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# 'Hostiles': The Lakota Ghost Dance and the 1891-92 Tour of Britain by Buffalo Bill's Wild West.

Vol. I

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Ph.D. Thesis

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December 2002

Abstract.

This dissertation concentrates on both the Lakota Ghost Dance of 1890 and on Buffalo Bill's Wild West from 1890 through to 1892, exploring the nature, the significance and the consequence of their interaction at this particularly crucial time in American Indian history. The association of William F. Cody's Wild West with the Lakota Ghost Dance has produced evidence that offers a new insight into the religion in South Dakota. Furthermore, it questions the traditional portrayal of the Lakota Ghost Dance, which maintains that the leaders 'perverted' Wovoka's doctrine of peace into one of war. It is clear that this traditional interpretation has been based upon primary source material derived from the testimony of those who had actively worked to suppress the religion. In contrast sources narrated by Short Bull, a prominent Lakota Ghost Dancer, demonstrate that it had been a peaceful religion combining white religion and culture with traditional Lakota ones, and as such was an example of Lakota accommodation.

At the same time as the Ghost Dance was sweeping across the western Indian reservations, Buffalo Bill's Wild West faced a crisis over its continued success. When William F. Cody and his Wild West's Indian performers were forced to return from their tour of Continental Europe to refute charges of mistreatment and neglect, they became involved in the suppression of the Lakota Ghost Dance. In consequence those Ghost Dancers removed and confined to Fort Sheridan, Illinois were then released into Cody's custody. Ironically, the closest these Ghost Dancers got to armed rebellion was when they played the role of 'Hostiles' in the Wild West's arena.

This research reveals some of the different forms of accommodation employed by the Lakota to deal with the demands of the dominant society at the close of the nineteenth century. The Ghost Dance and the Wild West shows presented the Lakota with various alternatives to the dependency that the government's Indian policy had brought about, while also enabling them to retain their Indian identity. As such Indian policymakers viewed both the Ghost Dance and

the Wild West shows to be a threat to their programmes of assimilation, which they perceived to be the Indians only route towards independence.

## Acknowledgements.

I would like to extend my gratitude to all that have funded my work, either through funding for specific research trips or for more general purposes: *University of Glasgow Postgraduate Scholarship*, Faculty of Arts, University of Glasgow; *Phillips Fund for Native American Research*, American Philosophical Society; *Garlow Memorial Fund*, Buffalo Bill Historical Center; *Glasgow Educational and Marshall Trust Schemes*, Glasgow; *Marcus Cunliffe Short Term Travel Award*, British Association of American Studies; *Research Support Award*, University of Glasgow's Graduate School of Arts and Humanities; *Financial Assistance for Postgraduate Students*, School of History & Archaeology, University of Glasgow; The Principal, Professor Sir Graeme Davies Discretionary Fund, University of Glasgow; The Vice-Principal, Professor Drummond Bone, University of Glasgow; The Department of History, University of Glasgow; The Andrew Hook Centre for American Studies, University of Glasgow; The Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Glasgow.

Grateful thanks are also extended to those who have assisted me in my research in the following archives: Archives II, Maryland; Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove, Glasgow; British Library Newspaper Library, Collindale, London; Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave, Lookout Mountain, Golden, Colorado; Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Denver, Colorado; Federal Archives and Record Center, Kansas City, Missouri; Glasgow Room, Mitchell Library, Glasgow; National Archives and Record Administration, Washington DC; South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota; Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming. With particular thanks to Paul Fees, Lynn Houze, Ann Marie Donoghue, and all the staff in the McCraken Research Library, at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming. I would also like to offer my gratitude to Antonia Lovelace and Mark O'Neill of Glasgow Museums who were instrumental in supporting and encouraging my work in its initial stages.

I am indebted to my supervisors, Professor Simon Newman and Dr Phillips O'Brien, who have been unstinting in their support and advice, and both Alison Peden and Ann Gow of the University of Glasgow also deserve grateful thanks. Many colleagues and friends have given support and advice over the years, which has been invaluable and greatly appreciated. Last but by no means least, for their patience, understanding, and constant support I would like to thank my family, Rob, Rosie and Tricia.

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## Introduction

In the winter of 1889-90, Short Bull and Kicking Bear led a party of ten Lakota delegates to Nevada to see the Indian messiah, Wovoka. Upon their return the delegates introduced Wovoka's religion to their kinsmen, and the Ghost Dance briefly flourished on the South Dakota reservations. But by the end of 1890 the American Government perceived the Ghost Dance as being a threat to their programmes of assimilation, and the Lakota Ghost Dancers as being hostile. At the close of the military suppression of the religion in South Dakota, which culminated in the infamous Wounded Knee Massacre, Short Bull and Kicking Bear were amongst twenty-seven Lakota Ghost Dancers incarcerated at Fort Sheridan, Illinois. Twenty-three of the Fort Sheridan prisoners were eventually released into the custody of Colonel William F. Cody, (Buffalo Bill), and in April 1891 they had accompanied a further forty-two Lakota Indians across the Atlantic to Europe to perform in Buffalo Bill's Wild West exhibition. The show spent the summer of 1891 touring provincial England before travelling to Glasgow for a five-month winter stand. When Cody decided to return home for a break, the exhibition hired a group of thirty Africans to cover his absence. In January 1892 Kicking Bear welcomed the Africans to the exhibition in the East End of Glasgow.

> My heart is glad to see you today, and I shake your hand. Long ago, we had plenty of land, but civilisation has driven us from it. Make better treaties, and see they are kept.[1] [Fig. 1]

Kicking Bear's words of welcome were particularly pertinent, and directly illustrate the Lakotas' perception of the problems that faced them at the close of the nineteenth century. Having nomadically followed the vast buffalo herds of the Northern Plains during the first half of the century, the Lakota had flourished as a formidable warrior society. However, the encroachment of Euro-Americans, and their railroads through

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[1] *Evening Times* (Glasgow), 16 Jan. 1892.

valuable hunting grounds, coupled with such fateful events as the battle of the Little Big Horn, resulted in a steadily diminishing land-base. Herded onto reservations, by the 1890s the Lakota were almost completely dependent upon the federal government for subsistence. Such dependency was in stark contrast to the independent life of pre-reservation days and a number of Lakota shared Kicking Bear's belief that it was the loss of invaluable land that lay at the root of their problems.[2]

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American Indian history has passed through a myriad of different interpretative lenses over the years that have usually reflected the prevailing perceptions of Indians at the time of writing. Thus Indians have been presented as both 'ignoble' and 'noble savages,' depending upon the extent to which any real or perceived threat from them had been nullified, through to the equally patronising perception and representation of American Indians as passive victims. Neither approach grants the Indian a voice, and instead presents Indian history from a purely Euroamerican perspective, with whites as the 'primary historical actors while Indians constitute the backdrop, the landscape, to Euroamerican settlement in North America.'[3]

Over the past thirty years historians concerned with American Indian history have attempted to redress the shortcomings of these polarised perspectives, incorporating Indian agency in their research and writing, and placing Indian characters and voices more centrally in their narratives and analysis. Such work has revealed a richer and more complex reading of American Indian history, which goes some way towards giving a broader understanding of Indian perspectives and motivations. It acknowledges that the Indians were active agents in the change processes, and although not often the masters of their fate, that they steadfastly selected strategic alternatives aimed at maintaining coherence. Therefore, themes such as resistance,

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[2] For further more detailed information on the Lakota see Chapter one.

[3] Nancy Shoemaker, ed., *American Indians*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2001) 3

survival, accommodation, and adaptation, provide conceptual frameworks for understanding how Indian societies have changed over time.[4]

When I started my research I knew little about the New Indian History, a new generation of scholars who are concerned with making Indians the main focus of their work, by illustrating Indian agency and placing more emphasis upon Indian perspectives. Perhaps somewhat naively, I made the conscious decision to avoid writing about an Indian perspective. This was due in part to an apparent lack of sources, combined with my feeling of being too distanced by time and geography to adequately second-guess what the Lakota at the end of the nineteenth century might be thinking or feeling. I thus endeavoured to avoid any such generalisations by focusing on the whites involved in the 1891/92 tour of Britain by Buffalo Bill's Wild West, but my research kept bringing me back to the Lakota and specifically to the Ghost Dance in South Dakota.

When I came across the hand written text 'As Narrated by Short Bull' I was forced to reassess all that I had come to understand about the Lakota Ghost Dance and started questioning how the dominant interpretation had come about. Thus, I came to see the immense importance in listening to Indian voices and to understand their motivations and perspectives, in order to interpret the bigger picture. It was only once I had come to this conclusion that I began to read about the New Indian History, Indian agency, and conceptual frameworks such as accommodation and adaptation. All of these ideas helped to explain what I was finding in my own research, and from this roundabout path I found that my work related directly to the New Indian History. Such historians as Nancy Shoemaker, Raymond DeMallie, and David Rich Lewis, are

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[4] Daniele Fiorentino, "Recovering Time and Space: Ethnohistory, History and Anthropology and the Current Debate on American Indian History," *Storia Nordamericana* (Italy) 5, no. 1 (1988): 101-14; Francis Jennings, "A Growing Partnership: Historians, Anthropologists and American Indian History," *Ethnohistory* 29, no. 1 (1982): 21-34.

but a few from the genre who I have found invaluable and whose work has helped with my own analysis.[5]

This dissertation concentrates on both the Lakota Ghost Dance of 1890 and on Buffalo Bill's Wild West from 1890 through to 1892, exploring the nature, the significance and the consequence of their interaction at this particularly crucial time in American Indian history. It demonstrates that the traditional interpretation of this aspect of American Indian history gives a limited or over generalised picture. Furthermore, the research provides evidence of the complex subtleties involved in the actions of the protagonists, underlining the messiness of history and its refusal to fit into clearly defined compartments.

The association of Cody's Wild West with the Lakota Ghost Dance has produced evidence that offers a new insight into the religion in South Dakota. Furthermore, it reveals some of the different forms of accommodation employed by the Lakota to deal with the demands of the dominant society at the close of the nineteenth century. The Ghost Dance and the Wild West shows presented the Lakota with various alternatives to the dependency that the government's Indian policy had brought about, while also enabling them to retain their Indian identity. As such Indian policymakers viewed both the Ghost Dance and the Wild West shows to be a threat to their programmes of assimilation, which they believed to be the only option for the Indian Nations to achieve independence.

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[5] In particular I am thinking of Nancy Shoemaker's *American Indians*, Raymond DeMallie's work on the Walker and Neihardt archives especially James R. Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Elaine A. Jahner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991); James R. Walker, *Lakota Society*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982); and Raymond J. DeMallie, ed., *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), and David Rich Lewis's article "Reservation Leadership and the Progressive-

Richard White has shown in his influential text *The Middle Ground* that once the 'Indians ceased to have the power to force whites onto the middle ground. Then the desire of whites to dictate the terms of accommodation could be given its head.'[6] At the close of the nineteenth century with the Indian Nations having been militarily pacified, whites were confident that they could go one stage further and impose 'total assimilation' upon their Indian 'wards'.[7] A general consensus of politicians, philanthropic Indian campaigners and anthropologists agreed that the only way for Indian survival was by the complete absorption of Indians into American society. The reformers of Indian policy set in motion an array of assimilation programmes with the intention of 'civilising' the Indians based upon the prevalent 'Protestant-Republican ideology' of the day.[8] Taking confidence from the scientific racial theories that proved

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Traditional Dichotomy: William Wash and the Northern Utes, 1865-1928," in *American Nations* edited by Hoxie et al., 201-219.

[6] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) xv. White explains the history of the 'middle ground,' as both a geographic region and a process, a meeting place in both senses of the term.

[7] 'By 1885, the American West had been won, and the Lakota had been militarily pacified.... Political sovereignty now resided with the local agent of the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA), whose material sources of power included the paramilitary Indian force that he paid and commanded, and the rations he dispensed on which the Lakota had come to depend for subsistence with the destruction of the pre-reservation mode of production.' Thomas Biolsi, "The Birth of the Reservation: Making the Modern Individual Among the Lakota." in *American Nations: Encounters in Indian Country, 1850 to Present* edited by Frederick Hoxie, Peter Mancall, James Merrell, (New York: Routledge, 2001) 111. Frederick Hoxie has identified 1890 as being the year when the American nation 'adopted a new approach to Indian affairs and created the machinery for effecting a campaign of total assimilation.' Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984) 41. For information on paternalistic attitudes towards Indians see Francis Paul Prucha, *The Indians in American Society: From Revolutionary War to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[8] David Wallace Adams quotes Carl F. Kaestle on the core elements of this ideology, which Adams states as being 'the bedrock of mainstream American cultural outlook' as including the following beliefs. 'The sacredness and fragility of the republican polity (including ideas about individualism, liberty, and virtue): the importance of individual character in fostering social mobility; the central role of personal industry in defining rectitude and merit; the delineation of a highly respected but limited domestic role for women; the importance for character building of familial and social environment

popular with the majority of the dominant society and that appeared to reinforce the concept of white racial superiority, the tribal culture of the Indian Nations was perceived to be preventing their elevation from 'savage' life to one of 'civilisation.'[9] Reforms were introduced to prepare the Indians for citizenship by means of individual allotment of communally owned tribal lands, the passing of laws prohibiting traditional religious and cultural practices, and a fundamental commitment to educational programmes.[10]

The motivations of reformers for embracing American Indians into mainstream society might appear somewhat contrary to the predominant racism in America at the close of the nineteenth century. Indeed, during the same time period American Blacks were facing increased persecution and legally sanctioned segregation as evidenced by the infamous *Plessey v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision of 1896.[11] It could be argued that the government's 'civilising' programmes conformed to the prevailing philanthropic beliefs that America owed the Indians for a century of land

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(within certain racial and ethnic limitations); the sanctity and social virtues of property; the equality and abundance of economic opportunity in the United States; the superiority of American protestant culture; the grandeur of America's destiny; and the necessity of a determined public effort to unify America's polyglot population, chiefly through education.' David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995) 11-12.

[9] For discussions of American racial theories see: Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963); William Stanton, *The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes Toward Race in America, 1815-59* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); and Reginald Horseman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

[10] Adams, *Education for Extinction*; Hoxie, *A Final Promise*; Christine Bolt, *American Indian Policy and American Reform: Case Studies of the Campaign to Assimilate the American Indians* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987); Jacqueline Fear-Segal, "Nineteenth-Century Indian Education: Universalism Versus Evolutionism" *Journal of American Studies* 33, no. 2 (1999): 323-41.

[11] Perhaps the best known of the "separate but equal" decisions in which the Supreme Court upheld the right of a railroad in Louisiana to segregate black passengers, setting a precedent for legally sanctioned segregation. Gossett, *Race*, 274-75.

grabbing, therefore providing a moral justification for the Indians' civilisation. However, there would also appear to be substance in the argument that the major motivation was to end the Indians' dependency upon the government for their subsistence, which was proving to be a significant financial burden.[12] Having been released from chattel slavery by the Emancipation Act of 1863, Blacks were not dependent upon either white society or the government for subsistence, and therefore there was no financial incentive to 'elevate' and incorporate Blacks into mainstream society. Furthermore, and perhaps more significantly, in the aftermath of the Civil War the 'Indian Question' proved to be 'politically neutral' and therefore posed no threat to national unity and only 'the smallest threat to existing social relationships.'[13]

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[12] For both the process and facts of evolving Indian dependency see Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983). White states: 'Although they had once been able to feed, clothe, and house themselves with security and comfort, Indians gradually resorted to whites for clothing and food. Initially they obtained clothing and other manufactured items as the result of various exchanges (first of goods and military services, later of labor and the land itself) whose terms and methods were not beyond their control. Increasingly, however, the terms of these exchanges were literally dictated by the whites. In the end, whites specified what was to be exchanged, how it was to be exchanged, what the Indians were to receive, and how they were to use it. At its most extreme, the process rendered the Indians utterly superfluous --a population without control over resources, sustained in its poverty by payments controlled by the larger society, and subject to increasing pressure to lose their group identity and disappear.' White, *The Roots of Dependency*, xix. Indian dependency was undoubtedly a result of government Indian policy and Gregory Dowd suggests that the American government set out to make the Indians dependent to get their hands on Indian land. See Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992) 117,121. An unidentified Rosebud Indian agent stated in 1889: 'The time has arrived when it is absolutely cruel to treat the Sioux as children and wards. Public sentiment is restive under the (budgetary) strain and will not long permit them to retain their present status; they must become individualized and acquire the rights of citizenship. The strain of civilization will deplete their numbers, as in the case of the Omahas, Winnebagos, and other semi-civilized tribes, but the principle of the survival of the fittest will apply, and such may acquire a reasonable degree of independence.' Quoted in Biolsi, "The Birth of the Reservation," 121.

[13] Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 33-34, 38-39.

Recent historiography has shown that American Indian responses to the assimilation policies of the US government were both individual and complex. Yet it appears clear that whether individuals embraced total assimilation, employed selective accommodation or resisted all assimilation policies, the major motivation was survival. To those who chose resistance or selective accommodation the maintenance of an Indian identity was paramount.[14]

Attacks on Indian autonomy and attempts to 'civilise' the Indian Nations of the North American continent were by no means restricted to the end of the nineteenth century, and Indian responses across the centuries were equally diverse and fluid. However, one common theme that appears to run throughout the period of Euroamerican contact is the numerous Indian religious responses that arose to deal with the resultant crises.[15] Gregory Dowd has painted a detailed and complex picture of the responses of the Eastern Woodland Indians to 'the disaster of colonialism' in *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815*.[16] Dowd's

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[14] Lewis, "Reservation Leadership and the Progressive-Traditional Dichotomy: William Wash and the Northern Utes, 1865-1928," 201-219; Adams, *Education for Extinction*; Scott Riney, *The Rapid City Indian School, 1898-1933* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, (1998); Katherine M. B. Osburn, *Southern Ute Women: Autonomy and Assimilation on the Reservation, 1887-1934* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998); David Rich Lewis, *Neither Wolf nor Dog: American Indians, Environment, and Agrarian Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[15] For an overview see Robert A. Brightman, "Toward a History of Indian Religion: Religious Changes in Native Societies," in *New Directions in American Indian History* edited by Colin G. Calloway, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988) 223-49. See also Joel W. Martin, *Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees' Struggle for a New World* (Boston: Beacon, 1991); James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Lee Irwin, ed., *Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000) 295-316; and Ronald Niezen, *Spirit Wars: Native North American Religions in the Age of Nation Building* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

[16] Dowd demonstrates that while some 'sought survival and even gain in cooperation, at least of a limited kind, with the Anglo-American or European powers. Others, in a more moderate stance, sought to decipher the secrets of Anglo-American strength, and made efforts to incorporate those

book informs and illustrates a number of themes relevant to my own research on the Ghost Dance religion of 1890. Firstly, that such pan-Indian religious movements had flourished a century before when members of Eastern Woodland tribes sought to resist perceived threats to traditional life from Europeans and Anglo-Americans. The militant 'nativists' of Dowd's research opposed dependence upon whites, initially for specific trade items and later for annuities, interference in tribal ways, and most notably land cessions. The Lakota Ghost Dancers of my own research were motivated by very similar concerns. However, one major difference between the two religious movements was that the Ghost Dance was peaceful, the Indians of the Western Plains having been militarily pacified. They knew they could not defeat the Americans, but sought alternate ways to resist assimilation and loss of an Indian identity through a peaceful and accommodating religious movement.[17]

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secrets into their own way of living. Then there were those who understood that they had failed in their commitments to the sacred powers, particularly the Great Spirit, the remote Creator who became increasingly important, probably under the influence of Christianity. In this understanding... lay the central premise of the militant, pan-Indian religious movements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.' Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 19.

[17] I am not the first to make such comparisons, see James Mooney, *The Ghost Dance* (1896; reprint, Massachusetts: J. G. Press, 1996); and Alice B. Kehoe, *The Ghost Dance: Ethnohistory and Rivitalisation* (Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1989). Furthermore, the Ghost Dance of 1890 was not the last of the pan-Indian religious movements and some like the Native American Church remain today. Frederick Hoxie stated 'In the nineteenth century, Indians met attacks on tribal religions with defiance, but tribal leaders were generally unable to stop government efforts to undermine their priests or to outlaw their ceremonies. In the twentieth century, however, the dynamic was very different, for the peyote road men defended themselves in terms non-Indians would recognize.... The defenders of peyotism discovered the power of political organization and constitutional rhetoric and turned them to the defense of an "ancient" rite; fitting themselves to the language of white piety, they asserted their distinctiveness while presenting themselves as loyal, Bible-reading Americans.' Frederick E. Hoxie, "Exploring a Cultural Borderland: Native American Journeys of Discovery in the Early Twentieth Century," in *American Nations* edited by Hoxie et al., 279. See also Irwin, *Native American Spirituality*; and Paul B. Steinmetz, S.J., *Pipe, Bible, and Peyote among the Oglala Lakota: A Study in Religious Identity* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998.

The Ghost Dance of the 1890s and the 'nativist' movement of Dowd's research also share themes with regards to religious innovation. Dowd notes that the 'nativists' believed that the Indians were in part responsible for their loss of power and that this feeling of responsibility prompted an emphasis on the renewal of ritual. Furthermore, that they 'experimented with "new" ritual in "traditional" ways. They introduced new cultural forms according to old processes.'[18] The parallels with the Lakota Ghost Dance are striking, not only did the Ghost Dance incorporate new ideas in traditional ways, but the fundamental motivation appears to have been resistance to the government's assimilation reforms, and the need for Indian control of the ongoing cultural change. Furthermore, Dowd argues that 'the disasters did not promote a steady, level evaporation of ancient beliefs; rather they promoted conflicts within communities over how best to cope,' similarly the Lakota community split into factions with very different ideas about how best to proceed to ensure survival. The extent of these splits can be seen in the fact that when the US government sent in the military to suppress the religion, a number of the Lakota worked alongside the government against their own people.[19]

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[18] Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 2, 9. 'The nativists' own innovations, innovations that would have been as apparent to them as they are to us, give lie to any notion that they sought simply to revive a dead past.... The nativists invented and borrowed, but they did so in a manner that seemed sanctioned by tradition.... The prophets' adherence to indigenous processes of religious change permits us to define them as nativists, for they sought native solutions to the catastrophe of colonialism. That their visions precipitated religious innovations, even borrowings from Christianity, is not in itself indicative of Indian apostasy. The myths teach that the Great Spirit, in times of trouble, calls upon some of his creatures to carry new ceremony to the people. Indians expected, anticipated, and actively sought such visions. "Traditional" Eastern Woodlands cultures did not set themselves in opposition to change; indeed, the main story in the colonial period is that of adaptation. But for nativists, acceptable changes were to come about through traditionally sanctioned means. By 1800, one of the requisites for such sanction was Indian control. Nativism meant, in this context, not the conservation of a current tradition, or revitalization of a dead or dying culture, but independence of, and resistance to, direct intervention by the American Republic.' Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 129.

[19] Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 18. For a discussion of Indian motivations for working with the US Army see David D. Smits, "Indian Scouts and Indian Allies in the Frontier Army," in *Major Problems in*

How individual Lakota chose to respond to the perceived crisis that faced them during the early assimilationist period reinforced the ongoing factionalism within the community.[20] Such factionalism, which was by no means specific to the Lakota, has traditionally been described as the 'progressive-traditional dichotomy.' However, David Rich Lewis has shown how limiting such definitions can be in his essay 'Reservation Leadership and the Progressive-Traditional Dichotomy: William Wash and the Northern Utes, 1865-1928.'[21] Lewis argues that 'this growing factionalism, based on what agents perceived as a progressive-traditional dichotomy running along band lines, was in fact individualistic, fluid, and issue- and economics- orientated.'[22] Lewis has shown how William Wash, who white officials dubbed as being 'the leading progressive Ute stockman,' also actively supported peyotism a ceremony which the very same officials 'deemed retrogressive and traditional.'[23] Likewise, the Lakota Ghost Dance leader Short Bull who was perceived by his agent as being stubbornly traditional, was also employed by the government carrying haulage to and from the various reservations, only stopping when the agent refused to employ him further because of his adherence to the religion. Therefore, by 'equating *progressive* with

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*American Indian History: Documents and Essays* (Second Edition), edited by Albert L. Hurtado and Peter Iverson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001) 322-46.

[20] Thomas Biolsi has noted: '[T]he Lakota in particular and Plains Indians in general have been recognized in the anthropological literature as particularly "individualistic" societies in which political power was not centralized but tended to cohere around self-made leaders, and individuals competed for wealth, prestige, and power.' Biolsi, "The Birth of the Reservation," 112, and Raymond J. DeMallie noted: '[T]he Oglalas remained a deeply factionalized people whose lack of unity made them especially vulnerable to manipulation by government officials and other outsiders.' Raymond J. DeMallie, book review of Robert W. Larson's *Red Cloud: Warrior-Statesman of the Lakota Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997) in *American Historical Review* (December, 2000): 1749-50.

[21] David Rich Lewis, "Reservation Leadership and the Progressive-Traditional Dichotomy: William Wash and the Northern Utes, 1865-1928," in *American Nations* edited by Hoxie et al., 201-19.

[22] Ibid., 203.

[23] Ibid., 208

change and *traditional* with resistance sacrifices individually complex behavior, diminishing our understanding of Native Americans' rationales and responses.'[24]

Nevertheless Lewis also acknowledges that such definitions can be useful 'as academic shorthand for issue-specific situations,' and it is with this in mind that I use the terms 'traditional' and 'progressive' with regards to individual Lakota reactions to the government's assimilation programmes.[25] To clarify, when I describe Short Bull as a traditionalist I do not wish the reader to interpret this as closed or fixed. As this dissertation will show, Short Bull was open to both innovation and accommodation, while at the same time being determined to defend the Indians' right to their own identity.

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When the Lakota began to practice the Ghost Dance they were soon labelled 'Hostiles' by the government authorities, a tactic that had been successfully utilised by previous administrations, and both contemporary and historical observers have accepted the label as accurate. The origin of the noun 'hostile' appears to be intrinsically linked to white American descriptions of perceived enemy Indian tribes, and the connection is even made in the *Complete Oxford Dictionary*.

> A hostile person; *spec.* (*U.S.*) a North American Indian unfriendly to the Whites.[26]

The *Complete Oxford Dictionary* notes its use by the *New York Mirror* as early as January 27 1838, and goes on to state that by 1860 the term appeared in John Russell Bartlett's *Dictionary of Americanisms* with the definition 'enemies. *Western.*' Significantly in its list of examples of the word's use, the *Complete Oxford Dictionary* includes a reference to the Lakota Ghost Dancers.

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[24] Ibid., 214.

[25] Ibid., 215.

[26] *Oxford English Dictionary*, on-line edition (2002),

> 1890 *Pall Mall G.* 18 Dec. 5/2 A courier has just arrived, and reports that the hostiles are fighting with the friendly Indians on the Grand River.[27]

The word 'hostiles' was used by white Americans to categorise any group of American Indians who openly opposed government policy. At the same time such labelling legitimised the Government's military actions taken to quash any suggestions of Indian independence or attempts at self-determination, regardless of whether the Indian actions included warlike demonstrations or not.[28]

This tactic was used in 1876 when the Government decided to take the Black Hills from the Lakota. Richard Slotkin noted in his book *The Fatal Environment* that 'it was assumed that once the decision had been made to force the sale of the Black Hills, hostilities with the Indians were inevitable.'[29] In order to 'disarm the administration's opponents by casting the army's role as that of defender of imperilled settlers,' the government removed army roadblocks from the path of miners and opened the hills to white settlement. It then decreed that any Lakota 'found off the reservations two months following, or after January 1, 1876, were to be considered as at war with the United States and subject to immediate attack.' Slotkin goes on to maintain

> The ultimatum was unprincipled on several counts: it made it an act of hostility for Indians to be found on the Unceded Lands, which were still legally Indian territory; moreover, winter conditions made it improbable that off-reservation Indians would receive the announcement, or could travel back to the reservations in time. There was no way the Indians could avoid being defined as hostile; and since this was obvious to all concerned, preparations began immediately for a three-pronged pincer campaign against the Indians to begin in the spring.[30]

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[27] Ibid.

[28] For an interesting examination of the language of war see Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998) ix-xxiii.

[29] Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization 1800-1890* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994) 420.

The situation was similar for the Lakota Ghost Dancers. Their refusal to abandon the religion signified to the American authorities that they were no longer respecting the orders of their agent: consequently they were out with the government's control, and were ultimately unfriendly. Therefore, in order to justify the use of the military to suppress the religion in South Dakota the American Government had categorised the Lakota Ghost Dancers as being hostiles. When the last of the Ghost Dancers surrendered to General Nelson A. Miles the mantle of 'hostile' passed to the twenty-seven Lakota men and women removed by Miles to Fort Sheridan. With their release into the custody of William F. Cody to tour Europe with Buffalo Bill's Wild West, the exciting term 'hostiles' became synonymous with the Ghost Dancers in the minds of the European onlookers.

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At the heart of the 1890 Ghost Dance religion was Wovoka, a Paiute spiritual leader and weather prophet. He was born in about 1856 near Yerington, Nevada, and at the time of the Ghost Dance was more commonly known as Jack Wilson. In the late 1880s Wovoka had experienced a religious revelation wherein he died and went to heaven. Whilst there he received from God instructions for a dance and a message of peace to share with all people. Later, Wovoka received emissaries from a number of different Indian Nations who had travelled to Nevada to learn all they could about the new religion. He prophesied that if they lived peacefully, did not lie, worked hard and performed the Ghost Dance, then dead friends and relatives would return and all would live together in the traditional way with plentiful game. In the fall of 1889 ten Lakota delegates including Short Bull and Kicking Bear set out to visit the Paiute prophet. They were gone all winter, and when they returned in the spring of 1890 they brought with them the Ghost Dance, a new religious practice that appeared to promise renewed hope for the Lakota people.[31]

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[30] Ibid., 420-421.

[31] For further information on Wovoka see Michael Hittman, *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance*, ed. Don Lynch (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

The Ghost Dance of the Lakota was performed around a central tree, a practice borrowed from the Sun Dance which had been the principal religious ritual of the Lakota until it was banned in the 1880s. The dancers circled around with hands clasped, swinging their arms to and fro, and chanting Ghost Dance songs. The ritual would be repeated over a period of hours, with the dancers working themselves into a heightened frenzy. If fortunate a dancer would fall into unconsciousness and experience visions, where they would meet and talk to dead friends and relatives. Visions had long been part of traditional Lakota culture and religious practice, and they were sought when an individual had to undertake an important venture or wished 'for something very earnestly.'[32] Ghost Shirts were worn by the dancers as an important part of the religion, and the Lakota imbued the shirts with protective qualities by means of decoration and ceremony.[33]

The dominant interpretation for both contemporary observers and subsequent historians accuse the leaders of the Lakota Ghost Dance of perverting Wovoka's doctrine of peace into one of hostility, characterised by the introduction of impenetrable Ghost Dance shirts. Writing in 1891 having investigated the religion in Nevada, First Lieutenant Nat P. Phister observed that 'the doctrine has been much perverted and distorted in its transmission to the Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahoes and other tribes.'[34] This sentiment was echoed five years later by James Mooney in his enormously influential publication, *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890*, in which he commented, 'Among the powerful and warlike Sioux... the doctrine

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[32] James R. Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Elaine A. Jahner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991) 84.

[33] Richard E. Jensen noted that 'only the Lakotas believed the garments were bulletproof. The general concept was both old and widespread on the plains, for warriors often invoked supernatural aid to protect them from an enemy's weapon.' Richard E. Jensen et al., *Eyewitness at Wounded Knee* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 10.

[34] Lt. Nat P. Phister, "The Indian Messiah," *American Anthropologist* 4, no. 2 (1891): 108.

speedily assumed a hostile meaning.'[35] In his book *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (1963), Robert Utley concurred with his nineteenth century predecessors, noting 'other Ghost Dancing tribes adopted the Ghost shirt, but only the Sioux invested it with bulletproof qualities.... The Sioux apostles had perverted Wovoka's doctrine into a militant crusade against the white man.'[36]

In recent years this interpretation has been questioned. Raymond DeMallie, for example, has argued in "The Lakota Ghost Dance: An Ethnohistorical Account," that 'the historical record does not support the accusation that the Sioux "perverted" the ghost dance doctrine of peace to one of war.' But as DeMallie himself commented 'this is a minority viewpoint in the literature,' and subsequent publications have continued to argue that the Lakota were responsible for 'distort[ing] the true Ghost Dance religion.'[37]

DeMallie's analysis was based on the ethnohistorical approach of symbolic anthropology, comparing 'epistemological and philosophical bases for action from the perspective of the different cultures involved.'[38] To date it appears there has been no systematic examination of why the dominant interpretation has been that the Lakota 'perverted' Wovoka's doctrine of peace into one of hostility or the possible flaws in this interpretation. Most significantly of all, there has never been a methodical analysis of the five Short Bull narratives recorded between 1891 and 1915, the most complete and authoritative of the surviving accounts of a Lakota Ghost Dancer.

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[35] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 149.

[36] Robert M. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963) 86-87.

[37] Raymond J. DeMallie, "The Lakota Ghost Dance: An Ethnohistorical Account," *Pacific Historical Review* 51, no. 4 (1982): 395, 387. Kehoe, *The Ghost Dance*, 13. For an overview of the literature see Shelley Anne Osterreich, *The American Indian Ghost Dance, 1870 and 1890: An Annotated Bibliography*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991); and Michael A. Sievers, "The Historiography of 'The Bloody Field ... That Kept the Secret of the Everlasting Word': Wounded Knee," *South Dakota History* 6, no. 1 (1975): 33-54.

[38] DeMallie, "Lakota Ghost Dance," 389.

These documents undermine the traditional view and give new insights into the Lakota interpretation of the Ghost Dance and the events in South Dakota during this critical time.

After presenting the background detail and biographical context for the dissertation in chapter one, the following two chapters take issue with the longstanding belief that the Lakota Ghost Dancers 'perverted' Wovoka's doctrine of peace into one of hostility. By re-examining the secondary literature and primary sources, it becomes apparent that the dominant interpretation of the Ghost Dance in South Dakota is based upon accounts of the religion given by those who actively worked to suppress it. As such these sources render a very narrow interpretation of the Lakota understanding of the religion and only a partial view of the unfolding events in South Dakota during the winter of 1890-91. When the anthropologist James Mooney visited Pine Ridge to research the Lakota version of the religion, the majority of the Fort Sheridan prisoners, a group of significant potential informants for Mooney, were in Europe with Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Therefore, the absence of key adherents of the Lakota Ghost Dance from crucial early accounts has perhaps been equally influential on our misunderstanding of the religion in South Dakota.

Sources originating with the Lakota Ghost Dancers themselves, particularly those narrated by the Sicangu Ghost Dance leader Short Bull, comprehensibly illustrate that the message brought back by the Lakota delegates was the same as Wovoka's original teachings. The five significant Short Bull interviews recorded between 1891 and 1915, which are corroborated by both Indian and white testimony, show that the Lakota Ghost Dance combined elements of traditional Indian and white religion and culture, preaching peace and accommodation. When the government banned the religion and troops were dispatched to South Dakota to suppress it, the Ghost Dance evolved into a form of passive resistance through non co-operation with government directives.

The key primary source for these two chapters is the document 'As Narrated by Short Bull,' the longest and most detailed of his five narratives, which records his experiences from November 1889 up until the summer of 1891. George Crager, the Lakota interpreter of Buffalo Bill's Wild West, recorded the narrative while both he and Short Bull were touring in Britain. The clear conclusion derived from this and other sources is that the dominant interpretation of the Lakota perverting the religion into something aggressively hostile towards whites is erroneous. To the Lakota, the religion offered hope in a time of great transition when their very identity was under attack, giving them a sense of direction that was both familiar yet new. To the American government, who remained relatively ignorant of the religion throughout its suppression, the Ghost Dance represented an obstacle to be overcome, a shift backwards towards pagan ways and thus a rejection of the assimilation programmes they were attempting to impose on the Plains Indians. When government agents reported a loss of control over the Lakota, the response of federal authorities was to reassert that control as quickly and swiftly as possible. And reassert it they did: the U.S. military's massacre of almost 300 Lakota men, women and children at Wounded Knee Creek was the most 'hostile' and aggressive element of the Ghost Dance troubles. It was not the Lakota who perverted Wovoka's doctrine of peace into one of war, but rather those who gained from its brutal suppression.

One of many such groups to benefit from the religion's military suppression, albeit indirectly, was Buffalo Bill's Wild West, and chapters four and five explore the significance of that repression to the continued success of William Cody's famous Wild West show. While the Ghost Dance was sweeping across the Indian reservations of the American West, a controversy had erupted in the eastern press over Cody's treatment of his Indian employees while touring Europe. The rising number of Indian deaths on the tour and the condition of those returning, had motivated the Secretary of the Interior to order an investigation into the allegations and to ban any further permits being issued to Indians for employment with Wild West exhibitions. The ban on Indian employment had very serious implications for Buffalo Bill's Wild West, for the Indians were an integral and popular part of Cody's narrative of

American conquest. As the controversy increased, the significant opposition to Indians appearing in Wild West shows showed no signs of abating. Thus, in November 1890 Cody cut short his very profitable tour of Continental Europe and returned to America to refute the charges that he had been mistreating the Indians in his employ.

When Cody and his Indian performers returned, both he and the Wild West Indians became embroiled in the suppression of the Lakota Ghost Dance. Cody himself was asked by General Miles to arrest Sitting Bull, but the plan was thwarted and the mission never completed, although the returning Indian showmen did work for the government in various capacities such as Indian police, scouts for the army, and peace negotiators. Cody was subsequently able to illustrate that contrary to the assertions of his critics the Wild West shows encouraged the Government's assimilation programmes, and that the experience of touring with his outfit was beneficial for Indians and whites alike.

Despite Cody's public claims that he was working in tandem with the government's assimilation programmes, by providing his Indian performers with waged employment, educating them through travel, and therefore encouraging independence from the government, there remained a fundamental difference: in Cody's show the Indians' identity was paramount. As Clyde Ellis has noted 'Cody paid Indians to be Indians, an unwittingly efficient encouragement in the maintenance of traditional institutions.'[39] Furthermore, the Indian performers were aware that 'ethnic identity need not be preserved through isolation' but that it could 'also be promoted through contact' with the dominant society.[40]

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[39] Clyde Ellis, '"We Don't Want Your Rations, We Want This Dance": The Changing Use of Song and Dance on the Southern Plains,' in *American Nations* edited by Hoxie et al. 361.

[40] L. G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 279

It was perhaps this aspect of the Wild West shows that proved to be a significant bone of contention for the Indian reformers who opposed them. With their assimilation programmes reformers were hoping to remould Indians into rigid copies of 'idealised' American whites. In order to do this they believed that they must destroy the Indian's identity, replacing it with one of white American respectability. The celebration by Wild West shows of a distinct Indian identity was therefore seen as the antithesis of their assimilation programmes. Indian reformers were also critical of the environment of travelling shows, contending that they attracted the worst aspects of white society. Moreover, the reformers paternalistic perceptions of the Indians as being childlike, meant that they believed the Indians to be ill-equipped to cope with their financial independence responsibly.[41] Yet it is clear that the Indians did not share the concerns of the reformers and they clearly welcomed the opportunity to work in Wild West exhibitions. One Indian agent recorded that 'school boys speak longingly of the time when they will no longer be required to attend school, but can let their hair grow, dance the Omaha, and go off with the shows.'[42]

If the management of Buffalo Bill's Wild West had not been forced to return the Indian performers to disprove the charges levelled against them, neither Cody nor the Wild West's personnel would have become involved in the suppression of the Ghost Dance. Touring with Cody's Wild West offered the Indian performers independence from government control, as well as regular food and a reliable income: these compared favourably with the poverty and monotony of reservation life. Therefore, the involvement of some of the Wild West's Indian personnel in the suppression of the Ghost Dance needs to be viewed in the context of the ban and their desire to overturn it. Furthermore, without the military suppression of the Lakota Ghost

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[41] For an examination of perceived Indian competence see Biolsi, "The Birth of the Reservation," 119.

[42] Ellis, "We Don't Want Your Rations, We Want This Dance," 361. For a discussion of Indian agency in performances see Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), and for a discussion of performance as a native survival strategy see Peter Iverson, *When Indians Became Cowboys: Native Peoples and Cattle Ranching in the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

Dance, Buffalo Bill's Wild West would have undoubtedly evolved into something very different. By disarming the arguments of the reformers opposed to Indian employment in Wild West shows, Cody and his Lakota performers secured for themselves and other Indians the right to work at a job of their own choice. Moreover, employment with Buffalo Bill's Wild West did not deny the performers their Indian identity, which was fundamental to the reformers' preferred choice of assimilation.

With the exception of L. G. Moses' book *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, the secondary literature has paid scant attention to the return of the Indians and the possible implications for Buffalo Bill's Wild West.[43] A number place the blame on White Horse, one of the returning Indian performers, claiming that he 'told a tall tale of cruelty and starvation,' whilst others simply noted that Cody and the Indians returned and successfully refuted the charges.[44] The mounting opposition to Indian employment in Wild West shows and the significance of the ban for Cody's Wild West is never addressed. Furthermore, whilst numerous secondary sources comment on the Wild West's involvement in the military suppression of the Lakota Ghost Dance, it would appear that none to date have made the connection between this and the subsequent continuation and prosperity of Buffalo Bill's Wild West.

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[43] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 92-105. Kasson does note that 'Cody's service to the government in this saved his career as an entertainer by restoring his credibility as a participant in the "real" life of the American West and reaffirming his right to employ Indian performers.' Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular Culture* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000) 191.

[44] Don Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960) 351. Rosa and May state 'White Horse, one of the Indians who left the company, invented tales that the Indians were being ill-treated and starved.' Joseph G. Rosa and Robin May, *Buffalo Bill and his Wild West: A Pictorial Biography* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 144.

The events in South Dakota enabled Cody to turn the situation to his advantage to such an extent, that when in February 1891 he applied to hire seventy-five Lakota performers, the government granted permission. To crown this success, twenty-three of the Ghost Dancers who had been removed to Fort Sheridan at the close of the military suppression of the Lakota Ghost Dance were released into his custody, in order to travel abroad as performers in his Wild West exhibition. Cody's position was bolstered by the fact that at the close of the suppression his close friend and ally General Miles, was in overall control of the relevant agencies at the time. The campaign against Cody's Wild West that had been launched by the Indian Rights Association was thus seriously disarmed. Not only were they unable to prevent Cody employing Indian performers *per se*, but neither could they stop him adding the Fort Sheridan prisoners to the ranks of the Indians he was taking to Europe.

The 1891-92 tour was Cody's second visit to Britain with his Wild West show, and in all the many and varied biographies of Buffalo Bill's Wild West most authors have tended to write in more detail about the first visit in 1887. However, the second tour was significantly different on two counts. Firstly because of the presence of the Fort Sheridan prisoners who were regarded with considerable excitement as participants in the last great Indian rebellion. Moreover, the exhibition toured the provincial towns of England and made its first visit to Wales and Scotland, thus bringing Cody's 'image' of the American West to a much larger British audience. Chapters six, seven and eight focus on the 1891-92 tour of Britain. Chapter six will explore how Cody used and presented the Fort Sheridan prisoners in the context of his narrative of the conquest of America. British perceptions of the Lakota Ghost Dancers, and the influence of Buffalo Bill's Wild West on their views of the Indians as 'the other,' are examined in chapter seven. Finally, through the Indians' experiences on the tour, chapter eight analyses how the allegations of mistreatment levelled against Buffalo Bill's Wild West the previous summer affected Cody's treatment of his Indian employees.

By taking the Lakota prisoners on tour with the Wild West, Cody and the government hoped to force the 'hostiles' to experience the power and might of white civilisation in order that they should never again rebel. While on tour with the Buffalo Bill's Wild West, the Fort Sheridan prisoners openly mingled with the other Indian performers and with American and European whites. They showed a keen interest in white culture and religion, gaining an expanded view of the world and knowledge that would be of benefit in future dealings with whites. Significantly, they stayed true to their beliefs, often continuing to practice the Ghost Dance years later.

The tour of Britain can be split into three distinct phases. From late June to October 1891, the show toured the length and breadth of the country doing stands of one or two weeks. Their stops included Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield, Stoke on Trent, Nottingham, Leicester, Cardiff, Bristol, Portsmouth, Brighton and Croydon, as well as return visits to Manchester and Birmingham. Buffalo Bill's Wild West then travelled to Scotland for a winter stand of four months in Glasgow's East End, before returning to Earls Court, London, in May 1892, for a summer season that ran until October.

Until recently this tour by Buffalo Bill's Wild West has not received a great deal of attention in the secondary literature. The majority of authors follow Cody's biographer Don Russell's cue, who based his account on the show's own publicity, which was contained in their programmes, and on Lew Parker's reminiscences *Odd People I Have Known*.[45] The use of the latter source has led to some factual inaccuracies, such as the often-repeated error that Rocky Bear and Bronco Bill were on this tour of Britain. In 1996 L. G. Moses gave a fuller account of the tour in his book *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, by utilising the many clipping books of the exhibition held in various American repositories. Two British authors published books in 2001, which both cover the 1891-92 tour. Alan Gallop's *Buffalo Bill's British Wild West* describes all three tours of Britain by Cody's exhibition,

[45] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 372-74; Lew Parker, *Odd People I Have Met* (n.p., [?1899]) 83-85.

devoting an entire chapter to the 1891-92 tour.[46] The benefit of having access to contemporary British newspapers can be seen in both Gallop's book, and Tom Cunningham's *The Diamond's Ace*, which includes two chapters dealing with Buffalo Bill's visits to Scotland.[47]

However, to date no one has brought all the relevant archival material together to provide the context for a more complete picture, and a better understanding of the 1891-92 sojourn. This dissertation draws not only on British newspapers, clipping books, and Wild West programmes, but also on the records of the Office of Indian Affairs and the Secretary of the Interior, in addition to a variety of supplemental correspondences from a number of different archives. Most notable amongst such archives are: The Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming; the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; the records of the Indian Rights Association, University of Oklahoma; the Western History and Genealogy Room, Denver Public Library, Colorado; the Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave, Lookout Mountain, Colorado; and the South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota. Through such documentation this dissertation offers a more detailed and complete account of the Indians' experiences on the tour, and presents a unique record of the British perception of the 1891-92 tour of Britain by Buffalo Bill's Wild West, and its Indian performers.

The use of archival sources such as newspapers and Indian narratives can pose potential problems of reliability. Generally newspaper articles comply with the paper's overall editorial stance and will only present a specific political viewpoint. However, while the credibility of the newspaper stories can sometimes be questionable, facts can still be gleaned from them when supported by corroboration. Furthermore, as newspapers would normally reflect the beliefs and attitudes of their readership they

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[46] Alan Gallop, *Buffalo Bill's British Wild West* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2001) 162-206.

[47] Tom F. Cunningham, *The Diamond's Ace: Scotland and the Native Americans* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2001) 87-188.

can be particularly good for assessing perceptions, making them an especially useful source. Therefore, I have endeavoured to make sure that the newspapers researched have cut across the broad spectrum of the political agenda in the hope of covering all angles and accessing a variety of points of view.

Narratives can also pose problems of credibility not least when it comes to translations, and this is particularly true for one of the key sources for this dissertation, 'As Narrated by Short Bull.' No Lakota version of the text exists to confirm the accuracy of the translation, as George Crager both translated and transcribed the narrative directly.[48] However, despite such difficulties Indian narratives are invaluable in giving a more complete picture of Indian agency and motivations. Moreover, as long as they can be substantiated by other sources, documents such as this one can provide a wealth of valuable information. For example, the document 'As Narrated by Short Bull' provides us with what is perhaps the only surviving eye witness account of events in the Badlands' stronghold during the tense impasse between the Lakota Ghost Dancers and the US military. Furthermore, it illustrates in much greater detail than any other text, Short Bull's understanding of the Ghost Dance and what Wovoka told him. As it stands I would contend that this document is the single most significant source on the experiences of the Lakota delegates who journeyed West to see Wovoka, and those of the Lakota Ghost Dancers during the winter of 1890-91.

At the close of the winter stand in Glasgow, the majority of Ghost Dance prisoners still with the exhibition decided that they had had enough of show business and asked to be returned home. The final chapter examines what happened to the Fort Sheridan prisoners once they had returned to America, and explores whether or not their time with Cody had the hoped for effect, namely, if they had rejected their allegedly 'pagan' religion and embraced the concept of white civilisation. The evidence clearly demonstrates, that for Kicking Bear and Short Bull at least, their journey across the Rocky Mountains to Nevada had had a much greater influence than their visit to Europe, and both maintained their belief in the Ghost Dance.

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[48] This source is analysed in depth on pages 69-72

Drawing on a wide variety of sources, this dissertation adds significantly to our knowledge of the Lakota Ghost Dance, and the importance and consequences of the interaction of Buffalo Bill's Wild West with the suppression of the religion in South Dakota. It illustrates how a number of Lakota utilised various forms of accommodation, both through adherence to the Ghost Dance and seeking employment with Buffalo Bill's Wild West, at this significantly transitional time in their history. In various ways the Ghost Dance and the Wild West shows presented the Lakota with the chance to resist the dependency that the government's Indian policy had created, while allowing them to retain their Indian identity. This argument is reinforced by the fact that both were also viewed as a threat to Indian assimilation, which the policymakers' of late nineteenth century America believed to be the Indians' only option for achieving independence.

Thus, this changes our whole understanding of the Lakota Ghost Dance and its suppression by the US military. The Lakota were not rebellious, but were interpreted as such by those who wished to reassert their control over the Ghost Dancers. The closest the 'hostiles' got to rebellion was 'playing' hostile Indians in the Wild West arena, which in turn reinforced the onlooker's perception of them as 'savages' and ultimately helped justify the suppression employed by the US Government in the minds of their white European audience. Furthermore, the peaceful religion's endurance demonstrates that the Lakota Ghost Dance had not been an uprising by hostile Indians, but was a religious movement that preached peace and accommodation, and which thus survived.

## One: Background and context

The Lakota, who are also referred to as the Teton Sioux, are the most westerly group originating from the Seven Council Fires, which in the sixteenth century had established itself on the headwaters of the Mississippi.[1] In turn, the Lakota themselves are also divided into seven different sub-tribes or *ospaye*, and these are given in James R. Walker's *Lakota Society* as:

| [Lakota name. | Literal translation. | White American Name.] |
|---|---|---|
| *Sicangu* | Thighs-scorched | Brulés |
| *Oohenonpa* | Boil-twice | Two Kettles |
| *Minikanyewozupi* | Plant-near-water | Minikanzus [Miniconjou] |
| *Oglala* | Cast-on-own | Oglala |
| *Itazipco* | No-bow | Sans Arc |
| *Sihasapa* | Black-foot | Blackfeet |
| *Hunkpapa* | End-of-horn | Hunkpapa[2] |

Each of these tribes were divided into two or more bands or *tiyospaye*, 'which were commonly composed of ten or more bilaterally extended families.'[3]

A band leader could command the respect and loyalty of a *tiyospaye* by his lifelong commitment to the four fundamental Lakota virtues of bravery, generosity, fortitude and wisdom, but ultimately he had little or no real decision-making authority. They

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[1] The Seven Council Fires represent the seven Siouan Tribes - the Lakotas, Mdewakantonwans, Wahpekutes, Wahpetonwans, Sisitonwans, Yantons, and Yanktonais. They share essentially the same language (with dialectical differences) similar customs and geographic origins. For further information see Catherine Price, *The Oglala People, 1841-1879: A Political History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996) 5-6, and Royal B. Hassrick, *The Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964) 3-6.

[2] James R. Walker, *Lakota Society*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982) 19.

[3] Price, *Oglala People*, 2.

were esteemed as the guardians of their bands, and the withdrawal of support functioned as an effective means of curbing a leader's conduct. Dissatisfied individuals could leave their *tiyospaye* and join that of a proven leader, or on some occasions they might form an entirely new band. Therefore, pre-reservation 'Lakota society was fluid and dynamic, characterised by the recurrent fusion and fission of bands.'[4]

The Lakota people were accomplished at adjusting to changing circumstances, and they had been forced to adapt to a new environment during the eighteenth century when they moved westward onto the Great Plains, after which they prospered as a formidable warrior society. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the nomadic Lakota bands that traversed the open prairies on horseback, following the vast buffalo herds and engaging in successful territorial and raiding wars against neighbouring enemy tribes, were perhaps the most successful Indian Nation of the region. However, throughout the nineteenth century the encroachments of whites, who first crossed and then settled the Great Plains, meant that this would also be a period of great transition for the Lakota. Initially, the government requested territorial negotiations, at which the Lakota appeared to fare somewhat better than many other Indian Nations. But the ever-increasing desire for Lakota tribal lands eventually led to more demands accompanied by enforced restrictions. Primarily these limitations applied to where the Lakota people could live and hunt with the introduction of the reservation system, but in the latter part of the century the dominant white society began to apply constraints to all aspects of Lakota life and culture.

Policymakers of late nineteenth century America believed that the only way for American Indians to survive was by a process of assimilation. They felt that Indians needed to discard their traditional culture and tribal affiliations, and instead be absorbed into American culture and society as independent individuals or 'Indian

[4] Ibid., 5.

Americans.'[5] One of the significant consequences for the Lakota of the government's policies of assimilation was that two distinct groups emerged. The 'progressives' concurred, often reluctantly, with the dominant society and concluded that their survival relied upon their embracing white culture. In contrast the 'traditionalists' believed that the only course for Lakota survival was staying true to their traditional ways, and resisting the government's attempts to assimilate them.

In line with the assimilation programme, Hiram Price, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, forwarded a directive on 10 April 1883 defining a number of 'Indian Offences' that was designed to stamp out practices that he felt were 'demoralizing and barbarous.' This directive was a direct attack on Lakota religious and cultural practices. Price's directive made it an offence to hold feasts and dances, including the Sun Dance, the principle religious ceremony of the Lakota. Moreover, such well-established practices as the 'purchase' of a wife by leaving property at the father's door, and polygamy, were also outlawed. All practices of medicine men, both medicinal and religious, were forbidden, and the wilful destruction of property - the traditional way of showing grief over the death of a relative - also became an offence.[6] The persistent attacks on their culture were deeply felt and bitterly resented by the Lakota, but the disappearance of the buffalo and other game through indiscriminate white hunting left the Lakota and neighbouring Indian Nations reliant on the US government for subsistence, 'a dependency that was nearly absolute.'[7] In Red Cloud's Abdication Speech 'I Was Born a Lakota,' given on 4 July 1903, the old leader astutely commented,

> The white men try to make the Indians white men also, it would be as reasonable and just to try to make the Indians' skin white as to try to make him act and think like a white man. But the white man has

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[5] Prucha, *Indians in American Society*, 24.

[6] Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 31.

[7] Prucha, *Indians in American Society*, 36-7, 43

> taken our territory and destroyed our game so we must eat the white man's food or die.[8]

These attacks on traditional Lakota culture were part of a larger government strategy designed to solve their perceived 'Indian Problem,' which resulted in a constantly changing 'Indian Policy.' Thomas J. Morgan, the incoming Commissioner of Indian Affairs, stated in his annual report of 1 October 1889 that the reservation system established for the Lakota with the Treaty of 1868 'belongs to a "vanishing state of things" and must soon cease to exist.'[9] Morgan believed that,

> the logic of events demands the absorption of the Indians into our national life, not as Indians, but as American citizens.... The Indians must conform to "the white man's ways," peaceably if they will, forcibly if they must. They must adjust themselves to their environment, and conform their mode of living substantially to our civilization. This civilization may not be the best possible, but it is the best the Indians can get. They can not escape it, and must conform to it or be crushed by it.[10]

A number of Lakota people had already chosen to follow this path and had made attempts to embrace the white American way of life, while others saw no benefit in it and determined to stay loyal to traditional Lakota culture. As with most Indians, these divisions had begun to emerge during the earliest dealings between the Lakota and the American government, but it wasn't until the government decided to intervene in Lakota culture and 'civilise' the Indians that the distinct camps of 'progressives' and 'traditionalists' arose. Such notable Lakota leaders as Red Cloud (Oglala), and Sitting Bull (Hunkpapa), clung resolutely to traditional Lakota culture and laboured vigorously against all threats to the old way of life. They appear not to have been motivated by a determination to preserve their own rank and power, but rather by their conviction that the welfare and survival of their people demanded

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[8] Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, 138. DeMallie noted that Red Cloud had made this speech when he 'abdicated his position as head chief in favor of his son, Jack Red Cloud.' See note 41, 297.

[9] Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The American Indian and the United States: A Documentary History*, vol. 1, (New York: Random House, 1973) 424.

[10] Ibid., 424-425.

uncompromising devotion to time-tested values. Such leaders as these were perceived by the government to be the most formidable barrier to Lakota 'civilisation,' and government officials therefore set out to strip these native leaders of their authority and break up tribal relationships.[11] Red Cloud noted that

> everything was done to break the power of the real chiefs.... I was abused and slandered to weaken my influence for good and make me seem like one who did not want to advance. This was done by the men paid by the government to teach us the ways of the whites.[12]

When officials of the Office of Indian Affairs sent out instructions to tear down the chiefs, their intention was to do away with uncompromising traditionalist chiefs. As a result of this policy, the Lakota were further divided by factions. Those known as progressives tried to follow the path marked out by their agent, and as they were usually co-operative they did not suffer the full weight of the government's attack, which was reserved for the traditionalists. However, as the traditionalist chiefs remained more powerful, the government was often inconsistent in following its own policies. When matters arose that required Indian co-operation, it would be the traditionalist chiefs to whom the government would reluctantly turn to.

The Indian Agents working at the individual reservations were also inconsistent, and often their assaults on chieftainship were in fact personal attacks on traditionalist chiefs whose power and influence they resented. Robert Utley noted in his book *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, that 'to accomplish anything they had to work either through real chiefs who happened to be progressive or through progressives promoted to chieftainship by the agent.'[13] Such inconsistency by the government led inevitably to confusion on the part of the Lakota, and meant that even those who wished to do the government's bidding were sometimes left perplexed as to what was required of them.

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[11] Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 27.

[12] William S. E. Coleman, *Voices of Wounded Knee*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000) 17.

[13] Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 26-29.

The rifts between the progressive and traditionalist groups of Lakota were reinforced and exaggerated by the Sioux Act of 1889, which was introduced to open up more Lakota land to white settlers. In his annual report of 1890 Commissioner Morgan re-emphasised the government's policy of assimilation, when he stated,

> It has become the settled policy of the Government to break up reservations, destroy tribal relations, settle Indians upon their own homesteads, incorporate them into the national life, and deal with them not as nations or tribes or bands, but as individual citizens. The American Indian is to become the Indian American.[14]

In accordance with this policy, and in light of the General Allotment Act of 1887 (Dawes Act), Congress had hurried through a bill applying to the Great Sioux Reservation.[15] The Sioux Act of 1888, however, was slightly different from the Dawes Act, in that it called for negotiations with Indians to buy the surplus land before surveys had been run and allotments made to the Indians. The Lakota were called upon to cede nine million acres of land, which the Federal government deemed surplus to their needs. In return for surrendering their right to 'joint undivided occupancy' of the Great Sioux Reservation, the Lakota would gain title to six separate reservations coinciding with the existing agencies, and receive allotted payment as settlers took up homesteads in the opened district.[16] In keeping with the Treaty of

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[14] Washburn, *The American Indian and the United States*, 435.

[15] The Dawes Act of 1887 authorised the President to survey, and classify for farming and grazing, the Indian reservations. Each head of family could receive 160 acres of farmland, each single male adult 80, and each child 40; for lands suited mainly for grazing, the amounts could be doubled. The actual title would not be conveyed immediately but rather held in trust by the government for 25 years, in order to prevent alienation to greedy whites 'until the civilization process equipped the Indian to make enlightened decisions.' After allotments, or before in the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior, the government could negotiate the purchase of surplus reservation lands and throw them open to white homesteading. The proceeds from the sale of these lands would then be used for the benefit of the Indians. Finally, Indians who took allotments automatically became United States citizens, subject to both civil and criminal laws of the state or territory in which they lived.

[16] The six new reservations were Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne River, Standing Rock, Lower Brule, and Crow Creek, see Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 63.

1868, the Act could not take effect without the consent of three-fourths of all Lakota adult males. A commission was appointed to obtain the required signatures, but it was met by an almost completely unified Lakota stand against the proposed land agreement.

In the national elections of 1888 the Republicans led by Benjamin Harrison returned to power, and the new administration were firmly committed to breaking up the Great Sioux Reservation. Added stimulus came with the passage of the Omnibus Bill in February 1889, which provided for the admission to statehood of North and South Dakota later that year. In order to open up the Lakota homeland, Congress enacted two measures. The Indian Appropriation Act (1889) empowered the President to appoint another commission to negotiate the best agreement possible, and the Sioux Act of 2 March 1889 laid out new terms of an agreement that the Indians must accept or reject as a whole. The commission was instructed to present the second act to the Lakota, and only if it was rejected were they to engage in negotiations.[17]

Again the Lakota had agreed amongst themselves to resist all coercion and to withhold their marks from the agreement. But this time, under the experienced hand of General George Crook, the commissioners adopted a different approach and worked behind the scenes to lure individuals away from the influence of their chiefs. This technique proved successful, for the commissioners eventually departed with more than the required signatures, but they left behind a divided people. The progressive and traditionalist dichotomy, which had existed since the government's initial attempts to 'civilise' the Lakota, was now more sharply defined then ever, and there was deep enmity between the two factions.[18] American Horse recalled

> I signed the bill and 580 signed with me. The other members of my band drew out and it divided us, and ever since these two parties have been divided.[19]

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[17] Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 48.

[18] Ibid., 49-54.

[19] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 201-02.

One of the most heated disagreements between the traditionalist and progressive groups concerned the rations furnished by the government. The commissioners had been repeatedly forced to promise the Lakota that acceptance of the agreement would in no way influence the amount of food issued thereafter. But the fear that the government would cut rations once it had obtained the desired land had not abated, and the traditionalists predicted a reduction in rations. The progressives were certain that even the whites could not be that foolish, and they confidently ridiculed the idea.

As it turned out they did not have long to contest the issue. Only two weeks after the commissioners had departed the order came to reduce the beef ration at Rosebud by two million pounds, at Pine Ridge by one million, and at the other agencies by proportional amounts. Utley noted that

> By the same Indian Appropriation Act under which the Sioux Commission was appointed, Congress in an economy move had cut the appropriation for subsistence and civilisation of the Sioux for the fiscal year 1890 to $900,000 - $100,000 less than for the two previous years.[20]

Hugh D. Gallagher, the agent at Pine Ridge, reported that 'when it became generally known that the reduction was really going to be made, it caused intense feeling against the Sioux Commission among those who had signed the bill.' Non-signers derided the progressives for being so foolish, and the signers quickly lost prestige and status among their people.[21] [Fig. 2]

It was during this critical period that the Lakota first heard of the existence of an Indian redeemer located in the west, and the dichotomy that existed on the Lakota reservations at the time had a fundamental effect on reactions to this new religion. Significantly, the Lakota were once again turning to traditional chiefs and medicine

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[20] Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 54-55.

[21] Ibid., 55.

men for leadership, and personal enmity between progressive and traditional Lakota dictated acceptance or dismissal of the Ghost Dance. The Lakota sources traditionally used by historians to suggest that the Lakota Ghost Dancers had corrupted the religion's original message of peace into an anti-white armed rebellion, originated amongst progressive Lakota who along with government officials viewed the Ghost Dance as being contrary to assimilation.

On July 23 1889, Elaine Goodale, a schoolteacher who had been accompanying a group of Oglala on an antelope hunt, recorded in her diary one of the first accounts of Wovoka heard on the Dakota reservations. Chasing Crane, on his way home from the Rosebud reservation had told 'a strange story of the second appearing of Christ!'

> God, he says, has appeared to the Crows.... He had been grieved by the crying of parents for their dead children, and would let the sky down upon the earth and destroy the disobedient. He was beautiful to look upon, and bore paint as a sign of power.[22]

Indians from western tribes who had visited Pine Ridge agency in the fall of 1888 brought the Lakota the first news of the new religion. The following year numerous letters were received from tribes in Utah, Wyoming, Montana, and Indian Territory, all talking about the advent of a new Messiah.[23] Captain George Sword of the Pine Ridge Indian Police later stated that the first people who knew about the messiah 'were the Shoshoni and Arapaho.' Sword went on to say that 'in 1889 Good Thunder with four or five others visited the place where the Son of God [was] said to be.'[24] This small delegation seems to have been the first Lakota group to visit the new Messiah. Black Elk, who had returned from Europe in 1889, commented,

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[22] Elaine Goodale Eastman, *Sister to the Sioux: The Memoirs of Elaine Goodale Eastman*, ed. Kay Graber, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978) 28.

[23] William T. Selwyn to Colonel E. W. Foster, United States Indian Agent, Yankton Agency, South Dakota, 25 Nov. 1890, Special Case 188, Ghost Dance, 1890-1898 (hereafter SC188), p2041, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group Seventy-Five (hereafter RG 75), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C. (cited hereafter as NA).

[24] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 159.

> This fall I heard that there were some men named Good Thunder, Brave Bear and Yellow Breast who had gone and seen the Messiah. It was towards the west right around Idaho somewhere. There was a sacred man there and they came back the following fall (1889) and reported that they had seen the Messiah and actually talked to him and that he had given them some sacred relics.[25]

In the fall of 1889 in a private council on the Pine Ridge reservation, Red Cloud, Young-man-afraid-of-his-Horses, Little Wound, American Horse, Big Road, and Fire Thunder amongst others, appointed a larger delegation to visit the western agencies in order to find out more about the new Messiah.[26] A messenger took a letter to Rosebud, and the Sicangu (Brulé) Lakota selected an additional two delegates. Short Bull, one of the delegates selected at the council at Rosebud, later stated:

> In the fall of 1889 I was at Cheyenne Agency and returned to Rosebud Agency in time for the issue. I then went to carrying freight for the Government between Valentine Neb., and Rosebud Agency. I had made one trip and [was] getting ready to make another, when a messenger handed me a letter. I asked for whom the letter was, his answer was, "Take it to the Council house." I done so [sic], the Council house was full of people as they were dancing "Omaha" at the time. I went at night to the Council house again, and saw two Brules searching through the crowd as if looking for some one. One of the men was "Eagle Pipe." When they saw me, they pulled off my blanket and placed me in the centre of the circle, at this time I did not know what they meant, they then selected "Scatter" whom they said was to go with me on a great mission.[27]

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Short Bull was one of ten Lakota delegates who travelled west to visit Wovoka during the winter of 1889-90. [Fig. 3] He became one of the Ghost Dance leaders of the Sicangu Lakota, and has been portrayed by both contemporary and historical critics as one of the most hostile of the Lakota Ghost Dancers.

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[25] Raymond J. DeMallie, ed., *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984) 256-257.

[26] Selwyn to Foster, 25 Nov. 1890, SC 188, p2041. RG 75, NA.

> To him the Ghost Dance signalled a restoration of the old way of life, and with respect to its doctrine and practice there could be no compromise. He believed in this restoration, and in the violent bent of his preaching we can almost visualise him riding with Crazy Horse.[28]

However, this image of Short Bull is completely at odds with the perceptions of those people who actually met him. For example James R. Walker, the agency physician at Pine Ridge, described Short Bull as

> an open, generous and kind-hearted man who attends with diligence to his own business, frequenting public places only when necessity makes this necessary, and remaining quietly at home most of the time. He is one of the few chiefs remaining.... and in all respects in which it could be expected of him he proves himself a real gentleman. His face always wears a smile, telling unmistakenly that nature made him gentle and benevolent.[29]

It is likely that Short Bull (Tatanka Ptecela) was born circa 1847 in Nebraska's Niobrara River country.[30] Prior to reservation days he had been a notable warrior and had taken part in numerous skirmishes with such traditional Lakota enemies as the Crow, the Flatheads and the Pawnee. In the winter of 1869 he was involved in a fight on the headwaters of Big Dry Creek in Montana. The incident, which has been recorded by some Lakota historians as 'Killed Thirty Crows,' occurred when the Lakota cornered a party of Crow warriors on a knoll. At the great cost of fourteen killed and eighteen wounded, the Lakota quickly succeeded in slaying all the Crows.

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[27] George C. Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," (MS [1891]) 1, Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave, Golden, Colorado (hereafter BBMG).

[28] Thomas Overholt, "Short Bull, Black Elk, Sword, and the 'Meaning' of the Ghost Dance," *Religion*, 8 (spring, 1978): 187.

[29] Eli S. Ricker quoted in Ronald McCoy, "Short Bull: Lakota Visionary, Historian and Artist," *American Indian Art Magazine*, (summer, 1992): 57.

[30] Tatanka Ptecela is given in Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, 284. A narrative by Short Bull is accredited to 'Chases Bug [Wabluska Kuwa], otherwise known as Short Bull,' in Eugene Buechel, *Lakota Tales and Texts in Translation* (Chamberlain, S.D.: Tipi Press Printing, 1998) 518. For a discussion of Short Bull's date of birth, see McCoy, "Short Bull," 55; and Wilhelm Wildhage, "Material on Short Bull," *Native American Studies*, 4, no.1 (1990): 35.

In a graphic depiction of the fight Short Bull shows himself as suffering three wounds and his brother as having been slain. The winter count of White Bull records the winter of 1872 as 'A Crow Riding a White Horse was Killed.' The explanation states that Poor Elk had killed the Crow's horse, that Red Eagle had killed the Crow himself and that 'Short Bull, a Brule, had counted coup.' A few years later he was involved in the Battle of the Little Big Horn, and is recorded as having subsequently painted 'a canvas tipi wall... depicting the Custer Massacre.'[31]

By 1889 Short Bull had become a well-respected Medicine Man in the Wazhaza band of the Sicangu Lakota. His commitment to traditional Lakota culture and religion is illustrated by events in 1879, when Cicero Newall, the new Rosebud reservation Indian Agent, threatened to prohibit the Sun Dance. Short Bull, along with Two Heart, led a group of Sicangu off the reservation with the intention of joining Sitting Bull in Canadian exile. They were pursued by the U.S. army and were returned to their reservation on 15 October 1879, after having been captured and put on a steamboat.[32]

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[31] McCoy, "Short Bull," 59-60; Stanley Vestal [Walter Stanley Campbell], *Sitting Bull: Champion of the Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957) 113-17. Another winter count (pictographic history), possibly derived from the same source, and kept by Susan Bettelyoun Bordeaux, is almost identical, 'Poor Elk shot a Crow's horse and Red Eagle the Crow Indian, Short Bull counted coup.' To 'count coup' meant that a warrior had touched the body of an enemy while at war. See Wildhage, "Material on Short Bull," 35. Wolfgang Haberland, "Adrian Jacobson on Pine Ridge Reservation 1910," *European Review of Native American Studies*, 1, no. 1 (1988): 13. Not to be confused with the Oglala (Grant) Short Bull who rode with Crazy Horse, see Gregory F. Michno, *Lakota Noon: The Indian Narrative of Custer's Defeat* (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Co., 1997).

[32] Richmond Clow, "The Rosebud Sioux: The Federal Government and the Reservation Years, 1878-1940" (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1977) 17-18. Wildhage, "Material on Short Bull," 35; McCoy, "Short Bull," 55. This commitment is also illustrated by the Short Bull narrative "Sending Spirits to the Spirit World," in which he protests against the arrest of a member of his band, who had given away his property in accordance with the traditional Lakota Giveaway, when his son had died. See Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, 141-42.

In the fall of 1889 Short Bull was working as a freighter for the Government, transporting goods between Valentine, Nebraska and the Rosebud Agency, when he and Scatter were chosen at a Council meeting to go 'on a great mission.' At the Council meeting Standing Bear gave Short Bull a new blanket and leggings before telling him of his assignment.

> "We have a letter from the West saying the Father has come and we want you to go and see him. You must try and get there, see him, recognize him and tell us what he says and we will do it. Be there with a big heart. Do not fail."[33]

Short Bull later recalled, 'I was called by Jocko Wilson to go and I went to see him.... He wanted a man who would be straight and would not lie.'[34] In addition to Short Bull and Scatter, eight others were selected by the Lakota as delegates, namely Kicking Bear, He Dog, Flat Iron, Yellow Knife, Brave Bear, Twist Back, Yellow Breast and Broken Arm.[35] They travelled west throughout the winter in order to find out all they could about the new religion.

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[33] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 1, BBMG.

[34] Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, 142-143.

[35] Short Bull's list corresponds only in part with previously published lists, but this might simply mean that Short Bull knew some of the Oglala by different names. Black Elk states, 'So Kicking Bear, Short Bull, Bear Comes Out and (Mash the) Kettle and a party started out to find out more about this sacred man and see him if possible.' DeMallie, *Sixth Grandfather*, 257-258. Sword states: 'Good Thunder, Cloud Horse, Yellow Knife, and Short Bull visited the place again in 1890 and saw the messiah.' Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 159. Mooney concluded: 'The delegates chosen were Good Thunder, Flat Iron, Yellow Breast, and Broken Arm, from Pine Ridge; Short Bull and another from Rosebud, and Kicking Bear from Cheyenne River agency.' Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 182. Utley states: 'In all there were eleven and they travelled together. From Pine Ridge went Good Thunder, Yellow Breast, Flat Iron, Broken Arm, Cloud Horse, Yellow Knife, Elk Horn, and Kicks Back. Short Bull and Mash the Kettle represented Rosebud, and Kicking Bear represented Cheyenne River.' Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 61. Luther Standing Bear calls Short Bull's companion 'Ce-re-aka-ruga-pi, or Breaks-the-Pot-on-Him.' Which might suggest that Scatter and Mash the Kettle are one and the same. Luther Standing Bear, *My People, The Sioux*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975) 218.

On his return in the spring of 1890, Short Bull was questioned by the Rosebud agent and admonished not to practice the new religion. But by October the Ghost Dance was in full swing on the Rosebud reservation having been started by Scatter, and after 'occasionally visiting the dances' Short Bull finally participated, 'becoming in time a "regular" dancer - day and night.'[36] The movement of his band towards the Pine Ridge agency, which was seen by the government as sign of hostility, was instead fundamental to the ongoing boundary dispute brought about by the Sioux Act of 1889. With the arrival of the military and rumours of his impending arrest, he led his people away from the Pine Ridge agency into the Badlands where they continued to practice the Ghost Dance without interruption. At the close of the military suppression of the Lakota Ghost Dance, Short Bull was arrested with twenty-six others and removed to Fort Sheridan by General Miles, who intended to hold them as 'hostages' to ensure that the Lakota would keep the peace.[37]

In March of 1891 Short Bull and twenty-two of the other prisoners were released into the custody of William F. Cody, in order to travel to Europe for two years performing in Buffalo Bill's Wild West.[38] One year later Short Bull returned to Fort Sheridan, where he and Kicking Bear were imprisoned for a further five months. Afterwards he returned to South Dakota where he lived with his children and two wives, Plenty Shell and Comes Out, at Allen on the Pine Ridge Reservation. He continued to believe in

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[36] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 8-9, BBMG.

[37] Ibid., 8-11. See also U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1891 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 411. For information on the boundary dispute see Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 78-79. Nelson A. Miles, *Serving the Republic: Memoirs of the Civil and Military Life of Nelson A. Miles Lieutenant-General, United States Army* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1911) 245.

[38] Short Bull's only involvement with Cody subsequent to this tour was in 1913 when he appeared in Cody's film re-enactment of the Wounded Knee massacre. Both McCoy and Wildhage erroneously state that Short Bull continued to work for Buffalo Bill's Wild West after the 1891/92 tour, citing John Burke, *Buffalo Bill: The Noblest Whiteskin* (London: Cassell, 1974) 226. See McCoy, "Short Bull," 57; Wildhage, "Material on Short Bull," 35-36.

the Ghost Dance religion and was one of the few remaining traditional holy men.[39] Throughout his life he kept a pictorial record of past events known as a winter count, and a record of his life by means of images, both painted and carved.[40] He was interviewed on a number of occasions by people who were interested in traditional Lakota culture and more specifically the Ghost Dance, and is responsible for what is perhaps the single most significant source coming directly from the Lakota Ghost Dancers.

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Short Bull's longest and most detailed account of the Ghost Dance, narrated in the summer of 1891, came about through his brief involvement with Buffalo Bill's Wild West. His engagement as a performer in the exhibition was mutually beneficial to both himself - in that it released him from incarceration at Fort Sheridan - and the exhibition's figurehead Buffalo Bill, who was enabled to continue his preferred choice of presenting genuine participants of recent western history to his audiences. William Frederick Cody (Buffalo Bill) had risen to national fame as an Indian scout and buffalo hunter, but it was his role as a showman with Buffalo Bill's Wild West that brought him international renown.[41] [Fig. 4]

The inaugural performance of Buffalo Bill's Wild West was given in May 1884 in St Louis, Missouri. Within the exhibition Cody presented an image of the West as a place of excitement and danger, based loosely upon his own personal experiences. He proved to be an incisive judge of public taste, and had found a combination that

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[39] Clark Wissler, *Indians of the United States: Four Centuries of Their History and Culture* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1951) 175; Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, 47; Wolfgang Haberland, "Die Oglala-Sammlung Weygold im Hamburgischen Museum Fuer Voelkerkunde (Teil 3)," *Mitteilungen Aus Dem Museum Fuer Voelkurkunde Zu Hamburg, NF*, 6 (1976): 22.

[40] See Wildhage, "Material on Short Bull," 38-41.

[41] For the history of Buffalo Bill and his Wild West exhibition see Russell, *Lives and Legends*; Rosa and May, *Buffalo Bill and his Wild West*; Paul Reddin, *Wild West Shows* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), and Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*.

appealed universally to audiences both in the United States and Europe. The exhibition portrayed the 'heyday of the West as a glorious period, based around the adventures of cowboys and Indians.'[42] The shows included such stock acts as bronco busting, horseback riding, trick shooting, roping, hunting, shootouts, and exciting skirmishes with Indians. Frontier life was presented as being dramatic and exciting, appealing to the nostalgic spirit of the time, and set piece acts such as 'Custer's Last Stand' served to reinforce Western myth as reality and greatly influenced public perceptions of the American West.[43]

One of Cody's most fortuitous decisions was to take on as a partner Nate Salsbury, whose expertise in business and showmanship contributed greatly to the exhibition's unrivalled prosperity.[44] John M. Burke, who had worked with Cody during his early theatrical tours, worked tirelessly as the Wild West's Press Agent and General Manager. Burke devoted his life to the promotion of Cody and his Wild West show, becoming the exhibition's most vigorous advocate and was immensely influential to its widespread appeal.[45] [Fig. 5.] After a shaky start, the popularity of the shows grew, attracting almost 200,000 visitors in one week alone in New York.[46] People from all

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[42] Martin Pegler and Graeme Rimer, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (Leeds: Royal Armouries Museum, 1999) 12.

[43] Libby Custer commented that the Wild West was the 'most realistic and faithful representation of a western life that has ceased to be, with advancing civilization.' Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 321-22.

[44] Cody and Salsbury's partnership was by no means an untroubled one, indeed in one of his reminiscences, entitled 'Secret Service,' Salsbury noted that when he came to write his 'famous book' he intended to call it "Sixteen Years in Hell with Buffalo Bill." Nathan Salsbury Papers, Series II, Personal Papers, Box 2, Folders 63/64, "Reminiscences," Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library, Connecticut.

[45] Russell noted, that Burke was 'one of the founders of the art of press-agentry, and to him goes much of the credit for making the name of Buffalo Bill a household word. It is also possible that the subsequent deterioration in the reputation of Buffalo Bill is due to Burke's exaggerations, his inconsistencies, his flagrant misquotations, and his lazy carelessness.' Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 203.

[46] See Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 322.

walks of life wanted to see Buffalo Bill's Wild West, and more importantly be seen to be there. The displays began to revolve around a format that was to remain basically the same for the next thirty years, and the Indians became one of the biggest attractions within the exhibition.

Cody had realised the potential popularity of authentic 'actors' during his early theatrical career and recognised that the 'public embraced characters who, if not actors, were nevertheless frontiersmen.' In order to give the performances added authenticity he therefore hired a few Indians to perform with his group.[47] As L. G. Moses pointed out in his book, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933,*

> There was nothing extraordinary in the employment of Indians to lend an air of authenticity to enterprises ranging from gallery exhibitions to melodramas. Indeed, Indians had been appearing regularly in circuses, carnivals, medicine shows, and plays since the 1840s.... Buffalo Bill, however, changed the nature of Indian employment and ushered in the heyday of the Show Indians.[48]

Initially Cody employed Pawnee Indians and this choice was most likely influenced by Cody's acquaintance with Major Frank North, who had previously commanded four companies of Pawnee scouts.[49] Then in 1885 Cody hired the infamous Lakota medicine man Sitting Bull, and his focus shifted to the Lakota.[50] Moses stated:

> Sitting Bull became the first great Show Indian. A headliner himself, he attracted as much attention as Buffalo Bill. Although he toured just one season, his employment established a course for all subsequent shows. Few of the Show Indians possessed the stature or notoriety of Sitting Bull; but his association with the Lakota victory over Custer at

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[47] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933,* 18.

[48] Ibid., 19, 21.

[49] 'Major Frank North, Chief of Pawnee Scouts.' *Buffalo Bill's Wild West,* 1884 program, William F. Cody Collection (MS:6), Series VI: A - programs, Box 1, McCracken Research Library, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming (hereafter BBHC), It is also believed that Cody had at sometime in the initial stages of his career employed both Arapaho and Omaha Indians.

[50] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933,* 23.

> the Little Bighorn secured his exemplary status. His employment, along with eight others from his band, represented the shift of Show Indian employment to the northern plains. The Sioux became the most prized Show Indians. Their reputations as warriors confirmed the image of Indians in the minds of Americans and eventually Europeans who saw their performances.[51]

Over the years Cody employed a multitude of Indian performers, and it has even been claimed that Buffalo Bill's Wild West 'was their largest employer outside of reservation areas.' [52] Yet there were many critics of the shows, and Indian reformers deplored both their use and depiction of American Indians. L. G. Moses commented, in his article, 'Wild West Shows, Reformers and the Image of the American Indian, 1887-1914.'

> Almost from the beginning of Indian participation in Wild West shows, allegations of mistreatment and exploitation reached the various secretaries of the interior and commissioners of Indian affairs, causing them to be concerned about the shows' effects on assimilationist programs and on the image of the Indian in the popular mind.[53]

In order to placate the concerns of officials at the Office of Indian Affairs, Cody's first contract in 1886 had stated that the company resolved to protect the Indians from 'all immoral influences and surroundings.' It went on to state that when selecting Indians for exhibition 'they will, as far as possible select married men who shall be accompanied on the exhibition tour by their wives, and all such women shall be fed and clothed and cared for, and returned to their respective homes.' Furthermore, they would select only Indians of the same religious faith, and promised to hire 'a representative... selected by some religious church or society... with a view to accompanying the Exhibition... and looking after... [the Indians'] moral welfare.'[54]

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[51] Ibid., 30.

[52] Pegler and Rimer, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 11.

[53] L. G. Moses, "Wild West Shows, Reformers, and the Image of the American Indian, 1887-1914," *South Dakota History*, 14 (1984): 193.

[54] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 32-33.

Nevertheless criticism of the use of Indian employees continued. Therefore, in February 1889 the government introduced a new form of contract.[55] The document stipulated,

> that the Indians engaged are to be paid a fair and reasonable compensation for their time and services, that they be properly fed and comfortably clothed, and cared for in case of sickness or disability, and they be returned to the Agency to which they belong when the time for which they shall engage themselves shall have expired.... That no Indian be unwillingly taken away from the reservation... and that each of the Indians engaging himself or herself to accompany the show, clearly and fully understand and agree to the terms of their employment....
>
> It is directed, in amendment of the former practice, that there must be a separate agreement made with each Indian, specifying fully all that is to be done by him, and all that is to be done for him, his care and keeping, and this should be approved by the Agent and... [the Office of Indian Affairs] before the Indian leaves the reservation.[56]

Agents were requested to forward the individual contracts to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. If the contract was authorised by the Commissioner, he would then set a bond for the show to deposit, which could range between two and twenty thousand dollars depending on the number of Indians employed.[57]

Yet such regulation was dismissed as woefully inadequate by reformers who wanted to put an end to this type of Indian employment. But as Commissioner John H. Oberly commented in April 1889, he was in no position 'to restrain the liberty of the law abiding person or citizen because in [my] opinion or the opinion of someone else that person or citizen will make an injudicious use of his liberty.'[58] Instead, Oberly felt he

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[55] Vilas to CIA, 1 Mar. 1889, Pine Ridge (hereafter PR) General Records, Miscellaneous Correspondence Received, Jan 1882-Dec. 1890, Box 27, RG 75, Federal Archives and Record Center, Kansas City, Mo. (hereafter FARC); Vilas to CIA, 18 Feb. 1889, PR Gen. Rec. ibid, RG 75, FARC.

[56] Vilas to CIA, 1 Mar. 1889, PR Gen. Rec., Box 27, RG 75, FARC; Vilas to CIA, 18 Feb. 1889, PR Gen. Rec. ibid, RG 75, FARC.

[57] Moses, "Wild West Shows," 201-02.

[58] Oberly's argument was based on 'the case of Standing Bear in 1879, in which the court had acknowledged the right of a peaceful Indian to come and go as he wished with the same freedom

could only outline the Bureau's opposition to Indians appearing in Wild West shows.[59] Thomas Morgan, a Baptist minister and educator, succeeded Oberly as Commissioner of Indian Affairs in June 1889. Moses noted that unlike Oberly, Morgan did not hesitate to

> use the coercive powers of his office... regardless of whether his actions violated individual rights.... Although he had no statutory authority to prohibit Indians from joining the shows, he could threaten aspiring showmen with the loss of their allotments, annuities, and tribal status.[60]

In November 1889, Morgan sent a circular to all his agents, stating that he was, 'desirous of collecting the fullest possible information regarding the effects upon the Indians of the so-called "Wild West" shows and similar exhibitions, with a view of suggesting such modifications in the policy of the Department as the facts may warrant.'[61] He asked for lists of Indians who had been connected with any show during the previous five years and for the names of Indians who were still absent from their reservations. He wanted to know 'what manner of life' the returned showmen were living, what influence they were having on their associates, and what the general health of the returnees was, including diseases bought back to the reservations. Morgan ended his memorandum with a question: 'What in your judgement should the Government do about such shows?'[62] In collating such information, Morgan hoped ultimately 'to win legislation from Congress that would expand the powers of his office.'[63]

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accorded to the white man.' Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976) 321; Moses, "Wild West Shows," 203.

[59] See Moses, "Wild West Shows," 199, and Rosa and May, *Buffalo Bill and his Wild West*, 147.

[60] Moses, "Wild West Shows," 203.

[61] CIA to Gallagher, 1 Nov. 1889, PR Gen. Rec., Corres. Rec'd from Office of Indian Affairs, Oct. 1880-Dec. 1890, box 9, RG 75, FARC.

[62] Ibid.; Moses, "Wild West Shows," 203-04.

[63] Moses, "Wild West Shows," 204; Vilas to CIA, 18 Feb. 1889, PR Gen. Rec., Box 27, RG 75, FARC.

The investigation confirmed Morgan's belief 'that the influence of "Wild West" and other similar shows has been harmful both to the Indians individually participating in the "shows" and also to the Indians generally.' He asserted that it was 'in the interest of Indian civilization and advancement' and the 'the duty of this Office to use all its influence to prevent Indians from joining such exhibitions.' Indian Agents were requested to inform all Indians that the Office of Indian Affairs was convinced that 'the practice of leaving reservations to join exhibitions is evil in its tendency and results.' In a memorandum distributed to individual agents Morgan outlined six points:

1. Traveling about the country on such expeditions fosters idleness and a distaste for steady occupation.
2. The Indians are brought in contact with people of low character, and learn the worst habits of the white race.
3. As a result they frequently return home wrecked morally and physically.
4. In such cases, after their return home, their influence and example among the other Indians is the worst possible.
5. During their absence their families often suffer for want of the care and assistance which they should be on hand to render.
6. Those who, without authority, entice Indians from their reservations to join exhibitions are apt to be unprincipled persons who care only for making money and who, in cases of illness or misfortune, might abandon the Indians far from home, penniless, among strangers. This has occurred several times.[64]

The Commissioner instructed the agents to 'impress upon the Indians the importance of remaining at home and devoting their time and energies to establishing comfortable homes, cultivating farms, building houses, and acquiring thrifty, industrious habits and surrounding themselves with the comforts of a worthy type of civilization.' He ended with a note of caution for any Indians who chose to ignore this advice and join such exhibitions, which was that 'they must not look to this Office for favor or assistance.'[65]

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[64] CIA to Indian Agents, circular, 8 Mar. 1890, PR Gen. Rec., box 27, RG 75, FARC.

[65] Ibid.

Therefore in the summer of 1890 the stage was set not just for a showdown between the Lakota Ghost Dancers and the US government, but also between the reformers of Indian policy, which included influential people in the Office of Indian Affairs, and Wild West Shows. Significantly at the bottom of both conflicts lay the programmes of assimilation, which the government believed to be the only option for American Indians at the close of the nineteenth century. With the absorption of Indians as individuals into mainstream American society the 'Indian problem' would be solved, 'for there would be no more persons identified as Indians. The Indian Office would wither away, and government paternalism toward the Indians would be at an end.'[66]

The Ghost Dance threatened assimilation on a number of fronts. Firstly in a practical way, in that it diverted the Indians' attention away from the assimilationists' agricultural and educational programs, and secondly in an ideological way, in that it maintained a Lakota perspective on religious matters and reinforced the very communal ideas reformers were attempting to break down. The Wild West shows were also perceived to jeopardise the assimilation programmes in a variety of ways. They were also seen to be a diversion from the preferred routes to independence of working an allotment, with performers being absent for months or years at a time. Furthermore, the financial compensation from appearing in such shows was far greater than any income Indians could expect to earn from agriculture. However, the Wild West show's greatest threat was their perceived confusing message to the Indians about what was required of them. They did offer employment and wages that could indeed encourage independence, but the very fact that they celebrated the performers' Indianness was an anathema to reformers, who instead wished to remould American Indian identity based on a sanitised self-image of white society.

Accordingly, as this dissertation will show, both the Lakota Ghost Dancers and the Wild West's Indian performers rejected total assimilation, and instead favoured the

more acceptable methods of accommodation or adaptation. That these Indians were successful in the long run is illustrated by the fact that despite the rigorous and sometimes brutal applications of the assimilationist programs, American Indians did survive as a distinct part of the larger American society.

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[66] Prucha, *Indians in American Society*, 24.

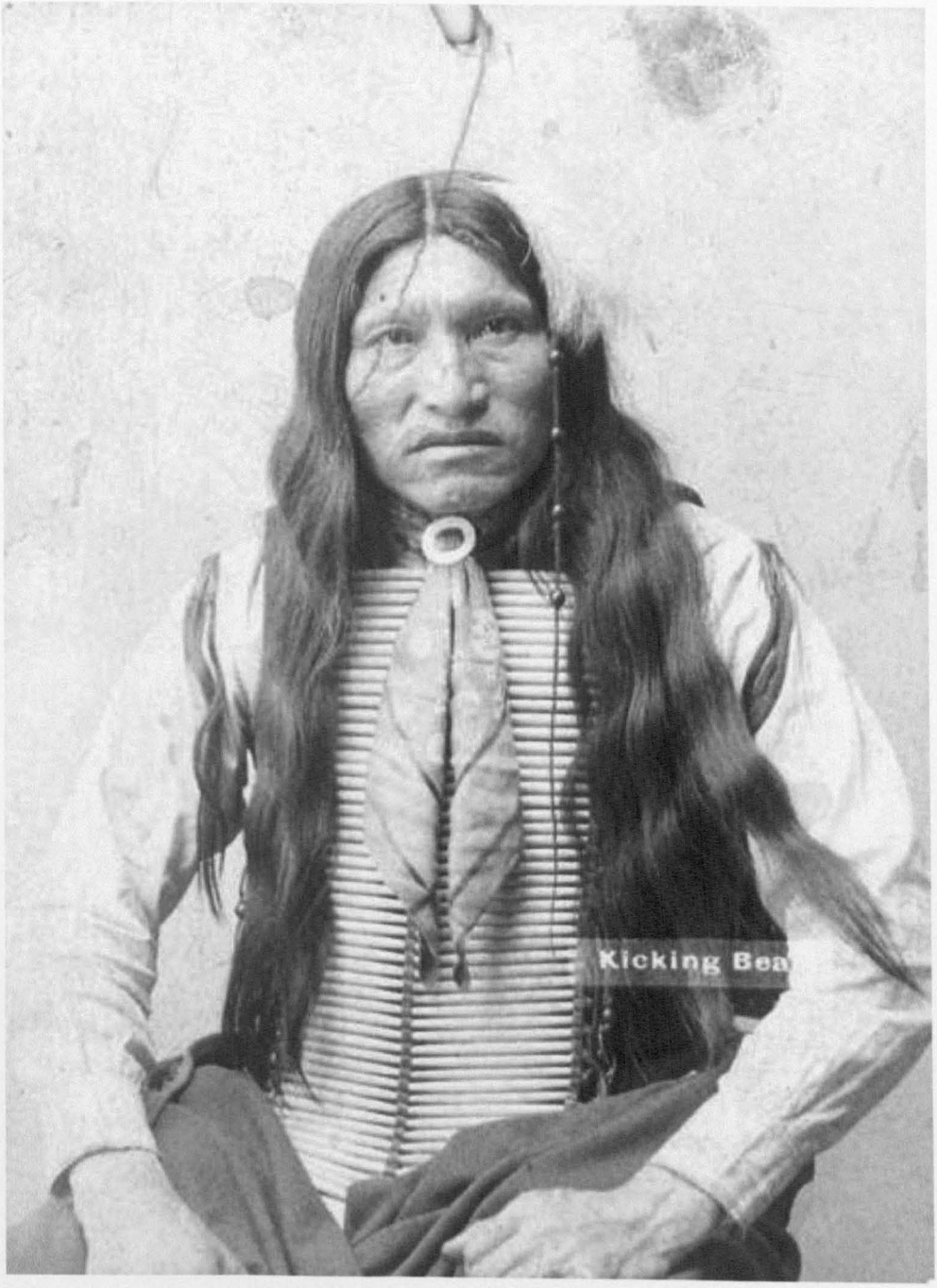
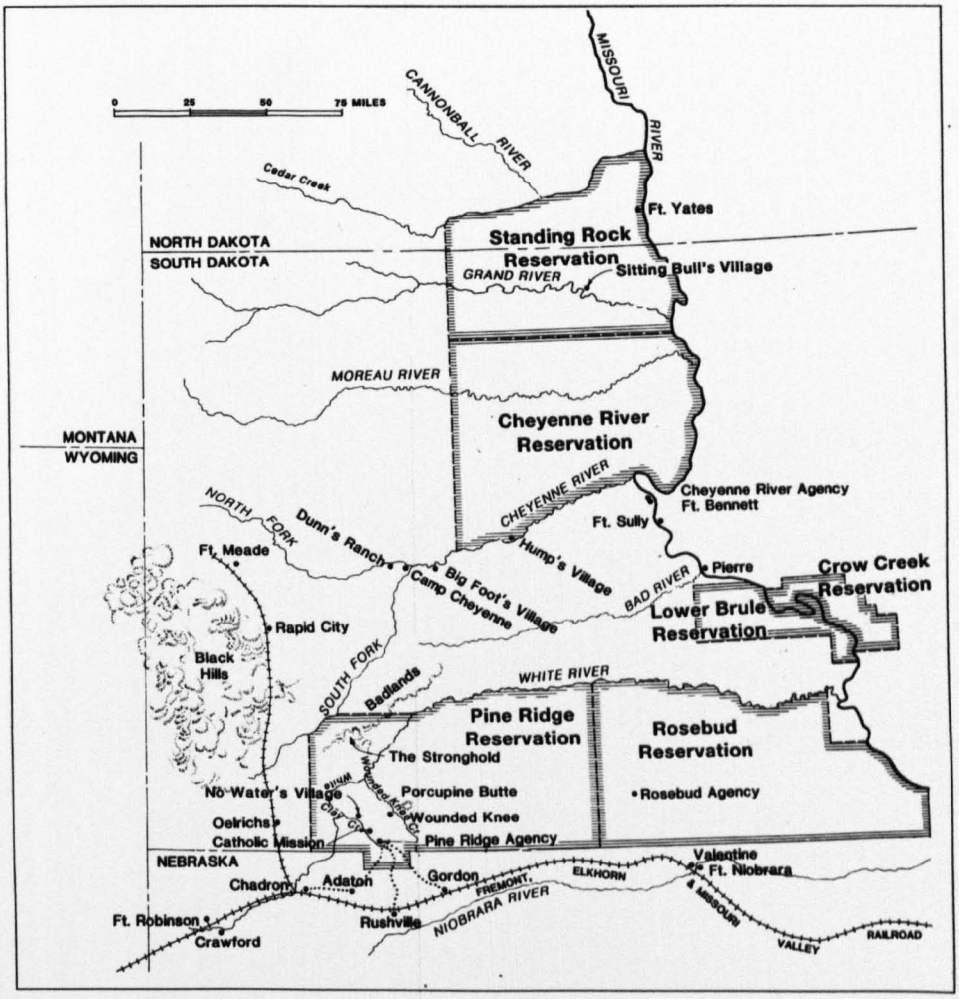



Fig. 1. Kicking Bear.




Sioux Reservations, 1890

Fig. 2. Map of Lakota Reservations in the aftermath of the Sioux Act of 1889. Taken from *Eyewitness to Wounded Knee* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991) *x*.


Fig. 3. Short Bull.

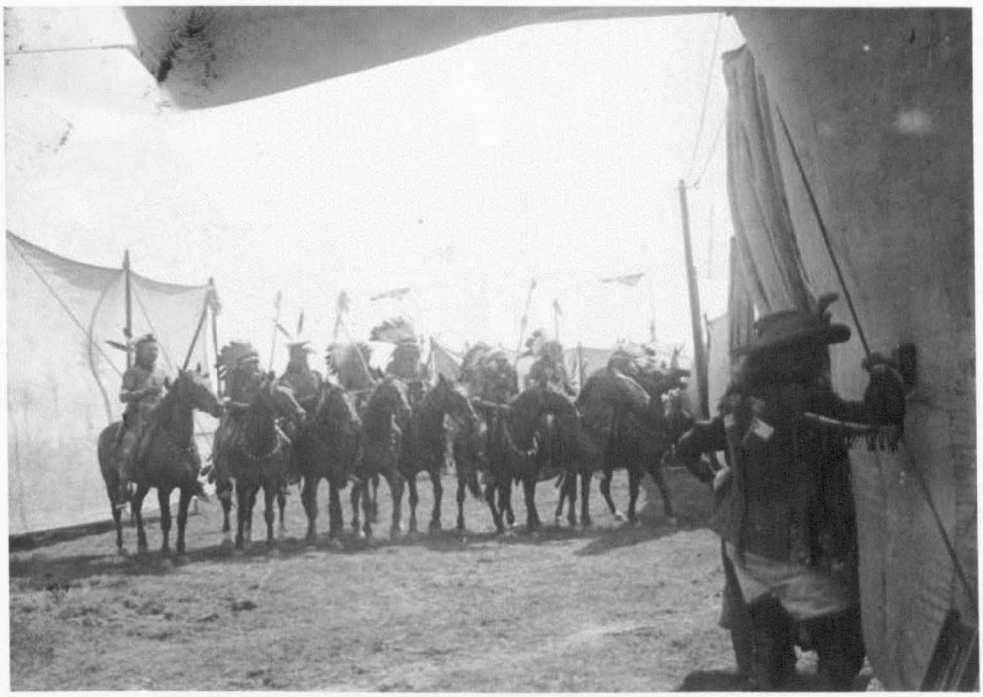


Fig. 4. William F. Cody at peephole, backstage of Buffalo Bill's Wild West.

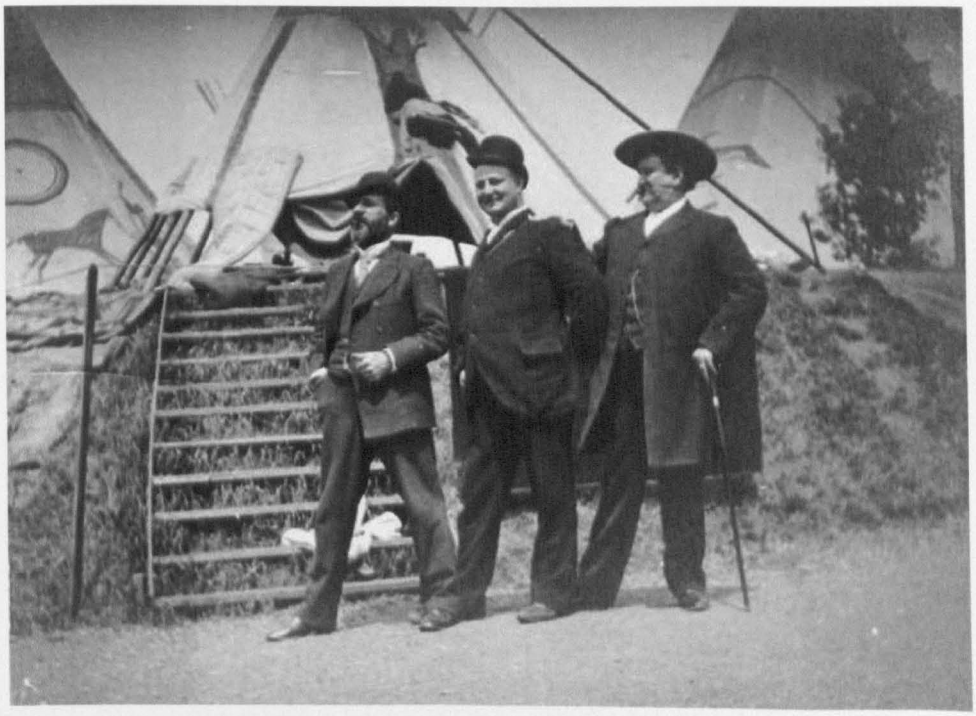


Fig. 5. Nate Salsbury, Fred Remington and John M. Burke, London 1892.

## Two: The Ghost Dance religion as Lakota accommodation

The Lakota Ghost Dance has traditionally been viewed as a 'perversion' of Wovoka's original doctrine of a peace, in that the Lakota made the religion into a more violent movement justifying armed resistance against whites, which resulted in the massacre of Wounded Knee. Yet this interpretation is too simplistic, and does not take into account the fact that the Ghost Dance was introduced when recent events had significantly exaggerated rifts between 'progressive' and 'traditionalist' Lakota. The most influential account of the religion remains James Mooney's *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (1896). Yet detailed analyses of his sources illustrate that Mooney was forced to rely on second hand accounts of the Lakota Ghost Dance, all of which appear to have originated with members of the Indian police force, who by definition were assimilationist. Therefore, the traditional view has been based upon accounts of the religion from white officials and progressive Indians who had little sympathy with the Ghost Dance, and who had a vested interest in presenting the religion as a hostile movement.

In contrast, sources narrated by Lakota Ghost Dancers themselves, most significantly the five narratives of Short Bull the Sicangu Ghost Dance leader, show that the message brought back by the Lakota delegates remained true to Wovoka's teachings. Short Bull's testimony is corroborated by both Indian and white sources recorded before the Wounded Knee massacre and therefore uncoloured by the tragedy. These documents demonstrate that the Lakota Ghost Dance leaders preached peace and accommodation. That the US Government viewed the movement as hostile can to some extent be explained by their lack of knowledge of the Ghost Dance. But perhaps more significantly it was the religion's presentation of an alternative way forward for the Lakota, as opposed to the government's programmes of assimilation, which posed the greatest threat to the federal authorities.

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On 28 December 1890, a band of Lakota Indians led by Chief Big Foot were travelling down through South Dakota, from their home on the Cheyenne River Reservation to the Pine Ridge Agency. Perceived by the military as being 'hostile' they were intercepted by the 7th U.S. Cavalry, arrested and then taken to camp at Wounded Knee Creek. During the night soldiers encircled the encampment and four rapid-fire canons were positioned on surrounding hills. The commanding officer Colonel James W. Forsyth had orders to disarm the band before escorting them in to the Agency at Pine Ridge, and so the next morning the Lakota men were called to council. As a white flag flew above their tents the women and children went about the business of dismantling the camp. When Forsyth's request for the Indian's guns and a search of the camp yielded only a small quantity of arms, he ordered that the men in the council circle should be searched. The warriors resisted, fearful of the soldiers' motives, and while they were being searched a shot was discharged. The response was indiscriminate firing and the massacre of up to 300 people. [Figs. 6 & 7]

The United States Government and army had categorised Big Foot's band as hostile because of their adherence to the Ghost Dance religion of 1890, which 'represented one of the largest social and religious movements among American Indians during the nineteenth century.'[1] The religion played a crucial role in the stand the Lakota Sioux took against the engulfing culture of the whites, which was being forced upon them in the name of progress. The US government responded to the religion in South Dakota by mounting the largest deployment of troops since the Civil War, sending in almost half of the army to stop the dancing. Their arrival on the South Dakota reservations caused panic amongst the Ghost Dancers, who then fled to the relative safety of the Badlands. Further north on the Standing Rock reservation a detail of Indian police were sent to arrest the Hunkpapa medicine man Sitting Bull on December 15. In the ensuing scuffle Sitting Bull was shot dead by policeman Red Tomahawk. Yet within fourteen days of Sitting Bull's death, the last of the Ghost Dancers in the Badlands

[1] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 106.

were heading back to Pine Ridge to surrender when the sound of gunfire emanating from Wounded Knee Creek stopped them in their tracks and caused a general stampede back to the Badlands stronghold. After a tense impasse lasting a couple of weeks, the Lakota Ghost Dancers finally surrendered on 15 January 1891.

For the Lakota in the years following the massacre, the significance of the event grew in importance and symbolic meaning. Speaking over one century later Bronco LeBeau, the Lakota tribal historic preservation officer for the Cheyenne River Reservation, declared that 'Wounded Knee is that central defining event in our past that changed us forever. Now we have a real strong sense of identity loss.'[2] The massacre fundamentally altered forever how the Lakota people would integrate themselves into living in a world dominated by white western-European culture and spirituality.

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The very first recorded interview with the 1890 Ghost Dance prophet was reported by the white scout Arthur Chapman, on 6 December 1890. Chapman had been sent by Brigadier General John Gibbon, the commanding general of the Division of the Pacific, to find and interview the 'Indian who impersonated Christ!'[3] The scout had spent a week questioning people, both whites and Paiutes, learning all he could about Wovoka and his new religion, eventually interviewing the man himself. Chapman relayed what Wovoka had told him in his report of 6 December.

> He... told me about going to heaven and seeing all the people who had died here on this earth, and what a nice place it was, the dancing and other sports, etc.; that God had visited him many times since and told him what to do; that he must send out word to all the Indians to come and hear him, and he would convince them that he was preaching the truth; that he must tell the Indians that they must work all the time and not lie down in idleness; that they must not fight the white people

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[2] Michael Kilian, "At last, U.S. returns sacred Wounded Knee relics to Sioux" *Chicago Tribune*, 27 Sept. 1998, p. 7.

[3] Hittman, *Wovoka*, 7.

> or one another; that we were all brothers and must remain in peace; that God gave him the power to cause it to rain or snow at his will; that God told him or gave him the power to destroy this world and all the people in it and to have it made over again; and the people who had been good heretofore were to be made over again and remain young; that God told him that they must have their dances more often, and dance five nights in succession and then stop.[4]

The substance of the religion as reported by Chapman was later corroborated by the ethnographer James Mooney following his interview with Wovoka in 1892. Both interviewers concluded that Wovoka's religion was one of universal peace.[5] Indeed Chapman noted that Wovoka had emphasised this sentiment to the visiting delegates, by telling them

> that when they went home to say to their people that they must keep the peace; that if they went to fighting that he would help the soldiers to make them stop.[6]

James Mooney and Robert Utley wrote the two most frequently cited secondary sources on the Ghost Dance and the Lakota interpretation of it. Although somewhat dated, Mooney's anthropological classic *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* remains the authoritative text on the doctrine of the Ghost Dance. Utley's *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* has been described as the 'definitive modern historical study' of the Lakota Ghost Dance, and it features the 'best presentation of the military perspective.'[7]

Yet, as Omer Stewart noted in 1977, Mooney's 'great monograph... covered the Ghost Dance phenomenon so completely [that] scholars have been tempted to cite Mooney

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[4] Ibid., 234-35.

[5] Ibid., 18.

[6] Ibid., 235.

[7] James Mooney, "The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890," *14th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology 1892-93*, Part 2 (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1896). All citations are from the 1996 reprint, please see above. DeMallie, "Lakota Ghost Dance," 386.

and look no further for additional data regarding that religious movement.'[8] However, while there has perhaps been an over reliance upon Mooney, some of his interpretations have also been questioned. Michael Hittman, for example, argued in his book *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance* that Mooney had a 'Plains bias,' which had coloured his interpretation of the religion.[9]

The doctrine of the Ghost Dance as related by Mooney is based on his interview with Wovoka in 1892, and on letters detailing Wovoka's message acquired on a visit by Arapaho and Cheyenne delegates in August 1891. In short, all of Mooney's sources for this subject date from a time when the Ghost Dance had already been suppressed by the military on the Dakota reservations. Moreover, although – as Utley noted - Mooney 'verified Wovoka's statements by interviewing Ghost Dancers throughout the West,' he was unable to interview many Lakota.[10] There are two reasons why Mooney's evidence is flawed with regards to the Lakota Ghost Dance. Firstly, Mooney

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Michael Hittman describes Utley's book as an 'excellent history of the 1890 Ghost Dance Religion among the Lakota,' Hittman, *Wovoka*, 22.

[8] Omer C. Stewart, "Contemporary Document on Wovoka (Jack Wilson) Prophet of the Ghost Dance in 1890," *Ethnohistory*, 23, no. 3 (1977): 219.

[9] The 'Plains bias' Hittman refers to was Hittman's perception that Mooney paid more attention to the Plains Indians' interpretation of the religion than the Paiutes'. Hittman states 'Mooney's Plains bias appears to have led him to recapitulate as the core of the 1890 Ghost Dance Religion what his beloved Kiowa, etc., told him, rather than what he heard from Wovoka and others in Nevada.' Hittman, *Wovoka*, 98. See also Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 76, note 22.

[10] James Mooney's sources were Casper Edson, an Arapaho, and Black Short Nose a Cheyenne, both of whom travelled to see Wovoka in August 1891. Mooney reproduces the letters in full, and the majority of subsequent publications on the Ghost Dance use the letters as the major source for the doctrine, many quoting from it directly. Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 142-45. Richmond L. Clow argued that the Lakota continued to practice the Ghost Dance long after the military suppression, see Richmond L. Clow, "The Lakota Ghost Dance after 1890," *South Dakota History*, 20, no. 4 (1990): 323-33. Furthermore, Richard E. Jensen et al., noted that 'the Ghost Dance became a part of the Lakota's own evolving religion rather than a brief experiment with an exotic belief.' Jensen et al., *Eyewitness*, 7. Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 69.

himself acknowledged that the Lakota were unwilling to talk to him when he visited Pine Ridge in 1891.

> I found the Sioux very difficult to approach on the subject of the Ghost Dance.... To my questions the answer almost invariably was, "The dance was our religion, but the government sent soldiers to kill us on account of it. We will not talk any more about it."[11]

Secondly, Short Bull, Kicking Bear and twenty-one other Lakota Ghost Dancers who might have aided Mooney's interpretation, were not in South Dakota when he visited. Instead, following an initial period of confinement in Fort Sheridan, Illinois, they had been released into the custody of William F. Cody, and were with him in Britain performing in his Wild West show.

Therefore, Mooney was forced to rely on second-hand accounts of the Lakota Ghost Dance, many of which were biased against the religion. Mooney depended heavily upon four primary documents, all of which appear to have originated from Indian police testimony. That is to say, all of his informants came from the 'progressive camp' of the Lakota, men who worked with and for the government and who had little if any sympathy with the Ghost Dance religion. When the Lakota had been moved onto reservations in the late 1870s the Indian police had been set up to enforce the Government Agent's rule. By definition the Indian police were assimilationist, and they were perceived by many - both Indians and whites - to be a divisive force introduced to undermine the influence of traditional leaders, and the majority of Ghost Dancers came from the camps of the latter.[12]

Mooney included one source on the Lakota Ghost Dance which was reportedly directly attributable to Short Bull, commenting that 'Valuable light in regard to the Sioux version of the doctrine is obtained from the sermon delivered at Red Leaf camp,

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[11] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 421-22.

[12] William T. Hagan, *Indian Police and Judges: Experiments in Acculturation and Control* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966) 82-103; Thomas Overholt, "The Ghost Dance of 1890 and the Nature of the Prophetic Process," *Ethnohistory*, 21, no. 1 (1974): 57.

on Pine Ridge reservation, October 31, 1890, by Short Bull.' This 'sermon' has been quoted in a number of secondary sources, which attribute it to two primary sources. It is most commonly cited as appearing in the Secretary of War's Annual Report of 1891, but John McDermott noted that 'a copy appeared in a Chicago Newspaper on 22 November 1890.'[13]

Captain C. A. Earnest of the Eighth Infantry had forwarded a report of the speech to the Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Platte, in a telegram dated November 19, 1890, and it is Earnest's telegram which appears in the Annual Report of the Secretary of War.[14] What remains unclear is who recorded and interpreted this speech by Short Bull. There is nothing to suggest that Earnest witnessed the 'sermon' himself, and he quite explicitly stated that Short Bull 'has not been seen by a white man since the dances commenced.' It seems most likely that Earnest's informants were members of the Indian Police who had visited the camp to arrest those who had killed cattle without authority.[15] Both Earnest and Short Bull refer to a confrontation

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[13] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 150-51. 'The present rendezvous of the dancers is at Corn Creek on Black Pipe thirty miles from the [Rosebud] Agency.' Capt. C. A. Earnest to Assistant Adjutant General, Dept. of the Platte, 19 Nov. 1890, Letters Received (hereafter LR), 6601, Record of Adjutant General's Office, 1780-1917, Record Group Ninety-four (hereafter RG 94), NA. U.S. Secretary of War, *Annual Report, 1891* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891) 142-43; John D. McDermott, "Wounded Knee: Centennial Voices," *South Dakota History*, 20, no. 4 (1990): 253; see also DeMallie, *Sixth Grandfather*, 267, note 13.

[14] Whilst ostensibly inspecting government beef cattle at the Rosebud Agency, Earnest had also been forwarding confidential reports detailing the movements and the temperament of the various groups on the reservation. Earnest to Assistant Adjutant General, Dept. of the Platte, 19 Nov. 1890, LR 6733, RG 94, NA.

[15] Earnest to Assistant Adjutant General, Dept. of the Platte, 19 Nov. 1890, LR 6601, RG 94, NA. See also Secretary of War, *Annual Report, 1891*, 140, and E. B. Reynolds, Special US Indian Agent, to T. J. Morgan, Commissioner of Indian Affairs (hereafter CIA), 2 Nov. 1890, SC 188 p50-51, RG 75, NA. Reynolds outlines in his communication the efforts of the Indian police to arrest those Ghost Dancers responsible for killing the cattle without authority, noting that on their third attempt he sent 'the Chief of Police with an interpreter.' He also makes specific references to the advancement for 'the inauguration of the new era.... to the new moon after the next one,' which corresponds directly with

between the police and the Ghost Dancers which would correspond with the suggested dates. Short Bull recounted:

> While in the ring dancing one day one of the Indian Police, a son of "Rope Necklace"... caught hold of my shoulder and turned me around and said, "You, have you ears," (the dancing stopped) and White Horse told the Policeman "to go away, as the Messiah's words were right, he only wanted the people to do two things, farm and go to church. We should not fight but be friends. I do not see any wrong in that, it is right and true. Short Bull has told the Agent all these things. We sent him to see the Messiah and we believe the words he has brought, he speaks the truth. The Indian Police are making trouble and soon plenty of whites will come here and make us trouble. That is all I have to say." The Policeman left and dancing was resumed.[16]

Whilst contemporaries and historians have used Short Bull's 'sermon' to illustrate his hostility and desire for a 'general uprising,' Earnest's formal report noted that the Lakota 'have not declared aggressions but determination to resist arrest or control.'[17] This conclusion is borne out by Short Bull's speech, which was not a call for hostilities but rather a reassurance that the Ghost Dancers could depend upon supernatural protection if the dance was interfered with.

> There may be soldiers surround you but pay no attention to them continue the dance. If the soldiers surround you four deep, three of you on whom I have put holy shirts will sing a song which I have taught you around them when some of them will drop dead, then the rest will start to run but their horses will sink into the earth, the riders will jump from their horses, but they will sink into the earth also, then you can do as you desire with them. Now you must know this, that all the soldiers and that race will be dead, there will be

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Short Bull's reported statement 'I have told you that this would come to pass in two seasons, but since the whites are interfering so much, I will advance the time from what my father above told me to do, so the time will be shorter.... [W]e must dance the balance of this moon, at the end of which time the earth will shiver very hard.' Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 150-151.

[16] Words in parenthesis Crager's, Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 9-10, BBMG.

[17] Thomas Overholt uses this sermon to illustrate that the Lakota had introduced 'a warlike twist in the doctrine,' Overholt, "Short Bull, Black Elk, Sword," 175. See also Secretary of War, *Annual Report, 1891*, 142. Earnest to Assistant Adjutant General, Dept. of the Platte, 19 Nov. 1890, LR 6601, RG 94, NA.

> only five thousand of them left living on the earth.... You must not be afraid of anything. The guns are the only things we are afraid of, but they belong to our father in heaven. He will see that they do not harm.[18]

The second of Mooney's sources was originally written in Lakota by George Sword, captain of the Indian police at Pine Ridge. It was translated into English by an unnamed Indian for Emma C. Sickels, and with her permission it was published in full by Mooney. This account reportedly gives the Lakota doctrine of the Ghost Dance and has been used by some historians to illustrate 'the decidedly militant overtones' of the Lakota Ghost Dance, by comparing it to the account of Porcupine, a Cheyenne who also journeyed west to visit Wovoka at the same time as Short Bull and Kicking Bear.[19] The validity of such a comparison is called into question, however, by the fact that the Sword statement does not make clear from whom, or how, he heard of this version of the Ghost Dance. One possible source mentioned several times in the text is Good Thunder, although it remains a possibility that Sword's statement is based largely on hearsay and rumours. Sword had arrested Good Thunder and two colleagues on the orders of Agent Gallagher, after Postmaster William Selwyn had informed the agent that Good Thunder and his colleagues had called a council to inaugurate the Ghost Dance. Sword had then questioned the Ghost Dancers, but the prisoners had refused to talk and were locked in jail until they promised not to hold councils. It remains unclear if Good Thunder changed his stance and discussed the Lakota Ghost Dance with Sword at a later date.[20]

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[18] Earnest to Assistant Adjutant General, Dept. of the Platte, 19 Nov. 1890, LR 6733, RG 94, NA.

[19] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 158-60. The original Lakota manuscript is in the archives of the Bureau of Ethnography. George Sword's statement was also published as "The Story of the Ghost Dance," *Folk-Lorist*, I (1892-93): 28-31. Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 73; Overholt, "Ghost Dance of 1890," 53-54.

[20] Good Thunder had visited Wovoka in 1889 returning to Pine Ridge in the fall, see DeMallie, *Sixth Grandfather*, 256-57. Sword quoted in Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 160. Good Thunder reportedly gave an account of his visit to Nevada, to Elaine Goodale who later reproduced it under her married name, see Elaine Eastman, "The Ghost Dance War and Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890-91," *Nebraska History*, 26 (1945): 31.

George Sword, who was previously known by his Lakota name, Hunts the Enemy, was the son of Brave Bear of the Oglala Bad Faces and a nephew of Red Cloud. Born in the mid-1800s he had participated fully in traditional Lakota life during his early years as a noted warrior, a Sun Dancer, a medicine man of the Bear Society, and a Pipe Owner. However, later in life his traditional outlook had undergone a dramatic change.[21]

> When I served the Lakota *Wakan Tanka*, I did so with all my power. When I went on the warpath I always did all the ceremonies to gain the favor of the Lakota *Wakan Tanka*. But when the soldiers fought with the white soldiers, the white people always won the victory. I went to Washington and to other large cities, and that showed me that the white people dug in the ground and built houses that could not be moved. Then I knew that when they came they could not be driven away. For this reason I took a new name, the name Sword, because the leaders of the white soldiers wore swords. I determined to adopt the customs of the white people, and to persuade my people to do so.
> I became the first leader of the U.S. Indian Police among the Oglalas, and was their captain until the Oglalas ceased to think of fighting the white people.[22] [Fig. 8]

As captain of the Indian police on the Pine Ridge reservation George Sword supported the suppression of traditional Lakota religious practices including the Ghost Dance, which he interpreted as harmful to the interests of his people. In November 1890 the Pine Ridge Agent sought Sword's opinion with regards to calling in the troops, a move supported by Sword. In his article "Short Bull, Black Elk, Sword, and the 'Meaning' of the Ghost Dance," Thomas Overholt commented that as a progressive, Sword 'must have... viewed [the Ghost Dance] as an embarrassment and

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[21] George E. Hyde, *Red Clouds Folk: A History of the Oglala Sioux Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1937) 174. Overholt, "Short Bull, Black Elk, Sword," 181.

[22] Sword quoted in Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, 74-75. Utley uses a somewhat different quote: 'In war with the white people I found their Wakan Tanka superior. I then took the name Sword.' Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 34. Hagan gives his name as 'Man-Who-Carries-the-Sword,' Hagan, *Indian Police and Judges*, 92.

impediment to the normalization of relations between the government and the Indians.'[23]

The third source chronicling Lakota interpretations of the Ghost Dance that was employed by Mooney was an interview with Kuwapi [One They Chased After], a Rosebud Indian who was arrested for teaching the Ghost Dance on the Yankton Reservation. While Kuwapi was in custody he was interviewed by William Selwyn who had been placed in charge of the force sent to arrest the Ghost Dancer. Selwyn then forwarded a copy of the interview to Agent E. W. Foster on November 22, 1890.[24]

A Yankton Lakota who had received 'a fair education under the patronage of a gentleman in Philadelphia,' Selwyn 'had for several years been employed in various capacities at different Sioux Agencies.' He had recently arrived at the Yankton Agency from Pine Ridge where he had been employed as Postmaster, and it was Selwyn who had informed the Pine Ridge agent about Good Thunder's plans to inaugurate the new religion at a council.[25] Once again Mooney's source was derived from an informant engaged with the Indian police who had been actively working with the government in the suppression of the Ghost Dance.[26]

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[23] George E. Hyde, *A Sioux Chronicle* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 264. Overholt, "Short Bull, Black Elk, Sword," 189.

[24] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 161-63.

[25] Ibid., 160-61. Agent Foster described Selwyn as 'a full-blooded Indian being the son of Medicine Cow, an old chief of this tribe; he is fairly well educated having been a protégé of Hon. John Welch, of Philadelphia, with whom he lived as a member of that gentleman's family.' Foster to CIA, 25 Nov. 1890, SC 188, p2042, RG 75, NA.

[26] Selwyn was not employed as a policeman as such, but rather as assistant farmer, but he was sent by the agent with the arresting party 'to obtain what information he could from the stranger.' Furthermore, Selwyn himself stated 'by your order of the 21st instant, I went up to White Swan and have arrested the wanted man (Kuwapi, or one they chased after).' Ibid., p2042-43, RG 75, NA.

The last of Mooney's sources for the Lakota Ghost Dance, which he describes as 'perhaps the best statement of the Sioux version,' also originated with the Indian Police. It was forwarded as a report by the Agent at Standing Rock, James McLaughlin, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on 17 October 1890, and was reproduced in the Commissioner's Annual Report of 1891.[27] McLaughlin's information was based on a speech given by Kicking Bear on 9 October 1890, at a council to inaugurate the Ghost Dance among Sitting Bull's Hunkpapa Lakota. When the agent learned of Kicking Bear's arrival he dispatched thirteen policemen to arrest and escort Kicking Bear from the reservation, but the police had returned without carrying out the agent's orders. In his book *My Friend the Indian*, McLaughlin reproduced Kicking Bear's speech verbatim. Utley noted, 'It was repeated to him word for word... by One Bull, an Indian policeman who was also Sitting Bull's nephew.'[28] Once again, as with all the other sources on the Lakota Ghost Dance employed by Mooney, this document originated in accounts given by the Indian police.

With this source it is important to also note McLaughlin's motivation. The agent sought the removal of Sitting Bull and with it the lessening of any potential influence he might have had over his followers at Standing Rock. As DeMallie noted, 'Agent McLaughlin had been clamouring for the old chief's arrest and removal from the reservation for some time, ever since Sitting Bull had refused to take up farming and be a model "progressive" Indian.'[29] McLaughlin did not hesitate to use the report of 17 October to pin the blame for the Ghost Dance on Sitting Bull, thereby strengthening his calls for the medicine man's arrest.

> Sitting Bull is high priest and leading apostle of this latest Indian absurdity; in a word he is the chief mischief-maker at this agency, and if he were not here, this craze, so general among the Sioux, would never have gotten a foothold at this agency. Sitting Bull is a

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[27] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 149; Commissioner of Indian Affairs *Annual Report, 1891*, 125-26.

[28] Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report, 1891*, 126. James McLaughlin, *My Friend the Indian* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910) 184-90. Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 97, note 13.

[29] DeMallie, "Lakota Ghost Dance," 394.

> man of low cunning, devoid of a single manly principle in his nature, or an honorable trait of character, but on the contrary is capable of instigating and inciting others (those who believe in his promise) to do any amount of mischief. He is a coward and lacks moral courage; he will never lead where there is danger, but is an adept in influencing his ignorant henchmen and followers, and there is no knowing what he may direct them to attempt...
>
> I would respectfully recommend the removal from the reservation and confinement in some military prison, some distance from the Sioux country, of Sitting Bull and the parties named in my letter of June 18 last... some time during the coming winter before next spring.[30]

The agent's assertions that Sitting Bull was 'high priest and leading apostle' of the new religion would appear to be questionable. Stanley Vestal, the Hunkpapa's biographer, instead contended that Sitting Bull was 'too entirely Sioux' to embrace a faith based on the teachings of Christianity.[31] In a 'Note on Kicking Bear,' published in Vestal's *New Sources of Indian History 1850-1891*, One Bull gave a rather different account 'as to what happened when Crazy Walking ordered Kicking Bear away in October, 1890.'

> "I, One Bull, in company with Crazy Walking and Catka, were all serving on Indian Police Force. McLaughlin ordered us to stop the Ghost Dance. Crazy Walking told the dancers to stop. Sitting Bull answered him as follows: 'The education of my children is uppermost. I have a school in my locality. This dance is not the most important undertaking. They will, eventually stop.' This is what we reported to McLaughlin upon our return."[32]

Thus, a careful review of the sources employed by Mooney in his highly influential account of the Ghost Dance reveals that with regard to the Lakota interpretation of the religion, Mooney's and almost all subsequent accounts are based upon the highly subjective reports of men who opposed it. Mooney used what was available to him at the time, but subsequent historians have had a much broader spectrum of sources

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[30] Words in parenthesis McLaughlin's, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1891, 125-26.

[31] Vestal [Campbell], *Sitting Bull*, 272.

[32] Stanley Vestal [Walter Stanley Campbell], *New Sources of Indian History, 1850-1891* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934) 340-41.

available to them. While this research questions Mooney's interpretation of the Lakota Ghost Dance as being too narrow, it does not dispute the validity of his monumental work on the Ghost Dance as a whole. Mooney's extensive research remains significantly valuable, as long as it is read in conjunction with the various other Indian sources that have since come to light.

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The Lakota Medicine Man Short Bull, who travelled to Nevada to see Wovoka in the winter of 1889-90 and later became one of its most prominent leaders, was responsible for perhaps the most significant sources available on the Lakota interpretation of the Ghost Dance. There are five texts dictated by Short Bull which cover his experiences of the Ghost Dance between late 1889 and the summer of 1891. At the turn of the century Short Bull gave an account of his visit to Wovoka and a brief description of the dance to James R. Walker, the agency physician at Pine Ridge: both of these were published in Walker's *Lakota Belief and Ritual.*[33] In 1907 Natalie Curtis published another account, 'Short Bull's Narrative,' along with three Ghost Dance songs dictated to her by Short Bull circa 1906, in *The Indians' Book.*[34] The German painter and ethnographer Frederick Weygold, interviewed Short Bull in 1909 and this statement, which was recorded in English but survives only in German translation, has been published in Wolfgang Haberland's article 'Die Oglala-Sammlung Weygold im

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[33] Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, 142-43. The date and interpreter for these two texts are unknown. Another text by Short Bull included in the publication entitled 'Sending the Spirits to the Spirit World,' was interpreted by Thomas Tyon on February 11, 1898. James R. Walker spent eighteen years in South Dakota as the agency physician at Pine Ridge, during which time he collected material relating to almost every facet of the old Lakota way of life, see Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, 3-50.

[34] Natalie Curtis, *The Indians' Book: Authentic Native American Legends, Lore & Music* (1907; reprint New York: Bonanza Books, 1987) 45-47. Natalie Curtis was a noted folklorist and collector of ethnic songs, who abandoned a career as a concert pianist when she found herself drawn to American Indian music during a trip to Arizona around 1900. She collected more than two hundred songs from eighteen tribes, which formed the basis of her book, which also included a photograph of, and a drawing by, Short Bull, see McCoy, "Short Bull," 57.

Hamburgischen Museum fuer Voelkerkunde (Teil 4).[35] Another narrative 'Wanagi Wacipi' was dictated to Ivan Stars in 1915 and was published in Lakota in Eugene Buechel's *Lakota Tales and Texts*.[36] However, the first and most detailed of Short Bull's narratives is a twenty-page hand-written text entitled 'As Narrated by Short Bull.'[37] Short Bull dictated the document in 1891 to the Lakota interpreter George C. Crager, while they were both touring in Britain with Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Crager was well qualified for the task, for he was fluent in Lakota having had an intimate relationship with the Sicangu for a number of years, especially the old chief Two Strike who had reportedly adopted him in 1878.[38] [Fig. 9]

Basing his interpretation on the Walker and Curtis accounts, DeMallie noted that 'the messianic and strongly Christian nature of the Ghost Dance is very clear in Short

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[35] Wolfgang Haberland, "Die Oglala-Sammlung Weygold im Hamburgischen Museum fuer Voelkerkunde (Teil 4)," *Mitteilungen aus dem Museum fuer Voelkurkunde zu Hamburg*, N.F., 7 (1977): 19-52. Wolfgang Haberland stated that 'According to Weygold's notes, he talked in the summer of 1909 a few hours with Short Bull, supported by an interpreter, probably... Herbert Bisonette.' See also Lothar Draeger, "Einige Indianische Darstellungen Des Sonnentanzes Aus Dem Museum Fuer Voelkerkunde in Leipzig," *Jahrbuch Des Museums Fuer Voelkurkunde Zu Leipzig*, 18 (1961): 80.

[36] Eugene Buechel, *Lakota Tales and Texts: Wisdom Stories, Customs, Lives, and Instruction of the Dakota Peoples*, ed. Paul Manhart (Pine Ridge, S. D.,: Red Cloud Lakota Language and Cultural Center, 1978) 277-89; Translated into English in a later edition, Buechel, *Lakota Tales and Texts in Translation*, 508-539. Not being a Lakota speaker myself I am reliant upon the published translation, but there appear to be discrepancies between the two editions. For example, in the original edition the words 'Maštincala Ha Šina In,' are translated in the footnotes as 'wears a robe of rabbit hide. This is the name of the camp,' but in the later edition, with full translation, it is given as 'Cree,' which would seem to be erroneous. See pages 279, and 511, respectively. Eugene Buechel had emigrated from Germany arriving in the U.S. in 1900, and was later a Jesuit missionary among the Lakota stationed at the St. Francis Mission. He is best known perhaps for his work on Lakota language, having translated a Bible History and Prayer book into Lakota, and self-publishing *A Grammar of Lakota: The language of the Teton Sioux Indians* (Saint Francis, S.D.,: n.p., 1939).

[37] Over looked for many years the document has recently been published in Coleman, *Voices of Wounded Knee*. Coleman uses the text throughout his book, but has put his own interpretation upon it.

[38] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull." For further information about the interpreter, George C. Crager, see Sam Maddra, *Glasgow's Ghost Shirt* (Glasgow: Glasgow Museums, 1999) 14-17.

Bull's teachings,' and 'it is possible to proliferate evidence to demonstrate the peaceful intentions of the leaders of the ghost dance.'[39] However, both of these accounts are brief and relatively un-detailed in comparison with the 1891 text, which was recorded within nine months of Short Bull's arrest and imprisonment. This document sheds new light on Short Bull's experiences and also gives evidence that challenges the long-accepted version of the Lakota interpretation of the Ghost Dance. It furnishes further evidence that rather than being fanatical or warlike the doctrine as given to, and as practised by Short Bull, was one of peace, and that what he advocated was not hostility but passive resistance to white control.

The document is unsigned and undated, simply bearing the title 'As Narrated by Short Bull,' but it can be roughly dated by context and content. The narrative relates Short Bull's experiences up to and including his hiring by Cody for Buffalo Bill's Wild West, his trip across the Atlantic and the exhibition's tour in England, ending in the present tense.

> In the spring "Long Hair" (Col. Wm. F. Cody, "Buffalo Bill") came to see us and made us a proposition to join his company across the "big water".... Our trip across the water made me somewhat sea sick but as soon as I got on land again was in good health. Ever since I have been well treated and cared for, all of the promises made have been fulfilled.... If our people have any complaints it is fixed at once, if we do not feel well, a doctor comes and looks after us, besides we go everywhere and see all the great works of the Country through which we travel. It learns us much, we see many people who are all kind to us. I like the English people but not their weather as it rains so much.[40]

Buffalo Bill's Wild West had left America on 1 April 1891, initially touring in Germany, Holland and Belgium, before opening their first leg of a provincial tour of England and Wales at Leeds on June 20. In October they travelled north to Glasgow for a five-month winter stand in Scotland, which would suggest that the most likely date for the document is the summer of 1891.

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[39] DeMallie, "Lakota Ghost Dance," 395.

The handwriting is clearly that of George Crager, the Lakota interpreter for this tour of Buffalo Bill's Wild West.[41] During the exhibition's visit to Cardiff in September 1891, two newspaper articles in *The Evening Express* recorded that Crager was engaged in writing a manuscript on the Lakota Sioux, and one referred specifically to a piece about Short Bull.

> This very intelligent interpreter is preparing a work on Sioux Legends, about fifty pages of which are devoted to the chief Short Bull and his craze about the Wakan Nuka [sic Tanka].[42]

It is clear that the document has been translated and written verbatim in longhand, with little punctuation except dashes between sentences, a skill Crager would have acquired as a clerk and a journalist.[43] Therefore, there is no Lakota version to compare with Crager's translation, but his association with the Sicangu should have enabled him to accurately translate and record what he heard. Moreover, it is obvious that he questions Short Bull for clarification where perhaps he felt the narrative made no sense, placing his understanding of what Short Bull meant in brackets.

> 2 days from now all nations will talk one tongue (Short Bull thinks he meant 200 or 2 years) the sign talk will be no more.

The sequence of events jumps back at times to add detail, as would an un-scripted narrative, which is further evidenced by Crager's bracketed comment '(At this stage of

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[40] Words in parenthesis Crager's, Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 20, BBMG.

[41] The author has been engaged in archival research into George Crager for a number of years. To see a published example of Crager's handwriting see Maddra, *Glasgow's Ghost Shirt*, 12.

[42] *Evening Express* (Cardiff), 23 Sept. 1891, p.2. 'That which Mr. Crager does not know about Indian life and thought is scarcely worth knowing. He is now engaged on a book which, when published, will, doubtless, considerably add to the knowledge possessed by the Anglo-Saxon race respecting the fast vanishing aboriginal of North America.' *Evening Express* (Cardiff), 26 Sept. 1891, p.4.

[43] It is recorded that Crager was the only journalist permitted to witness the Lakota Council on 17 January 1891 and that he 'gave Gen. Miles a copy of his verbatim report of the event, which the latter forwarded to the War Department in Washington as an official document.' *New York World*, n.d. "In Indian Guise." Crager Scrapbook 1890-1892 (hereafter CS), William F. Cody Collection (MS:6), Series IX: scrapbooks, Box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

the story "Short Bull" went into a trance remaining so for quite a while and then continued).' The unedited text has had no alterations to make it more dramatic, as might a published text or newspaper article. Furthermore, Short Bull does not shy away from detailing the depredations of the Ghost Dancers, such as the theft of horses, which further suggests that this narrative is an impartial account of his experiences.

The date, the detail and the demonstrable authenticity of this document make it the most significant contemporary first-hand account of the Lakota Ghost Dance. Yet it is necessary, of course, to consider the context and motivation for all five of the Short Bull narratives. The texts date from summer of 1891 to September 1915, covering a 24-year time period, and four were told to white interviewers who employed a variety of different translation methods. The first account narrated in 1891 appears to have gone through the least number of translations, for it was interpreted and transcribed by one and the same person, George Crager. Although the interpreters of the other documents often remain anonymous, their voices or perceptions are occasionally made clear. For example, the Walker text opens with the unknown interpreter's comment that Short Bull 'wants to prove that he was not the cause of the trouble of 1890-91.'[44] This sentiment is echoed by Weygold who at the time of his interview with Short Bull made the following note:

> Later it seemed that some of the Indians made Short Bull personally responsible in a moral way for the massacre at Wounded Knee. He said to the reporter that some of his fellow tribesmen would have been very hostile towards him and did seek for his life. One of his old opponents was present during the talk of the reporter with Short Bull in his tent. This was a further reason why Short Bull was very reserved and repeated the beginning of his speech... with his views and doctrines somehow more friendly towards [white] culture than it was in reality (at least before the battle at Wounded Knee).[45]

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[44] Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, 142.

[45] Haberland, "Die Oglala-Sammlung Weygold... (Teil 4)," 38.

This is indeed a relevant point, and one wonders what Short Bull might have kept to himself, and if the fact that the majority of his interviewers were white could have influenced what he did divulge. Yet throughout the 24 year period there is a consistency in what Short Bull said. Furthermore, his testimony with regards to his experiences in Nevada and his interpretation of the pacifist doctrine are corroborated by both Indian and white sources recorded prior to the Wounded Knee massacre, and therefore not coloured by the tragic event. Moreover, Weygold also noted that Short Bull assured him

> that he might have been errant sometimes in the past... but he (and this remark is reliable) had always been of honest and best intention. The white officers declared him in unison as a "perfect gentlemen".[46]

Although the identity of the 'white officers' Weygold refers to remains unclear, the statement would suggest that Weygold considered Short Bull to be a dependable informant. Ultimately the most effective argument that the Short Bull texts are a true reflection of his experiences, is that he stayed true to the Ghost Dance throughout his life, continuing to believe in and practice the religion, and maintaining a pacifist stance. If he had adapted and transformed it into a millennial, violent, anti-white religion, then it would have failed and died in 1890-91, but as a peaceful religion of accommodation as Wovoka had preached it, it both continued and evolved.[47] Short Bull's religion did not fail him, nor did he lose faith in his religion.

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Crager's document details how the Lakota delegation that travelled west to Nevada to meet Wovoka, journeyed through the winter and arrived in Mason Valley in March 1890. The journey represented a major undertaking, for they had to cross the Rocky Mountains and travel approximately 1500 miles in order to reach Wovoka's camp. [Fig. 10] As they progressed, delegates from other tribes including Cheyenne, Arapaho, Shoshoni, and Bannocks joined them. Porcupine, one of the Cheyenne

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[46] Ibid. 21. Words in parenthesis Weygold's.

[47] For a discussion of the religion's evolution see Kehoe, *Ghost Dance*, 41-50.

delegates, was later interviewed about his experience of these events by Major Henry Carroll on 15 June 1890, and his account compliments Short Bull's 1891 narrative.[48]

As they travelled west the delegates began to learn more about the new religion; they saw and participated in the dances and experienced overtures of peace.[49] In his 1891 account Short Bull gave his most detailed description of the journey.

> We were delayed one day at Pine Ridge to have the buggy repaired. We then started off and after hard travelling for two and one half days we caught up with the Ogallalas at Sage Creek near Casper Mountains. Here we also met "Man" and his two nephews Louis and John Shangrau who were returning to the Agency from a trip to Fort Washakie - we told them we were travelling West to meet the messiah. We then traveled on to the Arapahoes at Shoshone Agency where we stayed until one week after Christmas, when we started on horseback to the end of "Painted Rock" here we boarded a Rail Road train and arrived at a point where only Chinamen were. The Agent at Fort Washakie gave us Rail Road Passes, Sitting Bull [the Arapahoe] gave me 25 Dollars and I sold one of my beaded vests for $10, while we were at Shoshone Agency we danced the "Omaha" and got presents of money. We stayed three days at the Chinamans town, we then boarded another train travelling one day and night, but owing to a "hot box" we had to get out at the forks of a large creek where we camped for the night. The next morning we walked about 1½ miles reaching a small town, and once more began to travel by rail. The snow was so deep that plows were used to clear the road, which delayed us three days in a small town, on the fourth night the road was open so that we could travel again. After spending the night on the train we came to a creek, which was lined on either side by Lodges, a town was near so we

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[48] Major Henry Carroll, who was in command of Camp Crook, at Tongue River agency, Montana, transmitted Porcupine's statement to the War Department, who in turn forwarded it to the Indian Office. Published verbatim in Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 155-58. Short Bull makes reference to Porcupine in two of his narratives: Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 4, BBMG; Buechel, *Lakota Tales and Texts in Translation*, 515. Porcupine also gave a statement about the religion to J. A. Gaston, 1st Lieutenant, 8th Cavalry, Commanding the Department on Tongue River, at a Council held with the Cheyenne on Tongue River, Montana, Nov. 18, 1890. See SC 188, p117-121, RG 75, NA.

[49] Both Short Bull and Porcupine note that they saw and participated in the dance before their arrival at Wovoka's camp, and that the Chief of the Bannocks, 'brother of "old Washakie"', suggested they make a peace treaty. See Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 3-4, BBMG; Buechel, *Lakota Tales and Texts in Translation*, 510-11; and Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 155-56.

> got off the cars, travelling by foot to this Indian Village. The snow was very deep. Two of the men of this camp had been to see the messiah. The Chief of the tribe was the brother of "old Washakie," who set up a teepee [sic] for us, we stayed nine days and nights, five of which were spent in "Ghost Dancing" - despite the snow, but a rainstorm came up and melted the snow shortly after the dancing began. Here 10 Bannocks came over and took us with them, horses were provided for us at an Agency named "Pocktella". Here we met two big Indians, one with long black hair and the other with a black beard which looked so strange, they were both holding horses, the bearded mans name was "Botee" and the other "Elks Tusk Necklace." At the request of Washakie's Brother "Yellow Breast" and myself remained with him, while the others left. We went to his house and here I saw a Dakota woman who was married to a white man. Washakie's brother told me that the messiah would talk to me, but he wanted to say something to me first - saying - "Once I went to Washington and had a talk with "Spotted Tail," "Two Strike" and "Red Cloud" (speaking in the sign language) pay no attention to what some people say, the messiah will tell you the truth. I shook hands with all the Sioux Chiefs and dropped my arms against them for good and am their friend. Don't be afraid, no one will harm you here we are all friends - you will not die." Here the Bannocks came in for their rations and they gave us rations too, also horses, and took us with them to the other party who had gone on ahead, and we held a Council at the house of "Elks Tusk Necklace" who said - "My heart is glad to see all of you people today - my people here always do as I ask of them - we shake your hands and are glad - that fighting we done in the past is dropped. We are friends and hope we will always be so. Now we will go together to the messiah. He sent for me three times and I went, he has now sent for me again and I will go with you.[50]

Porcupine also made reference to the friendly and peaceful reception enjoyed by the delegates, recalling that

> the chief of the Bannocks told me they were glad to see a Cheyenne and that we ought to make a treaty with the Bannocks.
> The chief told me he had been to Washington and had seen the President, and that we ought all to be friends with the whites and live at peace with them and with each other. We talked these matters over for ten days.[51]

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[50] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 2-4, BBMG.

[51] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 155-56.

Both Short Bull and Porcupine commented on similar things they had observed along the way; the Paiute's lodges, the attire of the Indian women, and the many different peoples, including a number of whites, represented at the gathering. Short Bull recalled that,

> After remaining here [Pocatella/Fort Hall] ten days over one hundred boarded the cars and travelled from the evening till the next night, where we changed cars to arrive at another Agency of the Shoshones, from this point "Sitting Bull" of the Arapahoes, "Short Bull" of the Sioux, "Porcupine" of the Cheyennes, and several Bannocks started for the messiah by rail, after travelling from town to town for two days, we came to an Indian Villiage [sic] whose teepees were made of Bark and willows. The chiefs name was "Owns the people" of the "Rabbit Skin tribe", (their blankets and bedding being made of rabbit skins), the women were dressed like the white women and they lived on fish, they have an Agency. Their rations are small and one beef suffices for the whole band - they are rich - they fish continually and sell it.
>
> From this point we moved in wagons and other conveyances for one day to the Piutes where we remained thirteen days and then began to travel West, camping on a large creek the first night, and then following the Railroad to a station where some young men and women of the "Rabbit Skin" tribe met us who told us to go to the right of a large house in the distance and there remain two days which was done.
>
> After waiting two days the party started overland all but one Gros Ventre, a chief of the "Rabbit Skins," Two Bannocks, and Short Bull who boarded a train at about 3 o'clock in the morning and at Sundown reached a white mans villiage where an Agency was. This was the supposed home of the Messiah - they met some Indians who told them the Messiah would come in three days. Short Bull here found out that the letter that was sent to all Indian reservations asking them to gather at this point was written by an Indian.
>
> The spot selected was a lovely one, a heavy growth of Willow all around it, and a Circle had been cut down in the centre with entrances North, South, East and West. Short Bull was put at the West End with a Gros Ventre and Sitting Bull (Arapahoe). In this circle were only a few Indian Chiefs all the rest camping outside. In 2 days the wagon party came, besides every train bringing more and more people to this great gathering who had been sent for from all parts of the United States, there were, Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapahoes, Piutes, Gros Ventres,

> Bannocks, "Rabbit Skins", Indians with rings in their nose and others, names of which Short Bull did not know.[52]

Porcupine's similar comments illustrate that the Plains Indians were fascinated by the different cultures they were encountering.

> We got off at this Indian town. The Indians here were different from any Indians I ever saw. The women and men were dressed in white people's clothes, the women having their hair banged. These Indians had their faces painted white with black spots. We stayed with these people all day. We took the same road at night and kept on. We traveled all night, and about daylight we saw a lot of houses, and they told us there were a lot more Indians there; so we got off, and there is where we saw Indians living in huts of grass. We stopped here and got something to eat....
>
> In the dance we had there (Nevada) the whites and Indians danced together. I met there a great many kinds of people, but they all seemed to know all about this religion.... It appeared that Christ had sent for me to go there, and that was why unconsciously I took my journey. It had been foreordained. Christ had summoned myself and others from all heathen tribes, from two to three or four from each of fifteen or sixteen different tribes. There were more different languages than I ever heard before and I did not understand any of them.[53]

The white scout Arthur Chapman, who had visited Wovoka in December 1890 to gather information for the War Department, made similar observations about the Paiutes. 'The Piute Indians, men, and women, dress like the white people, and

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[52] Words in parenthesis Crager's, Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 4-5, BBMG. Both Chapman and Mooney witnessed similar areas of cleared ground as described by Short Bull. Chapman stated, 'In conclusion, I would say that I saw three of their dance grounds. They had been cleared of sagebrush and grass and made perfectly level, around the outer edge of which the willow sticks were still standing, over which they spread their tenting for shelter during these ceremonies. The cleared ground must have been from 200 to 300 feet in diameter, and only about four places left open to enter the grounds.' Hittman, *Wovoka*, 235; while Mooney stated, 'A large circular space had been cleared of sagebrush and levelled over, and around the circumference were the remains of the low round structures of willow branches which had sheltered those in attendance. At one side, within the circle, was a larger structure of branches, where the messiah gave audience to the delegates from distant tribes,' Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 164.

equally as good as the average white man of that country. The men part their hair in the middle and have it cut square off even with the lower part of the ear. The women have theirs banged and are exceedingly well dressed for Indian women.'[54] He went on to say,

> In regard to the Cheyenne Indian, Porcupine, who gave an account of his visit to the Piute camp at Walker Lake, I will say that it is wonderfully correct, as far as I am able to learn; that on his visit he first met with the Piutes at Winnemucca, and then at Wadsworth, on the Central Pacific Railroad, where he fell in with Capt. Dave, of the Piutes, who took him and his comrades in a wagon and hauled them to Pyramid Lake Agency, where they remained several days when Capt. Dave's son took them in wagons and hauled them to Wabuska, where they took cars for Walker Lake. This was told me by Capt. Ben, one of the Indian police at Walker Lake, and from other information I believe it to be true.[55]

Chapman also noted that J. O. Gregory, an Indian farmer who 'was in charge of the agency' remembered very distinctly 'the big dance which occurred near the agency, when Cheyennes, Sioux, Bannocks and other strange Indians were present, [and] that this meeting took place some time last March [1890].' Two other informants who were both with the Indian police force at Walker Lake, Josephus and Ben Ab-he-gan, told Chapman that this gathering had 'numbered about 1,600,' and that they had been fed on 'pine nuts and fish.'[56]

After their long journey the delegates awaited the arrival of Wovoka with eager anticipation. Both Short Bull and Porcupine carefully noted their first impressions of the man, and while Short Bull's statement is perhaps more descriptive it is imbued with a strong sense of how deeply the prophet inspired him.

> In a short time the wagon appeared from which direction it came no one knew, it contained two persons. The driver, an Indian, dressed in

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[53] Ibid., 157-57.

[54] Hittman, *Wovoka*, 235-36.

[55] Ibid., 236.

[56] Ibid., 231-33, 271-72.

> white mans clothing; and another man who had on a broad brimmed brown hat with two Eagle feathers in it, and a striped blanket. The person with the blanket on was the Messiah. Short Bull wanted to shake hands with him but the Chief told him not to saying "Wait till you go back then he will shake hands with you." At dusk I went out and told all my people to come in. Inside the circle a small Teepee was put up for the Messiah he entered with his face toward the south. The teepee was opened and we all stood before him, everybody crowding to get a glimpse of him. He took off his hat laying it on the ground with the crown down and brim up and said "How".... Short Bull sat directly in front of the Messiah and looked him all over from head to foot.[57]

Porcupine's description echoes this strong sense of the awe that Wovoka inspired in the visiting delegates.

> Just after dark some of the Indians told me that the Christ (Father) was arrived. I looked around to find him, and finally saw him sitting on one side of the ring. They all started toward him to see him. They made a big fire to throw light on him. I never looked around, but went forward, and when I saw him I bent my head. I had always thought the Great Father was a white man, but this man looked like an Indian.[58]

It is evident that both Short Bull and Porcupine were initially unsure as to whether Wovoka was an Indian or not. Short Bull related:

> I got a good look at him, he was dark-skinned, talked in a language similar to Indian and I believe he was an Indian.[59]

Whilst Porcupine remarked:

> In the night when I first saw him I thought he was an Indian, but the next day when I could see better he looked different. He was not so dark as an Indian, nor so light as a white man. He had no

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[57] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 6, BBMG.

[58] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 157.

[59] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 7, BBMG.

> beard or whiskers, but very heavy eyebrows. He was a good-looking man.[60]

Wovoka could only speak Paiute and a little English therefore Short Bull was reliant upon others to translate his words through the medium of sign language.[61] He recalled,

> An old man sat in front of him with his arms extended on his knees and another behind him in the same position, these were his interpreters, while the Messiah spoke these men would stand up and interpret what he said.... One of these interpreters talked in English to one of the Arapahoes named "Singing Grass" a son of old Chief "Friday" who spoke to me in the sign language.[62]

Despite this, the first speech made by Wovoka is clearly recognisable in both Short Bull and Porcupine's accounts. Short Bull commented:

> The Messiah said "I have sent for you and you came to see me. I will talk with you tomorrow - today I will talk to these people who

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[60] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 157. Porcupine's description compares well with Arthur Chapman's description that appeared in an article "Circle of the Shades" in the *Spokane Review*: 'The only thing that I noticed is remarkable about his head was an unusually low forehead. The hair of his scalp grows within an inch of his eyebrows, and such eyebrows I never saw. They are the heaviest and shaggiest that ever grew on an Indians head. His head is particularly prominent in the back and crown. His cheekbones are not prominent, but his lower jaw is massive, abnormally so. He does not have a hook nose. It is decidedly Greek. In fact, a finer cut nose I never saw.' Hittman, Wovoka, 107. Kicking bear and Good Thunders descriptions were very different. Good Thunder described Wovoka to Elaine Eastman as, 'a man of surpassing beauty, with long yellow hair, clad in a blue robe.' Eastman, "The Ghost Dance War" 31. Kicking Bear as quoted in McLaughlin stated 'when we were weak and faint from our journey, we looked for a camping place, and were met by a man dressed like an Indian, but whose hair was long and glistening like the yellow money of the white man. His face was very beautiful to see, and when he spoke my heart was glad and I forgot my hunger and the toil I had gone through.' McLaughlin, *My Friend the Indian*, 186.

[61] Mooney stated that Wovoka 'speaks only his own Paiute language, with some little knowledge of English. He is not acquainted with the sign language, which is hardly known west of the mountains.' Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 133. Hittman quoted an acquaintance of Wovoka's, Ed Dyer, as stating, 'Wilson [Wovoka] was known to have a good working knowledge of English but not quite up to explaining obscure points of Indian theology.' Hittman, *Wovoka*, 253.

[62] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 6, BBMG.

> have been here so long. We will now pray." Here all who were assembled crowded in with their faces turned toward the west, the Messiah made a "speech" but they did not tell me what he said.... After he had ceased talking dancing began in which he joined. Men, women, and all were singing and dancing with hands joined in a peculiar way, knuckle to knuckle, going round and round. Keeping it up for a long time.[63]

Porcupine's version is very similar to Short Bull's, both in recording the shortness and the content of the speech, and the fact that it was immediately followed by the dance.

> After awhile he rose and said he was very glad to see his children. "I have sent for you and am glad to see you. I am going to talk to you after awhile about your relatives who are dead and gone. My children, I want you to listen to all I have to say to you. I will teach you, too, how to dance a dance, and I want you to dance it. Get ready for your dance then, and when the dance is over, I will talk to you."... Then he commenced our dance, everybody joining in, the Christ singing while we danced. We danced till late in the night, when he told us we had danced enough.[64]

The second speeches reported by Short Bull and Porcupine seem to have been given on different days, but there are numerous common themes, most notably the idea that the religion was inclusive of whites and that there should be no fighting. In the 1891 narrative Short Bull gives perhaps his most detailed statement of what Wovoka said to him.

> The Messiah stood up and looked toward the west and began to talk (through 4 Interpreters). He said to "Short Bull." "I have sent for you to tell you certain things that you must do. There are Two Chiefs at your Agencies and I want you to help them all you can. Have your people work the ground so they do not get idle, help your Agents and get farms this is one chief. The other Chief is the Church. I want you to help him for he tells you of me; when you get back go to Church. All these churches are mine. If you go to church when you get back others will do the same. I have raised two bodies of men on this earth and have dropped one of them that is the Army. I want no more fighting, take pity on one another, and whenever you do anything that is bad something will happen to you. I mean fights between the Indians and whites. All over the world

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[63] Ibid., 6-7.

[64] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 157.

> one should be like the other and no distinction made, always sing and pray about me, for it is right. 2 days from now all nations will talk one tongue (Short Bull thinks he meant 200 [days] or 2 years) the sign talk will be no more. Educate your children send them to schools." He prayed again and stopped. These are all the words I got from him. While they were dancing the Ghost dance I saw White men, women and girls joining in the dance. I saw the Messiah daily for five days, he name was tattoed [sic] on the back of his left hand; On the fifth day I shook hands with him and all he said was that "soon there would be no world, after the end of the world those who went to church would see all their relatives that had died (Resurrection). This will be the same all over the world even across the big waters." He advised us to return again in the fall of the following year when he would have more to tell us, but for reasons we did not go.[65]

Porcupine's rendition, while differing somewhat from Short Bull's includes similar underlying themes.

> He spoke to us about fighting, and said that was bad, and we must keep from it; that the earth was to be all good hereafter, and we must all be friends with one another.... He told us not to quarrel, or fight, nor strike each other, nor shoot one another; that the whites and Indians were to be all one people.[66]

The idea 'that all race distinctions are to be obliterated, and that whites are to participate with the Indians in the coming felicity' was interpreted by Mooney as being 'contrary to the doctrine as originally preached.' Yet in a lecture delivered in 1911, Mooney contradicted this interpretation when he observed that Wovoka 'taught that the whole human race was of one kindred.'[67] The inclusiveness of Wovoka's doctrine was echoed in the majority of the Short Bull narratives, specifically the Curtis and Weygold texts, the former of which reports Wovoka as preaching:

> I would speak with you now. Behold, I tell you something for you to tell to all the people! Give this dance to all the different tribes of Indians. White people and Indians shall all dance together. But first they shall sing. There shall be no more fighting. No man shall kill another. If any man should be killed it would be a grievous

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[65] Words in parenthesis Crager's, Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 7-8, BBMG.

[66] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 157-58.

[67] Ibid., 139. Hittman, *Wovoka*, 246.

> thing. No man shall lie. Love one another. Help one another. Revile not one another. Hear me, for I will give you water to drink. Thus I tell you, this is why I have called you. My meaning, have you understood it?[68]

Similarly, Weygold recorded that Wovoka had told Short Bull:

> The white people know the praying. I said to them: They should pray and dance. All humans on earth, the Whites, too, if they have got intellect and heart, would come for praying with us in our way. From the rising to the sinking sun will (or should) all humans be one in this kind of praying. After that, only one thing will occur that will be bad. Indians and white people should have pity with each other.... that the people should pray honestly, like he taught it. If somebody would neglect this order, he would be hit by much misfortune.[69]

The Walker text, while not specifically stating that whites were to be included in the religion, echoed the idea of one church, and one belief.

> Across the ocean is a great church where he came from. "That church belongs to me. You may go as you please, but one church, one belief, one faith. When you listen to me when I pray or teach from my church all good people will come with me. The whole world will sing. The whole earth is now filthy and stinks. These murders and suicides are that which stinks.... Those that have done wrong, he will shake the earth. This part of the earth will get it."[70]

The Buechel text does not make reference to whites in this way, but includes the ideas of non-violence and co-operation with whites.

> My son, do not kill one another those I love. Whoever commits murder does evil. Love one another. Have compassion for one another. If I [you?] do this, I shall give you more from ceremonies. And this tribe of yours will flourish....
>
> And when you will be with whitemen, do things among them as they wish.[71]

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[68] Curtis, *Indians' Book*, 45-46.

[69] Word's in parenthesis Haberland's, Haberland, "Die Oglala-Sammlung Weygold... (Teil 4)," 38. I have translated into English quotations from German sources.

[70] Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, 142.

[71] Buechel, *Lakota Tales and Texts in Translation*, 512-13.

Furthermore, the evidence of Arthur Chapman corroborated the notion that from its inception the religion was all inclusive and preached peace.[72]

All of these accounts stand in stark contrast to the statement of George Sword, the chief of Indian police at Pine Ridge, which reported Wovoka as proclaiming:

> When the soldiers of the white people chief want to arrest me, I shall stretch out my arms, which will knock them to nothingness, or if not that, the earth will open and swallow them in.... Any one Indian does not obey me and tries to be on white's side will be covered over by a new land that is to come over this old one.[73]

Yet it is this last statement which perhaps holds the clue to the origin of the idea that the religion was anti-white.

Sword's statement explicitly makes reference to the destruction of the whites through supernatural means, a well-documented and common interpretation of the Ghost Dance, albeit an interpretation with multiple variations as to how this might come about. None of the Short Bull texts make reference to this and neither does the Porcupine account. But within the Porcupine text there is a somewhat similar statement, which may indicate where the idea originated. Porcupine recorded that Wovoka had suggested that 'if any man disobeyed what he ordered, his tribe would be wiped from the face of the earth.'[74] Therefore, one might interpret this as suggesting that if whites were non-believers this would be their fate. This concept appears to be confirmed in Luther Standing Bear's *My People, The Sioux*, in which he quoted Short Bull as saying,

> This man told us that all the white people would be covered up, because they did not believe; even the Indians who did not believe would also be covered.[75]

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[72] Hittman, *Wovoka*, 234-35.

[73] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 159.

[74] Ibid. 158.

[75] Standing Bear, *My People, The Sioux*, 218.

This would suggest that rather than being anti-white, Wovoka's religion was intolerant of non-believers, regardless of their race. It was those who did not believe or practice the Ghost Dance who were threatened with annihilation. As with some forms of Christianity, only believers could be saved.

The return of the dead is a recurrent theme within the Short Bull texts, and its centrality to the Lakota understanding of the religion is indicated by the name the Lakota gave the dance, *Wanagi Wacapi*, which translates as Spirit or Ghost Dance. Mooney stated that 'The Ghost-dance songs are of the utmost importance in connection with the study of the messiah religion, as we find embodied in them much of the doctrine itself.' However, while resurrection features in many of the Lakota Ghost Dance songs, none contain any reference to the destruction of the whites.[76]

Within the texts there are further references to the peaceful nature of the relationship between the Indians and whites proposed by Wovoka. Not only were the Ghost Dancers cautioned not to fight with the whites, they were positively encouraged to work with them. Short Bull refers to the fact that Wovoka wanted them to farm, to go to church and to send their children to school. Similarly Sword quoted Wovoka as saying 'My Grandchildren, when you get home, go to farming and send all your children to school.' Mooney found this curious, noting that 'although he came to restore the old life, he advises his hearers to go to work and send their children to school.'[77]

It is clear from the evidence that what Wovoka was advocating was a form of accommodation, which Nancy Shoemaker contends 'implies an acceptance of some aspects of the dominant culture but not the complete transformation and

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[76] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 315.

[77] Ibid., 183.

disappearance that is inherent in the term "assimilation."[78] This is further illustrated by the fact that within the context of the doctrine that encouraged the Lakota to live in peace and work with the whites, two of the Short Bull texts also allude to an acknowledgement of the cultural differences between the races. In the Buechel narrative Short Bull quoted Wovoka as saying:

> Now, as long as you were raised as an average Indian, so long will you be unable to be both one and the same as the whiteman.[79]

This is echoed in the Weygold narrative, in which Short Bull declared:

> The Indians were made by the Great Mystery and only for living in a certain way and they should (therefore) not accept the ways of another people. I thought, that this was misunderstood a lot.[80]

Wovoka was not arguing in support of assimilation, but instead that the Ghost Dancers should take the benefits of white society that are offered, with the knowledge and reassurance that by doing so it would not make them any less Indian.

Short Bull's frustration at the misinterpretation of the religion is evident in the Curtis text, in which he recounted the difficulties he had experienced in his relationship with the whites.

> It is true, all men should love one another. It is true, all men should live as brothers. Is it we who do not thus? What others demand of us, should they not themselves give? Is it just to expect one friend to give all the friendship? We are glad to live with the white men as brothers. But we ask that they expect not the brotherhood and the love to come from the Indian alone.[81]

The racism endemic to nineteenth century America meant that whites did not perceive the Indians as being equal to themselves, regarding them not as 'brothers' but rather as children, wards of the state who needed to be civilised by a patriarchal government. James McLaughlin, the agent at Standing Rock, illustrated this point

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[78] Shoemaker, *American Indians*, 8.

[79] Buechel, *Lakota Tales and Texts in Translation*, 513.

[80] Word's in parenthesis Haberland's, Haberland, "Die Oglala-Sammlung Weygold... (Teil 4)," 38.

[81] Curtis, *Indians' Book*, 46-47.

well when he stated, 'He [the Indian] is a grown-up child in his regard for the things he does not understand.'[82] Moreover, the rights of American citizenship were not extended to the American Indians: they were not protected by the Bill of Rights, which might have safeguarded their religious freedom.

Ironically, Lieutenant Hugh L. Scott who had been detailed to investigate the religion in December 1890, commented 'that this dance is intended as a worship of the white man's God there can be no doubt in the mind of any intelligent person who hears what they have to say on the subject.' Scott concluded that the Ghost Dance was 'a better religion than they ever had before, [for it] taught them precepts which, if faithfully carried out, will bring them into better accord with their white neighbors, and has prepared the way for their final Christianization.' Vestal concurred when he stated that 'The Ghost Dance was entirely Christian - except for the difference in rituals.'[83]

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The evidence suggests that the doctrine of the Lakota Ghost Dance was no different from that which Wovoka had originally preached. Short Bull's testimony is corroborated by both white and Indian sources recorded prior to the Wounded Knee Massacre, and therefore not influenced in any way by the tragic event. Furthermore, the documents maintain that the religion's message remained all-inclusive and peaceful when it was transferred to the South Dakota reservations. There is never any hint of hostility towards whites and instead it would appear that the religion encouraged the Lakota towards accommodation, as is illustrated by the Oglala Ghost Dancer Big Road.

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[82] McLaughlin, *My Friend, The Indian*, 238. For further information on 19th century American racism see Horseman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*; Gossett, *Race*; and Stanton *The Leopard's Spots*, and for a discussion on paternalism see Prucha, *Indians in American Society*.

[83] L.G. Moses, "Jack Wilson and the Indian Service: The Response of the BIA to the Ghost Dance Prophet," *American Indian Quarterly*, 5, no. 3 (1979): 306. Vestal [Campbell], *Sitting Bull*, 272.

> This dance was like religion; it was religious. Those who brought the dance here from the West said that the dance was the same as going to church.
> White people pray because they want to go to Heaven. Indians want to go to Heaven, too, so they prayed, and they also prayed for food enough to keep them out of Heaven until it was time to go. Heaven must be a nice place, or the white man would not want to go there. That was why the Indian would like to go.
> We danced and prayed that we might live forever; that everything we planted might grow up to give us plenty and happiness. There was no harm in the dance. The Messiah told us to send our children to school, to work our farms all the time, and to do the best we could. He also told us not to drop our church. We and our children could dance and go to church, too; that would be like going to two churches.
> I never heard that the Messiah had promised that the Indians should be supreme or that the white man should be destroyed. We never prayed for anything but happiness. We did not pray that the white people should be all killed. The shirts we wore made us go to Heaven. The dance was not a war dance, for none that went to it were allowed to have one scrap of metal on his body.[84]

The dominant interpretation that the Lakota Ghost Dance leaders 'perverted' Wovoka's doctrine of peace into one of war is based upon primary source material derived from the testimony of those who had actively worked to suppress the religion, and actively sought to justify these actions after the fact. As with so much of history, the events were chronicled by the victors. When James Mooney, author of the most significant secondary source on the subject, went to Pine Ridge to gather information on the Lakota version of the religion, Short Bull and Kicking Bear were in Europe with Buffalo Bill's Wild West. The absence of the men who had been fundamental in bringing the Ghost Dance to the Lakota seriously weakened his interpretation. That Short Bull spoke to Crager during the same time period and went on to speak to others about the religion, would suggest that he might have welcomed the opportunity

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[84] Coleman, *Voices of Wounded Knee*, 57.

to give Mooney his version of the events. Undoubtedly, such information would have ultimately given Mooney a much broader understanding of the Lakota Ghost Dance.


Fig. 6. The body of Big Foot at the site of the Wounded Knee Massacre.

The soldiers in background had been sent out to protect the burial party.


Fig. 7. The burial of the dead in a mass grave, three days after the massacre.

Fig. 8. Pine Ridge Indian Police 1890-91.

Captain George Sword, front left.

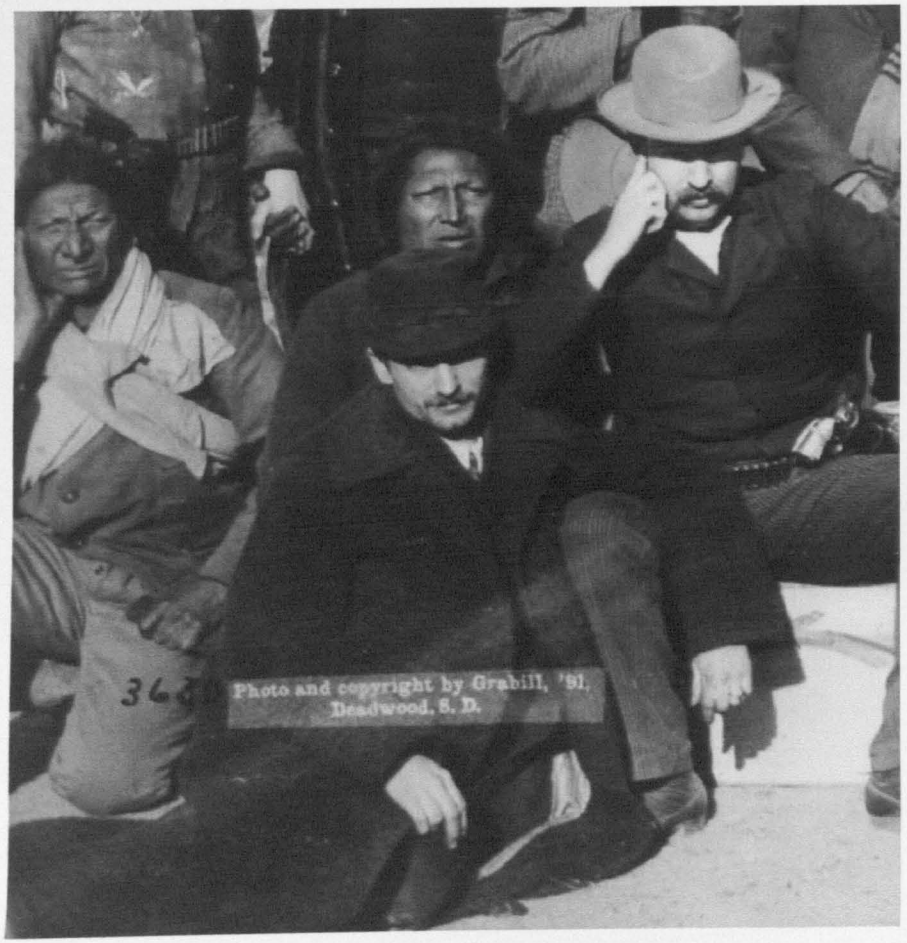


Fig. 9. George C. Crager (centre) at Pine Ridge Agency January 1891.


Fig. 10. Lakota Delegates journey from Pine Ridge, South Dakota to Walker Lake, Nevada, Fall 1889 – March 1890.

## Three: From accommodation to resistance, with the invasion of the US military

The Short Bull narratives, which have been substantiated by both Indian and white testimony, illustrate that the message brought back by the Lakota delegates who had visited Wovoka in March 1890 preached peace and accommodation. Furthermore, the evidence shows that when the religion was introduced to the Lakota it remained essentially peaceful and racially inclusive, and that the Ghost Dancers of South Dakota did not corrupt or change Wovoka's original doctrine of peace into an anti-white armed rebellion. However, the government reaction to the Lakota Ghost Dancers would suggest that they perceived the religion to be a substantial threat. Yet it was not white civilians living close to the South Dakota reservations who were being endangered by the Lakota Ghost Dancers, but rather the government's programmes of assimilation and the Indian Agent's control over dependent Indian wards. The Ghost Dance offered an alternate way forward for the Lakota in the form of accommodation, blending aspects of white culture with traditional Lakota beliefs and practices, while at the same time acknowledging their innate Indian identity.

When the government banned the religion and sent in troops to suppress it, the Lakota Ghost Dance became a passive form of resistance through non co-operation. This in turn became enmeshed with resistance to the new reservation boundaries, which had been introduced with the breaking up of the Great Sioux Reservation. Fear of the motives of 'the other' spread like a contagion infecting both the military and the Ghost Dance camps, creating heightened suspicion and resulting in a stand-off between the two parties.

The creation of the 'perversion myth' and the presentation of the Lakota Ghost Dance as a violent anti-white rebellion enabled the government to justify the religion's suppression and the aggressive actions of the military at Wounded Knee. Shortly after

the last of the Ghost Dancers came in to the Pine Ridge agency to surrender, General Miles removed twenty-four men and three women to Fort Sheridan, Illinois, and very soon they alone came to represent the 'Hostiles.'

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It is paradoxical that a religion with strong Christian elements, which preached peace and co-operation with the whites, came to be perceived as a hostile movement in South Dakota. Short Bull makes a number of references to the negative reactions to the Ghost Dance: in the Curtis narrative he commented:

> Who would have thought that dancing could make such trouble? We had no wish to make trouble, nor did we cause it of ourselves. There was trouble, but it was not of my making. We had no thought of fighting; if we had meant to fight, would we not have carried arms? We went unarmed to the dance. How could we have held weapons? For thus we danced, in a circle, hand in hand, each man's fingers linked in those of his neighbor.[1]

Unfortunately for the Lakota the general perception outside of the dance camps, was that the dances constituted preparation for an armed uprising rather than the rites of a peaceful religious movement. There are many reasons as to why this was the general view, and it could be argued that others were responsible for distorting the perception of the Lakota Ghost Dance into a hostile movement, to suit their needs.

By the late nineteenth century 'whites assumed that Indian culture was stagnant' and that only the imposition of Western civilisation could transform and indeed save the Indians. The government's policy toward the Lakota became one of hastening their assimilation by destroying their culture and the structures of Lakota society. In order to achieve this aim, the Indian agents did everything in their power to undermine Lakota tribal organisation, and weaken the influence of the traditional chiefs and medicine men. The agents appointed Indian police forces that could then compete with the chiefs for authority, and with the support of the agent the police soon

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[1] Curtis, *Indians' Book*, 45.

acquired much power. At the same time, the agents asserted their control by such punishments as withholding food, imprisonment, and the threat of banishment to Indian Territory.[2]

Whilst acknowledging that change was inevitable, both progressive and traditionalist Lakota sought to control this process themselves. The latter group's acceptance of the Ghost Dance was in itself an attempt to regain control of their lives within a framework that was both familiar and accessible, and the Lakota turned away from Indian agents and police and looked to traditional chiefs and medicine men for leadership. Hyde noted that 'the one thing that shocked the whites most was the collapse of all authority. The agents whose word had been law among the Sioux were now flouted and the armed Indian police were in general unable to execute their orders.' Disregard for governmental authority was bad enough, but the disruption of assimilationist programmes was worse still. In short, all of the government's planning and work that had been carried out since 1878 with the object of ending Lakota tribal organisation 'was destroyed by this messiah craze.'[3]

The attempts of the agents to reassert control over the Ghost Dancers was illustrated in an interview with a newspaper reporter in November 1890, when Little Wound, a leader of the Oglala Ghost Dancers, reported:

> Captain Swords, chief of police at the agency, and other messengers came to my camp from the agency, and told me that I was violating the law of the Great Father in disobeying the agent, and that Spotted Horse and Thunder Bull were now chiefs in my place. I told them that no white man had made me a chief, and, therefore, no white man could put me aside; and that I would still be chief as long as I lived. They said that as Spotted Horse and Thunder Bull had not joined the dance, they would rule in my place.[4]

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[2] DeMallie, "Lakota Ghost Dance," 390. Alvin M. Josephy, Jr. et al., *Wounded Knee: Lest We Forget* (Cody, Wyoming: Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1990) 17.

[3] Hyde, *Sioux Chronicle*, 258-9. Moses, "Jack Wilson and the Indian Service," 309.

As the Ghost Dance became more popular amongst the Lakota, it was not only the agents who were losing influence, but also the Indian police and those Lakota who had allied themselves to the government. Overholt recognised that 'for the more "progressive" Indians the movement must have meant primarily a setback in the advance of "civilization" and a potential threat to new-found positions of status.'[5] Short Bull described an incident which took place in May 1890, before he himself became an ardent dancer, which clearly illustrated the intensity of the friction between the traditionalist and progressives camps.

> Once one of the Indian Police and Interpreter Louis Rubadeau insulted me, I did not say much to them but said this, "The Messiah told me not to fight and I will not you may take a gun and kill me if you want to." Louis Rubadeau said to me "See if one of the dancers who are in a fit see the Messiah, I [if?] you can't do it you will be lost." At this Louis' brother who was nearby, grabbed him and dragged him away. Louis told "Turning Bear" if "you will kill "Short Bull" the Agent will give you One hundred Dollars, two horses, a cow and a yoke of oxen." "Turning Bear" told this to "Short Bull" who laughed and said nothing. "Turning Bear" was told to rush into the teepee, grab "Short Bull" and if he had him help would rush in to assist him to finish the job. This was in May and the "Ghost" dancing had well begun.[6]

The progressives, who had supported the Sioux Act of 1889, had already lost face as a result of the government's reduction of rations and its failure to carry out its promises. Accordingly, just like the agents it suited these Lakota to justify the suppression of the Ghost Dance by portraying it as a hostile movement and a threat to peace in South Dakota. An old Oglala man known as Issowonie told Short Bull 'our own people have caused the soldiers to come here by telling lies.' Crow Dog, too, recounted that 'his troubles began when interpreters lied to his agent, telling the agent that the Ghost Dance was really a war dance.'[7]

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[4] *Daily Telegraph* (London), 29, Nov. 1890, p.3.

[5] Overholt, "Ghost Dance of 1890," 57.

[6] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 8-9, BBMG.

[7] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 11-12, BBMG; Jensen et al., *Eyewitness*, 13.

Therefore, if we accept that progressive Indians were losing status and influence, and that all of Mooney's sources are derived from the testimony of the Indian police, it is not hard to see how and why the 'perversion myth' could have originated. While some progressives might have been motivated by old personal feuds, it is clear that others believed they were working in the best interests of their people. Luther Standing Bear was a progressive Lakota who worked as a teacher at the Rosebud Agency School. He told fellow Sicangu that 'it would not be right for them to join the ghost dancers, as the Government was going to stop it, and it would not be best for them to be found there. I told them the Government would use soldiers to enforce the order if it became necessary.'[8] The acceptance by white authorities that the Lakota Ghost Dance was hostile can to some extent be explained by misunderstanding and bigotry, but it also suited their needs. With the opening up of South Dakota to settlers, the government needed the Lakota to be subservient and easily controlled, and in the aftermath of the Wounded Knee Massacre the perception of the Ghost Dancers as hostile and out of control amply justified the actions of the military.[9]

The American government and progressive Indians opposed to the Ghost Dance were not alone in portraying the Lakota Ghost Dancers as hostile. Initially the ceremony had been seen as 'an item of curiosity and entertainment for the local white population.'[10] By mid-November, stories of the dance and of rumours about the coming of a messiah filled the nation's press, but as Moses remarked 'Dancing, peaceful Indians awaiting their divine redemption did not sell newspapers.' Soon journalists were flooding the country with stories about an impending Indian

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[8] Standing Bear, *My People, The Sioux*, 217, 220. Despite having a close relationship with the agent, whom he described as 'a nice young man,' in the aftermath of the Wounded Knee Massacre Standing Bear and two friends 'were ready to fight if it came to a "show-down." While we three were Carlisle graduates, we determined to stick by our race.' Standing Bear, *My People, The Sioux*, 225.

[9] Yet to assume that the different departments of the government were in unison would be wrong. Both the War Department and the Interior Department, or more specifically the Bureau of Indian Affairs, tried to distance themselves from any responsibility, and attempted to put the onus for the situation on the other.

[10] Jensen et al., *Eyewitness*, 43.

uprising.[11] By the beginning of December 'the newspapers and bureaucrats had created a chain of events from which there was no avenue of retreat.' The local population who had been suffering from the country's financial depression exacerbated the situation; they welcomed the influx of hard cash and 'wanted the troops, reporters, and other hangers-on with money to stay.'[12]

The government's suppression of the Lakota Ghost Dance began as soon as Short Bull and the other delegates had returned from Nevada. At first a number were cautioned not to speak about the new religion, while some enthusiasts were actually imprisoned. Kicking Bear was arrested on the orders of Perain Palmer, the Cheyenne River agent, but when he was tried by an Indian court his Lakota judges released him.[13]

The Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Robert V. Belt, repeatedly sent circulars to agents directing them to do all in their power to stop the Ghost Dance.[14] Agent Wright of the Rosebud reservation used the tried and tested strategy of withholding rations, informing Ghost Dancers 'that rations would be withheld until they had returned to their homes and ceased dancing.'[15] But it appears that the appeal of the new religion was too great, and a substantial number of Lakota refused to relinquish it. With the civilian authorities unable to reassert their control over the dancers it was left to the military to suppress the Lakota Ghost Dance, and their arrival on the South Dakota reservations caused panic and initially swelled the camps of the Ghost Dancers. But within two months the Lakota were brought under control, and in the process the two renowned leaders Sitting Bull and Big Foot, together with many more Lakota men, women, and children, had been slain.

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[11] L. G. Moses ' "The Father Tells Me So!" Wovoka: The Ghost Dance Prophet,' *American Indian Quarterly*, 9, no. 3 (1985): 342.

[12] Jensen et al., *Eyewitness*, 47.

[13] Hyde, *A Sioux Chronicle*, 258.

[14] Moses, "Jack Wilson and the Indian Service," 301.

[15] Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report, 1891*, 411.

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Non co-operation with government policy did not alone constitute a perversion of Wovoka's doctrine, as government policy included the prohibition of the religion for the Lakota Ghost Dancers. They therefore faced a dilemma - should they abandon the religion as the government wished, or should they practice it as taught by Wovoka. For those deeply religious Lakota the answer was simple, as ultimately the Great Spirit *Wakan Tanka* took precedence over the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Furthermore, the Short Bull sources clearly demonstrate that the Lakota version of the religion differed little in practice and maintained the concepts of peace and inclusiveness as originally preached. Short Bull informed Weygold of what he had said to the dancers at the beginning of the ceremony, and it is evident from this that what Short Bull conveyed to the Lakota dancers was the message given to him by Wovoka.

> I said to them (that is: before the Ghost Dance he said to his followers) "Paint your faces! You have to have good hearts! Close your eyes and bow your heads towards the earth, then you will only have one way to think (that is: your thoughts won't wander to other things)." I said to them, I wanted them in that position to say a prayer, but also I said to them that I would first like to speak some words: "Your children should go to school and learn. The old people should attend some religious worship and say prayers." I said to them they should draw something (from) the earth, too (that is: do some farming) and they should build houses to live in, and take good advice from respectable white men, too. Then do not kill each other! "In the old times there were lots of wars, blood and a bad odor (that is: from blood and corpses)." I said this to the old people, that they should draw advantage from previous experiences. Then I said that they should listen to my words, and that I would say a prayer. Take down all your finger-rings, earrings and all iron before you start dancing. If they would carry iron (with them) they would be tempted to do something bad.[16] [Fig. 11]

The only thing, which is perhaps not ascribable to Wovoka, is the concluding reference to iron. Sword's statement appears to corroborate this idea when he stated,

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[16] Haberland, "Die Oglala-Sammlung Weygold... (Teil 4)," 37.

'In the ghost dance no person is allow to wear anything made of metal.' Mooney sees this as being in 'accordance with the general idea of a return to aboriginal habits' and the abandonment of 'white man's dress and utensils.'[17] In a letter dated 7 March 1910, Short Bull makes a similar reference to iron when he describes how he used a tent for prayers before the dance: 'All folks pray to the great mystery, and no body brings iron into the tent. And nobody in the tent says something evil, indeed. Yes, so it is tradition, indeed.' Short Bull's letter appears to suggest that this concept came from ongoing traditional Lakota culture, and the Christian elements of the Ghost Dance undermine Mooney's assertion that the religion was no more than 'a return to aboriginal habits.' Weygold commented that the religious views of Short Bull 'are an odd mixture of old Indian and Christian elements, but the outward forms of his religion, the ritual side, are very old Indian practice.'[18]

The ritual of the Ghost Dance combined both innovative and traditional elements for the Lakota. Short Bull's brief description of the dance itself was published in Walker's *Lakota Belief and Ritual.*

> First: purification by sweat bath. Clasp hands and circle to the left. Hold hands and sing until a trance is induced, looking up all the time. Brought to a pitch of excitement by singing songs prescribed by the Messiah. Dressed as prescribed. Froth at mouth when in trance. They must keep step with the cadence of the song. The(y) go into trance in from ten minutes to three quarters of an hour. Each one described his vision. Each vision is different from others. Men, women, children have visions.[19]

The use of the sweat bath in preparation for the Ghost Dance was particular to the Lakota, who had traditionally used this as a religious rite of purification: as such it was one of many cultural variations of the dance introduced by each tribe in turn. In contrast, the style of the dance was an innovation for the Lakota and for the first time Lakota men and women danced together, alternating to form a huge circle. It was also

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[17] Haberland, "Die Oglala-Sammlung Weygold... (Teil 3)," 22-24. Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 160, 150.

[18] Haberland, "Die Oglala-Sammlung Weygold... (Teil 4)," 21.

[19] Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, 143.

a novelty for the Lakota to dance holding hands - 'knuckle to knuckle' - and to move round in a sideways motion.[20] The dancers would continue for many hours until a good number of them had fainted from exhaustion.

In the Beuchel narrative Short Bull gave a graphic description of his experience of the trance and two of his subsequent visions.

> When I was first affected, something of a sudden enlightened my whole face and it turned blue. So my bowels turned altogether upside down, I was about to vomit; and so I was afraid and tried not to remember. It seemed as though I were alighting upon a land of green grass; I took a walk, went over beyond up and onto a tall hill. Beyond it was a real camp, just an ordinary real camp, and so I went there. A horseman came from there galloping hard and arrived. It was Father, a very young and handsome man, and he said to me:
>
> Father: For heaven's sake, my son, I see what is yours, those I esteem, but when you carry a bad odor go home from there, and when you get home rub yourself (with sage), then come. So then you should go to your home and we shall see you among your own. (he said).
>
> So finally I turned back. And that was it. I awoke. And now while they were dancing in a circle, I was thus sitting in the middle. However, I awoke and felt very depressed. Whoever is in such a state of mind and has passed out, and as he knows so he speaks, and he does not lie. So thus I spoke.

Heeding his father's words he 'took a swim and a good bath,' and the next morning danced again. This time it was the 'Son of God' who spoke to him first, advising him of how he should proceed with the religion.

> At once I fainted and was again up on a hill. And there a man was standing and I went to him. It was the Son of God; when we had gone for a walk and it was he who saw us, when he stood there, I went to him; but those beyond the camp were, it seemed, loudly murmuring in the camp center, and the man said:
>
> Son of God: My son, you do not speak these words of mine well. So I have laid away for the future a number of ceremonies that I have told you about, so inform them. And always do painting over your body.

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[20] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 7, BBMG.

> And clothe yourself with it. Do not forget it. In the future, you will see one another with these. Well now, look! These who are one's people in assembling here weep and do a poor job talking over their affairs. So, I want you to get on well, but soon in the future you will see the land; if it is near, you will hear a voice. Since this land is badly worn out, you shall now live on a new countryside. So rejoice!
>
> Now when I tell you this which you hear, remember it well. Now soon when it is me that you pray for something I shall listen. Come now, go to your relatives who wish to see you.

In this second vision Short Bull's father welcomed him and took him to his lodge, where he was introduced to nine men described as his 'grandfathers in succession.' He was seated 'in the honor place' and given pemmican to eat.[21] An older man told him about the structure of the camp, which separated the men and the women, and he was then encouraged to visit his grandmothers in their lodge. Again he was welcomed and given food, this time 'a piece of stomach and marrow,' and after he had 'devoured it' he left the camp.

> I came outside and went off onto that hill. I was half asleep, and during the dancing I lay down in the center, woke up feeling very sad, and stood at the sacred tree while the people were all around me. Finally, I spoke to them about things how I had seen or was spoken to, and I bid them to do well.[22]

Unfortunately Short Bull did not elaborate on the meaning of his visions, but simply stated that 'Twelve times I passed out, and those times I became an eagle, it kept

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[21] Pemmican was an important and favoured dish of the Lakota, useful to warrior and hunting parties as an easily transportable high-energy food; it was also eaten at feasts. Hassrick noted that pemmican was prepared with 'broiled papapuze [dried jerked meat]' as its basis. 'After the meat had been cooked on the coals, water was sprinkled on it. Then with a granite meat pounder, the papapuze was pulverized in a rawhide bowl where it was mixed with bits of fat to taste. The pemmican was next fashioned into patties which could be eaten immediately or, being quite dry, stored well, especially when frozen. Dried cherries and grapes, crushed with pits and seeds, were commonly mixed with pemmican [and] Pemmican made from Buffalo Meat was considered the most desirable.' Hassrick, *The Sioux*, 83, 89, 217.

[22] Buechel, *Lakota Tales and Texts in Translation*, 515–18.

bringing me to my relatives, and with great delight I saw them all: my father, mother, my younger sister, [and] older brother.'[23]

As an important part of the ceremony the Lakota dancers wore special shirts and dresses, many of them bearing unique decoration inspired by the dancer's vision. The Ghost Dance costumes were believed by their wearers to render them invulnerable, having been invested with protective qualities by means of decoration and ceremony. The use of these garments by the Lakota Ghost Dancers has been repeatedly used to illustrate their hostile intentions. For example, Hyde commented, 'This Sioux prophet [Kicking Bear] had abandoned the peaceful teaching of the messiah and was telling the maddened Sioux that ghost shirts were bullet proof and that they now had the power to destroy the whites whose troops could not harm the Indians.'[24]

Mooney asserted that 'Wovoka himself expressly disclaimed any responsibility for the ghost shirt.'[25] Yet contemporaries recorded that not only did Wovoka claim invulnerability, but also that he utilised shirts when he demonstrated this strength to the Indians. When Chapman interviewed Wovoka in December 1890 he asked, "Did you tell them that you were bullet-proof, and to prove it you spread a blanket on the ground and stood upon it, with nothing on you except a calico shirt, and had your brother shoot at you a distance of 10 feet, and the ball struck your breast and dropped to the blanket?" To which Wovoka replied, "That was a joke."[26] Hittman also recorded that 'Wovoka purchased from [Ed] Dyer's General store and sold to his

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[23] Ibid., 518. For examples of other Lakota visions see Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 89-91; and DeMallie, *Sixth Grandfather*, 260-66.

[24] Hyde, *A Sioux Chronicle*, 258.

[25] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 153.

[26] Phister, "The Indian Messiah," 108; and Hittman, *Wovoka*, 235. Hittman quotes numerous people with regards to this demonstration of Wovoka's invulnerability, a number were actual witnesses to the event, while others reported what they had heard. Furthermore, while some saw the incident as proof of Wovoka's greatness, others discuss how he pulled off an illusory trick. See Hittman, *Wovoka*, 82-84, 250-51, 263, 306, 308, 309, 326, 332, & 336.

followers... "calico (ghost) shirts." The sale of these items joined the sale of eagle and magpie tail feathers and red paint as part of the income he derived from thaumaturges.'[27]

Therefore, the interrelated idea of invulnerability and shirts can be traced back to Wovoka himself. But whereas Wovoka's use of the shirt was intended as a demonstration of his power to reinforce his status in the eyes of the onlookers, with the Lakota the idea of protection was applicable to all. This would indicate a mindset on the part of the Lakota of being vulnerable and open to attack, and there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the Lakotas' use of the shirts was defensive rather than hostile.

> Although many whites were convinced that the Ghost Dancers were preparing for war, it is now evident that the dancers' primary concern was defending themselves from outside interference while continuing the ceremonies.... The bulletproof ghost shirts were consistent with this generally defensive posture. Elaine Goodale, who had worked on the reservation for five years, pointed out that the assertion that the shirts were bulletproof was not made until after the soldiers arrived.[28]

Vestal concluded that, 'Had they intended war, the warriors would have relied upon their war charms.... And, had war been their plan, why [would they have] put Ghost shirts on women and children?'[29] The Lakota did not expect women and children to become involved in fighting, and the very fact that women and children wore them suggests that they viewed attacks against these 'civilians' as very possible. In choosing

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[27] Ibid., 198. The demand for Wovoka's clothing also included hats and it would appear that Wovoka was responding to written requests, and that what followers desired were articles that he himself had worn. Hittman quoted Ed Dyer as recording that Wovoka 'was content merely to bask in the adulation and veneration of his fellow Indians. But his fellow Indians having ideas of his own, ran off with the ball. They asked for Wilson's garments, particularly shirts. They began, by extension to attribute miraculous powers to shirts he had worn, owned, touched, looked upon or simply just thought about.' Hittman, *Wovoka*, 252.

[28] Jensen et al., *Eyewitness*, 12.

[29] Vestal [Campbell], *Sitting Bull*, 277.

to practice the Ghost Dance the Lakota were assuming a pacifist stance of non co-operation, but in doing so they exposed themselves to retribution from the government.

Clark Wissler has likened the protective qualities imbued in the ghost shirts by means of decoration and ceremony to the Lakotas' use of protective shield-designs, which gave the owner supernatural protection.

> When the enemies of the Dakota were armed with native weapons, the shield had some value in itself, because few arrows could get through it, and it was of sufficient strength to ward off a blow from a club or an axe; but even at that time the designs and medicine objects tied to the shield seem to have been regarded as of greater importance than the mechanical properties of the shield itself. It was the power represented by the design to which the owner of the shield looked for protection. Naturally, with the introduction of fire-arms, shields ceased to have a real protective value; but their designs were still looked upon as capable of affording protection against evil.
> ...Yet the introduction of fire-arms did not relegate the shield to oblivion; and shield-designs are still cherished by men of the olden time, because they represent a kind of individual totem or protective power.'[30]

Thus, the idea of everyday objects assuming supernatural power was a familiar one, and the Lakotas' use of Ghost Dance garments fitted in with traditional beliefs and practice, and soon developed into an emblem of their belief in the religion. At the same time the shirts and dresses were perceived to give the dancers spiritual

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[30] Clark Wissler, 'Some Protective Designs of the Dakota,' *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, vol. 1, part 2, (Feb., 1907): 22-23. Wissler was head of anthropology and director of research at the American Museum of Natural history in New York at the beginning of the twentieth century. With regards to the protective qualities he stated, 'A comparison of the interpretations of shield-designs and ghost-dress designs seems to leave little opportunity for any other conclusion than that the protective designs used in the ghost-dance were essentially the same as those used in former times upon shields and other objects. The garments may be foreign; but the idea of protective designs is most certainly not peculiar to the ghost-dance religion, since it was widely distributed among American tribes, and associated with ceremonial objects that were in use at least a century before the ghost-dance religion appeared.' Ibid., 39-40.

protection, not because the Lakota Ghost Dancers sought armed conflict with the government or their white neighbours, but because they felt vulnerable to attack from such parties.

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White Americans, however, were predisposed to view these activities differently. The adoption of Ghost Dance shirts by the Lakota, and the movement of Short Bull's band from the Rosebud to the Pine Ridge reservation, were both viewed by whites as acts of aggression. Yet there is evidence that the initial motivation for Short Bull's movement was the boundary dispute bought about by the Sioux Act of 1889. The Act, which had ushered in a drastic reduction of Lakota lands and the formation of six separate reservations, had established a new boundary line between the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations, which ran due south from the mouth of Black Pipe Creek and greatly 'upset Chief Lips' Wazhazhas [sic], who lived along this creek and Pass Creek,' to the west.[31] [Fig. 12] Utley noted:

> Technically Brules [Sicangu], these people had joined the Oglalas in 1854, and lived with them until 1876, when they rejoined Spotted Tail's Brules to avoid the trouble with the Army that Red Cloud's leadership gave promise of provoking. Although they had drawn their rations at Rosebud Agency, their ties with the Oglalas were still strong, and, when the new boundary threw them into Pine Ridge Reservation, they insisted upon being counted on the Pine Ridge rolls.

American Horse recalled that, 'The commissioners promised the Indians living on Black Pipe and Pass Creeks that if they signed the bill they could remain where they were and draw their rations at this agency [Pine Ridge], showing them on the map the [boundary] line.'[32] To the Wazhaza the solution was simple and logical, and in July they asked Red Cloud's people in council to allow them to be transferred to the Pine Ridge Agency. Red Cloud stated, 'We told them we would confer with our agent (Col. Gallagher) about it, this we did and the agent called for our vote when we all

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[31] Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 78.

[32] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 202.

raised our right hands in agreement to the transfer. We then requested him to notify the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of our wishes.'[33] However, Thomas Morgan, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, believed the Wazhaza's should maintain their ties with the Rosebud agency and insisted that the families must relocate in the new Rosebud reservation, but the Wazhaza took matters into their own hands and instead moved toward the agency at Pine Ridge.[34]

Short Bull details this movement in the 1891 interview, 'As Narrated By Short Bull.'

> "Sore Hip" sent for me and I went to him. He told me "that he had seen "Red Cloud" sometime ago in reference to transferring a number of families to Pine Ridge Agency and that he was going to see him again and that he would be back in five days, but requested me to go to my home and stay there until he should return," which I done....
>
> I went to "Black Pipe" Creek and waited for "Sore Hip," all those who wanted to be transferred to Pine Ridge Agency going along. We met "Sore Hip" who told us, "that all had been arranged for our removal and that we were to start in four days. So on the night of the third day those who had no wagons moved to Pass Creek, and the main body was to move the next day, but before moving we had a great Ghost dance that night.
>
> In the middle of the night I was awakened by a friend who told me that many of my people were moving toward Pine Ridge Agency which surprised me, and some Indian freighters who had just returned from Valentine sent me word that soldiers were moving toward Rosebud Agency. I did not know why this should be, and it made me angry. One of these freighters "Rescuer" son of Elk Road told me that they were coming to arrest me and if I was not given up they would fire on us all. It was on account of many lies spread by others that I was to be arrested for. "Rescuer" said all the freighters heard the same, this was in November. I called my people together on Pass Creek and told them "to move forward and I would stay here alone, as I did not want them to have any trouble on my account. I want nothing but what was right for myself and my family. I had done as they wanted me to, and now have no rest, day

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[33] Thomas A. Bland, ed., *A Brief History of the Late Military Invasion of the Home of the Sioux* (Washington D.C.: National Indian Defence Association, 1891) 20-21.

[34] Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 78-79. See also Clow, *The Rosebud Sioux*, 71-74.

> or night. My brother "White Thunder" and my Cousin "Thumb" had been killed for jealousy and now they want me. Go on, I will stay here if they want to kill me they are welcome." That night they moved, all save myself and a few young men, my family who were on Pass Creek moved also; that night my brother came to me and said it was all lies that the freighters said, and the next morning some of the young men came back for me and I followed them camping that night on "Crow Creek." We broke camp the next morning, moving to "Medicine Creek" where we rested, camping that night at the forks of "Medicine Root Creek."[35]

Suggestions of Short Bull's impending arrest might have been easily dismissed as rumours, but the military's arrival and their appearance on the Rosebud reservation caused a general stampede of Sicangu Ghost Dancers.[36] Two Strike later stated:

> One day a white man employed at the trader's store at the agency came to my camp and told me that the soldiers were coming to stop the dance. This scared us so we put our women and children into wagons and got on our ponies and left our homes. We went to Pine Ridge and asked Red Cloud and his people to let us have a home on their reservation.[37]

Resistance to forced relocation because of the new reservation boundaries had thus become intertwined with resistance to government interference with the Ghost Dance itself.

Short Bull and his followers were soon advised by an Oglala to move their camp to the crossing by American Horse's village, and having set up their camp accordingly they went in a body to the home of Little Wound. The Pine Ridge agent had sent for Little

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[35] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 10-11, BBMG.

[36] On Nov. 21, 1890, the acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, R. V. Belt, wrote to the Secretary of the Interior stating, 'request that the military be directed to cause the arrest of the Indians named in Special Agent Reynold's telegram, should the military authorities concur... arrest and detention is absolutely necessary.' Short Bull headed Reynold's list, which included twenty other Sicangu Lakota. See R.V. Belt, Acting CIA, to John Noble, Secretary of the Interior, 21 Nov. 1890, SC 188, p89, RG 75, NA.

[37] Bland, *A Brief History of the Late Military Invasion*, 8.

Wound to bring Short Bull and his people to the agency, and so the two leaders started out for the agency with ten other Sicangu. Short Bull recounted that,

> They halted at the house of "Cherry Cedar" where they ate some dried meat, continuing afterward to the Agency bluffs and resting. Little Wound going on ahead to the Agency. It was sundown when Cheyenne Creek was reached, and afterwards going to the lodge of "Twist Back" on the Agency. While in this lodge I was called out by some of my young men who told me the Indian Soldiers were about to surround us, at this we remounted our horses and rode back to our camp on Wounded Knee Creek.[38]

The hasty return of Short Bull's group surprised the camp, and the people there 'feared something was wrong.' On the advice of an old Oglala crier, they then moved their camp into the South Dakota Badlands.

> The old crier then told me to move my people who were poorly mounted to the Bad Lands, as his people had told him to bring me this word, and should anything happen Red Cloud and the rest would join us there with plenty of horses. The Ogallalas brought a large lot of horses to us, saying that they belonged to a white man ("Big Bat") who lived up the creek, we went to him and he told us that "if there is going to be fight he could not take his horses with him as he had so many all over the country and if we wanted to ride them we could." So some of the Brules did take them. "Sore Hip" "High Hawk" and "Chief of the Black Hills" (a white man who is a judge) came out to us to have a talk. I did not go to the Council and don't know what was said. The next morning we moved toward the Bad Lands and camped there that night. "High Hawk" and the others returning to the Agency, no good being done by them.[39]

Short Bull and his followers were joined once again by other Sicangu Ghost Dancers, 'and some of the Ogallallas [sic], who had joined our dance.'[40] Two Strike commented, 'We went there to keep away from the soldiers. We did not want to

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[38] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 11-13, BBMG. On Nov. 27, 1890, Miles reported that Little Wound was at Pine Ridge Agency 'and his following coming. Short Bull of the Rosebud Agency, came in night before last; reports his people coming in; estimated at about 500 lodges and 2,500 people.' Miles, Chicago, to Adjutant General, 27 Nov. 1890, SC 188, p268, RG 75, NA.

[39] Words in parentheses Crager's, Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 11-13, BBMG.

[40] Bland, *A Brief History of the Late Military Invasion*, 8.

fight, we only wanted to be let alone, and be allowed to worship the Great Spirit in our own way.'[41] An Oglala, Turning Hawk, later stated,

> while the soldiers were there [Pine Ridge Agency], there was constantly a great deal of false rumor flying back and forth. The special rumor I have in mind is the threat that the soldiers had come there to disarm the Indians entirely and to take away all their horses from them. That was the oft-repeated story.
>
> So constantly repeated was this story that our friends from Rosebud, instead of going to Pine Ridge, the place of their destination, veered off and went to some other direction toward the "Bad Lands."[42]

It was this movement away from the Agency toward the Badlands that led many whites to categorise the Lakota Ghost Dancers as hostile. Brigadier General John R. Brooke, who commanded the Department of the Platte, and exercised field command of the troops at Pine Ridge, was instructed to 'separate the loyal from the "turbulent" Indians.' To this end he had dispatched Indian policemen to inform the Lakota that they must abandon their homes and gather at the agency. Soon hundreds of families 'who wished to be counted as "friendlies" had come in.'[43] By definition, then, Brooke considered all Lakota who had not complied with his order to be 'hostiles.'

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Short Bull gives a very detailed description of events in South Dakota from his return up to his arrest and imprisonment by General Miles in January 1891, including what is quite possibly the only surviving eyewitness account of life in the Ghost Dance camp in the Badlands. Moreover, Short Bull gives numerous examples of potential conflicts where he had followed the advice of Wovoka, and encouraged others not to fight. A number of such instances occurred whilst the Ghost Dancers were in the Badlands, and the following extract is interesting considering Utley's account of the same event in his book *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation*. Utley paints a very different picture of

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[41] Ibid., 8.

[42] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 246.

[43] Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 115-17.

Short Bull's role and suggests that it was Crow Dog, not Short Bull, who diffused the situation by placing his blanket over his head.[44]

> I called them together and bid them to stop, saying "I wanted no trouble. You must stop, you should do right, have no fighting. You have taken and butchered other peoples cattle and stolen horses, we will move back to the Agency, sell our ponies, pay for these cattle and have no more trouble. The Ogallalas must listen to what I say as well as the Brules. You have plenty of dried meat now, but do as I ask you." They would not listen but moved toward White River. I again asked them to listen, they had no ears, telling them to go to the Agency and that as soon as I got over being mad I would come in too. At this the young men surrounded me, I covered my head with my blanket so I could not see who would kill me for I heard their guns cock. One of them spoke up bidding me to uncover my face so I done it. I told them the reason I covered my face was that I did not care to see who would kill me, and wanted no trouble.[45]

In his own account Short Bull also detailed the troubles the Ghost Dancers had when they ventured out of the safety of their camp to purchase provisions, etc., including the extent of the local white paranoia about the Badlands camp and the contagious effect upon the Ghost Dancers of such uneasiness.

> Five of our men were then sent to Cheyenne River to buy sugar and other things for our use and as they neared a house, at the end of which was a haystack they were fired upon by a party of whites and my nephew "Circle Elk" a young boy who had been to school at Carlisle was killed. He could speak English and for that reason was sent with the party. When the four returned all of the young men mounted their horses to bring back the body of my nephew. I could see them in the distance going backward and forward when finally one of them returned saying they had met a band of Ogallalas from Pine Ridge Agency and they had taken away their guns. I told him to go back and return the guns, they had not been sent out to make trouble but to bring back the body of my nephew. He went back to the place and they all came back to the camp. "Roaming Walk" who had a "Medicine Pipe" (made of bone) laid it before me to fill and smoke, but "Porcupine Belly" shot it (which means I break the treaty). "Crow Dog" and "Roaming Walk" were very much dissatisfied all the time, so

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[44] It is worth noting that Utley's source was 'press dispatches... summarized in ... [James P. Boyd, *Recent Indian Wars*, (Philadelphia: n.p., 1891)] pp205-210,' see Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 140-142.

[45] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 13-14, BBMG.

> we took their guns from them, and some of the Ogallalas who said they would return to Pine Ridge Agency and kill us all.
>
> The next morning we all assembled on the dancing ground and "Knob Arrow" said, "Let us ditch this hill and if anyone comes here they cannot get to us." I told them to do as they pleased, but to first get my nephews body. Whereupon some of the young men started, the remainder digging the ditch. They found the body partly burned by prairie fire so it was wrapped up and left. We went over to where the fire was and were met by white soldiers who fired on us, so we turned back. I then told my people if these soldiers fire on you, fire back and when we got close to them again they fled. (The soldiers here mentioned were Cowboys). Again while a party of my men were out on foot one day they were attacked by soldiers, no one was killed but one was wounded, they had but one gun with them and in their flight lost that. After this my people stole more horses, "Lone Bull" getting a fine Grey horse which he rode.[46]

Short Bull's 1891 narrative makes clear how tense the atmosphere was within the camp in the Badlands. The government constantly sent intermediaries into the camp to try and coax the Ghost Dancers back to the agency at Pine Ridge. This tactic helped to expose rifts and drive wedges between the leaders, and also worked to heighten the growing sense of fear within the camp.

Apart from the statement in the Walker text when Short Bull comments, 'The Ghost shirt is *wakan*. It is impervious to missiles,' he made only one other reference to Ghost Dance shirts in all of the five narratives.[47] In his 1891 account, Short Bull recalled how he was challenged to give a demonstration of the Messiah's power: his response, in which he dismissed the invulnerability of the ghost shirt as being 'only a trick' is intriguingly similar to Wovoka's comment that this 'was a Joke.'

> The next day a delegation of Ogallalas came to us from Pine Ridge to make a treaty. Among the Chiefs were No Neck, Yankton Charlie, Standing Bear, and Crow Dog. They brought us presents, we killed one of the stolen cattle and made a feast. I told these Chiefs that if my people would be allowed to go to Pine Ridge to

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[46] Ibid., 14-15.

[47] Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, 143.

> live and draw rations there they would all be satisfied to go in. At this "Fast Thunder" arose [and] pointing to me said "You are the man who wants to get your people in trouble," to which I asked him "What do you mean?" He said, "You are trying to have your people fight. Now I ask you to do something wonderful that this Messiah told you to do, if you can do it I will also believe in him." I then said "My people do not want to fight they want peace. I told them what the Messiah said. He did not invest me with any spiritual power, but here is a "Ghost Shirt" take any gun and shoot it if you can." He asked for my gun, but I told him "to use his own gun and cartridge."
>
> Here young Jack Red Cloud, my cousin, came between us and said, "pay no attention to this man he is crazy, or else he would not speak as he does." I said "You ask me to stop and I will do it, this shooting at the shirt is only a trick and now I will not let him shoot at it.[48]

Within this statement Short Bull's frustration is obvious, yet despite provocation he still adhered to the belief that it was wrong to fight.

On the morning of 29 December 1890, the last of the Ghost Dancers were heading in to Pine Ridge to surrender. Short Bull and his uncle, Come Away from the Crowd, had been the last to leave the Badland's stronghold. They reached the main body of Ghost Dancers shortly after the arrival of a number of Indians who had been with Big Foot's band at Wounded Knee.

> As we reached the "big hill" we could look down and there saw the villiage [sic], everything was in a fearful state. Further on were other Indians coming toward the villiage and it looked as if trouble was near. I went into the villiage and was there told that "Big Foot" (or Spotted Elk's) Band had been all killed. I saw my cousin "Many Wounds" who was there and confirmed this report in a measure as he himself had been wounded in the shoulder; he told me that "all his relatives Father, Mother, all had been killed, all of their guns were taken from them and then they were fired on, and could do nothing."[49]

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[48] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 15-16, BBMG.

[49] Ibid., 16-17.

It was only after Short Bull heard of the massacre of Big Foot's band, and the killing of women and children, that he was tempted to take up weapons and fight in defence of his people.

> "I am not to blame the whites fired on us first, twenty-three of my own relations were killed in this fight, men, women and children, this is like butchery. Why do they kill helpless women and children? This shows the soldiers want us all to die off. When our Indians fought against an enemy of their own color you know what kind of a man I was, I laughed and feared nothing, but now I do not want you to fight, take care of the women and children, I am not looking for trouble, but if I am angered I am the worst among you. I have put all badness from me and want to be a good man. I will go over to where the battle was fought in the morning and see the bodies of my relatives. When I return if the soldiers fire on you, I will remember my old feelings, stand up and be a soldier once more."
>
> The next morning with four others we started for the battle-field. I was looking over the dead bodies and while so doing heard cannons in the distance, in the direction of Clay Creek. I found one of my uncles who had been badly shot in the leg but not dead, who told me this, "that all of the Indians had their Guns and Knives taken from them and as I went to my lodge to get my knife to surrender it, the firing began. I was shot in the leg and have laid here ever since. I do not know where the women and children are." So we "hitched up" four of the wagons we found here and put the horses to them picking up all that we could find who were not dead (some forty odd), taking them to a deserted house nearby on Wounded Knee Creek. Those whom we thought fatally wounded we left here and with the rest we started for our camp. It began to snow during the night and by morning a heavy snow had fallen, but we started for Wounded Knee about noon. When we reached the house we saw our friends were gone, but afterwards ascertained that they had been taken to the Agency by friendlies in charge of "No Neck." During all this time my heart was bad, yet I did not want my people to fight the Government. I might have done much harm but always kept my people from it. I wanted no fighting. I wanted to do as the Messiah bid me.[50]

The gunfire of the Seventh Cavalry was heard clearly at the agency, and caused a number of the Indians encamped there to stampede. Fleeing the agency they joined the Ghost Dancers who had set up camp near No Water's village, creating a temporary

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[50] Ibid., 16-17, 18.

settlement of 4,000 people. After a tense stand-off the Ghost Dancers eventually complied with the wishes of General Miles; they moved their camp to the agency at Pine Ridge, and on January 15, 1891, began to surrender their arms.

Despite very trying circumstances, Short Bull avoided conflict and endeavoured to follow what he had been taught in Mason Valley. As noted by DeMallie, the suppression of the Lakota Ghost Dance 'was only another step in the systematic suppression of native religious practices that formed an integral part of the U. S. government's program of Indian civilization,' but to the Lakota it marked the epitome of white suppression.[51] Not only were the Lakota Ghost Dancers not responsible for corrupting Wovoka's doctrine of peace, but other parties - in their reporting and recording of the religion - distorted the Lakotas' beliefs in order to satisfy their own needs. The majority of historians have too long ignored the words and actions of the Lakota Ghost Dancers, basing their interpretation of the religion on the words of those who opposed it. In the end, we are left with Short Bull's lament:

> Who would have thought that dancing could make such trouble? For the message that I brought was peace. And the message was given by the Father to all the tribes.[52]

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At the close of the military suppression of the religion in South Dakota a number of the Ghost Dancers were removed by General Nelson A. Miles to Fort Sheridan, Illinois. Short Bull recalled, 'Some ten days afterwards, General Miles asked me to go to Fort Sheridan, with "Kicking Bear" and some twenty-five others.'[53] In all twenty seven Lakota men and women were removed to Fort Sheridan: Short Bull, One Bull, Scatter, Good Eagle, High Eagle, Horn Eagle, Standing Bear, Sorrel Horse, Wounded With Many Arrows, Run Along Side Of, Close To Home, Hard To Hit, Crow Cane, Kicking Bear, Revenge, Knows-His-Voice, One Star, Standing Bear, Coming Grunt,

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[51] DeMallie, "Lakota Ghost Dance," 396.

[52] Curtis, *Indians' Book*, 45.

[53] Crager, "As Narrated by Short Bull," 19, BBMG.

Brings The White, Brave, Calls The Name, Medicine Horse, White Beaver, Little Horse, His Horses Voice and Take the Shield Away.[54] [Fig. 13] Major John Vance Lauderdale wrote to his wife Josephine on 26 January, detailing their departure.

> We have had a great day for this Agency the departure of Gen'l. Miles with his staff and about forty Indians. The General rode his horse out of town. The staff were in carriages, spring wagons, and the Indians were riding in lumber wagons with plenty of hay to sit upon. Crowds of women and children, the families of the Indians, stood about and kept up a kind of low singing or warbling as they always do when they are taking leave of their friends.[55]

Miles informed the Adjutant General that he was leaving for Chicago 'taking with me 30 Indians that I intend to keep for several months at Fort Sheridan under my personal observation.' He concluded that 'this is the strongest assurance of success and guarantee of permanent peace. In my judgement nothing is necessary now to secure that other than good government in the future.'[56] Miles believed that with Kicking Bear and Short Bull out of the way 'an uprising is entirely improbable now

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[54] Agent Charles Penny (Acting), Pine Ridge, to CIA, 28 Mar. 1891, microfilm M1282, Letters Sent (hereafter LS) to Office of Indian Affairs by Pine Ridge Agency, 1775-1914 (hereafter M1282 LS), p179-181, RG 75, FARC.; Passenger list of the SS *Switzerland* sailing from Philadelphia to Antwerp, 1 April 1891, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 264. There were two individuals known as Standing Bear who were removed to Fort Sheridan, one was an Oglala and the other was a Sicangu (Brulé). The prisoner One Bull should not be confused with Agent Mclaughlin's informant on Kicking Bear's speech, the Hunkpapa Indian policeman who was also Sitting Bull's nephew.

[55] Jerry Green, ed., *After Wounded Knee: Correspondence of Major and Surgeon John Vance Lauderdale while Serving with the Army Occupying the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, 1890-1891* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996) 92. Lauderdale also informed his sister, Francis, that Miles had sent a telegram three days later stating 'that the party reached there [Fort Sheridan] all right and that the Indians are very happy. This message was communicated to the Sioux families here and I have no doubt that there is great rejoicing in the tepees and homes where they live.' Green *After Wounded Knee*, 98.

[56] Miles to Adjutant General, telegram, Jan. 26 1891, File 5412-PRD-1890, RG94, National Archives Microfilm Publication M983, *Reports and Correspondence Relating to the Army Investigations of the Battle of Wounded Knee and to the Sioux Campaign of 1890-1891* (hereafter cited as M983, RG94, NA) p.1077.

that Sitting Bull and Big Foot are dead.'[57] This would suggest that Miles viewed these men and women as influential leaders, and soon they alone came to represent the 'Hostile Indians.'[58]

Yet this perception was at odds with the opinions of other officials. J. George Wright, the Rosebud Agent, wrote to Thomas Morgan, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, on 12 February, stating:

> The records of Crow Dog, White Horse, Lance, Two Strike, Eagle Pipe and Turning Bear were fully represented and made known so that no imposition might be practiced, but who are treated as blameless, while Short Bull, at this time a disturber, is merely a Medicine Man, no leader, but used by others, is the only one taken as prisoner, from here, to my knowledge.
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> The first three above named, are considered the worst and if not all, these should be removed. I am informed that the authorities were told, by those in a position to know, that Short Bull might be classed as an angel, compared with any of the above named.'[59]

This sentiment was echoed in a letter to Herbert Welsh, Secretary of the Indian Rights Association, in which James G. Wright (Snr.), a former agent at Rosebud wrote that,

> Gen. Miles in his letter... published Mar. 13th in the Yankton Journal says "The Indians now at Fort Sheridan will be kept there for several months to prevent the danger of allowing them to be on hand should the Sioux warriors look about for a leader. There are two Indians at Fort Sheridan, Short Bull and Kicking Bear who could start an Indian war in a day if they were with their people." (Kicking Bear is from Cheyenne River, I do not know him) Short Bull from this agency I do know, a man of little influence and no leader, a medicine man of the Sitting Bull persuasion, with little or no following, and as I am told was glad to get away fearing should he return the Indians would kill him as they threatened to do, owing to the non fulfillment of his prophesies, (I know by experience he was not a difficult man to control). The rest

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[57] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 28 Jan. 1891, fp. 'Miles Talks of His Charges: The General Satisfied That There Will Be No More Trouble.'

[58] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 27 Jan. 1891, p2. 'To be Rounded Up Here: Miles will take the Hostile Indians to Fort Sheridan.'

[59] Agent J. George Wright, Rosebud, to CIA, 12 Feb. 1891, SC188 p9-11, RG 75, NA.

> of those sent to Fort Sheridan were young men of neither position, influence or following. Gen. Miles' interpreter said "he asked Short Bull and others if they were afraid to go East with him, they answering No, he told them to select certain numbers and he would take them." [60]

That the Lakota themselves selected which Indians were to go to Fort Sheridan, appears to be corroborated by Miles himself in his autobiography *Serving the Republic*, in which he maintained:

> When the Indians moved back to their Agencies they were advised to give a guarantee of their good faith that such threatening of hostilities or actual war would not occur again in the near future; and, as an earnest of this, they were told that they should send a body of representative men to the East as hostages and as a pledge that in the future they would keep the peace. This they consented to do.[61]

However, the fact that those who were perceived as the greatest threat to peace on the reservations were not removed, meant that Miles' motivation for imprisoning those that he did remained unclear to many. Commissioner Morgan stated in a newspaper interview that neither the Interior Department nor the Indian Bureau knew anything 'of those Indians taken to Fort Sheridan.' He went on to state that 'Their coming to Fort Sheridan is the sole work of Gen. Miles.... This office was not consulted nor was

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[60] Jas. G. Wright to Herbert Welsh, Secretary, Indian Rights Association, 17 June 1891, Series I-A. Incoming Correspondence, 1864-1968, Reel 7, Indian Rights Association Papers, 1864-1973 (hereafter cited as IRA), (microfilm 42 357, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma).

[61] Miles, *Serving the Republic*, 245. Such a move had been utilised by the American government in 1832 after the 'Black Hawk War'. In the 1832 treaty 'of peace, friendship and cession' between the US government and the 'confederated tribes of Sac and Fox Indians,' Article Seven specifically states that the 'prisoners of war, now in confinement who were Chiefs and head-men, shall be held as hostages, for the future good conduct of the late hostile bands during the pleasure of the United States.' See Donald Jackson (ed), *Ma-Ka-Tai-Me-She-Kia-Kiak, Black Hawk: An Autobiography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955) 187,189. Dowd notes that 'what the Americans call the Black Hawk War' was in fact 'ten weeks of dire suffering among vastly outnumbered, outgunned, and starving Native American families fleeing for their lives. Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*, 193. This is but one of a number of similarities between the experiences of the Fort Sheridan prisoners in 1891 and those prisoners accompanying Black Hawk in 1832: both were imprisoned after religiously inspired resistance, and both went on to be displayed to white audiences.

the Secretary of the Interior. In fact, Gen. Miles has got so that he does not consult anybody - not even the President - in his dealings with the Indians.'[62] Furthermore, a letter written by an Indian named Laurence Industrious from the Pine Ridge agency suggests that from the Indian perspective there was quite a different reason for the removal of the Ghost Dancers. In it he commented:

> Kicking Bear and Short Bull each accompanied by 10 followers were taken east by Miles to remain there 6 years [? months], the object of taking them east is to show the Ghost Dance and its effect if any. I understand they have danced and the general opinion of the whites is that the dance was harmless and would not have any bad effect and that a great many lives had been lost for nothing, and these people will be returned to their agencies early next spring.... It is possible that they will give Kicking Bear his dance back to him again. Bear this in mind. Keep your ears open this way, I say this to you on the quiet. My heart shakes hands with you Couzin. It is me. Laurence Industrious.[63]

Indeed it would appear that the Fort Sheridan prisoners themselves were unclear as to why they were being held. Mary Collins, a visiting missionary, recalled that 'They asked me to find out what they were prisoners for.'[64] The ambiguous reasons for the removal of these specific Ghost Dancers gives little indication as to why three Lakota women were also taken. If, as Utley states, Miles had removed the 'Ghost Dance leaders... until passions had subsided enough for them to return to their people,' then this would indicate that Calls the Name, Medicine Horse and Crow Cane, were women of influence, who posed as great a threat as Short Bull and Kicking Bear.[65] Yet if on the other hand they were selected by the Lakota themselves, it might have been for very different reasons.[66]

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[62] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 31 Jan. 1891, p8. 'Not Imprisoned By Morgan's Orders: The Commissioner denies that he sent the Indians to Fort Sheridan.'

[63] Vestal [Campbell], *New Sources of Indian History*, 59.

[64] "Statement of Mary Collins," 2, Mary Clementine Collins Family Papers, Folder #48, Box 3, South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota (hereafter SDSHS).

[65] Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 271.

[66] With regards to the women it would seem from later newspaper articles that at least two were married to male prisoners, which appears to support the idea that the Lakota themselves selected who went. Furthermore, it would seem that such a practice was not unique. David Wallace Adams has

Initially Miles intended that the Fort Sheridan prisoners were to be 'instructed in the school of the soldier and inducted into the habits of civilized life.'[67] The *Chicago Daily Tribune* commented, 'The purpose of the War Department in the matter is not fully understood. It is said it is the intention of Gen. Miles to enlist the Indians in the regular army, subject them to the same discipline as other recruits so as to have them ready for service against hostile Indians in Indian wars which may break out in the future.'[68]

Upon their arrival at Fort Sheridan, the commandant Major McKibben, told reporters that a guard would be thrown around the Indians, but that the detail would not be large enough 'to make them believe that they were in durance.' They would be allowed every liberty consistent with the circumstances. McKibben went on to state that if Short Bull or Kicking Bear gave any intimation that they were restive 'the guard might be doubled,' but he felt that 'on the whole the mere fact that their surroundings were strange would keep not only the chiefs, but their followers as well, in a contented condition for some time to come.'[69] The *Chicago Daily Tribune* noted that,

> The arguments that were used to bring Kicking Bear and Short Bull to the East were that they would see a new country and such things of the white man's life that would teach them a lesson of the comforts of civilization. The chances are that the Brules will not be kept at Fort Sheridan longer than six months, their further disposition being now a matter of conjecture.[70]

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noted that when 72 Indian prisoners were removed to Fort Marion in Florida following the so called Red River War of 1874, 'for some unexplained reason Black Horse, a prominent Comanche, was allowed to take his wife and daughter.' Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 37, n.22. See chapters eight and nine for a more in-depth discussion of the women prisoners.

[67] *New York World*, 25 Jan. 1891, p.2.

[68] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 27 Jan. 1891, p.2. The use of Indian prisoners as scouts was not that uncommon, for further information see Smits, "Indian Scouts and Indian Allies in the Frontier Army," 332.

[69] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 28 Jan. 1891, fp.

[70] Ibid.

On 28 January a reporter visited the Fort to see for himself the circumstances under which the Indians were being held. His article, entitled 'Are Not Prisoners Of War,' illustrates the somewhat limited freedom granted to the Ghost Dancers.

> Short Bull, the Brule, sat in his Sibley tepee at Fort Sheridan yesterday and chopped army plug tobacco into fine-cut. He was in a strange country, but genuine tobacco pleased him so much more than the red willow bark that he had been forced to smoke when in the Bad Lands that he looked as nearly contented as a savage who imagines he has a grievance can.
>
> A single sentinel paced in front of his tent fairly laden down with orders about the intrusion of citizens on the quiet of Short Bull's retreat. Every village boy in Fort Sheridan and about two hundred from Highland Park formed a cordon around the tepees of the Indians, and the sentinel had more trouble in keeping the white man out than he had in keeping the red man in. The truth of the matter is that the Indians are in no sense prisoners. Every member of the guard that was mounted at Fort Sheridan yesterday morning had strict orders to allow the Indians to do as they chose. If Short Bull had chosen to go to the post-office to inquire for letters from Pine Ridge he could have passed the sentinel unchallenged. There was one special order, however, which the new officer of the day received to transmit to the guard which would have prevented Short Bull from going to the post-office, provided he insisted on taking his entire following with him. The reds, in short, are to have every liberty, provided they "go it alone."[71]

The feature also shows that the so-called 'hostile' Indians had become an item of curiosity to the local inhabitants, and the fact that 'society ladies' and children were allowed to visit them underlines the fact that the Indians did not pose a threat. More than anything the Ghost Dancer prisoners were a spectacle. The *Omaha Morning World-Herald* reported that when Miles paid a visit to Fort Sheridan he had been accompanied by 'two car loads of young ladies,' and that the 'Indians had been appraised of the onslaught and were in full glory of war paint and feathers.'[72] [Fig. 14]

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[71] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 29 Jan. 1891, p.3.

[72] *Omaha Morning World-Herald*, 6 Feb. 1891. 'Called on Ghost Dancers.' The same was true for the Indian prisoners under the charge of Lieutenant Richard Henry Pratt at Fort Marion. Adams noted

Short Bull's only reference to his confinement at Fort Sheridan occurs in the 1891 text 'As Narrated by Short Bull,' in which he recalled that 'while there we were often visited by General Miles who, with all the officers there, made us as comfortable as could be, doing all in their power for us.' The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported that Miles had sent Captain Huggins, one of his two personal aides, to Fort Sheridan to ask Short Bull and Kicking Bear whether or not they were well provided for.

> The Captain entered the first tepee and after a "How?" to each inmate asked through interpreter John Brugieur what the military father could do for them. Short Bull, with his tobacco before him, said: "Nothing but a blanket." The others were eating and drinking soldiers' rations, good soup, bread in plenty, and coffee in big tin cups. They, in turn, when questioned, said: "Nothing but a blanket." Capt. Huggins promised that each one should receive a liberal supply of bedding as soon as the Quartermaster's store was supplied, which would be in a day or two.[73]

The paper went on to note that McKibbin, the commandant at the fort, 'visited the reds almost hourly, and spent a goodly part of a month's pay in cigarettes, which all of the hostiles, barring Short Bull, prefer to commissary tobacco.'[74]

The Indians now living under guard in an alien, cold and 'swampy place,' soon found themselves the concern of the Indian Rights Association.[75] It was reported that members of the association were 'talking of applying a writ of habeas Corpus for the purpose of discovering what rights, if any, the Indians now held at Fort Sheridan have.... The idea of the association, it is said, is to use the case to thoroughly test in the courts the power of the government in the matter, and if necessary appeal to Congress for a change.'[76] There are no indications that the association took the

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'The Indians, although initially feared by some, were an object of great curiosity.' Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 38, 41.

[73] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 29 Jan. 1891, p.3.

[74] Ibid.,

[75] Ibid.,

[76] *Omaha Morning World-Herald*, 6 Feb. 1891. 'Talking for the Hostages.'

matter any further, and a possible reason for this might have been the Indians' ambiguous status. After all Miles could claim that they were not prisoners as such: he had asked them if they would accompany him, and they were granted the freedom to come and go, albeit with some limitations.[77]

By mid-March it was reported that the Indians were to be released, but not to return to their homes in South Dakota.

> Since first they were taken... at the close of the recent Indian outbreak they have been to the government a veritable white elephant. In fact a whole herd of white elephants.
>
> Their resigned conduct at the fort since first they realized that they were prisoners has been irritating in its suggestion that perhaps they were not being justly dealt with. Yet, as the still dissatisfied instigators of the late war, it would not do to send them back to their reservations lest a renewal of hostilities might through their disturbing and powerful influence result.
>
> "What shall we do with them?" has been a question frequently heard in the War Department.
>
> Buffalo Bill has offered a solution to the conundrum. The government has accepted it with alacrity. At the same time the famous scout has done himself a most kindly turn.[78]

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[77] Two sources suggest that the Fort Sheridan prisoners were considered by the military as Prisoners of War. Firstly, a telegram from Major General J. M. Schofield to Brigadier General Brooke, sent on 1 December 1890, stated: 'By direction of the Secretary of War you will regard as prisoners of war all Indians whom you think it necessary under present circumstances to detain under your control, and as such furnish them with necessary food from the Army supplies, in addition to that furnished by the Interior Department.' See SC 188 p1709, RG75, NA. Secondly, the remaining five prisoners at Fort Sheridan, after the majority had joined Cody's Wild West, appeared on a list of all 'Indian Prisoners of War.' See SC 188 p1470, RG75, NA.

[78] Unidentified newspaper clipping, n.d., 'Braves go to Europe - Buffalo Bill to Take the Indians from Fort Sheridan.' Buffalo Bill Scrapbook 1891-1927, Microfilm FF18, William Frederick Cody Papers 1887-1919, State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver (hereafter SHSC).

William F. Cody proposed to engage the Ghost Dancers in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, which would shortly be departing to conclude its monumental tour of Europe, and all but four of the Fort Sheridan Ghost Dancers agreed to go.

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It is apparent from the evidence that the Lakota Ghost Dancers had embraced Wovoka's pacifism. The religion remained essentially peaceful, combining elements of white religion and culture with traditional Indian ones. Furthermore, 'the Ghost Dance became a part of the Lakotas' own evolving religion rather than a brief experiment with an exotic belief.'[79]

Yet within the context of a peaceful religion that preached accommodation, the Lakota Ghost Dance can also be viewed as a rejection of dependency. The Ghost Dancers were encouraged to take from white culture what was of benefit, but to ultimately remain independent. In his book *The Indians in American Society*, Francis Paul Prucha noted:

> As the nineteenth century neared its close, the Indians on the reservations became almost completely dependent, a dependency that paradoxically was intensified by the very programs and policies that the paternalistic government of the United States instituted to assist the dependent Indians.[80]

Through the religion, the Ghost Dancers were attempting to assert their autonomy from government control, and in turn the government perceived the Ghost Dance to be a challenge to their authority. When the Office of Indian Affairs banned the religion the Ghost Dance became a form of resistance, albeit a passive one of non co-operation, under the rubric of an essentially peaceful movement.

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[79] Jensen et al., *Eyewitness*, 7.

[80] Prucha, *Indians in American Society*, 36-7, 43.

Resistance to forced relocation bought about by the new reservation boundaries introduced by the Sioux Act of 1889 became intertwined with resistance to the government's attacks against the Ghost Dance itself. When the government deployed soldiers to suppress the religion, the Ghost dancers retreated into the Badlands and subsequently became categorised as 'hostiles' by the military. Yet the only truly hostile and aggressive act of that winter was enacted by the Seventh US cavalry at Wounded Knee on 29 December 1890.

Initially the massacre had swelled the camps of the Ghost Dancers, but within a couple of weeks they had all surrendered to General Miles, and twenty-seven Ghost Dancers had then been removed to Fort Sheridan, Illinois. Short Bull and Kicking Bear had consented to accompany Miles to Fort Sheridan, accepting the mantle of 'hostile' for the good of the Lakota people as a whole. Their continued belief in the religion reinforces the fact that the Lakota Ghost Dance had not been transformed into an aggressive anti-white movement, which most likely would have failed and died with the massacre, but as a religious form of accommodation that could and did endure.

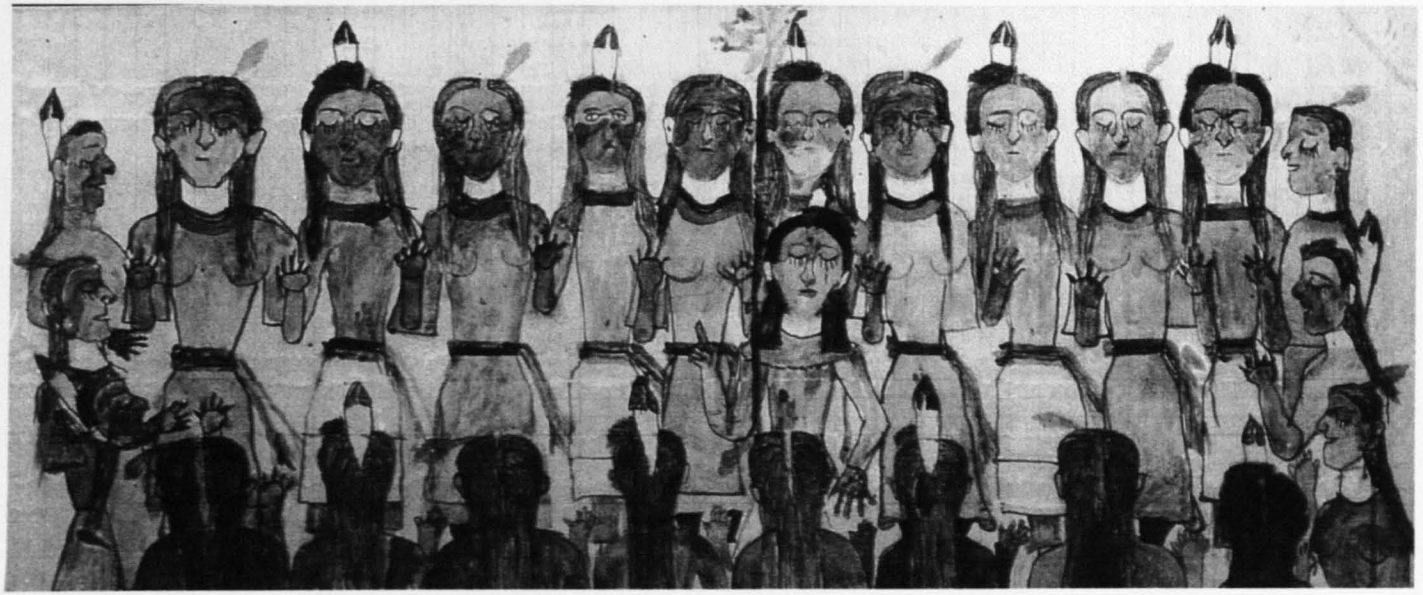

Fig. 11. 'A Prayer of Short Bull and his Adherents before the Ghost Dance,' drawn by Short Bull and given to Frederick Weygold circa 1909.

The drawing shows Short Bull leading the prayer in the centre surrounded by Ghost Dancers. Men and women alternate to form a circle, all have their right hand raised, and all but one have their eyes closed.

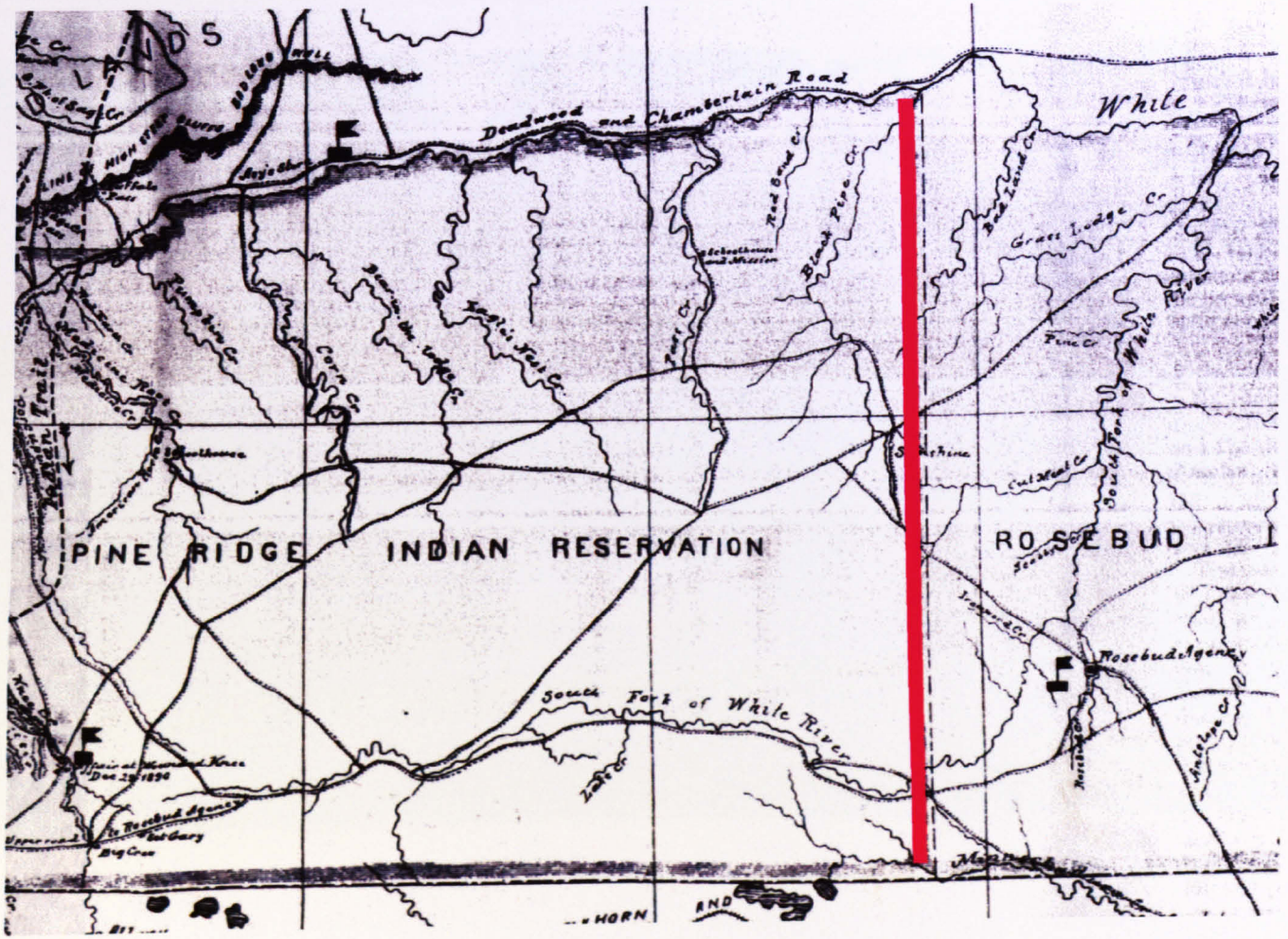


Fig. 12. The new boundary line between the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations brought about by the Sioux Act of 1889, placed Short Bull's Wazhaza band on the Pine Ridge side.

Fig. 13. Nineteen of the Twenty seven Fort Sheridan Prisoners.

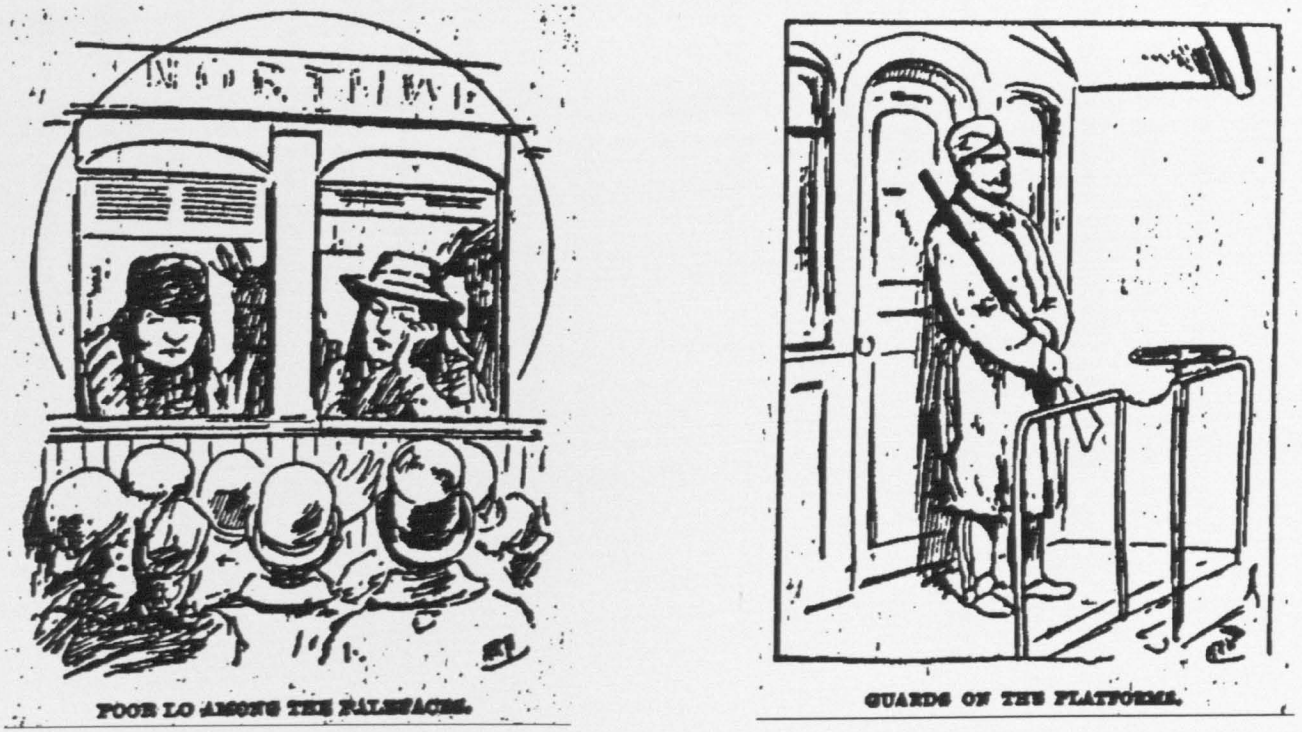


Fig. 14. Illustrations in *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 28 1891, depicting the arrival of the Ghost Dance prisoners from South Dakota. Kicking Bear and Short Bull gaze out at a crowd of onlookers.

## Four: Controversy over Buffalo Bill's use of Indian performers in his Wild West exhibition

At the same time as the Ghost Dance was spreading across the Lakota reservations, about sixty-five Lakota men and women were touring in continental Europe with Buffalo Bill's Wild West. But in the summer of 1890 a controversy exploded in the American press over the show's treatment of its Indian employees, and Buffalo Bill's Wild West faced a crisis that threatened its continued success. A number of Indian deaths, along with more general reports that Indians were neglected and returning home disgruntled with their treatment, alarmed the Secretary of the Interior. With the support of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs he ordered an investigation into the allegations and banned the issue of any more permits allowing the employment of Indians in Wild West exhibitions.

Without the Secretary of the Interior's ban and investigation into Buffalo Bill's Wild West, the troupe would have remained in Europe amassing immense profits from their exceedingly popular exhibition, and Cody and his Indian performers would have never assisted in the suppression of the Lakota Ghost Dance. Yet within six months Cody had not only overturned the ban, but had resumed his tour of Europe with twenty-three Ghost Dancers who had been imprisoned at Fort Sheridan, including Short Bull and Kicking Bear who were undoubtedly a great prize for Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Cody's employment of the Fort Sheridan prisoners was the capstone of a concerted effort on the part of the show's management to overturn the ban and illustrate to the government that the Wild West show could help to educate the Indians about the power and might of white society, and the benefits of embracing 'civilisation.'

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While Buffalo Bill's Wild West was thrilling European audiences during the summer of 1890, back in the United States the press were criticising the show, reporting that the health and morals of Indian performers were being neglected. The contrast could not have been greater: in Europe Cody was feted as an American Hero, while in his home country, in the words of the *New York World*, the 'hatchets [were out] for Buffalo Bill.'[1] Six Indian performers had died in Europe, and Americans read about descriptions of ill health and improper care from dissatisfied Indians who had left the show, along with accounts of Indians being allowed to drink, gamble and womanise. Reformers fanned the flames of discontent, suggesting that rather than helping to reform and 'civilise' the Indian performer's the show demeaned and demoralised them.[2] This view was shared by Thomas Jefferson Morgan, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who stated in his *Annual Report* of 1890:

> I have endeavored through the various agents to impress upon the minds of the Indians the evil resulting from connecting themselves with such shows and the importance of their remaining at home and devoting their time and energies to building houses, establishing permanent homes, cultivating farms, and acquiring thrifty, industrious habits, thus placing themselves in [a] fit position for absorption into our political and civil life.[3]

The dispute between Wild West exhibitions and the reformers of Indian policy was primarily a conflict over 'whose image of the Indians would prevail.'[4] Francis Paul Prucha noted in his book *American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900*,

> It soon became clear to humanitarians interested in the education of the Indians as American citizens... that the Wild West shows were retrogressive, that for both the Indians who performed and the whites

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[1] *New York World*, 21 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[2] John M. Burke to CIA, telegram, 26 Oct. 1890, LR 33009-1890, RG 75, NA; Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 100; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 351; Rosa and May, *Buffalo Bill and his Wild West*, 149.

[3] U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report, 1890* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1890), 3-4.

[4] Moses, "Wild West Shows," 194.

> who were entertained the image presented of the Indians was the wrong one.[5]

As reformers attempted to foster 'an alternate image of the Indian as a sober, God-fearing, industrious, independent farmer or herder,' Wild West shows were continuing to depict the Indians as 'savage' warriors.[6] Christian reformers also believed that the shows were antagonistic to creating a healthy approach among the Indians towards 'work and productive citizenship.'[7]

Whether the management of the Wild West failed to recognise the seriousness of the implications, or their distance from the United States handicapped them, their initial attempts to kill the story were unsuccessful. The much-publicised return of No Neck to refute the claims of poor food and ill treatment backfired. Dressed in a new suit, and with $100 given him by Buffalo Bill to give a good account of his treatment of the Indians, No Neck alluded to the fact that as chief of police in Cody's employ he had been unable to restrain the Indians from doing as they pleased.[8] In another attempt to quash the story, the exhibition's general manager and press agent, John Burke had invited the American Consul in Berlin to inspect the Indian performers and the environment of the Wild West show.[9] The Consul's report that he had never seen such well fed Indians was published in the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*, but by this time the story had taken on a life of its own.

Having ordered an investigation into Cody's treatment of the Indians who had travelled with him to Europe, the Secretary of the Interior had stated that 'no more

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[5] Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis*, 320.

[6] Moses, "Wild West Shows," 199.

[7] Ibid. 198-99.

[8] Burke to George Crager, telegram, 25 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC; *New York World*, 30 July 1890, *New York Journal*, 30 July 1890, and *New York Herald*, 30 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC

[9] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 98; and Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 351.

permits [should] be granted for Indians to go with these shows, under any circumstances.'[10] Buffalo Bill's Wild West faced losing the $20,000 bond they had lodged with the Department of the Interior to ensure fair treatment of the Indians, and the even more costly prospect of not being able to hire Indians in the future. As these performers were fundamental to the success of the exhibition the management decided to put the show into winter quarters, while the Indians were returned to America to refute the charges.[11]

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The criticisms of Buffalo Bill's Wild West had grown from anecdotal evidence to something more tangible when one of the Indian performers returning from Europe died in New York City. When the Bremen Steamship *Saale* landed at the port of New York on 14 June 1890, General John R. O'Beirne, the Assistant Superintendent of Immigration, insisted on detaining five passengers who had boarded the steamer in Leipzig, Germany.[12] The five were all Lakota Indians who had been in Europe performing in Buffalo Bill's Wild West, and who were now on their way home to the Pine Ridge Agency in South Dakota. The Wild West show had paid for steerage passage from Germany to New York, and then 'emigrant' passage on the railroad to Rushville, twenty-six miles from their homes at Pine Ridge, as well as giving the Indians cash to cover incidental expenses. It was reported that 'they were tired of

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[10] John Noble, Secretary of the Interior, to CIA, 4 Aug. 1890, LR 23943-1890, RG 75, NA; Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 97

[11] Wm. F. Vilas to CIA, 1 Mar. 1889, PR, Gen. Rec., Box 27, RG 75, FARC; Vilas to CIA, 18 Feb. 1889, PR, Gen. Rec., Ibid, RG 75, FARC; Moses, "Wild West Shows," 206; Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 93-94; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 351; Rosa and May, *Buffalo Bill and his Wild West*, 149.

[12] Steerage was the part of the ship that was allotted to those passengers travelling at the cheapest rate; it was usually overcrowded and offered little in the way of comfort.

[13] Unidentified newspaper clipping [New York], 16 June 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

Buffalo Bill and wanted to get back to Dakota.'[13] They gave their names as Eagle Horn, Blue Rainbow, Little Lamb, Running Creek and Kills Plenty. O'Beirne had detained the men because they were all in a poor physical state, but at last all but Kills Plenty (*Otakta*) were allowed to land. As Kills Plenty, suffering from a severely injured wrist, was unable to travel, O'Beirne had him transferred to Bellevue Hospital for treatment. The following day his comrades started for home.[14]

The injury to Kills Plenty had occurred during a performance of Buffalo Bill's Wild West in Germany, when the Indian's horse had fallen on him and crushed his right arm.[15] The wound had not been properly treated and upon further examination at Bellevue it was found that blood poisoning had set in. Moreover, tuberculosis had weakened the Indian further hampering his recovery.[16] Kills Plenty was visited in hospital by Rev. Father Craft, a Lakota speaking Indian Missionary who knew the Indian and happened to be in New York on a lecture tour, and by George C. Crager, a Lakota interpreter who had previously been employed by the Wild West show.[17] The

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[14] Ibid.; George C. Crager to Noble, 21 June 1890, LR 19021-1890, box 634, RG 75, NA. Moses erroneously mixes this group with another subsequent returning group when he states, 'O'Beirne implied that Eagle Horn, White Horse, Bear Pipe, Kills Weasel, and Kills Plenty had sailed from Europe without an interpreter "or anyone to conduct them." In fact, Fred Matthews, a veteran stage driver, accompanied the showmen.' Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 95. Fred Matthews had only accompanied the second group, which included White Horse, Bear Pipe, and Kills White Weasel, who arrived in New York on 19 July 1890.

[15] *New York Herald*, 19 June 1890, and Unidentified clipping, n.d. CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[16] *New York Times*, 19 June 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC; Crager to Noble, 21 June 1890, LR 19021-1890, box 634, RG 75, NA; *New York News*, 18 June 1890, *New York Journal*, 18 June 1890, *New York Press*, 19 June 1890, and *New York Times*, 19 June 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[17] Crager to Noble, 21 June 1890, LR 19021-1890, box 634, RG 75, NA. Father Francis M. J. Craft, S.J., was a long time missionary to the Indians, but not without controversy, in one instance he had been ordered from the Rosebud Agency when he defied the agent. See Jensen, et al., *Eyewitness*, 136, and Clow, *The Rosebud Sioux*, 45. George Crager had lived amongst the Sicangu Lakota for a number of years, and appears to have been employed by Buffalo Bill's Wild West in 1886. See Maddra, *Glasgow's*

two had several meetings with the sick man who expressed the hope that he might live until he reached his home. Those attending the Indian conferred with General O'Beirne and then cabled Cody to ask if he would defray the expenses of an attendant to accompany the Indian home. Cody agreed, and tickets were procured and arrangements set, but on the night of 18 June Kills Plenty died.[18]

The death of Kills Plenty was briefly covered by the New York City newspapers, which detailed the circumstances of his death and funeral preparations.[19] [Fig. 15] O'Beirne once again cabled Cody informing him of the Indian's death, and requested that Cody immediately forward $200 to Kountz Brothers Bank in order to cover the cost of the undertaker's bill and transport of the body back to the Agency.

After repeated attempts to contact Cody had failed, the matter was placed before the Secretary of the Interior, in the hope that he would take action to compel Cody to 'fulfil his contract and pay the expenses incurred for caring for this body or forfeit said Cody's Bonds.'[20] In order to be able to hire Indians to travel and perform with their exhibition the management of Buffalo Bill's Wild West had to make individual contracts with each Indian. In addition, as the Indians were 'wards' of the Government, they were not permitted to leave their reservation until a bond had been lodged with the Office of Indian Affairs to cover any expenses incurred from circumstances such as bankruptcy. For their European tour Buffalo Bill's Wild West

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*Ghost Shirt*, 14-15; 'Interpreter George C. Crager, formerly of the Wild West Show' *New York Sun*, 2 Jan. 1891, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC; Unidentified newspaper clipping [*New York World?*] n.d.[circa 1886, when Wild West show did six month stand at Erastina, Staten Island], CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC. Clipping not only refers to Crager 'the Sioux interpreter,' but also talks about Pawnee as well as Sioux performers, which helps date it to 1886.

[18] Crager to Noble, 21 June 1890, LR 19021-1890, box 634, RG 75, NA.; *New York Tribune*, 19 June 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 95.

[19] See CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[20] Crager to Noble, 21 June 1890, LR 19021-1890, box 634, RG 75, NA..

had lodged a $20,000 bond with the federal government in order to hire between 85 and 100 Lakota Indians for a period of two years.[21] Thomas Morgan, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, ordered that the body be transported to the Pine Ridge Agency, after which he would contact the management of Buffalo Bill's Wild West with a view to securing 'repayment... of the expense incurred.'[22]

George Crager, who had brought the matter to the attention of the Secretary of the Interior, supervised the arrangements in New York City, and six pallbearers escorted the body 'in a fine hearse through the Ferry to the [baggage] car.'[23] Hank Clifford accompanied the remains home, where Kills Plenty was interred at the Catholic Cemetery at the Holy Rosary Mission, four miles north east of the Agency on White Clay Creek.[24] The death of Kills Plenty and the Wild West's apparent disregard for his welfare fuelled the mounting opposition to Indians performing in Wild West shows. It also sparked a controversy which would cause Cody to cancel a proposed winter stand in the French Riviera and return to America with his Show Indians to refute the claims of his critics.

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[21] Moses, "Wild West Shows," 206; Vilas to CIA, 1 Mar. 1889, PR Gen. Rec., Box 27, RG 75, FARC; Vilas to CIA, 18 Feb. 1889, PR Gen. Rec. ibid, RG 75, FARC.

[22] CIA to Louis L. Robbins, Superintendent of Indian Warehouse, telegram, 23 June 1890, LB 200, p410, RG 75, NA.

[23] O'Beirne lists the pall bearers as 'Rev. Father Groff [sic. Craft], Mr George C. Cregar [sic. Crager], Capt. McGee, formerly interpreter and scout, Mr. Hank Clifford, Mr. Pierre Barguet, and James R. O'Beirne.' See Jas. R. O'Beirne, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Immigration, to Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, PR, 4 July 1890, PR Gen. Rec., Box 27, RG 75, FARC.

[24] Clifford would later be employed by Buffalo Bill's Wild West as their orator when they toured Britain in 1891-92. Unidentified newspaper clipping n.d., and *New York Journal*, 23 June 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC; Gallagher to O'Beirne, 28 June 1890, PR Gen. Rec., Misc. LS 1890, vol. 6, p152, box 54, RG 75, FARC; O'Beirne to Gallagher, 4 July 1890, PR Gen. Rec., Box 27, RG 75, FARC; Gallagher to CIA, 28 July 1890, LR 23464-1890, box 646, RG 75, NA. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 95.

The case against Cody had been steadily building from the beginning of the year. On 27 January 1890, US Consul Charles B. Trail wrote from Marseilles informing the Assistant Secretary of State, William F. Wharton, of the deaths of Chief Hawick and Featherman. When Buffalo Bill's Wild West had left Marseilles the previous December, the two Indians who were sick with typhoid fever and small pox respectively, were left at the Conception Hospital and entrusted to Trail's care. John Burke, the Wild West's manager had paid in advance for a private room, a doctor, and an attending nurse. Chief Hawick had died of the fever on 1 January, and Featherman of 'small pox of the most virulent type' on 6 January. A Catholic priest had officiated at the funerals and buried in separate graves, and their property was forwarded to Cody to be delivered to their heirs.[25]

In February 1890, US Consul Edward Camphausen had written from Naples reporting the death of Goes Flying at the Hospidale Cotugoro, Naples. Goes Flying had died of Small Pox on 15 February at the age of 45, and the Italian authorities had burned all of his possessions.[26] This was followed by another letter in March from Augustus O'Bourn, US Consul in Rome, reporting the death at midnight on 2 March of Little Ring at the age of 33. He was found dead in his bed and a post-mortem examination had shown heart disease as the cause of death. His body was interred at the main cemetery in Rome known as Campo Verano. He left only his clothing, which was taken by his brothers, Piece of Iron and Yellow Horse, who were also with Cody's show.[27]

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[25] Charles B. Trail, Marseilles, to William F. Wharton, Assistant Secretary of State, 27 Jan. 1890, PR Gen. Rec., box 27, RG 75, FARC; Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 94.

[26] Edward Camphausen, Naples, to Wharton, 19 Feb. 1890, LR 7465-1890, box 602, RG 75, NA. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 94.

[27] Augustus O'Bourn, Rome, to Wharton, 12 Mar. 1890, PR Gen. Rec., box 9, RG 75, FARC. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 89, 94; and Rita G. Napier, "Across the Big Water: American Indians' Perceptions of Europe and Europeans, 1887-1906," in

With the demise of Kills Plenty in New York City the total of Indian deaths for the 1889-1890 tour had risen to five. Unlike the other four who had died from disease or illness, Kills Plenty had been a young man whose death had been caused by the inadequate treatment of an injury incurred during a performance of the Wild West. Of greatest significance was the fact that he died not in a far off country but in New York City, and therefore in the American public eye. General O'Beirne wrote to Colonel Hugh Gallagher, the Pine Ridge Agent, that he was 'very much annoyed at the manner these Indians have been treated and will lay the matter before the government at Washington.'[28] O'Beirne recalled that in 1877 while he had been employed at the Red Cloud Agency, Cody had applied to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to hire a number of Indians for his theatrical show. O'Beirne had 'contended for favourable consideration towards Mr. Cody with the understanding... that the contract should stipulate that they [the Indians] should be kept free from demoralizing influences, liquor and other temptations, and should be safely returned to their Reservation.'[29] O'Beirne concluded that this had not been the case for Kills Plenty and his four companions who 'came here without an interpreter, or anyone to conduct them, or to supply their wants, excepting a boy sent from an imigrant [sic] boarding house who fortunately came to me.'[30] When three more Indians from Cody's employ returned from Europe, O'Beirne's 'agitation of the issue caused the controversy to explode in the newspapers.'[31]

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*Indians and Europe an Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays*, ed. Christian Feest (Aachen, the Netherlands: Radar Verlag, 1987) 397-400.

[28] O'Beirne to Gallagher, 4 July 1890, PR Gen. Rec., box 27, RG 75, FARC. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 95.

[29] General James R. O'Bierne had been a special agent sent from Washington 'to induce the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Indians to scatter out on farming land.' Hyde, *A Sioux Chronicle*, 70.

[30] O'Beirne to Gallagher, 4 July 1890, PR Gen. Rec., box 27, RG 75, FARC. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 95-96.

[31] Ibid., 95. Moses mistakenly confuses the two separate groups for one.

On 19 July 1890, White Horse, Bear Pipe and White Weasel disembarked from the *Augusta Victoria* having travelled in steerage from Hamburg. During the voyage the Indians had suffered from seasickness, and upon arrival they repeated that they had been unable to get proper food. This time Cody had sent Richard Matthews along as chaperone, the driver of the Deadwood Stagecoach in the show, but he had travelled as a saloon passenger and 'did not go near them during the trip.'[32] The next morning, before the showmen left for Pine Ridge, O'Beirne organised a press conference, with George Crager acting as interpreter. Bear Pipe stated that Rocky Bear, their acting chief in the show, and the interpreter Bronco Bill had treated them very cruelly. He complained that although the food they received was not fit for dogs, they were completely reliant upon whatever the cook supplied. Bear Pipe also contended that Buffalo Bill insisted that the braves should strip to the waist and come out in war paint and feathers at every show, refusing to allow them to wear shirts even in the coldest weather.[33] White Horse stated that 'all the Indians in Buffalo Bill's show are discontented, ill-treated and anxious to come back home.'[34] Agent Gallagher reported to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in a letter dated 28 July, 'these Indians like the ones preceding them have nothing to show for their services except shattered constitutions, which may or may not be built up again.' He went on to quote O'Beirne who had stated in a previous letter 'that the treatment of these returned Indians is inhuman and shows plainly how little concern is felt for them after they

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[32] *New York World*, 20 July 1890, and *New York Herald*, 22 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC. Matthews had been the stagecoach driver in Buffalo Bill's Wild West for a number of years, see Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 294.

[33] *New York Herald*, 22 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[34] Unidentified newspaper clipping n.d., CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC. The secondary literature erroneously states that it was White Horse rather than Bear Pipe who made the allegations, and they fail to note that the allegations of cruelty were not against Cody, but Rocky Bear and the interpreter. For example Russell states that it was White Horse 'who told a tall tale of cruelty and starvation.' Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 351; 'White Horse, one of the Indians who left the company, invented tales that the Indians were being ill-treated and starved.' Rosa and May, *Buffalo Bill and his Wild West*, 144. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 97.

have been broken down in the service and are no longer profitable to their employers.'[35]

In comparison, the return of White Horse, Bear Pipe and White Weasel attracted a great deal more newspaper coverage than the return of the previous group and the subsequent death of Kills Plenty. The articles were longer and the tone much less complimentary about Cody and his Wild West. The *New York Herald* reported, 'For months past the warriors have been straggling back in groups of three or five, sick and disgusted with their treatment while abroad. Fully one third of the original band have returned to this country.'[36] [Fig. 16] Bad press was not a new phenomenon for Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Cody had ended a personal letter dated 15 February 1890 with the observation 'I see the New York press is giving me thunder every once in a while. What for I don't know, I only wish they would stick to the truth.'[37] The claims of Bear Pipe and White Horse published in the *New York Herald* prompted John Burke, the Wild West's press agent, to take action to refute the claims, but with only limited success. Burke's first initiative was to invite the Berlin Consul General and the Secretary of Legation, as well as the Consul in Hamburg, to inspect the Indians and the Wild West's encampment, and all three were favourably impressed. Burke forwarded their agreeable report to the European edition of the *New York Herald*, who subsequently printed a retraction of the allegations.[38]

The second tack taken by Burke was an attempt to counter the claims of the returning Indians with another Indian performer; No Neck sailed from Germany on 19 July aboard the Bremen Steamer *Kaiser Wilhelm*. Burke cabled the Lakota interpreter George Crager, asking that he meet No Neck, and that he also contact John Hamilton

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[35] Gallagher to CIA, 28 July 1890, LR 23464-1890, box 646, RG 75, NA. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 97.

[36] *New York Herald*, 22 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[37] William F. Cody to "My Dear Doctor," 15 Feb. 1890, MS6, Series I:B Correspondence from William F. Cody, box 1, folder 11 1890-1892, Cody Archive, BBHC.

of the *Illustrated News*. Hamilton felt confident that No Neck would 'speak of the management as he found it' and would 'refute the allegations made by the others.'[39]

No Neck arrived in New York on 29 July 1890. He had travelled as a 'second [class] cabin passenger,' but contrary to the usual custom of permitting cabin passengers to land at the steamship dock, No Neck had to travel with the steerage passengers to the Barge Office before he was permitted to 're-enter the land of his fathers.'[40] Crager and Father Craft met him at the pier and escorted him to the Barge Office where he was registered. [Fig. 17] He then went to General O'Beirne's Office, where O'Beirne was waiting to receive him. Mr William O. Snyder, the American ticket agent for the Wild West show, was also on hand to represent Cody.[41]

No Neck's appearance and demeanour was in stark contrast to that of Bear Pipe, White Horse and White Weasel whose shoes and clothing had been described as 'poor and worn out.'[42] The *New York World* reported:

> His handsome silk umbrella - imported duty free- was deposited in a corner, his heavy winter overcoat was pulled off and his raven locks were arranged with the aid of a nice pocket-brush and sweetly scented with Parisian musk.... No Neck's appearance was that of an extra good liver, and to prove that he had not been starved by Buffalo Bill he was weighed on the baggage scales of Barney Biglin. Two hundred and six and one half pounds was his weight.[43]

Speaking through interpreters Crager and Craft, No Neck proceeded to give an account of the treatment received by the Indians in Europe. He agreed with Bear Pipe

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[38] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 351; Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 115.

[39] Burke to Crager, telegram, 25 July 1890, and John W. Hamilton to City Editor, unidentified newspaper, telegram, 26 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[40] *New York World*, 30 July 1890, and *New York News*, 29 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[41] *New York Herald*, 30 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[42] *New York Press*, 24 Aug. 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[43] *New York World*, 30 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

in saying that Rocky Bear, who was in charge of the Indians, treated them cruelly, gave them inadequate and insufficient food, and swore at them in Lakota, but in general his report on the treatment of the Indians was quite favourable to Buffalo Bill.[44]

No Neck reported that the Indians received bread, meat, coffee, tea, milk in cans, butter, rice, barley, prunes and bacon, and that the men were each paid $25 a month, although he received $30 as the Chief of Police at the Wild West show. He observed that 'the Indians thought that good pay when they first went to Europe, but after they got into civilised fashionable life and stayed out at night they did not think it was sufficient.' Many spent their money on gambling and whiskey, while others bought clothing, and a few had saved their earnings. He declared that no more Indians would go for anything less than $50 per month.[45]

The gathered pressmen were then informed that Buffalo Bill employed a doctor in all of the cities that the show visited, and that one of the Indian lodges was set aside as a hospital. No Neck recounted that Indians taken sick were sent home, while those who had died were placed in 'nice boxes,' and then buried in nearby graveyards with their names painted on slabs. Doctors had been supplied for the sick Indians and had given them medicine, but the Indians feared both the medicine and the hospitals.[46]

No Neck went on to acknowledge that Red Shirt, who had left the show in Barcelona and returned to America, had been in charge of the Indians until December 1889, when he had quarrelled with Rocky Bear at Marseilles. Agent Snyder interjected at this point to suggest that Rocky Bear had replaced Red Shirt as the latter had not restrained the Indians as Buffalo Bill wished, but No Neck replied that Rocky Bear

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[44] *New York Herald*, 30 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[45] *New York World*, 30 July 1890, *New York Journal*, 30 July 1890, and *New York Herald*, 30 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[46] Ibid.

had done little better.[47] He elaborated that Rocky Bear and Red Shirt had had trouble after the show left Paris, 'Bruin [Rocky Bear] being jealous of favours shown by the Parisianne belles to the other gentleman [Red Shirt].' In consequence Red Shirt came home.[48] The *New York Journal* went on to report:

> Buffalo Bill evidently knowing the reputations of the wicked continental cities told his Indians that they must not go out at night or go with the gay frivolous young women who see Paris by gaslight and told No Neck to enforce that order. "When I tried to do so," said No Neck, "the braves had no ears and paid no attention." In consequence of their dissipations they were attacked by various forms of debility which are the inevitable results of fashionable life as lived by our own gilded youths. "Rocky Bear," the chief said, "did not try to enforce Buffalo Bill's orders and was a sad rake himself doing considerable mashing among the continental belles...." [No Neck] admitted to Father Craft, amid loud laughter, that, as he found he could not keep the Indians in the way they should go, he thought he might as well take a hand himself and sallied forth and saw the elephant on his own account.[49]

He would not say whether he had any complaints against William Cody or Nate Salsbury, and evaded the questions by smiling in a 'bland manner' and saying that he was glad to get home. In describing his parting with Buffalo Bill he said:

> "Colonel Cody gave me a suit of clothes, paid my wages, and gave me $100 besides, telling me at the time that I should meet the newspapermen, and I was to give a good report of the treatment of the Indians."[50]

Then rising from his chair in a dignified manner he said in solemn tones, 'All I have spoken is truth. What I said they did not teach me.'[51]

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[47] *New York Herald*, 30 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[48] *New York Journal*, 30 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[49] Ibid. The term 'seeing the elephant' means 'to see or experience a great deal,' or 'a loss of innocence,' the elephant being seen as something exotic, whilst 'mashing' can be translated as 'seducing,' or 'making advances' to the opposite sex. See Jonathon Green, *The Cassell Dictionary of Slang*, (London: Cassell, 1998) 391, 773.

[50] *New York Journal*, 30 July 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[51] Ibid.

This attempt by the show's management to refute the charges of ill treatment had to some extent worked; No Neck was clearly well fed and handsomely clothed. But at the same time the interview had also illustrated the management's failings, principally that they were unable to ensure that the Indians were being kept free from 'demoralizing influences, liquor and other temptations.' Also, the fact that No Neck had been rewarded $100 to give a good account of the show's treatment of the Indians aroused suspicions amongst the New York pressmen. The subsequent coverage only heightened the controversy, which Burke had hoped to quash with No Neck's return and interview.

Upon his return to Pine Ridge, No Neck informed Agent Gallagher that a month previously an Indian named Wounds One Another, who was with Buffalo Bill's Wild West in Europe, had been killed when he had fallen from a train whilst travelling through Germany. The Agent informed Commissioner Morgan, that Wounds One Another had $108 due him at the time of his death, and that he also 'possessed a number of trinkets and a quantity of clothing,' which the dead Indian's father Bull Bear wished to have returned. The Agent was disturbed that he had received no official notice of the death, and thought it 'hardly possible that No Neck would make such a statement if it was not true.'[52]

Meanwhile General O'Beirne penned a letter to Commissioner Morgan on 3 August, in which he maintained,

> The question is asked now, why are not the Indians protected by the Government in their rights under the bonds which the contractors who have taken them away have given to the Indian Office?... I will be glad to afford any facilities in my power officially or otherwise to get at

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[52] Gallagher to CIA, 13 Aug. 1890, LR 25179-1890, box 651, RG 75, NA. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 97.

> some remedy for the shameful abuse to which these show Indians are now subjected here, and in Europe.[53]

The next day John Noble, the Secretary of the Interior, directed 'that no permits be granted for Indians to go with these shows, under any circumstances,' and Commissioner Morgan was instructed to investigate the facts in regard to the treatment of the Indian performers.[54]

The changing attitudes at the Interior Department encouraged the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in his mission to end Indian employment in Wild West exhibitions. Where previously the Secretary of the Interior had appeared favourably disposed towards Wild West shows, checking Morgan's enthusiasm on numerous occasions, now even Secretary Noble had reason to be disturbed. The evidence seemed to suggest that such shows did more than just foster negative perceptions of Indians in the public mind. They risked 'not only the health of Indians, but also their very lives.'[55]

Commissioner Morgan's patience had paid off, and on 22 August he swung into action. He wrote to Cody and Salsbury, outlining the complaints that had been received by the Bureau. He requested that they refund Gen. O'Beirne in full for all expenses incurred in transporting Kills Plenty's body back to his agency, and that they forward to Agent Gallagher 'all funds due to [the] deceased from you, at the time of his death and all other property left by him in your hands.' Morgan also required an account of the circumstances under which the injury to Kills Plenty had occurred, and

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[53] O'Beirne to CIA, 3 Aug. 1890, LR 23831-1890, box 647, RG 75, NA.

[54] Noble to CIA, 4 Aug. 1890, LR 23943-1890, box 647, RG 75, NA. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 97.

[55] Ibid. It was not only Cody's show that concerned the Indian Office, but also those Indians travelling with the Carver and Whitney, and the Adam Forepaugh shows. See Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 104.

a report on the nature and cause, so far as known to them, of the diseases with which the returned Indians were suffering when they left the show.[56]

Morgan also wrote to Gallagher instructing him to question all the returned Indians as to their treatment while abroad, obtaining affidavits from the Indians showing all the facts. The Agent was advised to ascertain if their employers had failed to comply with their contracts to properly care for them, or if the Indians had been grossly maltreated in other respects. Morgan reassured the Agent that if the management of such shows were found to be in the wrong, appropriate action would be taken.[57] Finally he wrote to O'Beirne, asking that if any more Indians arrived from Europe in a similar condition that he would 'be glad for you to ascertain from them the full particulars relative thereto and their treatment while abroad and advise this office as to the facts.' Morgan reassured O'Beirne that if it should appear from all the facts presented that the employers of the Indians had violated their contracts then proper steps would be taken to obtain adequate redress. He ended by noting, 'It is against the policy of this department to again permit Indians to be taken from their Reservations for exhibition purposes.'[58]

In his report to Morgan with regard to the treatment and health of the returned Show Indians, Gallagher responded that 72 healthy young Indian men had left his agency in the spring of 1889 to join the Wild West show's tour. Five had died among strangers in foreign lands, while the ill health of seven others had rendered them unfit for work, and these had been sent home. He continued,

> I find it very difficult to get any information from these young men in regard to their treatment while away but their condition upon arrival

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[56] CIA to Cody and Salsbury, 22 Aug. 1890, LB 203, p85-87, RG 75, NA.

[57] CIA to Gallagher, 22 Aug. 1890, LB 203, p93-94, RG 75, NA.

[58] CIA to O'Beirne, 22 Aug. 1890, LB 203, p100-02, RG 75, NA.

> here speaks more forcibly than words and is sufficient proof that their lot was a hard one while in the service of the Wild West show.[59]

Two more Indians from Cody's Wild West arrived back in New York on 26 August. Armed with the official support of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, General O'Beirne decided to investigate, and George Crager escorted the returning Indians Little Chief and Short Horn to O'Beirne's office. Short Horn wore his badge of office - a tin plate with the word 'Police' printed on it, indicating that he was employed in that capacity by Buffalo Bill's Wild West. He condemned No Neck, alleging that he often incited the Indians to go out and get drunk.

Little Chief stated that Buffalo Bill always treated the Indians well, but they did not like him because he was too much of a ladies man. Far from being destitute, the Indians had $500 between them, although this represented not their accumulated salaries but winnings from their fellow performers after a poker game played on their last pay-day. O'Beirne condemned the management of the Wild West for allowing the Indians to gamble, noting that while a few might profit, most would lose everything.[60]

Morgan's letter and accompanying documents were delivered to the management of Buffalo Bill's Wild West by the Consul General in Berlin. Nate Salsbury acknowledged receipt of the documents in a letter dated 18 September, in which he noted that a 'suitable reply shall be made to the demands.'[61] But at the beginning of October news reached Washington that while the show was in Bremen another of Buffalo Bill's Indians had died. Uses the Sword had died during a performance on 9

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[59] Loose document from PR Agency, dated 28 Aug. 1890, presumably written by Agent Gallagher (handwritten), p8-10 'Show Business.' PR Gen. Rec., Misc. LS 1887-1891, box 54, RG 75, FARC.

[60] *New York Press*, 28 Aug. 1890, *New York Sun*, 28 Aug. 1890, and *New York World*, 28 Aug.1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[61] Nate Salsbury, Cologne, to W. D. Stamur, US Consul, 18 Sept. 1890, LR 33697-1890, box 674, RG 75, NA. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 98.

September after falling from his horse and being trampled by a buffalo.[62] His body was buried at the Rhiensbury Cemetery, and the 'little Estate left by him' was delivered to his sister Spotted Elk, who was also with Cody's show.[63] This bought the total of Indian deaths during this tour to seven, and American press interest in the returned Indians showed no signs of abating: Burke's attempts to smother the controversy had served only to fuel the debate, rather than kill it.

The show faced an investigation by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, a man who disapproved of Indians being employed in such ventures, and if he found that the management had been negligent, Buffalo Bill's Wild West would lose its twenty thousand dollar bond. The Secretary of the Interior had banned the issue of further permits, and since the Indian performers were essential to the success of the show, the consequences for Cody's Wild West were serious. It became apparent that decisive action was needed to halt the accusations of mistreatment, and so on 26 October Burke cabled Morgan to inform him that Buffalo Bill had decided to bring the Indians to Washington, where they would be glad to explain matters personally. He signed off 'don't believe all you hear, justice to all is [the] foundation [of] good government [and] Christianity.'[64]

The majority of complaints made by the returning Indian performers had not been aimed at Cody himself, but instead primarily at other Indians with the show, most notably Rocky Bear. Their comments about Cody seem rather trivial and perhaps signify that while on tour the Indians had little contact with him outside of the arena. The only white openly criticised was the interpreter Bronco Bill, the principal intermediary between the management and the Indians. It is possible that Cody was

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[62] Uses the Sword was reportedly also known as 'Moskito'. Hugo M. Starkloft, US Consul, Bremen, to Wharton, 26 Sept. 1890, LR 33015-1890, box 674, RG 75, NA.

[63] Ibid.; Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 98.

[64] Burke, Strasburg, to CIA, telegram, 26 Oct. 1890, LR 33009-1890, box 673, RG 75, NA; Moses, "Wild West Shows," 206.

initially unaware of the Indian performers' disquiet, as Bronco Bill was unlikely to relay complaints about his own behaviour. Yet ultimately Cody and the management of the Wild West remained responsible, and they hoped to comprehensively refute the charges made against them with their return to the US.

On 13 November the *Belgenland* docked at the Delaware Wharves in Philadelphia. On board were thirty-eight returning Lakota performers and the Wild West's general manager John Burke. Amongst those waiting on the dock were Herbert Welsh, the Secretary of the Indian Rights Association, and General O'Beirne, Assistant Commissioner of Immigration at New York. General O'Beirne, Father Craft and George Crager had travelled down from New York the previous day in order to meet the Red Star steamship. Welsh was ready to investigate the charges of ill treatment, improper care and drunkenness.[65]

Once the steamship had moored Burke held a reception for the press in the forward saloon. Rocky Bear answered questions regarding the treatment of the Indians, with William Irving (Bronco Bill) acting as interpreter. He told them that the food they had been supplied was excellent, and that he had been 'fed so well that the bucks in the Pine Ridge Agency would have to stand out of his way when he got back.' Burke informed the gathered reporters, that 'all American Consular representatives dined with us and have signed a paper declaring that the food of the Indians was of the best.' In Hamburg they had met imitators of their show, and Burke claimed that it was these competitors who had 'caused these reports to be made against us through malice.' He concluded his speech by asserting 'We are going back next year in April.'[66]

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[65] *Philadelphia Press*, 14 Nov. 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC. *New York Sun*, 13 Nov. 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[66] *Philadelphia Press*, 14 Nov. 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC. This would appear to be a reference to Cody's former partner Doc Carver who had also been touring Europe with a competing Wild West show.

Following the press conference Welsh and O'Beirne met with Major Burke in the first class saloon. Herbert Welsh stated that as the representative of the Indian Rights Association he was present to make an investigation into the charges. He had with him Father Craft who would act as interpreter and he proposed to have the Indians questioned with Burke absent.[67] After a heated exchange of words Burke announced that he would be taking the Indians to Washington, and after questioning Welsh's authority he rejected the proposal.[68]

George Chandler, the Acting Secretary of the Interior, and Robert V. Belt, Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, had enjoined Welsh 'to make a full and impartial examination of the Indians upon their arrival in the city.' Welsh wrote to Chandler detailing his unsuccessful attempts to get Burke to comply.[69] Later in the day Welsh received a telegram from Chandler, which clearly confirmed that he had authority to conduct the investigation in Philadelphia. He once again attempted to persuade Burke to release the Indians for interviews, but Burke refused, complaining that the affair was none of Welsh's business.[70] Rebuffed and slighted, Welsh cabled Chandler informing him that Burke positively declined to permit the examination, and that Burke and the Indians had started out for Washington. His telegram closed with the cautionary remark, 'Interpreter suggested by him should not be employed nor should he be present at examination.'[71]

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[67] See note 79, in Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 100.

[68] *Philadelphia Press*, 14 Nov. 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 100-01, and William T. Hagan, *The Indian Rights Association: The Herbert Welsh Years, 1882-1904*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985) 144.

[69] Welsh, to George Chandler, Acting Secretary of the Interior, 13 Nov. 1890, LR 35081-1890, box 678, RG 75, NA.

[70] Ibid. Crager had been dispatched to deliver a second letter to Burke, reiterating Welsh's authority. *Philadelphia Times*, 14 Nov. 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[71] Welsh to Chandler, 13 Nov. 1890, LR 35080-1890, box 678, RG 75, NA. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 101. Moses, erroneously states that 'Cody had

Commissioner Morgan had left Washington in early September for a tour of agency schools, and was not present when Burke and the Indians arrived back in November. Therefore, Acting Commissioner Belt took charge of the matter in his absence.[72] Nate Salsbury and John Burke called at the Office of Indian Affairs on Friday 14 November, expressing the wish that their Indians be seen and examined. Belt reprimanded them for not allowing Welsh to conduct the examination in Philadelphia. But Salsbury and Burke explained that they feared 'the examination would not be impartial, and therefore they were unwilling that any private examination should be made at that time and under the existing circumstances.'[73] Belt responded that if the Indians in their employ had been well treated then Salsbury and Burke ought to have had sufficient confidence in the fairness and integrity of Mr Welsh. Salsbury and Burke then 'expressed a perfect willingness that the Department should make the examination in whatever manner it deemed proper.'[74]

Belt agreed to receive the Indians at 10am the next day.[75] Upon arrival Salsbury and Burke were informed that the examination would be conducted privately, with only Belt, his stenographer, the Indians, and the interpreter Chauncey Yellow Robe (a Lakota student from Carlisle School who had been brought down for the purpose), present. Salsbury and Burke protested, 'urgently requesting that their interpreter be allowed to remain in the room,' but they were denied.[76]

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already left for New York,' when in fact he had never returned with Burke and the Indians, instead he arrived a few days later aboard *La Normandie.*

[72] Ibid. 100.

[73] R. V. Belt, Acting CIA, to Noble, 18 Nov. 1890, LB 207, p191-204, RG 75, NA.

[74] Ibid. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933,* 101.

[75] Belt to Cody and Salsbury, 15 Nov. 1890, LB 207, p113, RG 75, NA.

[76] Belt to Noble, 18 Nov. 1890, LB 207, p191-204, RG 75, NA; Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933,* 101.

The Acting Commissioner started by welcoming the Indians to Washington before explaining the reasons for the meeting.

> [Salsbury and Burke] have brought you here, they say, to afford the Department... an opportunity to see and hear itself your condition, and for that purpose I have arranged to meet you today... [to ascertain] whether the contract made with you... has been carried out.[77]

Belt urged all that wished to talk, 'to feel free to speak to me your own minds as to your treatment.' In reply to his question, 'who will speak first,' Rocky Bear began with an opening statement that indicated that he was a 'progressive' Indian who had always worked with the Government, despite incurring the wrath of his own people. He concluded "I have been in the show four years, but I think it comes out all right. If it did not suit me, I would not remain longer."

Belt then went on to question the Indians, covering all the charges made in the preceding months. He asked how many Indians had died abroad; if they slept in houses; if they ate at tables, 'with chairs, knives, forks, plates, etc.,' and what they had to eat. The Acting Commissioner's questions were all answered by Rocky Bear, who gave a report of exemplary treatment and care.[78]

> I tell you they treated us well. If these things do not suit the great father, I would stop. If the great father do not want me to go on and show, I would go without it.... That is the way I get money. If a man goes to work in some other place and goes back with money, he has some for his children.[79]

The Acting Commissioner asked if they had been paid regularly and what Rocky Bear had done with his money. He responded, "I have bought some clothes and sent some money to my children; sent it to the Agent." Rocky Bear then opened his 'pocket-book,' which the acting Commissioner calculated held about $300 worth of gold coin, stating "I saved this money for to buy some clothes for my children." This prompted

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[77] Belt to Noble, 18 Nov. 1890, LB 207, p191-204, RG 75, NA.

[78] For note on Indians explaining away deaths see Moses, "Wild West Shows," 206.

[79] Belt to Noble, 18 Nov. 1890, LB 207, p191-204, RG 75, NA.

Belt to inquire if all the Indians had such well-filled pocket books. "At the reservation," Rocky Bear explained, "the children sometimes have nothing to eat, and they ask [for] money, so they send money to their children."[80]

Belt now turned his attention to questions concerning the alleged demoralising influences. He asked if the Indians had been 'allowed any whiskey, or fire water;' if visitors were allowed to enter their quarters 'at all times;' if they went as they 'pleased in the cities and towns... without escort, among bad people;' or if they were allowed to visit 'houses where bad women lived?' Whilst Rocky Bear admitted that they were permitted to leave the camp by themselves, he asserted that they were not allowed to visit brothels or consume whiskey.[81] However, Paul Reddin noted in his book *Wild West Shows*, that whilst the show was in Northern Europe just prior to their return,

> Germans and Austrians welcomed Indians wherever they appeared, including taverns and inns, where Indians became a "great friend of firewater." At the highly publicised rib roast breakfasts, Indians smoked cigars, drank along with the others, and offered "colorful toasts," even though show policy forbade Indians from drinking alcohol. While Buffalo Bill did not condone drunkenness among Indians, he did attend the rib roast dinners, and newspaper articles about Native Americans in taverns and inns appeared so frequently that Cody and others in the show must have known about their activities.[82]

Rocky Bear may not have been lying to the Acting Commissioner, for Belt had not asked if the Indians drank 'whiskey, or fire water,' but rather if they were allowed to, and Rocky Bear had answered this question quite honestly.

The focus of Belt's questioning then turned to what happened within the exhibition arena. He wanted to know if there was any physical danger in appearing in such shows, and what kind of clothes they wore while performing. When Rocky Bear responded that they wore different kinds of clothes, Belt pushed him further, asking

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

"Did you appear on exhibition without any clothes on?" Rocky Bear explained that "There is none needed when not cold, but when cold, we wear clothes." To clarify the point the Acting Commissioner asked again "I mean when you were exhibiting before the people did you go without clothes?" To which Rocky Bear repeated "When it was not cold, we did, when it was cold, we did not."[83] Moses speculated that 'Wearing breechcloth, as far as Belt was concerned, constituted nakedness.'[84]

The Acting Commissioner continued the interview, asking if performing was hard work; if Rocky Bear had asked to be brought home; if they had been attended by a doctor when they were sick; if they were well cared for on the boat journey home; if they had exhibited on Sundays; and if they had attended church. Throughout the interview Rocky Bear had answered the Acting Commissioner's questions, perhaps having been nominated to speak for the group, or because of his supervisory role, and his answers appeared to suggest that Cody and Salsbury had fulfilled their contracts. Belt then stated, "If there is any one here who has any complaint or grievance to make about his treatment, I would like to hear from him." After a pause, with no one making a complaint, Black Heart spoke up saying, "I want to say a few words.... What O'Beirne has said, that is not to be listened to. What the great father says, that is to be listened to."[85] He then went on to explain to Belt the appeal of exhibition work,

> These men have got us in hand. We were raised on horseback; that is the way we had to work. These men furnished us the same work we were raised to; that is the reason we want to work for these kind of men. At the end of every month we drew our salary. What we eat was just the same as the whites eat, and we sit in the camp with them just the same, exactly. When one of our people got sick, we went for doctor; doctor looks at him. If he thinks fit to send him home, send him home right away. If he is able to stay, doctor says keep him there. The company have spent lots of money on us, certainly; that is what we with them for.[86]

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[82] Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 114.

[83] Belt to Noble, 18 Nov. 1890, LB 207, p191-204, RG 75, NA.

[84] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 103.

[85] Belt to Noble, 18 Nov. 1890, LB 207, p191-204, RG 75, NA.

[86] Ibid.

Black Heart went on to maintain that the Indians should be allowed to work wherever they chose, as was the case for whites.

> If Indian wants to work at any place and earn money, he wants to do so; white man got privilege to do same - any kind of work that he wants.... When this show is ready to go again, I want to go with it.

Concluding that the examination was not developing any complaints or grievances, Belt then decided the door should be opened, allowing entry to Salsbury, Burke and the awaiting reporters.[87] Whether the Acting Commissioner was persuaded that the charges against Cody and Salsbury were inaccurate, or if he instead believed 'that the Indians had been well prepared,' is impossible to say.[88] It is evident that the Indian performers were aware of the accusations made in the press, and both Black Heart and Rocky Bear expressed the desire to continue their work with Cody. They were surely well aware that complaints or accusations against their employers would have had detrimental effects on their future employment. Moreover, it should also be noted that the majority of prior complaints of cruelty were made not against Buffalo Bill, but Rocky Bear. It seems unlikely that any Indian would have spoken out against him in his presence, or incur the wrath of their colleagues, if such complaints resulted in the loss of a prized job.

After being granted permission to speak, Nate Salsbury expressed his appreciation to the Indians for their co-operation. Then, perhaps with the ongoing investigation in mind, he counselled them to be on their best behaviour when they returned home.

> Go back to your reservation; obey every law laid down for your country's good, in all respects, like men; try to prove to your brothers on the reservation that, like white men, you are willing to submit to any law that does not deprive you of your freedom, or make you any less men.[89]

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[87] Ibid. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 101-03.

[88] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 103.

[89] Belt to Noble, 18 Nov. 1890, LB 207, p191-204, RG 75, NA.

Belt concluded the interview by contending that "full opportunity has been given to you to make any complaints of breach of contract, and I have heard no complaints from you, and therefore must assume that these people are filling the contract." Belt also added a note of caution:

> You have travelled a great deal and you have learned a great deal. Now you are going back to your reservation, where you will find some little excitement growing out of the religion of your people, who believe in the coming of a new Messiah. They are laboring, we believe and feel that we know, under a great delusion, and as you have learned a great many things we want to ask that you will use your influence and your exertions on the side of the Government... to restrain your people from any undue excitement.[90]

The Acting Commissioner then informed the assembled group that the time had arrived for them to leave, and the Indian performers responded by giving Belt three cheers before departing.[91]

O'Beirne was greatly displeased when he read the newspaper accounts stating that there 'was no truth in the charges' and that the Indians insisted that they were well treated. He wrote to the acting Commissioner requesting to know 'if the investigation as stated actually took place... and who acted... as interpreter,' and he requested a copy of the report.[92] The *New York Press* reported that O'Beirne was not only dissatisfied with Belt's decision, but that he would also be asking for another examination to be held at Pine Ridge.[93] Belt, too, doubted that he had managed to get the full facts, and

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[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 103.

[92] O'Beirne to Belt, 17 Nov 1890, LR 35577-1890, box 679, RG 75, NA. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 103. The report forwarded to O'Beirne is somewhat different from the one sent to the Secretary of the Interior. For a comparison see 'Report of proceedings had before the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at the Indian Office, upon the above date [15 Nov. 1890], with regard to the condition and treatment of the Indians connected with the Wild West Show,' LR 7678-1890, RG 75, NA, and Belt to Noble, 18 Nov. 1890, LB 207, p191-204, RG 75, NA.

[93] *New York Press*, 17 Nov. 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC. O'Beirne also wrote to Herbert Welsh, urging him to pursue the matter, but Welsh declined stating 'I think it a

on 24 November he wrote to Daniel F. Royer, the new agent at Pine Ridge. The acting commissioner informed the agent of the details of the case, and went on to say that he desired a further investigation to be made with a view to 'eliciting all facts bearing on the subject which it is possible to obtain.' In order that he might determine whether contracts had been violated, whether the management were liable under their bonds and the amount of such liability, he instructed the agent to secure affidavits of the returned Indians showing all the facts. This was to be accompanied by a report of the 'names and whereabouts so far as can be ascertained of all Indians who left their Agency with said shows and have not returned thereto, with cause of their absence.'[94]

Cody himself returned to America on 18 November, aboard the French liner *La Normandie*. As soon as Cody stepped ashore he was met by members of the press who were eager to interview him about the controversy. The *New York World* reported that 'Mr Cody was not at all backward in pronouncing the charges not only false but prompted by malicious motives.' Nate Salsbury explained,

> When Buffalo Bill and myself saw the persistency and malignancy of these unfounded charges we decided to put the Wild West in winter quarters in Strasbourg, Germany, give up a number of money making engagements and bring the Indians home, and let them tell the

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more dignified position to remain silent since it is not likely that good could be accomplished by the opposite course.' Welsh had found the whole scenario rather humiliating, in November 1892, when he was requested by the Commissioner to investigate a similar matter he stated 'I accepted the unpleasant task which involved the sacrifice of an entire day and very discourageous and insulting treatment from the manager of the company supposing that I would have been supported in carrying out the instructions which I received from the department. To my surprise and discomforture, when the manager of the Indians refused to allow the investigation... the Department backed down and I was left in the lurch. With this experience in mind I do not care to repeat the experiment.' See Welsh to Father Craft, 17 Nov. 1890, Series I-C Letterpress Copy Books Reel 70, vol. 6, p478, IRA; O'Beirne to Welsh, 18 Nov. 1890, Incoming Correspondence Reel 6, IRA; and Welsh to CIA, 23 Nov. 1892, Series I-C Letterpress Copy Books Reel 71, vol. 8, p979, IRA.

[94] Belt to Agent D. F. Royer, PR, 24 Nov. 1890, PR Gen. Rec., box 9, RG 75, FARC. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 103-04.

> authorities in Washington just how they were treated.... We have sacrificed over $25,000 to come home and vindicate our name and character from this unjust and vindictive onslaught. The vindication which we received in Washington, when Secretary Noble... was convinced that all the charges were unfounded, is perfectly satisfying to us, and I think if Gen. O'Beirne has any sense of manhood he will now come out and openly and publicly admit the injustice of the charges made against us.[95]

Cody felt confident he had the support of the government, and that his interests coincided with theirs, believing that 'the theory of the government's management of the Indian is that he should be made self-supporting. Therefore when I employ Indians and comply with the agreement with Mr Noble to feed, clothe and pay them for their services, we are advancing in a practical way the ideas of the government.' Undaunted, Cody announced that he would procure seventy-five more Indians from Pine Ridge the following spring.[96]

However, in an extract from his report printed in the press on 30 November, Secretary Noble gave a rather different impression.

> When the present Administration began there was little or no restraint put upon anyone seeking to take Indians off the reservations for exhibition in this or other countries. The first act done by the present secretary was to require a bond of any person asking such privilege, conditioned on fair payment and treatment of the Indians and their return to their homes, and for the employment of a white man to be selected to go along with the Indians and look to their rights and welfare. This, it is thought, did much good in some cases; but experience has shown since, that in other cases the Indian has greatly lost by such employment. He is taken into strange and new exciting surroundings, he is taught to re-enact the wildest and most savage scenes of Indian warfare, and too often tempted to concur in practice to the lowest vices. When misfortune overtakes him in any form of disease or accident, or bankruptcy breaks up the show of his employer, his condition on returning home is not a good object lesson of the benefits of civilized life as found by him in the capitols of our own and other

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[95] *New York World*, 19 Nov. 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[96] *New York Herald*, 19 Nov. 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

> enlightened lands. The results are, in fact, deplorable and it has been ordered that no more such licenses or contracts shall be made or approved, and that the Indian agents shall exert themselves to prevent and defeat any attempts in the future to take Indians from the reservations or elsewhere for such purposes. If some act of congress were passed forbidding any person or corporation to take into employment or under control any American Indian it would be of much assistance to the Department in enforcing this policy.[97]

On 1 December 1890, Belt wrote to the Secretary of the Interior informing him of the action taken. While the Indians were in Washington, Belt reported that his office had endeavoured to ascertain the condition and treatment of the Indians while abroad. He reported that the Indians had made no complaints whatever as to their treatment by their employers, and that they had instead insisted that they had been well treated. He commented that they 'all looked exceedingly well, and manifested attachment for Messrs. Cody, Salsbury and Burke, which I had no reason to suspect was simulated.' Yet he felt constrained to pursue the matter further and had instructed Agent Royer to make a further examination. Belt wrote that he had no objection to Herbert Welsh or any other representative of the Indian Rights Association attending Royer's investigation, or to Welsh conducting a separate investigation. He concluded 'I must confess that I do not consider that any further action is required,' noting that no reply had yet been received from Royer, presuming the delay to be due to the 'prevailing excitement of the ghost dance among the Sioux.'[98]

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Apart from L. G. Moses, most authors have paid scant attention to the return of the Indians and the possible implications for Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Some blame White Horse, claiming that he 'told a tall tale of cruelty and starvation,' others simply

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[97] Unidentified newspaper clipping, 30 Nov. 1890, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[98] Belt to Noble, 1 Dec. 1890, LB 207, p484-489, RG 75, NA. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 104.

noted that Cody and the Indians returned and successfully refuted the charges.[99] Joseph G. Rosa and Robin May, who gave the matter more attention that most, concluded that

> The result, not surprisingly, was a vindication of Cody and his staff. No Indians complained. All praised Cody and his show, and the deaths were explained by the Indians themselves. Their dead comrades had been unhealthy when they set out; the agency doctor had failed in his duty. Wounds One Another, who died after falling from a moving train in Germany, had, the Indians said, been drunk at the time. That was the end of the matter. Salsbury wrote off Walsh [sic Welsh] and company as benevolent cranks.[100]

Nellie Snyder Yost in her book, *Buffalo Bill: His Family, Friends, Fame, Failures, and Fortunes*, commented, 'There is an expanded version of Cody's return and his motives.' She remarked,

> Tim McCoy remembers the "autumn evening in 1913" when three or four fellows were grouped around the Colonel at the Irma Hotel listening to him tell stories. In the fall of 1890, Cody said, he had been reading and hearing from visitors about "Indian troubles" back in his West - about the Ghost Dance popularity, about rumblings among the Sioux. Portents. In the Colonel's estimation things were going to be happening, so he returned to be in on them; it would be good publicity.[101]

Yost cites Tim and Ronald McCoy's *Tim McCoy Remembers the West*, but goes on to note that she had asked McCoy 'specifically about his understanding of what Cody [had] said that day.' McCoy had responded 'that he had no doubt in his mind that desire for publicity was a major reason for Cody's returning then to the U.S. "It would," Cody said, "give the show a goosing."' Yost also records that John Burke had

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[99] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 351. Rosa and May state 'White Horse, one of the Indians who left the company, invented tales that the Indians were being ill-treated and starved.'

[100] Rosa and May, *Buffalo Bill and his Wild West*, 149. The authors cite Moses, "Wild West Shows," 206, as their source for this information, but it is unclear where Moses got his evidence or how he reached these conclusions. A survey of the primary sources cited does not reveal anywhere that the Indians made such references about their dead comrades.

[101] Nellie Snyder Yost, *Buffalo Bill: His Family, Friends, Failures and Fortunes* (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1979) 225.

written a line in 1911 for the Wichita *Eagle*, 'He [Cody] came at great expense from Europe to reach the field in the Ghost Dance Campaign,' which she suggests could 'be interpreted to support this notion.'[102] A similar version appeared in the *New York Herald*, in July 1894, when Burke made absolutely no mention of any trouble for Buffalo Bill's Wild West caused by its supposed misuse of the Indians, instead suggesting that they returned to Pine Ridge on a peace mission.

> When the news came to us in Europe of the last Sioux outbreak Colonel Cody took the fastest available steamer for America and hastened at once to report at Pine Ridge Agency, and to offer his services as mediator. I was at that time in Strasburg with Black Heart and sixty-five other Indians. We were instructed to return to the reservation with all possible despatch in order that the Indians who were with me might use their influence toward quieting their people and restoring friendly relations with the government.
>
> We stopped at Washington, where Commissioner Belt, in the absence of General Morgan told us of the threatening state of affairs on the reservation and asked us to hasten with all speed to the seat of the trouble.[103]

It is apparent that the 'story' of the return in 1890 was rewritten over time: it was preferable to claim that the Ghost Dance was disturbing both Cody and the Indian performers, rather than admit that the show was having a crisis over its use of Indians. In Victor Weybright and Henry Sell's, *Buffalo Bill and the Wild West*, myth and reality have blurred. While they acknowledged that complaints had been made, they accepted Cody's interpretation without reservation:

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[102] Yost, *Buffalo Bill: His Family, Friends, Failures and Fortunes*, 488, note 11.

[103] *New York Herald*, 1 July 1894, Scrapbook 1894, MS6, Series IX, box 10, p83, Cody Archives, McCracken Research Library, BBHC. This re-writing of the facts began as early as 1891, whilst the Wild West toured Britain. 'Colonel Cody and Major Burke were travelling with their show in Alsace-Lorraine when this friction began. They both hurried home, taking with them the Indians, and were in time for the first "rackets," as the skirmishes are termed.' *Leicester Daily Post*, 31 Aug. 1891, p5, 'Buffalo Bill's Show in Leicester.'

> Troublemakers, possibly rivals in the show business, spread rumours that the Indians were not well treated; and although Buffalo Bill denounced the rumours as false they persisted.[104]

The authors go on to claim:

> General Miles thought perhaps the [Ghost Dance] business could be settled by a visit from Buffalo Bill. If Cody could talk with Sitting Bull and other Indian chiefs, the rebellious Indians could perhaps be calmed down and trouble averted. Colonel Cody responded with alacrity to the appeal of General Miles. He took temporary leave from his show and returned to America.[105]

Whether or not the allegations of mistreatment or neglect had any foundation is far from clear. The death rate amongst the Lakota who travelled with Cody to Europe mirrored that of the majority of Lakota living on the Dakota reservations in the care of the American Government, and more precisely the Office of Indian Affairs. The deaths abroad represented roughly 10% of the Indian contingent, while the death rate at the Pine Ridge reservation for the winter of 1889-90 was reportedly '25 to 45 a month in a population of some 5,500,' therefore between 5-10%.[106] Similar accusations of mistreatment and neglect could have just as easily been laid against the government. Bishop Hare, a veteran Episcopal missionary among the Lakota, later stated:

> In the year 1890, drought, the worst known for many years, afflicted the western part of South Dakota, and the Indian crops were a total failure. There is ample evidence that, during this period, the rations issued lasted, even when carefully used, for only two-thirds the time for which they were intended. Added to their distress, this period, 1889 and 1890, was marked by extraordinary misfortune. The measles prevailed with great virulence in 1889, the grippe in 1890. Whooping cough also attacked the children. The sick died from want.... The people were often hungry, and, the physicians in many cases said, died when taken sick, not so much from disease as for want of food.[107]

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[104] Victor Weybright and Henry Sell, *Buffalo Bill and the Wild West*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1956) 171.

[105] Weybright and Sell, *Buffalo Bill and the Wild West*, 172.

[106] Hyde, *A Sioux Chronicle*, 238.

[107] Mooney, *Ghost Dance*, 202-03.

Moses noted that 'the number of Indians who had died on tour, five from disease and two in accidents, was for Morgan and his friends (indeed, for anyone reading accounts in the newspapers) a shocking statistic that they hoped to turn to their advantage.' However, such statistics soon paled into insignificance, for 'the death toll - from starvation, exposure, and gunfire - at Pine Ridge reservation within a month of their return would shock the nation.'[108]

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It is hard to imagine how Buffalo Bill's Wild West could have continued without Indian performers, for they were crucial to Cody's narrative of the conquest of America. The Indian performers were used to reinforce Cody's status as a heroic frontiersman, for the show presented them as formidable barriers to civilisation, against which white America had triumphed in the winning of the West.[109] To give his exhibition added kudos and to raise it above ordinary shows, Cody needed the authentic characters his audiences had come to expect, and without the Indians Buffalo Bill's Wild West would have lost its core component.

Cody's exhibition was not theatre in which actors represented individuals by playing characters; such a performance would have been too polished and tame for the Wild West extravaganza. Instead Cody's show was about excitement and danger, and 'the "realism" of the Wild West helped to intensify the drama...[and] heighten the excitement.' The Wild West tapped into 'the hunger of a broad audience for amusements that set their pulses racing and also reassured them that the rapidly modernizing world was a safe and stable place.'[110] As Joy S. Kasson noted:

> Buffalo Bill's Wild West had promised spectators that they could experience vicarious thrills without danger or discomfort, imagine

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[108] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 104.

[109] Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*, 161-62.

[110] Ibid., 62.

> war without reckoning its costs, experience the hatred of an enemy but feel reassured about their own magnanimity. The show had claimed realism and educational value, but it had shown spectators a glamorous, scripted, patriotic performance spectacle.[111]

These contradictions were in Kasson's words 'a crucial sign of the Wild West's modernity. Audiences understood that its spectacle was fiction but approved its claims to authenticity. They realized it represented an exaggerated and idealized view of frontier life but thought they were seeing "the real thing."[112]

However, 'realism' was also key to its educational claims.

> The object of the show was not to present a circus performance, but to give a true picture of American frontier life with real characters who had played their part in the history of a portion of the American continent which would soon be a thing of the past.[113]

Not unlike the salvage anthropologists of the day, Cody purported to offer the last glimpses of the 'real' or 'authentic' to his audiences before they vanished. Furthermore, as Kasson maintained 'the Wild West's great achievement... was made possible largely through the contribution of the American Indian performers,' who not only brought a perceived element of authenticity to the exhibition, but also played the crucial role of 'a counter-force against which the hero displayed his virtues.'[114]

Cody's use of Indian performers and more specifically the image he presented of them, clashed with the idealised Indian championed by reformers. While Cody presented and indeed celebrated the Indians as wild mounted warriors and hunters of a bygone age, reformers 'wished to foster the ideal of Indians as tamed humans in a tamed land, who were embracing civilization through land allotment, education and

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[111] Ibid., 262

[112] Ibid., 221

[113] Ibid., 85

[114] Ibid., 162

industry.'[115] Consequently government officials became concerned about the negative effects of Indian participation in Wild West shows on assimilation programmes.

The Indian performers, who welcomed the chance of employment with Cody's Wild West, did not share the concern of the reformers. On the Indian reservations in the late nineteenth century even those Indians who had been educated and given a new set of goals and expectations, had very few employment opportunities. The government invested little in Indians after educating them, and often it was all but impossible to survive on land not suitable for agriculture. Cody offered the Indian performers a job that appealed because it came from the Indians own experiences, while also guaranteeing them wages, travel, and status, and perhaps more importantly independence from government control.

When the Lakota performers returned to South Dakota the ban on issuing any more permits to Indians for employment in Wild West shows remained in place. While they had shown Acting Commissioner Belt that the management had kept good faith with regards to their contracts, the Indians still faced the possibility of losing a prized job. This must surely have affected their behaviour upon their return home. Both the management and the performers were very aware that the press, then present in significant numbers at Pine Ridge, would be watching their every move and that the journalist's reports would be read throughout the nation. The involvement of the Wild West's personnel in the suppression of the Ghost Dance needs to be viewed against the backdrop of the Secretary of the Interior's ban and the need to overturn it.

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[115] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 5

BORN ON THE BRINY DEEP.

Two More Passengers on the Saale Than Started—Some of Buffalo Bill's Indians Back Also.

The Bremen steamship Saale landed in this port yesterday 177 saloon and 702 steerage passengers. The Saale's trip was an exciting one in one particular. A few days after she left Southampton a stranger boarded the ship. The intruder was a bouncing boy, and in consequence of the way in which he came on board the ship he secured his passage gratis. The next day a little lady came on board the ship the same way.

The ship's doctor made as comfortable as possible these children of Neptune until the ship arrived at this port, and they were placed in Uncle Sam's care. Dr. Gutteres insisted on keeping the sea-born bits of humanity, and their mothers, under his care for awhile before they should encounter the battle of life, and Gen. O'Beirne insisted on detaining the native Indians who were on board.

These said they were of the Sioux nation and of the La Toka tribe, and were on their way from Buffalo Bill's show, now in London, to their home in the Red Cloud Pine Agency. They had passes all the way through and money to pay expenses. They were tired of Buffalo Bill and wanted to get back to Dakota. They gave their names: Eagle Horn, Blue Rainbow, Little Lamb, Running Creek and Kill-his-Pony.

Finally all the Indians were allowed to land except Kill-his-Pony, who is in a most critical state of health. While with the Buffalo Bill show a month ago Kill-his-Pony fell and broke his hand. Blood poisoning has now set in. Kill-his-Pony is 9 years of age. The Indian was sent to Bellevue Hospital, where he will remain for treatment.

Consumption, which is eating away his life, is making rapid progress, and the little fellow is now lying in a precarious condition. His recovery is extremely doubtful. It is believed that his disease was contracted in Europe, where he went as a member of the "Wild West" show. He belongs to the Dakota tribe of Sioux, and was a resident of the Pine Ridge Agency. His condition is being made as comfortable as possible. Rev. Father Crafts, of Dakota, is a frequent visitor to the young brave.

"KILLS HIS PONY" NO MORE.

One of Buffalo Bills Indian's Dies in Bellevue Hospital.

Otakte, or "Kills His Pony," the Sioux Indian, died in Bellevue Hospital this morning.

"Kills His Pony" was a Dacotah, and had been with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in Europe. Saturday he arrived in this port on the steamship Saale very ill with consumption.

GONE TO THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUND.

Kill-Many, the Sioux Indian who arrived at the Barge Office from Europe a few days ago in a sickly condition, died yesterday at Bellevue Hospital. A Catholic priest administered the sacraments. Kill-Many was connected with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, and was about eighteen years old. His last hope expressed was that he might live until he reached Pine Ridge Agency, his old home. Colonel Cody telegraphed from Paris that he would bear the expense of sending the body out West.

Otakte, or "Kill Many," one of Buffalo Bill's Sioux, who returned from Europe on Saturday seriously injured by a fall from his horse while with the show in Berlin, died in Bellevue Hospital on Tuesday. His body will be taken to the Sioux reservation by "Hank" Clifford and George C. Crager, who were with Buffalo Bill as interpreters.

OTAKTE DIES IN BELLEVUE.

He Was One of Buffalo Bill's Indians and Was Fatally Hurt By a Fall.

Otakte, the young Dakota Indian who was sent from the Barge Office to Bellevue Hospital on Saturday, died there on Tuesday night. He was attended in his last hours by the Rev. Father Craft, by whom he was converted to Catholicism several years ago at the Pine Ridge Agency. Gen. O'Beirne, assistant superintendent of immigration, sent a despatch to Buffalo Bill, who is at Leipsic, notifying him of Otakte's death and asking him if he would defray the expenses of sending the body to Otakte's tribe. Buffalo Bill answered that he would. Interpreter George C. Crager will superintend the city end of the funeral to-day. The mourners will be Gen. O'Beirne, Father Craft, Interpreter Crager, and Hank Clifford, who married a squaw of Otakte's tribe. Clifford will accompany the body to the Pine Ridge Agency.

Otakte died of blood poisoning. His horse fell on him while he was performing with the Buffalo Bill show in Germany, and his right arm was crushed and he was badly injured internally.

War nicht zu retten. — Der Indianer Otakte in die ewig grünen Jagdgründe eingegangen. Der Sioux-Indianer Otakte (Tödtet Viele), welcher, wie bereits mitgetheilt, letzten Samstag mit vier Stammesgenossen auf dem Dampfer „Saale" von Europa hier eintraf, wo sie mit „Buffalo Bill's Truppe umhergereist waren, ist im Bellevue Hospital gestorben. Otakte hatte durch einen Sturz mit seinem Pferde den rechten Arm oberhalb des Handgelenks sowie den Brustkasten gebrochen, die Brüche waren vernachlässigt worden und in Folge dessen Knochenfrass eingetreten. Der Indianer wurde nach der Ankunft hier in's Bellevue Hospital gebracht, war aber nicht mehr zu retten. Castle-Einwanderungs-Superintendent O'Beirne, welcher sich für das Schicksal des Indianers interessirte, hatte sich per Kabel mit „Buffalo Bill", der jetzt in Leipzig weilt, in Verbindung gesetzt und erhielt gestern eine Depesche von demselben, worin er sich erbietet, im Falle die Nothdurft dieselben sollte, die Kosten für Transport und Bestattung der Leiche in der Sioux-Reservation zu bezahlen. In Uebereinstimmung hiermit wird General O'Beirne die Leiche einbalsamiren lassen und unter Geleit des von den Sioux als „Squaw-Mann" aberkannten Hank Clifford nach der „Pine Ridge"-Agentur in Dakota senden.

Kill-His-Pony Is Dead.

Kill-His-Pony, the Indian, died yesterday of consumption. He arrived at the Barge Office on Saturday from the steamship Saale. As he was too sick to go to Pine Ridge Agency he was sent to Bellevue Hospital. Rev. Father Craft was at the hospital and gave the dying man spiritual consolation. The body will be embalmed and forwarded to the agency. "Hank" Clifford, one of the scouts who came here to look after Kill-His-Pony's welfare, will accompany it. The start will be made at 3.30 o'clock this afternoon by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

KILLS-MANY IS DEAD.

Kills-Many, the young Indian who was admitted to the Bellevue Hospital Saturday last suffering from consumption and an improperly treated broken arm, died yesterday. He was a member of the Lacotan tribe of Sioux, and was taken from the Pine Ridge Agency, Dakota, by Buffalo Bill and went with the Wild West Show to Europe. The boy returned to this port with six others of his tribe Saturday last. He will be buried at the expense of "Buffalo Bill."

Father Croft, the Indian missionary; General O'Beirne, W. Barkay, Captain Mellee and Scouts Clifford and Creigan acted as pallbearers on Saturday for the body of Kill-his-Pony, the young Dakotah Indian, whose body was forwarded to the reservation.

To Sleep on the Happy Hunting Grounds.

Kills-Many or Killed-His-Pony, the young Indian who died of consumption at Bellevue Hospital yesterday, will sleep his last sleep in the land of the Red men. He was a Sioux of the Lacotah tribe, and thanks to the kind interest of the Hon. W. F. Cody, Gen. J. E. O'Beirne and George C. Crager, a Sioux interpreter, engaged Undertaker Michael P. Daly, who took the remains from the Morgue to-day. To-night they will be sent by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to Pine Ridge, Dakota, when they will be taken to the primeval wilderness and interred with Sioux rites.

LAST OF A BRAVE.

The Remains of Kill-His-Pony Shipped to His Father in Dakota.

The body of the young Sioux Indian, Kill-His-Pony, who died last week at Bellevue Hospital, was shipped to Pine Ridge Agency at midnight Saturday.

The body was in charge of scout Jack Clifford, who was engaged by General O'Beirne to see that the remains of the young brave were safely delivered to his father, the chief Corn Planter, in Dakota.

On the coffin lay a wreath of ivy, the gift of Mr. Creigan, who has spent twenty years among the Sioux, and is well acquainted with old Corn Planter.

Those who acted as pall-bearers to the train were General O'Beirne, who is an old Indian fighter, and who has an Indian name a foot long; Father Croft, who has been a missionary among the Sioux Indians, and a chief of the tribe to which Kill-His-Pony belonged; Captain McGee and Jack Clifford, two scouts and Indian fighters; Mr. Creigan and W. Barkay.

The expense of embalming the body of Kill-His-Pony, and of shipping it home, is borne by Buffalo Bill, as it was while with the Wild West Show in Europe that the Indian received the injuries from which he died.

Killed-His-Pony Buried.

General O'Beirne, who returned from Gettysburg yesterday, received a letter from Agent H. D. Gallagher of the Sioux Agency thanking him for forwarding the body and seeing to the funeral arrangements of Killed-His-Pony, the Indian who recently died at Bellevue Hospital. The burial took place at the Mission Cemetery, four miles northeast of the agency, on White Clay Creek. Chief Red Cloud and Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horse sent word that they would be remembered, and "shake" with General O'Beirne.



Fig. 15. Front page of George Crager's clipping book showing newspaper coverage of Kills Plenty's death, and a lock of the Indian's hair taken after he had died.


Fig. 16. Cartoon from the *New York World*, July 21 1890.

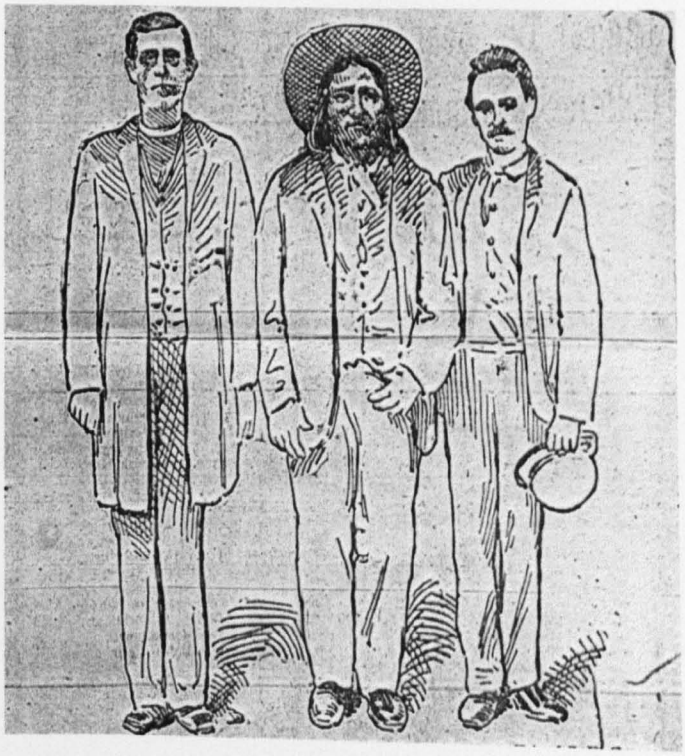

Fig. 17. Illustration of Father Craft, No Neck and George Crager from *New York Press*, August 24 1890.

## Five: How the suppression of the Lakota Ghost Dance saved Buffalo Bill's Wild West

Buffalo Bill and his Indian performers would never have become embroiled in the suppression of the Lakota Ghost Dance if had they not been forced to return to America and refute the charges of mistreatment and neglect. Instead they would have remained in Europe entertaining audiences and netting huge profits through their depiction of the conquest of America. However, when the Indian performers returned to their homes in South Dakota the ban on Indian employment in Wild West shows remained in effect, and the military repression of the Lakota Ghost Dance gave Buffalo Bill's Wild West a perfect platform from which to illustrate their usefulness to the government.

The prevailing predicament on the Lakota reservations enabled the Wild West's management to turn the situation to their advantage. Along with Cody's attempted arresting of Sitting Bull, the involvement of the Wild West Indians as police, scouts and negotiators for the government meant that Cody was able to illustrate the positive effects on the Indians of touring with his show. Consequently, after concentrated lobbying, the ban was overturned and Buffalo Bill's Wild West resumed their European tour in April 1891.

The suppression of the Ghost Dance included the removal to Fort Sheridan of twenty-seven supposed leaders of the religion. Twenty-three of the prisoners were later released into the custody of Buffalo Bill to tour Europe. By taking the Lakota prisoners on tour with the Wild West, Cody and the government hoped to force the 'hostiles' to acknowledge the power and might of white society and civilisation, thus ensuring that they would never again rebel. Yet reformers did not concur with this belief, and instead they condemned Cody's employment of the prisoners as a government sanctioned farce, and they renewed their efforts to ban Indian

employment in Wild West shows. Despite being at the peak of their influence, the Indian Rights Association failed to have Cody's permission to hire the Fort Sheridan prisoners rescinded. As a result, while Cody's status as an Indian employer had been boosted, the reformers were forced to look for new ways to promote their alternate 'image' of the Indians.

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Having in their opinion refuted the charges made against the management of Buffalo Bill's Wild West, Burke and the forty-five Lakota performers left Washington and headed home for Pine Ridge. Their arrival was eagerly awaited, but it was into the 'charged atmosphere' of the Lakota Ghost Dance that Cody's Indians returned. Moses recorded that:

> One of the ironies is that the Indian Bureau, frequently hostile toward the Show Indians, now expected them to act as harbingers of Euroamerican civilization.... The Indian Bureau asked the Show Indians, reviled as symbols of a way of life on the verge of extinction, to explain to their people the nature of things to come.... [and] persuade their families and friends to awake from their fevered dreams.[1]

Their return coincided with the arrival of the military on the South Dakota reservations, and as the trains pulled out of Omaha, they carried not only the troops but also a group of newspaper reporters from around the country. One such correspondent was C. H. Cressey of the *Omaha Bee*. He commented,

> They seem to a certain extent to realize the gravity of the situation, and it is believed they will do much toward restoring quiet. Several of the party had received letters from their friends at Pine Ridge speaking of the Christ and Messiah craze just before they had sailed from Europe.[2]

Bizarrely in the same article Cressey also speculated that the returning Indians were plotting an ambush of the train. John E. Carter, in his essay 'Making Pictures for a News- Hungry Nation,' noted,

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[1] Ibid. 104.

[2] Jensen et al, *Eyewitness*, 28.

> His story hinted of dark diabolic conversations and of their furtive glances out the windows and gestures toward the familiar landscapes that they had last seen three years previously. He interpreted these actions as a prelude to an Indian plot to attack the train at Valentine. There, confederates of the returning Sioux would join those on the train and thus begin the rumored revolution.[3]

Contrary to Cressy's imaginative story line, all reports suggest that the returning showmen worked tirelessly in support of the government. According to Carl Smith, the *Omaha World-Herald* correspondent at Pine Ridge, 'All Bill Cody's Indians, past and present, are on the right side.'[4] Daniel Royer, the Pine Ridge Agent, appears to have concurred, as he recruited a number of them for the Pine Ridge Indian police force.[5] Others were hired as army scouts at $13 a month plus rations, and 'simultaneously the army used [a number of] the Wild West show Indians to coax others who had fled the agency to return.'[6] Charles W. Allen, the editor of the *Chadron Democrat* recalled that

> the company placed Major Burke at Pine Ridge and he remained through the entire duration of the trouble, looking after the welfare of former employees of the show. His influence in behalf of peace and loyalty to the government was effective. He organized a score of intelligent, upstanding young braves, under the leadership of Black Heart, who were constantly on the alert among the various factions, counselling not only their fellow showmen but others, and reporting everything to him.[7]

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[3] Ibid. 44.

[4] Quoted in Ibid. 28-29,

[5] Ibid. 29; 'According to William Fitch Kelly of the *Nebraska State Journal*, Agent Royer of Pine Ridge had drawn his Indian police force almost entirely from Indians who had previously performed with Buffalo Bill's show.' Christina Klein, "'Everything of interest in the late Pine Ridge War are held by us for sale': Popular Culture and Wounded Knee," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 25, no. 2 (1994): 49; 'About fifty of them were employed as Indian police and in a company of scouts sent to Fort Robinson for duty under Lieutenant Taylor.' Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 367.

[6] Jensen et al, *Eyewitness*, 31.

[7] Charles W. Allen *From Fort Laramie to Wounded Knee: In the West That Was*, ed. Richard E. Jensen (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997) 168-69. Burke later recounted to a journalist that 'Black Heart, while unwilling to take up arms against his own people, was nevertheless willing to aid me in a

Not everyone was so favourable towards Burke and his presence at Pine Ridge. In a confidential letter to Herbert Welsh of the Indian Rights Association, the Reverend Charles Cook confided

> Major Burk, [sic] Buffalo Bill's emissary, has come back with some fifty "wild" Indians; has been here for some two weeks or more. It has come to me through the Indians that in this confusion he is quietly trying to run off Indians to the "show." I know the Government orders, but these men have managed before to evade all such. I had a real fight of words with him yesterday. I believe he is laying some scheme. You should be here to see him and talk with him personally, and thus defend the poor Indians. Do not publicly quote me on this point.[8]

Burke and the Wild West's Indians were not the only ones who became embroiled in the military suppression of the Lakota Ghost Dance, for Cody himself almost stole the show. In the 'Report of the Major General Commanding the Army,' which appeared in the *Annual Report of the Secretary of War (1891)*, Nelson A. Miles reported:

> It was the design of the division commander to anticipate the movements of the hostile Indians and arrest or overpower them in detail before they had time to concentrate in one large body, and it was deemed advisable to secure, if possible, the principal leaders and organizers, namely, Sitting Bull, and others, and remove them for a time from that country. To this end authority was given on November 25, 1890, to William F. Cody, a reliable frontiersman, who has had much experience as chief of scouts, and who knew Sitting Bull very well, and had perhaps as much influence over him as any living man, to proceed to the Standing Rock Agency to induce Sitting Bull to come in with him, making such terms as he (Cody) might deem necessary, and if unsuccessful in this, to arrest him quietly and to remove him quickly from his camp to the nearest military station. He was authorized to take a few trusty men with him for that purpose. He proceeded to Fort Yates on the Standing Rock Reservation and received from Lieut. Col. Drum, commanding, the necessary assistance, but his mission was either suspected or made known to the friends of

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semi-neutral way in whatever manner I might direct.' *New York Herald*, 1 July 1894, Scrapbook 1894, MS6, Series IX, box 10, p83, Cody Archives, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[8] Welsh to O'Beirne, 16 Dec. 1890, Letterpress Copy Books Reel 70, p593, IRA.

> Sitting Bull, who deceived him as to his whereabouts. This had the effect of delaying the arrest for a time.[9]

This official version of events is somewhat misleading, as it was the Standing Rock Agent James McLaughlin who thwarted Miles' plan, rather than the 'friends of Sitting Bull.'

Sitting Bull, the Hunkpapa Medicine man, was a leading traditionalist with influence among the Lakota. The majority of white Americans held him responsible for the annihilation of George Armstrong Custer and his Seventh Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876. In 1890 Sitting Bull lived on the Standing Rock reservation, where he was a persistent thorn in the side of Agent McLaughlin. There is some debate as to whether Sitting Bull was himself an adherent of the Ghost Dance, but it is clear that he had invited the Ghost Dancer Kicking Bear to come to Standing Rock, after which members of Sitting Bull's band became Ghost Dancers. To government personnel, both in Washington and in the West itself, Sitting Bull was a dangerous trouble-maker, and some historians have argued that officials seized upon the Ghost Dance religion as an excuse to remove influential traditionalists who opposed the onslaught of white civilisation.[10] The Medicine Man had toured with Buffalo Bill's Wild West for a short season in 1885, and Cody considered himself to be 'an old friend of the chief.'[11] [Fig. 18]

In his publication *A Sioux Chronicle*, George Hyde posed the question 'Why Cody was chosen for this extremely delicate piece of work is difficult to determine.'[12] Utley has suggested that 'Miles let himself be convinced that, if anyone could capture the

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[9] Secretary of War, *Annual Report*, 1891, 145-46. In his autobiography *Serving the Republic*, Miles simplified the event to 'My first effort in that direction [arresting Sitting Bull] proved a failure, owing to diverse influence that was used to defeat my purpose.' Miles, *Serving the Republic*, 238.

[10] Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., "Wounded Knee a History," in *Wounded Knee: Lest We Forget*, 17.

[11] William F. Cody, *Buffalo Bill's Life Story: An Autobiography of Buffalo Bill (Colonel W. F. Cody)* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1920) 305-06, quoted in Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 359.

[12] Hyde, *A Sioux Chronicle*, 286.

Hunkpapa leader, Cody was the man.'[13] Cody himself later stated, 'I received a telegram to meet General Miles at Chicago to discuss the situation. I had only set foot on American soil a week before, and the upshot of our talk was that I set out... to bring in Sitting Bull.'[14] Don Russell maintained that, 'Miles, convinced that he was faced with a widespread Indian war, wanted information about the Bad Lands country, with which Cody was familiar. Whether the mission to Sitting Bull was the purpose of Miles' telegram to Cody or was an afterthought is not clear.'[15]

It would appear that the two spent a number of days discussing the situation, and thus Cody's decision to go was hardly made on the spur of the moment. A Chicago reporter commented,

> For two days he has been frequently consulting General Miles about this uprising at Pine Ridge, but as yet has reached no definite decision.... "I don't know yet whether I shall fight them or not. It might not look exactly right for me to do so, for I have made a fortune out of them, but if they get to shedding innocent blood I may, if I can be of any service, go up there."[16]

In his autobiography Cody painted a very dramatic picture of the mission. With regards to his appointment by Miles he commented:

> Miles said that Sitting Bull had his camp somewhere within forty or fifty miles of the Standing Rock Agency, and was haranguing the Indians thereabout, spreading the Messiah talk and getting them to join him.... He knew that I was an old friend of the chief and he believed that if any one could induce the old fox to abandon his plans for a general war I could.[17]

On 24 November 1890, Miles authorised Cody 'to secure the person of Sitting Bull and... deliver him to the nearest com'g officer of U.S. Troops, taking a receipt and

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[13] Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 123.

[14] Unidentified newspaper clipping, 29 May 1891, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

[15] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 358.

[16] *Chicago Herald*, n.d., Buffalo Bill Scrapbook, Microfilm FF18, Cody Papers, SHSC.

[17] Cody, *Buffalo Bill's Life Story*, 305, quoted in Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 358-59.

reporting your action.' On the back of a visiting card Miles wrote 'Com'd'g officers will please give Col. Cody transportation for himself and party and any protection he may need for a small party.'[18] The next day the papers reported that 'Buffalo Bill has been ordered to the seat of the trouble.' Intriguingly, in the interview Cody stated, 'I shall arrive at Omaha on Monday. Thence I shall probably proceed directly to Rushville, thirty-one miles from Pine Ridge.' Perhaps this was just a ruse to throw people off the scent of his real mission at Standing Rock, but his ending statements indicate that it was Sitting Bull who was on his mind.

> Of all bad Indians, Sitting Bull is the worst. Rock[y] Bear and Red Shirt, who are fighting chiefs, will do whatever is necessary to defeat Sitting Bull. These were with me. Sitting Bull will always be found with the disturbing element. If there is no disturbing element, he will foment one. He is a dangerous Indian and his conduct now portents trouble.[19]

Four days later the press reported that Cody had arrived in 'Bismarck on his way to Standing Rock Agency, whence he will go directly to Sitting Bull's camp.' The true purpose of his mission had still not been disclosed to the press, who reported that Cody had 'been sent to investigate the "Messiah craze" among the Indians, with almost unlimited authority.'[20]

Stanley Vestal maintained that as 'the Ghost Dance and the Sioux were front-page news. Buffalo Bill saw a chance to make a grand *coup* and acquire huge publicity for his show.'[21] Coming immediately after a summer of bad press for Buffalo Bill's Wild West, this suggestion is perhaps understandable. Cody was joined on his mission by three old friends; Dr. Frank Powell (White Beaver), Robert Haslam (Pony Bob), and John Keith.[22] They arrived by train at Mandan, Dakota, on Thanksgiving, from

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[18] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 359.

[19] *Daily Telegraph* (London), 25 Nov. 1890, p5.

[20] *Daily Telegraph* (London), 29 Nov. 1890, p3.

[21] Vestal [Campbell], *Sitting Bull*, 280.

[22] Cody quoted in an unidentified newspaper clipping, 29 May 1891, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC. Pfaller mentions that it was G. W. Chadwick, and makes no reference to

whence they sent a telegram to Fort Yates 'announcing that they would arrive at the fort that night.'[23]

James McLaughlin, the Standing Rock Agent, was greatly dismayed at this news. He had planned to have the Indian police arrest Sitting Bull on ration day 'when all Indians except Sitting Bull came to the agency.'[24] He later commented in his autobiography, *My Friend, the Indian*, 'The threat came on us like a bolt from the blue.... [and] The threat took form in Colonel William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill).'[25] McLaughlin sent a courier to Jack Carignan, a schoolteacher who lived about three miles from Sitting Bull's camp, informing Carignan that he had received the telegram from Cody, and expected the party to arrive later that night.[26] Carignan replied

> I am positive that no trouble need be apprehended from Sitting Bull and his followers, unless they are forced to defend themselves and think it would be advisable to keep all strangers, other than employees, who have business amongst the Indians away from here, as Sitting Bull has lost all confidence in the whites.[27]

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John Keith, see Louis Pfaller, "'Enemies in '76, Friends in '85' - Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill," *Prologue, The Journal of the National Archives*, 1, no.2 (1969): 28; see also Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 124, and Reddin, *Wild West Shows*, 116. Russell makes no reference to either Chadwick or Keith, but instead names Steve Burke and Bully White, see Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 361. In a clipping from the *Chicago Herald*, 13 December 1890, which was reproduced in the 1893 Program for Buffalo Bill's Wild West, Lieutenant G. W. Chadwick was quoted as saying that he 'was not detailed to accompany Colonel Cody... and that he never saw him till several days after Cody's return.' *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* 1893 Program p50, MS6, Series VI:A, box 1, folder 10, Cody Archives, McCracken Research Library, BBHC. Both Utley and Wooster state that the party also included five journalists, but Russell argues that 'The fact that no other episode in his later career is so poorly covered proves he was not.' Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 124; Robert Wooster, *Nelson A. Miles and the Twilight of the Frontier Army* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993) 181; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 361.

[23] Pfaller, "Enemies in '76, Friends in '85," 28.

[24] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 360.

[25] McLaughlin, *My Friend the Indian*, 209.

[26] Vestal [Campbell], *New Sources of Indian History*, 8-9.

[27] Vestal [Campbell], *New Sources of Indian History*, 10. Despite issuing this warning, on the day that Cody arrived at Standing Rock, Carignan himself escorted a Chicago newspaperman, Sam Clover, to

Meanwhile, Cody and his party were delayed at Mandan and did not arrive at Fort Yates until 28 November.[28] Upon arrival Cody presented his authorisation to the post commander, Lieut. Col. William F. Drum. Drum reported that a 'discussion was commenced in regard to the situation, but it was noticed that Col. Cody who asked for whiskey was somewhat intoxicated.' In light of this fact the meeting was adjourned to allow Cody a few hours rest. But, as Drum recorded, 'the Colonel continued to drink and was in no condition to attend to business that afternoon and evening.'[29] Cody's condition was corroborated by Bishop W. H. Hare in a letter to Herbert Welsh, in which he repeated

> Confidentially their opinion [John Grass, Gall, Two Packs, and Major McLaughlin] is that Gen. Miles has either softening of the brain or a Presidential bee in his bonnet. Buffalo Bill reached Fort Yates drunk, bearing an autograph letter from Miles authorizing him to capture Sitting Bull. He was kept drunk on his arrival at Yates (justifiably?) and did not get off as soon as he otherwise would have done, and thus time was gained to secure rescinding of the authority.[30]

The Bishop's comment that 'He was kept drunk' perhaps more correctly describes the situation than Drum's official version.

Upon Cody's arrival McLaughlin had wired the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Thomas Morgan.

> William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) has arrived here with commission from Gen. Miles to arrest Sitting Bull. Such a step at present is unnecessary and unwise, as it will precipitate a fight which cannot be averted. A few Indians still dancing, but it does not mean mischief at present. I have matters well in hand, and when proper time arrives can arrest

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Sitting Bull's camp, where Clover proceeded to photograph a Ghost Dance from the seat of a wagon. See Vestal [Campbell], *Sitting Bull*, 281.

[28] Pfaller, "Enemies in '76, Friends in '85," 28.

[29] Ibid. 28, 30.

[30] W. H. Hare to Welsh, 12 Dec. 1890, Incoming Corres. Reel 6, IRA.

> Sitting Bull by Indian police without bloodshed.... Request Gen. Miles order to Cody be rescinded and request immediate answer.[31]

The Commissioner forwarded the telegram to the Secretary of the Interior, John Noble. Noble then met with President Harrison and the Secretary of War. At the same time Drum had wired General Miles, but Miles insisted that Cody should proceed with his mission.[32] Meanwhile officers at Fort Yates conspired to delay Cody until McLaughlin had received an answer. They invited Cody to the Officer's Club with the intention of drinking 'him under the table,' but as Russell noted 'Cody's *capacity* was such that it took practically all the officers in details of two or three at a time to keep him interested and busy through the day.'[33]

Despite their best efforts, Cody was none the worse for wear the next morning, and as no new orders had been received, Drum and McLaughlin made one last effort to dissuade Cody from his plan.[34] Undeterred Cody set out for Grand River and Sitting Bull's camp at 11 am.[35] The media now knew that Cody had been authorised to arrest 'the disaffected chief Sitting Bull, and convey him to the nearest military post.' Reuters also noted that 'trouble is anticipated should an attempt be made to arrest

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[31] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 360.

[32] Pfaller, "Enemies in '76, Friends in '85," 30. Miles wrote to Drum, 'Cody's orders were to quietly carry out the letter of his instructions if he or you secure the person of S. B. hold him. This will comply with the Secretary's wishes, and he authorizes this construction.' Miles to Commanding Officer, Fort Yates, 30 Nov. 1890, SC 188 p350, RG 75, NA.

[33] Vestal [Campbell], *Sitting Bull*, 280-281; and Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 361. In his autobiography Cody states 'I had never served with the Eighth Cavalry to which the companies at the Post belonged, but I had many friends among the officers, and spent a very pleasant afternoon and evening talking over old times, and getting information about the present situation.' Cody, *Buffalo Bill's Life Story*, 309.

[34] Wooster stated 'great indeed was everybody's surprise to see the latter [Cody] emerge from his temporary quarters sweet, smiling and happy, ready for the start to Sitting Bull's camp and asking for transportation and an escort.' Wooster, *Nelson A. Miles*, 181.

[35] Pfaller, "Enemies in '76, Friends in '85," 30; Vestal [Campbell], *Sitting Bull*, 281; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 361.

that chief. The troops are quietly preparing for a campaign. Ammunition and rations have been issued, and everything is ready for a move at a moments notice.'[36]

On the night of 29 November Cody and his party camped where the Sitting Bull Road crossed Oak Creek, but only four hours after their departure McLaughlin had received a telegram from the President rescinding Cody's orders. As Cody and his friends made leisurely progress towards Sitting Bull's camp the next morning, they were overtaken by a messenger sent by the agent.[37] The next day the group returned to Fort Yates and a little later started for the railroad. Cody returned to Chicago, where he submitted a claim for $505.60 to cover the transportation costs of himself and his three friends, before heading home to North Platte.

As Louis Pfaller noted in his article '"Enemies in '76, Friends in '85": Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill,' 'We can only speculate what might have happened if Buffalo Bill had reached Sitting Bull's camp.'[38] Furthermore, it remains unclear how Cody hoped to achieve his aim. Sitting Bull would only have accompanied Cody willingly if it had also suited his purpose, that is, if it was in the best interests of his people. Being unarmed and unsupported by troops or the Indian police, it is very doubtful that Cody would have been able to compel Sitting Bull to leave his home against his wishes.

Cody later stated to European journalists that 'Jealousy and diplomacy had intervened, and the order for Sitting Bull's arrest was countermanded.'[39] In sending his telegram McLaughlin asserted that he had 'saved to the world that day a royal good fellow and

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[36] *Daily Telegraph* (London), 1 Dec. 1890, p3.

[37] Cody, *Buffalo Bill's Life Story*, 311; McLaughlin, *My Friend the Indian*, 211.

[38] Pfaller, "Enemies in '76, Friends in '85," 31.

[39] Unidentified newspaper clipping, 29 May 1891, CS, MS6.IX, box 2, McCracken Research Library, BBHC.

most excellent showman.'[40] Russell remarked that 'Cody was apparently unaware of McLaughlin's part in his recall.'[41] Instead Cody believed that it was 'Some well-meaning philanthropists, who divined a sinister motive in my action... [and] impressed President Harrison that it would create a war, ending in the death of Sitting Bull.'[42] General Miles on the other hand was reportedly 'furious over the interference of the upstart agent,' and was also aware that somehow Colonel Drum had conspired to thwart his plan. His Adjutant General wrote confidentially, 'If reports are correct, the Division Commander is not entirely satisfied with the action of the military at Fort Yates.'[43] This would suggest that when Miles came to write his official version of the event for the Secretary of War, he was well aware that it had been McLaughlin and Drum who had thwarted his plan, not 'friends of Sitting Bull,' as he had implied.

Historians have dismissed this episode as a 'comic opera' that was 'straight out of vaudeville.'[44] Russell commented that 'Most of those who have written about the incident have considered it the height of absurdity.'[45] But he goes on to assert 'It has been popular to ridicule his mission as a publicity stunt, which ignores the point of view of General Miles, who at the moment was far from being interested in promoting Buffalo Bill's Wild West.'[46] Leaving aside Miles' motivations for the moment, and taking into account Cody's approach to the whole assignment, which included heavy drinking and hiring old show friends to accompany him it might appear that he perceived the mission as a non-too-serious jaunt. Coupled with the bad press his Wild West exhibition had been receiving, Cody may have been understandably anxious to secure some good publicity: what better way was there to get the American public and even possibly the Office of Indian Affairs back on his side, than to capture the old

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[40] McLaughlin, *My Friend the Indian*, 211.

[41] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 364.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 126.

[44] Wooster, *Nelson A. Miles*, 181; Eastman, *Sister to the Sioux*, 142.

[45] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 358.

[46] Ibid., 364.

adversary of the American Government and help quell the present crisis? Yet, as Russell pointed out, this does not explain Miles' role. Perhaps, as Bishop Hare implied, Miles himself was seeking publicity 'to promote his own presidential candidacy.' To have been the man responsible for the mission that captured Sitting Bull and ended the perceived rebellion would certainly have increased Miles' national profile.[47] Whatever the motives behind Cody's failed mission, and despite a vigorous campaign waged against them, within a few months it would be Miles and Cody who would triumph.

McLaughlin also failed to arrest Sitting Bull 'without bloodshed', as he expressly desired. Within two weeks Miles had issued an official arrest warrant, and on 15 December a squad of Indian police was sent out by McLaughlin to 'secure the person of Sitting Bull, using any practical means.' The Hunkpapa medicine man was seized from his bed in the early morning. As he was brought out of the cabin his followers crowded round and tried to rescue him, but in the fight that ensued he was shot dead, along with eight other members of his band and six Indian police.[48]

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With the death of Sitting Bull a number of his followers fled south and were taken in by the Miniconjou traditionalist chief Big Foot. But Big Foot's name also appeared on the military's list of influential leaders to be arrested, and on 23 December the band quietly slipped away from the Cheyenne River Reservation and headed south, seeking safety with Red Cloud at Pine Ridge. The Seventh Cavalry intercepted the band five days later, arrested them and took them to camp at Wounded Knee Creek.

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[47] Wooster, *Nelson A. Miles*, 181-82.

[48] Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 146-66; Jensen et al., *Eyewitness*, 32. One oft repeated story of Sitting Bull's death, is that a horse given to Sitting Bull by Cody when the former left the Wild West exhibition, started performing tricks during the gun battle. For a very interesting re-examination of the myth, see William E. Lemons, "History by Unreliable Narrators: Sitting Bull's Circus Horse," *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, no.2 (1995): 64-74.

John Shangrau, who had been employed by Buffalo Bill's Wild West as an interpreter on many occasions, was chief of Brigadier General John R. Brooke's headquarter scouts.[49] He was present at Big Foot's arrest on 28 December, and on the following morning Colonel Forsyth ordered him to bring the Indians to council in front of the sick chief's tent. Shangrau translated the demands of Forsyth for the Indians arms to be surrendered, and tried to persuade Big Foot to comply. Later, Philip Wells replaced Shangrau as Forsyth's interpreter, while Shangrau accompanied Captain George D. Wallace. They had just completed their search of the village when the fight broke out. Shangrau was chatting with another scout, when they were forced to flee along with the women and children to avoid the crossfire of the soldiers.[50]

Not all Lakota who had been previously employed by Buffalo Bill's Wild West worked to suppress the Ghost Dance. One such performer, Black Elk, who had been with Cody in England in 1887-88, embraced the new religion, despite having been approached by two policemen urging him to work as a scout.[51] On the morning of 29 December 1890, Black Elk, who was encamped at the agency, heard the shooting at Wounded Knee. He left Pine Ridge with about twenty other young men, and in his own words, 'started out to defend my people.'[52] Black Elk maintained that he led a charge against the soldiers and succeeded in driving them back, engaging the soldiers for most of the day.[53] When it was dark they headed back to the agency but were fired

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[49] Sarah J. Blackstone, *The Business of Being Buffalo Bill: Selected Letters of William F. Cody, 1879-1917* (New York: Praeger, 1988) 8-9.

[50] John Shangrau interview, 1906. Series Two 'Ricker Tablets,' Tablet No. 27, Box 6, Reel 5, p105, Eli Ricker Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society (hereafter NSHS); Sam Maddra, "The Wounded Knee Ghost Dance Shirt," *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, no. 8 (1996): 50.

[51] DeMallie, *Sixth Grandfather*, 270. DeMallie noted that another Oglala with the same name, possibly his brother, did enlist as a scout, see note 21.

[52] Ibid., 272-73.

[53] Ibid., 273-74.

upon, and so they turned away and took the trail to the main camp of Ghost Dancers on White Clay Creek.[54]

Cody was at home on his ranch in North Platte when news of the massacre spread across the nation. Previously, on 23 November 1889, he had been commissioned a Brigadier General as aide-de-camp on the staff of Governor John M. Thayer of Nebraska, and on 6 January 1891 the Governor activated this commission. Thayer requested that Cody 'proceed to the scene of the Indian troubles and communicate with General Miles.' He was also asked to visit the towns along the Elkhorn Railroad, using his 'influence to quiet excitement and remove apprehensions on the part of the people,' and to meet with Brigadier General L. W. Colby, who was the commanding general of the Nebraska National Guard.[55] Six days after Cody had received his orders from Governor Thayer, Miles informed him that 'the entire body of Indians are now camped near here,' and that 'Nothing but an accident can prevent peace being re-established.... I feel that the State troops can now be withdrawn with safety.'[56]

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Whilst in Pine Ridge, Cody had met up with John Burke and some of his former Indian employees, and it was from here that Cody began a concerted effort to overturn Secretary Noble's ban and hire more Indian performers for his exhibition. [Fig. 19] Cody needed real Indians to authenticate his Wild West show and give credence to its educational claims, and fortunately 'the Sioux crisis [had] come along and upset the new policy.'[57] For the present time the military was in control of the reservations from which he would normally recruit his Indian performers, and while he may have had enemies in the Office of Indian Affairs, Cody had many friends in the War Department, significantly Major General Nelson A. Miles. [Fig. 20]

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[54] Ibid., 276.

[55] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 366; Yost, *Buffalo Bill: His Family, Friends, Failures and Fortunes*, 226.

[56] Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 378.

[57] Hagan, *Indian Rights Association*, 144.

On 10 January, Agent Royer completed his report on Cody's Indian performers, and sent it on to acting Commissioner Belt who had requested it two months earlier. Royer reported that the Indians had made no complaints against Buffalo Bill's Wild West, and furthermore since their return 'they have all used their influence and shown by their actions that they... stood by their government to a man in the late excitement among their people. The great number of them belong[ing] to the Police and scout force.'[58] Commissioner Morgan himself was forced to concur that they had learned much in their travels, and praised them for remaining loyal.[59]

The media also praised Cody's Indian performers for their efforts in helping to suppress the Lakota Ghost Dance. On 15 January T. H. Tibbles wrote in the Omaha *Morning World-Herald*,

> A good deal has been said about the Indians who were with Buffalo Bill and I took a good deal of pains to inquire about them, for many of them were the most prominent men among the Indians and they were all on the right side.... Their foreign travels have done them good and given them enlarged views. It would be a good thing if the government would employ Colonel Cody to take the whole Sioux nation on a European tour. Bill may not keep a Sunday school, although I believe

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[58] Royer to CIA, 10 Jan. 1891, LR 3186-1891, box 699, RG 75, NA. Royer included 59 affidavits, and concluded that 'in fact their statements go to prove that Messrs. Cody & Salsbury have if anything more than complied with the strict provisions of their contracts with these people.' He also noted that three Indians, Standing Bear, Kills Enemy Alone and William Garnett, had remained in Europe, and listed those who had died, with the addition of Shade who had returned and died at the Agency.

[59] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 109.

> he makes his Indians go to church every Sunday; but it is a better place than an Indian agency on half rations and nothing to do.[60]

In addition to such public praise, John Burke endeavoured to elicit favourable recommendations from other sources. On 15 January Red Cloud signed an open letter of support for Buffalo Bill's Wild West:

> I wish the people to know that W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) has treated me and my people well always. And all my people who have been with him, give me a good account of their treatment. Buffallo [sic] Bill and his Agent Maj. Burke have done everything to advise us right, and to prevent bloodshed in this trouble. This makes my heart glad. Has given us provisions and tobacco to send to the Hostiles to conciliate them and many other things.[61]

The following day two more letters arrived in support of the Wild West's employment of Indians. The first came from Valentine McGillucuddy, the former Pine Ridge agent. He reported that the Wild West Indians had 'sustained the authorities not only incurring the ill will of the hostile element, but risking their lives as policemen and enlisted scouts in defence of the Agency and in endeavour to preserve the peace.' He concluded that 'their association with you has certainly had a practical civilizing result as their general deportment and costume indicates the addition to the above.'[62]

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[60] Tibbles recounted 'There is not a fairer man to be found anywhere than Major Swords, who is in command of the two companies of Indian police. Serving under him are Little Chief, Cheyenne Butcher, Plenty Horses, Gun-on-the Middle, Knife, Lone Elk, Little Wolf, Red Owl, Strikes Plenty, Frank White, Yellow Boy, White Horse. Among the leading men, whom every one knows and who have done excellent service, are American Horse, Rocky Bear, Long Wolf, Lone Wolf, Black Heart, Spotted Elk, Lone Bear, and Plenty Bear. Over 200 others have taken part in the peace commissions and other duties. With Taylor's command of guards, scouts and the Ninth cavalry are: Yankton Charlie, No Neck, Stands First, Red Shirt, Walking Bull, Picket Pin, Prairie Chicken, Ribs, Bad Corn, Little Bull, Eagle Chief, Eagle Shield, Runs-Close-to-Lodge and Jim Chinchy. *Omaha Morning World-Herald*, 15 Jan. 1891.

[61] Cody and Salsbury to CIA (enclosure 3), 26 Feb. 1891, LR 7678-1891, box 708, RG 75, NA.

[62] Cody and Salsbury to CIA (enclosure 2), Ibid.

The second letter, written on the day of the Ghost Dancers' surrender, was General Miles' reply to Cody's inquiry as to whether Miles had any objection to him 'employing a body of Indians' to accompany the exhibition to Europe in the coming spring. Miles remarked that he knew of no objection, and that 'such a measure would meet with my approval' for the following reasons:

> First: It would give them occupation, and enable them to support themselves and their families.
> Second: It would lessen the expense of the Government and lesson the danger of any trouble with these Indians as between them and the Government or the white race.
> Third: It would be an educational measure, as it would teach them as no other lesson could do, the power and numerical strength of the white race, and the benefits and advantages of civilisation.[63]

Miles' last two points would appear to indicate that Cody had proposed to employ the Indians who had recently opposed the Government. In the light of his later acquisition of the Fort Sheridan prisoners it would seem that even before the formal surrender, let alone the removal of twenty-seven Ghost Dancers to Fort Sheridan, Cody might have discussed such a proposal with Miles.

On 23 January, Burke added another letter to his collection. H. D. Gallagher, the former Pine Ridge agent who had been so dismayed at the poor condition of the returning showman, wrote:

> I am glad to learn... that the Indians White Horse, Eagle Horn, Bear Pipe, White Weasel, and other Indians who returned in ill health from Europe have recovered and are working for the Government and enjoying good health. And that it was really a relapse of the influenza they were suffering from and no permanent constitutional ailment, as I at the time feared.[64]

Whilst in Washington to present Lakota grievances to the president, a delegation of Lakota men all signed a document that proclaimed they had

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[63] Cody and Salsbury to CIA (enclosure 6), Ibid.

[64] Cody and Salsbury to CIA (enclosure 1), Ibid.

> no objection to our young men going with Buffalo Bill's Wild West, as they are well paid and well taken care of in every respect. We believe an Indian should have the right to follow any agreeable employment offered him.[65]

These letters were forwarded to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on 26 February 1891, in support of Cody's request for permission to hire 75 Indians to accompany him to Europe. Cody laid out the facts as he saw them, starting with a brief résumé of Buffalo Bill's Wild West. He pointed out that the rest of the exhibitions' entourage was currently wintering in Germany under the care of Nate Salsbury, as the Indians had been returned 'at very great expense' in order to satisfy the Office of Indian Affairs. He then went on to note,

> I think you will find upon inquiry that these Indians, and also those who were with us upon former occasions, have been important factors in producing peace and quiet upon the Sioux reservation during this winter.[66]

Cody specified that he would require sixty adult males, and fifteen women and children. The men would be paid $25 a month, with 'Chiefs' receiving between $30 and $60, whilst the women would earn $10 per month. He asserted that they would be accompanied at all times by an interpreter, and that they would be 'shown a disposition to save their money.'[67]

Cody stated that it was 'highly important that we should be able to procure these Indians as soon as possible' as the company planned to resume their tour in Germany

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[65] Cody and Salsbury to CIA (enclosure 4), Ibid. The document was 'signed' by American Horse, Spotted Horse, Hump, Spotted Elk, Little Wound, Big Road, Young Man Afraid of His Horses, Fire Lightening, High Hawk, He Dog, Fast Thunder, High Pipe, Two Strike, Grass, White Bird, and Major George Sword, and witnessed by Amos F. Towne, and George C. Crager. The latter being the very same man who had seemingly been involved in the campaign against Cody and the Wild West the previous summer. Crager went on to be employed by Buffalo Bill's Wild West when the show left for Europe later that year.

[66] Cody and Salsbury to CIA, Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

'not later than the 15th of April.' Moses noted that Cody 'enticed the commissioner with a promise to make his selection from among those Oglalas and Brules who "might be mischievous in the Spring if allowed to remain upon the reservation."'[68] He also requested Morgan to 'please note that we have an existing unexpired contract (and bond) for two years or longer,' claiming that

> Our immediate return to Europe was only delayed by the late serious trouble in the Sioux country where duty and humanity demanded our presence, personal acquaintanceship and influence in the cause of order and peaceful solution of a dangerous situation, to the extent of our humble ability.[69]

Cody's letter had been written on the headed notepaper of the United States Senate, and was accompanied by one from Senators Charles F. Manderson and A. S. Paddock, with the endorsement of Congressmen G. I. Laws and George W. E. Dorsey.[70] The Senators' letter began by highlighting Cody's achievements, before going on to support his application. Manderson suggested that

> In the present condition of affairs, there can be no question but that an important factor in the prevention of further outbreak would be the absence and the profitable employment of some of the Indians who have hostile tendencies.[71]

Furthermore, he endorsed the Indians' right to work.

> I have no question as to *the right* of Indians living upon Reservations, to contract for employment in which they can be self-supporting. If there is no regulation by which they can obtain such employment, they will enter into it as I believe, even in the presence of opposition from your Department. It is certainly better that you should assume control and direction under terms that are reasonable and fair to all concerned.[72]

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[68] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 109.

[69] Cody and Salsbury to CIA, 26 Feb. 1891, LR 7678-1891, box 708, RG 75, NA.

[70] Moses noted that the four were 'members of the Nebraska delegation to Congress,' Republican Senator Manderson being 'president *pro tem.*' Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 109.

[71] Charles F. Manderson et al. to CIA, 26 Feb. 1891, LR 7679-1891, RG 75, NA.

[72] Ibid.

The management of Buffalo Bill's Wild West based their argument to be able to hire more Indian performers on four main points. To begin with, they stood by their past record, which two investigations had endorsed. Secondly, they highlighted the fundamental right and freedom of Indians to contract for employment. Thirdly, the recent military suppression of the Ghost Dance enabled Cody to illustrate the positive effects upon Indians of participation in his show, and he concluded by suggesting that further hostilities could be avoided by his hiring of potential troublemakers.

Thomas Morgan, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, replied to Senator Manderson on 2 March 1891. Obviously unswayed by the arguments laid before him, Morgan stated,

> I can see no reason for changing the views expressed in the last annual report of this office... in opposition to a continuance of the practice... of occasionally permitting Indians to travel with shows, for exhibition purposes; on account of the very harmful results thereof to the Indians in various ways; and the granting of further permits for such purpose is expressly prohibited by the Secretary of the Interior.[73]

For Morgan, how Cody and Salsbury had treated the Indians was beside the point, the key problem lay in the practice of Indians travelling with Wild West shows. He believed that such practices were 'very demoralizing to them from nearly every point of view.'[74]

In contrast to his predecessor, Commissioner Morgan 'did not share Oberly's concern about the freedom of decision of the Indians.'[75] He aggressively laid out the facts as he saw them.

> As to the *right* of the Indians to enter into employment (for exhibition purposes) in the face of the opposition of this Department thereto. I

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[73] CIA to Manderson, 2 Mar. 1891, LB 212, p140-45, RG 75, NA.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis*, 321.

> have to say, that the Indians are under the care and pupilage of the Government, which disburses large amounts annually for their support and whose strong arm protects their homes and property against the lawless element of the dominant whites.... The relations thus existing should certainly be reciprocal, and should the Indians in defiance of the regulations of this Department adopted for their protection and welfare, leave their reservations for exhibition purposes, they would thereby strike the arm which protects and the hand which feeds them, and morally loosen the bond upon which they must mainly rely for protection, and they would thereby be liable to all proper repressive measures which the Government should see fit to adopt.[76]

Morgan concluded his letter with a thinly veiled threat aimed at Cody and Burke.

> In order that your clients may be fully advised of the regulations of the Department prohibiting Indians from being taken for exhibition purposes, and of the steps being taken to prevent it, I transmit herewith a copy of a letter... to the Acting Indian Agent at Pine Ridge Agency, S.D., informing him of said order of the Secretary of the Interior, and instructing him to arrest all persons on the Pine Ridge Reservation for the purpose of obtaining Indians for the purpose indicated, &c. I deem it proper to advise you of this order so that there may be no mistake, as to your clients understanding that such steps as they may take to obtain Indians for the purposes stated will be at their own risk.[77]

Morgan's victory was short lived, for on 6 March the Acting Secretary of the Interior informed the Commissioner that 'Permission is hereby granted Messrs. Cody and Salsbury to engage Seventy-five Indians.'[78] The *New York Times* commented that 'no amount of evidence that Col. Cody could produce... could affect Commissioner Morgan, nor would he listen to the recommendations of Indian agents and Gen. Miles... that it would be the best way to prevent a renewal of troubles in the Spring.' The *Times* went on to state that 'Cody has been here [Washington] a week working hard to prevent the destruction of his show by Morgan's arbitrary act. The matter was finally laid before Secretary Noble, and to-day the Secretary overruled the

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[76] CIA to Manderson, 2 Mar. 1891, LB 212, p140-45, RG 75, NA.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Chandler to CIA, 6 Mar. 1891, M1282 LS, p.175, RG 75, FARC.

Commissioner.'[79] Three days later Morgan informed the Indian agents on the Dakota reservations of the reversal of policy.[80]

The military suppression of the Lakota Ghost Dance had given Buffalo Bill's Wild West the perfect platform upon which to base their case against the Secretary of the Interior's ban on permits. Cody was able to illustrate that contrary to the assertions that touring with the exhibition was detrimental to Indian assimilation, the Wild West Indians were prominent in their active support of the government. With the accusations of mistreatment and neglect dismissed, Cody was also now able to make an attractive proposition to the government, by offering to take into custody the perceived troublesome element. Without the timely military suppression of the Ghost Dance, Cody's efforts in this direction would have been decidedly more difficult, and without an Indian contingent, Buffalo Bill's Wild West would have lost one of its most successful and popular elements.

Despite the management's outward optimism, the Wild West had taken very seriously the possibility of an Interior Department ban on the employment of Indians. This is illustrated by the fact that Nate Salsbury, anticipating such a ban, had revised the show. Up until March of 1891 there existed no assurance that the Indians would be allowed to return to Europe and as their role had been at the core of the show it proved necessary to be prepared for a drastic reorganisation. Salsbury had put into effect his idea of a show that 'would embody the whole subject of horsemanship,' and had recruited equestrians from around the world, creating what was to become known

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[79] *New York Times*, 7 Mar. 1891, p4.

[80] CIA to Penny, 9 Mar. 1891, LB 212 p197-98, RG 75, NA; CIA to Agent James McLaughlin, Standing Rock, 9 Mar. 1891, Standing Rock Gen. Rec., Misc. Corres. 1891, File 517204/3, box 392, RG 75, FARC. Curiously Moses suggests that Morgan granted permission when Manderson *et al.* intervened as 'Morgan was nothing if not loyal to his party,' yet Morgan's letter to Manderson would appear to strongly contradict this statement as speculation. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 109.

as the Congress of Rough Riders.[81] Cody's success in obtaining the required Indian performers meant that the new show delayed its debut until Buffalo Bill's Wild West returned to London in May 1892.

Cody was particularly keen on hiring a specific group of Indians, namely the Ghost Dancers that Miles had confined at Fort Sheridan. This small group of men and women had come to represent 'the Hostiles,' and as such they would be a great asset to the European tour. Richard Slotkin has argued that Buffalo Bill's Wild West had a 'commitment to historical authenticity and... [a] mission of historical education' vouched for in part by its 'use of figures publicly recognized as actual participants in the making of history.'[82] Therefore, 'authentic historical celebrities' such as the Fort Sheridan prisoners, would 'lend credibility and... exploit public curiosity.'[83] Furthermore, in light of the recent controversy, being entrusted with the Fort Sheridan prisoners would not only give Cody added status, but would also publicly symbolise the government's seal of approval for Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Armed with Secretary Noble's permission to hire more Indian performers for his show, he travelled to Chicago to lay the proposition before the prisoners. Under the headline 'Braves Go To Europe,' a Chicago newspaper reported

> When the Indians saw the handsome and well known face of Buffalo Bill an expression of joy came into their sullen countenances. Upon the instant they arose, and Kicking Bear, who since his imprisonment has been the most morose and uncommunicative of them all, came forward and taking Buffalo Bill's hand said:
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> "For six weeks I have been a dead man. Now that I see you I am alive again."[84]

Cody explained the reason for his visit, and asked "Will you go with me?" After discussing the proposition between themselves, Kicking Bear replied that he "advised

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[81] Ibid., 118; Russell, *Lives and Legends*, 370.

[82] Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992) 67-68.

[83] Ibid., 74.

[84] Unidentified newspaper clipping, n.d., Buffalo Bill Scrapbook, p13, Microfilm FF18, Cody Papers, SHSC.

them to go and they will go. I think I may go too."[85] [Fig. 21] Cody later told reporters that by the time of his planned return to America 'in time for the world's fair' in 1893, he was confident that

> All vestige of hostility in the breasts of the Indians will have disappeared. They will see what they have never dreamed of. They will learn of the comforts of civilization and when they return to their tribes their influence will have more beneficial effect than any other agency that might be employed.[86]

Hiring the Fort Sheridan Ghost Dancers was a brilliant coup for Cody, who two weeks earlier had been faced with the possibility of not being able to hire any more Indians for his exhibition at all. But it was not going to prove to be straight forward, not least because the Indians appeared to change their minds, and on 14 March the *Chicago Daily Tribune* quoted Cody as saying

> The date of our departure has not been decided.... I visited Fort Sheridan again this afternoon, but found some of the braves in an entirely different mood than the day before. Half of the number who had consented yesterday to go to Europe with me refused to talk further about the proposition. They will go, however.... Maj. Burke has the thing in charge now and is able to make an Indian do just as he wants him to.[87]

The prisoners were given a choice: they could either remain at Fort Sheridan for six months, and then face the possibility of arrest, trial and imprisonment upon their return to South Dakota; or they could accompany Cody for one year, receive a wage of up to $50 a month, plus expenses, and then be returned to their agency without further consequence.[88] All but four, who were too sick to travel, agreed to go.[89] That the prisoners should chose to tour with Buffalo Bill's Wild West rather than remain at Fort Sheridan is hardly surprising. Cody offered them not only wages, which could go to support their families back home, but also a degree of independence and

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[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 14 Mar. 1891, p6.

[88] "Statement of Mary Collins," 2, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

[89] Crofton to Adjutant General, 31 March (4 April) 1891, M983, p.1338, RG 94, NA.

stimulation, compared to the restrictions and monotony of life at the Fort, in a Midwestern environment that was completely alien to them.

The plan was wholeheartedly supported by General Miles, who sought permission from the War Department on Cody's behalf. In a telegram dated 14 March, he reported,

> I have suggested that he take those [Indians] at Ft. Sheridan. After consulting with him they are all willing to go. I think it a most excellent measure.[90]

The chance to get the Indians out of the country, and at the same time to relieve the army of the trouble and expense of their support, greatly appealed to Miles.[91] He believed that the 'experience would be most valuable to them as they would see the extent, power and numbers of the white race, and when they eventually return, would be entirely different men.'[92] Miles also contacted Captain Penny, the acting Indian agent at Pine Ridge, suggesting that he should 'advise those restless spirits to go with Cody.'[93]

Meanwhile, news of Cody's success did not please the Indian reformers who had greatly welcomed Morgan's actions against Wild West shows. Herbert Welsh of the Indian Rights Association decided to arm himself 'with the facts' and wrote to numerous people requesting their opinion of the matter.[94] He had been disturbed to receive information that the Italian press were reporting that Cody planned to bring to

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[90] Miles to Adjutant General, telegram, 14 Mar. 1891, M983, p.1220-21, RG 94, NA.

[91] Utley, *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, 271.

[92] Miles to Adjutant General, telegram, 14 Mar. 1891, M983, p.1220-21, RG 94, NA.

[93] Miles to Penny, 17 Mar. 1891, PR Gen. Rec., Misc. Corres. Rec'd 1891-1895, box 30, RG 75, FARC.

[94] Welsh to Mary C. Collins, 16 Mar. 1891, Folder #48, Collins Papers, SDSHS; Welsh to CIA, 7 Mar. 1891, Letterpress Copy Books Reel 71, p86, IRA; Welsh to Rev. Wm. J. Cleveland, 9 Mar.1891, Letterpress Copy Books Reel 71, p90, IRA.

Europe '50 of the worst hostile Indians, and will give a Ghost Dance as given on the Plains.'[95]

Using information he had gathered, Welsh reported Cody's failed attempt to arrest Sitting Bull, referring specifically to the showman's drunkenness. Welsh concluded his letter to Morgan by observing that 'a man of this type is not fitted for the care of Indians,' remarking, 'I submit this simply for your private information.'[96] Prior to his appointment as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Morgan had been the corresponding secretary of the Providence branch of the Indian Rights Association and it is therefore scarcely surprising that Morgan and Welsh held similar views.[97]

When Miles learnt of the moves afoot to oppose Cody's hiring of the Fort Sheridan prisoners, he wrote to the Adjutant General, urging that the decision not be reversed.

> A society or combination of very worthy people, but who are in no way responsible for the peace of the Western States and Territories are making a strong effort to induce the President to countermand Secretary Noble's permission for Mr. Cody to take some of the wild Indians to Europe. I hope it will not prevail.[98]

He added to his previous arguments that it 'also relieves the settlers who are most interested and who would be glad to be relieved from the terror of their presence.'[99] On 18 March, Cody and Burke were informed by a letter sent in care of the agent at Pine Ridge, that the War Department had no objection to them hiring the Indians 'now at Fort Sheridan,' provided that the Interior Department did not object.[100]

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[95] Welsh to Collins, 16 Mar. 1891, Folder #48, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

[96] Welsh to CIA, 11 Mar. 1891, Letterpress Copy Books Reel 71, p105, IRA.

[97] Hagan, *Indian Rights Association*, 103.

[98] Miles to Adjutant General, telegram,17 Mar. 1891, M983, p1223, RG 94, NA.

[99] Ibid.

[100] C. McKeever, Assistant Adjutant General, Chicago, to Cody and Salsbury, 18 Mar. 1891, PR, M1282 p.156, RG 75, FARC.

Mary C. Collins, an Indian missionary, then took up the cause against Cody, taking her case before the relevant parties in Washington.[101] Collins had been sent by the American Board of Congregational Churches to do missionary work among the Lakota, and she had spent twelve years at the Cheyenne River Agency, and four years at Standing Rock.[102] As a result of interviews Collins had conducted with Sitting Bull about his experiences with Cody, she had become 'an inveterate opponent to the employment of Indians in Wild West shows.'[103] Despite failing to prevent Buffalo Bill's Wild West from employing the Fort Sheridan prisoners, her lobbying of the government illustrates that not only were Cody's critics well placed, but that they remained a significant threat to the Wild West and its employment of Indians.

Collins had learned about the prisoners at Ft. Sheridan while visiting the veteran humanitarian, General Oliver O. Howard, at his home in Glenco, Illinois.' She recounted that

> A number of children were very anxious to see the Indians, and I thought perhaps I might do them some good by visiting them.... While there I found they were going with Buffalo Bill to Europe on Exhibition. I was afraid they were not going willingly, so I asked the Indians, speaking their language, and they said they were willing to go.... One man said if they remained there they would not receive any pay, and not be allowed any privileges but that if they went with Buffalo Bill, he and one other man were to receive fifty dollars ($50.00) a month, and all the others each twenty-five dollars ($25.00) a month, and all expenses paid, and they would be able to travel all over the foreign country. They would only have to be gone a year, they could return to the Agency, and the past would be forgotten, and nothing would be done to them. I went outside of the tent and spoke to the interpreter, and he made the same statement to me, and added that it

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[101] Nathan H. Whittlesey, Chicago Congregational Club, to 'Whom Those Present May Come,' letter of introduction, 18 Mar. 1891, Folder #48, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

[102] "Statement of Mary Collins," 1, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

[103] Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 111. See also "Statement of Mary Collins," 1, Collins Papers, SDSHS, in which Collins stated that Sitting Bull had 'said when they were off of exhibition they were allowed to have all the whisky they wanted, [and] described the places of entertainment to which they were taken, which were very low vile places.'

> would be much better for them to go so that they would escape all possible punishment for what they had been doing.[104]

She returned the following Sunday, 15 March, to 'hold services with them.' At which time a number of the Indians reportedly begged her 'to interfere in their behalf, [as they] did not want to go with Buffalo Bill, but were willing to stay there for six months and then return to Pine Ridge.' The missionary promised to see what she could do.[105] Miles was furious when he learnt that Collins had given the Indians 'the impression that she was going to Washington with a delegation to urge the President to send them back to their reservations.' He remarked that,

> The effect of such interference is mischievous, causes... [the Indians] to be restless and might do serious harm. The meddling of people with Indian affairs, who are in no way responsible, has been very annoying and injurious, and I trust that no attention will be paid to them.[106]

On 16 March Collins attended the Congregational Ministers' meeting in Chicago, with the intention of consulting with Commissioner Morgan, who had been invited to address the meeting. Morgan assured Collins,

> that he was opposed to the entire matter of the Buffalo Bill show... but that he had recently been overruled by Secretary Noble, although he had opposed the matter as strongly as he could, and he felt that there was nothing more that he could do in regard to the matter.[107]

Collins addressed the gathering, which was composed of about three hundred 'Ministers and business men.' Those assembled drafted a resolution 'protesting against any man being allowed to go with Buffalo Bill,' and then appointed a Committee of three and elected Collins as chairman, after which they sent her 'to Washington to carry the resolutions to the President.'[108]

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[104] "Statement of Mary Collins," 2, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

[105] Ibid., 2-3, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

[106] Miles to Adjutant General, 19 Mar. 1891, M983, p1225, RG 94, NA.

[107] "Statement of Mary Collins," 3, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

[108] Whittlesey, to 'Whom Those Present May Come,' letter of introduction, 18 Mar. 1891, Folder #48, Collins Papers, SDSHS; "Statement of Mary Collins," 3, Collins Papers, SDSHS. See also Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 112-13.

Three days later Collins met with President Harrison who informed her that 'he had no sympathy with any kind of exhibition of wild Indians,' and that he would far rather see 'an Indian at his plough than at his war dance.' Furthermore, he felt that to allow the prisoners to accompany Cody would be 'too much like rewarding the bad boy.' The President directed Collins to take the matter before the Secretary of the Interior. Secretary Noble informed her that he had based his decision on three main factors: Belt's examination of the returned show Indians, which had shown them to be in good condition; the impressive amount of money they had sent home, perhaps as much as $18,000, which led him to conclude that 'they had better be off in a show making money than to be at home fighting or doing nothing;' and a letter from the Secretary of State, James G. Blaine, who had seen the show in England and had found 'nothing objectionable in it.' When Collins quizzed him about the Fort Sheridan prisoners Noble replied that 'they are under the War Department, and I have nothing to do with them.' [109]

Collins next port of call was the Secretary of War, but finding him absent she instead met with Acting Secretary, Lewis Addison Grant. Grant promised to look into the matter, and he reassured Collins that prisoners who did not want to go could remain. He went on to state:

> [The] Department had not been consulted in regard to bringing in the prisoners, they did not know what the Indians had done, why they were prisoners, [nor] for how long they were to be made prisoners.[110]

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[109] "Statement of Mary Collins," 4-5, Collins Papers, SDSHS. Secretary of State, James G. Blaine wrote to Noble on 5 March 1891. 'When I was in London in 1887, I spent a day in Col. Cody's camp and in witnessing the Wild West Show. I carefully went through the Indian camp; it was thoroughly clean, nice, well kept, and well policed.... I have no doubt the Indians engaged by him came back to America improved in their morals, in their sense of individual responsibility, in the art of decent living and of clothing, and in general highly advanced in respectable manhood.' 'Correspondence in Relation to the Employment of Indians with the Wild West Exhibitions,' Noble to Hon. Philip C. Garrett, President, and Others, Indian Rights Association, 2 May 1892, Incoming Corres. Reel 9, IRA.

[110] "Statement of Mary Collins," 5, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

Grant assumed 'that there were about forty of them [who had been the] leading men in the late trouble,' and was reportedly astonished to learn that there were instead only 'twenty-seven, among them boys and women.' He pointed out that it was Secretary Noble who had suggested the Fort Sheridan Indians should go, and that the War Department 'had simply allowed it.'[111]

Acting Commissioner Belt was next to receive a visit from Mary Collins. The missionary advised him of what Secretary Noble had said, but Belt informed her that 'he was thoroughly opposed to Buffalo Bill taking any Indians.' Collins now felt that she had 'the sympathy of all except the Secretary of the Interior,' and she returned to the Acting Secretary of War: Grant advised her 'that he himself would go to the President, and if the President gave him permission he would countermand the order.'[112] He added that with regard to the Ghost Dancers now at Fort Sheridan,

> perhaps Gen. Miles might now think that he had made a mistake in bringing these men in and that he had them on his hands and did not know what to do with them and so thought this the best method of getting rid of them.[113]

Unfortunately we have only Collins' version of these events. On 21 March Grant had forwarded to the President a copy of Miles' telegram 'protesting against the interference of irresponsible parties who seek to influence the President.'[114] However, despite Collins' optimism, the permission granted to Cody was never rescinded. Yet, while Collins *et al.* failed, the episode illustrates the high profile and significance of the controversy, and that high-ranking government officials, including the President, found time to take part in the debate.

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[111] Ibid., 6, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

[112] Ibid., 6-7, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

[113] Collins to Members of Congregational Club, Chicago, 7 Apr. 1891, Folder #48, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

In her report to the members of the Congregational Club, Collins had suggested that the 'prisoners' should be turned over to the eastern schools. Having visited General Samual Chapman Armstrong at Hampton Institute, she had found that he was more than willing to take the Indians as students.[115] She had also met with Herbert Welsh in Philadelphia, who 'could hardly believe that in the face of so strong a protest and of all the facts, that the President would not interfere.' Collins remained confident that her work had 'not been in vain and that He who knoweth the end from the beginning will bring our desires to pass.'[116]

On 26 March, Captain Charles Penny, the acting Indian agent at Pine Ridge, forwarded to Morgan the complete list of all the Indians to be employed by Buffalo Bill's Wild West, including those to be taken from Fort Sheridan.[117] On 28 March the Indians recruited at Pine Ridge left for Chicago by 'special train.'[118] Two days later twenty-three of 'the Indian prisoners,' accompanied by John Shangrau who had acted as their interpreter the whole time they had been at Fort Sheridan, were released into the custody of Cody's representative, John Burke.[119] Cody was instructed to inform the War Department when the prisoners terminated their employment with him, as they would not be permitted to return to their reservations without official permission.[120]

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[114] Grant to E. W. Halford, Private Secretary, Executive Mansion, 21 Mar. 1891, M983 p.1226, RG 94, NA.

[115] Such a move had been tried and tested by Captain Pratt who had been inspired to set up Carlisle Indian School after his experience with the Fort Marion prisoners, believing that education was the most practical way to assimilate the Indians. See Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 36-49.

[116] Collins to Members of Congregational Club, Chicago, 7 Apr. 1891, Folder #48, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

[117] Penny to CIA, 28 Mar. 1891, PR, M1282 p179-181, RG 75, FARC.

[118] Penny to CIA, 21 Mar. 1891, LR E91, box 717, RG 75, NA.

[119] Crofton to, Adjutant General, 31 Mar. 1891, M983 p1338, RG 94, NA.

[120] J. M. Schofield, Major General Commanding, to Adjutant General, 6 Apr. 1891, M983 p1339, RG 94, NA; Grant to Cody, 17 Apr. 1891, M983 p1340, RG 94, NA.

Four Indians now remained at Fort Sheridan, Little Horse, Takes the Shield Away, His Horse's Voice and White Beaver.[121] The post surgeon reported on 6 April, that three of the four were sick, and in the absence of an interpreter he found it impossible to give them proper medical treatment and therefore recommended that they be returned home at once.[122] Brigadier General Brooke, who remained in charge of the Department of the Platte, did not think it wise to return the four men just yet, and advised against such a course of action.[123] Instead Louis Shangrau, John Shangrau's brother, was temporarily employed as an interpreter.[124]

Mary Collins attempted to visit the remaining Lakota men at Fort Sheridan, but was stopped by the Fort's Commandant. She informed Herbert Welsh that,

> John Young an Indian at school at Highland Park, reports them in a deplorable condition, and others, white people, who have visited them say they are terribly neglected.[125]

She urged Welsh to 'take hold of the case,' and in response Matthew Sniffen, the clerk of the Indian Rights Association, forwarded Collins' letter to Commissioner Morgan.[126] Morgan was advised by Secretary Noble to return the letters to Welsh, 'with the information that they will no doubt receive attention if they are sent directly

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[121] Crofton to Assistant Adjutant General, 6 Apr. 1891, M983 p1385, RG 94, NA.

[122] L. W. Crampton, Assistant Surgeon, Fort Sheridan, to Post Adjutant, 6 Apr. 1891, M983 p1383, RG 94, NA. The commanding officer at Fort Sheridan, Colonel Crofton, felt that the Indians' ailments were due more to homesickness than any disease, but he too recommended that they be sent home. Crofton to Penny, telegram, 10 Apr. 1891, PR, Gen. Rec., Misc. Corres. Rec'd., 1891-1895, box 28, RG 75, FARC; Crofton to Assistant Adjutant General, 6 Apr. 1891, M983 p1385, RG 94, NA.

[123] Schofield to McKeever, telegram, 9 Apr. 1891 M983 p1388, RG 94, NA; McKeever to Schofield, telegram, 10 Apr. 1891, M983 p1389, RG 94 NA.

[124] Thomas M. Vincent, Assistant Adjutant General, Washington DC, to Grant, 11 Apr. 1891, M983 p1386, RG 94, NA; Samuel Breck, Assistant Adjutant General, Washington DC, to McKeever, telegram, 11 Apr. 1891, M983 p1387, RG 94, NA; Crofton to Assistant Adjutant General, Chicago, 1 May 1891, M983 p1476, RG 94, NA.

[125] M. K. Sniffen, Clerk, Indian Rights Association, to CIA, 17 Apr. 1891, SC 188, 11-40/41, RG 75, NA.

[126] Sniffen to CIA, 17 Apr. 1891, SC 188, p11-40/41, RG 75, NA.

to the Secretary of War, whose action they criticise and whose attention the subject needs.'[127] On 30 April, the four remaining Ghost Dance prisoners held at Fort Sheridan were released, and Louis Shangrau escorted them back to Pine Ridge.[128]

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Not only had Cody succeeded in getting his Indian performers, but also he had managed to hire genuine participants from the latest episode of Western history, and he lost no time in making the most of this coup when it came to publicising the show. But even after Buffalo Bill and the Indians left for Europe, the debate over their employment continued to rage in America. On 26 March the *Christian Register* had run an editorial entitled 'Stop the Farce,' which attacked the government for allowing Cody to acquire more Indian performers for his exhibition, specifically the Fort Sheridan prisoners. The article argued:

> "Buffalo Bill" has never contributed anything of importance to the solution of the Indian question, - he can be spared without great loss; but that the United States Government should become a partner to his enterprise and give its official sanction to this ridiculous performance by detailing some of the Indian wards of the government to accompany it is the most absurd part of the whole business.... There are twenty-seven prisoners now at Fort Sheridan who took part in the recent fight at Pine Ridge. It will undoubtedly add something to his receipts to exhibit Indians who have really killed white people, and who may thus strike terror into the hearts of a European audience; but, if the government.... sends these Indians off on such an expedition, it will become party to a shameful and foolish enterprise. If these Indians are guilty of bringing about the recent disturbance, they may properly be tried and sentenced for the offence. If they are guiltless, they should be set free.[129]

Collins and Welsh wrote to people canvassing support and maintaining their campaign in opposition to Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Welsh believed that their major

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[127] Noble to CIA, 20 Apr. 1891, SC 188, p11-42, RG 75, NA.

[128] Crofton to Assistant Adjutant General, Chicago, 1 May 1891, M983 p1476, RG 94, NA.

[129] Isabel C. Barrows, wife of the editor of the *Register*, forwarded a copy of the clipping to Morgan, see Barrows to CIA, 31 Mar. 1891, LR 12090-1891, box 719, RG 75, NA.

obstacle was the Secretary of the Interior, 'whom we have found highly unsatisfactorily. Hon. Morgan is anxious to do the right thing, but Noble is more affected by other considerations than by interest in the welfare of the Indians.'[130] Welsh continued to urge friends and associates to petition the President, believing that he also shared their views.[131]

Welsh wrote to Morgan on 3 April stating that he was preparing a statement for the public, and wished to know 'whether the Government has definitely and positively granted Mr. Cody authority to take the Indians?'[132] Welsh was too late, for Cody and the Indians had left the country two days before. Undaunted, Welsh wrote a letter to the Editor of the *New York Evening Post* entitled 'Demoralizing the Indians,' which was based upon information received from Mary Collins. The letter, written on 9 April and published on 27 April, detailed Collins' account of the attempts to have Cody's permission rescinded. Overall it was a damning indictment of the government.

> And thus the Government put itself into the position of assisting a private speculation, and gave Indians to an exhibition under the inducement that their alleged evil deeds would be forgotten and justice would not reach them. What an admirable object-lesson to the evil-doer on the one side and the loyal Indian on the other! The evil-doer gets $25 a month, a foreign trip, and freedom from punishment as the reward for treason, thieving, and possibly murder, while the peaceable man remains at home in poverty and contemplation as to the true significance of the white man's ways....
>
> But apart from the general question as to whether Indians ordinarily should be handed over by the Government for exhibitions, what defence can be made to its delivering prisoners of war (of whose offences the authorities themselves seemed to be ignorant) for an exhibition in Europe, and who are announced in foreign papers as desperate criminals! What are the residents of other countries to think of our methods of dispensing justice, and what shall we ourselves think of them!

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[130] Welsh to Rev. T. L. Elliot, 18 May 1891, Letterpress Copy Books Reel 71, vol. 7, p522, IRA.

[131] Welsh to John Nicholas Brown, 12 May 1891, Letterpress Copy Books Reel 71, vol. 7, p527, IRA; Welsh to O. J. Hiles, 27 May 1891, Letterpress Copy Books Reel 71, vol. 7, p622, IRA.

[132] Welsh to CIA, 3 Apr. 1891, SC 188 p11-1, RG 75, NA.

> Since the highest official authorities in the country have in vain been applied to, we now turn to that court of last appeal, the public sentiment of the people of the United States.[133]

On 3 June the Indian Rights Association addressed a letter to the Secretary of the Interior outlining their opposition to the use of Indian performers in Wild West show. In the letter the Association asked that Noble reconsider the decision to grant permits for Indians to go with Wild West exhibitions, arguing that the practice was the antithesis of the Government's policy of assimilation. Whilst they acknowledged that the Government could not prevent any Indian who was an American citizen or who lived outside of an Indian reservation from joining such exhibitions, reservation Indians were different, for

> in the case of Indians... who are living on a reservation, the Federal authorities have clearly this right since they can prevent any Indian from leaving his reservation and also by Sec. 2 149 of the revised statutes the Commissioner of Indian Affairs is authorized and required with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior to remove from any tribal reservation any person being thereon without authority of law, or whose presence within the limits of the reservation may be detrimental to the peace or the welfare of the Indians.[134]

The Indian Rights Association went on to consider the case of the Fort Sheridan prisoners, arguing strongly against Cody's use of them.

> It is manifest that the moral effect of exhibiting to the public these Indians whose deeds have led the Government to punish them by imprisonment, must be subversive of the very result which the authorities had in view; that such a course must tend to create in the minds of those who have been guilty of disorder or violence the belief that the Government does not disapprove their conduct, and that it will lead the peaceable and law-abiding Indians to the equally unfortunate conclusion that the Government, while indifferent to them, will reward evil doers.[135]

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[133] *New York Evening Post*, 27 Apr. 1891, Folder #48, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

[134] Indian Rights Association to Noble, 3 June 1891, Incoming Corres. Reel 7, IRA.

[135] Ibid.

While the Wild West exhibition was in Duisburg, Germany, Nate Salsbury read Welsh's letter 'Demoralizing the Indians' in the *New York Evening Post* and he wrote to the editor on 18 May. Salsbury enclosed a letter to Herbert Welsh, and asked the editor 'in the interest of truth and justice' to publish his reply. He went on to assert that 'Mr. Welsh is malicious and untruthful in his attack and I do not imagine the *Evening Post* desires to be a party to persecution.'[136] The editor forwarded Salsbury's reply to Welsh on 2 June.

Salsbury's anger is clearly visible in his letter and the forcefulness with which he impugns Welsh and Collins is perhaps due to his frustration that the negative stories and attacks of the previous summer were continuing. He began by refuting specific charges made by Collins. With regards to 'Sitting Bull's son' acquiring 'vile habits and physical disease with Buffalo Bill's Wild West,' Salsbury responded that Sitting Bull's son had never travelled with the show.[137] He also challenged Collins and Welsh to provide evidence that Cody had advertised in a London paper that he was bringing with him some of the worst element of hostiles from the late trouble, before going on to claim

> As to the prisoners who were at Fort Sheridan, let me give you this information; that they are as well behaved as any Indian Peace Commissioner I ever knew, and abide by all the rules and regulations of the camp with cheerfulness and fidelity to their contracts. For look you, Mr. Welsh, we have rules and regulations, and we enforce obedience to them from all our employees, white or red.[138]

As an illustration of the falseness of the claims made against the exhibition's treatment of its Indian contingent the previous summer, Salsbury informed Welsh that

> No Neck is <u>now</u> the chief of our Indian Camp police. Otakta [Kill's Plenty] died in New York of lingering consumption, from which he had suffered for years, and so much did White Horse resent his treatment by us, that he not only returned to our employ, but brought

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[136] Salsbury to Editor, *New York Evening Post*, 18 May 1891, Folder #48, Collins Papers SDSHS.

[137] Salsbury to Welsh, 18 May 1891, Folder #48, Collins Papers SDSHS.

[138] Ibid.

> his father, a man eighty-one years old, with him. The old man seems to enjoy a clean bed, a good suit of clothes and three square meals a day.[139]

The tone of Salsbury's letter is scathing, and perhaps the management of Buffalo Bill's Wild West perceived that Herbert Welsh posed more of a threat than O'Beirne had.[140] As Secretary of the Indian Rights Association, Welsh certainly had more influence and therefore Salsbury is likely to have felt that the story had to be quashed.[141] That Collins erred in her testimony would also have given Salsbury both confidence and ammunition to attack her and undermine her allegations.

Undoubtedly stung by Salsbury's caustic reply, Welsh swung into action. He wrote to people who knew Collins, suggesting that he felt honour bound to respond to the charges made against her, and he inquired into her 'reliability as a witness' and 'her general character for trustworthiness.'[142] At the same time he maintained that 'there is nothing in Mr. Salsbury's letter which affects the validity of our position... namely, the propriety of the Government permitting reservation Indians to join wild west shows.'[143] In a letter to the Standing Rock Agent, James McLaughlin, he asked, 'Will you kindly inform me as to any mis-statements of fact made in my letter,' noting that if he were in error he would gladly withdraw his statement.[144]

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[139] Ibid.

[140] Salsbury wrote 'Bigoted abuse of honorable men is distasteful to the great majority of Americans, and in your character of a pestiferous meddler you would do well to subside, for be assured I will impeach your veracity with the testimony of men in high places in public esteem, - an attitude you can never hope to attain unless you overhaul your liver and get your spleen regulated, so that you can employ your abilities (if you have any) in legitimate fashion.' Ibid.

[141] Hagan noted that at the time the IRA was at the height of its power and influence. See Hagan, *Indian Rights Association*, 143.

[142] Welsh to Joshua W. Davies, 3 June 1891, Letterpress Copy Books Reel 71, vol. 7, p 644, IRA; Welsh to M. E. Strieby, 3 June 1891, Letterpress Copy Books Reel 71, vol. 7, p 645, IRA; Welsh to McLaughlin, 3 June 1891, Letterpress Copy Books Reel 71, vol. 7, p 647, IRA.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.

The following day, 4 June, Welsh wrote to Mary Collins, forwarding her a copy of Salsbury's letter. He requested that at her earliest convenience she answer the charges against her, and he requested an exact copy of the newspaper clippings she had made reference to.[145] Welsh also wrote to the editor of the *New York Evening Post*, inquiring 'if the Salsbury letter is to be published and if so on what date,' but the editor reassured him that he had no plans to publish the letter.[146]

Welsh heard from Agent McLaughlin on 12 June that Miss Collins 'is a lady of high respectability, truthful and conscientious,' but that she had erred in stating that Sitting Bull's son had travelled with Cody. None of Sitting Bull's sons had travelled with Buffalo Bill's Wild West, but the 'depraved individual' Collins referred to was instead Louie Sitting Bull, a step son of the Medicine man, 'raised by the latter until quite a youth.' The agent went on to assert that while 'Louie Sitting Bull's general character is as Miss Collins stated,' Cody was in no way responsible for it as he had 'never been on exhibition or in any way connected to a traveling show.' While disapproving of the practice of allowing Indians to join exhibitions, McLaughlin felt he had to state that the Indians who travelled with Cody 'always spoke in the highest terms of the treatment they received... and never mentioned to me of their having gotten whiskey or visited low places.'[147] Collins also replied to Welsh, admitting that she no longer had the newspaper clipping, as she had given it to the Acting Secretary of War who had failed to return it. She also conceded that she had erred in her statement with regard to Sitting Bull's son.[148]

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[145] Welsh to Collins, 4 June 1891, Letterpress Copy Books Reel 71, vol. 7, p 652, IRA.

[146] Welsh to J. E. Learned, Managing Editor, *New York Evening Post*, 4 June 1891, Letterpress Copy Books Reel 71, vol. 7, p 653, IRA. Learned to Welsh, 5 June 1891, Incoming Corres. Reel 7, IRA.

[147] McLaughlin to Welsh, 12 June 1891, Incoming Corres. Reel 7, IRA.

[148] Collins to Welsh, 12 June 1891, Incoming Corres. Reel 7, IRA.

Welsh was unperturbed, and perhaps more determined than ever to make a stand against Wild West shows in general and Cody and his company in particular. On 26 June he wrote to Collins reassuring her that her mistake was 'comparatively trifling,' but once again asked about the missing newspaper clipping. His closing words revealed his resolve not to be beaten.

> In the meanwhile, please gather for me any further information which you consider thoroughly trustworthy regarding the Buffalo Bill matter. Cannot you get for me some statement from reliable persons at Standing Rock concerning the facts in the case of Buffalo Bill's visit to Ft. Yates last autumn for the purpose of arresting Sitting Bull?[149]

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Buffalo Bill and the Wild West's Indian performers would not have become involved in the suppression of the Ghost Dance, had they not been forced to return to America to refute the charges of mistreatment and neglect. Moreover, their involvement was motivated by the need to overturn the Secretary of the Interior's ban and preserving the Lakotas' right to be employed as performers in Wild West shows. While the Wild West Indians would no doubt have been equally concerned with the plight of their people, the ability to gain employment with Cody's Wild West and be guaranteed a good wage and regular food was obviously important to them. A guarantee that did not exist if they were forced to remain upon the reservations, where work was few and far between and government annuities were poor and scarcely sufficient. At the close of the military suppression of the Lakota Ghost Dance the management of Buffalo Bill's Wild West were able to illustrate to the government the positive effects on the Indians of touring with their exhibition, and they were enabled to further secure their position as Indian employers. Furthermore, by disarming the arguments of the reformers, they protected the Indians right to work on their own terms at a job of their choice, not as assimilated Indians, but as Indians.

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[149] Welsh to Collins, 26 June 1891, Folder #48, Collins Papers, SDSHS.

To crown the success of overturning the Secretary of the Interior's ban, Cody had employed twenty-three of the Fort Sheridan prisoners. Not only was this a coup in that Buffalo Bill's Wild West could boast of a unique attraction to pique the curiosity of potential audiences, but the fact that the government sanctioned Cody as the custodian of reputedly dangerous Indians further bolstered his status as an Indian employer. The decision of the Ghost Dancers to accompany Cody on his tour of Europe rather than remain at Fort Sheridan is hardly surprising. Cody offered not only wages and status, but also a good deal more stimulation and independence than was available either at the Fort or on the reservations. Yet it was Cody's hiring of the prisoners that motivated the Indian Rights Association to renew their efforts to make Indian employment in Wild West shows a thing of the past.

The reformers were particularly galled because of the message that Cody's employment of the prisoners would have sent to the Indians on the reservations who had stayed loyal to the government. They believed that the government was rewarding the wrong doers instead of punishing them, and that this would discourage progressive Lakota in the future. The Indian Rights Association took their case to the government in Washington and believed that they had the support of the President. Yet despite having more influence than the critics of the previous year and thus posing a greater threat to Buffalo Bill's Wild West, the Indian Rights Association failed to end Indian employment in Wild West shows, and instead turned their attention to creating alternate public images of Indians.[150]

The controversy and debate over Indian participation in Wild West shows illustrates that the Indian reformers wanted to do more than make the Indians self-supporting, instead it was the Indians' very identity that they planned to make over. Furthermore, the episode demonstrates that the reformers' ethnocentrism led them to view the Indians as inferior and childlike. As such the Indians were perceived as being incapable of knowing how best to help themselves, and that they therefore needed the

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[150] See Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*.

guidance of benevolent humanitarian reformers. It was this paternalistic perception that motivated the reformers and policy makers to be opposed to Indians exhibiting in Wild West shows. It is clear from the debate over Cody's employment of Indian performers that what the Indians wanted was beside the point, as the reformers doubted the Indians' competency to be able to judge for themselves. Reformers hoped to promote a specific reconstructed image of American Indians based on an idealised concept of white Christian Americans, and deplored anything that might jeopardise this notion or their process of 'civilisation.'

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Fig. 18. Sitting Bull and William F. Cody, photographed while on tour in Canada 1885.

Fig. 19. Cody and Burke with Indians and journalists at Pine Ridge Agency, January 16 1891.

Standing left to right: Rocky Bear, Good Voice, Two Lance, George Crager, Two Strike, William Cody, Crow Dog, High Hawk, Short Bull.

Seated left to right: Thunder Hawk, American Horse, John A. McDonough, Young Man Afraid, Kicking Bear, John M. Burke.

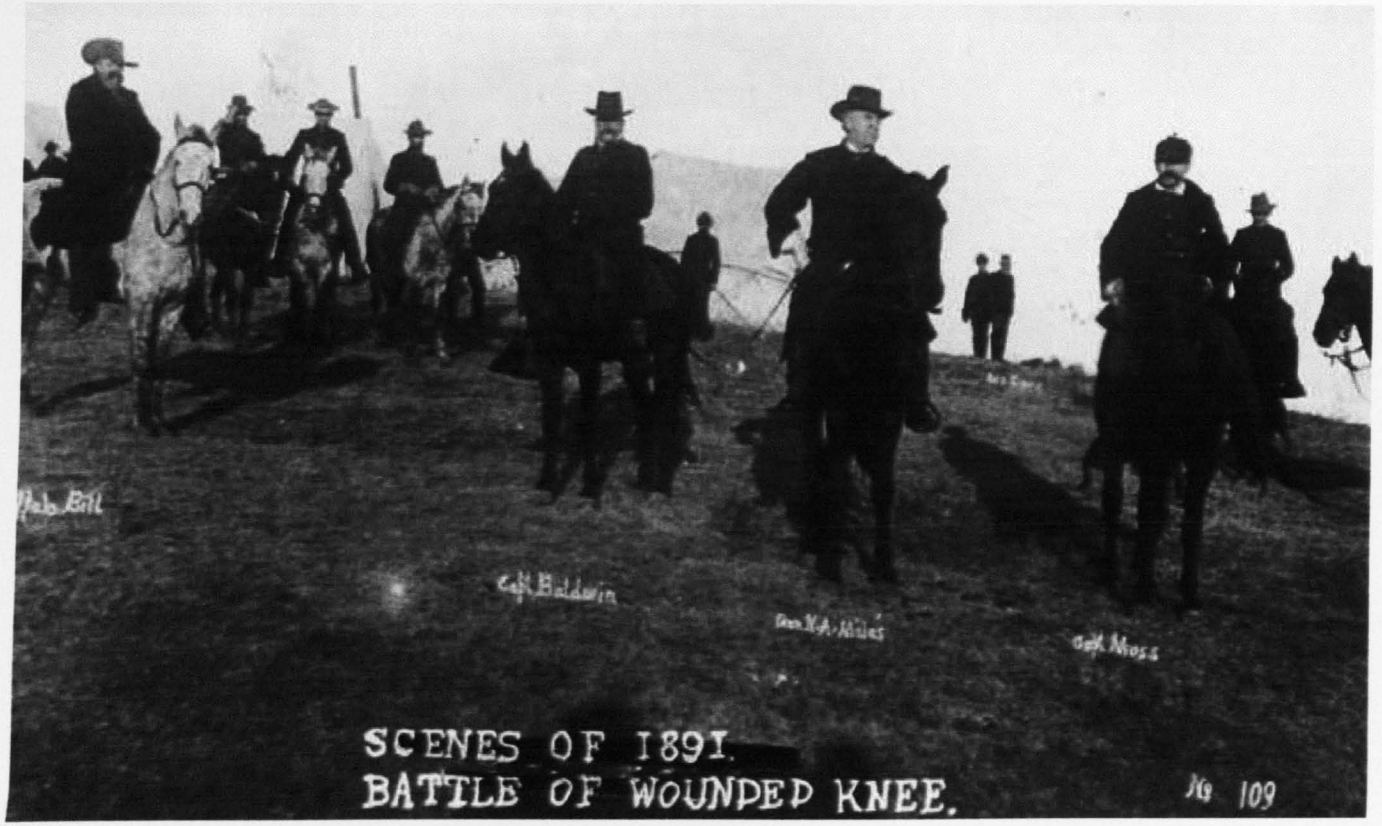
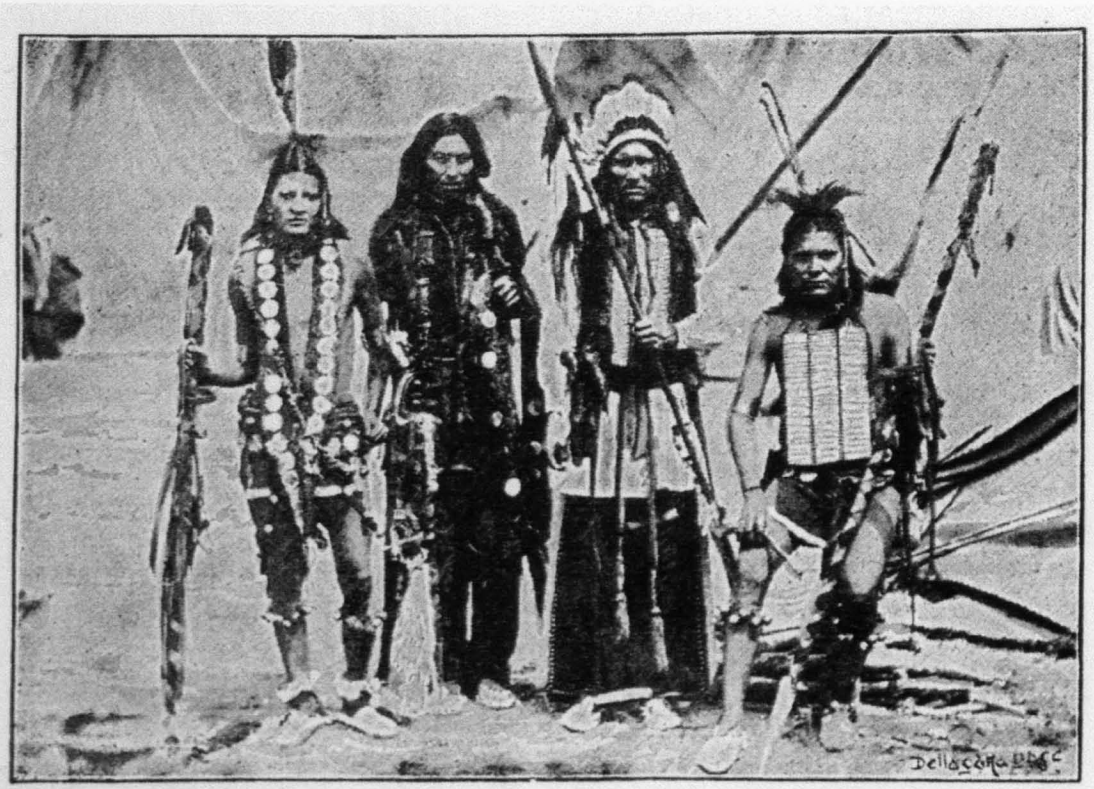



Fig. 20. William F. Cody (left) with General Nelson A. Miles (second from right) at Pine Ridge Agency, January 1891.



THE FIGHTING CHIEF, KICKING BEAR AND STAFF, CAMPAIGN 1891, PINE RIDGE.

Fig. 21. Kicking Bear and associates at Pine Ridge, 1891.