accept Burrowes' figures.

The Hayfield Fight, like the Wagon Box Fight near Fort Phil Kearny the next day, was a victory for the army. In both engagements, the Sioux and their allies sought to isolate and destroy small details from the forts. After mopping up these detachments, they would move against the forts themselves. In each instance the whites, armed with new breach-loaders, fought from behind barricades and inflicted such heavy losses on the redmen as to discourage attacks on the forts.⁴⁸

Captain Burrowes, in commenting on the Hayfield Fight, reported:

The new breech-loading musket gave the men an opportunity to fire much more rapidly when the occasion demanded and with less exposure of the person than the Springfield rifle, whilst the superiority of the sight gives more accuracy to the aim. The confidence which it gives the men from the rapidity with which it can be fired and the telling effect of the shot tends to keep them calm, composed and confident under fire.⁴⁹

On the day after the fight, Lieutenant Sterberg and Private Navin were laid to rest in the post cemetery with military honors.⁵⁰ Colonel Bradley on August 5 sent Lieutenant Fenton with 50 men and a mountain howitzer to reoccupy the position at the corral. The soldiers were delighted to discover that the Indians had not destroyed the wagons and the two mowers abandoned on the 1st. Fenton turned his people to building a solid cottonwood log corral, reinforced with sod stacked around the logs. The haying crew then went back to work, guarded by a company of infantry and a mountain howitzer.⁵¹

47. Burrowes to Bradley, Aug. 3, 1867, NA, RG 393; Lockhart, *Life and Adventures*, p. 189; Templeton Diary, Aug. 1, 1867.

48. Appleman, *Action on the Bozeman Trail*, p. 147.

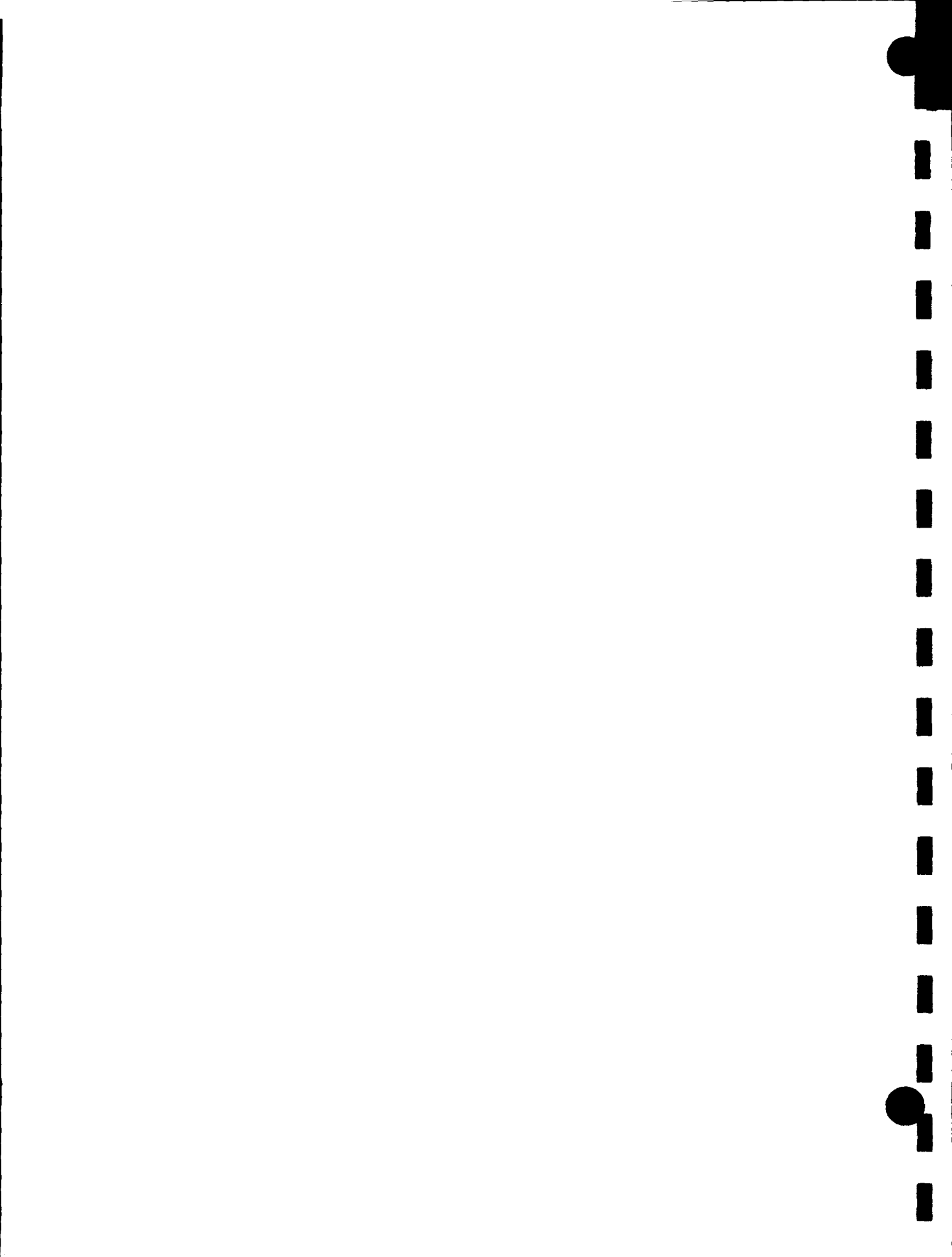
49. Burrowes to Bradley, Aug. 3, 1867, NA, RG 393.

50. Templeton Diary, Aug. 2, 1867. John Hollister, having died, was likewise buried in the cemetery on Graveyard Hill.

51. *Ibid.*, Aug. 6, 1867; Bradley to Adjt., Mountain District, Aug. 5,

1867; David, *Finn Burnett*, p. 195. The new corral was about one-half mile northeast of the old one, and out in the middle of the river bottom, where the Indians would find no cover and concealment. The company stationed at the corral was rotated every eight days. SO 19, Aug. 18, and SO 24, Aug. 26, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

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X. THE ARMY LEARNS ABOUT PARTISAN WARFARE
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A. Colonel Bradley Has Problems

1. The Return of the Hostiles

The Fort C. F. Smith garrison was at breakfast on August 4, 1867, when the sentries called that an ox train was in sight. When the wagons pulled up to the fort, they were found to be a contract supply train belonging to Wells Fargo & Co. The train was guarded by Company D. On the 5th the wagons were unloaded, and the stores inventoried and examined by a board of survey. Colonel Bradley was disappointed to learn that the Fort Phil Kearny ordnance people had failed to forward the breech-loaders for Company E. He accordingly issued instructions for Company E to escort the train back, and before returning, Lt. Winfield S. Matson would see that his men turned in their old arms and drew breech-loaders. The train and its escort started down the Bozeman Trail on the evening of the 6th.¹

Hostile Indians were seen on the afternoon of August 6 for the first time since the Hayfield Fight. To harass the garrison they began setting grass fires. The fire swept across many acres and was still burning the next day. They had burned out by the 8th, when John Richard arrived from Gallatin with six wagons for his hay crew. He had been chased by Indians on the Stillwater and Rosebud, but had escaped during a wild ride down the rocky stream bed.

Richard had interesting news from Montana for the soldiers. Acting Governor Meagher had "drowned while drunk at Fort Benton," he said, and there had been a complete breakdown in discipline among the Montana Volunteers camped on Shields River. At first, the militiamen had refused to permit him to proceed. Desertions were frequent, with men leaving for home daily, taking their horses and weapons with them.²

The Sioux reappeared on August 11, when about 60 swept down and sought to cut off the rear hay wagon, as the train traveled from the fort to the hay meadow. The driver lashed his team to

1. Smith to Adjt., Dept. of the Platte, Aug. 12, 1867; Templeton Diary, Aug. 4-6, 1867; SO 9, Aug. 4, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records. The return trip took six days, Lieutenant Matson reporting to Colonel Smith on the 12th. The muzzle-loading Springfields and ammunition formerly in the hands of Companies D and E were surveyed and returned to the Fort Phil Kearny ordnance storeroom at this time.

2. Templeton Diary, Aug. 8, 1867; *The Montana Post*, Aug. 10, 1867.

a gallop, and he, along with several stragglers, reached the corral ahead of the onrushing redmen. The warriors circled the corral but did not attack. Lieutenant Fenton had his gun squad fire a charge of canister at the Sioux, scattering them. Several now rode toward the corral, and Richard went out to talk with them. They asked if he were Richard, and when he identified himself, they wanted him to accompany them. He refused. After Richard returned, the cannoneers hurled two more rounds at the Indians, and they disappeared.³

Two days later, on the 13th, the hostiles returned and charged the men manning the mowers. When fired upon by the soldiers, the Indians beat a hurried retreat. Later in the day, they followed the wagons hauling hay to the fort. Several shots were fired, but there were no casualties as the Indians kept their distance.⁴

Richard's hay crew by August 27 had fulfilled its contract. The equipment was returned to the Fort C. F. Smith quartermaster, the guard detail recalled, and the corral abandoned. The energy formerly expended on the haying operation would be concentrated on Colonel Bradley's construction program.⁵

2. Desertions Plague the Battalion

In August 1867 the battalion lost more men by desertion and accidents than in combat. On the 24th the Bighorn claimed another victim. Sergt. John Murphy drowned as he was crossing the river at the ford below the fort. Three men (Pvts. Burns, Campbell, and Thomas) deserted on the 21st, taking their breech-loaders and ammunition, and reached the camp of the Montana Volunteers. Four others deserted, but after wandering about the area for several days, and being unable to slip across the Bighorn, returned to face a sentence in the guardhouse. The high incidence of desertion was blamed on hard work, low pay, and the proximity of the Montana diggins. To guard against desertions, Colonel Bradley had each face of the stockade patrolled. The Sergeant-of-the-Guard was required to visit each post every 30 minutes. Even so, desertions continued. Three men slipped away on the night of September 4. This caused Colonel Bradley to explode that the only way to prevent desertions was to lock up the men at night.⁶

3. Templeton Diary, Aug. 11, 1867.

4. Templeton Diary, Aug. 14, 1867.

5. Ibid., Aug. 27, 1867; SO 26, Aug. 27, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

6. Templeton Diary, Aug. 14, 21 & 24; *The Montana Post*, Sept. 7, 1867; Bradley to Adjt., Mountain District, Sept. 4, 1867, NA, RG 393.

Iron Bull and several other Crow chiefs visited Fort C. F. Smith in mid-September. Colonel Bradley, having received favorable reports regarding Iron Bull's reliability, hired him at \$100 per month to carry the mail twice a month to Fort Phil Kearny. He and his family would pitch their lodge near the fort.

Iron Bull's first assignment, however, was to bring in deserters. Four soldiers had deserted at the beginning of the fourth week of September. Pvts. Edward Hurley and Thomas Burke had started for Virginia City, and Pvts. John Gooley and Bernard Bravo for the Crow village. Iron Bull and another Crow overtook Hurley and Burke, invited them to the village, and took them prisoner. The four soldiers were brought in by the Crow and confined to the guardhouse.⁷

B. Red Cloud Retains the Initiative

1. The Attack on Lieutenant Shurly's Train

Congress on July 20, 1867, enacted legislation creating an Indian Peace Commission, with authority to open negotiations with the hostile Indians and bring peace to the frontier. On October 21 White Forehead, a Crow sent by the Commission to contact the Sioux, and to invite them to Fort Laramie for a council, returned to Fort C. F. Smith to draw his rations. He reported the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho camped near the Bozeman Trail. According to White Forehead only Red Cloud with 20 lodges wished to continue the war, while a number of Sioux had accompanied Charlie Richard to Fort Laramie. A Sioux chief had told White Forehead that his people would not send any more parties to war on the whites until they heard the results of the Fort Laramie council.⁸

It was soon apparent that the Sioux had lied to White Forehead. Lieutenant Shurly with 40 soldiers started for Fort Phil Kearny on October 28, as an escort to a returning supply train. When within five miles of their goal, on November 2, they encountered a corraled train escorted by Lt. L. L. McCarthy. The train, loaded

7. Templeton Diary, Sept. 20-24, 1867. Subsequently, Private Gooley escaped on October 15 while being escorted from the sink to the guardhouse. The guard, Pvt. Charles Force, was judged negligent by court martial and sentenced to one month at hard labor. GO 23, Oct. 25, 1867, NA, RG 393; Post Records.

8. Templeton Diary, Oct. 23, 1867; SO 68, Oct. 25, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records. White Forehead was issued two pounds of tobacco, four pounds of hardtack, two pounds of sugar, one pound of coffee, and two pounds of bacon, to compensate him for his mission.

with corn for the Fort C. F. Smith quartermaster, had been attacked by Indians. In obedience with orders from Colonel Smith, shown to him by McCarthy, Shurly assumed responsibility for the 16 northbound wagons and turned over the train he had brought down from the Bighorn to McCarthy.

The next morning, the 3d, Shurly moved out. They soon encountered a "wild snow storm" and were compelled to corral. On the 4th, the weather having cleared, the march was resumed. Ox teams were slowed by slippery roads, while small groups of Indians were seen on the bluffs overlooking Goose Creek. The train soon arrived at a dangerous point on the narrow road, where it skirted a ravine. To keep the wagons from sliding off the road and into the ravine, Lieutenant Shurly had ropes attached to them and held by men posted on the uphill side. Pickets were deployed to guard against a sudden onset by the onlookers. Only three wagons remained to pass the grade, when the pickets called, "Indians!"⁹

Lieutenant Shurly, along with the gunners assigned to the mountain howitzer turned over to him by Lieutenant McCarthy, was with the rear wagons. He was separated by about one-half mile from the lead vehicles. At the first alarm, Shurly, a veteran with a distinguished Civil War combat record with the Army of the Potomac, sent a runner ahead with orders for the wagonmaster to corral.¹⁰

The Indians charged both the front and rear of the train. Loading the howitzer with canister, the gunners got off one round, before the whooping redmen closed in. Shurly, fearful that the howitzer would be captured, had the piece limbered and rushed to

9. Shurly to Templeton, Nov. 10, 1867, NA, Microcopy 665. The train, at this time, was positioned: the three rear wagons on the brow of the hill, two at the foot of the grade, and the remainder "bunched" at the foot of a second hill, a short distance up the road.

10. Shurly had been mustered into the volunteer service as 1st lieutenant of Company G, 26th New York Infantry. He was promoted to captain on August 7, 1861. At Fredericksburg, Virginia, on December 13, 1862, Shurly had been terribly wounded as a Rebel minié ball ripped through his pelvic region. Discharged for disability, Shurly was mustered into the Invalid Corps and served as Assistant Adjutant General for the huge prisoner of war pen at Camp Douglas, Illinois, from August 1863 until December 1, 1865, when he resigned. Entering the regular establishment in 1867, Shurly was assigned to the 27th Infantry as a 1st lieutenant. Lieutenant Shurly's ACP File, NA, RG 94.

the corral. The warriors, on the departure of the cannon, dismounted and assailed the rear guard. Most of the men with Shurly were soon disabled, and the Lieutenant struck in the left foot by an arrow. He ordered a retreat to the corral, the slightly injured assisting the severely wounded.

The corraled train was flanked on one side by the underbrush-choked bank of Goose Creek and on the other by bluffs. Large numbers of Indians, 300-400, advanced and began plundering the three abandoned wagons. Several rounds from the howitzer sent them scattering, whereupon Shurly deployed and advanced a skirmish line. The Indians were routed from the underbrush, and, covered by the fire of the howitzer, the skirmishers brought in two wagons.

The lead wagon at the time the Indians struck was loaded with the soldiers' baggage, a small sack of mail, and 1,000 rounds of ammunition. The teamster had left his six-mule team unattended to assist the next wagon back. The shots caused the team to stampede, and the wagon was captured and plundered by Indians. Lieutenant Shurly was distressed to learn of the loss of the reserve ammunition, and not knowing how long it would be before a relief column appeared, he called for his men to conserve their cartridges. A number of wagons were unloaded and the sacks of corn used for breastworks.

Lieutenant Shurly now became faint from loss of blood and sat down. Satisfied that he was rapidly becoming incapacitated, he directed Mr. Harwood, a citizen, to take charge of the defense. Harwood shouted for volunteers. Supported by the fire of the howitzer, they advanced once more and recovered a third wagon. Two wagons were still unaccounted for--the one with the soldiers' gear and another loaded with supplies for the post sutler.

About dark, the Indians withdrew. As soon as Lieutenant Shurly was satisfied that they were gone, he sent a rider to Fort Phil Kearny, 18 miles away, with a message asking Colonel Smith for help. Colonel Smith was disturbed to learn what had happened. Earlier in the day, Capt. Lewis Merrill of the Inspector-General's Department and his escort had reached Fort Phil Kearny from Fort C. F. Smith. They had traveled the old road which passed within several miles of the cut-off, on which the train was under attack. They had heard firing, but had assumed it was Indians shooting buffalo, thereby earning Colonel Smith's ill-will for their lack of initiative.

A battalion of the 2d Cavalry was now ordered to the train's assistance. The horsesoldiers arrived on the morning of November 5. Lieutenant Shurly, on mustering his command, found that the defense of the train had cost his 40-man detachment two killed

and four wounded, including one civilian.¹¹ One wagon belonging to Post Sutler Leighton and loaded with \$15,000 in supplies had been lost, in addition to the government wagon with the soldiers' baggage and mail.

While the dead and wounded were evacuated to Fort Phil Kearny, the huge sacks of corn were reloaded. The train, its escort reinforced by Gordon's cavalry battalion, then continued on to Fort C. F. Smith, where it arrived on the 12th.¹²

The November 4 attack on the train satisfied Colonel Bradley and his command that the Sioux and their allies were not interested in peace. Two weeks later, on the 18th, a Sioux war party swept down on Thin Belly's 40-lodge Crow village, in the timber south of the fort. Unable to stampede the Crow's ponies, five of the Sioux forded the Bighorn and made for Post Hunter John Teuksbury's two wagons that were gathering hay. Three or four soldiers crossed the river, and the Sioux fled.¹³

2. The Sioux Close Out the Year With a Success

Three weeks were to pass before the Sioux reappeared in the Fort C. F. Smith vicinity. On December 9, 1867, a Crow hunter was accosted four miles downstream from the fort. He was riding a horse belonging to Charlie Smith, a white trapper living nearby, and when the Sioux said they wanted the animal, he told them they would have to kill him to get it. Blows were exchanged, but the Crow succeeded in escaping and returning the horse to Smith.¹⁴

The Sioux struck again at daylight on December 29, when a 60-man war party ran off a herd of 55 mules at the wood contractor Richard's camp, on War Man Creek, three miles from the fort. Richard was at fault, because he failed to station any herders with his animals. Five of the mules were subsequently recovered by the Crow, who returned them to the contractor. Negotiations were undertaken, but the Sioux refused to return the rest in ex-

11. Ibid.; Templeton Diary, Nov. 7 & 8, 1867; Proceedings of Board of Survey, Nov. 12, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records. The dead were: Cpl. Peter Donelly and Pvt. Harold Partingheimer. In addition to Lieutenant Shurly, the wounded were: Pvts. Gordon Fitzgerald and James McKeever, and William Freeland, a civilian.

12. Templeton Diary, Nov. 9 & 12; Proceedings of the Board of Survey, Nov. 12, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records. 16,963 pounds of corn were lost by being thrown onto the ground as breastworks. The train started back to Fort Phil Kearny on the 14th.

13. Templeton Diary, Nov. 18, 1867.

14. Ibid., Dec. 9, 1867.

change for trade goods. The loss of the mules, however, did not put Richard out of business, because he employed ox teams, purchased from Nelson Story, to fulfill his contract with the post quartermaster.¹⁵

3. Colonel Bradley Plans to Strike Back

Two couriers (one a Crow and the other a Nez Percé), sent by Colonel Bradley to contact the Sioux and Cheyenne and ascertain their sentiment toward peace, returned in the first week of January. They had visited Red Cloud's village at different times and had talked with him. Red Cloud told them that white visitors from north of the Missouri had recently been in his camp. They had advised him not to make peace, and had offered to sell him powder. Before returning to their base, they had made the Sioux presents of powder and tobacco. The couriers had seen the tobacco, and it was in "long twists or coils, such as the Hudson Bay Co. sells." The Nez Percé claimed that Red Cloud had identified his visitors as Frenchmen.

Bradley was inclined to believe this report of interference by the Hudson's Bay Company in the internal affairs of the United States, and so informed his superiors.¹⁶

Bradley accordingly proposed to use the Crow and Shoshoni against the Sioux. He approached the chiefs of the Mountain Crow and suggested that they make peace with the Shoshoni:

They were agreeable. In February messengers would be sent to the Shoshoni, with invitations for Chief Washakie and the other leaders to come to the fort in March. A council with the chiefs of the Crow and Shoshoni would be held, and the two tribes urged to unite against the Sioux.

When he forwarded details of his plan to General Auger in Omaha, Bradley observed:

The surest way to keep the hostile Sioux from raiding on us, is to set some of the friendly tribes to raiding on them; they would steal them poor before spring, if they had our countenance and a little help in the way of ammunition.¹⁷

15. Bradley to Adjt., Dept. of the Platte, Jan. 7, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte; Story, "Nelson Story, Sr.," *Billings Gazette*, Billings Public Library, Clipping File.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

With the advocates of peace determining Indian policy in Washington, Colonel Bradley's proposal was unacceptable. He was directed to forget his plan to employ the Crow and Shoshoni against the Sioux. Plans for the army to take the offensive were to be held in abeyance, pending the outcome of the Fort Laramie Council in April.

C. The Army Supplies Fort C. F. Smith

1. Arrival of Commissary and Quartermaster Stores

An important supply train (Wells Fargo Trains Nos. 28 and 41) reached Fort C. F. Smith on September 1 and 2. It was escorted by Lieutenant Matson and Company E. Colonel Bradley was disturbed to learn that Colonel Smith had employed Company E to escort wagons all the way to Fort Reno. When the next escort from his battalion went down to Fort Phil Kearny, Bradley requested that his superior not send them on to Fort Reno, as his troops were worked very hard and needed "rest as much as any in the Regiment."¹⁸

A Board of Survey proceeded to examine and report on the condition of the commissary and quartermaster stores brought up by the two Wells Fargo & Co. trains. While some deficiencies were noted in the subsistence stores, there was a shortage in the quartermaster stores of 424 sacks of corn, totaling 55,460 pounds. Most of the corn--348 sacks--the contractor had had to leave at Fort Reno on August 16, when Indians stampeded and ran off a number of the oxen. This compelled him to leave a number of wagons behind. Seventy-six sacks of corn had been fed to the teams en route by authority of headquarters, Department of the Platte.¹⁹

A review of the report made by the Board of Survey reveals that the garrison would eat well. Rations receipted for included such vegetables as tomatoes, hominy, beans, green corn, green peas, and kraut. Among the meats and seafood were: oysters, salted mackerel, bacon, ham, lard, and dried beef. There were dried and canned peaches and dried apples. Condiments included: condensed milk, pepper, salt, and vinegar. For the soldiers' sweet tooth there was both white and brown sugar, maple syrup, molasses, jellies, cranberries, and jams. There was coffee, roasted and Java, and green and black tea to drink. To add variety, there was rice, soda crackers, hard tack, pickles, and corn-

18. Bradley to Adjt., Mountain District, Sept. 4, 1867, NA, RG 393.

19. Report of Board of Survey, Sept. 2, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

meal. There would be no shortage of flour this winter, as 152, 888 pounds were weighed into the Commissary Storehouse.²⁰

While the fatigue details unloaded the wagons and stored the supplies into the warehouses, the Fort C. F. Smith soldiers listened to stories of the Wagon Box fight. They countered with accounts of the Hayfield Fight. Undoubtedly facts were ignored as each tried to outdo the other.²¹ By the 7th the wagons were unloaded, and Captain Burrowes with Company G was tagged for escort duty. Burrowes and the train started for Fort Phil Kearny at 3 p.m., September 8.²¹

On September 12 and 13 over 50 wagons reached the post on the Bighorn with commissary and quartermaster stores. The train was guarded by a battalion of the 2d U. S. Cavalry. Once again, a Survey Board was constituted by Colonel Bradley, and a working party detailed to unload wagons. The Board, on reviewing the invoices, found some significant shortages in regard to corn and flour. An investigation revealed that two days out from Fort Phil Kearny, a wagon loaded with 44 sacks of flour, each containing 308 pounds, had upset. It was the next morning before the wagonmaster could send a party to right the wagon and reload the flour. When he did, the teamsters found that the escorting cavalry had made off with 15 sacks of flour. It was determined that the contractor was not liable for this shortage, but for certain others he was.²²

The post quartermaster who was in charge of providing the troops with clothing, camp equipage, and building materials signed receipts for a number of boxes. Clothing received included: uniform coats, sack coats, drawers, forage caps, flax shirts, trousers, socks, and boots. Camp equipage and accoutrements consisted of knapsacks, haversacks, drums, fifes, and tents. To be used in Colonel Bradley's construction program were axe and pick handles, chains, stoves, steel, and buckets. For the teamsters there were feed boxes, doubletrees, leather, and wagon saddles, while for the clerks there was stationery and a safe. As Colonel Bradley wished the garrison to have a garden, there were four plows.²³

20. Ibid; Report of Survey Board, Sept. 13, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

21. Templeton Diary, Sept. 7 & 8; SO 36, Sept. 7, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

22. Report of Survey Board, Sept. 13, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records. The contractor was charged for: seven sacks of flour, five boxes of hardware, 22 sacks of corn, 13 sacks of bacon, and five barrels of cornmeal.

23. Ibid.

The wagons had been unloaded by the 17th, and the next morning the train and its cavalry escort started down the Bozeman Trail. Captain Burrowes and his company returned at the same time. Burrowes had pushed his veterans hard, and they had made the march up from Fort Phil Kearny in three and one-half days, a record they believed would stand.²⁴

2. Difficulties With the Montana Volunteers

John Richard and a companion reached Fort C. F. Smith on September 29 with a story that made Colonel Bradley's blood boil. Richard explained that his ten-wagon train, en route with Gallatin Valley vegetables, had been threatened on the Rosebud by 100 Montana Volunteers. These people, he continued, had gotten out of hand and were "murdering and robbing in the most reckless manner."²⁵ Orders were issued for Lieutenant Fenton to fall out 24 footsoldiers and six mounted infantry and march to the relief of Richard's train. If the Montanans were molesting the train, he was to attack and disperse them, "but not to pursue them farther than to ensure the safety of the train."²⁶

With his soldiers riding in three wagons and taking the mountain howitzer along, Fenton crossed the Bighorn. It seems that a company of volunteers had been advanced to the Stillwater, when it was learned that Indians had killed Capt. A. F. Weston and Frank Hodges. Richard, as he passed by en route up from Fort C. F. Smith, had told the volunteers at Camp Meagher that the Arapaho had killed the two whites. The volunteers, however, suspected the Crow, and as Richard was known to be friendly with that tribe his story was discounted. Consequently, as Richard returned with his train, the volunteers went out of their way to harass him. After Richard had galloped ahead to report to the army, they released his wagons.²⁷

Lieutenant Fenton's detachment encountered Richard's train on the Clarks Fork and escorted it to the Bighorn, where it arrived on October 4. The next day the post commissary purchased the Gal-

24. Templeton Diary, Sept. 18, 1867. Burrowes' company had been absent from the post for ten days.

25. Ibid., Sept. 29, 1867. There are two Rosebud Creeks in this part of Montana. One of the Rosebuds flows into the Yellowstone near present-day Forsyth; while the other, rising in the Beartooth Mountains, flows into the Stillwater southwest of today's Columbus.

26. SO 50, Sept. 28, 1867; NA, RG 393, Post Records.

27. The *Montana Post*, Sept. 14, 1867. Camp Thoroughman had been re-designated Camp Meagher, following the death of the acting governor.

latin Valley vegetables (potatoes, onions, beets, and turnips) from Richard.²⁸

The garrison's difficulties with the Montana Volunteers were about over. Brig. Gen. Alfred Terry, the commander of the Department of Dakota, on October 1, 1867, ordered Governor Green C. Smith to muster out the 1st Montana. Many of the volunteers, when notified they were to be disbanded, possessed themselves of their arms and accoutrements, the commissary supplies, and 250 public horses and mules, and deserted.²⁹

3. Supplies and Materials for the Construction Program Arrive

The largest supply train to reach Fort C. F. Smith in its brief but eventful history came in on October 16. There were 100 wagons guarded by detachments of the 4th, 18th, and 27th Infantry commanded by Captain Smith, who informed Colonel Bradley that another section of the train, guarded by 20 men, would be in the next day. About dark these wagons were attacked by Indians, and the two rear wagons, loaded with corn and shovels, captured and plundered. Two men galloped to the fort with news of the attack, and Colonel Bradley ordered Companies E and I to march to the relief of the train. When they arrived, the soldiers found the wagons corraled. After recovering the two wagons and salvaging some of the contents, the men of the 27th Infantry escorted the second section of the train to the post.³⁰

It took several days to unload, inventory, and store the commissary and quartermaster stores brought up from the depot at Julesburg by Wells Fargo & Co. in the 136 big freight wagons. Train No. 52, 24 wagons, had been loaded out of the depot on July 29, while the other two trains, Nos. 76 and 77, had left Julesburg on September 5.³¹

The Board of Survey found that most of the stores received consisted of materials and tools needed to implement Colonal

28. Templeton Diary, Oct. 4, 1867; SO 54, Oct. 5, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records. 9,942 pounds of potatoes were purchased at 14¢ per pound, 777 1/2 pounds of onions at 25¢ per pound, 433 1/2 pounds of beets at 14¢ per pound, and 1,147 pounds of turnips at 14¢ per pound.

29. *The Montana Post*, Nov. 9, 1867.

30. Templeton Diary, Oct. 16, 1867.

31. Julesburg, at this time, was the railhead for the Union Pacific Railroad, running eastward to Department Headquarters at Omaha.

Bradley's construction program. There were stoves (cooking and heating); bundles of spades and shovels; tools to outfit a blacksmith shop; lampblack; bundles of sash; kegs of nails, brads, and screws; rope; powder and fuses; putty; bars of iron and steel; wheelbarrows; linseed oil; and post augers. The only major shortage found was corn. One-hundred and fifty-six sacks of corn (31,306 pounds) were missing from Train No. 77. Over half this figure was accounted for, when the wagonmaster showed the Board an affidavit signed by the Fort Phil Kearny quartermaster, certifying that he had retained 18,700 pounds of corn for use at his post. The rest of the deficiency was ascribed by the Board to shrinkage. Thirty-nine sacks of corn had been lost by Train No. 76. Wagonmaster Hyatt claimed that most of these sacks had been in the two wagons plundered by Indians on the evening of the 16th. The Board disagreed, and held the contractor liable for the loss of 25 sacks.³²

4. Colonel Bradley and His Friends Visit Black Canyon

While the wagons were being unloaded, Colonel Bradley took Captain Smith and other visitors on a ride into the Bighorns. Post Hunter Teukesbury served as guide. The first snow of the season had fallen on the night of the 18th, and while it had melted at the fort by the morning of the 21st, there was about four inches on the ground in the mountains. After a 12-mile ride, Teukesbury found a narrow trail giving access to Black Canyon. Lieutenant Templeton reported that the canyon was entered by

one of the narrowest and steepest paths I ever saw. The scenery was grand. There was about 4 inches of snow on the ground and the dark pine tree tops were covered with it One of the men was leading his horse down when, the horse stepped on a stone, which threw him off the path and he rolled about 60 yards down into the rivulet at the bottom of the gulch. He was not hurt much.

Upon reaching the bottom of Black Canyon, some of the men began preparing lunch. While they were doing this, Colonel Bradley shot a large rattlesnake. After they had eaten, Bradley and Captain Smith fished for trout, but the season was too late, and they did not even get a strike. On the ascent, Lieutenant Templeton's horse stepped on a slippery rock and lost his footing "and was going down" when the Lieutenant caught a sapling and pulled both of them "over into the path again." Soon after reaching the rim of the canyon, the party encountered two bears and killed the

32. SO 63, Oct. 18, 1867, and Proceeding of Board of Survey, Oct. 18, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

cub. It was about 6 p.m. before the party returned to the fort, following an enjoyable ride of nearly 40 miles.³³

Captain Smith's troops and the empty wagons pulled out for Fort Phil Kearny the next morning. On October 26, five days later, Sergt. Thomas Pendergast and his 15-man detachment returned to the fort as escort to 26 wagons. While on Tongue River they had seen about 300 Sioux warriors. The Sioux, much to the train's relief, sent a Crow to tell Sergeant Pendergast "not to be afraid but to move along in safety, as they were not going to trouble him."³⁴

5. Captain Merrill Visits the Post

The wagons brought up by Sergeant Pendergast were unloaded and the stores inventoried by October 27. Early the next morning the train started for Fort Phil Kearny, escorted by a 40-man detail commanded by Lieutenant Shurly.³⁵ It was barely out of sight, before the sentries reported horsemen on Big Hill. Colonel Bradley and his officers believed the newcomers to be the eagerly awaited sutler's wagons, so a number rode to meet them. They were understandably dismayed to find an inspection party sent by General Auger, the Department Commander, and its two-company cavalry escort. Captain Merrill, the senior officer, had some good news, however. He was accompanied by the paymaster, and sutler Don Leighton's supplies should be along in about ten days.³⁶

The next four days were "spit and polish." The troops were mustered and inspected, the books reviewed, and the buildings

33. Templeton Diary, Oct. 21, 1867. Black Canyon was entered by the Three Springs Trail. As a boy the author used this route to enter Black Canyon to fish for trout. At certain seasons of the year, Black Canyon is one of the great trout streams of America. Normally, rattlesnakes are not seen this late in the season.

34. Templeton Diary, Oct. 26, 1867. Sergeant Pendergast and his detachment had left Fort C. F. Smith on October 13 for Fort Phil Kearny. They had been detailed as an escort to Dr. Henry Matthews of the Peace Commission.

35. Ibid., Oct. 27, 1867; SO 70, Oct. 27, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records. Included in the detachment were one sergeant, four corporals, and 35 privates.

36. Templeton Diary, Oct. 27, 1867. One of Leighton's wagons was lost to the Indians in the November 4 attack on the train escorted by Shurly's detachment.

and stores examined. On the last day of the month, after the personnel had been paid, the official party and its escort returned to Fort Phil Kearny.³⁷

6. Nelson Story Supplies the Mountain District with Potatoes

A small herd of beef cattle for the post commissary was received on October 31. When the Board of Survey checked the cattle, they were disappointed to see that they were in "rather poor condition, averaging in weight 970 pounds gross, 485 net, and that the . . . number was 74." The contractor having no invoices, it was impossible for the Board to ascertain if there were a deficiency in number, or a significant loss of weight on the trail up from Julesburg.³⁸

Two trains, Nelson Story's of 28 wagons and McAdow's of 12, reached the post at the end of the third week of November with vegetables, mostly potatoes, from the Gallatin Valley. Story had contracted to deliver 100,000 pounds of potatoes to the post "in good, merchantable condition . . . at \$10 per cwt." As the season was late, he had rushed his brother, Elias, out into the Gallatin Valley, where he bought potatoes at \$1 per cwt, while Nelson Story rode to Virginia City to procure the necessary wagons. He soon returned with the wagons to Bozeman, where they were loaded.

Story recalled that on the trip down to Fort C. F. Smith, as time was of the essence:

they ate only two meals per day . . . and never unyoked the oxen. They would get up before daylight, hook the oxen to the chain and start, driving until the sun became hot, between 10 and 11 a.m., when they would unhook, water the cattle, put them onto good grass, and then get breakfast.

Between two and three o'clock p.m. they would again hook to the chain and drive until dark, when they would again water, turn out for the night, get supper and turn in.³⁹

The post commissary accepted delivery on all but two wagon loads of potatoes, which were in excess of the figure named in

37. Ibid., Oct. 28-31, 1867.

38. SO 72, Oct. 31, 1867; Report of Board of Survey, Oct. 31, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

39. Templeton Diary, Nov. 19-20, 1867; Story, "Nelson Story, Sr.,"

the contract, and Story proceeded to Fort Phil Kearny with these. Although the potatoes were frozen as hard as rock by the time of his arrival, Story experienced no difficulty disposing of them. On his return to the post on the Bighorn, he sold his oxen to John Richard and M. W. McKenzie, and then returned to Bozeman.⁴⁰

7. The Burt and Miller Families Take Up Quarters

The Crow mail riders on November 23, 1867, reached the post with a message addressed to Colonel Bradley from Capt. Andrew S. Burt. The latter reported that he was en route to the post with 88 recruits to fill empty billets in the battalion, and they had become "somewhat demoralized." It would be appreciated if Bradley sent a column of veterans to help him keep order. Burt's column, which was escorting 26 supply wagons, would camp for the night on Soap Creek. Captain Hartz with Company I was sent to the relief of the newcomers. He met Burt's column on Big Hill.

When the newcomers arrived at Fort C. F. Smith on the 24th, their coming created excitement, because two of the officers, Captain Burt and Lt. William H. Miller, had brought their families. Although the Millers had no children, the Burts had two, and were accompanied by Mrs. Burt's sister, Kate Reynolds, and a Mormon servant girl. For the first time since its establishment in August 1866, there would be women and children living on the post. Captain Templeton recalled that "their arrival causes quite a stir among the bachelors, as they have to move out of their quarters."⁴¹

Captain Burt, on reporting to Colonel Bradley, told of an eventful march up from Fort D. A. Russell. His column of recruits and the train had been attacked by Indians, near the crossing of Crazy Woman, on the night of November 13-14. In this night engagement his troops expended considerable ammunition and reported no casualties. The Indians lost two ponies. The column had reached Fort Phil Kearny on November 16, where a number of the recruits were detached and assigned as replacements to units posted at the headquarters fort. With the 88 remaining recruits, Captain Burt

Billings Gazette, Clipping File, Billings Public Library.

40. Story, "Nelson Story, Sr.," *Billings Gazette*, Clipping File, Billings Public Library. While en route back to Bozeman, Story, as his party was camped near Shields River, lost a number of firearms and other gear to Indians. About 30 redmen swept down, and plundered several wagons before the teamsters could recover their wits and intervene. The *Montana Democrat* (Virginia City), May 2, 1868.

41. Templeton Diary, Nov. 23-25, 1867, Templeton had been promoted

had started for Fort C. F. Smith on the 21st. On Tongue River they had encountered Crazy Head's Crow village.⁴²

On November 26 the recruits were assigned to various companies in the battalion, and on the following day, Captain Burt was directed to relieve Lieutenant Fenton as commander of Company H. Colonel Bradley, as late as July, had described Burt's new command as "the worst I ever saw in point of morale and discipline."⁴³

Among the supplies unloaded were those for the post hospital. When the Survey Board inspected and inventoried the items, it was found that 25 gallons of whiskey was missing from a 40-gallon barrel. Asst. Surg. J. F. Frantz, who had traveled with the train, theorized that the whiskey had been stolen at Fort Sedgewick before it had been loaded, because the barrel had stood on end in a wagon surrounded by boxes. The Board, failing to take cognizance of the keen sense of tactics demonstrated by enlisted men to avoid the best planned security measures to tap a whiskey barrel, agreed.⁴⁴

Captain Hartz and his Company I, would escort the wagons down to Fort Phil Kearny. Although it snowed three inches on the night of the 27th, Hartz had his troops and train on the road by 6 a.m.⁴⁵

8. The Winter of 1867-1868 Commences

The weather, following the snow, turned very cold. Taking advantage of this condition, a hunting party went out and on December 4 brought in six deer. Iron Bull and the other mail couriers, in the first week of December, made the round trip to Fort Phil Kearny in four days, a record. On their return on the 5th, they brought news of another fight on Crazy Woman Creek. A train had been compelled to corral there by several hundred hostiles. Before being relieved by Captain Gordon's cavalry battalion from Fort Phil Kearny, the defenders had lost two killed and five woun-

to captain to rank from October 19, 1867.

42. Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, pp. 105, 117-118, 120-121.

43. SO 85, Nov. 27, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records; Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, p. 139.

44. Proceedings of a Board of Survey, Nov. 29, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records. Frantz was to replace Asst. Surg. Thatcher as post surgeon.

45. Templeton Diary, Nov. 28, 1867.

ded.⁴⁶ This reinforced the soldiers' belief that the Fort Laramie Council would fail to bring peace to the Bozeman Trail.

Iron Bull, following this ride, was taken ill. Several of his people learned of this and visited the fort, planning to take him back to the village, as they feared he would die among the whites. The rugged warrior was unafraid, and on December 11 his friends returned to the village without him.⁴⁷

John Richard and a small party came in from Fort Phil Kearny on the 13th. Dr. Henry Matthews, of the Peace Commission who was at Fort Reno, wanted Richard to bring down to Fort Phil Kearny wagons to transport the Crow annuity goods. Richard would use his wagons, but the army would have to provide an escort. Colonel Bradley accordingly issued orders for Lieutenant Fenton to take Burt's Company H and escort the wagons. Captain Burrowes, who was being reassigned to headquarters Department of the Platte, would travel with the train as far as Fort Phil Kearny.⁴⁸

Richard was unable to get his wagons ready to roll on the 14th as he had hoped, and 48 hours passed before the train moved out. There had been more snow, and the train returned on December 17, and Lieutenant Fenton informed Colonel Bradley that the snow drifts on the northeast slopes were too deep to buck. Several warm days melted the snow sufficiently to permit the train and its escort to proceed. When the column finally started, Captain Burrowes, for some unexplained reason, remained at Fort C. F. Smith.⁴⁹

9. The Battalion Celebrates the Christmas Season

Although two of the five companies constituting Colonel Bradley's battalion were absent guarding trains, this was not permitted to curb preparations for the Christmas season. Unlike the previous year, there were now women and children at the isolated fort on the Bighorn. Mrs. Burt recalled that getting a tree was easy, but to trim it was a different matter. She had brought several ears of popcorn in her trunk, and this was popped. Candy was made to fill the "cornucopias made of yellow paper" secured from the post quartermaster. Captain Burrowes,

46. Ibid., Dec. 4-5, 1867; Smith to Auger, Dec. 4, 1867, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte.

47. Templeton Diary, Dec. 10-11, 1867.

48. Ibid., Dec. 13 & 14; SO 90, Dec. 13, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

49. Templeton Diary, Dec. 16 & 17, 1867.

and Dr. Frantz helped the Burts in decorating "the rooms with evergreens, holly and red berries." Captain Burt had the post carpenter make three sleds, one for his children, one for the post baker's three little girls, and one for Iron Bull's daughter.⁵⁰

Post Hunter Teukesbury, assisted by Sergt. Rhinehart Schwanegar and ten privates, went out and killed several deer. This permitted the garrison to have a long remembered Christmas dinner of roast venison, soup, vegetables, and current jelly. Mrs. Burt recalled a "delicious entree . . . a venison paté, made and cooked by a soldier, a Frenchman by birth, who excelled in making this special dish." The Burts had plum pudding, which they shared with three bachelor officers.⁵¹

Captain Hartz and Company I, having spent Christmas on the Bozeman Trail, returned from Fort Phil Kearny on December 27. Travel, because of the snow and cold had been slowed, and several more weeks were to pass before Lieutenant Fenton and Company H arrived back at Fort C. F. Smith.⁵²

50. Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, pp. 143-144.

51. *Ibid.*, 144; Templeton Diary, Dec. 24-25, 1867.

52. Templeton Diary, Dec. 27, 1867.

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XI. FORT C. F. SMITH SERVES AS A PAWN
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A. The Winter of 1868 Passes Quietly

1. The January Cold Wave

The first part of January 1868 was bitterly cold on the Big-horn, with the thermometer frequently dropping to 15 degrees below zero. Orders were issued permitting the troops to "wear furs on their collars and cuffs of their great coats." When the weather was very cold, the guard was to be attired in "fur caps, gloves, overshoes, and such other articles as may be necessary for their comfort."¹ Despite these orders, there were a number of cases of frostbite, and many men were on sick call with colds. Colonel Bradley accordingly, on January 10, called the attention of his company commanders to the need of taking more stringent steps to protect their men from the inclement weather. Hereafter, no hunting parties would be sent out unless the men were properly clad. Overcoats would be worn at drills and musters.²

While there were sufficient commissary stores on hand to see the battalion through the winter, Colonel Bradley and Surgeon Frantz were concerned by Army rules and regulations governing the quantity of fresh vegetables to which soldiers were entitled. On January 7 Bradley requested permission of Department Commander Auger "to make an extra issue of fresh vegetables to the troops at this Post." Captain Kinney had adopted this procedure the previous winter, but his action had been subsequently disapproved. So far, Bradley had made "an extra issue of 30 lbs. of vegetables to the hundred rations," but could not continue indefinitely this practice on his own initiative.

The authorized ration, with this extra issue, was, in his opinion, "barely sufficient to feed the men. One half the men here are new troops," who require more food than veterans. Because of the dry, cold climate, "all men required more than would satisfy them farther south." If vegetables were issued in lieu of other rations, it would cut the cost of rationing the garrison materially, because Gallatin Valley potatoes, costing 14 cents per pound, would be equivalent to two pounds of flour at 22 cents a pound.

1. GO 30, Dec. 29, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records. The coldest day was January 7, with a high temperature reading of 11 below zero and a low of 24 degrees below.

2. GO 2, Jan. 10, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records. On December 29, 1867, orders had been issued permitting the detail of hunting parties to consist of not less than five privates, under a non-commissioned officer, to operate in the vicinity of the fort.

At the moment, the troops were "very healthy," and if they were to remain in that condition, the extra ration of fresh vegetables was necessary.³

Colonel Bradley was not afraid to make decisions, and on January 8, on his own responsibility, he issued instructions announcing that "until further orders fresh vegetables will be issued in lieu of other rations."⁴ The herd of beef cattle received at the post in November was "slaughtered." To preserve the meat, the carcasses were quartered and hung where they got "the full benefit of the winter air," and then packed in ice. As this method of preserving meat was new, Bradley promised to report on the success of his experiment. However, no report was forthcoming.⁵

The cold weather, along with the deep snow near the fort, caused the Indians to disappear from the immediate vicinity. Most of the Mountain Crow, on learning that there were no trade goods to be had at Fort C. F. Smith, had "gone to points on the Yellowstone and Muscle-Shell to trade." Nothing had been seen of the Sioux for a month. Reports reaching the post at the end of January indicated that they were camped on the Rosebud and lower Powder River.⁶

2. Scurvy Appears

The weather, by the end of January, had moderated, and the troops were in good health.⁷ By mid-February sufficient snow

3. Bradley to Adjt., Dept. of the Platte, Jan. 7, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte. The Secretary of War had disallowed the vouchers drawn in September 1866 and February 1867 in favor of John Richard for fresh vegetables purchased by the post commissary. In a successful effort to get the Secretary to reverse himself, it was pointed out by Captain Templeton that fresh vegetables were necessary to prevent the spread of scurvy. At other posts in the Mountain District, where no fresh vegetables had been used to supplement the rations, scurvy had "prevailed to an alarming extent." Because of the distance involved, it would have been impossible for the post commander to have secured permission from the Commissary-General to make the purchases in time to have been of any use in combatting scurvy. Templeton to Eaton, March 30, 1868, NA, RG 393. Brig. Gen. A. B. Eaton was Commissary-General.

4. SO 3, Jan. 8, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

5. Bradley to Adjt., Dept. of the Platte, Jan. 29, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid. On January 29 there was six inches of snow on the level, and the mercury stood at 25° above zero.

had melted to enable Colonel Bradley to send 1st Lieutenant Walter Halleck and a 23-man detail with several wagons to Fort Phil Kearny. There Halleck picked up some commissary stores, along with the baggage belonging to several officers scheduled to join the battalion.⁸

Despite Colonel Bradley's efforts, the failure to provide the soldiers with a balanced diet was apparent by the middle of March. On March 15 Bradley reported, "the garrison is in good health: though within the last two weeks a number of cases of scurvy have appeared."⁹ Apparently, the dread disease was present in its more benign manifestations, because neither Lieutenant Templeton nor Mrs. Burt mentioned the outbreak.¹⁰

3. The Mail Service Improves

There was a great improvement in the mail service in the winter of 1867-68. In January, Crow couriers brought up the mail twice, on the 8th and 19th; in February once--on the 11th; and in March on the 11th, 21st, and 26th. In March the Crow couriers were fired by Colonel Bradley. "Some foolish irresponsible party" at Fort Phil Kearny had told the Crow to "hurry through." The Crow, not realizing that this individual had spoken out of turn, galloped their mounts much of the way, killing one of the public horses. After discharging the Crow, Bradley hired Mr. Harwood, a Mountain Man, to carry the mail.¹¹

4. Discipline and Morale at Fort C. F. Smith

Many soldiers have always sought ways to supplement their rations or income by pilfering from the army, and those at Fort C. F. Smith were no exception. On the evening of January 6, as Corporal-of-the-Guard Edward Woods was posting his relief, he

8. SO 18, Feb. 13, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

9. Bradley to Adjt., Dept. of the Platte, March 15, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte.

10. Templeton Diary, Jan.-March, 1868; Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, p. 148.

11. Templeton Diary, Jan.-Feb. 1868; NA Returns for Regular Army Infantry Regiments, June 1821 - Dec. 1916, 27th Infantry, Jan.- March 1868. In January, Bradley, dissatisfied with the arrangements for carrying the mail, had requested that "the commanding officers of the posts below here be directed to forward mails twice a month, instead of once." Bradley to Adjt., Dept. of the Platte, Jan. 29, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte.

saw that two of the boards at one elevation of the commissary shed had been forced. Corporal Woods immediately contacted Pvt. August King, the issuing clerk. They entered the shed and found that it had been broken into and a number of items stolen. Missing were: 67 pounds of candles, 160 pounds of lard, ten pounds of black tea, two kits of mackerel, 52 pounds of soda crackers, 133 pounds of ham, and 89 pounds of dried beef. A search failed to turn up any of the missing items.¹²

The snow and cold curbed desertions. No men slipped away from the post during the winter. Colonel Bradley, however, learned that Pvts. John Brown and John Zoller--two of the three men who had deserted Company D the previous August, had been captured in the Gallatin Valley and were confined at Fort Ellis. Sergeant Swanneger, in accordance with orders from Colonel Bradley, turned out a five-man detail. Mounted on horses provided by the post quartermaster and leading three pack animals, Swanneger's detachment started for the Gallatin on March 2, with orders to take custody of the deserters and return them to the fort to face court martial.¹³

With the weather fair and the road open, Sutler Leighton, in the first week of March, started from Fort Phil Kearny for the post on the Bighorn with several wagonloads of supplies. A snow-storm caught the train on Soap Creek, and on March 7 Colonel Bradley told Lieutenant Halleck to proceed to Leighton's assistance with 28 soldiers and five wagons. Halleck's detachment marched the next morning, and encountered the sutler's wagons where expected. The supplies were redistributed, and with his wagons lightened Leighton reached the fort without further adventure. Word that the sutler had replenished the shelves of his store caused morale to soar.¹⁴

12. Proceedings of Board of Survey, Jan. 14, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records. At the time Lieutenant Halleck had entered on duty, "a large portion of the commissary stores were placed in a paulin covered shed." Dissatisfied with the security provided, Halleck had had the stores moved into the commissary storeroom, and into a "board roofed shed," which was a continuation of the main building. Halleck had been named post quartermaster on September 4, 1867.

13. SO 24, March 2, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records; Bradley to Adjt., Dept. of the Platte, March 15, 1868, and Templeton to Adjt., Dept. of the Platte, Feb. 13, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte. Swanneger's patrol carried five days' rations

14. SO 25, March 7, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

5. The District Commander Visits the Post

Although he had been on his duty station as commander of the Mountain District since July 1867, Col. John E. Smith, because of the press of other duties, was unable to visit Fort C. F. Smith until the third week of March. Escorted by a company of the 2d Cavalry, Smith reached the Bighorn post on the 26th. Colonel Bradley's invitation to visit Bighorn Canyon was accepted with alacrity by Smith, who in turn invited the ladies to join the party, "giving it the charm of a delightful picnic." Mrs. Burt recalled:

We had longed to visit the canyon but it had not been practicable as a large escort was needed to ensure safety. Really to have the pleasure of looking beyond that mountain range upon which we had been gazing so long from afar was greater delight than we had thought possible. Mrs. Miller, Kate, and I were also charmed to avail ourselves of the great pleasure offered us. Every officer who could be spared from duty joined the party.

The cavalcade ascended the Wood road. Everyone was on horseback, except those in an ambulance--Elizabeth Burt and Mrs. Miller, the Burt children, and their nurse. Near the Pretty Eagle Quest Site, the party had a picnic. "A camp kettle of good coffee, cold venison plate, a great pan of army pork and beans" constituted the menu.¹⁵

6. Captain Burt Replaces Colonel Bradley as Post Commander

Colonel Smith on the 31st inspected and reviewed the troops, and announced that he was pleased with the fort and condition of the garrison.¹⁶ While at the post, Smith arranged for Colonel Bradley's relief. Bradley, on January 12, had applied to the War Department for a 30-day furlough to begin about April 1, with permission to ask for a 30-day extension. The reason for this request was his forthcoming marriage to Miss Ione Dewey of Chicago. The request was approved, and on April 1, Bradley went on leave status, and the senior company commander, Capt. Andrew S. Burt, took charge of Fort C. F. Smith.¹⁷

15. Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, pp. 158-159; Templeton Diary, March 26, 1868.

16. Templeton Diary, March 26, 1868; Returns for the Regular Army, Infantry Regiments, June 1821-Dec. 1916, 27th Infantry, March 1868, NA, Post Records.

17. Bradley, ACP File, NA, RG 94; Bradley to Adjt., Dept. of the Platte, Jan. 12, 1868, NA, RG 394, Register of Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of

Like Captains Kinney and Burrowes, Burt had entered the regular establishment as an officer in the 18th U. S. Infantry, in the summer of 1861. As 1st lieutenant of Company F, he had been wounded when he fought at the battle of Mill Springs in January 1862. Cited for gallantry by Brig. Gen. George H. Thomas, he was brevetted captain. He had participated in the siege of Corinth as a member of Col Robert McCook's staff, and had served on Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans' staff during the Tullahoma and Chickamauga campaigns. Once again, he was mentioned by General Rosecrans and Maj. Gen. Alexander McD. McCook in official reports of these operations. Soon after the battle of Chickamauga, he was promoted captain and assumed command of Company F, 18th Infantry. He led his company at Missionary Ridge and in the Atlanta Campaign, and was brevetted major for "gallant and meritorious services during the Atlanta Campaign and the battle of Jonesboro." Before being ordered to Fort C. F. Smith, Captain Burt had served as post commander at Fort Bridger.¹⁸

Colonel Bradley, Captain Burrowes, and Lieutenant Halleck would accompany Colonel Smith and his escort as far as Fort Phil Kearny. Burrowes, like Bradley, had been granted a furlough. Halleck had been ordered before the retirement board and would turn over to Lt. Alexander Wishart his responsibilities as post quartermaster. Assistant Surgeon Frantz would also be leaving the Bighorn, taking with him Hospital Steward Albert Simmons. Service in the isolated post had been too much for Simmons, and he had lost his mind. Frantz would look after Simmons as far as Omaha, from where he would be sent to St. Elizabeth's Asylum in Washington.¹⁹

Captain Templeton's Company D had been alerted to be ready to start for Fort Phil Kearny on April 1, as escort to seven wagons. Two of the wagons were laden with Gallatin Valley potatoes and turnips for the Fort Phil Kearny commissary, while another was loaded with Colonel Bradley's and the other officers' baggage. Accompanied by Colonel Smith's party and its escort, Templeton and his men made 27 miles on the 1st, camping for the

the Platte; SO 7, April 1, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records. Bradley married Miss Dewey on May 14, 1868, in Chicago, Illinois.

18. Burt, ACP File, NA, RG 94.

19. SO 34 and SO 35, March 29 & 31, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records. Two men, Dr. McCleary and Simmons, had now broken under the strain of working in the post hospital. Before the fort was abandoned, another man, Pvt. John Murphy, lost his mind. Unless he was watched, he would stray away from the fort. Thacher to Litchfield, May 18, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept of the Platte. H. G. Litchfield was Adjutant General, Department of the Platte.

night on Lodge Grass. The next day they encountered Dr. Matthews with three wagons and a 20-man escort. Matthews was en route to Fort C. F. Smith to meet with the Crow and hostiles and urge their attendance at the Fort Laramie council. Captain Gordon and his 2d Cavalry troopers had planned to outdistance Templeton's foot-soldiers, but an early start enabled the infantry to reach the evening's camp site on Twin Creek first. The race continued the next two days, Templeton having Company D on the road by 3 a.m. on April 3. Templeton boasted that his men kept "up first rate and are anxious to beat the Cavalry, who went ahead yesterday, and took the new road, while I have chosen the longer and better one." Company D reached Fort Phil Kearny at noon on the 4th. But for a breakdown of one of the wagons, which caused a 90 minute delay, Templeton believed his men would have out-marched Gordon's.²⁰

Captain Templeton said goodbye to Colonel Bradley and his party on April 5. Although it snowed on the morning of the 6th, Company D started back for its base at daybreak the next day. A cold rain drenched the column on the 8th, but the troops marched rapidly, as they were unencumbered by a wagon train. They were back at Fort C. F. Smith at noon on April 9, having made "the quickest trip ever."²¹

Captain Templeton and his troops discovered on their return from Fort Phil Kearny that Captain Burt, in his role as post commander, had made or planned to effect changes in the battalion's routine. The company commanders would henceforth drill their units in the "School of the Soldier," giving special attention to paragraphs 90 and 91 in *Upton's Tactics*. Captain Hartz would hold school for the officers?²² Target practice would be held twice daily at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Springfield Rifle ammunition would be used, with the officers charged with the responsibility of practicing economy in its expenditure.²³

With the departure of Colonel Bradley, Captain Burt and his family moved into the commanding officer's quarters. Following this move the quarters were occupied as follows: Building No. 1 Captains Templeton and Hartz; Building No. 2 Lieutenants Matson,

20. So 34, March 29, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records; Templeton Diary, April 1-4, 1868.

21. Templeton Diary, April 5-9, 1868.

22. GO 8, April 2, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

23. GO 10, April 16, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records. This order superseded GO 9, which provided for daily target practice in accordance with *Heath's Tactics*.

McCarthy, and Harwood; Building No. 3 Captain Burt and his family; Building No. 4 Lieutenant Miller and his family; and Building No. 5 Lieutenant Wishart with the offices of the post quartermaster and commissary. The enlisted men were billeted: Company G in Barracks No. 1, Company I in Barracks No. 2, Company H in Barracks No. 3, Company E in Barracks No. 4, and Company D in Barracks No. 5.²⁴

B. Dr. Matthews of the Peace Commission Visits the Crow

1. Dr. Matthews' First Trip to Fort C. F. Smith

Since August of 1867, seven months before Colonel Bradley left Fort C. F. Smith, the United States had been groping for a formula that would bring peace to the Bighorn and Powder River Country. On August 29, 1867, two couriers, Jack Steed and Raphael, reached the post with important dispatches from Colonel Smith at Fort Phil Kearny. In an effort to end the Red Cloud War, the Office of Indian Affairs had determined to hold another peace conference at Fort Laramie in September. Colonel Bradley was to communicate this information to the Crow and through them to the Sioux. To do so he would send four men (Mitch Bouyer, Louie Richard, Baptiste, and a friendly Sioux) with presents for the chiefs--tobacco, sugar, and coffee.²⁵

The messengers returned on September 10 from the Yellowstone, accompanied by a dozen Crow chiefs. Colonel Bradley, the next morning, spoke with the Crow and invited them to attend the Fort Laramie Council, but they declined as the distance was too great and the notice too short.²⁶ On the 13th Dr. Henry M. Matthews, a special agent for the Peace Commission, reached the fort, escorted by a company of Cavalry. Dr. Matthews of Missouri, on August 8, had been named a special agent of the Indian Peace Commission, and ordered to proceed to the country of the Mountain Crow, and to "use every effort to induce them to go to Fort Laramie to meet the commissioners." If he were unable to prevail on them to go, he was to ascertain where they were agreeable to holding a council.

24. SO 36, April 3, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

25. Bradley to Adjt., Mountain District, Sept. 4, 1867; SO 28, Aug. 29, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

26. Templeton Diary, Sept. 12, 1867.

Moreover, he was authorized to call on the army for subsistence for the Mountain Crow.²⁷

Traveling by way of Forts Laramie and Reno, Dr. Matthews, on his arrival at Fort Phil Kearny, was told by Colonel Smith of the dispatch of the messengers to the Crow. This news excited Matthews, because it would facilitate the accomplishment of his mission.

Immediately after reaching Fort C. F. Smith on the 13th, Matthews met with the Crow chiefs. In answer to his invitation to attend the Fort Laramie Council, they gave him the same answer as Bradley: the season was late, the distance was too great, they lacked transportation, and the young warriors were opposed to their going. To demonstrate their friendship for the whites, they would travel to Fort Phil Kearny "to meet anyone sent by their Great Father." At this council, they desired to discuss boundaries and annuity good.

Recent visitors to the hostile villages told Matthews that the Sioux were "determined" to fight as long as the whites occupied their country, or they had a warrior left. While they would not go to Fort Laramie, the Sioux were agreeable to meeting the commissioners at Fort Phil Kearny. According to the Crow, the Sioux, if there were to be peace, would insist that the whites abandon the Bozeman Trail and the three forts erected for its protection.

When he forwarded this information to the Commission, Dr. Matthews announced that he was sending couriers to see the Sioux, and to ask them if they were agreeable to meeting Brig. Gen. William S. Harney at Fort Phil Kearny in October.²⁸

Eight days passed before Matthews again conversed with any Crow. On September 20 Iron Bull's squaw and another woman visited the fort. They told the whites that their village was nearby, but that the Dog Soldiers would not permit members of the tribe to come over to the fort. They, however, had given the Dog Soldiers the slip.

27. Taylor to Matthews, Aug. 8, 1867, NA, RG 48, Records of the Indian Peace Commission, 1867-1868. N. G. Taylor was president of the Peace Commission.

28. Matthews to Taylor, Sept. 11, 12, & 13, 1867, NA, RG 48, Records of the Indian Peace Commission, 1867-1868. Matthews presented to the Crow gifts he had purchased in St. Louis, as well as \$200 worth of supplies requisitioned from the post commissary--tobacco, crackers, coffee, candles, bacon, sugar, salt, and pepper.

The next day Long Horse and several Dog Soldiers came in. After being issued rations, they met with Dr. Matthews. Long Horse "talked so saucy that he was told to Keep quiet," whereupon he stalked out of the council. When the Crow returned to their village, Iron Bull remained and was rehired by Colonel Bradley to carry the mail twice a month to Fort Phil Kearny.²⁹

Colonel Bradley and Dr. Matthews determined to visit the Crow village to test the sentiments of other Crow leaders besides Long Horse. On the 25th, accompanied by an escort, they rode down the valley and encountered the village below the mouth of the Rotten Grass. Most of the women and children were gathering and drying plums and buffaloberries. Shot-in-the-Face invited the visitors into his lodge, and they ate plums and parleyed. After learning that the village was en route to the fort, the whites, having spent an hour with the Crow, returned.³⁰

The Crow village, on the 26th, camped near Fort C. F. Smith. That afternoon Dr. Matthews counceled with the chiefs. He cautioned them against scattering for the fall buffalo hunt, and advised them to keep together for mutual protection from the Sioux and their allies, and to cross to the west of the Bighorn. The Crow seemed in a good humor, and the next day they forded the Bighorn and started for the Clarks Fork.³¹

For the next 12 days the only Indians near the fort were Iron Bull and his family. On October 10, 75 lodges of Mountain Crow under White Mouth, Blackfoot, Bear's Tooth, and Crazy Head appeared. Dr. Matthews held a council with them the next day. After they received rations, a number agreed to accompany him to Fort Laramie. Sergeant Pendergast of Company D with 15 men was detailed by Colonel Bradley to escort Dr. Matthews as far as Fort Phil Kearny. The next day, the 13th, Matthews and his party started for Fort Laramie. No treaty, however, was concluded, because the Sioux and their allies boycotted the council.³²

2. Dr. Matthews Meets With the Sioux

In November, Dr. Matthews traveled to Fort Laramie to brief members of the Peace Commission on what he had learned regarding the views of the Sioux and Crow. Satisfied with his performance, Chairman Taylor named Matthews "Special Indian Agent for the Crow & other tribes inhabiting the country in the vicinity of Forts

29. Templeton Diary, Sept. 20-21, 1867. 30. Ibid., Sept. 25, 1867.

31. Ibid., Sept. 26-27, 1867.

32. Ibid., Oct. 10-13, 1867; SO 61, Oct. 13, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post

Phil Kearny and C. F. Smith." He was to superintend these tribes, "in the interest of the Indian Peace Commission & use every means in his power to maintain peace between the Indians and the United States."³³

Matthews left Fort Laramie on the 27th, with several wagon loads of annuity goods, and reached Fort Phil Kearny on December 10. Couriers were dispatched to notify the tribes of his arrival and of his desire to speak with them. The Crow, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Sioux responded to these messages. The Sioux agreed to meet with Dr. Matthews on January 1, 1868.

Accompanied by Colonel Smith and several of his officers, Dr. Matthews held a council with a number of Sioux chiefs on the 2d near Fort Phil Kearny. After he told of the government's and commission's desire for peace, the chiefs assured him that they had a similar wish, but they added the reservation that peace could be restored only if the Bozeman Trail were abandoned and the troops withdrawn from Forts C. F. Smith, Phil Kearny, and Reno. They claimed that the occupation of the road and country by the whites had resulted in a "diminution of the game." As this was the only good hunting grounds in their possession, and unless this demand was conceded by the United States, there was no need for them to meet with the Peace Commission at Fort Laramie in April. If the United States were willing to yield on these two demands, "a strong and permanent peace could be made at once," and they would forget their claims to territory south of the Union Pacific Railroad.

Matthews assured the Sioux that the Commissioners were their friends, and their demands would receive consideration. Although Red Cloud was not in attendance, he sent a message to Matthews, assuring him that he would "abide" by the January 2 agreement, and "would consider anyone who interfered with or broke it as his enemy."³⁴

Records; Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, p. 138.

33. Taylor to Matthews, Nov. 15, 1867, NA, RG 49, Records of the Indian Peace Commission, 1867-1868.

34. Matthews to Taylor, Feb. 18, 1868, NA, RG 48, Records of the Indian Peace Commission, 1867-1868. Red Cloud's brother represented him at the January 2 council. One-half the annuity goods intended for the Crow were distributed as presents to the Sioux in attendance.

3. Dr. Matthews Returns to Fort C. F. Smith

Few Indians were seen at Fort C. F. Smith during the winter of 1867-1868. On March 14 Crazy Head's and White Mouth's village of Mountain Crow returned to the area from the Yellowstone. The chiefs informed Colonel Bradley that they had encountered a small band of Sioux, and had been told that "the Bad Faces, Unkapapas, Two Kettles, and Brules were not for peace, but would take the war path this spring, under Red Cloud." Bradley forwarded this report to General Auger's headquarters. His nine-month experience on the Bighorn, however, had conditioned Bradley to place little reliance on the stories told by the redmen, unless they were corroborated by other sources.³⁵

Dr. Matthews spent ten days at the post, in the first half of April, contacting the Crow and reassuring them that their interests would not be sacrificed by the Peace Commission at the forthcoming Fort Laramie Council. A Montanan, J. W. McKenzie, was present when Dr. Matthews met with the Crow, and he was disillusioned with what he saw, as Dr. Matthews presented the Crow with 300 army uniforms, 300 blankets, 1,500 pounds of flour, 1,000 pounds of sugar, 600 pounds of coffee, 1,000 pounds of powder and lead, and 100,000 percussion caps. If his friends in the east could have witnessed the council, he felt certain they would cease extolling the virtues of the plains Indians and back the army.³⁶

Dr. Matthews, having distributed the annuity goods and insured the attendance of a number of Mountain Crow chiefs at the Fort Laramie Council, told Captain Burt, on the 12th, that he was ready to start for Fort Phil Kearny. Orders were accordingly issued for the post quartermaster to make available to Matthews two six-team wagons and one four-horse ambulance. He would be escorted by Lt. Tillotson and the 22-man cavalry detachment that had accompanied him up from Fort Phil Kearny. Also traveling with the detachment would be five prisoners and their guards. Three of them were deserters from Fort Phil Kearny being returned for punishment, while two men (Edward Hurley and Thomas Burke) former privates in Company D, were being taken to Madison, Iowa, by Lieutenant Fenton and a three-man detail. There they were to be turned over to the warden of the penitentiary to serve time for desertion. Matthews, his escort, and John Richard's train left Fort C. F. Smith in mid-April.³⁷

35. Bradley to Adjt., Dept. of the Platte, March 15, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte.

36. McKenzie to Editor, May 1, 1868, found in *Montana Democrat*, May 9, 1868.

37. SO 39, April 11 and SO 40, April 12, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

The Crow, except those planning to attend the Fort Laramie Council, headed for Clarks Fork.

C. Partisan Warfare on the Bighorn

1. The Hostiles Reappear

Two days before the departure of Dr. Matthews, on April 10, the garrison was reminded that peace had not yet been effected, as several Sioux were found prowling near the haystacks. When challenged by a picket, they fired a warning shot and disappeared.³⁸ On April 16 about 30 hostiles came pounding into view on their ponies and made for Post Hunter Teukesbury's mule herd, grazing near the post. A warning shot was fired by a sentry in one of the basions, and the cry "Indians, Indians" was raised. Captain Templeton was ordered by Captain Burt to turn out his company and march to the citizens' assistance. The "long roll" was still beating, as Company D moved out on the double, their rifles at the ready. Templeton's footsoldiers fired about 100 rounds and scattered the Indians. Checking with Teukesbury, Templeton learned that the prompt intervention by the military had saved all his mules but one. This animal had been so badly injured by arrows that he had to be destroyed. The Indians were seen to carry off one of their number, either killed or wounded by Teukesbury.³⁹

Mrs. Burt, Kate Reynolds, Mrs. Miller, and four-year-old Andrew Gano had had a narrow escape. They had gone out to the spring near the fort to pick violets and ferns, when the alarm was raised. For a moment they stood paralyzed with terror, before Kate screamed, "Run, run for your lives!"

"This cry," Mrs. Burt recalled,

broke the spell. My sister and I each grabbed a hand of the boy and gathering up our skirts ran as I believe no woman ever ran before. We rushed into the stockade to see the officers and soldiers double-timing through the gates to meet the raiders.⁴⁰

38. Templeton Diary, April 10, 1868.

39. Ibid., April 16, 1868; Burt to Adjt., Dept. of the Platte, April 21, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte; Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, pp. 159-160.

40. Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, pp. 159-160.

When he notified General Auger of this raid, Captain Burt wrote that "until further orders, I shall treat all indians except Crows, Snakes, and Nez-Perces as hostiles, and will not permit them to remain in my neighborhood." In view of the government's decision to seek peace with Red Cloud, he promised not to sieze the initiative, but to limit himself to the defensive.⁴¹

On April 17 Harwood brought up the mail. The talk when he left Fort Phil Kearny was that 1,000 "peaceful Sioux" were momentarily expected. He started back for Fort Phil Kearny at dark on the 22d. Harwood drove his horse hard and made the round trip in a little over four and one-half days. While the "peaceful Sioux" had failed to appear, the Cheyenne had. From them it was learned that in the skirmish on the 16th, the Sioux had lost one killed and three ponies⁴²

On April 28 a Sioux war party swept into a view and tried to cut-off a two-man mounted patrol. The alarm was raised, and Company E and a mounted detachment rushed to the rescue. The mounted force was an innovation recommended by Colonel Smith on his recent visit to the Bighorn. He had told Captain Burt to detail an officer, Lieutenant McCarthy, and 16 enlisted men as mounted infantry. He felt such a force would enable the garrison to undertake effective pursuits of small parties of hostiles, such as had harassed the army the previous year.⁴³

This time, however, the redmen had too great a lead, before Lieutenant McCarthy could rally his men. Nevertheless the Indians were followed about three miles, before the soldiers gave up the chase. Lieutenant McCarthy swore that he had shot one of the hostiles during the running fight.⁴⁴

2. Captain Burt Institutes New Security Measures

This raid led Captain Burt to take additional precautions. Hereafter when the alarm was raised, the companies of the bat-

41. Burt to Adjt., Dept. of the Platte, April 21, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept of the Platte.

42. Templeton Diary, April 17-27, 1868.

43. Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, pp. 164-165. Mrs. Burt and her sister, Kate, had taken advantage of this order to go horse-back riding, when her husband had the horses exercised. Mrs. Burt found a ride across the plateau, although under an armed escort, "a great delight . . . from the close confinement within the stockade."

44. Templeton Diary, April 28, 1868; SO 42, April 15, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

talion would fall in and be mustered on their respective parade grounds. The companies were to take turn being on call for emergencies. Each tour of duty was to last a week.⁴⁵ The company commander of the duty company, at the alarm, would march his unit to the scene of attack, "and adopt such measures as his judgment may dictate being careful not to allow himself to be drawn too far from "the support of the battalion. The non-commissioned officer in charge of the mountain howitzers was to report to Captain Hartz. In event of a night alarm, the battalion would be turned out to man the loopholes in the different faces of the fort.⁴⁶

The next day, April 29, the Sioux tested Captain Burt's defense plan. About 30 warriors again sought to surprise the mounted patrol. Spearheaded by the mounted detachment, Company H rushed to the patrol's assistance. Company D and one of the mountain howitzers followed. The Indians, by the time they had ridden three miles, had outdistanced the pursuit. As a futile gesture, the howitzer was thrown into battery and two rounds fired at the rapidly disappearing redmen. One of the patrol, when questioned, claimed that he had unhorsed a warrior, but that two others had swooped down, snatched him off the ground, threw him across a pony, and galloped off. On checking the area, the soldiers found a double-barreled shotgun, bow, quiver, arrows, shield cover, and whip.⁴⁷

Captain Burt, having heard that several of his officers questioned his tactics, held a staff meeting. It was determined to dispense with the roving mounted patrol, and as the officers were all too familiar with details of the Fetterman Fight, not to pursue the Indians so far, in the future.⁴⁸

The Indians tested Captain Burt's revised security measures on May 5, when about 50 hostiles, having passed through the reef, came pounding out of Lime Kiln Creek. They swept toward the sentinels guarding a fatigue party working on the cemetery. The soldiers blazed away with their breech-loaders, and the Indians veered away and galloped past the south face of the stockade. Alerted by the firing and shouts, Company D turned out on the double and blazed away as the redmen thundered out of range.

45. GO 11, April 28, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records. The companies were to be on call in the following order: H, I, D, E, and G.

46. Ibid. The north face was No. 1, the east face No. 2, the south face No. 3, and the west face No. 4. These faces would be manned respectively by Companies I, D, E, and G. Company H was to constitute a ready reserve.

47. Templeton Diary, April 29, 1868. 48. Ibid., April 30, 1868.

Company D followed the Indians about a mile, but turned back when large numbers of warriors appeared on the War Man Creek bluffs.⁴⁹

Five days later, on May 10, two young Mountain Crow warriors reached the fort. Captain Burt learned from them that their village was scattered from the mouth of Beauvais to the Little Bighorn. They said the others would be up the next day.

That afternoon the soldiers turned out, as about 175 Cheyenne trotted up and asked for rations. Their spokesman told Captain Burt that they were tired of war; that they wished to live in peace with the whites; and that they wished to trade. After having his commissary issue some rations Burt permitted them to camp near the fort. Several of the Cheyenne were talkative, and from them it was learned that there were three Sioux villages on the Little Bighorn. One Sioux, it was said, had been killed in the skirmish on April 29 and another wounded in the clash on May 5.

The Cheyenne now complained that Captain Burt had not given them enough sugar. He gave them another sack, an action that earned the disapproval of at least one of his subordinates. After trading about 200 buffalo robes to the post sutler, the Cheyenne left the area on the evening of the 11th.

About six hours before the Cheyenne broke camp, about 150 Crow appeared at the fort and were likewise issued rations. The Crow told Captain Burt that there were seven Sioux villages on the Little Bighorn, and that they planned to assail Fort C. F. Smith to secure revenge for the death of a chief in the Hayfield Fight.⁵⁰

Captain Burt was disappointed with the performance of his troops. On checking with his officers, he found that over 600 rounds of ammunition had been expended, on May 5, with no apparent loss to the Indians. Orders were issued that hereafter, when there was an Indian alarm and the companies were not formed, that there would be no indiscriminate and unauthorized firing. Selected marksmen would be given permission to fire by officers and non-commissioned officers.

The officers were chided that it would be unnecessary for the commanding officer "to comment on the value of this ammunition,

49. Templeton Diary, May 5, 1868; Returns for the Regular Army, Infantry Regiments, June 1821-Dec. 1916, 27th Infantry, May 1868, NA, Post Records.

50. Templeton Diary, May 10-11, 1868.

or to say how much the interest of the service and our own safety demands the strict economy in its expenditure."⁵¹

On the night of May 14 one of the sentries heard suspicious noises. It was very dark, and he saw an Indian silhouetted on the east gate. He opened fire and called the alarm. Several other members of the guard blazed away, as the "long roll" was beaten. There was shooting out near Teukesbury's corral, as his men shot at prowlers. The troops were formed on the double to resist an attack but none was forthcoming, and in the morning when Captain Burt made an inspection, he was uncertain as to whether there had been Indians about, or his men had let their imaginations get the better of them.⁵²

3. Burt Proposes to Take the Offensive

The harassing tactics of the Sioux had their effect on Captain Burt, as well as his troops. On May 18 he wrote General Auger regarding their actions. From the Crow, it had been learned that the Sioux continued to manifest a "bitter and earnest hostility" toward the whites, and that they planned to press the struggle. As soon as their Medicine Lodge was completed, the seven Sioux villages camped on the Little Bighorn would step up hostilities. If General Auger were agreeable, Burt would take the field with four of his five companies. To insure the success of his plans, which he would "not now lay before the Dept. Commander in detail, a company of Cavalry would be necessary" to enable him to surprise the principal village.⁵³

General Auger, in view of the government's decision to seek peace with the Sioux and their allies by abandoning the Bozeman Trail forts, pocketed Captain Burt's rash plan to carry the war to the Sioux. Eight months before, on September 30, 1867, General Auger had written the War Department, pointing out that the defense of the Bozeman Trail had tied down two infantry regiments (the 18th and 27th) and "half a regiment of cavalry." To maintain their positions, the troops had "to fight almost daily to secure their supplies of wood & hay." Indian raids had stifled emigrant traffic.

In reply to the War Department's request for his opinion as to the propriety of abandoning the posts, Auger was opposed.

51. GO 12, May 6, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

52. Templeton Diary, May 15, 1868.

53. Burt to Litchfield, May 18, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte.

To support his position, he wrote:

Were the question a new one, and arising as to whether they should now be established, I should regard it as unnecessary and unwise to do so until a satisfactory arrangement had been made with the tribes through whose country . . . [the Bozeman Trail] passes, knowing how impossible it is to make any route through hostile Indian Country perfectly safe for purposes of emigration and traffic.⁵⁴

But the forts had already been established, "and large sums have been expended on them" for storehouses and barracks. In Auger's opinion, the Red Cloud War would soon end--either in the defeat of the Indians or by treaty. When that time came, unless the region was to be abandoned to the hostiles, the Bozeman Trail "must become the great highway between Colorado, Nebraska and Montana." Because of the route's proximity to Indian Country, the forts should not be abandoned, because they would have to be re-established in the future.

While Auger agreed that the establishment of the posts had precipitated the war, he questioned the wisdom of yielding to the Indians' demand for their abandonment as a sine qua non to negotiations. If the forts were given up before a treaty was effected, it would embolden the Indians to "enlarge the sphere of their hostilities and diminish very materially the chance for permanent peace." Unless the government had determined to abandon the region to the Indians, Auger was opposed to evacuating the three Bozeman Trail forts.⁵⁵

Auger was correct in his estimate of the situation, but he was overruled by forces backing the Indian Bureau and its demand for a negotiated peace with the Sioux and their allies. Treaties would be signed and broken, and not until the campaign of 1876 and 1877 would the power of the Sioux and northern Cheyenne be destroyed.

54. Auger to Adj. Gen., Sept. 30, 1867, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Sent, Dept. of the Platte.

55. Ibid.

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XII. THE UNITED STATES LOOSES A WAR

A. Word Is Received that Fort C. F. Smith Is To Be Abandoned

1. The Fort Laramie Council and Treaties

In the latter part of April 1868, Dr. Matthews, accompanied by a number of Crow chiefs, traveled to Fort Laramie. There the Indian Commission held its long awaited council with the hostiles. The forces clamoring for a peaceful settlement to the war were in the ascendancy in Washington, and despite General Auger's recommendations to the contrary, the Peace Commission supported the position taken by Dr. Matthews in his January 2 meeting with the Sioux chiefs.

On April 29 the Commissioners and the leaders of the Sioux and Arapaho concluded a treaty which legalized exclusive Indian possession of the region as far west as the 104th parallel. The United States would abandon the Bozeman Trail and evacuate Forts C. F. Smith, Phil Kearny, and Reno.

Nine days later, on May 7, the Commissioners signed a treaty with the Crow. As the Crow had wished, they were given a reservation in southern Montana.¹ An agency for the Crow would be built on Otter Creek, to be staffed by an agent, physician, carpenter, farmer, blacksmith, miller, and engineer. A sawmill and schoolhouses were to be erected at the agency. Heads of families, desirous of becoming farmers, would have the opportunity of selecting a tract, not to exceed 320 acres, to be occupied and cultivated. Once a year, for 30 years, each male Crow over 14 and each female over 12 would be issued specified articles of clothing. For their part, the Crow agreed to reside on the reservation, and to compel their children, between 6 and 16, to attend school.²

2. News Is Received that the Forts Are To Be Abandoned

On May 19 General Auger moved to implement this decision by his superiors. Colonel Smith was notified that the three forts

1. Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties* (Washington, 1904), Vol. 2, 1008-1011. The boundary of the Crow reservation was to begin where the 107th meridian of longitude crossed the southern boundary of Montana; then north with the said meridian to mid-channel of the Yellowstone River, then up the channel of the Yellowstone to the point where it crossed the southern boundary of Montana (the 45° of latitude), and then east with the 45th parallel to the beginning.

2. Ibid.

in his Mountain District would be evacuated. The public property at Fort C. F. Smith would be sold at public auction, while that from Forts Phil Kearny and Reno would be transferred to such of the lower posts as the Quartermaster General directed. After the public property at Fort C. F. Smith had been sold, Burt's battalion would be transferred to Fort Phil Kearny. Once the public property was removed from the latter post, the troops were to be withdrawn to Fort Reno, and remain there until the stores had been sent to Fort D. A. Russell, when they would "proceed to a convenient camp on the railroad . . . and await further orders."³

Public property at Fort C. F. Smith was to be advertized for sale on June 1. Captain Burt was to dispose of everything at the post, except such commissary stores as might be required at Fort Ellis and those needed to subsist his battalion on its march to Fort Phil Kearny.⁴ To effect the transfer of Burt's battalion, Colonel Smith was to send 40 of the wagons currently en route to his district to Fort C. F. Smith. Thirty wagons and two companies would be withdrawn from Fort Phil Kearny and shifted to Fort Reno to relieve Major Van Voast's battalion.⁵

Rumors regarding the possible evacuation of the Bozeman Trail forts had been circulating since Dr. Matthews' January council with the Sioux. These stories were generally discredited by the troops, and those who were cognizant of the " trials and dispairs" through which the soldiers "had passed in leading the way for the opening of a road through this country." As Mrs. Burt observed:

Two years before this our officers and men had begun to build this post under terrible trials. Many precious lives were lost. Numbers of our comrades were laid away in the little graveyard on Cemetery Hill . . . and now it seemed the country really was to be given back to the Indians.⁶

3. SO 80, Dept. of the Platte, May 19, 1868.

4. Auger to Smith, May 18, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Sent, Dept. of the Platte. Fort Ellis, near Bozeman, had been established by the 13th Infantry on August 27, 1867.

5. Auger to Smith, May 19, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Sent, Dept. of the Platte. The remainder of the train was to be employed, under the direction of the chief quartermaster, to remove the stores from Fort Phil Kearny.

6. Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, p. 165.

News that the Bozeman Trail was to be abandoned by the United States had the anticipated repercussions in the Montana mining camps. Speaking for his fellow citizens, the editor of the *Montana Post* termed the decision "the most disgraceful, criminal and cowardly concessions to arbitrary demands of an avowedly hostile power, that ever called the crimson of shame to the cheeks of Americans."

In calling attention of his readers to the advertised sale of public property at Fort C. F. Smith, scheduled for June 1, the editor ridiculed the United States Army for retreating "in disgrace before a horde of barbarians," and being compelled to destroy thousands of dollars in public property to prevent them from falling into Red Cloud's hands.

The only hope for the country to escape this folly, the editor continued, was to transfer the Indian Bureau from the Department of the Interior to the War Department, "where it properly belongs." If this were done, he predicted, the order abandoning the Bozeman Trail forts would be canceled.⁷

General Auger's instructions regarding the sale of public property and the evacuation of the post was delivered to Captain Burt by Capt. Edmund F. Thompson on May 27. He was accompanied by Lieutenant Wishart and several other officers. Wishart had left the post on May 2 to meet his family at Cheyenne, but he got only as far as Fort Laramie, where he received a telegram to return to the Bighorn to supervise the sale of the quartermaster stores for which he was responsible. This was a great disappointment to him.⁸

B. Preparations for the Evacuation Proceed

1. Captain Burt Opens and Closes the Auction

Two days later, the 29th, Nelson Story, W. S. McKenzie, Jim Leighton, and Louis Richard reached the fort in two buggies. Story and McKenzie informed Captain Burt that they planned to

7. *The Montana Post* (Helena), June 19, 1868.

8. Templeton Diary, May 27, 1868. Capt. Isaac d'Isay, who had accompanied Captain Thompson, replaced Lieutenant Matson on May 30 as commanding officer of Company E. SO 63, May 30, 1868, RG 393, Post Records. Lieutenant Wishart had traveled as far as Fort Phil Kearny with Lieutenant Matson and Company H, sent by Captain Burt to bring up three wagon loads of medical supplies inventoried to his post. Matson's command returned to Fort C. F. Smith on May 13. Templeton Diary, May 13, 1868;

bid at the sale. Their escort, 30 men commanded by Lt. William Stephenson, had camped for the night on Soap Creek. Stephenson's detachment arrived at Fort C. F. Smith the next day. At the crossing of the Little Bighorn, Stephenson's troops had seen three Sioux. One of the warriors had visited camp and had begged some bread and coffee.⁹

On June 1 Captain Burt had Lieutenant Wishart commence the sale. After one box of tools was sold to each company in the battalion, Burt ordered the public auction "suspended and postponed," because there were only two outside bidders--the partners Story and McKenzie--and with no competition little would be realized from the sale. When Burt notified General Auger of this development on June 6, he reported that his battalion was ready to abandon the post on the arrival of the train from Fort Ellis to load the commissary stores destined for that post. According to reports reaching the Bighorn from the Gallatin Valley, the earliest that the Fort Ellis wagons could be expected was July 10.¹⁰

2. The Hostiles Continue to Harass the Army

Lieutenant Stephenson's detachment, with which Captain Thompson rode, left the post for Fort Phil Kearny at sun-up on June 2. Thirty-five hours later, one of Stephenson's men returned on a sweat-lathered horse. The man handed Captain Burt a message reporting that Indians, at daybreak on Trout Creek, had surprised the pickets and had stampeded their horses and mules. The hard ride had taken its toll, and the courier, who was "scarcely rational," blurted out that he had seen a large Sioux village within 15 miles of Fort C. F. Smith.¹¹

Captain Burt, not wishing to take any chances, issued orders for Lieutenant Miller to turn out Company G and march to Stephenson's relief. Miller would accompany Stephenson's people to Fort Phil Kearny and then return to the Bighorn. The troops, when they moved out, carried 100 rounds of ammunition on their persons and six days' rations in their haversacks. They were accompanied by Lieutenant Wishart with three wagons, loaded with

Returns for the Regular Army, Infantry Regiments, June 1821-Dec. 1916, 27th Infantry, May 1868, NA, Post Records.

9. Templeton Diary, May 29 & 30, 1868. Story had left Virginia City on May 8, and traveling by way of Salt Lake City, Cheyenne, and Omaha, had covered 2,600 miles.

10. Burt to Litchfield, June 6, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte.

11. Templeton Diary, June 2-4, 1868. Captain Thompson commanded Company K, 27th Infantry.

300 rations for Stephenson's troops, and all the public mules that could be spared to pull Stephenson's wagons.¹²

Miller's company was absent ten days. When it returned on June 14, Lieutenant Wishart was accompanied by his wife and two children. Mrs. Burt and the other women of the post were delighted "to receive a lady just from the States, bringing the latest news, the new spring fashions, the most recent gossip."¹³

At the beginning of the second week of June, there was excitement on the Bighorn as the Crow who had attended the Fort Laramie Council returned. On the 7th, the day before they appeared, two Crow stopped in and told the soldiers they were en route to the Little Bighorn to steal Sioux ponies in reprisal for the death of one of their people, slain by a Sioux war party west of the Bighorn. Another Crow war party led by Thin Belly started for the same destination, 48 hours later.¹⁴

3. The Departure of Companies D and I

When he returned from Fort Phil Kearny, Lieutenant Wishart brought orders from Colonel Smith for Captain Burt to start Companies D and I to that post. Orders were issued on the 15th for Captains Hartz and Templeton to have their men draw nine days' rations and for Quartermaster Wishart to provide the column with 12 wagons to haul their gear and camp equipage. Before moving out, the two companies were "to abandon all property that had been inspected and condemned, because of lack of transportation."¹⁵

The two companies marched for Fort Phil Kearny early on the 18th. Captain Templeton for one did not want to leave the post on the Bighorn, because he had "become quite attached to it." The soldiers made a good march and halted for the night on Lodge Grass. The grass was lush and knee high, and "all nature" looked beautiful as the soldiers tramped southeastward.

Captain Hartz called an early halt on the 19th on Trout Creek. Recalling Stephenson's recent difficulties at this point, he deployed one-half company as pickets to guard the horses and mules, as they were let out to graze. About 30 Sioux swept into sight and sought to run off the animals. The soldiers gave the warriors

12. SO 67, June 4, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

13. Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, p. 164; Templeton Diary, June 14, 1868.

14. Templeton Diary, June 7-10, 1868.

15. Templeton Diary, June 14, 1868; SO 71, June 16, 1868, NA, RG 393,

a hot reception, and they fled, one of them dropping a double-barrel shotgun. After they had been foiled, the Sioux had the gall to ask Dr. Matthews and his interpreter, when they rode out to talk to them, why the army had opened fire.¹⁶

The infantrymen spent the night of the 20th on Wolf Creek. Once again, the Sioux tried to run off the herd but were frustrated by alert pickets. They then ensconced themselves in the underbrush and opened a harassing fire on the camp. Captain Hartz had Templeton deploy Company D, as skirmishers, and advance. The Indians, not wanting a fight, fled before the soldiers closed in.¹⁷

Captain Hartz's column was another night on the road and reached Fort Phil Kearny on June 22 at 10 a.m. After Hartz had reported to Colonel Smith, the troops moved into several recently vacated barracks.¹⁸

4. Nelson Story Gets a Bargain

Although bidders were as scarce as hen's teeth, Captain Burt, in accordance with Colonel Smith's instructions that Fort C. F. Smith be evacuated at as early a date as possible, directed Lieutenant Wishart on June 15 to resume the sale of the public property. The only bids submitted were by Story & McKenzie, but Burt informed his superiors, "it must be remembered that . . . most of this property is worthless to the government," because of its great distance from the railroad. Moreover, buyers could not be expected "to pay large prices for articles delivered in the heart of an indian country 300 miles from a settlement or market."

Colonel Smith's son, who had reached the post from the Gallatin Valley, had bad news. At the time of his departure (June 4), no persons had expressed any intentions of traveling to the Big-horn to attend the auction. Three reasons were ascribed for this situation: (a) a money shortage; (b) a fear of Indians; and (c) most of the freighters had sent their wagons to Fort Benton in

Post Records.

16. Templeton Diary, June 18-19, 1868. Dr. Matthews had accompanied Lieutenant Wishart on his return to Fort C. F. Smith, and he was traveling back to Fort Phil Kearny with Captain Hartz's column.

17. Ibid., June 20, 1868. Mail carrier Harwood, who had overtaken the column on the 19th, left the camp before dark on the 20th and headed for Fort Phil Kearny. He soon encountered the hostiles and was pursued, but, in the darkness, he succeeded in outdistancing them.

18. Ibid., June 21-22, 1868.

anticipation of huge profits to be gained, because of low water on the Missouri.¹⁹

Story and McKenzie purchased what they wished on very favorable terms. One dollar was paid for stoves which when freighted to Helena, brought \$100. Twenty-seven wagons loaded with quartermaster stores purchased by them were soon en route to the Gallatin Valley. Some difficulty with Indians was experienced, and one of Story's men was killed near the Clarks Fork. On the Stillwater on July 17 Story encountered Capt. Emory Clift with the Diamond R Train bound from Fort Ellis to the Bighorn to load surplus commissary stores.²⁰

In the second week of August, Story employed John Richard to proceed from Virginia City to the Bighorn to load the remainder of the stores he had purchased at the mid-June auction.²¹

5. The Last Weeks at Fort C. F. Smith

Meanwhile, the mounted detachment organized in April, in response to Colonel Smith's instructions, was disbanded. The horses were turned over to the post quartermaster and the men rejoined their units.²² Wagonmaster Reed's train, which was to assist the battalion in removing ordnance and medical stores, personal gear, and camp equipage, arrived. Captain Burt, knowing that livestock attracted Indians, alerted Lieutenant Wishart to be on guard: (a) the stock were not to be turned out to graze until noon; (b) Reed or his assistant with ten to 15 mounted teamsters was to make a thorough reconnaissance of the area before that hour, paying especial attention to Lime Kiln Creek and the Backbone; (c) vedettes would then be posted, and the alarm would be the rapid firing of several shots; and (d) Lieutenant Wishart was to see that Reed's animals were foraged.²³

19. Burt to Litchfield, June 16, 1868, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept of the Platte; SO 71, June 15, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

20. *The Montana Post* (Helena), July 31, 1868; Among the items purchased by Story were: 4,000 pounds of white lead, 10,000 pounds of nails, seven mowing machines, and two sawmills (one steam and the other water-powered). Story proposed to stock a store he had just opened in Helena with his Fort C. F. Smith purchases.

21. *Ibid.*, Aug. 14, 1868.

22. SO 72, June 17, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

23. SO 77, June 26, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

The final weeks at Fort C. F. Smith were a hectic period for the men of Burt's battalion. Besides the usual garrison duties, large numbers of men were employed boxing gear and loading wagons. In the first week of July, Paymaster R. D. Clarke and his escort visited the fort. The troops were paid to June 30, and many of the soldiers got roaring drunk that night to celebrate. While on the Bighorn, Lt. Albert J. Neff of the 2d Cavalry, the officer in charge of the escort, died of inflammation of the bowels. With the post about to be abandoned, it was decided not to inter Neff's remains in the cemetery. Orders were therefore issued on July 8 by Captain Burt placing Lieutenant Shurly in charge of the escort and Neff's remains, which were to be delivered to the commanding officer at Fort Laramie.²⁴

Leaving Fort C. F. Smith the next morning, Paymaster Clarke and his escort was at Fort Phil Kearny on July 13.²⁵

Grass near the fort had been grazed off by Reed's mules by mid-July, and it was necessary to move them to a new pasture. It was determined to graze them on Lime Kiln Creek, west of the Backbone. As this was out of sight of the stockade, Lieutenant Matson with Company H was detailed to guard the herd. Moving out on the morning of the 17th, in light marching order, Matson's troops went into camp on Lime Kiln. Outposts were established and manned to "guard against surprise by the Indians and the Loss" of Reed's mules.²⁶

C. Fort C. F. Smith Is Abandoned

1. The Battalion Moves Out

In the last week of July, Captain Clift arrived from Fort Ellis and loaded the surplus commissary supplies, while John Richard came up from Fort Fetterman with wagons to haul away additional quartermaster stores purchased by Story and McKenzie. By date of July 29, 1868, all the gear had been packed, Wagonmaster Reed's wagons loaded, and the mules harnessed and hitched. The bugler

24. SO 81, July 8, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records; Templeton Diary, June 25-27, July 13, 1868. A team and wagon, along with Pvt. Michael Quackers, was assigned to Lieutenant Shurly to convey and guard the deceased's remains.

25. Templeton Diary, July 13, 1869.

26. SO 85, July 16, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

sounded assembly, and the men of Companies E, G, and H, 27th Infantry, fell into ranks with haversacks and knapsacks.²⁷

As the day for the post's evacuation approached, a Crow village camped nearby. It had been necessary for the whites to keep "a watchful eye on every Indian who filtered into the stockade." Mrs. Burt recalled:

Any one of them, buck or squaw, would whisk under his or her blanket in a twinkling any small article left for a moment unguarded or which had been discarded to the trash pile. Many amusing and some serious altercations took place between various bucks, squaws and owners of property.

By the hour the column was ready to start for Fort D. A. Russell, most of the Mountain Crow had gathered near the stockade. One of the chiefs, Mrs. Burt recorded,

seemed very proud as he walked under the protection of my discarded brown silk umbrella split in the creases. Another [warrior] appeared with my stolen jet and gold cross suspended from his neck. Reluctantly he yielded to my husband's demand to restore my property.²⁸

The battalion on July 29, 1868, with the ambulance in which Captain Burt's family rode in the lead, took up the march. Reed's train followed. Several men hired by Nelson Story took possession of the fort to guard their employer's property, until the remainder could be removed to the Gallatin Valley and Helena. To permit his troops and his family to get a final glimpse of Fort C. F. Smith, Captain Burt halted the battalion near the crest of Big Hill, while Reed's wagons made the ascent.²⁹

2. The March from the Bighorn to Fort D. A. Russell

Reaching Fort Phil Kearny on August 2, Captain Burt found that Colonel Smith had completed preparations to abandon that post and was anxiously awaiting his arrival to begin the march for the railroad. Within 36 hours of the time Burt had reported to him, Smith put the troops and trains in motion for Fort D. A. Russell by way of Forts Reno and Fetterman.³⁰ On the march from Fort Reno to the

27. Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, p. 167; SO 89, July 29, 1868, NA, RG 393, Post Records; Templeton Diary, July 22, 28 & 29, 1868.

28. Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, p. 168.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169; *Montana Post* (Helena), Aug. 14, 1868.

30. Templeton Diary, July 28-31; Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*,

railroad, Captain Templeton's health began to ebb. "From a strong man of robust appearance, day by day his strength failed until the hollow cheeks and sunken eyes told too clearly his days were drawing to a close."³¹ After the arrival of the regiment at Fort D. A. Russell on August 18, 1868, Captain Templeton was sent home to recuperate. Colonel Bradley and his bride welcomed the regiment to its new post, and on August 29, Smith, whose health had also broken down, turned over command of the 27th Infantry to Bradley and started for Illinois.³²

pp. 173-174. On July 28 Colonel Smith, despairing of the arrival of the train from Fort Ellis to load the commissary stores, had ordered Company A, 27th Infantry to escort a train to Fort C. F. Smith. Company A returned to the post the next day, having encountered a messenger with word that the Fort Ellis train had arrived and departed, and that Burt's battalion would evacuate the Bighorn River fort on July 29 or 30.

31. Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, p. 175. Captain Templeton with his Company D, rejoined the battalion at Fort Reno. Templeton and his men had left Fort Phil Kearny on July 30.

32. *Ibid.*; Smith to Auger, Aug. 29, 1868, NA, RG 393, Register of Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Platte.

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XIII. FORT C. F. SMITH, 1866-1908*

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A. The Construction History of Fort C. F. Smith

1. Fort C. F. Smith as Constructed in 1866

In August 1866 work was started on Fort C. F. Smith by fatigue parties and extra duty men of Captain Kinney's battalion. While working parties got out timber, men were turned to with picks and shovels digging a ditch about 330 feet square, two feet wide and three feet deep. Before the end of the month, Colonel Hazen visited the Bighorn on a tour of inspection. Encouraged by Hazen's statement that the position would be held, Captain Kinney saw that work on the post was pushed. On August 29, the day prior to Hazen's departure for Fort Benton, construction of the commissary storehouse began.¹

Twenty-five wagons, loaded with commissary stores and corn, reached Fort C. F. Smith from Fort Phil Kearny on September 10. The wagons were unloaded the next day and the stores inventoried. When the train started down the Bozeman Trail, it was escorted by Sergt. John Murphy and a 20-man mail party.² Another train loaded with commissary stores arrived at the post on the 14th and was unloaded in the following two days.³

These commissary supplies were stored under canvas, because no buildings had been completed by mid-September. We know that on the 16th, Colonel Hazen's orderly, Private Swartz, who had become separated from the inspection party north of the Yellowstone, made his way back to the post. When he sighted the post, he could "see nothing but the long Commissary tent," and he at first thought it might be some kind of Indian building. But on getting nearer he was able to distinguish other tents.⁴

* see National Register forms p. 505.

1. Templeton Diary, Sept. 4, 1866. The garrison was still living in tents, because on the night of September 7, Lieutenant Templeton's "office tent" was whipped to shreds in a windstorm.

2. Ibid., Sept. 10 & 11, 1866; Post Returns for the 27th Infantry, September 1866, NA.

3. Templeton Diary, Sept. 14 & 16, 1866.

4. Ibid., Sept. 16, 1866. Swartz, on the 9th, had become separated from Hazen's party, when four Indians surprised him as he lagged to cut some meat from a buffalo. He had held off the redmen but they got his horse.

Captain Kinney, on the 17th, sent Templeton up into the mountains for a patrol. His mission was to locate "some long timber for ties for the large buildings"--the commissary and quartermaster storehouses. Six miles from camp, on War Man Mountain, a good stand of timber was sighted.⁵

The weather now turned bad; there was rain and snow. Work on temporary barracks and officers' quarters was pushed to get the troops out of their tents as soon as possible.⁶ To speed construction, Lieutenant Templeton, whenever possible, hired prospectors or emigrants to assist the extra-duty men and fatigue parties.⁷

By October 2, 1866, the commissary storehouse was erected and work started on the stockade. Pine logs, ten to 12-foot in length, were brought down from the pinery on Lime Kiln Creek for construction, placed on end in the ditch, and the earth tamped around them. At the southeast and northwest corners of the stockade "were little places built out like the bay windows of a house," with embrasures for the mountain howitzers, so arranged to permit the garrison to sweep the area in front of the palisade with canister.⁸

Captain Kinney on October 5 made a reconnaissance to investigate sites for building stone quarries. A good site was found on the west side of Lime Kiln, within one and a half miles of the camp. The quartermaster storehouse had been completed by October 8, and a fatigue party was organized to move the stores out of the tent that had previously sheltered them. Work was started on the stables on the 10th, and by the 12th the post quartermaster had a dozen teams hauling timber for the stockade down from the pinery.⁹

After the snow that fell on October 14 had disappeared, the weather, as usual in this region, moderated and there were several weeks of Indian Summer. This enabled the extra duty men and those on fatigue to make rapid progress on temporary barracks and officers' quarters. On November 21 Captain Kinney and most of his officers rode up onto the mountains to look for more timber. Several elk were seen, and as the party came down a trail skirting the canyon, they saw some bighorn sheep.¹⁰

5. Ibid., Sept. 17, 1866. 6. Ibid., Sept. 18, 1866. 7. Ibid. Sept. 25, 1866.

8. Lockhart, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 153-154; Templeton Diary, Aug. 12-14, Oct. 2, 1866.

9. Templeton Diary, Oct. 6, 8, 11, & 12, 1866.

10. Ibid., Nov. 20 & 21, 1866. They shot at the bighorns but the range was too great. Lieutenant Templeton was astonished at the agility of the bighorns, as he watched them leap from rock to rock.

It is apparent that the post, as constructed under Captain Kinney's supervision in 1866, was incomplete. It consisted of a log stockade with two bastions, and two permanent storehouses and a number of temporary barracks and officers' quarters fronting on the parade ground. Outside the stockade were a number of permanent structures--a stable and corral, the sutler's store, and quarters for the civilian employees.¹¹

2. The Fort Gets a Flagpole

Fatigue parties were organized as soon as the snow melted in late March 1867. Quarters and barracks were improved and wood gathered. On May 13 Lieutenant Counselman went up into the mountains with a mounted patrol on a successful search for a tall tree to serve as a flagstaff. The tree was felled, but three days passed before Captain Kinney turned out a detail and brought it in. On June 1 the flagstaff was raised, and the next day the "Stars and Stripes were unfurled to the breeze . . . for the first time" at C. F. Smith.¹²

Following the arrival of Company E, 27th Infantry, at the post in June, fatigue details were assigned to get out timber and to build barracks for the newcomers.¹³

3. Colonel Bradley's Opinion of the Fort as Constructed

Colonel Bradley, on his arrival in the fourth week of July 1867, found the "Post in a very rough state," and he foresaw "a good deal of hard work to put it in decent shape for winter." Working parties would be turned to getting out timber and stone and erecting a stream sawmill. Bradley had brought up the necessary machinery from Fort Phil Kearny.¹⁴

11. Templeton to Meigs, Nov. 1, 1867, NA, RG 92, Ltrs. Recd., Quartermaster General. Templeton, on that date, informed Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs that the officers' quarters at the post were "neither fit nor intended as anything else than temporary shelters."

12. Templeton Diary, May 13 & 16, and June 1 & 2, 1867; Post Returns for the 27th Infantry, March, April, & May 1867. Templeton is undoubtedly referring to the garrison flag. Although it can not be documented, we can be reasonably certain that a regimental flag was displayed at the post, from a small staff in front of battalion headquarters, as early as mid-August 1866.

13. Counselman to Burrowes, June 27, 1867, NA, RG 393.

14. Bradley to Adjt., Mountain District, July 27, 1867, and Smith to

Some of the buildings erected under Captain Kinney's supervision were to be dismantled, as Bradley proposed to "alter the plan, so as to make the outer wall of the houses the defensive line." Indeed, every government building, except the two storehouses, would have to come down and be rebuilt, because: (a) they were "not fit to keep officers or men in"; and (b) they had been erected without regard to "system or order." Bradley was especially irked by the officers' quarters, which he described as "nothing but shanties" and a "disgrace to the country & army." There was not a floor in the fort, while the roofs consisted of "a thin layer of gunny sacks & dirt."

To undertake an ambitious construction program, Bradley called on Colonel Smith to detail him some skilled craftsmen, as a survey showed that the battalion mustered few carpenters and masons. He would like to have these men by September 1, by which time it was hoped to have stockpiled sufficient timber, stone, and lumber to begin construction.¹⁵

To rally support for his ambitious program, Colonel Bradley had Surgeon Geisdorf inspect and report on the existing hospital and barracks. Geisdorf found that the hospital, a hastily built structure, had a ward that was only 10 x 10 x 7 feet, ventilated by 2 x 3-foot windows, and had to be evacuated during heavy rains. This room would be unable to hold one-fourth of the medical stores scheduled to be delivered in the fall. It contained no quarters for the hospital steward. The kitchen, 10 x 12 x 6 feet, was too small.

The barracks were low, narrow, dark, and poorly ventilated, "allowing a very insufficient supply of air and light." As 400 cubic feet was the minimum amount of space to be allotted per man, these barracks did not provide more than half that amount. Surgeon Geisdorf considered "the erection of new and spacious quarters necessary for the comfort and health of the troops." The

Adj. , Dept. of the Platte, July 27, 1867, NA, RG 393. As there was no sawmill at the post in 1866, the buildings constructed at that time would be either hand hewn or round log. Lieutenant Shurly, years later, recalled that a six wheeled wagon, pulled by 12 yoke of oxen, was used to transport the sawmill engine from Fort Phil Kearny to the Bighorn. The mill, which was erected in the gulch, a short distance in front of the northwest bastion, had wooden gears. Hebard & Brininstool, *The Bozeman Trail*, 2, pp. 144-145.

15. Bradley to Adj. , Mountain District, July 27, 1867, and Smith to Adj. , Dept. of the Platte, July 27, 1867, NA, RG 393.

same criticism and suggested remedy also applied to the officers' quarters.¹⁶

4. Colonel Bradley's Construction Program

By the end of the first week of August, the sawmill had been erected and was ready to begin sawing lumber.¹⁷ Throughout the remainder of the month, the timber cutting party daily sent in several wagon loads of logs from the ridge overlooking Black Canyon, seven miles away. By August 27 there was enough sawed lumber on hand for Colonel Bradley to convene a board consisting of Captains Burrowes and Hartz, and Lieutenant Fenton "to report upon the best & most practicable method of erecting the buildings now in the process of construction by the troops."¹⁸

Plans having been made and approved by Colonel Bradley, work was commenced on the new buildings on October 1. Drills were suspended, and all hands not on extra duty or guard were made available for construction projects. The post quartermaster was authorized to purchase lime, charcoal, and adobes. Each company would be responsible for constructing its own barracks. Lieutenant Templeton's Company D spent October 1 hauling stone, sand, and lime. The next day the foundations were dug. D's barracks would be 30 feet wide, which was six feet wider than those of the other companies. On the 3d the limestone foundations were laid.¹⁹

To provide a ready supply of timber for the post sawmill, contractor Leighton had taken a logging crew through Bad Pass. Above the canyon, near the mouth of the Stinking Water, they went to work. Trees were felled, stripped of limbs, and hauled to the river. There the logs were formed into rafts and started downstream. The river, however, was too low, and the rafts either broke up or stranded in the canyon. Three men, Finn Burnett, Don Colvin, and Al Stevenson, the first since Jim Bridger in 1825, passed through the Canyon on a boat to ascertain how this method of getting out timber worked.²⁰

16. Geisdorf to Bradley, July 30, 1867, NA, RG 393.

17. Bradley to Adjt., Mountain District, Aug. 5, 1867, NA, RG 393.

18. SO 26, Aug. 27, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

19. Templeton Diary, Oct. 1-3, 1867; SO 52, Oct. 1, 1867, NA, RG 393, Post Records.

20. Templeton Diary, Oct. 7, 1868; David, *Finn Burnett*, pp. 199-202. Another man, Harwood, followed the trio through the Canyon on a cottonwood raft.

Colonel Bradley, when this scheme failed, contracted with Richard to haul timber from the pinery up on the mountain overlooking Black Canyon. A company of soldiers was detailed to guard the loggers and Richard's train.²¹

By the end of the first week of October, Bradley was able to report that the enlisted men of the battalion were all engaged "in making adobes and erecting adobe barracks and officers' quarters." Currently, he had 93 men on extra duty as mechanics, laborers, and teamsters. In addition, there were 33 civilians on the post payroll. Included were a chief clerk, one clerk and storekeeper, one interpreter (Mitch Bouyer), one blacksmith, one saddler, four carpenters, one painter, one engineer, one wagonmaster, ten teamsters, two hostlers, six laborers, and three Crow mail carriers, one of whom was Iron Bull. The three highest paid, all receiving \$150 per month, were the chief clerk, wagonmaster, and Interpreter Bouyer. Common laborers and teamsters were paid \$45 per month.²²

Colonel Bradley continued to push his construction program. Throughout October, November, and December, weather permitting, fatigue parties and extra duty men worked on the barracks and officers' quarters. Mrs. Burt recalled that at the time of her arrival at the post in the last week of November that the quarters assigned her family were crowded, consisting of two rooms and a kitchen. The kitchen was one of the original officers' quarters built under Captain Kinney's supervision the previous year. Its "floor was of dirt beaten hard and covered with gunny sacks. The new rooms were of adobe with plastered walls and planed wood-work." There was a heating stove in each room, and a cooking range in the kitchen. When night came, beds for the three adults, the two Burt children and Christina, the Mormon servant, "were made on the floor in the front room. Before guard mounting each morning the beds were piled in the back room and the table was prepared for breakfast."²³

The post, Mrs. Burt recalled, "was enclosed as a stockade. Undressed, pointed timbers were set upright side by side in the vacant spaces between houses. Its two gates were closed at retreat, and sentinels kept watch at its corner bastions." The

21. Templeton Diary, Oct. 7, 1867; SO 55, Oct. 6, 1867, Post Records.

22. Report of Civilian Employees at C. F. Smith, Oct. 8, 1867, NA, RG 383; SO 69, Oct. 26, 1867, NA RG 393, Post Records. The Crow mail carriers were to be paid \$33.33 1/3 each, per month, issued rations, and to be provided with a uniform each.

23. Mattes, *Indians, Infants, and Infantry*, p. 142.

rear elevation of their "kitchen and dining room formed part of the stockade."²⁴

In January 1868, whenever the weather moderated, the troops, having completed the barracks, worked on quarters for the bachelor officers. Because of the snow it was impossible to send the government wagons to the pinery for logs, so the post quartermaster was compelled to purchase pine logs from a contractor to carry on Bradley's construction program.²⁵

The decision to abandon the Bozeman Trail forts having been made, Colonel Bradley, in the late winter of 1868, stopped his construction program. No more improvements would be made to the post. It is probable that the fort, at this time, appeared much as it does in the D'Isay drawing.

5. The Destruction of Fort C. F. Smith

Fort C. F. Smith, along with the other abandoned Bozeman Trail forts, was burned soon after its evacuation by the Sioux and their allies. According to Nelson Story's son, Byron, the Indians destroyed the fort almost as soon as the army was out of sight, and before Richard and McKenzie could finish hauling to Bozeman and Helena the quartermaster stores purchased by his father.²⁶

Story recalled that his father filed a claim for the destruction of this property, which, after many years, was allowed by the United States Court of Claims. Indian claims on file at the National Archives have been examined, and while Nelson Story filed a claim in 1874 against the Crow for the destruction of ten flatboats on the Yellowstone, and against the Sioux in 1875 for the theft of 13 horses and mules, he filed no claim against the Sioux for destruction of property at Fort C. F. Smith. It is believed that Byron Story confused the two claims filed by his father in 1874 and 1875, and allowed in the 1890s, with accounts regarding his purchase of the stores and the destruction of Fort C. F. Smith in 1868. It is believed that if Story had lost any property at C. F. Smith, he would have filed a claim. It is accordingly my opinion that Richard and McKenzie, because of the presence of the guards, were able to remove his property

24. Ibid., p. 143.

25. Templeton Diary, Jan.-March 1868; NA, Returns for the Regular Army Infantry Regiments, June 1821-Dec. 1916, 27th Infantry, Jan. 1868; SO 10, Jan. 24, 1868, NA, Post Records. The post quartermaster was authorized to purchase 27,560 feet of timber at \$75 per 1,000 feet.

26. Story, "Nelson Story, Sr.," *Billings Gazette*, Clipping File, Billings Public Library.

before the Sioux burned the post. If so, the fort, at the earliest, would not have been destroyed until September 1868.²⁷

B. The Deterioration of the Remains

1. The Appearance of the Remains in 1874

In 1874, eight years after the destruction of the fort, the ruins were visited by members of the Yellowstone Expedition. One of the men reported:

We found the adobe walls of Fort Smith still standing, the neatly walled and well arranged cemetery nearly as left, except that the Indians have wrenched the gate from the hinges, and the boards at the head of the graves are displaced, and some of these hacked and otherwise defaced; but the names on all of them are yet legible. The beautiful monument in the center of the enclosure with the names of all buried [sic] . . . is but little defaced.²⁸

2. Lieutenant McClernand's 1876 Visit to the Site

Lt. Edward J. McClernand, the son of a Civil War general, visited the area in April 1876 while on a patrol up the Bighorn in search of the Sioux. McClernand reported that on the afternoon of the 27th, they rode "through the 'Hayfields' of old Fort C. F. Smith," and after a three-mile march, reached the abandoned post. He observed that

most of the walls are still standing, built of adobes on stone foundations. The roofs, however, are all destroyed; the flag-staff lies across the parade-ground, and from the manner in which it is cut, we supposed it was felled by Indians. The cemetery is least injured of all, and the monument . . . is but little defaced, the corners having been chipped away in several places with a hatchet. This monument, standing alone in the wilderness and erected by the sorrowing friends, was the last token of love for those who slept here beneath the sod, waiting long, and perhaps in vain, for the country they loved to avenge their death. It is built of limestone, which I suppose was found some place in the mountains lying 2 or 3 miles to the south.²⁹

27. Claims for Indian Depredations, Nelson Story Claims, 2325 and 3614, NA, RG 123.

28. A. M. Quively, "The Yellowstone Expedition of 1874," *Contributions*, 1, pp. 274.

29. "Journal of Lieutenant E. J. McClernand, 2d Cavalry, April 1-

3. James E. Wilson's 1879 Survey of the Limestone Reservation

In the summer of 1879, a surveying party headed by James E. Wilson visited the site of Fort C. F. Smith. With the establishment of Fort Custer in 1877, it had been determined to undertake certain needed surveys. Lt. Col. G. P. Buell, the post commander, had decided to have a reservation established at the site "to include the old government post grave-yard and the ridge containing the limestone ledge of rock on the east and right bank of the Big Horn River." The limestone was being used in the construction of Fort Custer.^{30*}

Wilson and his men, after reconnoitering the area, established the point of beginning 1,772 feet due north and 700 feet due east of the site of the Fort C. F. Smith flagstaff. The boundary was then run due south one mile and 5,206 feet; west two miles; north one mile 4,470 feet to mid-stream of the Bighorn River; then down the mid-channel to an intersection with the prolongation of the eastern boundary; and then along said prolongation to the place of beginning.³¹ As surveyed, the reservation included nearly all the "available limestone" in the area, the quantity of which to Wilson seemed "to be inexhaustable."

The old cemetery, Wilson observed,

was situated on an elevation near the river, and everything connected with it seems in tolerably good condition. The monument erected by Cos. D, E, G, H & I, 27th Inf. June 1868 to the memory of Lieut. Sigismund [sic] Sternberg and others buried there stands out very conspicuously among its surroundings being 12 feet in height.³²

* see National Register forms p. 673.

September 29, 1876," reprinted in *Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 45th Congress, 2d Session, 2, Pt. 2 (1877), 1365.*

30. GO 2, July 4, 1879, NA, RG 98. Wilson and his party had previously surveyed the Fort Custer Reservation and the Custer Battlefield Reservation.

31. Wilson to Chief Engineer, Dept. of Dakota, April 7, 1880, NA, RG 98.

32. Ibid. The monument had a stone base 3' 6" by 2' 8" by 7.5" on which was positioned a block of limestone 4' in height by 1' 8" by 1' 6" on which several names of the persons to whose memory it is dedicated are inserted." On this block was positioned a small base 6" in height by 2' 3" by 2' 2". This base had been vandalized. Positioned on the base was a limestone obelisk 6' 7.5" in height, 1 4.5" square at the base, 8" square within 4" of its summit, and 4" at its summit.

Enclosing the cemetery was a fence, 113 feet six inches long on its eastern side and 55 feet in width facing the Bighorn. This fence was built of "partly-dressed loose rock to a height of 3 1/2 feet and 2 feet in thickness. The entrance was ten feet from the southeast corner of the enclosure on the 55-foot side."³³

Wilson and his men found the ruins of the fort interesting. The adobe walls of the officers' quarters and barracks were still standing, and lent "to the situation an appearance of antiquity it would not otherwise possess." The stump of the flagstaff, which was used to establish the point of beginning of the survey, was 52 feet in front of the ruins of the commanding officer's quarters.

Game was still abundant in the area. While the surveyors did not see any bear, the working parties burning lime for Fort Custer warned them to be on the lookout for grizzlies. A number of rattlesnakes were killed, and Wilson and his men had to be careful, in running their lines, not to step on one. Having completed the work, the party returned to Fort Custer on September 14.³⁴

4. Granville Stuart's 1880 Reconnaissance

Granville Stuart, whose brother James had led the company of prospectors attacked by the Sioux at the mouth of Lime Kiln in 1863, visited the Crow Reservation in May 1880. He was looking for land on which to pasture cattle. On May 5 Stuart's party crossed the divide from Soap Creek and examined the "red adobe ruins" of Fort C. F. Smith. "What a shame for the government to allow the hostile Sioux to burn it," Stuart observed. They then visited the cemetery. There they found "a nice monument of white marble [limestone] but the Indians have shot it in several places knocking off some of the corners but it is still in fair condition." Most of the headboards had rotted down, but many of the names had been inscribed on the monument.

Just above the cemetery, Stuart visited the mouth of Lime Kiln, where a Sioux war party had attacked his brother's company 17 years before, killing two and wounding seven.³⁵

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid. From Fort Custer, Wilson continued on to St. Paul, where he arrived on October 29, 1879.

35. Granville Stuart, *Forty Years on the Frontier, As Seen in the Journals and Reminiscences of Granville Stuart . . .*, edited by Paul C. Phillips, 2 vols. (Cleveland, 1925), 1, 119-120.

5. The Ruins as Described by Miss Vie Willits in 1908

Miss Vie Willits in 1908, while researching her thesis on "The Bozeman Trail" for the History Department at the University of Wyoming, visited the site. She found much more extensive ruins than those seen previously at Forts Phil Kearny and Reno. She attributed this to the area having "remained unpopulated and undeveloped." The stockade, she observed, had been 125 yards square, and "built in such a way as to form the outer wall of the soldiers' barracks along the south." Remains of two openings, which Miss Willits presumed to be gates, were observed. Much of the south wall, which was of adobe, was extant "in a jagged line from two to ten feet high." The southeast bastion was a dilapidated heap of boulders. Near the east wall was a mass of "broken mounds." Post holes were all that remained of the north, east, and west fronts of the stockade.

In the face of the bluff, looking toward the Bighorn, were two large depressions that Miss Willits presumed marked the "dugout stables," guarded from above by a row of rifle-pits. Fronting the mound, indicating the site of the west stockade, were another row of rifle-pits.

The corners of the commanding officer's quarters were still "standing in tall columns," while a few feet in front was a hole where the flagstaff had stood. In the south wall, a few charred window casings were in evidence, while in several places in the inner corners whitewash could be chipped off. Scattered about were pieces of broken stoves and door locks, and here and there a broken bottle and rusty tin cans.³⁶

6. The Site Today

By 1920 portions of the south adobe wall were still standing. A copy of a photograph of the "ruins" taken in that year is found in this report. By the mid-1930s, when the author first visited the site, the south wall had disappeared. Today's visitor to the area can see grass covered mounds. Persons familiar with the Burnett plan and the D'Isay drawing, by studying the mounds, can trace the outline of the stockade, and pinpoint the bastions, barracks, and officers' quarters. At the time of the writer's July 1969 visit to the site, the area was scarred by holes left by pot-hunters, who have been vandalizing the site in search of artifacts in defiance of the Antiquities Act.

36. Vie Willits, "The Bozeman Trail," unpublished thesis (University of Wyoming, 1908), pp. 23-24.

C. The Post Cemetery

In June 1892 the commander at Fort Custer detailed Lt. W. T. Johnston of the 10th U. S. Cavalry to take a detail to the C. F. Smith Cemetery and to remove the remains of the deceased to the Custer Battlefield National Cemetery. When he reached the cemetery, Johnston found that all the headboards had been pulled up and scattered about the enclosure. Only ten could be located, and time had "almost entirely erased the names." Examining them, he found two names not inscribed on the monument--Mrs. Julia Roach and T. W. Randall, a citizen accidentally shot August 28, 1867.³⁷

Counting the names on the monument, this indicated that there were 17 bodies to be accounted for. Trenches were dug, and the remains buried in two rows, disinterred. Although the coffins were opened, Lieutenant Johnston was able to identify only three of the bodies--Julia Roach, Thomas Navin, and George McGee. One of the bodies--interred in the hollow of a tree and wearing a silver ring with gold set, with N. A. Buck scratched on the inside--plagued Johnston. As there was no record of a N. A. Buck being laid to rest in the cemetery, the deceased must have been wearing another's ring at the time of death.³⁸

The remains and monument, in June 1892, were hauled to Custer Battlefield National Cemetery, where the remains were reinterred and the monument repositioned. Here the memorial shaft and the graves, numbered from 572-589, may be seen by the visitor.³⁹

37. Johnston to Perry, June 11, 1892, NA, RG 92. The 15 names inscribed on the monument were: 2d Lt. Sigmund Sternberg, killed Aug. 1, 1867, in the Hayfield Fight; Cpl. Alvah H. Staples, killed by Indians, Sept. 20, 1866; Pvt. Charles Hackett, killed by Indians, Sept. 21, 1866; Pvt. Thomas Navin, killed Aug. 1, 1867, in the Hayfield Fight; Pvt. Jeremiah Osier, died of disease, May 15, 1868; Guide James Brannan, killed by Indians, Oct. 19, 1866; Citizen W. Bruce Smith, died of wounds, Oct. 12, 1866; Wagonmaster George W. McGee, drowned, Aug. 11, 1866; Citizen Charles Bowmar, killed by Indians, Sept. 13, 1866; Citizen Daniel Grouse, drowned, Sept. 9, 1866; Teamster James Strong, died of wounds, Dec. 8, 1867; Citizen J. G. Hollister, killed Aug. 1, 1867, in the Hayfield Fight; Pvt. Charles Riley, died in the hospital, April 4, 1868; Pvt. Robert Clair, killed by accident, June 7, 1867; and Pvt. Thomas Fitzpatrick, killed by Indians, Sept. 20, 1867.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

D. Maps, Plans, and Sketches

1. Hartz's Map

Unfortunately, it has been impossible to locate a detailed plan of Fort C. F. Smith. In August 1867 Captain Hartz prepared a "Map of the Reservation of Ft. C. F. Smith, Montana Terty." This was before Colonel Bradley undertook his ambitious reconstruction program. On his map of the area, Captain Hartz shows the outline of the stockade with two bastions--one at the northwest angle and the other at the southeast angle. A number of buildings, three large and six small, are located outside the stockade.⁴⁰

2. Dr. Hebard's Plan of the Post

Finn Burnett, who spent the summer of 1867 on the Bighorn, and Vie Willits, provided information that enabled Dr. Hebard to prepare a diagram of the fort as Burnett recalled it. A copy of this plan is found in this report.⁴¹

3. D'Isay's Drawing

Captain D'Isay spent June and July 1868 at the fort, and he prepared a drawing of the post based on a sketch by Pvt. Anton Schonborn. Schonborn's sketch is missing, as is D'Isay's drawing, but a photocopy of the latter is found in the Signal Corps Records at the National Archives. The photocopy depicts a stockade, with bastions at the northwest and southeast angles. The west, north, and east fronts of the stockade are log, while the south front is adobe. Positioned at strategic points along the stockade are three sentry boxes. The west gate is shown near the southwest angle. Fronting the parade ground are five officers' quarters, a similar number of barracks, office, commissary, storehouse and shed, and quartermaster storehouse. Outside the west and south faces of the stockade are located several structures.

4. Comments on the Hebard Plan and the D'Isay Drawing

There are a number of significant differences between the D'Isay drawing and the Hebard plan. While the configurations of the

40. Capt. E. L. Hartz, "Map of the Reservation of Ft. C. F. Smith, Montana Terty," NA, RG 77, Fortifications File. Colonel Bradley forwarded Hartz's Map to Headquarters, Department of the Platte on September 5, 1867.

41. "Fort C. F. Smith," found in Hebard & Brininstool, *The Bozeman Trail*, 2, 141.

forts are similar, as is the location of the flagstaff, the number and type of buildings fronting on the parade ground vary. D'Isay locates five officers' quarters fronting on the north side of the parade, Hebard three.

Fronting on the east side of the parade, D'Isay locates two structures--the right one a double building--; while Dr. Hebard locates three buildings, two aligned a short distance in front of the stockade, and a third some distance in front of the south structure. Dr. Hebard identified these structures as an office, storehouse, and quartermaster storehouse. D'Isay does not identify any structures in his drawing, but the two fronting the parade on the east are undoubtedly two of the five post barracks.

Both Dr. Hebard and D'Isay locate three barracks on the south side of the parade ground.

Fronting on the west of the parade ground, D'Isay depicts two buildings, one of which has a shed attached to its north elevation. The structure with the shed attached would be the commissary storehouse, while the other structure would in all probability be the quartermaster storehouse. Dr. Hebard identifies the two structures found in her plan on this side of the parade as officers' quarters. D'Isay also locates three structures between the stockade and the rear elevations of the two storehouses. These buildings may have housed offices.

D'Isay's drawings locates three more structures, all small, within the stockade. These are located near the northeast, northwest, and southwest corners of the stockade. Dr. Hebard locates only one of these structures, which she positions at the southwest corner of the stockade and identifies as the guardhouse.

According to the D'Isay drawing, only the south front of the stockade was adobe, while Dr. Hebard indicates that the west front of the stockade was also adobe. The D'Isay drawing locates one gate and three sentry towers; Dr. Hebard's plan shows two gates and no sentry towers. We know from documentary evidence that there were two gates to the fort, but none of these were located in the south front of the stockade as shown by Dr. Hebard.

Outside the stockade, Dr. Hebard locates the sawmill, quarters for teamsters and employees, stable and corral, and the sutler's store. The D'Isay drawing, which does not show the entire area, depicts only two outbuildings, one of which is shown where Dr. Hebard locates the quarters. In positioning the outbuildings, Dr. Hebard, although she fails to cite the document, must have relied on the Hartz Map, because the positions she ascribes to them are identical. If Dr. Hebard saw

the D'Isay drawing, she apparently gave little weight to it, preferring to rely on Burnett's recollections.

A study of contemporary documents, reinforced by a field reconnaissance of the site in July 1969, leads to the conclusion that in August 1867 the outbuildings as located on Dr. Hebard's plan are correct. Archeological investigations will be necessary to corroborate her identification as to the use of these structures. At the same time, my studies indicate that the D'Isay drawing reflects conditions accurately within the stockade, following the completion of Colonel Bradley's construction program. The location of structures and identifications ascribed to them by Dr. Hebard cannot be documented. An archeological investigation is needed to supplement the documentary evidence.

E. Comments and Recommendations*

The war fought by the United States Army against the Sioux and their allies in 1866-1868 for control of the Bozeman Trail, was important in the western expansion of our country. Precipitated by the construction of forts to protect the trail and emigrants en route to western Montana, the war was terminated by a temporary retreat by the United States. At Fort Laramie in April 1868, the United States, for the first time, failed to force its will on the Indians and make them accept its terms. The final settlement with the Sioux and their allies would be postponed until 1876-1877, after the government had been compelled to acknowledge the failure of its peace policy. That the United States failed to prevail in the Red Cloud War is forgotten by most of today's historians and journalists in writing of our troubles in Korea and Vietnam.

The Red Cloud War and the Bozeman Trail Forts merit national significance. While Fort Phil Kearny, as it was headquarters for the Mountain District, was more significant than Fort C. F. Smith, it is not now, or likely soon to be administered by the National Park Service. Consequently, Fort C. F. Smith is where the service must interpret the Red Cloud War and the Bozeman Trail Forts. The site is attractive and within the boundary of the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. Near the giant Yellowtail Dam, the site, if developed, would possess an exceptionally high degree of visitor interest.

An extensive and complete archeological investigation of the Fort C. F. Smith site is mandatory. Information from such an investigation is needed before any proposals to reconstruct the fort or any of its buildings can be evaluated by management. The documentary evidence simply does not provide sufficient evidence to proceed with an accurate reconstruction which would meet the service's criteria for projects of this nature. An archeological investigation will also enable the service to identify activities

* see National Register forms, p. 505

carried out in various buildings, thus adding to the visitor's appreciation of the hardships faced by the isolated garrison.

In conjunction with the archeological investigation of the site and a study to determine what, if any, reconstructions should be undertaken, the National Park Service will mark and interpret the site of the Hayfield Fight. This site, as well as that of Fort C. F. Smith, will be entered on the National Register.

As soon as steps have been taken to insure the protection of the area from vandals, the Fort C. F. Smith Cemetery Monument should be brought back from Custer Battlefield National Cemetery and placed in the Visitor Center to protect it from further deterioration and erosion. Already, the handcarved inscriptions are barely legible. A faithful replica of the memorial should be positioned on Graveyard Hill, where the original stood from 1868-1892. The limestone wall enclosing the post cemetery will be reconstructed.

On Lime Kiln Creek,* the site of the quarries from which stone was secured for Forts C. F. Smith*and Custer*will be identified with trailside interpretive markers. The kilns at which lime for the two forts was burned should likewise be marked.

* see National Register forms p. 673, 677.

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