BIHO LIB ACC# 1018

DO NOT REMOVE FROM LIBRARY

A History

Nez Perce Campaign 1877

by

Dr. M. D. Beal

Part 2 Chap 17-26 and Addendum

BIG HOLE
NATIONAL
BATTLEFIELD
LIBRARY
91

BIG HOLE
NATIONAL
BATTLEFIELD
LIBRARY

Chapter 17

ESCAPING THE ABSAROKA BLOCKADE

The Absaroka Range forms the east boundary of Yellowstone National Park. It is a lofty granite barrier with thirty peaks towering above ten thousand feet. Small headwater tributaries appertaining to Shoshone (Stinking Water) and Clarks Fork rivers have carved slight depressions above the eight-thousand-foot- level that are called passes.

Thus, nature has decreed that any caravan seeking an eastern exit would be channeled into one of these passage ways. Accordingly, the military officials of the Dakota Department distributed their considerable troops upon strategic transition points where the hostiles might be pocketed.[1]

Colonel Sturgis was guarding Clarks Fork, Major Hart was on Shoshone River, Colonel Merritt was on the Wind River to the southeast, Captain Cushing was near the Crow Agency to the northwest. General Howard, backed by detachments under Colonel Gilbert and Lieutenant Doane, was pressing from the rear, and Scout Fisher and his Bannocks were literally dogging the heels of the hostiles. Considering terrain and logistics, this was a vast concentration of power in the midst of the Northern Rockies.

The Nez Perces were in a very tight place, but fortunately they discovered that fact in the nick of time. Fisher's Bannocks used the term "trap" to describe the Nez Perce position as of September 8.[2] Newspaper correspondents had informed the public concerning these moves, and reports from the Park were eagerly awaited. On August 31, the New Northwest prematurely exulted over the promise of victory:

> In view of the bad effect their success and escape would have on other Indians, and in view of the evil they would probably here-

> after do Montana, this concentration of forces, and the determination to destroy them, is in the highest degree gratifying. We are largely indebted for it to the presence of General Sherman in Montana, who has had the lion in him roused by the defiant progress of the Nez Perces and by personal attention to the movement of troops has raised up an army on the four sides of Joseph just when it seemed most probable that he was about to escape, scot free, except for the blow Gibbon struck him, and laden with booty, into the great open country of the hostiles. We wait now hopefully for news that the Nez Perces have been struck hard and fatally. They are too brave and dangerous a foe to escape, for their escape unscathed means still darker days for the border.

At last the forces of nature and man had combined to interpose an invulnerable blockade upon the Red Tartars from Idaho.

The Chiefs Overcome All Obstacles

One author suggests that the Nez Perces escaped from this predicament in a supernatural fashion. "At a sign from the red man, the barriers had rolled away; the trap, so carefully adjusted to ensnare him (Joseph), had been folded up and put aside; the white man had been outwitted; the quarry had made good his escape."[3]

Actually, the Nez Perces were delivered by a simple combination of factors that worked to their advantage. The principal mistake was made by Colonel Sturgis. After taking a position at the mouth of Clarks Fork, from which he could swing a powerful blockade (360 troops) across the canyon, he was persuaded to depart. This decision resulted from the reports of three different scouting details he had sent up Clarks Fork looking for Indians. Like Bacon at Targhee Pass, Sturgis was several days early, so he abandoned watchful waiting in favor of moving the command. His reconnoitering detachments convinced him that the hostiles had chosen the Shoshone River thoroughfare. In fact, Lieutenant Ezra B. Fuller and a guide climbed a ridge and got a glimpse of a receding Indian column as it wound around a hill in that direction. The guide affirmed that having gone that far south, the hostiles could not possibly find a pass leading into the Clarks Fork drainage. He

failed to realize that they might double back to a secret pass under a timber cover.

Foreseeing such a prospect, Howard sent several sets of scouts to Sturgis, warning him to stand fast, but none of them reached him. Between the rugged wilderness and vigilant Nez Perces no intelligence was ever passed between these officers. In fact, several prospectors caught between them were also killed.[4] These desperate acts, committed by the hard-riding, wide-ranging Nez Perces, struck terror throughout the area and added grist to the charge that the hostiles condoned wanton murder. Actually, every man they destroyed was either a messenger at the time or he was bound to become one in a matter of moments. The circumstances warranted drastic action against those who were found in this no man's land between the military forces. Measures taken in behalf of self-preservation demand little justification. Thus, Yellow Wolf made a statement rather than an apology in saying: "Every white man in those mountains could be counted our enemy."[5]

Although Howard lacked certain knowledge of Sturgis' position, he was sufficiently confident to send a messenger to Fort Ellis with a reassuring telegram to General McDowell.[6]

Whether the Nez Perce maneuver toward Shoshone River was deliberate or accidental, the result was the same. Sturgis was lured away into a futile forty-mile game of hide-and-seek, which placed him two days in the wake of the fleeing enemy.

Nez Perce records concerning the precise method of their escape are slender. Yellow Wolf remembered that the soldiers missed them. Said he, "We had gone down the creek while they came along the hillside."[7]

Perhaps Howard's great scout, S. G. Fisher, left the most accurate account of what happened in his journal dated September 10. This entry describes what the Nez Perces accomplished the day before:

> To the east, from the top of the divide, the enemy's trail bore off towards the south-east, which direction my Indians told me would take them onto the Stinkingwater, to the south of Hart Mt., which are in plain sight from the top of the divide we passed over this morning. After leaving the summit the enemy followed the trail towards the Stinkingwater about two miles, and then attempted to elude pursuit by concealing their trail. To do this, the hostiles "milled", drove their ponies around in every direction, when, instead of going out of the basin in the direction they had been traveling and across an open plain, they turned short off to the north, passing along the steep side of the mountain through the timber for several miles. When we reached the point where the enemy had endeavored to cache their trail, we scattered out in every direction looking for it. At first the scouts were at a loss to know which way they had gone but after spending some time in the search I was so fortunate as to stumble onto the trail. I then went back to apprise the command of this new change of direction, leaving the other scouts to follow after the Indians. Returning, we followed through a very narrow and rocky canon down to Clarks Fork, at a point about two miles below where it comes out of a canon.[8]

These maneuvers disclose that Nez Perce scouting was excellent and their art of deception and camouflage superb. Furthermore, the passage of their caravan through the rugged Absarokas will always stand as a feat of great horsemanship. Indeed, General Howard characterized the total performance as an example of consumate generalship.[9]

The baffling Nez Perce route across the mighty Absarokas probably conformed to the following description: From Cache Creek they crossed Sunlight Pass and descended Sunlight River for a dozen miles. Then, they quartered northward to Trail Creek which they ascended to Lodgepole Divide. They descended Lodgepole Creek to its point of confluence with Crandall Creek which they followed to Clarks Fork. It was a rough hunters' trail, wholly unsuited as a passageway for nearly seven hundred people and their massive remuda.

Lieutenant Wood said the awful earth gash into which the Indian cavalcade tumbled was like going through a gigantic railroad tunnel. Howard described it as ". . . a strange canyon, where rocks on each side came so near together that two horses abreast could hardly pass."[10] He further stated that many

horses and mules fell as his command slid down this canyon. His men were forced to ". . . admire the quick wit of an Indian who had the hardihood to try the experiment, and break the almost impassable roadway."[11]

The Military Commands Unite

As stated, the Nez Perces made their precipitous exit from the Absarokas on September 9. Howard plunged into the same defile and emerged late the next day. By then Sturgis had discovered that he was on a wild goose chase, and he returned to Clarks Fork where he came upon Howard's trail. Overtaking Howard on the eleventh, the two established a common camp in the valley. Of course both officers were greatly chagrined over the chieftain's success in eluding the trap that had been contrived. After exchanging their mutual commiserations, they considered it wise to send two messengers, one by water and one by land, to Colonel Nelson A. Miles at Fort Keogh (Miles City) on Tongue River. In this message, Howard explained how the Nez Perces escaped and where they were destined to go. Therefore, he urged Miles to make every effort to intercept and detain them until he could overtake them again.[12]

By now the hostiles were probably fifty miles ahead of Howard and Sturgis, but the commanders decided that hot pursuit might be rewarding. Hence, Howard magnanimously allowed Sturgis to take the lead in an attempt to overtake the Nez Perces. Howard's officers were opposed to this arrangement, but Sturgis' horses were in better condition to make a fast march down the valley toward the plains. Howard realized better than anyone that durable horses and men would be needed to overtake the hard-riding hostiles. Besides, Sturgis was eager to redeem his command from the blunder he had recently made. Indeed, when he first discovered that the chiefs had escaped, he swore that he would overtake them before they crossed the Missouri River if he had to go on foot and alone.[13] Howard gave him a slender addition of scouts, artillery, and cavalry, and at daylight on the twelfth the Seventh Cavalry was eagerly

pursuing the Indian trail. They traveled sixty miles in the rain that day without seeing fresh Indian signs. The next morning an early march took them to the Yellowstone River, near present-day Laurel. Men and horses were stiff and dispirited from their strenuous exertions. After fording the river, Sturgis called a halt and issued a welcome order to unsaddle and put the horses on lariat. All indications pointed to a lessening of resolution toward pressing the pursuit at that time. Actually, they were within several miles of the Nez Perces, who were leisurely breaking camp and engaging in a bit of horseplay betimes.

Upon reaching Clarks Fork, Looking Glass, who had boasted of his close bonds with the Crow Indians, hastened ahead to seek friends and allies. He succeeded in contacting leaders of both segments of the Crow nation, namely, Mountain and River clans. Neither clan could be persuaded to join the hostiles. The Crows evidently considered Nez Perce resistance as a lost cause. The Mountain chiefs declared strict neutrality, but the more sedentary River Crows were definitely partial to the whites. Governed by expediency and cupidity, they were ready to despoil the Nez Perces as opportunity afforded. This state of affairs, added to the positions previously taken by treaty Nez Perces, Flatheads, Bannocks and Lemhis (Tendoy's Shoshonis), caused Yellow Wolf to exclaim: "I do not understand how the Crows could think to help the soldiers. They were fighting against their best friends! Some Nez Perces in our band had helped them whip the Sioux who came against them only a few snows before. This was why Chief Looking Glass had advised going to the Crows, to the buffalo country. He thought Crows would help us, if there was more fighting."[11]

Hostile and Comical Conduct in Yellowstone Valley

The Nez Perce retreat down Clarks Fork to the Yellowstone River Valley,

and thence northwestward up Canyon Creek, describes an arc. Parts of these valleys were sparsely populated, resembling the Horse Prairie and Lemhi areas in that respect. Unfortunately Nez Perce conduct toward the white men encountered was also comparable. Lacking facilities for handling prisoners, too many of their scouts were disposed to kill the whites and take their horses. Several miners were accorded this treatment on Clarks Fork. Although in one instance the lives of a man named J. M. V. Cochran and his companions were spared, his ranch was raided and two trappers named Clint Dills and Milton Summers, temporarily staying there, were killed. An account by Cochran, printed in the Billings Gazette, June 30, 1927, describes the descent of several warriors upon the P. W. McAdow sawmill and their "annexation" of the horses on the premises. It also states that a band of hostiles dashed into Coulson and burned the saloon. These acts impelled Cochran and his friend, the notorious "Liver-eating Johnson", to become members of a band known as George Houston's Yellowstone Scouts.

In spite of the all-pervading hardships and heart aches that characterized their retreat, the Nez Perce braves were inclined to grasp fun when they found it. Such opportunity was provided by the arrival of a stagecoach at the Bill Brockway ranch on the Yellowstone, two miles below its confluence with Clarks Fork. The three passengers aboard, including Fanny Clark, a vaudeville performer, had a chance to hide before the young men spied the vehicle. Seizing the reins, they had great sport in weaving back and forth and scattering the contents of the mailbags.

By this time, Pawnee Tom, one of Sturgis' best scouts, had located the Nez Perces. Taking in the situation at a glance, he dashed upstream to tell the Colonel. Moments later, he approached the relaxing troops, wildly shouting, "Indians! Indians!" The announcement was electrifying; troopers jumped to their feet and dashed for their horses. Even the animals sensed

the urgency of action and chafed on their bits while being saddled and packed. Only a few miles separated the command from its foes. Within fifteen minutes the troopers reached the crest of a ridge, hoping to catch the Nez Perces in camp. But the Indian caravan was in motion and pushing toward the mouth of Canyon Creek. Yellow Wolf remembered that, "The traveling camp had nearly been surprised." The attention of scattered scouts was attracted by a blanket signal warning, meaning "Soldiers coming close!"[15] Such were the circumstances in which Colonel Sturgis and the Seventh Cavalry undertook to capture the Nez Perces after several days of forced marching.

Chapter 17

Escaping the Absaroka Blockade

Footnotes

1. Sturgis had 6 companies, Hart had 5, and Merritt had 10.

2. S. G. Fisher, op. cit., p. 275.

3. P. W. Byrne, Soldiers of the Plains (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1926), p. 198.

4. Two of Sturgis' scouts, named Groff and Leonard, and a Crow Indian boy were killed. Fisher discovered the bodies of two miners he identified as Oleson and Anderson from the Black Hills. Fisher also tells of a Nez Perce scout killed and scalped by members of his own scouting party. Redington came upon three dead miners, and one who was wounded.

5. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., p. 184.

6. Howard and McGrath, op. cit., p. 253.

7. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., p. 183.

8. S. G. Fisher, op. cit., p. 277.

9. O. O. Howard, op. cit., p. 255.

10. O. O. Howard, My Life and Experiences Among Hostile Indians, p. 295.

11. O. O. Howard, Nez Perce Joseph, p. 255.

12. Howard's Supplementary Report, p. 622-623.
Charles Erskine Scott Wood wrote the order to Colonel Miles to this effect: "The hostiles are regulating their speed by ours. I (Howard) will pace my march to not exceeding ten miles a day to enable you to get ahead of them. When you have done this, notify me immediately, and I will close up and support you." See "The Spectator," September 14, 1929.

13. Theodore Goldin, "The Seventh Cavalry at Canon Creek", in Brady, Northwestern Fights and Fighters, op. cit., p. 214.

14. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., p. 194.

15. Ibid., p. 185.

Chapter 18

THE BATTLE OF CANYON CREEK

From the area of its confluence with Clarks Fork, Yellowstone River constitutes a line of transition between the Rocky Mountains and the High Plains. The river bisects a massive country which sustained an abundance of game. This was the region the nontreaty Nez Perces had elected to occupy when the fortunes of war forced them from their Idaho homeland. They believed the Crow Indians would welcome them and they hoped the white man would allow them to make the long journey in peace. Especially since they had chosen to travel through the least settled areas. Hoping to avoid trouble, they side-stepped the military in Lolo Canyon, made a truce with the Bitter Root settlers, and entered the Big Hole Basin. There they were surprised and nearly captured by Colonel Gibbon. Recovering, they left a trail of blood to Clarks Fork. They were not looking for battles; rather, they were attempting to avoid them. To that end they had kept moving relentlessly. Bleeding wounds, deaths, weariness, short rations, worn-out horses, were all taken in stride. The pace was so rapid that Howard never quite caught them, although their occasional detours failed to deceive him.

Apprehending the presence of troops on Clarks Fork, the chiefs strained every nerve to circumvent battle. Now Colonel Sturgis, with over four hundred cavalrymen and two howitzers, was bearing down upon them.

The Nez Perces Strive to Avoid Battle

There are no records disclosing the thinking of the chiefs in this situation. When Looking Glass discovered that the Crows were undependable, they must have realized that their presence in this area was untenable.

Howard and Sturgis were bound to attack them in order to restore military prestige. Furthermore, the Crows would steal their horses if they possibly could. It was doubtful if the Nez Perces had enough vitality, manpower, and ammunition to make a determined and effective stand against the forces at hand, not to mention those under Merritt and Cushing, in position or approaching, not far away. Hence, continued flight was the only alternative to further blood-letting, followed by surrender. Therefore, in the spirit of the "Ginger Bread Man", they would "run, run, run. . ." as they had been doing for the past two moons.

This strategy, together with a resurgence of energy and determination, definitely reflect Chief Joseph's increasing influence. Remember that although he had been the foremost champion of nontreaty Nez Perce rights, still he deplored the outbreak of war and entered the campaign reluctantly. Once in, he favored an all-out effort in Idaho, but Looking Glass persuaded the council to retreat to Crow land. The latter's leadership was dominant until the Battle of Big Hole, then it declined. On Clarks Fork his prestige fell again, because the Crows proved untrustworthy. On the other hand, Joseph had demonstrated an unwavering concern for the well-being of all the people. This was natural, because he was chief of the largest faction; but his sense of responsibility encompassed them all. He possessed an inherent quality of understanding in regard to their hardships and suffering that constantly enlarged his stature as the Guardian of the People. The miscalculations of others had placed the tribe in great and continuing danger. At this point, and henceforth, the speed and endurance necessary for their survival must be truly heroic. The campaign could only be won by the pervading influence and leadership of an exceptional character. Would they be able to muster the necessary energy and unity to achieve their goal?

The Canyon Creek setting was conducive to flight and the Nez Perces

took advantage of the environment. They had just enough time to win the race across a prairie to the canyon as the cavalry quartered toward them from the south. Not that Canyon Creek was a narrow defile, easily protected. Its lower reaches are broad and open, and the rimrock guarding the flanges does not extend far upon the interior sides. The canyon trail gradually ascended between rolling hills to the uneven plateau west of the Yellowstone Valley. Therefore, the terrain did not preclude the possibility of pursuit by exceptionally resolute men.

Skirmishing on Canyon Creek

Colonel Sturgis and his command first sighted the Indians from a ridge two miles away. The hostiles were moving toward the mouth of Canyon Creek. Eager soldiers shouted, "Let's beat 'em to it," and away they went. Major Lewis Merrill's battalion and Lieutenant Wilkinson's L Company took lead. Captains Bell and Nowlan, with Companies F and I, moved along rapidly in support of the advance guard. Captains F. W. Benteen and French, commanding Companies H and M, were held in reserve for a while, then they were ordered to strike the warriors on the southwest wall of the canyon.

When the troops raced forward, Nez Perce sharpshooters began firing from the rimrock flanges. Other warriors, directed by Looking Glass, formed a rear guard and fired steadily at the approaching troops. These fusillades caused a slackening of speed; indeed, the advance troops were ordered to dismount, deploy, and advance on foot. A. F. Mulford, a member of the regiment, claims that this was a serious tactical error, insuring the Indians' escape. He said that many troopers wept with frustration over the command to dismount.[1] Obviously the chiefs did not intend to do anything beyond covering their retreat. Whereas, Sturgis mistakenly assumed that they would accept this challenge and join in a close-range battle against the approaching

line. Yellow Wolf described the maneuvers of Nez Perce horsemen: "We did not line up like soldiers. We went by ones, just here and there entering the canyon."[2] He further stated that toward the end of the skirmish, when the people were all in the canyon, "Only one warrior, Teeto Hoonod, was there doing the fighting. His horse hidden, he was behind the rocks holding a line of dismounted soldiers back. He was shooting regularly, not too fast."[3]

What started out as a vital and promising action bogged down, because of effective fire power from a few Nez Perce sharpshooters ensconced in the rimrock, and a menacing counter attack by a few warriors who had long range rifles. In due course, according to plan, Captain F. W. Benteen made two determined charges in an attempt to dislodge the warriors from the rimrock. However, Nez Perce fire compelled him to withdraw. Merrill's failure to inflict any real punishment upon the Nez Perce rear guard, followed by Benteen's inability to gain entrance to the canyon without considerable risk, enabled the caravan to reach security in the canyon. Sturgis did not press the attack, but viewed the action through field glasses from a position a half-mile behind the line. A soldier named Jacob Horner expressed appreciation for the fact that Sturgis mounted the wounded and sent them down to the Yellowstone River under escort, but he thought this humanitarian action contributed to the escape of the hostiles. Whereas, Mulford states that Lieutenant Hare requested permission from Major Merrill to lead a charge into the canyon, but the request was refused.

Accordingly, the skirmishing at the mouth of Canyon Creek was lively but short lived. The Nez Perces were only interested in covering their retreat, and Sturgis was unwilling to risk close pursuit up the canyon. Many troopers believed that more prompt, daring, and resolute action would have been rewarding. As it turned out, the Nez Perce warriors succeeded in

holding the troops back, by gradually vacating their battle stations, and then reassembling as a rear guard. Meanwhile, the chiefs kept the tribe moving until after dark. This effort enabled them to pass through Canyon Creek and camp among some rolling hills beyond.

After following the Nez Perces up the canyon until dusk, Sturgis wisely decided to return and form a camp at the mouth of Canyon Creek. That night a cold wind seemed to drum a funeral dirge, which was disturbing to many restless soldiers lying next to the battle ground and its dead horses. The next morning when the pursuit was resumed, Sturgis found narrow places in the trail ". . . so choked with rocks, trees, and brush that any attempt on our part to have followed them by night march would have resulted in disaster."[4]

Howard Reaches the Battlefield

Upon hearing of the battle on the afternoon of September 13, Howard picked a company of fifty cavalrymen and pushed ahead of his command. He reached the mouth of Canyon Creek early the next morning. His impressions of the situation were vividly recorded:

> It was the most horrible of places, ---sage-brush and dirt, and only alkaline-water, and very little of that! Dead horses were strewn about, and other relics of the battlefield! A few wounded men and the dead were there. To all this admixture of disagreeable things was added a cold, raw wind, that, unobstructed, swept over the country. Surely if anything was needed to make us hate war such after-battle scenes come well in play.[5]

Although the descriptions of the battle and the battleground were satisfactory, the reports that were issued by Sturgis, concerning Indian casualties, proved to be greatly exaggerated. He placed their loss at sixteen, and added that ". . . nine hundred ponies had been dropped by the hostiles. . . I am going ahead this morning (15th) and propose to push them until they drop their whole herd. . . ."[6]

Although Howard's Bannock Scouts and Sturgis' Crows searched high and low, they did not find any dead Nez Perces. Scout Fisher confirmed this

report and it agrees with Yellow Wolf's declaration that only three Indians were wounded in this fight.[7] Howard reduced the estimate of stolen horses to four hundred, whereas, Yellow Wolf remembered that the number actually stolen by the Crows at that time was nearer forty. However, he said a good many worn out ponies were abandoned.

Sturgis lost three killed and eleven wounded. Forty-one horses were either killed or abandoned by the military as a result of this skirmish.[8] Obviously the Nez Perce warriors had made an effective defense for people trying their level best to avoid a battle.

Howard spent September 14 at the battle ground camp awaiting the arrival of his command. That evening, Captain Cushing also arrived with much needed supplies from Fort Ellis. Even so, the rations of both commands were so slender that captured Indian ponies were killed for food. The General had been expecting Cushing and Norwood to arrive with reinforcements for some time, but Colonel Gibbon had given Norwood another assignment. Therefore, Cushing confined his efforts to bringing in the supplies.[9]

Hot Pursuit by Colonel Sturgis

Meantime, Sturgis continued pursuing the hostiles for several days. During that time his cavalry traveled a hundred and fifty miles. This brought them to the Musselshell River, where a halt was called. The Nez Perce pace was too fast for Sturgis. His men and horses were in desperate need of rest and supplies. Hence, for the second time he was planning to give up the chase. His letter to Howard, explaining this decision, is revealing: "I find it impossible for my command to gain upon them, and their direction is taking me further and further from supplies. I have. . . reluctantly determined to abandon a hopeless pursuit before my horses are completely destroyed or placed beyond recuperation. . . ."[10] In one week Sturgis discovered what Howard had been contending with for two months, namely, that the Nez Perces

were an exceptionally fleet, resolute, and resourceful band of people.

Notwithstanding the Colonel's confession of inadequacy, the Helena Weekly Independent, September 27, stated that Sturgis had a fight with the hostiles on the Musselshell and that skirmishing was a daily occurrence. Whereas, Yellow Wolf flatly declared that no soldiers ever caught up with them after they entered Canyon Creek.

The Role of the Crow Indians

Perhaps part of the exceptional Nez Perce speed in this grueling flight should be attributed to the cunning and persistence of the horse stealing Crows. T. W. Goldin of the Seventh Cavalry declared that a band of them held a frenzied war dance in Sturgis' camp after the Canyon Creek Battle. Thenceforth, they served him as scouts, and in so doing they tantalized and molested the Nez Perces as opportunity afforded.[11] Yellow Wolf estimated that a hundred Crows and Bannocks attacked the Nez Perce rear on September 14. He said they darted in close to the rear of the caravan, hanging low on the sides of their horses, ". . . doing under-neck shooting. . . . Only when we were moving would they come after us. When we met them, they ran from us." No wonder his"heart was just like fire" with indignation.[12] Thus, he charged them in towering wrath and received a slight wound in the thigh before retreating.

Although these tactics were extremely annoying, the chiefs could not afford to stop and discipline the treacherous pursuers. At least three Nez Perces were killed by the Crows and Bannocks in this area. They were Teeweeyounah (Yellow Wolf's friend), Tooklecks (Fish Trap), and Wetyetmas Hapima (Surrounded Goose). The latter's name symbolizes precisely what happened to these men. Only one of the three was a warrior. On September 21, The Benton Record carried an account of a Crow warrior who was captured by the Nez Perces. They whipped him over the head, then dressed his welts nicely, put him on a horse, mocked his pretension to manhood, derided him and all his tribesmen as squaws, then sent him away.

Of course, these friendly Indians were praised for their services. A man named Langhorne sent a message to The Helena Independent, September 15, stating: "The Crows are harrassing them and stealing a good many horses." On September 29, The Bozeman Times printed the following memorandum from George W. Frost, United States Indian Agent, Crow Agency: "Please give information to the papers from me that the Crows are loyal and fighting every time with the whites. . . . They have taken all the Nez Perces' pack animals with packs. . . say 200."

It is apparent that friendly Indian scouts inflicted more damage during this protracted extension of the Canyon Creek battle than Sturgis had done in the beginning.

The Canyon Creek Battle Monument

On July 13, 1958, a sandstone monument was dedicated upon the Canyon Creek Battlefield, under the auspices of the Yellowstone Historical Society. Speakers for the occasion included Walter C. Nye, Fred C. Krieg, Campbell Calvert, Peter Yegen, William M. Kirkpatrick, and Dr. Merrill D. Beal. Each explained a facet of the campaign or battle. A bronze plaque bears the following legend:

Canyon Creek Battle

September 13, 1877

Soldiers were elements from the Seventh and First Cavalry and the Fourth Artillery. Col. Samuel D. Sturgis, commanding. Casualties: Three dead, eleven wounded.

Indians engaged were the Nez Perce tribe, escaping from their reservation and fleeing to Canada. Leader, Chief Joseph.

The Indians crossed the Yellowstone River, east of Laurel, burned a stage station on Canyon Creek and cut spokes from a stagecoach's wheels for use as quirt handles. They proceeded to this point, where they met and fought the Sturgis command in the area south of this marker.

YELLOWSTONE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 1958

Chapter 18

The Battle of Canyon Creek

Footnotes

1. A. F. Mulford, Fighting Indians! (Corning, New York: Paul L. Mulford, no date), p. 115.

2. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., p. 185.

3. Ibid. On July 13, 1958, Lloyd Golden, a native of Laurel, Montana, told the author that considerable lead was found along the base of the rimrock, and the ledge had many holes where bullets had struck.

   Perhaps Teeto Hoonod was using Poker Joe's long-range Sharps rifle. It is said that this gun was buried at the night camp following this battle, because there was no more ammunition for it, and the rifle weighed fifteen pounds.

   The warriors also had several long-range needle-guns with telescope sights, and one heavy Creedmore. H. M. "Muggins" Taylor claimed that these rifles could throw lead 1300 yards.

4. Theodore W. Golden to L. V. McWhorter. See Yellow Wolf, Footnote, p. 187.

5. O. O. Howard, op. cit., p. 257.

6. Tom Stout, op. cit., p. 362.

7. Yellow Wolf named Silooyan, Eeahlokoon, and Elaskolatat as the warriors who sustained wounds in this battle. Hear Me, My Chiefs, p. 465.

8. On July 13, 1958, Charles Zimmerman told the author that the bodies of two soldiers were uncovered in 1907 by a Northern Pacific Railroad crew. They were building a line from Billings to Rapelje. The graves were at the mouth of Canyon Creek. The remains were removed to the Custer Battlefield.

9. L. V. McWhorter, op. cit., p. 466.

10. Sturgis to Howard, September 15. Supplementary Report, 627.

11. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., p. 189.

12. Ibid., p. 187.

Chapter 19

FROM THE MUSSELSHELL TO THE BEAR PAWS

On September 16, General Howard's command was assembled in a pleasant campground on the Yellowstone River, just below its confluence with Canyon Creek. While there, Lieutenant Fletcher gave him a full account of the recent battle and other incidents pertaining to the Sturgis command. Energetic operations by various officers enabled Howard to refurbish his supplies in this area before resuming the pursuit of Sturgis and the hostiles.

On September 20, his command reached the Musselshell River and camped within a few miles of Sturgis. Howard was pleased with this environment, because it afforded ample grass for the horses, and fish and berries for the men. He and Sturgis held several consultations, and during one of them a messenger from Colonel Nelson A. Miles arrived announcing that he had received their communication of the twelfth, and that he was preparing to enter the campaign on the morning of the eighteenth.

This news was indeed gratifying to the officers and Major Lewis Merrill predicted that Miles would surely succeed in capturing the hostiles. His judgment was based upon what he knew about the Colonel's ambitions, competence, and knowledge of the country. In so saying, Merrill cautiously suggested that Miles was "something of a glory chaser like Custer. . . ."[1] Howard agreed that the prospects were good and after a day of reflection and prayer (while in motion), in speaking to Mason, he said, "Colonel, I believe that we shall capture these Indians yet."[2] The feelings of others were less optimistic; indeed, Dr. Alexander didn't think Miles had one chance in a

million. Nonetheless, the spirits of the men were lightened and they resumed the pursuit with enthusiasm. In fact, the outlook became sufficiently promising to permit the release of Sanford and his cavalry unit, also Robbins and several other scouts, on September 27, when they reached the Missouri River.

Joseph's Route and Progress

When Sturgis stopped on the Musselshell to recuperate and wait for Howard, the Nez Perces had little to fear. They knew nothing about Miles, but even so they traveled as fast as they could toward the Missouri. In order to reach the Cow Island ford on the Old Muddy, they headed almost due north via Judith Gap, thereby avoiding both the Judith and Snowy ranges. The plains country through which they passed was generally uninviting, as any motorist will observe by going from Billings to Lewistown on Highway 87. However, there were several pleasant basins and vast grasslands where bison, elk, and antelope were abundant. Judith Basin was such a place, and there they encountered Chief Dumb Bull's band of Crows drying bison meat. The chiefs evidently permitted the young warriors to raise havoc with this band by seizing their ponies. This addition of several hundred fresh mounts was reflected by a corresponding abandonment of worn-out Nez Perce horses.[3]

Thus, the Nez Perces went pounding along to the north. The unremitting speed that enabled them to outrun Sturgis and the Crows also cost them some of their own numbers. The seriously ill and the dog-tired elders continued to fall by the way. The facts of a case involving a woman who fell behind to confine herself have been preserved. Friendly Crows discovered her plight and persuaded her to stay with them until her little son was stronger and both were better able to travel. She did so, dwelling with them to the satisfaction of all concerned, until her presence was disclosed to the Crow Agency officials. When that happened she and the child were compelled to

return to her people, which would have been fine if they hadn't been exiled in Kansas Indian Territory by that time.[4] The point is, the Nez Perce band was gradually falling apart under the pressure of the military relay system of pursuit. By this time it was doubtful if there were more than six hundred and fifty of them left in the caravan.

On September 21, the band camped near the Reed and Bowles Stockade on Big Spring Creek, near Lewistown. It does not appear that any atrocities or thefts were committed upon the settlers in this particular area.[5] Generally paralleling the Carroll Trail, the Nez Perces followed the Snowy Mountain foothills to Dog Creek, which they ascended to the present town of Winifred. From there they headed northeast along the route followed by the present auto road to Cow Island, which they reached on the morning of September 23. They covered the last seventy miles of this lap in thirty-six hours.

The Cow Island Crossing Affair

Cow Island Crossing was the head of steamboat navigation at that season of the year. Therefore, Cow Island Landing was a temporary place of deposit, where supplies were stored for northern Montana forts and settlements and frontier posts in Canada. The Indians called this Missouri River fording place Seloselo Wejanwais, meaning a kind of colored paint.

Since there were supplies for Fort Benton, a detachment of a dozen soldiers under Sergeant William Moelchert from Company B, Seventh Infantry, were on guard. In addition, three civilian employees who were responsible for private supplies were stationed there. Colonel George Glendennin was the Cow Island freight agent for the Josephine line of steamboats.

Both soldiers and Indians apprehended the nature of the situation at a glance. The former, having been warned that the Nez Perces might arrive, had improvised breastworks around a tented area. Therefore, the men took

such refuge as these defenses afforded.

Meantime, the clansmen swam their horses across the Missouri and established camp two miles up Cow Creek. While this was being done, some of the warriors held back and two of them rode over to the supply area and asked for a parley with the leader. When Moelchert appeared the scouts asked for supplies from the stockpile. He promptly refused and would not reconsider when they offered to pay, although he did give them a side of bacon and a half sack of hardtack. Since this gift fell far short of their requirements, the chiefs decided to help themselves. At this juncture, a quaint note was drafted by one of the guards and sent to Colonel Glendennin who was over in Fort Benton:

Rifle Pit at Cow Island
September 23, 1877, 10 A.M.

Colonel:
Chief Joseph is here, and says he will surrender for two hundred bags of sugar. I told him to surrender without the sugar. He took the sugar and will not surrender. What will I do?

Michael Foley[6]

In another communication, Foley explained that there was a coulee just north of the pile of freight which enabled the Indians to carry away the supplies without being exposed to rifle fire.

Yellow Wolf stated that the chiefs had told the warriors to refrain from fighting. Nevertheless, a shot was fired by someone, and a desultory exchange of ammunition ensued. The breastworks were not charged, but one warrior and two of the civilians were wounded as a result of the shooting. Obviously the Nez Perces were only interested in the food, otherwise the supply defenders would have been destroyed. Instead, according to Peopeo Tholekt, "We took whatever w e needed. . . . Some took pans and pots for cooking. We figured it was soldier supplies, so set fire to what we did not take. We had privilege to do this. It was war."[7] Other informants remembered that the chiefs were opposed to the destruction of supplies that took place during the night. At dawn they ordered the reckless young men back

to the camp; whereupon travel order was resumed.

On the morning of September 24, shortly after the Nez Perces had departed, Major Guido Ilges and Lieutenant E. E. Hardin arrived at Cow Island Landing with thirty-six mounted volunteers and one enlisted man. Ilges decided to give chase, and by noon he overtook their rear guard scouts. This feat was made possible by reason of the fact that a band of the hostiles had encountered a freighter train, killed three of the teamsters, and were still ransacking the contents. As Ilges approached the wagons were burned and a few shots were exchanged. One of the citizen volunteers was killed and the Major wisely decided to return to Cow Island. He certified that the Nez Perce sharpshooters were excellent marksmen at long range. It was not his desire to establish any closer contact in the circumstances.

The Nez Perces Slow Down and Relax

During September 24, the Nez Perces made a change in leadership and policy that was destined to produce their downfall. Lean Elk (Poker Joe) was replaced by Looking Glass as leader of the caravan. The issue at stake was speed against loitering. Circumstances favored the latter, and its advocates made a good case; namely, Howard was several days in the rear, the people and ponies were on the brink of exhaustion, fresh supplies were in hand, and bison were within reach. Besides, the weather was turning cold and stormy. Even so, Lean Elk made an earnest rebuttal, but his demands were considered to be unreasonable. Several informants certified to McWhorter that Looking Glass upbraided Lean Elk for his haste; it was causing too much weariness. Whereupon, the latter replied, "All right, Looking Glass, you can lead. I am trying to save the people, doing my best to cross into Canada before the soldiers find us. You can take command, but I think we will be caught and killed."[8]

Notwithstanding the solemnity of this warning, the council consented to the changes and short marches were made during the next four days. On the

morning of the twenty-ninth, an advance guard killed some bison on Snake Creek near a northern spur of the Bear Paw Range. This creek is a tributary to Milk River, which flows into the Missouri east of Fort Peck. When the caravan reached this place at noon, Looking Glass advised making a night camp, although the place, being without trees, lacked wood for fuel. However, bison chips were plentiful and there was a labyrinth of ravines and coulees along the creek bed that would partially protect them from the cold wind threatening from the north. Aside from a ridge on the south, the campsite was vulnerable to a sweeping approach by horsemen on three sides. The position was not well-chosen from the standpoint of defense, although the ravines served other salutary purposes.

Nonetheless, the proposal to establish camp there was specifically opposed by a warrior named Wottolen, who had received an impression of impending danger. Looking Glass scoffed at this protest as he had done when similarly warned on August 8 in the Big Hole.[9] Thus, the Nez Perce chiefs made the fatal mistake of establishing camp at mid-day, and generally relaxing within forty miles of the International Boundary and safety.

Many authors have stated that the chiefs stopped on Snake Creek because they thought they had reached Canada. Yellow Wolf denied this in saying, "We knew the distance to the Canadian line. Knew how long it would take to travel there."[10] Joseph also remembered sending runners in search of Sitting Bull's camp, but he did not plead ignorance of the geographical situation.

Thus, the controlling factors in the delay were an imperative need for rest and food, together with a sense of security against being surprised by Howard. Since crossing the Missouri the hunting had been excellent. In fact, the success of their hunters confirmed the prevailing description that ". . . the country was alive with game. . . buffalo, deer, and mountain sheep."[11]

Howard's pursuit to Snake Creek

On September 20, when Howard learned Miles had entered the campaign, he and Sturgis agreed to follow the hostiles with deliberation. Sturgis wrote,

"We must not move too fast lest we flush the game."[12] Accordingly, the officers shortened their daily marches between the Musselshell and Missouri rivers, hoping the chiefs would act similarly. Howard gave Joseph credit for quickly penetrating his design in thus delaying. In any case, the hostiles moved rapidly in this area and Howard experienced some difficulty in following their trail through Judith Basin.[13] However, both commands emerged from the basin in good order.

On September 25, Howard was pleased to meet two messengers from Fort Benton. They bore the news that the Indians had forded the Missouri at Cow Island, taken stored supplies, and seized a freighting outfit. The messengers also stated that a strong command, under Miles, had crossed the Missouri near its confluence with the Musselshell and was in hot pursuit.

Howard's reaction to these startling developments was characteristic. Said he, "It did not take us long to pass the next fifty or sixty miles to Carroll."[14] At that point he secured the steamer Benton and, taking his two aides, several scouts, and Miller and his artillery battalion on board, went up stream to Cow Island. The balance of the soldiers remained at Carroll with Sturgis and Mason, pending new orders from Howard or Miles. At Cow Island, Howard received another message from Miles assuring him that his movements had not been discovered by the hostiles. Thus, in high spirits, Howard and his escort of seventeen mounted men hastened north along the Nez Perce trail. They all hoped that this effort would not be in vain. Upon reaching the bluff at the north end of the Bear Paws on October 4, they intercepted Miles' trail, and toward evening they met two of his scouts. Before darkness descended, they arrived at the Bear Paw Battle camp; whereupon, Miles gave Howard the following account of his march to that place.

Chapter 19

From the Musselshell to the Bear Paws

Footnotes

1. Francis Haines, op. cit., p. 271.

2. O. O. Howard, op. cit., p. 264.

3. J. W. Redington, "Scouting in Montana in the 1870's," Frontier, Vol. XIII, No. 1, (November, 1932), p. 62.

4. C. T. Stranahan, "Aftermath of the Nez Perce War," Lewiston Morning Tribune, April 16, 1933.

5. Oscar O. Mueller, "Surrender of Nez Perces. . ." Lewiston Daily News, March 2, 1948. Yellow Wolf had an unfortunate experience in the Judith Basin area while hunting mountain sheep, accidentally wounding his own horse. This put him on foot, and in returning to the caravan, he came upon four white campers. In quest of hospitality, he received a command to stop, which he disregarded. His forward movement caused the men to shoot at him. One bullet grazed his arm. He charged them, injured two, and took four horses. He justified his conduct in saying: "Those men spoke war when they drew their guns. I understood that meaning." Yellow Wolf, op. cit., p. 197.

6. New Northwest, October 12, 1877.

7. Narrative of Peopeo Tholekt, McWhorter Northwest Pacific 16, State College of Washington, Pullman, Washington, p. 62.

8. L. V. McWhorter, op. cit., p. 473.

9. Ibid., p. 478.

10. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., p. 204. Yellow Wolf said, "We knew General Howard was more than two suns back on the trail. It was nothing hard to keep ahead of him."

11. Nelson A. Miles, Personal Recollections and Observations of General Nelson A. Miles. (New York: The Werner Co., 1897), p. 132. In October, 1879, Miles led a party of twenty soldiers on a six-day hunt along the Rosebud River. The trophies of this excursion were 60 deer, 3 antelopes, 1 mountain sheep, 5 elk, 17 bison, 70 prairie chickens, and 6 ducks.

12. O. O. Howard, op. cit., p. 263.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., p. 264. Notwithstanding Howard's fine display of energy, speed, and determination during this phase of the pursuit, the Helena Weekly Independent of October 4 stated: "The impression is strengthening that the sword is too horny an implement for Howard to handle."

Chapter 20

COLONEL NELSON A. MILES ENTERS THE CAMPAIGN

When Howard and Sturgis found themselves trailing the Nez Perces down Clarks Fork on September 12, they realized that if they were to capture them Colonel Miles was their only hope. He had a strong command at Fort Keogh, but that was several hundred miles to the northeast. Still, there was a chance that a messenger might reach him in time, so Howard sent an appeal for Miles to march rapidly ". . . to prevent the escape of this hostile band, and at least hold them in check until I can overtake them."[1]

Meanwhile, Miles was becoming increasingly anxious to receive some word of the campaign from the west. Hence, when a rider moved swiftly toward Fort Keogh on the evening of September 17, he sensed that a significant message was about to be delivered. Upon reading Howard's dispatch, Miles proceeded forthwith to carry out his orders. In responding to Miles' commands, the cantonment immediately became a beehive of activity, and by morning his troops had all been ferried across Yellowstone River. Besides, forty wagons and a pack train with a month's supplies had been assembled and loaded. The Colonel's report to the Assistant Adjutant General, Department of Dakota, states: "The command left Cantonment on the morning of the 18th, the different orders regarding escort for the Commission had already put enroute the Battalion 2d Cavalry and one (1) Company, (Hale's) 7th Cavalry; these were taken on the march; . . ."[2] Actually, his total force included three troops of the Second Cavalry, three of the Seventh Cavalry and six companies of the Fifth Infantry (the latter mounted upon Sioux ponies); and thirty Cheyenne Indian scouts. There were two pieces of artillery, a breech-loading

Hotchkiss and a 12-pound Napoleon cannon.[3] The entire command included three hundred and eighty-three men.

Miles sent couriers to Fort Peck and Fort Buford on the Missouri River, ordering a steamer load of supplies to go up the river for the relief of Howard and Sturgis, and to supply his own needs when he reached the mouth of the Musselshell River.

Surely Miles had acted with high intelligence and energy in making these preparations to fulfill his assignment. Moreover, it could be anticipated that he would not flag in his effort to intercept the hostiles. His character record and ambition promised action. He was born in 1840 in Westminster, Massachusetts, of a well-known family. Nelson was educated in the public schools. When the Civil War started, he became a volunteer. By 1861, he had become a lieutenant. During the course of the war he received wounds in action at Fair Oakes, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Petersburg. An observation by his brother officers discloses a part of his nature: "Other men let up once in a while, but he kept at it always."[4] Tall, handsome, energetic and resolute, Miles was also fortunate, because every battlefield somehow yielded him laurels. He served as Howard's aide-de-camp in the Peninsula Campaign and the two men became fast friends from that experience. Before the war ended, Miles was commissioned a Colonel and Brevet Major-General.

Miles' Service Upon the Western Frontier

Miles decided to remain in the army, and in 1869, he assumed command of the Fifth United States Infantry at Fort Hays, Kansas. During the eight years that preceded the Nez Perce campaign, Miles proved to be a cut above many other officers of the Missouri Division as an Indian fighter and commander of men. Perhaps he acquired more experience in fighting Indians than any other officer. He campaigned against the Kiowas, Comanches,

Cheyennes, and Arapahoes on the arid plains of Texas; he pacified Utes and Apaches in New Mexico; he pursued Cheyennes and Ogalalas through deep snows on the northern plains. Finally, in 1876, he entered the Sioux War. This campaign made him thoroughly familiar with the upper Missouri River country. Miles learned the ways of the respective Indian tribes, and he mastered their war tactics by encounters with great chiefs. He had dealings in peace or war with Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Gall, Pretty Bear, White Bull, Horse Road, Two Moons, Little Hawk, Hump, and Lame Deer. From each contact a lesson was learned, and at least one nearly cost him his life. These were the circumstances: At the conclusion of a fight with Lame Deer's band in the Wolf Mountains, Miles was arranging a parley when the action of a scout aroused the Chief's enmity and he fired point-blank at Colonel Miles. Luckily for Miles his horse reared, but the bullet killed a soldier instead.[5]

Miles also profited from contact with his fellow officers and great scouts such as John Brughier and Luther "Yellowstone" Kelley.

The Colonel's Indian Policy

His large experience and penetrating observations enabled him to formulate effective strategy and tactics for the defeat of hostile Indians. He was not an Indian hater; he did not regard them as malignant fiends, unworthy of admission to human brotherhood. Indeed, he observed many Indians who possessed splendid impulses and attributes. Some of their leaders were capable diplomats, and when they chose this role he was willing to exercise patience and forebearance. However, in his view, the West was already a white man's country by 1870, and it should be managed accordingly. The gold rushes had distributed Americans everywhere; cattle ranching had followed in their wake. The transcontinental railroad and branch lines were in operation. The Northern Pacific was pointed straight west from Duluth. Railroads would

bring farmers. In 1876, as Miles surveyed the vast plains surrounding Fort Keogh, he is reported to have said: "When we get rid of the Indians and buffalo, the cattle and sheep will fill this country."[6] This statement does not mean that he was ruthless in dealing with Indians. It implies, rather, that he had a practical, business-like attitude toward them. He preferred to settle disputes amicably and he had already succeeded in avoiding hostilities in negotiating with several tribes in the Southwest.

The hard inner core of his nature was disclosed in his demand upon a tribe of Cheyennes in November, 1875, to release the two Germaine girls they had captured or be annihilated. The white girls were surrendered to him. His resolution is also revealed by his repetition of a frontier saying: "When an Indian wants meat, he hunts game; when he wants sport, he hunts the white man. . . . my time was devoted to hunting hostile Indians and avoiding being ambushed by them."[7] To that end he developed plans and tactics for their subjugation.

The Miles Campaign Methods

In 1876, Congress appropriated funds for the erection of forts Custer and Keogh. The latter was established at the point of confluence of the Tongue and Yellowstone rivers.[8] Colonel Miles was appointed Post Commander, and he organized the cantonment with the Fifth United States Infantry formerly stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Due to the rigors of winter climate on the north plains, he might have occupied the post in a passive manner. Instead, he equipped and trained his men for campaigning in the coldest weather. His soldiers were not allowed to fritter and doze in their camps during the bear hibernation months. Said he, "The Indians expected us to hive up, but we were not the hiving kind."[9] He reasoned that winter campaigns would be harder on the hostiles than upon

his well-clothed and supplied troops.

The foregoing account concerning Miles' character, training, experience, and attitude reveals him as a considerable man when he entered the Nez Perce campaign on September 18, 1877.

The Colonel's Line of March

From Tongue River, Miles proposed to quarter his course northwestward across the headwaters of Big Dry, to the confluence of the Musselshell and Missouri rivers. He hoped to intercept the fugitives somewhere between that point and Cow Island before they crossed the river. The weather was favorable, both men and beasts were eager, and everything contributed toward making excellent progress. On September 23, the day the Nez Perces crossed at Cow Island, Miles camped within six miles of the confluence of the Missouri and Musselshell rivers.

That evening the Colonel sent Lieutenant Biddle to the Missouri in search of a steamboat, and he succeeded in overtaking the last one of the season. The next morning Captain George L. Tyler and a battalion were ferried across the river with instructions to go upstream while Miles followed a parallel course on the south bank. This distribution of forces would assure quicker initial action if the hostiles had already crossed the Missouri, which Miles doubted at the moment. In fact, he sent a dispatch to General Alfred H. Terry that morning which read: "The reports from Howard and Sturgis are encouraging, and I will move upon the South side of the Missouri to Carroll, and possibly Judith Basin, to intercept any, if possible, prevent any of the Nez Perces from going north."[10] Miles further stated that in his opinion, by then, the hostiles had been used up by the rigors of their long campaign.

Half an hour after the steamboat was released, three men came down

stream in a small boat, bearing the news that the Nez Perces had crossed at Cow Island on the twenty-third. Glancing down stream, the Colonel estimated the distance to the steamer at three miles. If Sergeant McHugh could throw a shot from his Napoleon into the side of the headland the boat was approaching, the captain might understand that her return was desired. The plan worked, and within the hour the troop-ferrying procedure was resumed. Some of the wagon supplies were transferred to the pack train in anticipation of a fast race against the Nez Perces for the Canadian boundary. Unfortunately for them, the chiefs were unaware of the approach of this new command. During the next four days the red and white caravans moved northward in a tandem-like relation with the Nez Perces a day ahead and the Little Rocky Mountains between them. Miles had not seen any sign of the hostiles and it was the twenty-ninth of September. He had expected to overtake them at a certain point of geographical transition, a sort of pass between the Little Rockies and the Bear Paws.

Discovery of the Nez Perce Camp

However, this discouragement left him when a courier named Charles Buckrum, sent by Major Ilges, arrived on the twenty-ninth with information concerning the relative position of the Indians.[11] Scouting parties had been fanning out ahead of Miles as his command advanced, and at six o'clock on the morning of the thirtieth a detail of Cheyenne scouts, under Louie Shambow, discovered the Nez Perce trail. Lieutenant O. F. Long of the 5th Infantry relayed this information back trail to Miles.

In rushing forward, Miles observed the transformation of his erstwhile listless Cheyenne flankers to a spirited and brave advance guard as they approached the enemy's camp. Indeed, the imminence of battle, after traveling two hundred sixty-five miles in ten days, had an electrifying effect upon the entire command. The morning was raw and cold with occasional

snow flurries driving in from the north, but these conditions neither cooled nor dampened the ardor of the men as they pushed toward the concealed Nez Perce position. Miles obviously believed that his arrival completely surprised the hostiles. He wrote: "The Nez Perce were quietly slumbering in their tents, evidently without a thought of danger, as they had sent out scouts the day before to see if there were any troops in the vicinity, and the scouts had reported 'none discovered', but that they had seen vast herds of buffaloes, deer, elk, and antelopes quietly grazing on the prairie undisturbed, and no enemy in sight."[12]

Although the chiefs had neglected to send out scouts or post sentinels around the camp, they had a few minutes notice in which to strike a defense posture. Perhaps several Nez Perce buffalo hunters observed the troops with field glasses as they approached between two coulees at the southeast corner of the campground.[13] Actually, preparations were underway for continuing the flight to Canada. Indeed, many Indians were seen running toward the horse herd, and that action precluded any opportunity to properly reconnoiter their position. The circumstances required action and Miles decided to seize time by the forelock.[14]

Chapter 20

Colonel Nelson A. Miles Enters the Campaign

Footnotes

1. O. O. Howard, Letter from Howard to Miles, September 12, 1877. Howard's Supplementary Report, p. 623.

2. Letter from Miles to the Assistant Adjutant General, Department of Dakota, written October 6, 1877; from Camp in the Bear Paw Mountains. National Archives, Washington, D. C.

3. Letter from J. J. Healy to The Benton Record, from the Bear Paw Battlefield. Published October 12, 1877. Also see letter from L. A. Noblett to the Montana State Historical Society, June 3, 1903.

4. George E. Pond, "Major-General Nelson A. Miles," McClures Magazine, November, 1895, p. 564.

5. Ibid., p. 570.

6. Mark H. Brown and W. R. Felton, Before Barbed Wire, (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1956), p. 98.

7. Nelson A. Miles, Personal Recollections, p. 131.

8. The fort, consisting of ten square miles, was located about two and one-half miles west of Tongue River. In 1877, a plot of land was surveyed for a townsite and it was named Milestown. The town was not incorporated until 1887; thereafter it was called Miles City. Miles City Daily Star, May 24, 1934.

9. George E. Pond, op. cit., pp. 566, 567.

10. Letter from Miles to Terry, September 24, 1877, from Camp on the Mouth of Squaw Creek on the Missouri River.

11. Helena Weekly Independent, October 11, 1877.

12. Nelson A. Miles, Personal Recollections, p. 271.

13. C. R. Noyes, Great Falls Tribune, February 16, 1936.

14. J. J. Healy, The Benton Record, October 12, 1877.

Chapter 21

THE BATTLE OF THE BEAR PAWS

A description of the campsite the chiefs established at noon on September 29 has been given. However, it is expedient to recapitulate the facts in view of the imminence of an attack. The camp ground was located at the base of a crescent-shaped cove on the east side of Snake Creek. Although the upper end of the crescent on the southwest was only twenty-five feet higher than the bottom land, it prevented an effective approach from that angle. The other three sides were open, undulating, grass lands. Therefore, the camp did not offer much in way of protection from a dashing assault by cavalrymen. Indeed, it provided a temptation for the adoption of such strategy. Although the camp ground was not chosen in the interest of protection against an attack, nevertheless it possessed several advantages. Snake Creek not only provided water, but it had carved several coulees in the alluvial soil. Between the mouths of the two coulees a triangular bar, with its base along the creek, provided room for action. Whereas, the coulees being nearly six feet deep served as natural trenches. Even so, after Miles established his siege, the Indians excavated many jug-shaped fox holes with connecting tunnels.[1] The tools used in digging included trowel bayonets taken from the Big Hole battlefield, and knives and pans from Cow Island supplies. Shelter pits were dug for the old, the women, and children; rifle pits for the fighters. Small rocks from the creek bed were placed atop the firing pits to deflect bullets. There were no rocky crags, no windfalls of timber, behind which the besieged Indians might taunt attackers. Albeit,

courage, defiance, and tremendous endurance were destined to be exhibited behind the soft-walled coulees on Snake Creek, while the wind blew and snow fell during the first week of October, 1877.

The Second and Seventh Cavalry and Fifth Infantry Attack

As Miles surveyed the Indian position from the distance, he could not see the Nez Perce lodges or observe the details of their position as delineated herein. However, he knew where the camp was from the goings and comings his scouts had reported. He also noted commotion among the thousand or so horses, grazing on the northeast side of the creek beyond the village. Obviously, his presence had been reported and Indian horsemen were moving toward their mounts. Perhaps a hundred ponies were already laden with squaws and papooses. At least that many, accompanies by an escort of about sixty braves, were able to escape.[2] Lacking time to catch and load their horses, the rest of the Indians rushed back to the coulees, where the warriors crouched with rifles in hand and waited.[3] The circumstances demanded action, and Miles was ready and able to command. From what transpired, his orders must have been essentially as follows: "Captain Hale, Seventh Cavalry, move in on the south flank of the village; Captain Snyder, Fifth Infantry, attack the front; Lieutenant Maus, support this movement with your scouts, both white and red; Captain Tyler, Battalion Second Cavalry, encircle and confine the Indian horses; Lieutenant McClernand, retrieve the fleeing train; McHugh, mount the Hotchkiss and wheel forward, swing the four-pound howitzer to north; main Cavalry, ready for sustained frontal assault; Infantry, deploy and follow cavalry charge." Surveying the resulting formations, he raised his arm and shouted, "Attack!"[4]

Reins were loosed, spurs clicked, and away rolled a thundering avalanche of mounted might. Colonel Miles said: "The tramp of at least six hundred horses over the prairie fairly shook the ground." The charging lines raced

headlong toward the Indian campground. It was the same speed and precision that had broken the power of the Sioux and Cheyenne nations. Yellow Wolf said he heard a ". . . rumble like stampeding buffaloes. . . hundreds of soldiers were charging in two, wide, circling wings. They were surrounding our camp. . . . I saw soldiers firing at everybody."[5] At a hundred yards the grim warriors opened fire, and the battle broke with a roar. For a few moments the attack was fierce and unwavering. Valor and vitality was characteristic of every effort, but Nez Perce resistance was equally heroic and unflinching. When their guns blazed, blue-clad men dropped from their saddles.

Captain Carter's gallant charge upon the edge of the village was repulsed by the loss of a third of his command. A half-dozen soldiers were cut off, but they defended their position in a ravine and withdrew after dark. Captain Hale was killed instantly, and his comrades remembered his recent response to Miles' order to advance on the Indian camp; namely, "My God, have I got to go out and get killed in such cold weather!"[6] Lieutenant Biddle also fell mortally wounded, which left Hale's K Troop leaderless and it was almost annihilated. Other units fared little better, and when Lieutenant Eckerson, covered with blood from his wounds, rushed back to Miles and shouted, "I am the only damned man of the Seventh Cavalry who wears shoulder straps alive!"[7] the Colonel ordered a change of tactics. The bugler ordered "Halt! Dismount! Prepare to fight on foot!" However, Nez Perce fire power also made an advance on foot too costly. As a result, each fighter found a depression and enlarged it, thereby automatically effecting a transition from charging strategy to that of siege.

Although greatly disappointed, Miles gave direction to this change. He had hoped that his combination of surprise and numbers, momentum and precision would overwhelm the Nez Perces. Miles had commanded a thundering attack indeed,

but to a degree he had charged an invisible foe. Moreover, these hostiles had been able to take care of themselves. Miles had understood that they were exceptional marksmen; therefore, an assault would be a calculated risk, but he took it probably hoping to achieve a smashing victory before Howard arrived with reinforcements. Within an hour he began to realize that storming the stronghold would produce unacceptable casualties. His precipitous attacks proved to be a rash venture; hence, at 3:00 P.M., he reluctantly imposed a siege upon the beleaguered hostiles.

The Character of Nez Perce Defenses

Meantime, Nez Perce activities might be described as a pattern of organized confusion. Many warriors were frustrated in their attempts to catch their ponies, because Captain Tyler's soldiers and Cheyennes were pressing down upon them. Between firing at the advancing foe and trying to secure transportation they were sorely distressed. Chief Joseph was among them, and he managed to catch a pony for his daughter and send her north with the fleeing column. By then the horses were stampeding and he was forced to run for his life. Chief Joseph described his feelings and reactions about this emergency in these words:

> I thought of my wife and children, who were now surrounded by soldiers, and I resolved to go to them or die. With a prayer in my mouth to the Great Spirit Chief who rules above, I dashed unarmed through the line of soldiers. It seemed to me that there were guns on every side, before and behind me. My clothes were cut to pieces and my horse was wounded, but I was not hurt. As I reached the door of my lodge, my wife handed me my rifle, saying: "Here's your gun. Fight!"
>
> The soldiers kept up a continuous fire. Six of my men were killed in one spot near me. Ten or twelve soldiers charged into our camp and got possession of two lodges, killing three Nez Perces and losing three of their men, who fell inside our lines. I called my men to drive them back. We fought at close range, not more than twenty steps apart, and drove the soldiers back upon their main line, leaving their dead in our hands. We secured their arms and ammunition. We lost, the first day and night, eighteen men and three women.[8]

As Chief Joseph stated, some of the warriors were killed in their flight toward the coulees. Others sought the protection of shallow lateral ravines close at hand, where they remained until nightfall, when they returned to the camp under cover of darkness. Accidents were inherent in this situation with Nez Perce warriors separated, fighting as ones and twos. In fact, four braves, including capable Lean Elk (Poker Joe), met death at the hands of their own comrades. Whereas, Joseph's brave brother Ollokot, Pile of Clouds, Toohool-hoolzote, Hahtalekin, and many others were slain by the attackers.

Surrounded by low-lying soldiers and bereft of all but a few of their ponies, the Indians were in a desperate plight. The loss of their remuda was catastrophic. Without horses there was no prospect of a successful flight for the majority. In the circumstances, lesser men would have raised the white flag to prevent further effusion of blood and terminate physical suffering from exposure.

Several soldiers and scouts have left records of the fighting during the first afternoon. Jacob Horner stated that after the soldiers dismounted ". . . the Fifth Infantry charged toward the village on foot, but the withering fire of the Indians soon proved too severe, and attempts to capture the village by such means had to be abandoned."[9] Louis Shambow stated that he used his dead horse as bulwark until the odor resulting from repeated hits forced him to wiggle into a new position behind a rock. Here he was joined by Luther "Yellowstone" Kelley and Corporal John Headdo. They exchanged shots with the relatively invisible hostiles until the corporal was mortally wounded. He died while they were carrying him away. Concerning Nez Perce marksmanship Shambow said, "Those Indians were the best shots I ever saw. I would put a small stone on top of my rock and they would get it every time."[10]

On the other hand, the soldiers and scouts pinned the warriors down in

their rifle pits. Any reckless Indian was sure to draw a volley of accurate shots. Thus, marksmen on both sides exercised great caution in these exchanges. The most terrifying weapons in this battle were the artillery pieces. This was particularly true on the evening of October 1, after Captain Brotherton's wagon train arrived with tents, supplies, and a twelve-pound cannon. At first the artillerymen experienced difficulty in placing their shots in the coulees, but by sinking the tail piece they elevated the muzzle and thereby converted the cannon into a mortar. Exploding shrapnel raised havoc with the riflepits and tunnels. Indeed, a woman and child were buried alive in a shelter as a result of such an explosion. Other Indians were partially buried from time to time, but no deaths were attributed to direct hits. Miles certainly had the Nez Perces corralled and their surrender was inevitable. Still, he deemed it expedient to send a courier to inform Howard and Sturgis about the siege and urge them to hasten forward with reinforcements. The messenger missed Howard, but he reached Sturgis on the evening of October 2, and he moved forward rapidly.

Conditions in the Coulees During the Siege

Whereas, the soldiers were quite comfortable in camp on the evening of October 1, the Nez Perces were penned in their cold, dismal coulees. An unnamed woman left this record of her experience:

> We digged the trenches with camas hooks and butcher knives. With pans we threw out the dirt. We could not do much cooking. Dried meat. . . would be handed around. . . given to the children first. I was three days without food. Children cried with hunger and cold. Old people suffering in silence. Misery everywhere. Cold and dampness all around.[11]

Ollokot's wife, Wetatonmi, added, "We slept only by naps; sitting in our pits; leaning forward or back against the dirt wall. Many of the warriors stayed in their pits all the time."[12]

Yellow Wolf gave a graphic account of their forlorn situation at the

beginning of the third day of battle:

> Morning came, bringing the battle anew. Bullets from everywhere! A big gun throwing bursting shells. From rifle pits, warriors returned shot for shot. Wild and stormy, the cold wind was thick with snow. Air filled with smoke of powder. Flash of guns through it all. As the hidden sun traveled upward, the war did not weaken. . . . Cooking facilities in the besieged camp were piteously meager. The dead brush along the creek---a species of undersized willow---afforded scant kindling. Buffalo chips, though abundant, became buried the first night of the siege beneath a blanket of snow and were available only under cover of darkness. . . . A young warrior, wounded, lay on a buffalo robe dying without complaint. Children crying with cold. No fire. There could be no light. Everywhere the crying, the death wail. . . . All night we remained in those pits. The cold grew stronger. The wind was filled with snow. Only a little sleep. There might be a charge by the soldiers. The warriors watched by turns. A long night. . . . I felt the coming end. All for which we had suffered lost![13]

When proud, courageous Nez Perce youth, such as Yellow Wolf, placed their hearts upon the ground, surely the chief's wisdom would soon search for pathways toward peace.

Albeit, there were a few moments of exultation among the Indians, accompanied by corresponding depression in the Colonel's camp, then the reactions were completely reversed. These were the circumstances: The defeat of General George A. Custer's forces in the Battle of Little Big Horn on June 25, 1876, brought great pressure upon the Sioux nation. In order to escape retaliation a considerable tribe, under Chief Sitting Bull, sought a sanctuary in Canada. They occupied an area directly north of the Bear Paws, and upon occasion their presence was reported on the American side of the boundary.

As already noted, the vicissitudes of the campaign forced the Nez Perces toward Canada. Their battle experiences at the Big Hole and Canyon Creek, together with the unending pursuit of the indefatigable Howard reinforced by Sturgis, presented flight to Canada as the only alternative to surrender and subjugation. With their goal within easy reach, miscalculations had enabled Miles to corral most of them. Within several days, Miles would surely

be reinforced by Howard and Sturgis. There was still one prospect of escape, namely, would Sitting Bull respond to an appeal for help?

Acting upon the precept of never despairing without hope, six warriors slipped out of camp during the night of September 30, with a message for Sitting Bull. Unfortunately these messengers came upon an Assiniboine village, where they were murdered. Even so, Sitting Bull received the message from other escapees, but that worthy quickly moved his camp forty miles in the opposite direction! Apparently the old Medicine Man did not choose to increase his considerable unpopularity in America by pulling Nez Perce chestnuts out of the fire.

This is not true & should never see print - JPW

Meanwhile, the imprisoned hostiles waited and hoped. Then, on the afternoon of October 3, their sharp eyes beheld many dark objects in the distance, moving toward their camp. A joyful shout rang out to the effect that Sitting Bull's warriors were coming! Further observation disclosed the fact that a herd of partially snow-covered bison bore a close resemblance to mounted Indians and their trappings. This development produced deep gloom in the coulees and great jubilation in the camp on the plain. Thus, the last hope of the imprisoned hostiles was truly evanescent like ". . . snowflakes on the river, a moment bright, then gone forever."

The death of Chief Looking Glass was incidental to this misapprehension. While standing partly exposed in order to observe the approach of a mounted Indian whom he supposed to be a courier from the Sioux, a bullet struck him in the forehead.[14] His death was instantaneous and it had a profound effect upon the people. Like Young Joseph, Looking Glass was the son of a renowned chief who bore the same name. Both father and son had been dynamic leaders, proud, independent, eloquent, and forceful. Looking Glass was the fifth chief killed on Snake Creek, and his passing was symbolical, strategic, and atoning. It symbolized the end of the old order of Nez Perce culture. Since

the dawn of Nez Perce history they had been governed by a dynasty of chiefs. The close-knit fabric of tribal solidarity that had united the generations was being torn asunder. A nation was dying in the frozen rifle pits on Snake Creek. The deaths of Chiefs Lean Elk, Hahtalekin, Ollokot (sub-chief), Toohoolhoolzote, and Looking Glass were therefore strategic. Heirs of old free and easy ways, they had laid down their lives for the cause of independence. Their vital sparks had been quickly extinguished; whereas, the spirits of surviving chiefs were bound to be crushed beyond recovery. The element of atonement marked the passing of Looking Glass in particular. Although he entered the war more reluctantly than some other chiefs, once in, his responsibility for tribal misadventures was considerable. Dominating and persuasive, his vote for flight from the Clearwater was decisive. His determination to unite with the Crow Indians and travel leisurely over a circuitous route in reaching them, was not well-conceived. His overconfidence at the Big Hole, and again, in the Bear Paws, had overcome the anxieties of more restless warriors. He was a great, dynamic chieftain and men followed him intuitively. His judgment had been exercised in what he conceived to be the best interests of the people, but in this campaign he did not seem to select the best of all possible choices.

Having done much of what was done, he shared the fate of those who sacrificed all. Thenceforth, leadership and responsibility would be shared by Chiefs Joseph and White Bird.

Gestures Toward Peace

In his report to the Assistant Adjutant General, Colonel Miles stated that, "The Indians had from time to time displayed a white flag, but when communicated with had refused to surrender their arms, but on the morning of the 5th they surrendered. . . ."[15] McWhorter's informants affirm that

the first gesture toward cessation of hostilities came from Miles on the morning of October 1. According to Yellow Wolf, a white flag went up and an Indian voice shouted in Chinook that Miles would like to see Joseph. Whereupon, the chiefs delegated a half-blood Nez Perce and half-Delaware named Tom Hill to go and see what Miles desired. This version is probably correct, because, as one historian reasoned, with victory within his grasp,

> Miles feared reinforcements for his own troops almost as much as he feared allies for the Nez Perces. Any hour might bring Sturgis, his equal in rank and anxious for promotion. Even worse, Howard might arrive and take command of all the troops, because of his superior rank, and thus get the lion's share of the credit for the capture. To forestall such a calamity, Miles began negotiating with Joseph, whom he regarded as the head chief of the hostiles.[16]

Meantime, chiefs Looking Glass (not yet deceased), White Bird, Joseph, and others attempted to formulate a course of action. Concerning this issue, as upon other occasions, Looking Glass assumed an arbitrary position. In his view, white men could not be trusted. They were people of many faces and tongues, wholly given to intrigue and deception. He prophesied that surrender would entail disillusionment, sorrow, and death. Chief White Bird expressed similar opinions and flatly declared that he would never surrender. Whereas, Joseph, thinking and feeling as the guardian of the people, was somewhat disposed to accept honorable terms of surrender.

Upon returning, Hill conveyed the impression that Miles was honorable and sincere, as well as able to force a surrender. Hill said Miles wanted to meet Joseph halfway, both literally and in spirit, and talk. Thus, a parley was arranged and Joseph and two other warriors went forth to meet Miles and several of his officers at a halfway point marked by a bison robe.

Peace Negotiations Break Down

While the eyes of the Chief and the Colonel closely searched each other's countenances for evidences of integrity or otherwise, the terms of surrender

were explained to Joseph's interpreters. Miles demanded the surrender of all firearms, but Joseph insisted that his people should retain half of them to shoot game. Upon this point Miles was adamant and Joseph would not yield. This disagreement broke up the parley and the Indians started back toward their entrenchments. Then, upon some pretext known only to Miles, Joseph was taken into custody. Once again it was a civilized commander who violated the truce flag in dealing with the Nez Perces.

Miles made an innocent reference to this matter in simply saying that he "detained" Joseph at his camp overnight. Later, when Lieutenant Lovell Jerome was asked why Joseph was held captive, he said: "That was Miles' way. When he could get hold of a chief or some prominent person he would hold him on some pretext. He also did this with Geronimo in the Apache affair."[17] Whatever the motivation, this act nearly cost Jerome his life.

These were the circumstances: While Joseph was being detained, Miles ordered Jerome to reconnoiter the periphery of the Nez Perce camp and ascertain if the Indians were stacking their arms in compliance with his instructions to Joseph's associates. Instead of stopping on the edge, Jerome rode into the middle of the stronghold. Whereupon, Yellow Bull seized the bridle reins of the Lieutenant's black horse and pulled the rider from the saddle. Joseph's failure to return had convinced some of his young men that Miles was treacherous. Accordingly, the situation became explosive and some of the warriors wanted to kill Jerome. Yellow Bull and Wottolen restrained them by agreeing to investigate the reason for Joseph's retention. Meantime, Jerome was held in one of the better underground shelters, where he was allowed to retain his side arms and communicate with Miles. He was also permitted to receive warm food from the officers' mess.

As he promised, Yellow Bull entered "Bear Coat's (their name for Miles) camp to see Joseph and secure his release. Joseph described this meeting.

> General Miles would not let me leave the tent to see my friend alone.
>
> Yellow Bull said to me: "They have got you in their power, and I am afraid they will never let you go again. I have an officer in our camp, and I will hold him until they let you go free."
>
> I said: "I do not know what they mean to do with me, but if they kill me you must not kill the officer. It will do no good to avenge my death by killing him."[18]

Although Miles directed the artillery fire upon the Indian stronghold that evening, on the following morning, October 2, he exchanged Chief Joseph for Lieutenant Jerome.

Yellow Wolf stated that Joseph was subjected to indignities during his detention: "Chief Joseph was hobbled hands and feet. They took a double blanket. Soldiers rolled him in it. . . He was put where there were mules, and not in the soldier tent. That was how Chief Joseph was treated all night."[19] Yellow Wolf further stated that Jerome sent a message to the officers informing them of the hospitality accorded to him: "I am treated like I was at home. I hope you are treating Chief Joseph as I am treated."[20] Presumably, this note had a bearing upon the decision to release the chieftain. When the two prisoners were exchanged on the half-way ground, they shook hands. Although some mutual confidence and good will was thereby restored, the truce flag came down and the battle was resumed in the manner of a stalemate.

Joseph's feelings had been ruffled, and yet he must have realized that unless the Sioux came soon their case was hopeless. Later he said: "We could have escaped from the Bear Paw Mountains if we had left our wounded, old women, and children behind. We were unwilling to do this. We never heard of a wounded Indian recovering in the hands of white men."[21] Surely, the mantle of tribal guardian was fitting him better all the time.

Notice that he still employed the pronoun "we". It was two days later, after Looking Glass was slain and White Bird had fled, before he spoke in

the first person when referring to his role of leadership. This usage did not signify a change in the man, but rather in the circumstances.

On the evening of October 4, after their hopes of redemption from Sitting Bull waned near the vanishing point, Joseph and White Bird reached an understanding. Each would act as he saw fit, in respect to himself and in behalf of his tribesmen. Actually, that had been the basis of their alliance from the beginning. White Bird's disillusionment concerning white man's justice was intense and of long duration. Then, too, the war was started by members of his band. He really feared that volleys from a firing squad would follow his surrender. However, he found no fault with Joseph for turning his face toward peace. As the time for decision approached, White Bird said, "What Joseph does is allright; I have nothing to say."[22] Their meeting of minds came at a psychological time, because General Howard and his escort reached the battlefield at dusk on the evening of October 4.

The Effect of Howard's Arrival

Having been without word of Miles' progress since he left Cow Island on September 29, Howard was becoming increasingly apprehensive. Then, on the evening of October 4, his detachment came upon Miles' trail after passing the gap between the Little Rockies and the Bear Paws. As the men were preparing to make camp and consume the choice parts of a bison Lieutenant Wood had just shot, the two couriers, who had successfully carried Miles' message to Sturgis, rode up. They informed Howard about the facts of their message and mission. Explaining that they had found Sturgis and Mason, they assured Howard that their joint command was rapidly marching toward the Bear Paws. They also briefed Howard upon the first day of the Bear Paw Battle and of the proximity of the battleground. The distance to the battlefield being estimated at a dozen miles, Howard gave orders to hasten forward.

Resuming their march, Howard's party soon heard the reports of slow but steady rifle fire. Then, as they topped a ridge, they saw the familiar and welcome sights of an army bivouacked upon the plain in semi-darkness.

Colonel Miles, observing the General's approach, quickly organized an escort consisting of his adjutant, Lieutenant Oscar Long, an orderly and several soldiers, and rode out on the prairie to meet Howard. Both parties dismounted and Howard said, "Hello, Miles! I'm glad to see you. I thought you might have met Gibbon's fate. Why didn't you let me know?"[23] Since the reason for this failure had been given by the messengers, Howard's question was given scant attention. In fact, Lieutenant C. E. S. Wood, Howard's aide, wrote that Miles exhibited a formal and reserved attitude toward the General until after Howard had generously assured him that he could proceed with the surrender. Then "Colonel Miles' entire manner changed; he became cordial, thanked the General for all he had said."[24] This version is supported by Howard's Official Report, wherein he stated: "I had no desire to assume immediate command of the field, but would be glad to have him finish the work he had so well begun."[25]

Whereupon the two Civil War comrades laid plans for implementing a surrender the next day. To initiate action toward that end, it was agreed that Howard's faithful Nez Perce scouts, Captain John (Jokais) and Old George (Meopkowit), should serve as messengers. Each of these Indians had a daughter with the hostiles——a fact partly responsible for their role, and one that was bound to assure them entry to the camp.

Later, when Howard was alone with his aide, Lieutenant Wood registered an objection over Howard's promise to occupy a secondary role in the conclusion of the campaign. Wood and his brother officers on Howard's staff felt that their large exertions and hardships in pursuing the hostiles over thirteen hundred miles of wilderness was being sacrificed upon an altar of

expediency and good fellowship. However, the General had given his word and he was an honorable man. Besides, he obviously believed that there would be enough credit and praise to meet the requirements of all concerned.[26] As always, Wood was impressed by Howard's character, integrity, and soldierly ethics; but he distrusted Miles, and events were destined to confirm his dubiety.

Thus, in two simultaneous councils in opposite sides of the battle-ground, it was decided that the principal roles in the impending negotiations would be played by Joseph and Miles respectively. Their ascendancy was due to a combination of fate and the magnanimity of their peers. Each was destined to play his part so well that he would not only tower above his fellow warriors in the surrender scene the next afternoon, but forever after.

The setting, as of October 1, would be a point marked by a bison robe, mid-way between the camps of the embattled forces. Mutually satisfactory emissaries were on hand to establish the necessary contact and confidence to stage the play. Would the Nez Perce epic have a sanguine or a tragic ending?

Chapter 21

The Battle of the Bear Paws

Footnotes

1. C. R. Noyes, "The Last Stand or The Battle of the Bear Paws," Ms. Yellowstone National Park Library, Mammoth, Wyoming, p. 9.

2. Francis Haines, op. cit., p. 274.

3. Some families were separated in these circumstances, and they were destined never to be united again.

4. Howard and McGrath, op. cit., pp. 271-2. Also Chester A. Fee, op. cit., pp. 253. 4, 5.

5. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., pp. 205-6.

6. Howard and McGrath, op. cit., p. 271.

7. Ibid., p. 271.

8. Chief Joseph, op. cit., pp. 19, 20.

9. Usher L. Burdick and Eugene D. Hart, Jacob Horner and the Indian Campaigns of 1876 and 1877. (Baltimore: Wirth Brothers, 1942), p. 23.

10. C. R. Noyes, "Shambow's Story," op. cit., p. 11.

11. McWhorter, op. cit., p. 485.

12. Ibid., p. 486.

13. Yellow Wolf, p. 212.

14. McWhorter, op. cit., p. 495.
The sharpshooter who received credit for killing Looking Glass was a scout named Milan Tripp.

C. R. Noyes said he received information from a warrior named Many Wounds that Looking Glass was struck down by a piece of shrapnel. See the Great Falls Tribune, February 16, 1936.

Chester A. Fee stated that Looking Glass was killed by the sentinels while attempting to get by them and escape to Canada. See op. cit., p. 259.

15. Nelson A. Miles, Letter to the Assistant Adjutant General, Camp near north end of Bear Paw Mountains, October 6, 1877, National Archives, Wn., D. C.

16. Francis Haines, op. cit., p. 277.
McWhorter reached the same conclusion, saying: "The Nez Perces had little to gain by opening negotiations for surrender; their salvation lay in holding out until help could arrive from the Sioux in Canada.

Miles, impatient to terminate the fight successfully, probably asked for the parley. See Hear Me, My Chiefs, p. 488.

17. L. V. McWhorter, op. cit., p. 489.

18. Howard and McGrath, op. cit., p. 278.

19. Yellow Wolf, p. 217-218.

20. Ibid.

21. Joseph, op. cit., p. 21.

22. Report of the Secretary of War, 1877, Vol. I, p. 630. Quoting General O. O. Howard.

23. Chester A. Fee, op. cit., p. 324.

24. Ibid., p. 326.

25. O. O. Howard's Official Report, December 27, 1877, Report to the Secretary of War, 1877, Vol. I, p. 630.

26. Concerning his remonstration to Howard, Lieutenant Wood wrote the following for The Spectator, September 14, 1929: I stood in Howard's tent (which I shared) while he told Miles: "I have not come to rob you of any credit. I know you are after a star, and I shall stand back and let you receive the surrender, which I am sure will take place tomorrow." When Miles left the tent, I told General Howard I thought he made a mistake, for the regulations required the senior officer to assume command---that it was not fair to leave his own command out of the surrender. He laid his one hand on my shoulder and said: "Wood, Miles was my aide-de-camp in the Civil War; as you all know I got him his first command. I trust him as I would trust you."

Chapter 22

" I WILL FIGHT NO MORE FOREVER"

In mid-afternoon of October 5, Captain George and Old John, Howard's Nez Perce interpreters, approached the siege trenches waving a white flag. Yellow Wolf recorded Captain John's salutation: "All my brothers, I am glad to see you alive this sun! . . . We have traveled a long ways trying to catch you folks. We are glad to hear you want no more war, do not want to fight. We are all glad. . . ."[1]

These words were not entirely acceptable to the warriors. In fact, Chuslum Hihhih wanted to shoot the spokesman, but a warrior restrained and rebuked him. Then Old George gave utterance to his thoughts and feelings: "We have come far from home. You now see many soldiers lying down side by side. We see Indians, too, lying dead. I am glad today to be shaking hands. We are all not mad. We all think of Chief Joseph and these other brothers. We see your sons and relations lying dead, but we are glad to shake hands with you today. I am glad to catch up with you and find my daughter, too, alive."[2] In this fashion, a proper liaison was established. Perhaps seeds of confidence might be sown that would be fruitful. Leastwise, the warriors relaxed in the coulees. They would hear what Howard's Nez Perce interpreters had to say. Speaking in turns, John and George offered assurances upon many points, namely: Miles was an honest-appearing man. He could be trusted to be just and considerate. Whereas, Howard had been saying for months, "When I catch Chief Joseph, I will bring him back to his own home."[3] After listening to these assurances and promises the two chiefs sent them away and counseled with the warriors.

Final Peace Negotiations

Having been burned before, several warriors distrusted the officers. They suspected Howard's motives. In fact, they envisioned hangings and firing squads under his supervision. To these forebodings, reassuring answers had been given by the messengers. No, there would not be any shootings, hangings, or trials. Yes, their horses and rifles would be returned in due course. Furthermore, food, blankets, and good treatment were awaiting them. Many were persuaded by the discussion that their lives would be spared and their property restored.

While the warriors were deliberating, the messengers returned. They explained that the generals were becoming impatient; they wondered why the Indians didn't come. Chief Joseph replied, "We will council over this. We will decide what to do!"[4] Then, the messengers emphasized this point: "Those generals said tell you 'We will have no more war.'" This proved to be the clinching appeal. Both chiefs and warriors resisted the posture of a forced surrender. Said Joseph, "You see, it is true, I did not say 'Let's quit'. You see, it is true enough! I did not say 'Let's quit.'"[5]

Yellow Wolf said this line of argument convinced most of the warriors. They said, "Yes, we believe you now." He then stated his own viewpoint in unequivocal terms: "We were not captured. It was a draw battle. . . . We expected to be returned to our own homes. This was promised us by General Miles. This was how he got our rifles from us. It was the only way he could get them."[6]

White Bird opposed surrender and conducted himself accordingly. What Joseph said and did was allright; he had spoken, and he would act as he saw fit. Unanimity was not an important consideration in Nez Perce policy. Tribal law accorded each chief, faction, and individual the right of decision. No one was to be forced to conform to majority rule in such matters.

The exigencies of the situation forced Joseph to resolve his own doubts. He could not divest himself of his guardian role. Said he, "For myself, I do not care." Then his dark eyes surveyed the shivering, starving noncombatants and the wounded braves. "It is for them I am going to surrender."[7]

Chief Joseph thought then, and always, that he exercised the power of decision. Some doubt the reality of this position. They honor him for his pluck in holding out until October 5. But by then the murky fog of inevitable defeat was closing relentlessly upon him. His people were starving, freezing, and dying. Meantime, the measured tread of Howard's cavalrymen, under Colonels Mason and Sturgis, was breaking the silence of the prairie forty miles away. Joseph was not unaware of these facts, and yet, he said: "General Miles said to me in plain words, 'If you will come out and give up your arms, I will spare your lives and send you back to the reservation' . . . General Miles had promised that we might return to our country with what stock we had left. . . . I believed General Miles, or I never would have surrendered."[8]

That is obviously an accurate statement of Joseph's position and prospects. No one ever suggested that he was given to hyperbole. Indeed, his statements and actions were always characterized by restraint. General Howard recorded his recognition of this fact in a significant line: "And even at the last, the natural resources of his mind did not fail him."[9]

Joseph's Understanding of the Surrender Terms

Therefore, when Chief Joseph rode out to meet Howard and Miles at the half-way point on mid-afternoon of October 5, he did so in good faith and conscience. An inherent sense of values and a deep comprehension of human justice convinced him that the Nez Perce cause was not unworthy. Thus, in this dark hour, his eyes disclosed an inner pride over his people's record in this unwanted war. He felt that they had made a glorious effort to

preserve their independence. They had fought their battles and conducted their flight in a clean and honorable fashion. Surely, the powerful sovereign that had made them bite the dust would temper justice with mercy. He understood that a full surrender of his people, that is, all who chose to follow him, would eventuate in their return to the Clearwater country. He could hardly expect to regain their ancestral homelands, but rather that the terms originally governing their removal to the Lapwai Reservation would be met. He and his warriors had reached this understanding as a result of a parley with Colonel Miles on October 1. This viewpoint was further confirmed during the extended consultations with Captain John and Old George, the two intelligent treaty Nez Perces who had been with General Howard since the beginning of the campaign. Surely, the warriors' perspicacity would have penetrated and rebuked any duplicity on the part of these emissaries. Furthermore, if the foregoing conditions were improperly understood, there would be ample opportunity for clarification upon the surrender spot.

Character of Indian Surrenders

The surrender of armies has often been the occasion for elaborate military protocol and fanfare. However, Indian capitulations were inevitably characterized by a lack of pomp and ceremony. Such surrenders were bound to be one-sided affairs. The hostiles lacked uniformity of dress, and their colorful ceremonial costumes were not likely to be available at the conclusion of an arduous campaign. Thus, surrendering Indians usually presented a nondescript, rag-tag, bob-tailed type of appearance. Chief Joseph's surrender scene on the Bear Paw prairie was no exception. Indeed, it transpired among the shambles of a battlefield. Dead horses were both seen and smalled. A generally disheveled and grimy appearance was presented by all present except a knot of officers who carried extra wearing apparel.

The dead and wounded on both sides disclosed the stark misery of war. Indeed, its mask was off until the dead were buried, the wounds ameliorated, and the tributes of society forthcoming.

Forlorn as their physical posture was bound to be, the psychological influence was incomparably worse. Resentment, frustration, and mingled defiance and resignation produced a compound of tremendous pathos. One of the spectators on this occasion was a wounded ex-Cheyenne chieftain, named Hump. He had served Miles nobly in this campaign, having killed two Nez Perces with his own hands. As he viewed Chief Joseph's surrender, he may have remembered the occasion when he made the following statement to Colonel Miles: "Alas! Alas! For my race, it is passing away, . . ." Then, after meditating a few moments, he took off his belt and gun. Looking fondly at them, he handed them to Miles. Then he pointed to his ponies and said, "Take them, I am no longer either a chief or a warrior."[10] Since then, Hump had served Miles as a scout and had now helped him throw these great Nez Perces' hearts upon the ground.[11]

The People Agree to Surrender

Although fully conscious of the fact that his surrender would terminate the existence of the Nez Perces as an independent nation, Chief Joseph did his level best to accentuate the positive elements in the situation. True enough, they would be a group of displaced persons upon the Lapwai Reservation, but the arc of heaven would be the same above them. The Clearwater River was nearly as lovely and sweet as the Wallowa. The camas and kouse meadows were fully as good. Surely, the gifts of this manifold land and inspirations from the Great Spirit would assuage their sorrow and erase their fears. Smiles and laughter would soon brighten the countenances of youth, and the older ones would gradually find the new order of life acceptable.

In such a fashion, Joseph marshalled the points of a persuasive argument,

which he patiently presented. His melodious voice and optimistic manner won the confidence of nearly all. After all, he had always been more of a diplomat than a warrior. Indeed, his course from the beginning had been that of guarding their liberties and protecting the lives. While this consensus was being reached, time dragged on.

Finally the messengers were summoned to the coulees, and Chief Joseph told them what had been decided. Then, as an act of faith, he uttered an avowal to the effect that from where the sun now stood he would fight no more forever. He based this resolution upon the desperate plight his people were in. Most of the chiefs were dead. "He who led the young men is dead," meaning his beloved brother Ollokot. "It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. . . ." Joseph wanted to bind up the nation's wounds. Indeed, he yearned to recover the lost ones who had fallen by the way. "Maybe I shall find them among the dead."[12] Then, speaking lowly, he disclosed the peaceful nature of his inner soul: "I am tired; my heart is sick and sad."[13] Surely, the sensitive spirit of this message, issued by a fallen chieftain in the cold Bear Paw coulees, conforms to the grandeur of other gems that have emanated from historic crosses and dungeons in the history of this world. Greetings and salutations were then sent to the generals, with a promise to surrender in a little while.

The two Nez Perce messengers went forth with mingled feelings of elation and depression. The solemnity of Joseph's manner and message was not forgotten. In fact, Old Captain John's eyes filled with tears, his lips quivered, and his voice broke as he delivered the surrender message to the generals.[14]

These worthies, flanked by three officers and interpreter Arthur Chapman, then took their stance upon the parley ground. Toward evening, Joseph rode forth from the coulees, followed by several warriors on foot. The character of the day seemed to be in keeping with the sad event about to transpire.

A snow-filled wind swirled down from the Bear Paws and swept the prairie; but sometimes towering human spirits have the power to rise above such gloom. This was destined to be such an occasion.

Surrender Incidents

Lieutenant Wood, one of the officers who witnessed the surrender, wrote the most satisfactory account of the proceedings. His description follows: "Joseph's hair hung in two braids on either side of his face. He wore a blanket. . . and moccasin leggings. His rifle was across the pommel in front of him. When he dismounted he. . . walked to General Howard and offered him the rifle. Howard waved him to Miles. He then walked to Miles and handed him the rifle. Then he stepped back and began his speech."[15]

> Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before I have in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. The old men are all killed. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led the young men is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are, perhaps freezing to death. I want time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs, I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more.[16]

Joseph's conduct was urbane and dignified, Howard's magnanimous, and Miles' majestic. When this ceremony was over, tensions broke and, as Yellow Wolf aptly states, "The chiefs and officers crossed among themselves and shook hands all around. The Indians lifted their hands towards the sky where the sun was standing. They said, "No more battles! No more war!"[17] Thus, mutual felicitations were exchanged, the war was "quit". Now soldiers and Indians would have a chance to rest, eat good food, and drink good water. Howard spoke in a kindly manner to Joseph, saying, "You have your life. I am living. I have lost my brothers. Many of you have lost brothers, maybe more than on our side. I do not know. Do not worry more."[18]

Colonel Miles also disclosed a mellow spirit in saying, "No more battles and blood. From this sun, we will have a good time on both sides, your band and mine."[19]

Indeed, Miles' overall bearing, attitude, and expressions impelled the Indians to regard him as their protector. They understood that he would take them to Fort Keogh for the winter; then they could all go home. Their reaction to this prospect was expressed by Yellow Wolf: "Now we understand these words, and will go with General Miles. He is head man. We will go with him."[20]

Thus, stimulated by felicitations and avowals of good will, the Nez Perce delegates returned to the coulees. They confidently urged the people to surrender their arms. As Chief Joseph moved among them, his people noticed slight wounds upon his forehead and wrist. By assuaging their sorrow and promising them better times,he won their hearts. Surely, he was the supreme embodiment of Indian virtues. His nature combined elements both noble and tragic. Perhaps he was the last best specimen of the pristine Nez Perce race.

Joseph's plucky spirit and kindly manner in ministering to the needs of his half-starved people elicited admiration from all. Indeed, J. J. Healy reported his activities in the Benton Record of October 12, 1877, as follows: "Joseph was walking round about his people talking to the wounded and occasionally addressing the warriers by signs and seemed quite unconcerned about his defeat." Mr. Healy observed that the people quickly responded to his leadership by exhibiting excellent attitudes and spirits.

Meantime, White Bird and his followers had been preparing to leave for Canada when opportunity afforded. Later in the night, "When deep darkness came, Chief Whitebird and his people walked out from that camp."[21] It was reported that fourteen men and a comparable number of women constituted

this band. They made for Chief Sitting Bull's camp. Only six of White Bird's warriors cast their lot with Chief Joseph. They were Yellow Bull, his two brothers, and three other men.[22]

The Misfortunes of Many Escapees

Remember that approximately one hundred and fifty Nez Perces escaped from the Bear Paw camp just as Miles launched his attack. Chief Joseph's daughter and sister were in this band. No doubt others escaped between then and White Bird's departure on the night of October 5. One of the latter's companions, named Black Eagle, estimated that a total of two hundred and thirty-three escaped from the battlefield.[23] Of this number, one hundred and forty were men and boys and ninety-three were women and girls.

Perhaps Yellow Wolf was the last one to leave the coulees. He was Chief Joseph's nephew, and his mother and Joseph's daughter (Kapkap Ponmi, meaning Noise of Running Feet) were among the escapees. Thus, toward the morning of October 6, Chief Joseph said to Yellow Wolf: "You better go and find your mother and my daughter. Bring them here!"[24] The Chief's desire matched Yellow Wolf's wish, and he succeeded in reaching Canada, but not in fulfilling Joseph's request.

The following statement by Colonel Miles discloses his effort to intercept the escapees. It also reveals one aspect of the misfortunes that befell many. Miles erred in stating that White Bird escaped in the beginning of the battle:

> During the siege Lieutenant Maus had been sent north with a detachment to, if possible, overtake White Bird and any other Indian that had been able to escape. In this he was to some extent successful, and brought back several. He also brought back the information that when the Indians who had escaped reached the Assinniboine camp, the friendly Assinniboins, instead of coming to the assistance of their beleaguered brethren, killed the two Nez Perces and left their bodies on the prairie.[25]

J. J. Healy and George Croft confirmed this pattern of activity by reporting: "Here we met Bull's Lodge, a Gros Ventre chief, who told us that the Assiniboins and Gros Ventre, assisted by three white men, had attacked a Nez Perce camp. . . and had captured two women and two boys, and killed several warriors. The had one fresh scalp with them. . . ."[26] Healy and Croft gave Major Ilges credit for securing pledges from the above mentioned tribes to attack and plunder the fleeing Nez Perces. A man named John Samples reported that more than thirty Nez Perces, who appealed for refuge, were slain and robbed by the Assiniboins and Gros Ventres.[27] This report was no doubt exaggerated; but a member of the latter tribe, named Moccasin, also gave testimony to the effect that seven Nes Perces were killed and four captured by a band of his people. Obviously, the lot of detached Nez Perce escapees was not a happy one. Even so, nearly two hundred of them succeeded in reaching the Canadian sanctuary, where the Sioux extended their arms in welcome. A brief account of their experiences with the Sioux will be given subsequently.

Newspaper Reports of Chief Joseph's Surrender

When Joseph returned to the coulees to effectuate details of the surrender, Howard and Miles repaired to their tents. Each began the preparation of a report to his superior officers. According to Howard's aide, Lieutenant Wood, Colonel Miles showed Howard the message he had prepared for General Alfred H. Terry. In this version, Howard's arrival and presence at the surrender ceremony was mentioned. The courier left on schedule and the message he bore duly reached Terry and finally General Philip H. Sheridan, for release to the press in Chicago. The message was dated October 5, and came from Colonel Nelson A. Miles. Although brief, it was exulting, if not egotistical: "We have had our usual success. We made a very direct and rapid march across country, and after a severe engagement and being kept

under fire for three days, the hostile camp under Chief Joseph surrendered at two o'clock today."[28]

This message made no mention of Howard, a fact that he did not find out until he reached Fort Lincoln a week later. Naturally, he was crushed and disillusioned by this turn of events. Remember, his officers had cautioned him against this development when he so generously allowed Miles to conduct the peace negotiations. They all felt betrayed. Being thus ignored by their superior officers and the press, after pursuing the hostiles to the verge of exhaustion, was worse than the ridicule the same sources had poured upon them all summer.

No doubt the influence of Howard's officers had a bearing upon the surrender report he authorized Lieutenant Wood to give the Chicago newspapers on October 25. Young Wood justified this action, because of what he regarded as Miles' disloyal and unsoldierly conduct in deleting Howard's role from the first report; although the Colonel made up for the omission in his second dispatch the following day. Naturally, this report contained more details pertaining to the surrender and gave Howard the recognition he so justly deserved, but the news value was minor. Meantime, Howard's account of the surrender had reached General Sheridan's desk. Indeed, he read both Wood's newspaper account and Howard's report the same morning. The appearance of Wood's article in the Chicago Tribune, without his permission as division commander, made him angry. Upon meeting Howard, he was so furious and spoke so vehemently that Howard left his presence in righteous indignation.[29] Contrary to Howard's expectations, events had revealed that there was not enough glory in Joseph's surrender to go around.

Before Howard left Chicago for the Columbia River Department, he wrote a note of apology to Sheridan stating that he was ". . . very sorry to have compromised you in any way."[30] The note was forwarded to Sherman, bearing

Sheridan's endorsement: "I do not feel much compromised. It seems to me that General Howard compromised himself."[31] Subsequent chapters will disclose the fact that, from the Nez Perce viewpoint, no surrender promises to them were redeemed by the pot calling the kettle black.

Condition and Enumeration of the Nez Perces

Meantime, the surrender had been effectuated. In Howard's words, "The lame, maimed, halt, and blind (Nez Perces) came crawling up the hill."[32] Of course there were also many able-bodied refugees. Estimates concerning the number surrendered vary from four hundred and ten to four hundred and thirty-one. Perhaps McWhorter's estimate is the most reliable one. He states that, "In all, Joseph surrendered eighty-seven (87) men, one hundred eighty-four (184) women and one hundred forty-seven (147) children."[33] That made a total of four hundred eighteen souls.

Remembering that a considerable proportion of the men were elderly and another forty bore wounds, it is apparent that the modesty and good will that characterized the surrender ceremony should have prevailed forever; especially if what an officer who examined the Indians' arms said about them was true, namely, ". . . he did not see one worth having."[34]

Bear Paw Battle Casualties

Twenty-five Nez Perces were killed in the last battle. Of this number, all but three were cut down the first day. Miles reported that forty-six Nez Perces were wounded and that may be the most accurate figure.

Miles' report of October 6, from the Bear Paw Battle Camp to the Assistant Adjutant General, listed twenty-three dead and forty-five wounded. A later list of fatalities, certified by the War Department, included the name of Private William Randall with those forwarded from the battlefield. The following soldiers were killed in the last battle:

Captain Owen Hale	7th Cavalry
2nd Lieut. Jonathan W. Biddle	"
1st Sergt. George McDermott	"
1st Sergt. Michael Martin	"
1st Sergt. Otto Wild	"
Sergt. James H. Alberts	"
Sergt. Otto Durselow	"
Sergt. Max Mielke	"
Sergt. Henry W. Raichel	"
Private John E. Cleveland	"
Private David I. Dawsey	"
Private Charles F. Hurdick	" (George?)
Private Frank Knaupp	"
Private Lewis Kelly	"
Private Samuel McIntyre	"
Private Francis Roth	"
Private William Randall	"
Private William Whitlow	"
Private Thomas Geohegan	5th Infantry
Corporal John Haddo (Heddo)	"
Private Joseph Kohler	"
Private Richard M. Peshall	"

Private Kohler died October 1, 1877, of wounds.

Private Irving, Co. G 2nd Cavalry

Evaluations of the Bear Paw Battle

Analysis of the foregoing casualties discloses the fact that both sides sustained almost identical losses. In each case, these casualties occurred incident to the morning assaults upon the Indian situation. Therefore, as Miles reported, ". . . the fighting was very severe and at close quarters."[35] Upon surveying the battleground four days later, General Howard stated: "The work was bravely done, though the gallant charge cost the lives of many men, and disabled many more."[36] The Battle of the Bear Paws was not as furious and heart-rending as the one on the Big Hole, but it was the finale of an extraordinary campaign.

Perhaps Louis Shambow was the only man on the field who thought Miles resorted to siege tactics prematurely. Said he, "I have been in harder fights than that and will always believe that if we had not hesitated we would have ended that fight in fifteen minutes, as there were twice as many white men as there were Indian warriors."[37]

Of course, Shambow was a frontiersman and the responsibility for the men's lives was not his. Will Cave also held the opinion that, "General Miles could have wiped them out in a few hours, but he took three days to force their surrender rather than to destroy them entirely."[38] Thus, he attributes Miles' restraint to a consideration for Nez Perce lives. By combining the two factors, the governing reason may be established. Surely, Colonel Miles had conducted an admirable march, and the ability and courage of his men were indubitable. Still, he quickly discovered that the capacity of the hostiles to inflict injury was terrible. Said he, ". . . they were the boldest men and best marksmen of any Indians I have ever encountered. And Chief Joseph was a man of more sagacity and intelligence than any Indian I have ever met."[39] Hence, Miles reluctantly bided his time until the imminent arrival of Howard's command would make a surrender inevitable.

The Status of the Bear Paw Battlefield

Upon the conclusion of the surrender, food, blankets, and medicine were issued to the Indians. During the next two days the soldiers and Indians buried their dead. With a few exceptions, the remains of the slain rested there until the fall of 1903, when Quartermaster McDonald at Fort Assiniboine received orders to transfer the soldiers' bodies to the fort burial ground. Eight years later, when Fort Assiniboine was abandoned, these remains were disinterred and taken to the Fort Custer National Military Cemetery.[40] Indian remains have not been disturbed.

For decades little interest was exhibited in the battlefield, and its existence was forgotten by all but a few. L. V. Bogy was chiefly responsible for getting a section, including the battle ground, withdrawn from entry.[41]

In 1928, the Chinook, Montana Lions Club sponsored a project of staking the Indian situation on the battlefield. L. V. McWhorter, Many Wounds, Peo-

Peo Tholekt, and Yellow Wolf marked many points of interest. They also placed a slender Chief Joseph monument upon the spot where Chief Looking Glass fell. In 1929, the battleground was further memorialized by the Chinook Lions Club and the Daughters of the American Revolution. James Griffin coordinated these efforts by erecting a monument from rocks gathered on the battleground.[42]

On April 15, 1930, Congress appropriated funds which provided for the erection of another monument. It included a bronze plaque designed by Jessie S. Lincoln, which depicts Colonel Nelson A. Miles and Chief Joseph in the central positions of the surrender scene.[43] This plaque was embedded in a huge boulder mounted upon a concrete base. The plaque bears this inscription:

"From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever"

October 5, 1877

Surrender of Chief Joseph to Colonel Nelson A. Miles
To the valor and devotion of those
Both Red and white who struggled here
Erected by the Congress of the United States
Under the authority of an Act approved April 15, 1930.

Meantime, the stakes driven by McWhorter and his associates in 1928 had been lost or destroyed. Therefore, the Lions Club, aided by Emil Kopac, made arrangements for McWhorter and several Nez Perce warriors to return in 1935. This time the stakes were re-established and a replete sketch of the area was platted. On September 30, 1936, another monument was placed upon the battleground, upon which an embedded plaque bears this legend:

Bear's Paw Battle Ground

In grateful remembrance of the officers and enlisted men killed in action in the last decisive armed conflict between the white men and the Red Men in the Northwest.

September 30 - October 6, 1877

7th U. S. Cavalry

Captain Owen Hale
2nd Lieut. Jonathan W. Biddle
1st Sergt. George McDermott
1st Sergt. Michael Martin
1st Sergt. Otto Wild
Sergt. James H. Alberts
Sergt. Otto Durselow
Sergt. Mac Mielke
Sergt. Henry W. Raichel
Pvt. John F. Cleveland
Pvt. David I. Dawsey
Pvt. Charles F. Hurdick
Pvt. Frank Knaupp
Pvt. Lewis Kelly
Pvt. Samuel McIntyre
Pvt. William J. Randall
Pvt. Francis Roth
Pvt. William Whitlow

2nd U. S. Cavalry

Pvt. John Irving

5th U. S. Infantry

Corporal John Haddo
Pvt. Thomas Geohegan
Pvt. Joseph Kohler
Pvt. Richard M. Peshall

Erected by the
Daughters of the American Revolution
and the
Citizens of Blaine County, Montana
September 30, 1936

Since then the Chinook Lions Club has made occasional efforts to secure additional funds from Congress to enlarge and beautify the battleground. Pending these developments, the historic battlefield where Colonel Miles superintended Chief Joseph's surrender still lies almost forgotten among the ravines and gullies that describe the bluffs of Snake Creek. Undoubtedly trees, grass, and a pleasant fountain of water would make the area far more attractive, but Agnes C. Laut caught the true significance of the place when she said: "There is something in this old battlefield to tug at your heart strings."[44]

Perhaps the existing pristine elemental atmosphere of desolation provides a proper setting for a memorial to the valor and suffering that characterized the lives of the white and red men who fought and bled upon this dismal field from September 30 to October 5, in the year of the Indian dog fall, 1877.

Chapter 22

"I Will Fight No More Forever"

Footnotes

1. Yellow Wolf, p. 222.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 223.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 224.

6. Ibid., p. 225.

7. Alvin M. Josephy, "The Last Stand of Chief Joseph," (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1958), Vol. IX, No. 2, p. 80.

8. Chief Joseph, op. cit., pp. 20, 21.

9. O. O. Howard, op. cit., p. 273.

10. The Avant Courier, Bozeman, Montana, June 21, 1877.

11. Nelson A. Miles, Personal Recollections, op. cit., p. 277.

12. Chief Joseph, op. cit., p. 21. By this time Joseph had lost two wives and his brother Ollokot. His daughter had fled to Canada.

13. Ibid.

14. Francis Haines, op. cit., p. 279-80.

15. C. E. S. Wood, op. cit., p. 4. Also, letter from Wood to McWhorter, January 31, 1936. McWhorter NP 29, pp. 19-20. State College of Washington Archives, Pullman, Washington. Several versions of Joseph's actions incident to the surrender were given by persons whose lack of proximity to the scene render their statements somewhat unreliable. Private Charles A. Smith and citizens William Bent, John Samples, and Frank J. Parker may have received the impression that Joseph deliberately insulted Howard in either refusing to tender his rifle to him or else offering it to him, muzzle first, in a menacing manner. These reports, unsupported by reference from the principals, are not very convincing. Woods' eye and ear witness account is much more in keeping with Joseph's character.

16. Hear Me, My Chiefs, p. 498.

Footnotes - Chapter 22

17. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., p. 225.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., p. 224.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., p. 229.

22. Ibid., p. 226.

23. L. V. McWhorter, op. cit., p. 499.

24. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., p. 229.

25. Nelson A. Miles, Personal Recollections, p. 276.

26. The Benton Record, October 12, 1877.

27. Charlotte M. Kirkwood, op. cit., p. 27.
Mrs. James Dorrity recorded an example of Gros Ventre cruelty toward three Nez Perce men and two women escapees. She stated that an Indian named Long Horse and his associates took the Nez Perces captive and killed them. This crime was committed on a sandbar in Milk River several miles west of present-day Chinook, Montana.

28. Miles to Terry, October 5, 1877. Report of the Secretary of War, 1877, I, p. 515.

29. Chicago Tribune, October 25, 1877. Also C. E. S. Wood, op. cit., pp. 333-34.

30. Howard to Sheridan, October 25, 1877, Box 1183, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

31. Ibid.

32. O. O. Howard, Nez Perce Joseph, p. 269.

33. Hear Me, My Chiefs, p. 499.

34. Albert G. Forse, op. cit.

35. Miles to the Assistant Adjutant General, op. cit.

36. O. O. Howard, op. cit., p. 270.

37. Louis Shambow, op. cit.

38. Will Cave, op. cit., September 18, 1921.

Footnotes - Chapter 22

39. Nelson A. Miles, Serving the Republic, p. 181.

40. The Butte Miner, November 19, 1931.

41. The Great Falls Tribune, February 16, 1936.

42. Ibid.

43. The Boise Capital News, November 19, 1931.

44. Chester A. Fee, op. cit., p. 251.

> We retreated as rapidly as we could toward the Buffalo country. After six days General Howard came close to us, and . . . we attacked him, and captured nearly all of his horses and mules. We then marched on to the Yellowstone Basin.
>
> On the way we captured one white man and two white women. They were treated kindly and released at the end of three days.
>
> We also captured two more white men. One of them stole a horse and escaped. We gave the other a poor horse and told him he was free.
>
> Beyond Clarks Fork, General Sturgis, a new war-chief, attacked us. We held him in check. . . leaving a few men to cover our retreat.
>
> Several days passed, and we heard nothing of General Howard, or Gibbon, or Sturgis. We had repulsed each in turn, and began to feel secure, when another army, under General Miles, struck us. This was the fourth army, each of which outnumbered our fighting force, that we had encountered within sixty days.
>
> We had no knowledge of General Miles' army until a short time before he made a charge upon us, cutting our camp in two, and capturing nearly all of our horses. About seventy men, myself among them, were cut off.
>
> I dashed unarmed through the line of soldiers. It seemed to me that there were guns on every side, . . . we fought at close range, . . . and drove the soldiers back upon their main line. . . . We lost, the first day and night, thirteen men and three women. General Miles lost twenty-six killed and forty wounded.
>
> On the fifth day I went to General Miles and gave up my gun and said, "From where the sun now stands I will fight no more."[2]

A similar compression of General Howard's voluminous accounts would be impractical. However, he made a deft summary of the campaign strategy at a Welcome Home gathering in Portland, Oregon, on November 11, 1877.

> I may venture a single remark in our own behalf. However the rewards and the criticisms concerning this last Indian war may be distributed, it is indeed true that there has been one campaign continuous, and we claim systematic, extending from the time the savage murderers of Idaho forced the unequal battle of White Bird Canyon and bedewed the steep slopes and neighboring ravines with the precious blood of our slain, to the last scene when Col. Miles stood at my side to receive the surrendered rifle of the Indian chief - a campaign begun in the treachery, murder and fearful outrages of the non-treaty Nez Perces, but continued beyond the line of this military department in precise conformity to Gen. Sherman's order, and with General McDowell's generous support and more specific direction.[3]

Howard's statement as patently disclosed his defensive attitude as it concealed his charitable disposition. Nonetheless, he brought out the fact that, after all, this devious and protracted campaign had not been prosecuted in a wholly haphazard fashion. Indeed, there had been a unified pattern of operation, and it finally succeeded.

On November 13, 1877, a U. S. Senate Resolution requested information from President Hayes concerning the causes and costs of the Nez Perce War. In turn, Secretary of War George W. McCrary called upon various officials in his department. General William T. Sherman wrote a summary of the war which was printed in U. S. Senate Documents, Vol. 1, covering the First and Second Sessions of the Forty-fifth Congress. The following represents a brief abstract of Sherman's seven-page description of the campaign:

> The recent war with the Nez Perces was so unexpected, and has been attended with so varied and interesting incidents, covering a vast surface of country utterly regardless of boundary-lines, that I find it necessary to embrace it more at length and in detail than is ordinarily called for where an Indian war is usually confined to a smaller area, generally to a single department. . .
>
> On June 15, General Howard dispatched two cavalry companies under Captain Perry, numbering ninety-nine men, to the scane of disorder.
>
> Captain Perry proceeded rapidly by night to the head of White Bird Canon, making seventy miles, with the loss of two night's sleep. There he found the Indian camp, and assisted by eleven citizen volunteers, proceeded at once to attack. The Indians seemed well prepared, for they repulsed the attack and compelled the command to fall back. . . losing Lieutenant Theller and thirty-three enlisted men.
>
> Reinforcements were promptly dispatched by the division commander, General McDowell. . . from the small frontier posts along the Pacific coast as far south as Yuma; . . . and the Second Infantry under Colonel Wheaton was sent from South Carolina.
>
> By the 8th of July, General Howard had collected a force of about four hundred men; and on the 11th he discovered the enemy on Clearwater and attacked them. . . . General Howard reports twenty-three warriors killed, twice as many wounded, twenty-three warriors taken prisoners, and seventeen women and children made captive. His own loss was thirteen men killed, two officers and twenty-two men wounded. This battle was chiefly important because it prevented other Indians from joining the hostile Nez Perces. Howard reorganized his command, sending one force up north into the Spokane country; another was held in reserve near the Indian reservation, and he himself started in pursuit across the Lolo Trail. . .
>
> Hearing of the approach of these Indians, Captain Charles C. Rawn, located at Fort Missoula, entrenched himself on Lolo Creek with forty enlisted men and quite a force of citizen volunteers. . . . The Indians reached Rawn's fort July 28, passed around it into the Bitter Root Valley in such numbers that he was not justified in attacking them outside his entrenchments, and with a large herd of horses passed deliberately up the Bitter Root Valley (which is well settled), doing little comparative damage to the inhabitants.
>
> Colonel Gibbon, with one hundred forty-six men, afterwards increased by thirty-four citizens, overtook the enemy on a branch of the Big Hole, surprised them at daybreak of August 9th and for

a time had the Indians at his mercy; but their numbers so far exceeded his own, that he in turn was compelled to seek cover in a point of timber where he fought on the defensive 'til the Indians withdrew at 11 p.m. on the 10th.

Colonel Gibbon reports his loss at two officers, six citizens, and twenty-one enlisted men killed; five officers, four citizens, and thirty-one men wounded. And on the part of the enemy, eighty-nine were buried. . . It is otherwise known that the Indians sustained a very heavy and nearly fatal loss in wounded in this fight, and could Colonel Gibbon have had another hundred men, the Nez Perces War would have ended right there.

From Gibbon's battlefield, Howard resumed the pursuit. He followed to Horse Prairie, then threw a force of forty cavalry and some scouts towards Henrys Lake, designing to intercept and hinder the enemy. . . . but this party, after waiting a few days, returned, leaving the route open to the Indians. . . .

On August 19th General Howard made camp at Camas Prairie. Here the Indians turned on him, stampeded and ran off at daylight of the 20th his pack-train, which was partially recovered by his cavalry. In this fight Captain Norwood's company made a handsome fight. General Howard was compelled to give his men and animals some rest at Henrys Lake. I recognize the full measure of the labors, exposure, fatigue, and fighting of General Howard and his command, having personally seen much of the route over which he passed, . . . It is simply impossible for infantry or even cavalry with their single horses, to overtake Indians who drive along a whole herd, changing from a tired horse to one comparatively fresh at pleasure; knowing the country as these Indians do, ready to hide in the many rocky canons, ravines and dense woods. . . and able with a small rear guard to hold at bay any number in pursuit, who often for miles must follow trails in single file. Happening to be in Montana at the time, . . . I gave up my cavalry escort. . . and was pleased to learn that it was of material assistance to General Howard at Camas on the 20th of August.

From Henrys Lake to Bear Paw Mountains, all Howard could do was follow where the Indians led, and this he did with praiseworthy zeal and perseverance. On others devolved the task of "heading off" and "capture." The Indians were in General Sheridan's division, and he promptly gave the necessary orders. He caused a force of six companies of the Seventh Cavalry, under its colonel, Sturgis, to watch the outlet by Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone; another of five companies of cavalry, under Major Hart, of the Fifth on the Stinking Water, which is a branch of the Big Horn; and still another of ten companies of cavalry, under Merritt, of the Fifth, on Wind River. . . One or other of these bodies was sure to intercept them, with General Howard's command on their heels. . . .

They successfully evaded General Sturgis' command but he made a fast pursuit and engaged them in a running battle at Canon Creek on September 13th. The Nez Perces then passed north across the Musselshell, through Judith Basin, to the Missouri River at Cow Island. Here on September 23rd, the Indians lightly skirmished with a small guard of the Seventh Infantry; burned some supplies, forded the river and pushed on north toward Milk River and the British boundary.

On the morning of September 30, Colonel Miles found the Nez Perce camp on Eagle Creek. . . . The result of his attack was complete, viz., the capture of Joseph and the surviving remnant of his brave but dangerous body of Indians. The Indians in this fight lost in killed six of their leading chiefs and twenty-five warriors, with forty-six wounded.

Colonel Miles reports his own loss at two officers and twenty men killed, four officers and forty-one men wounded.

General Howard, with a small escort, arrived on the field a short time before the surrender, but did not exercise any command. Of course Colonel Miles and his officers and men are entitled to all honor and praise for their prompt, skillful, and successful work; while others, by their long, toilsome pursuit are entitled to corresponding credit, because they made the success possible.

Thus has terminated one of the most extraordinary Indian wars of which there is any record. The Indians throughout displayed a courage and skill that elicited universal praise. They abstained from scalping; let captive women go free; did not commit indiscriminate murder of peaceful families, which is usual, and fought with almost scientific skill, using advance and rear guards, skirmish lines, and field fortifications. Nevertheless, they would not settle down on lands set apart for them, ample for their maintenance; and, when commanded by proper authority, they began resistance by murdering persons in no manner connected with their alleged grievances. With your approval, these prisoners are now en route by the most economical way to Fort Leavenworth, to be there held as prisoners of war until spring, when, I trust, the Indian Bureau will provide them homes on the Indian reservations near the Modocs, where, by moderate labor, they can soon be able to support themselves in peace. They should never again be allowed to return to Oregon or to Lapwai.

General Wesley Merrill wrote the following evaluation of the campaign:

In the year 1877 occurred the wonderful retreat and defense of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perces, who were pursued by General Howard and his command from Idaho Territory to Montana, a distance of more than thirteen hundred miles, along which, at different points, were intercepting forces which hacked and cut at the Indians, till at last, reduced in numbers and equipment, they surrendered to an intercepting force, part of the original pursuers being present at the surrender.

It was a wonderful pursuit, pluckily persisted in, in the face of every possible hardship. But who can do justice to the labor, courage and endurance of the retreat? How intensely interesting would be an account from Chief Joseph if he had the pen of a ready writer and could make his own report! His feints, strategems and ambuscades; the resolute marches in which he distanced his pursuers; his defense and passage of rivers with all his impedimenta, including women and children; the meeting and battling with the intercepting forces, or the avoidance of these and escape across difficult and unknown country, until finally deceived in reference to the identity of the country he was seeking and in the friends he expected to meet, he was brought to bay like a hunted lion, terrible in his death struggle.[4]

In addition to the professional descriptions and commentaries that have been written about the campaign by officers and historians, many glowing accounts have come from the pens of other writers.[5] Instead of quoting any of these, however eloquent, it seems more appropriate to simply review the salient features of the campaign. These would relate to atrocities, duration, distance, hardship, forces, casualties, material costs and losses, and leadership.

In Respect to Atrocities

Each side was guilty of committing cruel and wanton acts against the lives of others. No attempt should be made to strike a balance. Perhaps a great judge might hold the military officers more accountable, because their mores, disciplines, and authority were presumed to be much higher, firmer, and more clearly invested. Acts of war inevitably fall into both cruel and benign categories. While Nez Perce behavior fluctuated between these extremes, their conduct was predominantly praiseworthy. No extenuations need be offered for the wanton murder of settlers on White Bird Creek. A score of desperate young men perpetrated those crimes in a malicious, irresponsible, and provocative manner.

The successive destruction of several men on Horse Prairie, Birch Creek, Yellowstone National Park, Clarks Fork, and Cow Creek must be weighed against them. Whereas, meticulous adherence to their treaty with the Bitter Root settlers was extraordinary in Indian warfare. They also deliberately bypassed Bannack City and Junction; and their considerate treatment of captives in Yellowstone National Park was exceptional.

Actually, Nez Perce bitterness over Gibbon's surprise attack at the Big Hole was tempered by restraint. Otherwise, they would have raided several vulnerable villages along their route. Furthermore, they would have committed indignities upon the enemies who died within their lines. The

absence from such offenses was admitted by J. J. Healy, who witnessed the surrender scene. Said he: "The Nez Perces, of course, deserve little sympathy; yet they fought as bravely as any men could have fought, and conducted their warfare more like civilized people than savage Indians. During the siege they never harmed a wounded soldier, and on no occasion have they been known to take a scalp or otherwise mutilate a victim."[6] Every student of Indian warfare has been impressed by the freedom from savagery that characterized Nez Perce conduct. Donald MacRae said, "But greatest of all is the fact that this campaign was conducted without the destruction of property and the murdering of settlers that usually was a part of Indian warfare."[7] Certainly, by comparison, the long Nez Perce trail was a clean one.

The most reprehensible acts committed under military auspices were those perpetrated by the Indian scouts employed by Howard, Sturgis, and Miles. Bannacks, Crows, Cheyennes, Assiniboines, and Gros Ventres scalped the Nez Perce dead and killed their aged and wounded whenever they had a chance.

Of course, the morality of Gibbon's and Miles' surprise attacks upon villages, including noncombatants, may always be a controversial issue. Both Perry and Miles violated the flag of truce.

Finally, Howard and Miles lacked the courage and energy necessary to secure the fulfillment of their surrender pledges. So much for the relative standards of integrity, morality, and civilization as they were exemplified by Indians and white men during the eleven-week Nez Perce Campaign of 1877.

Distances Traveled

General Howard's official estimate of the distance traveled by his command follows:

> From the beginning of the Indian pursuit across the Lolo trail, until the embarkation on the Missouri River for the homeward journey, including all halts and stopages, from July 27th to October 10th, my command marched one thousand three hundred

> and twenty-one miles in seventy-five days. Joseph, the Indian, taking with him his men, women, and children, traversed even greater distances, for he had to make many a loop in his skein, many a deviation into a tangled thicket, to avoid or deceive his enemy.
>
> So that whichever side of the picture we examine we find there evidence of wonderful energy, and prolonged endurance.[8]

Actually, the command's starting point was Fort Lapwai instead of Kamiah. Therefore, his forces had traveled about two hundred miles before Howard started his count. Indeed, J. W. Whalley considered Portland as Howard's personal starting point. Said he, "We know that from the 5th day of June to the 6th of October of this year, General Howard with his command traveled 2,180 miles, averaging twenty-one miles per day, resting but once for twenty-four hours in that time, and that this remarkable march was made with animals poor and jaded from the start. . . ."[9]

In their attempts to throw Howard off the trail, the fleeing Nez Perces made two wide detours. Hence, they traveled an additional two hundred miles. Thus, the over-all distances traveled by Howard's command and the Nez Perces were fifteen hundred and seventeen hundred miles respectively. Even so, the Indians managed to keep two or three days ahead of their indefatigable pursuers. Howard's ability to follow them so closely with his combined forces was remarkable. Remember that he had no remounts; whereas, the Nez Perce remuda afforded two or three horses per person.

Today, if a person desired to "follow" the Nez Perce Campaign trail in an automobile, he would take a combination of paved and forest roads, or paved roads entirely. The distance from White Bird to the Bear Paws, over the shortest possible automobile route, would be about twelve hundred miles; whereas, adherence to paved highways would add another two hundred miles. Surely, by any criterian the Nez Perce retreat from White Bird Canyon to the Bear Paw Mountains was one of the greatest treks recorded in the annals of man.

Strategy and Tactics Involved

The cardinal point of Nez Perce strategy was defensive. When Howard mounted a superior force they placed their trust in the speed of their horses. Of course, the major battles were fought from relative fixed positions, but within that framework they exercised great mobility. At both White Bird Canyon and Clearwater River, they were in proper defensive postures. In both the Big Hole and the Bear Paws, they fought under considerable disadvantages. Between battles they ran like Cossacks and Tartars. When closely pressed, they were well-served by scouts and they even constructed fox holes. They also exercised considerable finesse in attempting to mask their movements to confuse their pursuers. Howard's Nez Perce scouts managed to penetrate these strategems; but Colonel Sturgis was maneuvered off his base by such a ruse in the Absarokas.

When battle was joined, the Nez Perces fought by ones and twos, instead of in formations. Although the fighters tended to rally around their respective chiefs or the great warriors.

Howard soon learned that his command could not outrun or corner the Nez Perces. Therefore, his guiding principle was to effectuate an advanced blockade and then strike them from the rear. Distances, terrain, and various imponderables precluded the proper coordination of this fine plan, although it was employed four times.

Colonel Miles ultimately executed the forward facet of the plan with token assistance from Howard coming up from the rear. A combination of physical elements favorable to his purpose, together with the power and valor of his command, enabled Miles to achieve a surrender.

Hardships Incident to the Campaign

Ordinarily the Rocky Mountain wilderness was kind to Indian bands. It provided much of their sustenance as they leisurely moved along. In this

campaign, the Nez Perces were twice despoiled of their village equipment on the Clearwater River. After that, they lacked many appurtenances for decent living. Nearly all of their bison robes and lodge coverings were abandoned at the Big Hole. Thenceforth they suffered increasingly from the cold night air.

An adequate food supply could not be gathered for seven hundred people in flight. Inevitably their diet was raw and scanty, and yet the energy required by travel under duress was far more than that needed for existence under ordinary conditions.

Perhaps the most distressing Nez Perce experience was the fact that where friendly Indian allies were anticipated, enemies were usually encountered. Their erstwhile friends exhibited menacing attitudes at best, and five out of seven tribes were actually belligerent.

Total Fighting Forces Involved

The various responsible estimates of the Nez Perce fighting men ranged from Howard's excessive three hundred twenty-five to Yellow Wolf's scant hundred. Chief Joseph stated that there were seventy warriors in the White Bird Battle and two hundred fifty in the Battle of Clearwater. A half-dozen were lost in the latter battle, thirty more at the Big Hole, and fifty escaped before the Bear Paw Battle. That formula would give the Nez Perces close to an average of one hundred eighty-eight fighting men in the four major battles.

L. V. McWhorter estimated that the combined military and organized volunteer forces who participated in the campaign totaled fourteen hundred.[10] Whereas, the Dictionary of American History, quoting Cyrus Townsend Brady, lists the total number as five thousand, and states that two thousand were actually engaged in battle.[11] Some of the contradictory elements in these statements may be reconciled by remembering the fact that the following officers had commands in motion that were not joined in battle: C. C. Gilbert,

G. C. Doane, Major Hart, and Wesley Merritt. In addition, a total of several hundred Indians served the military as scouts, raiders, and fighters. Besides, them many civilian scouts were attached to the different commands. As an example, fifty-three individuals made claims for serving Howard as scouts, couriers, and messengers.[12]

All told, the military probably averaged two hundred eighty-two fighting men in the four major battles of the campaign. Therefore, their average fighting strength in point of numbers exceeded the Nez Perces by about ninety-four men.

Total Campaign Casualties

Estimates of Indian casualties sustained during the campaign vary considerably. Official military reports state that approximately one hundred fifty-one Indians were killed and eighty-eight were wounded. A summary of the casualties disclosed in this history would support the tabulation of one hundred twenty-three killed and about ninety-two wounded.[13]

The official casualty report listed one hundred twenty-seven soldiers killed, one hundred forty-seven wounded, and about fifty civilian fatalities. The number of soldiers killed, as recorded in this history, was six less and the number of wounded two more than officers reported. No doubt the final tabulation of one hundred twenty-seven killed and one hundred forty-seven wounded should prevail. The fifty civilian deaths reported to the War Department seems to be correct. Perhaps the forty-nine killed and six wounded, recorded in this history, closely conforms with the actual casualties reported in available references.[14]

If the total casualties for the whites approximated three hundred seventeen, and of the Indians, two hundred fifteen, the ratio resulting would be three to two in the Indians' favor.

A summary of the total official casualty reports for the campaign would be three hundred twenty-eight killed and two hundred thirty-five wounded; whereas, the record compiled in this history approximates two hundred ninety-one killed and two hundred thirty-nine wounded. In either case, a considerable reservoir of vibrant blood was spilled over the issue of whether less than eight hundred non-treaty Nez Perces should remain distributed or be concentrated in their dwelling places.

Material Costs and Losses

Perhaps the material losses involved in the war may be more accurately assessed than any other. A start on the Indian deficit can be made by recalling that the Treaty of 1963 offered them $262,500 to facilitate their establishment upon the reservation. Although that was an unacceptable sum for the five tribal provinces under consideration, it may be regarded as an asset in this tabulation.

Thereafter, more tangible property was involved, such as the loss of many horses and cattle incident to their removal from the ranges. Then, there was the seizure and destruction of Looking Glass' village by Colonel Whipple. On July 12, the village of the combined tribes was abandoned under pressure of Howard's pursuit. Much property loss was sustained in the Big Hole Battle. Finally, the horses Miles secured at the Bear Paws were never returned. Joseph said, "We gave up all our horses---over eleven hundred---and all our saddles---over one hundred---and we have not heard from them since. Somebody has got our horses."[15] Joseph never cried over spilled milk. He accepted the loss of his beloved Wallowa as an act of history due to failures in diplomacy and war; but the government's refusal to redeem the promises made by Howard and Miles at the Bear Paws was beyond his comprehension.

Who can properly appraise the value of these Nez Perce losses? Remember that before the war they were prosperous, even wealthy, by Indian

standards. Upon its conclusion, they were wholly destitute. Gone were their ancestral homelands, their livestock, and habitations; their independence, self-direction, and pride. However, a people seldom sustains a great loss without some compensating gain. In this case, the rewards for sacrifice consist of tributes to the sagacity, energy, and valor of the non-treaty Nez Perces.

An appraisement of the white man's material losses would include individual damages and state and federal costs. Lewiston, Idaho newspaper reports listed destruction or damage to sixteen dwellings, fourteen barns, and many minor buildings. Settlers in Horse Prairie and Clarks Fork lost many horses. George L. Shoup's wagon train was burned and several buildings in the Clarks Fork-Yellowstone area (Poulson) were damaged. Supplies at Cow Island and a wagon train north of the Missouri Crossing were seized or destroyed.

The governors of Idaho and Montana each called forth volunteers and the expenses of these energetic, if rather futile, activities amounted to many thousands of dollars. United States Army reports indicate that the extra expense the campaign entailed, beyond normal maintenance costs, was $931,329.02.[16]

At this point, one historian interjected this interrogation: "Was half the Wallowa worth the price?" In seeking an answer to that question, the writer made a journey to the Wallowa Valley in 1954. His criterian for judgment was the intensivity of resource utilization. Were there thousands now living where hundreds lived before? Were there well-developed towns nurtured by a complex and integrated economy? In a word, had the Nez Perce grazing lands been transformed into a fruited cornucopia? Actually, none of these conditions exist. The town of Joseph is a lovely rural hamlet with a population of six hundred sixty-six. Of course, the countryside is less beautiful by reason of ditches and fences. White men's habitations

are no more attractive, and far less interesting, than the generally elegant Nez Perce lodges that formerly graced the landscape. In brief, a band of Indian stockmen were driven out to make room for their white counterparts.

Ironically, the greatest claim the citizens of Wallowa Valley have upon the attention of their fellowmen lies in an annual representation of the Nez Perce epic. This event, scheduled in early July, depicts some aspect of the Nez Perce War. In an attempt to exhibit a semblance of reality to the thread-worn pageantry, a band of Nez Perces may deign to adorn the event by their presence. A speculative sentiment might suggest that if the Wallowa Nez Perces had been left undisturbed their valley would be very attractive to visitors. Surely, they would have achieved prominence and prosperity as stockmen. Their Appaloosa horses might well be exhibited in a grand manner. Of course, no particular fame would be attached to their tribe. It was the Nez Perce War that emblazoned the name of the Wallowa Indians and their chieftain upon the hallmark of fame.

Actually, more than "half of the Wallowa Valley" was involved in the conflict of 1877. There were the homelands of White Bird, Toohoolhoolzote, Looking Glass, and Hahtalekin. Therefore, the question should be posed: Was half of Chief Joseph's Wallowa, White Bird's lower Salmon River, Toohoolhoolzote's South Salmon Highlands, Looking Glass' Middle Fork of Clearwater, and Hush-hush-cute's and Hahtalekin's Snake River Bend country worth the price paid in blood and treasure?

In reference to this question, there are both pros and cons. General Howard's reply was unequivocal: "One hundred and eleven comrades have been killed and buried between Oregon and Minnesota, and as many have been sorely wounded, but yet success has perched upon our banners and we can come back to you rejoicing. The results have been dearly purchased, but those results are good."[17]

General Miles equated the elements in this "battle of civilization" in an equally affirmative fashion: "What was at one time a vast plain, wilderness and mountain waste, has been transformed into a land of immeasurable resources, a realm rivaling in extant and resources the empire of the Caesars."[18] He further explained that the Nez Perces stood in the light of civilization and in the pathway of progress. Hence, in his view, their removal was both necessary and justifiable.

Leadership Evaluations

Frequent references have been made to the resolutions and actions taken in council by the Nez Perce chiefs. Upon occasion the leadership role of a particular chieftain has been described. At this point, it is expedient to evaluate the status and roles of the principal leaders.

Chief Joseph's Role in the War

The duration, distance, and deviousness of the Nez Perce Campaign attracted wide attention. Their skill in eluding capture and the valor they disclosed when battles were joined, captured the people's imagination. The subtle combination of heroism, mastery, and pathos incident to the prosecution of their flight and final surrender established them as favored underdogs in the public mind. Many experienced observers supposed that a native military genius was conducting the retreat. Thus, the legend of a "Red Napoleon" evolved as the campaign unfolded.

Actually, the clans did not invest a single chief with large permanent powers. No one was made a total war chief. Instead, decisions were made in council and executed in concert.

However, the military officers assumed that Joseph was the dominant chieftain. And yet, General Howard confessed that they lacked factual proof. Said he: "It is a difficult matter to ascertain the doings and sayings of

Indians after they have gone on the 'war path'. As soon as Joseph's Indians had passed Kamiah to traverse the Lolo trail, I had but few opportunities to gain knowledge from inside their lodges."[19] No other officer learned as much as Howard's little concerning Nez Perce leadership. Perhaps Lieutenant Wood, Howard's aide, made the most positive statement upon this point by writing, "He (Joseph) was, in council, at first probably not so influential as White Bird and the group of chiefs that sustained him, but from first to last he (Joseph) was preeminently their 'war-chief'. Such was the testimony of his followers after his surrender, and such seems to be the evidence of the campaign itself."[20] Obviously, Wood's conclusion was primarily based upon the central fact of Joseph's survival. Besides, he was unduly influenced by the testimony of Joseph's followers. Other chiefs were unable to speak for themselves. Other officers also certified by inference that Joseph master-minded the great flight. L. V. McWhorter's expression of the Indian viewpoint of this matter allows no equivocation: "Joseph, the war chief, is a creature of legend; Joseph, the Indian Napoleon, does not emerge from the Nez Perce chronicles of their great fight for freedom. Why he has received credit for engineering the great retreat is something of a mystery, symptomatic perhaps of the white man's great ignorance of his Indian adversaries."[21]

Of course, McWhorter supplied the answer to the legend. Even so, it is not likely to diminish because, as time passed, tributes proliferated from men who served in the campaign. Their reports will stand and the public must have its symbols.

Admittedly, such characterizations as the following smack of hyperbole: "Considering the tools with which he (Joseph) had to work, and what he did, he is the matchless wonder of all time, notwithstanding Napoleon, or those who preceded or followed him."[22] Chester A. Fee extolled Joseph's generalship in a high key:

> As a guerilla leader Joseph stands as high as any known in history: Forrest, Morgan de la Reye, T. E. Lawrence, Von Vorbeck-Littlow, Abd-el-Krim. . . Joseph ranks with Lee, Jackson and Grans as one of the best generals this country has produced. . . .
>
> Had Joseph led thousands and had he been born of a people and in a place less remote from the main currents of history, his name would resound in our ears like thunder.[23]

Nelson C. Titus characterized Hem-mot-too-ya-la-kekt in this fashion: "Chief Joseph, who as a human being, a warrior and a leader and the representative of his people, ranks high above King Philip or Pontiac; superior to Osceola, Black Hawk and Sitting Bull, and the equal of Tecumseh, and the noblest of them all in times of disaster, peril and misfortune."[24]

In this history, Joseph has been represented as the highest embodiment of Nez Perce manhood, He was a mature, well-integrated man. His physical and mental endowments were uniformly good. He was tall, stalwart, massively framed. He possessed exceptionally large, brilliant, black eyes. In expression, he was calm, impassive, and sedate, except when pleading the cause of his people. Then his musical voice became animated and magnetic. He was modest, temperate, restrained, and sensible. Joseph was disposed to bend with the storm, instead of defying it. He was diplomatic, just, and courageous. He fought for a cause, rather than for personal glory. Hem-mot-too-ya-la-Kekt, meaning Thunder Traveling to Loftier Mountain Heights, son of Old Chief Joseph, was born about 1840. He lived at Lapwai until 1847; thereafter, his home was the Wallowa Valley. He became Chief of the Wallowas in 1871. There were about fifty-five able-bodied men in his band. Chief Joseph was not classed as a warrior before 1877. During the Nez Perce War, when a battle threatened to engulf the people, he stopped fighting and rushed to their aid. In so doing, he deserves the title of "Guardian of the People", if not "War Chief Joseph." Albeit, his personal fighting record was altogether admirable, and any detractors would do well to contemplate his own axiom in respect to such an issue. Joseph said, "Cursed be the hand that

scalps the reputation of the dead."[25]

Alvin M. Josephy deftly placed Joseph's status in focus by saying, "The fact that neither Joseph nor any other individual chief had been responsible for the outstanding strategy and masterful success of the campaign is irrelevant. The surrender speech, taken down by Howard's adjutant and published soon afterwards, confirmed Joseph in the public's mind as the symbol of the Nez Perces' heroic, fighting retreat."[26]

Even so, the record of Joseph's compatriots deserves consideration.

Chief White Bird

White Bird was born about 1807. His Indian name was Peopeo Kiskiok Hihih, meaning White Goose. In his younger years, White Bird became noted as a bison hunter and warrior against the Cheyennes and Sioux.

Howard described White Bird as a demure-looking Indian. Nonetheless, he was so constituted as to attract attention. He was five feet nine inches tall, with broad shoulders and sinewy limbs. His cranium was advanced, his face was longer than average, and its features were impressive.

White Bird was a stubborn foe of white invaders upon his domain. This hostility no doubt influenced the minds of his younger tribesmen. However, White Bird was mild in temper, manner, and speech. He was opposed to war, because he feared the consequences thereof would be disastrous.

White Bird's influence and prestige extended beyond his tribe. Therefore, his views carried weight in council. He helped formulate the campaign plans, but he took no part in the fighting until the last battle. At the Bear Paws, he occupied a rifle pit.

Refusing to surrender, White Bird sought asylum in Canada where he lived for about five years. His ministrations as a medicine man were believed to have caused the deaths of two brothers. Therefore, their father, a member of Joseph's band, killed the Old ex-Chief.

Chief Looking Glass

The name Ippakness Wayhayken, meaning Looking Glass Around Neck, was given to this chief's father. Perhaps the name was derived from a tin looking glass worn by the elder chieftain. Old Looking Glass was a notable bison hunter and tribal warrior. He participated in the latter part of the Treaty of 1855.

Young Looking Glass was born circa 1832. In 1877 he was forty-five years old, and although his hair was streaked with gray, he was exceptionally active. He was almost six feet tall, rather heavy muscled, and somewhat flat-faced. His band included about forty able-bodied men.

Although Chief Looking Glass was aggressive and extrovertive in nature, he was definitely opposed to the war. Indeed, he deliberately segregated his tribesmen from the other clans as a precaution against involvement. However, he proposed to stay in his Middle Fork of Clearwater homeland. Colonel Whipple's attack upon his village on July 1, forced him into the camp of the belligerents.

Looking Glass was bright, decisive, opinionated, and persuasive. A natural leader of men, his influence and confidence gave him an outstanding role in the direction of the retreat. He was an experienced "tripper" to the bison country, which made him familiar with the Lolo and its connecting trails east of the Bitter Roots. He was also acquainted with the leading chiefs among the Flathead, Bannock, and Crow tribes. Hence, he played the paramount role in counseling retreat. In fact, he led the march more than any other chief. His errors in strategy and a tendency to loiter on the trek was primarily responsible for the failure to reach Canada.

He was killed in the Bear Paw Battle. Otherwise, he would probably have fled from the camp with White Bird, rather than to join Joseph in the surrender.

Chief Toohoolhoolzote

Toohoolhoolzote, spelled variously, means sound; probably a Flathead name. He was a broad-shouldered, deep-chested man, five feet ten inches tall. A great hunter and warrior in his youth, he was a man of Herculean strength. Tradition affirms that he could carry a deer on each shoulder. In his latter years he became a Dreamer. It was said that he was a homely man, with a heavy guttural voice that enhanced his oratorical power. Haughty in demeanor, resentful of the white man's invasion, he was determined to go where he pleased and live where he wished. General Howard called him a "cross-grained growler." He regarded him as insolent, abrupt, and provocative in manner and address. Surely, in defense of his hereditary rights, he proved to be fierce and implacable. His attitude no doubt influenced the young men who started hostilities in June, 1877. Toohoolhoolzote was greatly revered as a leader and patriot. His influence extended far beyond his small band. For an old man, he was exceptionally active in the campaign. His band consisted of one hundred eighty-three souls, of whom about thirty were able-bodied men. He was killed in the Battle of the Bear Paws.

Lean Elk, or Poker Joe

A French half-blood, he owned fast race horses and he was clever in other sports and games, as his name "Poker Joe", suggests. An intelligent, restless man, he was well qualified to take a leading part in an adventure of this kind. Yellow Wolf said Poker Joe was a great leader and warrior. He was a bison hunter also. In fact, he was returning to Idaho from a long bison hunt when he met the fleeing Nez Perces upon the western end of the Lolo Trail.

After the Big Hole Battle, he took Looking Glass' place as the leader of the march. He held this position until they reached the Bear Paws. Lean Elk's insistence upon speed was responsible for the change in command

there and the resulting battle. He was killed in the charge upon the camp.

Chiefs Hahtalekin and Husishusis Kute

The name Hahtalekin has no English translation. However, Hahtalekin was also known as Taktsoukt Ilppilp, which means Echo. He was only about thirty-four years old, but he had achieved considerable experience as a hunter. He was the principal chief of the Paloos band, which included about sixteen able-bodied men. As the leader of the smallest contingent, his influence in council and strategy was probably of a minor order. Chief Hahtalekin was killed in the Battle of the Big Hole.

Husishusis Kute, also spelled Husnhushcute, means Bald Head. A sub-leader under Hahtalekin, he was about thirty-seven years old. He was a Dreamer, and being a good orator, he spoke for the Paloos band in the Lapwai Council. He survived the campaign and went into exile with Joseph.

Ollokot and Yellow Wolf

The name Ollokot, meaning Frog, may have been derived from Cayuse or Umatilla sources. Son of Old Chief Joseph and brother of Chief Joseph, Ollokot was sometimes called "Young Joseph." In his relations with others, including the whites, Ollokot was always friendly. His countenance was more open and his features more mobile than Joseph's.

He was six feet two inches tall, very nimble and strong; a great athlete. Animated and full of fun and adventure, he was very popular with the young men. In fact, he was the principal warrior in Joseph's band. Remember how Joseph referred to him in his surrender speech? "He who led the young men is dead." Chief Joseph trusted and confided in Ollokot. In some ways the latter was Joseph's mentor and guide.

Yellow Wolf, Heinmot Hihhih, also known as Hermene Moxmox; the first name means "White Thunder" or "White Lightning", the second "Yellow Wolf."

Born about 1856, Yellow Wolf was twenty-one years old when the Nez Perce War started. He was nearly six feet tall, and he weighed one hundred eighty-seven pounds. He was strong and quick in movement, an athlete. His special ability was breaking and training horses. L. V. McWhorter characterized Yellow Wolf as a man of sensitive nature, with tragedy written in every lineament of his face. His laughter was infrequent, and never more than a soft, scarcely audible chuckle. He was a keen observer and his memory was good.[27]

He played an active part in the Campaign of 1877 as a scout and warrior. He did not surrender after the Battle of the Bear Paws, but escaped to Canada. In the summer of 1878 he returned to Lapwai and gave himself up. He was sent to the Indian Territory for six years when the survivors were returned to the Northwest. Yellow Wolf lived at Nespelem in company with his uncle, Chief Joseph.

L. V. McWhorter became acquainted with Yellow Wolf in 1908, and he proved to be an excellent informant pertaining to the history of his people. Yellow Wolf: His Own Story, was published in 1940, as a result of the rapport, patience, and diligence of the author and Yellow Wolf. Thus, young Yellow Wolf was a valiant warrior, and he also became a considerable historian. Much reliance may be had upon the Nez Perce story as related by him: "I am tell you true! I will die, you will die! This story will be for the people who come after us. For them to see and know what was done here." He died at Colville Indian Reservation on August 21, 1935, age seventy-nine years. Friends placed a suitable monument bearing this inscription:

1855 1935
Yellow Wolf
Patriot Warrior
of the
Nez Perce
"Lost Cause"
1877

Marker placed by White Friends

Great Nez Perce Warriors

Next to the chiefs and sub-chiefs came the renowned bison hunters and tribal warriors. There were probably a score who had achieved fame as bison hunters and leaders in tribal forays against the plains Indians. A list of these veteran marksmen who also understood battle tactics and strategy would include Five Wounds, Rainbow, Pahkatos, Two Moons, Red Moccasin Tops, Wounded Head, Otstotpoo, Yellow Bull, Peopeo Tholekt, Lean Elk or Poker Joe, Passing Overhead, Jeekunkun, Iskatpod (Black Trail), Tewit Toitoi, Lakochets Kunnin, and Light in the Mountain.

From these veterans the younger Nez Perces learned the arts of Indian fighting. As a result, many of them became experienced and effective warriors during the course of the campaign.

General Oliver Otis Howard

O O Howard was born in Leeds, Maine, November 8, 1830. He graduated with an A.M. from Boudoin College in 1850 and from United States Military Academy in 1854. In 1865, Waterville College, Maine, and Shirtliff College, Illinois, conferred the LL.D. degree upon him.

Howard commanded a brigade in the First and Second Battles of Bull Run. He had command of a division in the Fredericksburg and Chancellorville battles. He was wounded twice in the Battle of Seven Pines (Fair Oaks), where he lost his right arm. Howard was in full command of the Battle of Gettysburg for a short time on July 1. Later, he commanded the Fifteenth and Seventeenth corps in the campaign of Atlanta and in Sherman's March to the Sea.[28] The rank of Major-General was achieved in December, 1864.

Thus, as a general Howard ranked very high in experience, accomplishment, and prestige. The Nez Perce Campaign gave him a full opportunity to apply his energy, tactics, and strategy, and he did so in a remarkable manner. His pluck and imagination have been described in detail. Perhaps no one

else could have performed more creditably in the circumstances. Hindsight enabled his critics to find fault with his management. Truly, he made several mistakes, namely, he was too abrupt in dealing with Chief Toohoolhoolzote in the May Council. Furthermore, he failed to follow the hostiles after demoralizing their forces in the Clearwater Battle. In the view of many, Howard has been condemned for abandoning Chief Joseph to his fate after the Bear Paw Surrender.

Howard's native generosity and humanitarian impulses were exemplified more accurately in his role as head of the Freedman's Bureau. Obviously he was deeply interested in the Negro's welfare. In this connection, he was actively associated with the development of Howard University at Washington, D. C. As a reward, he served as head of the institution from 1869 to 1873.

As repeatedly mentioned, Howard's management of the campaign was roundly criticized by the press, many citizens, and citizen volunteers. His officers, regulars, and scouts disclosed an entirely different viewpoint. They found him diligent, energetic, considerate, and determined. Even the scouts, who were particularly unincumbered and freelancing, esteemed him as one of their kind. One of these, named Joseph Wall, said: "Howard wore a faded blue overall suit, and only his military hat with a star in front proclaimed his rank."[29] Perhaps Howard's common appearance would symbolize his actual stature in respect to the prosecution of the Nez Perce Campaign. It was a hardy man's task, and he performed in a workmanlike manner. No flashes of brilliance or strokes of ingenuity were disclosed. Howard's generalship during the Bannock War of 1878 was far more decisive and impressive. However, his conduct of the Idaho Sheep Eater War of 1879 left much to be desired. Even so, the question recurs: Who, if anyone, could have done any better in managing these campaigns?

General Howard retired from the army in 1895. Thereafter, he lived in

Burlington, Vermont, where his son, Colonel Guy Howard, also resided. The General visited war training camps in behalf of the YMCA during the Spanish-American War. Howard's latter years were spent graciously in lecturing and writing about his military experiences. As time passed, his acquaintance with, and mementos from, President Lincoln also enhanced his prestige. Indeed, Howard devoted considerable energy and means toward the development of the Lincoln Memorial University, which he had helped establish in 1896. This university was particularly designed to nurture the Lincoln tradition among the mountain people of Eastern Tennessee.[30] As the General savored the fruits of a long, rich life in doing much good, one wonders if he ever reflected upon the forlorn status of the displaced Nez Perces living on the Colville Reservation in Washington.

Colonel Nelson A. Miles

A biographical sketch of Nelson A. Miles was recorded in Chapter 20. His philosophy concerning Indians was also delineated in that context. His masterly march from Fort Keogh and discovery of the Nez Perce camp on Snake Creek were also described. As Miles approached the camp, he decided to launch an all-out attack, even though a less drastic procedure might have been rewarding. After sweeping in the Nez Perce remuda, the hostiles were actually in his power. Both Miles and the chiefs knew that Howard and Sturgis were within several days march of the Bear Paws. Therefore, a siege would surely produce a surrender.

However, these same circumstances offered an assurance of victory, and the moods of the military and of the nation were impelling factors toward prompt and conclusive action. Colonel Miles assessed the situation in that light and decided to deliver the necessary blow. He felt that a victory would restore military prestige, settle Indian restlessness, and bring honor to his command. Always a victor, the Colonel savored the trophies of combat. Said he, "The exquisite satisfaction that is the result of a complete and valuable

victory, thrills the heart of the soldier and fills him with the most delightful sensations that man can enjoy, but is changed to the deepest gloom as he witnesses the terrible sacrifices of his comrades far away in a wierd and lonely land, skirting along the base of cold and cheerless mountains."[31]

Obviously, Miles comprehended the subtle factors and intricate ramifications of war. Still, he believed in full efforts and major objectives, not in half-way measures and limited goals.

The Bear Paw victory enhanced the Colonel's prestige and had a direct bearing upon his subsequent promotions.[32] In due course, he became Chief of Staff, and he served in that capacity during the Spanish-American War. In June, 1900, Nelson A. Miles was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General in the United States Army.

Colonel John Gibbon

John Gibbon was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on April 20, 1827. Graduating from the Military Academy in 1857, Gibbon served in the war with Mexico. His next assignment was to capture and remove the Seminole Indians from Florida to the Indian Territory. Subsequent frontier service in Utah and Kansas resulted in his promotion to the rank of Captain.

Gibbon served as a Division Commander during the Civil War. He was wounded at Fredericksburg and Gettysburg. The unit he commanded was called the "Iron Brigade."[33] Gibbon was promoted four times for Gallant and Meritorious Services. In 1865, he achieved the rank of Brevet Major General.

After the war, Gibbon returned to the frontier with the rank of Colonel. He served in Utah, Dakota, and Montana territories. He was in charge of a column of four hundred fifty men during the Sioux Campaign in 1876. His command buried the dead at Little Big Horn. Obviously, Gibbon was a vigorous, experienced, and sagacious officer.

When the Nez Perce War started, Gibbon was in command of the 7th Infantry at Fort Shaw, Montana. From that post he moved toward the Nez Perces with characteristic energy and confidence. He exercised great skill in stalking the Indians and surprising them at the Big Hole. He prudently ordered a retreat to a siege position under the pressure of a desperate Nez Perce counter attack.

The ethics of his surprise attack upon a village of sleeping Indians has been criticized. Some citizens, then and thereafter, wished that he had been more of a diplomat and less of a hell-for-leather fighter.

After the Nez Perce Campaign, Gibbon was in command of the Departments of Dakota, Platt, and Columbia successively. He was detached from service in April, 1891. Gibbon died at Baltimore, Maryland on February 6, 1896.

Colonel Samuel D. Sturgis

Samuel D. Sturgis was born in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania on June 11, 1822. Upon graduating from the Military Academy in 1846, he entered the war with Mexico. He saw action at Buena Vista; in fact, he was captured there and held as a prisoner of war for a short time.

During the decade of the 1850's, Sturgis served in Missouri, Kansas, California, New Mexico, and Texas. During these tours he campaigned against Apaches, Cheyennes, Commanche and Kiowa Indians.

Sturgis entered the Civil War on the side of the Union with the rank of Captain. As a result of his gallant and meritorious services at Manassas, Fredericksburg, South Mountain, Antietam and elsewhere, Sturgis was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, 6th Cavalry, October 27, 1863. Upon three occasions Colonel Sturgis commanded full divisions, namely, Second Battle of Bull Run, Fredericksburg, and Antietam.

After the war, Sturgis resumed service upon the Texas frontier. Later as Colonel, 7th Cavalry, he was in command of a regiment at Fort Lincoln in

the Dakota Department. From that post he participated in the Yellowstone Expedition designed to capture the fleeing Nez Perces.

Colonel Sturgis displayed fine energy and determination during this phase of the Nez Perce Campaign. Perhaps he erred in being overly eager to intercept the Indians. Instead of waiting at the mouth of Clarks Fork, he was drawn into the baffling Absaroka foot hills where the chiefs eluded him. Once beyond him, no possible amount of energy and speed on his part could overtake the fleet Nez Perces.

Colonel Sturgis later served as Governor of the Soldiers' Home near Washington, D. C., and finally, as Commandant at Fort Meade, Dakota. He retired from active service in 1886, age sixty-four. He died three years later at St. Paul, Minnesota.[34]

Captain Charles C. Rawn

Charles C. Rawn was born in Pennsylvania about 1843. He enlisted in the Civil War as a private in May, 1861. During his first year he became a Second Lieutenant. In 1863, he was advanced to the rank of Captain.[35]

Rawn entered frontier military service and he was supervising the construction of Fort Missoula when the Nez Perce War started. He exercised reasonable restraint and prudence in refusing to attack the Nez Perces in Lolo Canyon.

Other high ranking officers connected with the Nez Perce Campaign, who had achieved distinction in the Mexican and Civil wars, included General Irwin McDowell and Colonel Charles C. Gilbert.

Disposal of the Campaign Forces

Chief Joseph and his four hundred eighteen people joined the long procession which Miles started at the Bear Paws on October 7. They understood that their destination would be Fort Keogh, and that they would spend the

winter there. Howard's order to Miles on this point read:

> Col. Nelson A. Miles,
> Fifth Infantry, Commanding District of the Yellowstone
> Colonel:
> On account of the cost of transportation of the Nez Perces to the Pacific Coast, I deem it best to retain them all at some place within your district, where they can be kept under military control until spring. Then, unless you receive instructions from higher authority, you are hereby directed to have them sent under proper guard to my department, where I will take charge of them and carry out the instructions I have already received.[36]

Of course, with the exception of the dead, Miles returned to the fort with his command intact. However, the Cheyenne Indian scouts, recently endowed with five choice Nez Perce ponies each, were allowed to go in advance. Miles moved slowly because he was encumbered by the captives and wounded. It was a heterogeneous caravan, consisting of three battalions of troops, four hundred eighteen prisoners, their ponies and travois, a wagon train, and ambulances.

On October 13, Miles reached the confluence of the Missouri and Musselshell rivers. There he met Howard and his command, which the General had assembled near Carroll. He had secured enough steamboat space to take his infantrymen on board. These troops were transported to Saint Louis on the Benton. From that station they returned to Fort Vancouver by rail. The cavalry units returned to their respective posts overland. Howard and Miles held their final interview at this time. It was agreed that the General would make a personal report of their plans for the Nez Perces to General Philip Sheridan in Chicago. An account of Howard's altercation with Sheridan over the Bear Paw Battle newspaper reports has been given.

Colonel Samuel D. Sturgis and his command remained in the field to watch the Sioux and capture as many runaway Nez Perces as possible. The feelings of these men, and others in the Department of Dakota, were described by Major James S. Brisbin in his Report to the Assistant Adjutant General, dated

at Fort Ellis, Montana, October 29, 1877, wherein he stated: "Many of the old soldiers say the year 1877 was the hardest they ever experienced, and if I may be allowed to judge, I will say, I never saw, even during the Civil War, harder or more dangerous service."

The thirty fast-riding Sioux and Cheyenne scouts arrived at Fort Keogh on October 13. For a half-day their garbled accounts of the battle caused considerable anxiety among the people concerning the safety of their friends and relatives. Then a white scout, named John Brughier, arrived with more details of the battle and the casualties involved.

On October 15, Miles and his motley host reached the Yellowstone River directly opposite the cantonment.

Chapter 23

A Summary of the Nez Perce Campaign

Footnotes

1. American Military History 1607-1953, ROTC Manual (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1956), p. 287.

2. Chief Joseph, op. cit., A Summary of his entire story.

3. O. O. Howard, Portland Daily Bee Supplement, November 11, 1877.

4. Patrick E. Byrne, Soldiers of the Plains. (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1926), pp. 199, 200.

5. An example of this viewpoint is provided by Herbert Ravenel Sass's article entitled "The Man Who Looked Like Napoleon." Colliers', September 21, 1940.

6. J. J. Healy, Benton Record, October 12, 1877.

7. Cyrus Townsend Brady, op. cit., p. 4.

8. O. O. Howard, Nez Perce Joseph, pp. 273, 274.

9. Portland Daily Bee, op. cit.

10. L. V. McWhorter, op. cit., p. 501.

11. James Truslow Adams, Dictionary of American History (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1940), Vol. IV, p. 129.

12. Annual Report of the Secretary of Interior, 1877, Vol. II, p. 108.

13. In this history, the casualties have been recorded as follows:
White Bird Battle: 2 Indians wounded; 34 whites killed and 4 wounded.
Clearwater and Camas Prairie skirmishes: 3 Indians killed and 3 wounded; 14 whites killed and 3 wounded.
Clearwater Battle: 4 Indians killed and 6 wounded; 13 whites killed and 40 wounded.
Big Hole Battle: 87 Indians killed and about 30 wounded; 30 whites killed and 40 wounded.
Camas Meadows skirmish: 2 Indians wounded; 3 whites killed and 5 wounded.
Canyon Creek Battle: 2 Indians wounded; 3 whites killed and 11 wounded.
Deaths from Musselshell to Missouri: 3 Indians killed and 1 wounded.
Cow Island skirmish: 1 Indian wounded; 1 white wounded.
Bear Paw Battle: 25 Indians killed and 46 wounded; 24 whites killed and 45 wounded.
Total casualties: 123 Indians killed (including about 57 women and children), and about 92 wounded; 121 whites killed and 149 wounded.

No one can ever know exactly how many Indians were killed and wounded, and yet one must place confidence in their own estimates because military estimates were never conclusive.

14. An accurate record of civilian deaths incident to the Nez Perce War is also elusive. For example, estimates concerning the settlers killed in the White Bird raids vary from 14 to 22. The names of 12 were listed in this monograph. Other civilians killed during the campaign included: About 10 on Camas Prairie; 6 at the Big Hole and 4 wounded; 5 on Horse Prairie; 5 on Birch Creek; 2 in Yellowstone National Park (and 2 wounded): about 6 on Clarks Fork; and 3 north of Cow Island Crossing. Total killed 49, wounded 6.

15. Chief Joseph, op. cit., p. 22.

16. Report of Henry C. Hodges, Deputy Quartermaster General to the Secretary of War, December 18, 1877. Senate Executive Document No. 14, 45th Congress, 2d Session, p. 10.

A cursory examination of the Congressional Record Index covering 1878, 1879, and 1880 disclosed the fact that several bills were introduced pertaining to damages and expenses sustained by the people of Idaho and their government. Mr. Cockrell introduced a bill on April 29, 1878: "To provide for ascertaining and reporting the expenses incurred by the Territory of Idaho, and the people thereof, in defending themselves from attacks and hostilities of the Nez Perce Indians in the year 1877. . . .

On February 9, 1880, H.R. No. 4391 was introduced to provide: "For the relief of the citizens of Idaho and Washington Territories who served in connection with the United States troops in the war with the Nez Perce Indians, and for the relief of the heirs of such as were killed in such service." This bill was reported favorably on May 21, 1880.

17. The Portland Daily Bee Supplement, November 11, 1877.

18. Nelson A. Miles, Personal Recollections, op. cit., p. 51.

19. O. O. Howard, Nez Perce Joseph, op. cit., p. 272.

20. C. E. S. Wood, Century Magazine, May, 1884, p. 142.

21. L. V. McWhorter, Hear Me, My Chiefs, pp. 501, 502.

22. H. Hamlin, "The Chief Joseph Trek and Surrender", The Pony Express, September, 1947. Herbert Ravenel Sass wrote, "This Chief Joseph, whose face was curiously like Napoleon's, proved himself probably the most brilliant soldier the red race ever had." See "The Man Who Looked Like Napoleon", Collier's Magazine, September 21, 1940.

23. Chester A. Fee, op. cit., p. 272.

24. Ibid., p. 289.

25. Ibid., p. 303.
Joseph has had many detractors. It appears that as his prestige in-

creased, especially after His Own Story was published, many citizens certified that he was a bad Indian. Arthur Chapmen, who had posed as Joseph's friend, circulated the false story that Joseph participated in the White Bird raids. Indeed, he said that he killed Mrs. J. J. Manciel with his own hands.

26. Alvin M. Josephy, "The Last Stand of Chief Joseph", op. cit., p. 81.

27. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., pp. 13-18.

28. Ned Bradford, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1956), pp. 36, 54, 308, 326, 491, 506, 596.

29. The Dillon Examiner, September 14, 1938.

30. "General Howard of Burlington was Favorite of Lincoln", Burlington Free Press, February 12, 1959.

31. Nelson A. Miles, Personal Recollections, op. cit., pp. 276, 277.

32. The Miles City Daily Star, May 24, 1934 printed this item: "Nelson A. Miles was Commandant at Fort Keogh from 1876 to 1880. He was honored by the conferring of the military title of Brigadier General in recognition of his painstaking and successful campaigns against the wandering bands of Indians in the northwest, forcing them to surrender and return to their reservations. Miles City was named in his honor.

33. Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, Dictionary of American Biography. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), Vol. 7, p. 236.

34. George W. Cullum, Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military academy. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) Vol. 2, p. 280.

35. Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army. (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office), Vol. I, p. 817.

36. Howard to Miles, October 7, 1877. Report of the Secretary of War, 1877, Vol. I, p. 631.

Chapter 24

TRAILS OF TRIUMPH AND TEARS

A phase of the reception given the gallant commandant at Fort Keogh and his men was recorded by Colonel Miles himself:

> The families of the officers and soldiers and all the other people at the garrison, including the band of the Fifth Infantry, citizens and Indians, lined the bank of the Yellowstone; and as some of the principal Indians stepped into the boat, and it moved from the northern shore, the band struck up "Hail to the Chief," and then as we neared the other shore, it suddenly changed to "O, no! no! not for Joseph," which it played for a short time, and then went back to the former strain.

Surely that was a curious, if not a quaint mixture of welcome and disdain.

Of course, joy over the safe return of the command was not entirely unrestrained, because of the twenty-four fatalities it had sustained. Still, officers Owen Hale and Lieutenant J. W. Biddle happened to be bachelors. Therefore, mourning over their deaths and the loss of the other twenty-two killed was probably less intense at Fort Keogh than elsewhere. Albeit, enthusiasm and appreciation ran high at the Fort over the victory and for the return of the men.

Colonel Miles was considerably lionized, and the little town developing in juxtaposition to the fort was subsequently named in his honor. Several weeks later, when he visited Forts Buford, Lincoln, and the town of Bismarck, Dakota Territory, the people residing in those places extended comparable felicitations.

General Howard's frustration over the subordinate position accorded him in the newspapers, concerning the capture of the Nez Perces, has been given. His attempt to place the record in balance in Chicago has also been described. Perhaps Howard's emotional state upon that occasion pre-

cluded him from reaching a firm understanding with General Sheridan in regards to the fate of the Nez Perce captives. In any case, his superiors over-ruled the surrender terms he and Miles had made with Chief Joseph.

From Chicago Howard took the transcontinental to San Francisco, where he made a full report of the campaign to General Irwin McDowell. There, too, he met his wife from whom he had been separated since May 30. Together they returned to Portland by boat, arriving on November 11.

A Homecoming for General Howard

As the Howards came ashore they were greeted by a committee carrying banners. Posters and mastheads announced a celebration in honor of his success:

WELCOME HOME

Portland Ablaze---Brilliant Reception
to Gen. Howard

Turn Hall the Scene of the Festivities
Grand Military Display

Speeches--Music and Fireworks--Complimentary
Performance at New Market Theater

The Portland Daily Bee, Supplement, November 11, 1877, contained an account of the tributes and responses given at the meeting. At the conclusion, J. W. Walley advanced to the footlights and delivered the following eulogy:

> We are here also, I apprehend, to show that republics, so far as Oregon is concerned, are not ungrateful, and that ridicule and misrepresentation, come from what source they may, when applied to those whose courage and patriotism have been proved on many a well-fought field in preserving the liberty we enjoy, merit and receive our unqualified disapprobation. We are also here to show that Oregonians, in estimating the meed of praise due to final success, consider the means by which success was rendered possible; and in awarding their tribute, forget not those who have borne the heat and labor of the day, whilst justly treating all who did their duty from the eleventh hour.

Thus, General Oliver Otis Howard was finally accorded a fair measure of recognition and praise for his considerable exertions in dealing with

the Nez Perces during the preceding five months.

Countermanding the Surrender Terms

Meantime, Miles quartered his captive Nez Perces at Fort Keogh and began making preparations for their sustenance until spring, when he planned to return them to the Northwest in accordance with the surrender terms. Having received no reply to his requests for information or orders, Miles was governed by the original design of placing the Nez Perces on the Lapwai Reservation. However, higher authorities had been assessing the facts of the Nez Perce case, and they decided to countermand the terms and pursue a different course than that which had been originally contemplated. The prospect of sending the Nez Perces to the Indian Territory, if they were ever captured, was proposed by Colonel Erwin C. Watkins, Indian Bureau Inspector, on July 20, 1877.[1] The idea obviously had merit, because Idahoans who had sustained losses in lives and property were bound to harbor bitterness toward the hostiles. Treaty Nez Perces and Lapwai Reservation officials entertained reasonable doubts concerning the integration of the former non-treaty Dreamer stockmen and hunters with the steady reservation farmers. Of course, if that prospect posed a problem, then there was still less logic in attempting to merge the captives with a miscellany of other tribes in the Indian Territory. But Indian Bureau officials were never noted for logical and consistent policies. At the moment they were committed to a centralized reservation system, and it seemed expedient to establish these Nez Perces upon it. Generals William T. Sherman and Philip H. Sheridan were in accord with this policy.[2] In this matter, Sherman disclosed the same resoluteness that characterized his march through Georgia. On August 31, he instructed Sheridan to withhold terms from the hostiles if, and when, they were captured. They were to be treated with extreme severity like the Modocs. In a telegram dated October 10, Sherman flatly stated that the Nez Perces "must never be

allowed to return to Oregon, but should be engrafted on the Modoc in Indian country."

Thus, by November these worthies were in favor of settling the Nez Perces upon the Quapaw Reservation near the Modocs. General Sherman thought that was a fine place for them, ". . . where by moderate labor they can soon be able to support themselves in peace. They should never again be allowed to return to Oregon or Lapwai."[3] Sherman realized that this decision conflicted with his order to Howard before he had left the Department of the Columbia, wherein he said: "Pursue the Indians until captured or driven out of the country. If captured care for them in your own department. . ."[4] He was also cognizant of the fact that Howard and Miles had promised to send their captives to the Lapwai Reservation in the spring of 1878. Nevertheless, he invoked the exile sentence upon them, because ". . . there should be extreme severity, else other tribes alike situated may imitate their example."[5]

As a general, Sherman admired the fighting and tactical qualities the Nez Perces had exhibited in the campaign. Indeed, he paid a glowing tribute to their prowess:

> Thus had terminated one of the most extraordinary Indian wars of which there is any record. The Indians throughout displayed a courage and skill that elicited universal praise; they abstained from scalping; let captive women go free; did not commit indiscriminate murders of peaceful families and fought with almost scientific skill, using advance and rear guards, skirmish lines and field fortifications.[6]

Even so, Sherman's admiration for the valor and quality of an honorable foe did not blind him to the dangers of returning them to the Northwest. Restlessness still existed among many tribes, and Sherman did not propose to make any Nez Perce leadership available to potential enemies.

Secretary of the Interior, Carl Shurz, also concurred in these views. Therefore, by November 1, Miles received notice from General Sheridan that he should transport his prisoners down the Yellowstone River to Fort Buford,

thence on the Missouri to Fort Lincoln. These forts were equi-distant, that is, it was four hundred miles from Fort Keogh to Fort Buford and an equal distance from the latter post to Fort Lincoln. The full import of this order was not disclosed to Chief Joseph until he reached Fort Lincoln on November 16.

In fact, General Sheridan's first order simply implied that the cost of supplying the prisoners would be much less at Fort Lincoln. Even if Miles suspected that a long-range plan was on foot, he had no alternative. Winter was pressing in upon the Yellowstone, as evidenced by the appearance of slush ice in the water. The transportation of four hundred thirty-one (a baker's dozen Nez Perces had been rounded up since the surrender) people, including the wounded, ill, old, young, and distraught, eight hundred miles through a wilderness region was a task of the first magnitude.

Therefore, the Colonel applied his executive talents toward its solution. He organized a wagon train and arranged to march the warriors and most of the able-bodied women prisoners overland under military escort. The balance, consisting of the wounded, ill, aged, and young, could be transported more expeditiously by water. Steamboats were not available for service at that season of the year. An alternative was presented by the arrival of a fleet of flatboats from Livingston, with winter food supplies for Fort Keogh. Miles requisitioned fourteen flatboats and their operators to transport his prisoners to Fort Buford, situated at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers.

Flatboating Down the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers

A fascinating account of this flatboating operation was written by one of the steermen named Fred G. Bond.[6] The following fifteen paragraphs represent a compression of his twenty-two page monograph concerning the voyage.

2 7 See foot

The flatboats were about thirty-two feet long and eight feet wide, tapering slightly at each end, having four long sweep-oars. Twenty-two Nez Perces were turned over to Mr. Bond, together with the following rations: dried salt port, Rio green coffee, brown sugar, hard tack, rice, navy beans, flour, and baking powder. A spot of stones was arranged on the boat for the accommodation of an Indian fire.

In the interest of a speedy voyage, Colonel Miles offered a prize to the first flatboatman who arrived at Fort Buford. Mr. Bond accepted the challenge, and in order to facilitate his prospects he held a council and organized his prisoners in this fashion:

> I stood up and told them I was there Chief on this journey of wha-wha meaning Far-Far, that we was going through a hostile country of the dog cutthrout of Sioux and the flaping Crows giving them the signs that hereafter they was my people to watch for safty and I expected them to do my commands quickly and with respect. I then turned towards the aged Chief who had repeated all I said in this counsel I said I name this Chief George Washington because of his noble appearance. You will do his bidding from me at all times and places on this journey. I then turned to a very aged Indian woman who hair was snow white, she was tall slender and very dark with folded wrinkles on her face that would put to shame an age allegator of the Florida glades. This lady I said we will call her Shades of Night, she will be our boat figure head and pilot and in command of all women with us, also the two children. Then I turned to a middle age woman and said you will make and care for the coffee at all times also its roasting and help geather dry willow wood for the boat fire. The other Indian women I told them to cook, wash and tend to sick and wounded. The young Indian men I did not give them a task for I needed them when the time come for them to act.[7]

The young men were often needed as oarsmen, and sometimes as pullers and pushers when sandbars were encountered. Otherwise, they were permitted to make and use bows and arrows. Their skill as archers, together with Washington's prowess in using Bond's rifle, adequately supplemented their rations with fresh game of many kinds.

Bond tied up his boat on an island, whenever possible, for an hour at mid-sun. This respite gave his people an opportunity to exercise and relax. They averaged four miles an hour, or forty miles per day. Precautions were

taken each night against mishaps or theft of rations by animals or roving Sioux bands.

An evidence of Bond's spiritual stewardship is found in this statement:

> After tieing up for the nights and our feast was over I would explain to my people about our head chief (Great Father) at Washington, D. C. How they held consol's there to run so large white nation. The city were the white people lived so thick they would fight for space to live and air to breath, the great Iron horse that had the speed of a hundred ponies that lived on wood and water and how many sun it would take his Iron horse to reach Washington D. C. Washington would help me translate and by signs my people understood. We seat there and talk till the moon would throw its silver rays on the frozen river mist on the drift wood. All then would be hushed when Washington gave a prayer.[8]

Obviously, Bond established an exceptional rapport with these Nez Perce people.

The weather was generally pleasant, with bright days and frosty nights. Nature was generous with her bounties of fish and game. In a stretch of the Badlands, the Yellowstone River was lined by bullberry bushes. The Indians relished the berries, but in so doing, they made ". . . it sad for our sugar ration."[9]

When Bond reached the Missouri River the slush ice made his crossing difficult, but he reached Fort Buford in good order. There the military took over his twenty-two Nez Perces, placed them under guard, and treated them as prisoners indeed. The other flatboats arrived the following day or so, and the wagon train with prisoners and escort, under command of Colonel Miles, also came in.

On November 9, Special Order No. 225 directed the release of five companies from Fort Buford to escort the Nez Perce prisoners to Bismarck.[10] However, Colonels Miles and Moore decided to extend the amphibian operation to Fort Lincoln. After all, only one flatboat out of fourteen had been wrecked, and the loss of lives was slender. Therefore, the operators were offered premium wages to undertake the navigation of the rapidly flowing

Missouri. Again, time was of the essence, because the slush was congealing into ice blocks.

Fred G. Bond's description of the voyage from Fort Buford to Fort Lincoln discloses certain changed conditions:

> Day after day we sailed, drifted, and pushed ice packs from our bow and at times the ashpoles acting like runners to slip over some half hidden cake of ice that now was wirling in a jam crouding and crushing on their voige to perish in the warm waters of the South. Once in a while a deer or antelope would fall befor the never failing shot of Washington and the twang of the youth Indian bow with steel pointed arrows would furnish a beaver tail for replenish our feast, for beaver tail is good food if it cooked proper. And yet among my people I noticed a blank "now and anon" a blank turned up face to mine. Try as I could I could not find a spark of who had sown a word of evel among my people. What was it? they appeared all alike.[11]

Bond accurately suspected that contact with the military and certain "hangers on" at Fort Buford had greatly depressed his Nez Perces. Actually, they were losing confidence in Miles and becoming fearful for their lives.

These fears were partially confirmed from a different source as they approached the Mandan Indian villages. These people regarded the Nez Perces as interlopers and treated them accordingly. They threw rocks at the captives and attempted to upset their flatboats. However, the unarmed Nez Perces responded to these hostile gestures with vigor. Their real fears were centered upon powers and principalities that surpassed their understandings.

Upon reaching Fort Lincoln, they were greatly frightened by Northern Pacific Railroad engine whistles and the firing of salutes by the fort artillery. These blasts and volleys were regarded as the signals of their fate. Bond said, "They became so helpless I had to work the boat across the river all alone to the Fort Landing. They sat up a moaning chant no dout their death chant."[12]

The flatboats and wagon train, with the accompanying prisoners and escort, reached Fort Lincoln on November 16. Colonel Miles received orders

to requisition a passenger train to transport the Nez Perces from Fort Lincoln to Fort Leavenworth. Such a train was rushed over from Fargo.

Meantime, the citizens of Bismarck organized a celebration to honor Colonel Miles, his escort, and Chief Joseph on the evening of November 19. Bond's description of the preparation for the affair follows: "The little city was by now on the buzz getting ready to give a grand ball and supper in honor of Chief Joseph. The ladies of the Fort joined in. There were no printed tickets. The tickets were $10.00 gold coin, ladies free, and oppen to all."[13]

When Colonel Miles, his escort, and the prisoners entered Bismarck they were greeted by the Fort Lincoln band and practically all of the citizens in the area. Food in great plenty was provided in the town square for the military guards and prisoners. As Bond observed the dress and over-all status of the Nez Perces, he remarked: "The appearance of all was heart rending sad."[14] By that time the prisoners had learned that they were to be exiled in the Indian Territory, and the light of the mountains had disappeared from their eyes. Chief Joseph's only comment was, "When will the white men learn to tell the truth."[15] Besides the general reception accorded the Colonel Miles cavalcade, a special banquet was held in honor of Chief Joseph and two of his aides. The invitation appeared in the Bismarck Tri-Weekly Tribune on November 21, 1877:

> To Joseph, Head Chief of the Nez Perces.
> Sir: Desiring to show you our kind feelings and the admiration we have for your bravery and humanity, as exhibited in your recent conflict with the forces of the United States, we most cordially invite you to dine with us at the Sheridan House in this city. The dinner to be given at 1½ p.m. today.

While Joseph and his friends were being dined and feted by a select committee in the Sheridan parlors, Fred G. Bond treated Washington to a farewell dinner. Mr. Bond recorded that although salmon was available his

friend Washington ". . . was too sad to eat and the Irish waitress said, 'The Devils to put those people under soldiers guard.'"[16] Strangely enough, an Irish waitress in a rough, raw Missouri River town had deftly expressed the latent American sympathy for these misplaced people.

The high military and civil authorities were making a mistake which was apparent to common, ordinary folks dwelling far beyond the area of hostilities. Even so, the officials were probably exercising some restraint. They might have heeded the radical demands from some Idahoans, as expressed by one author: "These prisoners should have been tried for their offenses by the courts, should have been brought back where they could have been identified and, where found guilty, should have been hanged till they were dead, as other murderers!"[17] Unfortunately, passionate appeals for court action against "vanquished war criminals" finds easy acceptance among many of the "guilt free victors."

Of course, several officials called attention to certain hazards inherent in the removal of the Nez Perces. In fact, on November 1, 1877, E. A. Hayt, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, wrote the following to Secretary of Interior Schurz: "Experience has demonstrated the impolicy of sending northern Indians to the Indian Territory. To go no further back than the date of the Ponca removal, it will be seen that the effect of a radical change of climate is disastrous. . ."[18] He then cited casualty rates incident to the removal of both Poncas and Cheyennes. Since the Nez Perce removal involved still greater climatic variations, proportionately higher death rates could be anticipated. Nevertheless, as Miles continued his triumphal journey to St. Paul on November 19, the Nez Perces were being scheduled to leave for Fort Leavenworth four days later. Thus, the Nez Perce case was resolved by higher authority, without a hearing. Concerning this and subsequent moves, Chief Joseph said: "We were not asked if we were will-

ing to go. We were ordered to get into railroad cars."[19]

The Reactions of Miles and Howard

Colonel Miles declared that he exerted all possible influence to prevent the removal of the Nez Perces to the Indian Territory. Surely, his report to Secretary of War McCrary discloses a genuine solicitude for their welfare:

> As these people have been hitherto loyal to the government and friends of the white race from the time their country was first explored, and in their skilful campaigns have spared hundreds of lives and thousands of dollars' worth of property that they might have destroyed, and as they have, in my opinion, been grossly wronged in years past, have lost most of their warriors, their homes, property, and everything except a small amount of clothing, I have the honor to recommend that ample provision be made for their civilization, and to enable them to become self-sustaining. They are sufficiently intelligent to appreciate the consideration which, in my opinion, is justly due them from the government.[20]

In explaining the removal order to Chief Joseph, Colonel Miles said: "You must not blame me. I have endeavored to keep my word, but the chief who is over me has given the order, and I must obey it or resign. That would do you no good. Some other officer would carry out the order."[21] Joseph believed Miles and he did not blame him. Said he, "I do not know who to blame. . . but there are some things I want to know, which no one seems able to explain. I cannot understand how the government sends a man out to fight us, as it did General Miles, and then breaks his word. Such a government has something wrong about it."[22] Later, as Joseph became better acquainted with the federal system and its political and military hierarchy, he said, "White men have too many chiefs."

Lieutenant C. E. S. Wood was unimpressed by Miles' exertions. He obviously felt that the Colonel could have prevented the removal if he had gone right up the line. However, the Lieutenant was critical of Colonel Miles for reasons disclosed in connection with the surrender.

Lieutenant Wood was even less charitable toward Howard for his course in regard to the removal issue. Said he:

> I differed with General Howard, who took the ground that no promise had been made Joseph, that the surrender was unconditional, and that he had no right to make terms. I thought this too technical and a moral wrong, and thought that the general's understanding was so clear as to be a part of the surrender, and that we were morally bound; also that, technically, Sherman's wire warranted a promise to return the prisoners to the Department of the Columbia, and the order Howard gave to Miles, after the surrender, to return the prisoners to his department, showed his own interpretation and intention.[23]

Lieutenant Wood properly criticized General Howard for insisting that Chief White Bird's flight made the surrender terms with Joseph null and void. As previously noted, Joseph had no power to control the older chief or his willing followers. Wood affirmed that there was only one opinion at that time, namely, the Nez Perces would be taken back to the Lapwai Reservation in the spring of 1878.[24] Nevertheless, Howard shrugged off the injustice of the Nez Perce exile by saying, "Let them settle down and keep quiet in Indian Territory, as the Modocs have done and they will thrive as they do."[25] The General thereby conceded that his honor was not at stake. However, the conscience of Colonel Miles continued to be restless and, partly because of this fact, his integrity was destined to be vindicated in due time.

The Nez Perces Winter at Fort Leavenworth

On November 23, when the Nez Perce train was leaving Bismarck, General Sherman sent a report to the Secretary of War: "The prisoners are now en-route by the most economical way to Fort Leavenworth, to be held there as prisoners of war until spring when I trust the Indian Bureau will provide them homes on the Indian Reservation. . . ."[26]

Upon reaching their temporary destination on November 27, the Nez Perces were placed upon a camp ground, between a swampy lagoon and the Missouri River, two miles above the fort. One observer said the spot must have been

selected for the express purpose of decimating the Indians. The fort physician reported that half of the Indians were soon afflicted by malaria. Of the four hundred thirty-one prisoners of record on December 4, 1877, four hundred ten were alive the following July, when the Bureau of Indian Affairs finally assumed jurisdiction. Survivors were described as presenting a picture reminiscent of the horrors of imprisonment at Andersonville, Georgia.

On December 10, Chief Joseph and seven members of his band addressed a petition to the government and submitted the same to Captain George M. Randall. The petition pleaded their case to be returned to Idaho. However, as an alternative, they requested the right to select a tract of land in the Indian Territory. The area was to include room enough for the Canadian and other scattered members of the tribe. These requests were considered reasonable by Captain Randall; therefore, he endorsed them and forwarded the petition to General Sherman. On January 12, 1878, Sherman wrote, "Disapproved" on the document and reminded Randall that much concern over the wishes of his prisoners was improper. The Nez Perces should be handled and located at the convenience of the government, without reference to their desires. Actually, the sense of this Nez Perce petition received the sympathetic attention of President R. B. Hayes and Secretary Carl Schurz, but neither of them exerted sufficient determination or energy to overcome the adamant position taken by Generals Sherman, Sheridan, and Howard.

Of course, living conditions in the camp were tolerable during the cold winter months, but when spring came the lack of proper sanitation, coupled with the ravages of malaria, reduced Nez Perce vitality to a low ebb. Accustomed to living in a healthful climate with horses and cattle to keep them busy and happy, the "do nothing" prisoner life shattered their morale. They tried to keep up their spirits by daily dancing, but there was nothing to

sing about. Joseph graphically described their dismal situation: "Many of our people sickened and died, and we buried them in this strange land. . . . The Great Spirit Chief who rules above seemed to be looking some other way, and did not see what was being done to my people."[27] Obviously, their Dreamer faith was being tested, but it was doubtful if much Christianity was made manifest in their behalf.

However, the matter of providing a permanent home for the exiles was explored by Congress in the spring of 1878. The idea of fulfilling the Bear Paw surrender terms did not receive any consideration. Congressmen from the Northwest were opposed to such a course. Whereas, those who represented states and territories in proximity to the Indian Territory were reluctant to provide homes for additional Indians there. Thus, while the fate of these misplaced orphans was debated, they sickened and died upon Fort Leavenworth swampland. The political interplay between the western and middle-western Congressmen eventuated in two proposals, namely, return the Nez Perces to Idaho, and secure their consent before sending them to Oklahoma Indian Territory. Both substitute measures were defeated in favor of locating them on the Quapaw reserve in Kansas Territory.[28] The bill, approved on May 27, 1878, provided that the sum of $20,000 might be expended under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior for moving the Nez Perces from Fort Leavenworth to a suitable location in the Indian Territory and for their settlement thereon. Therefore, on July 9, 1878, Indian Commissioner E. A. Hayt requested the War Department to deliver the prisoners to his jurisdiction.

Accordingly, Indian Inspector John McNeill and Agent Hiram W. Jones of the Quapaw reserve arrived at Fort Leavenworth to escort the Nez Perces to their new homes. They were taken to Baxter Springs on the train, thence by wagons to a seven-thousand-acre tract of Miami and Peoria lands. Several Indians died enroute, and by October forty-seven more had gone to the Great Beyond.[29]

This heavy death rate was the aftermath of exposure to a cold winter and a hot summer in a different climate, without any preparations in way of sanitation or proper living facilities. For example, no preparations had been made to receive them at either place. Upon arriving on the Quapaw in late July, they were wholly without shelter. No quinine was available to provide relief from malaria. The Nez Perces called the Quapaw reserve Eeikish Pah, meaning Hot Place.

In spite of their considerable exertions to wrest a livelihood from the soil, little progress was achieved in a year. Joseph expressed the general feeling in saying, "I think very little of this country. It is like a poor man; it amounts to nothing."[30]

A literal conformity to the title "A History of the Nez Perce Campaign, 1877" would have concluded this narrative at Fort Leavenworth on December 31, 1877. Such an ending would have been both tragic and incomplete. As already disclosed, Nez Perce fortunes were destined to become worse before they improved. Hence, it seems expedient to describe their boot-strap order of recovery and partial restoration to their former homeland. Furthermore, since this record did not support the legend of Joseph's supreme war chieftainship, it ought to describe his role as a superlative Indian diplomat. The Nez Perce surrender and exile did not preclude performance in this field, and here again, the resources of his mind and spirit proved equal to the needs of his people.

Chapter 24

Trails of Triumph and Tears

Footnotes

1. E. C. Watkins to J. Q. Smith, July 20, 1877, Nez Perce War, A.G.O. 6286, Box 1182, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

2. Sherman to Sheridan, August 31, 1877, Nez Perce War, A.G.O. 5558, Box 1182, National Archives.

3. Sherman's Annual Report, Report of the Secretary of War, 1877, Vol. I, p. 15.

4. C. E. S. Wood, op. cit.

5. Sherman to General E. D. Townsend, October 10, 1877, Nez Perce War, A.G.O. 6286, Box 1182, National Archives.
Also see an article entitled "Banishment of the Nez Perces" by Berlin B. Chapman, Oklahomian, Oklahoma City, Okla., May 10, 1936.

6. Ibid.

7. Fred G. Bond, Flatboating on the Yellowstone 1877, (New York: New York Public Library, 1925), p. 7.

8. Ibid., p. 10.

9. Ibid., p. 9.

10. Document No. 4753 DD 1877, Box 24, National Archives.

11. Fred G. Bond, op. cit., p. 15.

12. Ibid., p. 19.

13. Ibid., p. 21.

14. Ibid., p. 22.

15. Chester A. Fee, op. cit., p. 274.
Joseph's statement resembles one made by Red Cloud during his visit to the Black Hills, where he was hospitably entertained by his white friends. In bidding them good-bye he expressed the hope that, if they did not meet again on earth, they might meet beyond the grave "in a land where white men ceased to be liars." See Helen Hunt Jackson, A Century of Dishonor, p. 9.

16. Fred G. Bond, op. cit., p. 22.

17. Lucille M. Kirkwood, op. cit., p. 35.

Footnotes - Chapter 24

18. Chester A. Fee, op. cit., p. 274.

19. Chief Joseph, op. cit., p. 23.

20. Miles to McCrary, Report of the Secretary of War, op. cit., p. 529.

21. Chief Joseph, op. cit., p. 22.

22. Ibid.

23. C. E. S. Wood, op. cit.

24. Ibid.

25. Chester A. Fee, op. cit., p. 276.

26. Sherman's Annual Report, Report to the Secretary of War, 1877, Vol. I, p. 15.

27. Chief Joseph, op. cit., p. 23.

28. Congressional Record, May 7-8, 1878, 45th Congress, 2nd Session, Vol. VII, pp. 3233-3266.

29. Howard and McGrath, op. cit., pp. 296-297. By July 21, twenty-one Nez Perces had died, two hundred sixty were ill, and shortly thereafter the total number of fatalities exceeded one hundred.

30. Senate Miscellaneous Document, No. 53, 45th Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. II, p. 77.

Chapter 25

ORDEAL FOR SURVIVAL IN EXILE

In Chief Joseph's "From Where the Sun Now Stands" surrender speech he said, "My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are. . . . I want to have time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. . . ."[1]

The circumstances governing his prisonership precluded the realization of Joseph's hope. The trail of tears the Nez Perces were compelled to pursue took them a thousand miles beyond the terminal point of the campaign. Hence, he could not search for the lost ones, but eventually some of them were brought to him. However, the motivation that impelled the government to round up the runaway, or other, nontreaty Nez Perces was more punitive than humanitarian. Several cases will serve to illustrate the modus operandi.

The Case of Six Nez Perce Boys

Eloosykaset, meaning Standing on A Point, also known as John Pinkham, related this narrative concerning his experience in the campaign and as an exile. He and five other Nez Perce boys, ranging in age from seventeen to twelve, fled for their lives during the Battle of the Big Hole. Hiding and frightened, they did not succeed in rejoining the fleeing caravan. Instead, they made their way back to the Clearwater River. During several weeks of this rugged wayfaring, with only one gun among the six, they were kept busy "Dodging, keeping away from where might be whites, our traveling was slow. Most of the time we had nothing to eat. We suffered terribly from hunger. For days we did not know where we were. We were always afraid of our lives. After long wandering, we crossed the Rockies and other wild ranges, and

reached the Nez Perce Reservation."[2] Whereupon, the officials sent them to Fort Leavenworth along with thirteen non-treaty adults, who had returned from a bison hunting expedition. This policy of seizing non-treaty Nez Perces, wherever found, and sending them to the Indian Territory was applied consistently.

Reference has been made to the woman and child left behind, incident to childbirth, in the Musselshell country. Friendly Crow Indians adopted them, but when discovered by agency officials they were sent to the Indian Territory. Naturally, all fort commandants and agency officials received orders to send all non-treaty Nez Perces to the Indian Territory. Indian tribal chiefs were sternly warned not to harbor any stray Nez Perces. Actually, the various plains tribes were more than cooperative in bringing the hostiles to heel. One citizen who lived near the Bear Paws heard and saw more than enough concerning the brutal treatment of the Nez Perces who fled from the last battle and were caught. She observed that they did not receive ". . . the protection of a stray dog. . . I will always remember this cruel thing with horror."[3]

On October 28, 1877, Colonel Miles dictated a memorandum from Camp on Tongue River, to the Assistant Adjutant General of the Department of Dakota, Saint Paul, that describes the procedure employed in handling these matters. "I have the honor to report that I have sent two Nez Perces Indians, Um-Tock-Multin (Five Hat) and Sup-Pu-Innos (Bugle), under charge of Capt. A. S. Bennett, 5th Infantry, to Ft. Lincoln, there to be held subject to orders from Dept. Headqrs."[4]

The exercise of comparable vigilance and persistence in regards to the apprehension of stray Nez Perces resulted in the considerable addition of eighty to the four hundred eighteen prisoners originally surrendered on Snake Creek. In fact, some of those who escaped into Canada finally wound up in

Eeikish Pah. Yellow Wolf reported his experience in Canada, his return to Lapwai, and subsequent exile. The following section describes the salient points in his narrative.

Nez Perces Among the Sioux

When Yellow Wolf's party of escapees approached the Sioux village, they were met by members of that tribe who ". . . mixed us up. They took us one by one. . . . They gave me everything I asked, just as if I was one of their children. In the spring, one Sioux made himself a brother to me."[5] Yellow Wolf stated that the Nez Perces got along fine with the Sioux, and that they remained in the same camp all winter. It was situated about five hundred miles north of the Canadian Boundary. In the spring of 1878, the Nez Perces heard that they might return to their ancestral hunting grounds.

Experiences in Returning to Idaho

Accordingly, small parties were organized from time to time, and they set out for home. There were thirteen men, nine women, and several children in Yellow Wolf's band. All were mounted and about half of the men had guns. They resolved that trouble would not be sought, but they realized that it would be difficult to avoid. Having no funds, they were obliged to forage along the trail. In the circumstances, theft of livestock might become imperative as a means of survival. However, they felt justified in appropriating food stuff, because of the losses they had sustained the previous year. Actually, these hunters were generally able to secure enough wild game to meet their requirements.

Whenever able, they would bypass the white man's habitations. Twice, designing reservation Indians attempted to lure them into captivity. Once, the Nez Perces helped themselves to a rancher's cattle, then decided to find him, offer a settlement, and get some flour. Whereupon, three white men

flourished their rifles and shouted, "Get out of there!" In the ensuing altercation Yellow Wolf killed one of the three men.

Farther on, Yellow Wolf committed still another brutal act incident to an effort to secure food and friendship. Inadequacy in the use of English made Nez Perce communication of their peaceful intentions almost impossible. In one instance, a white man exercised a salutary approach by saying, "Come on, friends! Come on! Get off! Tie up your horses! . . . We will give you one sack of flour."[6]

On Rock Creek, about twenty miles from Philipsburg, Montana, they had another rough episode with several miners. Mutual suspicions and inability to communicate resulted in the deaths of John Hays, Amos Elliott, and Billy Jory. One J. H. Jones was in the kitchen preparing food like mad for the unwelcome visitors, but when he heard they had shot his friends he dropped his pans and fled. The Nez Perces gave him the run of a life time, but he managed to elude them among a labyrinth of gullies, brush, and trees. The account of this hazardous flight made such an impression upon his Philipsburg auditors that they promptly dubbed him "Nez Perce" Jones, thereby automatically differentiating him from innumerable Welshmen.[7] In going up Lolo Creek, Yellow Wolf felt impelled to club one citizen and disarm three, because he interpreted their menacing gestures with rifles to mean, "Come on! We want trouble!"[8]

Reports of these depredations reached the officials at Fort Missoula and a detail of thirteen soldiers, under Lieutenant Thomas S. Wallace, trailed the Nez Perces clear across Lolo Trail. They eventually established several tenuous contacts on July 25, in which shots and horses were exchanged in a series of raids and counter thrusts. As Yellow Wolf quaintly stated, "We had a little war."[9]

An account of these affairs also reached the officers at Fort Lapwai

and a joint delegation of soldiers and agency officials met the returning exiles when they reached the Clearwater River in late July. The older men, women, and children gave themselves up promptly. Yellow Wolf spoke his personal feelings in saying, "For me, I will stay in the prairie like a coyote. I have no home!"[10]

Thus, a few warriors attempted to avoid the inevitable by roaming about in their most sequestered haunts. Homeless, disheartened, broke, and classed as renegades, they were ultimately forced to give themselves up. Otherwise they would have been hunted down and shot. A report, dated August 2, 1878, by Major D. P. Hancock from Camp Howard, describes the excitement, however groundless, that existed among the Idaho settlers over the return of these few Nez Perces.[11]

The women and children from Canada were distributed among the people, but Yellow Wolf and his associates were placed in custody at Fort Lapwai. This precaution was necessary in the interest of safety, but it was slso taken in preparation for their removal to the Indian Territory.

Yellow Wolf learned that eleven men and one woman of White Bird's band had reached their old home on Salmon River in mid-July. Their leader, Tahmiteahkun, described their rough journey from the Sioux camp to Salmon River. Actually, the experiences of these two groups, and other exiles who returned to Idaho, generally conformed to the pattern described.

Yellow Wolf's account of his life in exile in the Indian Territory was characterized by brevity and simplicity. Said he:

> I was sent to the Territory with nine other of Chief Joseph's band. There we united with our old friends and relations---those left of them. . . .
>
> We were not badly treated in captivity. We were free so long as we did not come towards Idaho and Wallowa. We had schools. Only the climate killed many of us. All the newborn babies died, and many of the old people too. . . . All the time, night and day, we suffered from the climate. For the first year they kept us all where many got shaking sickness, chills, hot fever. We were always lonely for our old-time homes. . . No mountains, no

> springs, no clear running rivers. Thoughts came of the Wallowa where I grew up. Of my own country when only Indians were there. Of tepees along the bending river. Of the blue clear lake, wide meadows with horse and cattle herds. From the mountain forests voices seemed calling. I felt as dreaming. Not my living self.[12]

This graphic description of Nez Perce life in Eeikish Pah, by a natural historian, was confirmed by the lengthy reports of four different agents who supervised their seven years of captivity.

Chief Joseph's Leadership in Exile

Of course no one was more aware of Nez Perce suffering, or more anxious to improve conditions, than Chief Joseph. As their guardian, he had struggled to retain the Wallowa homeland by negotiation. When that means failed, he reluctantly waged a war to the bitter end in defense of their rights and liberties. He surrendered under terms that were acceptable. When these terms were undone, he turned the intelligence, energy, and resources of his mind and spirit to the task of the survival and ultimate liberation from what he considered to be bondage in exile. In achieving these ends this dedicated chieftain exhibited considerable talent in the field of politics and diplomacy.

His dissatisfaction with the Nez Perce allotment on the Quapaw Reservation in Kansas has been disclosed. These complaints proved sufficient to move Indian Commissioner E. A. Hayt and Ezra M. Kingsley to make an investigation. Upon observing the distress and forlorn character of the people, he concluded that he and his colleagues had erred in assuming that these mountain Indians would be easily acclimated in Kansas Territory. The same conclusion was reached by Senator Thomas C. McCreery, a member of a congressional investigating committee, who visited the Nez Perces in October, 1878.

Therefore, in mid-October, 1878, Hayt, Kingsley, Joseph, and Husishusis Kute made a two hundred fifty mile trip in search of an area more suitable and acceptable to these badly misplaced people. The two chiefs observed the various sections of the available domain with discerning and discriminating eyes. An area situated at the junction of the Salt Fork of the Arkansas and

the Shikakia rivers, in the vicinity of present-day Ton Kawa, elicited a favorable response. A combination of fertile bottom land, well-timbered upon the peripheries, was probably the best unoccupied land Oklahoma Territory could provide. This region, consisting of ninety thousand acres, was within the boundaries of the Ponca agency.

Joseph's legal talent was disclosed by an astute move which was conceived as he pondered the prospect of removing to a permanent home. It should be remembered that he had first lost the Wallowa Valley, and later, his rights under the Bear Paw Surrender, from the want of formal treaties. In January, 1879, Joseph, Yellow Bull and Arthur Chapman, their interpreter, went to Washington, D. C. On the fourteenth, the chiefs presented their case in Lincoln Hall to a gathering that included congressmen, cabinet members, and diplomats. Close attention was given to their appeals and they were accorded a considerable ovation at the conclusion. Impressed by their reception, Joseph and Yellow Bull filed a proposition with the office of Indian Affairs on January 31. They offered to relinquish all claims to lands in Oregon and Idaho for four townships to be selected by them from lands in the Indian Territory, plus a bonus of a quarter of a million dollars and the expenses of moving them to the new reservation. Commissioner Hayt considered the offer as just and proper, and Shurz transmitted the plan to the House Committee on Indian Affairs, with a request for favorable consideration. But Congress failed to take any action. Albeit, in the summer of 1879, Hayt made arrangements for the removal of the Nez Perces to a ninety-thousand-acre tract in the Ponca country. No title of land ownership was issued at the time to the area, known as the Oakland Reservation, where they were settled.[13] Having made a special concession to Joseph, Commissioner Hayt hoped the Chief would abandon all hope of returning to the Northwest and devote his efforts and leadership to the development of the new reserve.[14]

The Move From Quapaw to Ponca

Accordingly, in June, 1879, three hundred seventy Nez Perces were moved from the Arkansas to the Oklahoma reserve.[15] Since they lacked sufficient horses to effectuate the 180-mile journey, the Indian Bureau provided twenty-five additional teams to facilitate the transportation. Several Nez Perces died enroute, and others followed their example during subsequent weeks of difficult adjustment. As at Fort Leavenworth and Quapaw, no preparations of any sort had been made to receive them at Ponca. Hence, their habitations for a year or so were primitive indeed. Fall rains and subsequent cold weather caught most of the people without adequate shelter. Medical attention for the ill and infirm was nonexistent and even quinine was always in short supply.

Nez Perce Endeavors Toward Subsistence

As plows and harrows came to hand, some of the men clumsily turned to gardening. Others, or perhaps the same, devoted their attention to the nucleus of a cattle herd. One of the Indian agents observed that the Nez Perces were natural herdsmen. Actually, their capacity in this regard was never fully tested because of slender numbers. This lack enabled them to rent some of their range to encroaching white cattlemen. Of course, the Nez Perces had formerly been eminently successful as horse breeders. However, horses were even harder to get than cattle; but finally they acquired one hundred eighty-nine horses, ten mules, and one hundred eighty-three cattle. Actually, they did not lack means for the acquisition of brood stock and bare necessities. Despite Joseph's dissatisfaction, the Indian Bureau expended about $100,000 upon the Nez Perces during a five year period. Aided by this slender support, the exiles began to recover from the abject poverty and total dependence the vicissitudes of war had foisted upon them.

Indeed, they made some progress in respect to education and Christian

endeavor. In 1879, three Nez Perces from Lapwai joined the exiles for the purpose of preaching and teaching. They were Archie Lawyer, Mark Williams, and James Reuben. Lawyer and Williams succumbed to the rigors of climate and returned home, but Reuben served as a teacher during the balance of the exile period.[16]

Successive reports from Indian agents indicate that, although the Nez Perces were gradually improving economically and socially, the death rate remained abnormally high. Dr. George Spinning, who visited the reserve, counted the graves of one hundred children. He reported, and other sources concurred, that practically all of the children born in this Hot Land died there.[17] Indeed, many children who had survived the hardships of the campaign also passed away. Chief Joseph's daughter, born at Tolo Lake in mid-June, 1877, was among the number.[18]

Chief Joseph's critics have stated that he never turned his heart from his old homeland toward the new one. This was probably the case. How could he become attached to a land wherein the climate invoked the cursed decree of a Pharaoh or Herod upon his children?

Joseph Works and Yearns for the West

Actually, Joseph simply followed the wise precept of never despairing without hope. This divine spark was kept aglow in him by several experiences. In 1878, Indian Inspector General McNeil visited with Joseph on the Quapaw Reserve. The Inspector's observations impelled him to suggest that a direct appeal to President Rutherford B. Hayes might prove fruitful. In fact, McNeil made arrangements for such an interview and in March, 1879, Joseph, Yellow Bull, and their interpreter, Arthur Chapman, went to Washington, D. C. Joseph's description of his political contacts follows: "I have seen the Great Father Chief (the President); the next Great Chief (Secretary of the Interior); the Commissioner Chief (Hayt); the Law Chief (General Butler), and

many other law chiefs (Congressmen), and they all say they are my friends, and that I shall have justice."[19]

Although Joseph conferred at length with the officials mentioned, he was unable to achieve any substantial results. Indeed, he became increasingly aware of the fact that there were strong currents of opposition to his proposal of restoration. Western Congressmen were not about to support such a plan. Realizing this fact, Joseph became disheartened over his failure to obtain a solid promise of support for such a move from any quarter. He was obviously in a mood of frustration the day he made these observations to the reporter representing the North American Review. He quoted Joseph as saying:

> I have heard talk and talk, but nothing is done. Good words do not last long until they amount to something. Words do not pay for my dead people. They do not pay for my country, now over-run by white men. They do not protect my father's grave. They do not pay for my horses and cattle. Good words will not give me back my children. Good words will not make good the promise of your War Chief, General Miles. Good words will not give my people good health and stop them from dying. Good words will not get my people a home where they can live in peace and take care of themselves.[20]

Perhaps this profound indictment of the duplicity characteristic of the federal procedures in dealing with Indian affairs was the most compelling element in the masterful article the Review published in April, 1879, under the title "An Indian's Views of Indian Affairs." Joseph gave "His Own Story", as it was popularly called, in such a calm, forthright, and insistent way that it pricked the consciences of many readers. He reviewed the history of his people from the time of Lewis and Clark to 1879. He described their early independence and prosperity; their acceptance of missionaries, settlers, and miners; the adjustments they willingly made in the Treaty of 1855; their refusal to surrender tribal homelands under the terms of the Treaty of 1863; the pressures that resulted in forcing them upon the Lapwai Reservation in June, 1877; the unfortunate Indian raids and the eventual war. His honest and accurate history of the campaign was acceptable as the Nez Perce side. He explained the avowals governing his surrender and their subsequent re-

pudiation. He delineated the deleterious effects of the climate upon the lives of his people.

The pathos of his appeal was real. Joseph and his people would have preferred annihilation in the Battle of Bear Paws rather than suffering gradual but inexorable tribal extinction in Oklahoma Territory. Albeit, he had registered an oath in heaven "to fight no more forever." Now, he could only appeal to the honor and justice of his masters. In his view, this effort was proving futile, because of weasel words. Even Leonard Grover, former governor of Oregon, who had helped run Joseph out of the Wallowa, now as United States Senator from the same state, had proffered influence and friendship if Joseph would forget about his claim to the Wallowa Valley.[21] In July, 1879, A. B. Meacham, former Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Oregon, and a party of well wishers visited the Nez Perces. Their presence elicited the following jeremiad from Joseph:

> You come to see me as you would a man upon his death-bed. The Great Spirit above has left me and my people to their fate. The white men forget us, and death comes almost every day for some of my people. He will come for all of us. A few months more and we will be in the ground. We are a doomed people.[22]

It was after interviews with such men that Joseph made the following observations in his patient and dispassionate manner of speaking: "I am tired of talk that comes to nothing. . . . I cannot understand why so many white chiefs are allowed to talk so many different ways, and promise so many different things." When promises were lightly made, Joseph said, "Look twice at a two-faced man." When someone circulated a resolution, he commented, "Big name often on small legs."[23] Thus did Joseph disclose a shrewd appraisal of politicians and their devious ways. In reflecting upon these contacts he said, "It makes my heart sick when I remember all the good words and all the broken promises."[24]

In part, Joseph became the victim of his increasing prestige. He put

his finger on the problem in saying, "There has been too much talking by men who had no right to talk." He did not realize how part of the American public fawns over celebrities. He was seeking concrete, tangible results. He wanted action that would produce a quick move to the Rocky Mountains. Actually, this democratic process he deplored was the key to the solution of the matter. Every interview, however barren of action, was reported to a favorable press. He was constantly acclaimed as a great warrior, a noble character, and the devoted guardian of a languishing band of exiles.

As the public became increasingly aware of "His Own Story", he emerged as a champion of freedom. In the conclusion of that great document, Joseph made the welkin ring for greater human liberty and civil rights. Said he:

> All men were made by the same Great Spirit Chief. They are all brothers. The earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it. You might as well expect the rivers to run backward as that any man who was born a free man should be contented penned up and denied liberty to go where he pleases. If you tie a horse to a stake, do you expect he will grow fat? If you pen an Indian up on a small spot of earth, and compel him to stay there, he will not be contented nor will he grow and prosper. I have asked some of the great white chiefs where they get their authority to say to the Indian that he shall stay in one place, while he sees white men going where they please. They cannot tell me.
>
> I only ask of the Government to be treated as all other men are treated. If I cannot go to my own home, let me have a home in some country where my people will not die so fast. . . .
>
> Whenever the white man treats the Indian as they treat each other, then we shall have no more wars. We shall be all alike--- brothers of one father and one mother, with one sky above us and one country around us, and one government for all. Then the Great Spirit Chief who rules above will smile upon this land, and send rain to wash out the bloody spots made by brothers' hands upon the face of the earth. For this time the Indian race are waiting and praying.[25]

Joseph freely admitted that his people were fallible; indeed, he confessed that they needed to change their ways. Meantime, he demanded the chance to live as other Americans lived. He affirmed that most Indians had been forced into war, because they lacked recourse to just and honorable means of resolving their controversies with white men. These statesmen-like

views obviously came from a bright mind with penetrating insight. By temperament Joseph was restrained, if not taciturn, but he constantly released his splendid thought and energy in pleading the cause of his people.

The Nez Perce Cause Gains Momentum

Finally, the seeds Joseph had planted during his visit in Washington, D. C., in 1879, began to take root. The Indian Rights Association and the Presbyterian Church both recommended the return of the Nez Perces to a mountain environment. C. E. S. Wood, having resigned from the army, began a campaign of letter writing in their behalf. He also went to Boston, where he enlisted the support of Moorefield Storey and other humanitarians.[26] From these small sparks, a considerable blaze gradually evolved. Scores of letters and telegrams supporting the removal of the Nez Perces to the Northwest reached Congressmen. Indeed, on April 14, 1884, Senator Henry L. Dawes presented a petition to that end, sponsored by the Presbyterians of Cleveland, Ohio, bearing over five hundred signatures, including the name of Mrs. James A. Garfield. Thus, the labors of this brilliant Nez Perce diplomat and a few devoted friends, including Colonel Miles and the Nez Perce Indian agents, finally generated a movement that was destined to fairly compel the government to "Let the Captive Nez Perces Go!"

Naturally, the Pharaohs of Washington, D. C. and the Northwest were reluctant to fulfill the promises of others. However, by 1884, Indian tribes generally had been reduced to a status of military impotency. Hence, a concession to the Nez Perces was finally accepted as an expedient. On July 4, 1884, Senator Dawes secured the passage of an act which gave the Secretary of the Interior discretionary power over the disposition of Joseph's band. The Nez Perces hailed this news with great joy and feasting. Thenceforth smoldering mountain lights were fanned by hopes that were destined to be realized in May of the following year.[27]

Chapter 25

Ordeal for Survival in Exile

Footnotes

1. Chief Joseph, op. cit., p. 22.

2. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., pp. 135, 136.

3. Mrs. James Dorrity, "Mrs. James Dorrity's Story Concerning the Battle of the Bear Paws." MS. Idaho State College, Pocatello, Idaho.

4. Colonel Miles to the Assistant Adjutant General. Document No. 4352 DD 1877, National Archives, Washington, D. C.
An unspecified number of warriors turned back on the Lolo Trail. Howard's men apprehended them when the war ended, and they were taken to Fort Vancouver as prisoners. Assured of their reform, Howard returned them to their families at Lapwai in April, 1878.

5. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., pp. 234-236.

6. Ibid., p. 252.

7. Ibid., p. 255. Also, see John K. Standish's account entitled "Hazardous Race of Nez Perce Jones." Fallon County News, November 24, 1930.

8. Ibid., p. 253.

9. Ibid., p. 263. See John Gibbon's account as it appears in Report of The Secretary of War 1878, p. 68. Eric Thane stated that Wallace and his men killed six of these Nez Perces and that the others were "hunted to death." This does not agree with Yellow Wolf's version in respect to the casualties. Dillon Examiner, December 14, 1938.

10. Ibid., p. 272.

11. Hancock to the Assistant Inspector General, August 2, 1878, Report to the Secretary of War, 1878, pp. 181-182.

12. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., pp. 212-289.

13. This tract of land was ceded to the Nez Perces in June, 1883. See Berlin B. Chapman, "Banishment of the Nez Perces," The Daily Oklahomian, Vol. 44, No. 123, issues of May 10, 1936 and November 20, 1910, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
Also, "Nez Perces in Indian Territory: An Archival Study." Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. I (June, 1949).

Footnotes - Chapter 25

14. E. A. Hayt, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1878, pp. 33, 34. Hayt became well acquainted with Joseph during this tour. Hence, his opinion of him was well-conceived. Said he, "Joseph is one of the most gentlemanly and well-behaved Indians I ever met. He is bright and intelligent and is anxious for the welfare of his people."

15. L. V. McWhorter, Hear Me, My Chiefs, p. 534.

16. Clifford M. Drury, Lewiston Morning Tribune, October 18, 1936. Drury describes this as a thrilling episode in an otherwise barren period of Babylonian captivity.

17. Kate C. McBeth, op. cit., pp. 96, 97.

18. L. V. McWhorter, Research Studies of the State of Washington, Vol. 26, No. 4, p. 217. (December, 1958, Pullman, Washington.)

19. Chief Joseph, His Own Story, p. 25.

20. Ibid.

21. Chester A. Fee, op. cit., pp. 277, 278.

22. Council Fire, Washington, D. C., October, 1879.

23. Chester A. Fee, op. cit., p. 282.

24. Chief Joseph, op. cit., p. 25.

25. Ibid.

26. C. E. S. Wood, The Spectator, September 14, 1929.

27. J. Stanley Clark, "The Nez Perces in Exile." Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Vol. 36, 1945, p. 229.

Chapter 26

EPICAL TWILIGHTS

It is generally known that during the decade of the 1880's the Great American Frontier vanished. The moving tides of white migration had rolled over the continent. In the sixties and seventies, Indian uprisings had been quite ferocious and, therefore, threatening. However, the recalcitrant peoples inevitably wrecked themselves against the might of federal power. The skill and persistence of veteran Civil War officers and men were so pervading that Indian warriors could only writhe and twist. After the battles of the Little Big Horn and White Bird Canyon, the shrill staccato shouts of Indian triumph were seldom heard. Instead, mournful wails of defeat were uttered on every battlefield.

Thus, by 1880, Indian barriers were broken. The tribes were scattered, confined, desolate, and forlorn, but not forsaken. The unsettled portions of the West were sufficiently intersected and circumscribed as to preclude effective resistance from any remaining sanctuaries of refuge. Having witnessed the subjugation of the Indians by the use of naked power, many Americans were undergoing an earnest soul-searching in regards to Indian policy. The tragedy that had overwhelmed the traditionally friendly Nez Perces served to emphasize the wrongs inherent in arbitrary solutions of Indian problems. During the decade of the eighties the type of yeast was fomenting that eventuated in the publication of Helen Hunt Jackson's A Century of Dishonor in 1887.

As noted, Chief Joseph's appeals for justice represented a catalytic agent in the development of this trend. Without exception, Indian agency

officials who contacted the Nez Perces became convinced that their survival required removal to the mountains. On September 6, 1881, Agent Thomas Jordan reported that there were only three hundred twenty-eight survivors from the original total of nearly five hundred captives. He said the death rate continued to be so high that "The tribe, unless something is done for them, will soon be extinct." Furthermore, Agent Jordan absolved the Nez Perces from personal carelessness in regard to health matters. Said he, "They are cleanly to a fault. . . . They keep their stock in good order, and are hard working, painstaking people."[1] Thus, the various successive agents and the Indian Commissioner concurred upon the central fact that the Nez Perces were simply not becoming acclimated in Oklahoma.

The First Refugees Return to Idaho

In May, 1883, the War Department approved a proposal by the Indian Bureau to close the Nez Perce school and permit twenty-nine people to return to Idaho. Whereupon, Congress appropriated $1,625 to meet the expenses incident to their removal. James Reuben took charge of the group, which consisted almost entirely of widows and orphans. These people were transported by railroad from Arkansas City to Kelton, Utah. Before leaving, Reuben wrote to the Lapwai Reservation officials requesting men and horses to meet the train at Kelton. Accordingly, Indians with ponies made the long march and, after weeks of travel, they finally reached the reservation. Kate C. McBeth described their appearance: "After him (James Reuben), rode the weariest, dustiest, most forlorn band of women with blankets and belongings behind each woman on her horse. . . . But they were well drilled. A half circle was formed by them facing the agent's office."[2] Then Reuben addressed those assembled for the occasion. He described the hardships the refugees had endured, the suffering and death that had afflicted and decimated them.

His auditors took Reuben's charges to their bosoms and much sympathy and consideration was made manifest. No untoward threats or demonstrations were made against this pitiful little band. Hence, Reverend A. L. Lindsley made a partial survey of public feeling in the Salmon River district that might serve as a guide in future restorations. Proposals toward that end received equivocal responses. Some people were in favor and some were strongly opposed. Judge Leland advocated legal procedures: "There is only one way of prevention: to surrender to the authorities of Nez Perce County the survivors of the Indians who were indicted for outrage and murder committed before the war began."[3] The United States Attorney General had previously recommended suspension of this action and Idaho courts had complied. However, it granted a suspension only, and there were boasts that if the war criminals were restored to Idaho they must be tried. Otherwise, it was affirmed that they would be shot on sight. Actually, the young fire-brands who perpetrated the White Bird raids had been killed during the campaign. In the circumstances, demands for trials and threats of summary action seemed more vindictive than rational. Still, it was a matter that confronted the federal officials, and they resisted the growing demand for the return of the Nez Perces from other quarters for two more years.

On June 14, 1883, the Cherokees conveyed title to Oakland tract to the Nez Perces. A year later, their appropriation of more than $18,000 was made available for improvements. Neither of these facts changed their negative attitudes toward the country. Meantime, the reports from the Ponca Agency pointed to still more illness and death. The total number of survivors in 1884 had dropped to two hundred eighty-two. Agent John W. Scott reported that ". . . there is a tinge of melancholy in their bearing and conversation that is truly pathetic. I think they should be sent back, as it seems clear they will never take root and prosper in this locality."[4]

In May of 1884, fourteen petitions were presented in Congress, demanding action upon the repatriation of the Nez Perces. Foreseeing the prospect of even more insistent appeals, the Senate amended an Indian Appropriation Bill to provide funds for such a move if the Secretary of Interior authorized it. The bill became a law on July 4. Secretary Shurz and Commissioner of Indian Affairs H. Price decided to authorize the removal. To that end they formulated a plan of distribution under which the White Bird and Looking Glass Indians would be settled on the Lapwai Reservation. Whereas, Joseph and most of his followers would be placed upon the Colville Reservation in northern Washington.

On September 16, Agent John W. Scott received this information, and he presented the same to the Nez Perces the next day. In general, they were delighted with the message, but Chief Joseph and many of his followers objected to the Colville proposition. They held that they had been punished enough and, therefore, they would not voluntarily consent to further humiliation. In their view, the proposed segregation would brand them as "wild." Said Joseph, "If I could, I would take my heart out and hold it in my hand and let the Great Father and the white people see that there is nothing in it but kind feelings and love for Him and them." Since these objections and scruples were minor in comparison to the main objective, Joseph and his associates reconciled themselves to the plan. Apprehension among Indian Bureau officials dwelling in Washington, D. C. and the Northwest held the removal in abeyance for seven months. Finally, by April of 1885, the necessary steps had been taken to restore the surviving two hundred sixty-eight Nez Perces to the Northwest. The sale of their livestock netted the tribe $2860.50, which was little enough for so many people, and a far cry from the wealth they owned in the spring of 1877.

Before boarding the train at Arkansas City on May 22, 1885, four Nez

Perce chiefs signed a document wherein they relinquished all claims to the Oakland reservation. This act was endorsed by all adult members of the band. Everyone was pleased to be leaving; that is, until the trail pulled out and they remembered their departed members whose remains were buried in this Hot Land. Although the locomotive throbbed, hissed, and whistled in its accustomed manner, all but the loudest blasts were drowned out by the howling of a disconsolate people.

The Basis of Distributing the Exiles

Upon arriving at Pocatello, Idaho, the Nez Perces were greeted by Captain Frank Baldwin, Acting Judge Advocate of the Columbia Military Department. He separated them into two groups according to the assigned destinations. Captain Baldwin explained that federal officials had formed this policy for the protection and welfare of all concerned. Accordingly, one hundred eighteen were sent to Lapwai, while one hundred fifty were shipped farther on to Colville.

Actually, Chief Joseph had agreed to this arrangement before the band left Oklahoma. In his view, this was a proper temporary expedient as a concession to the timid officials who were disturbed by threats emanating from Idaho citizens. He also realized that it would take time to negotiate for the restoration of part of the Wallowa Valley. Remember, he was now hoping for a complete diplomatic triumph.

As previously disclosed, this policy was designed to preclude violent remonstrance and revenge. Curiously enough, the Indians who were exiled from Idaho by this act were least responsible for the war. Therefore, this double exile appears to have been a final punitive measure against Chief Joseph as a symbol of the entire Nez Perce controversy and war.[5] Actually, the reasons for this discrimination were never clearly defined. As a result, various interpretations have been assigned concerning the motives that

governed the officials in this matter. Yellow Wolf stated flatly that he was given a choice. He said that when they reached Walla Walla the interpreter asked, "Where you want to go? Lapwai and be a Christian, or Colville and just be yourself?"[6] Both Francis Monteith and Kate C. McBeth admit that the Lapwai Agency officials and mission workers were anxious to receive the more progressive exiles. They wanted the ones who would respond to the program of civilization, rather than adhere to the traditions and 'Tawats' of the old Dreamer cult. In any case, the line of demarcation does not appear to have been absolutely rigid. A partial mixture eventuated, and this amalgam probably proved salutary for both groups.

A boat from Walla Walla deposited the Lapwai contingent at Lewiston on June 1, 1885. No untoward gestures of hatred were exhibited by vengeful white men. Although one person stated that, "A group of men were at the landing. . . to meet the boat. They had intended to take him (Joseph) away from the officers and hang him."[7]

On the other hand, the resident Nez Perces took the refugees to their bosoms in full faith and fellowship. A tribute to their integrity was expressed by F. D. Fleming, head clerk of the Agency, when he wrote, "Not once did these forlorn outcasts prove recreant to the trust placed in their promises. . . . Returning broken in spirit and in purse they stoically accepted the inevitable burying the dead past."[8] Mr. Fleming also stated that all official influences upon the reservation were opposed to Chief Joseph's return to Lapwai. Kate C. McBeth cogently recorded his status: "For a few years at first Joseph was afraid to come down upon the Nez Perce reserve---afraid of the surrounding whites, and because of the many indictments against him---but this fear wore off. Then he visited his friends---too often for their good, for he held to his heathenism with all the tenacity with which he had clung to his beloved Wallowa Valley."[9]

Missionary McBeth was not explicit concerning the deleterious influence Joseph's visits had upon the steady Lapwai Reservation folks. Actually, the disturbing factor was related to Joseph's increasing prestige and popularity. Lapwai Indians, and others, were forever rallying around the hero of the great campaign. They wanted to hear him describe incidents of valor and deeds of heroism. In this regard Joseph was quite reticent, but the veterans who always accompanied him could be induced to respond. Their graphic accounts invariably produced nostalgia for the old days of Nez Perce unity and power. In fact, the people finally recognized that the War of 1877 was the greatest epic in Nez Perce history.

Thus, the negative influence, if any, that McBeth deplored proved to be evanescent. Every society stands in need of traditions of leadership in the field of independence and valor. Surely Joseph and the other non-treaty chiefs and warriors endowed the Nez Perce people with praiseworthy examples in that regard. But those were not the virtues reservation and church officials considered paramount at that time. However, the war and exile had largely liquidated the hunter class and in their passing the last vestiges of anti-reservation sentiment disappeared. Administrators gradually minimized, and finally eradicated, the role of chieftainship in reservation procedures. Thus, as time passed, the exiles blended nicely with the Lapwai Indians, and they persisted in making gradual progress toward becoming a self-sufficient farming population.

Excluded from the Wallowa and unwelcome at Lapwai; what was Joseph's status at Colville?

Chief Joseph's Band at Colville

When Joseph's band arrived at Colville in June, they were met by an unsympathetic Indian agent named Major Gwydir. His supplies were inadequate to meet Nez Perce minimum requirements, hence, the military officials at

Fort Spokane provided some rations.

Taking his cue from the Agent, old Chief Skolaskin of the San-poil tribe refused to admit the Nez Perces to their assigned area on the Colville Reservation. In fact, Major Gwydir was forced to employ troops from Fort Spokane before Joseph's people could be settled. Of course Chief Joseph was not there by choice; in his view, it was simply another exile, only closer to home. However, he applied his talents toward the improvement of conditions. To this end Joseph observed that the land at Nespelem appeared more promising than that at Colville. Hence, he requested the privilege of relocating his people there. Permission was received and this move was made in December, 1885. Then it was discovered that the land had already been pre-empted for other purposes. This development necessitated another move within the Nespelem area during July, 1886. Obviously, the Nez Perces were moving about too much; they were not taking root. Consequently, no crops were raised and available rations proved inadequate. Low morale expressed itself in gambling and other non-constructive activities.

However, some crops were planted in 1887, and within three years, thirty heads of families were classed as farmers. Others were gradually building up horse and cattle herds. Actually, the value of horses, in which they took inordinate pride, was relative small. Ownership of numbers yielded points of prestige, however slender the market value. Joseph was much more interested in horses than in crops.

Therefore, progress came slowly; indeed, the Nespelem Nez Perces were far from self-supporting in 1890. At that time the government furnished seventy-five per cent of their living; whereas, they produced ten per cent and gathered fifteen per cent from their traditional occupations.[10] Of course, the latter activities were performed with a zest that made them less mindful of their status as exiles. By 1900, the government reduced their

allowance to half rations in food and clothing.

The climate at Nespelem was healthful, although not so well-balanced as that of the Wallowa-Imnaha Valley combination. Nevertheless, they were surrounded by a great complex of mountains, forests, and prairies, interlaced by lakes and streams. Their village was situated on the banks of a rapid river named Nespelem. As Yellow Wolf stated:

> On the Colville we found wild game aplenty. Fish, berries, and all kinds of roots. Everything so fine many wanted to remain there, after learning that Wallowa was not to be returned to us. Chief Moses advised Joseph to stay. The Indians were good to us. Gave us horses, and other useful property and goods. Deer everywhere, and good salmon at Keller. It was better than Idaho, where all Christian Nez Perces and whites were against us.[11]

Yellow Wolf's last sentence implied that their Colville neighbors were friendly, which was hardly the case. However, at Nespelem, they were permitted to rock along in their own ways. In some respects Lapwai would have been a more congenial home, but the pressures of religion and progress were greater there. As a matter of fact, under the Severalty Act of 1887, Joseph's people might have received allotments of land on that reservation, but they declined.[12] Acceptance would have forever precluded any prospect of receiving comparable allotments at Wallowa. In this frail hope they were destined to be disappointed.

Still, Nespelem proved to be a satisfactory homeland, and by the turn of the century the Nez Perces began to prosper. Since then, many have become substantial cattlemen and farmers. Those who do not care to work their own land lease it to others. Thus, between receiving a little cash, raising a garden, hunting, fishing, and working at seasonal jobs, they get along very well.

Tribal Life at Nespelem

Joseph's leadership in war and diplomacy has been described. At this point it seems expedient to consider his status and experience at Nespelem.

Judge William I. Lippincott, who talked with Joseph in 1885, described his manner as being reserved but friendly. Although depressed in spirit, his countenance was still expressive.

Having lost his first wife, Joseph married two widows of fallen Nez Perce warriors. When a missionary suggested that he should abandon one, he replied: "I fought through the war for my country and these women. You took away my country; I shall keep my wives."[13]

Joseph had nine children, but all except one died before reaching maturity. The latter, who was exiled from him, died in early womanhood. Still, Joseph maintained a patriarchal-type of household by inviting nephews and others to be his lodge companions.

An interesting account of Chief Joseph's life in 1892 was recorded by Erskine Wood. He was the thirteen-year-old son of C. E. S. Wood who served as aide-de-camp to General Howard during the Nez Perce War. As an expression of friendship, Joseph invited this young man to be his guest. Accordingly, Erskine spent two three-month periods at Nespelem. The following represents a compression of his observations: Joseph preferred a tent to the house provided by the government. His main interest was in raising horses. He liked to race these steeds and bet cautiously upon his favorites. The races were sometimes conducted with considerable fanfare. Hunting deer was an important fall activity in which nearly all of the people participated. Joseph distributed the meat according to need, but the hide became the sole property of the killer. Curing meat and tanning hides were integral parts of the hunting business.

In winter the people established communal lodges for mutual comfort and pleasure. Attention was given to the instruction of the young in tribal history, religion, and arts. Joseph advised the youth to learn both the old and the new ways.

Young Wood stated that Joseph was considerate and kind toward all, and that he was highly revered. He had no official authority, but his personality enforced his decisions. He presided upon all festival occasions, and he spoke eloquently. When dressed in full ceremonial regalia, his bearing was both grand and majestic. Erskine Wood was greatly impressed by Joseph's regard for the son of a former enemy. A half-century later, the Wenatchee Daily World, June 13, 1956, recorded Wood's feelings: "He took me into his tepee and into his heart and treated me as a son. . . . We ate together, hunted deer together, and slept together. I can say truthfully, knowing him was the high spot of my entire life."

Joseph's Last Journeys and Honors

In 1897, Joseph observed that white squatters were encroaching upon open lands within the Colville Reservation. Appeals to local authorities were futile, so Joseph set out for Washington, D. C. He explained the situation to President William McKinley and others. He also met General Miles. These high officials assured Joseph that his grievance would be given prompt attention.

While Joseph was in the East the dedication of the late U. S. Grant's tomb took place. General Miles sponsored Joseph's appearance for the occasion and arranged to have him ride in the procession of honor. As marching companions, Chief Joseph and William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody were the cynosure of all eyes. Generals Howard and Miles also attracted considerable attention. In fact, the appearance of the three principals in the Bear Paw surrender scene reanimated the controversy concerning the relative parts the generals had played in the chieftain's capture.[14] Joseph also visited an Indian camp exhibition being held in Brooklyn. Naturally, he was the object of much interest and consideration.

Joseph's desire to remove his people from Nespelem to the Wallowa Valley

was given expression and publicity on this trip. Indeed, he met with members of the Indian Commission in Washington, D. C. and submitted a petition to that effect. Although his request received support from General Miles and others, the commissioners were reluctant to take any action. However, they authorized United States Indian Inspector James McLoughlin to make an investigation.

Accordingly, in June, 1900, McLoughlin visited the Nez Perces at Nespelem. Then, accompanied by Joseph, he made a reconnaissance of the Wallowa and Imnaha valleys. Obviously, the physical contours and general features were the same as they had been in 1877. Otherwise, it was white man's country. Fences and irrigation ditches circumscribed the landscape, and four little hamlets had sprung up along the Wallowa River. Former tribal meadows were dotted by stacks of hay and grain. Orchards blossomed where no trees had stood before. These scenes were both pleasing and nostalgic. No doubt Joseph reflected upon what might have been, but he was thinking more of the future. Joseph's dark eyes surveyed the azure heavens and the snow-tinted crags of Mount Eagle Cap. He envisioned the semi-tropical shrubs and flowers of the Imnaha Valley. The camas, kous, and huckleberries were blooming. Surely, this was an Indian paradise---the delight of his youth and the joy of his manhood. He yearned to spend his declining years at Wallowa and be buried with his parents by the lake. He still hoped that the government would compel the settlers to move over and make room for his people. He presented his proposition to purchase part of the Wallowa Valley to the people of Enterprise---allow the Nez Perces to return, then they would see how well happy Indians could do in the beloved land of their ancestors. It was a vain hope. McLoughlin did not recommend what Joseph wanted. The Nespelem Agent concurred with the Inspector, and the Indian Commissioners decided that such a move would be impractical.

Joseph could not accept this decision. In his view, the Wallowa still belonged to his people. On March 27, 1901, while Professor Edmond S. Meany was interviewing him, he dictated this statement: "My home is in the Wallowa Valley, and I want to go back there to live. My father and mother are buried there. If the government would only give me a small piece of land for my people in the Wallowa Valley, with a teacher, that is all I would ask."[15] This fervent appeal was denied; he never saw Wallowa again. But he made a final effort to achieve his objective. In the late winter of 1903, Joseph made another journey to Washington, D. C. General Miles was his host, and he visited with President Theodore Roosevelt. The Chief's conduct, as always, was discreet and proper. He was an urbane gentleman; he was inclined toward taciturnity; but he willingly went where hie hosts suggested and made comments upon appropriate matters.

Officials of the Carlisle Indian School invited Joseph to stop over in Pennsylvania enroute to the Northwest. There he met General Howard. Upon this occasion the former enemies expressed mutual good will, and toasted each other as honorable and worthy foemen.

James J. Hill became interested in Chief Joseph's cause and in September of 1904, he sponsored his appearance in Seattle. A public meeting was held in which Professor Meany reviewed the history of the campaign and then presented Joseph and his nephew Red Thunder to the audience. Enthusiasm ran high as the guests mingled with the people. The next day the colorful visitors witnessed a football game and enjoyed the gala occasion. Whatever hopes Hill may have entertained to restore Joseph to the Wallowa were shattered by the latter's death on September 21, 1904.[16] Dr. Latham, the agency physician, reported that Joseph died of a broken heart while sitting before his tepee fire.

At that time Joseph was quietly laid to rest, but on June 20, 1905, a

monument was unveiled to his memory and his remains were disinterred and redeposited with great ceremony. The impressive seven-foot marble monument and inspirational memorial services were provided by the Washington University State Historical Society. Notable white and Indian orators paid glowing tributes to Joseph, and reverberations of the sentiments expressed then have persisted. A Chief Joseph Memorial and Historical Association was duly organized. Thenceforth, romantic elements began crescendoing around the memory of Chief Joseph until, by the mid-thirties, a considerable legend had evolved. As previously noted, he became the Great War Chief, a Red Napoleon, the majestic symbol of a good lost cause.

In 1939, Representative Compton I. White introduced a bill, H. R. 4331, requesting an appropriation of $25,000 to provide a monument in memory of Chief Joseph and a museum for Indian relics and records at Lapwai, Idaho. The bill was not consummated, but a public controversy was started concerning its merits. J. W. Redington, one of General Howard's scouts, wrote a protest on the ground that Joseph was an outlaw. Whereupon, a rebuttal in Joseph's defense was made by F. M. Redfield, a Lapwai Agency official in 1877.[17] Mrs. C. F. Manning, professing to represent the old settler viewpoint, said flatly: "A memorial to Joseph is unthinkable!"[18] Advocates of the memorial employed soft answers in dealing with such wrath. They simply affirmed that it was unseemly to blacken a man's name after he was gone. The point was well conceived because, as veneration over Joseph's achievements increased in general, antipathy toward him increased among certain old timers.[19] Obviously, the time for a memorial in Idaho had not arrived in 1939.

By 1943, a movement for the removal of Chief Joseph's remains to the Wallowa Valley had developed in eastern Oregon. Upon this issue, opinions were also divided. Archie Phinney, Superintendent of the Lapwai Indian Agency, supported the move. Said he, "While reburial of Joseph's remains

in his Wallowa home cannot be expected to undo the historical wrongs his people suffered, his cause can be revitalized in the nation's consciousness by return of his body."[20] However, Superintendent C. L. Graves of the Colville Agency characterized the proposal as a publicity stunt, sponsored by the citizens of Joseph, Oregon.

Meantime, while regional partisans argued over minor memorials and the relocation of graves, the massive Chief Joseph Dam began harnessing the mighty Columbia below Bridgeport, Washington. On June 12, 1956, the dam was officially named and dedicated. The roster of speakers disclosed a fine blend of federal and tribal leaders. A special tribute to Chief Joseph by Erskine Wood included this statement: "He ruled by the sheer force of his character. The people were happy in their leader. . . . There was no hatred in his soul in spite of the wrongs our race had done him. . . . He was a man of true magnanimity."[21]

Henceforth, the name Joseph will be linked with B. L. E. Bonneville and Franklin D. Roosevelt in reference to hydroelectric power. Perhaps other considerations may bring the names of this illustrious trio into increasing accord. Each is a folk hero around whom lore and legend inevitably accumulate. Each life symbolizes an era, and each man played his part in a masterful and dramatic manner.

In time the Nez Perce War may become one of the greatest epics in American history. Surely, the Campaign of 1877 disclosed remarkable degrees of skill, valor, pathos, tragedy, and dynamic passions for justice and affection. Since Chief Joseph has become a substantial embodiment of these superlative traits, the meaning of his Nez Perce name is bound to be made manifest. Perhaps Heinmot Tooyalakekt, "Thunder Traveling to Loftier Heights", may be emblazoned upon the pinnacle of fame.

Chapter 26

Epical Twilights

Footnotes

1. Annual Report of the United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1881, p. 94.

2. Kate C. McBeth, op. cit., pp. 99, 100.

3. Chester A. Fee, op. cit., p. 287.

4. Ibid., p. 285.

5. Remember, Joseph's twelve-year-old daughter, Kapkap Ponmi, escaped into Canada. She returned to Lapwai, where she entered the agency school. She was not permitted to live with Joseph at Nespelem. See Yellow Wolf, p. 288.

6. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., p. 290.

7. Mr. C. F. Manning, "The Nez Perce Indian War as I Knew it", Ms. Idaho State College Historical Archives, Pocatello, Idaho.

8. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., p. 292.

9. Kate C. McBeth, op. cit., pp. 97, 98.

10. L. V. McWhorter, op. cit., p. 545.

11. Yellow Wolf, op. cit., p. 290.

12. Francis Haines, op. cit., p. 297.

13. Chester A. Fee, op. cit., p. 291.

14. Ibid., p. 296.

15. Ibid., p. 300.

16. Montana Standard, August 10, 1958.

17. The Idaho Statesman, Dec. 5, 1926.

18. Mrs. C. F. Manning, op. cit.

19. Francis Haines, op. cit., pp. 297,8,9. Even Arthur Chapman was impelled to circulate falsehoods, wherein Joseph was accused of participating in the White Bird raids that started the war.

20. The Lewiston Daily News, March 12, 1948.

21. Wenatchee Daily World, June 13, 1956.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscript Material

Besette, Amede. "Visit to the Big Hole Battlefield." Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

Buck, Henry. "The Nez Perce Indian War of 1877." Montana Historical Society Library, Helena, Montana.

Cave, Will. "Notes Concerning the Nez Perces." Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

Cappius, Samuel L. "A History of the Bitter Root Valley to 1914." A thesis, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, 1939.

Clark, W. S. "An Account of Walla Walla and Dayton, Washington Volunteers in the Nez Perce War." Historical Archives, Idaho State College, Pocatello, Idaho.

Clough, J. P. "Recollections of the Nez Perce Indian War of 1877." Idaho Historical Society, Boise, Idaho.

Comba, Richard. Official Report on Co. "D" 7th Infantry During the Nez Perce Campaign. Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

Cone, H. C. "White Bird Battle." 970.5; N49C62, Idaho Historical Society, Boise, Idaho.

Cruickshank, Alexander. "The Birch Creek Massacre." Idaho State College Historical Library, Pocatello, Idaho.

Fisher, Don C. "The Nez Perce War." A M.A. thesis, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho, 1931.

Gibbon, John. "Report of the Battle of the Big Hole, with the list of Killed and Wounded." Box No. 23, Document 3595, 1877, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

Gollogly, Mary. "The Nez Perce War as I Knew It." Big Hole Battlefield National Monument, Montana.

Hathaway, Ella C. "Battle of the Big Hole August 9, 1877."

Manning, C. F. "The Nez Perce War as I Knew It." Idaho State College Historical Archives, Pocatello, Idaho.

Metlen, George R. Letter describing the route taken by the Nez Perces. Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

Bibliography

Moelchert, William. "Correspondence regarding the Cow Island Affair." Ms. Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

McConville, Edward. Report to Governor Brayman Concerning the Record of Idaho Volunteers in the Nez Perce Campaign. Idaho Historical Society, Boise, Idaho.

McDonald, Angus. "The Nez Perce Campaign." Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

Noblett, L. A. Letter Concerning the Bear Paw Battle. Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

Noyes, Al J. "The Battle of the Big Hole as I Saw It." Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

Partoll, Albert J. Commentary on Colonel Gibbon's Report on the Battle of the Big Hole. Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

Poe, James W. Letter to Governor Brayman Concerning the Nez Perce Atrocities in Washington County. Idaho Historical Society, Boise, Idaho.

Samples, John. Letter Describing the Battle at Cow Island. Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

Shearer, George M. Letter to Major E. C. Mason Concerning Conduct of the Nez Perce War. Idaho Historical Society, Boise, Idaho.

Talkington, Henry L. "Manuscript History of the Nez Perce Reservation." Idaho Historical Society, Boise, Idaho.

U. S. Army Commands Department of Dakota: 1877 Reports, letters, etc., Document numbers 3531 DD, 3595 DD, 3754 DD, 3983 DD, 4070 DD, 4085 DD, 4095 DD, 4124 DD, 4229 DD, 4263 DD, 4352 DD, 4398 DD. These documents filed in Boxes 23 and 24 in the National Archives, Washington, D. C.

Weikert, Andrew J. "Journal of a Tour in Yellowstone National Park in August and September, 1877." Document No. 9787. W 421, Yellowstone National Park Library, Mammoth, Wyoming.

Wilmot, Luther P. "An Account of White Bird, Cottonwood, Misery Hill and Clearwater Battles." University of Montana, Missoula, Montana.

Wilson, Eugene. "The Nez Perce Campaign." Ms. Washington State Historical Society Library, Tacoma, Washington.

Woodruff, C. A. "The Battle of the Big Hole." Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana.

Printed Journals, Diaries and Autobiographies

Bruffey, George A. Eighty-one Years in the West. Butte: The Butte Miner Co., 1925.

Bibliography

Ferris, Warren A. Life in the Rocky Mountains. Denver: Old West Publishing Co., 1940.

Howard, Oliver O. My Life and Experiences Among Our Hostile Indians. Hartford, Conn.: A. D. Worthington & Co., 1907.

Hunter, George. Reminiscences of an Old Timer. Battle Creek, Michigan: Review and Herald, 1889.

Miles, Nelson A. Personal Recollections. Chicago: The Werner Company, 1897.

Miles, Nelson A. Serving the Republic. New York: Harper & Bros., 1911.

Noyes, Alva J. The Story of Ajax. Helena: State Publicity Company, 1914.

Palmer, Joel. Journal and Travels Over the Rocky Mountains. Cleveland: A. H. Clarke, 1906.

Quaife, Milo M. Yellowstone Kelley's Memoirs. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926.

Spalding, Henry Harmon. The Diaries and Letters of Henry Harmon Spalding and Asa Browen Smith Relating to the Nez Perce Mission, 1838-1842. Edited by Clifford M. Drury. Glendale, Calif.: A. H. Clark Co., 1958.

Thwaites, Reuben Gold. Original Journals of Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806. New York: Dodd, 1906.

Warren, Eliza Spalding. Memoirs of the West. Portland, Ore.: March Printing Company, 1916.

Articles in Magazines and Periodicals

Burns, Ignatius. "Coeur d'Alene Diplomacy in the Nez Perce War of 1877." Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Vol. 42, No. 1, (January, 1951).

Burns, Ignatius R. "The Jesuits, the Northern Indians and the Nez Perce War of 1877." Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XLII (January, 1951).

Carpenter, John A. "General Howard and the Nez Perce War of 1877." Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Vol. 49, No. 4 (October, 1958).

Catlin, J. B. "The Battle of the Big Hole." Montana State Historian's Annual Report. Missoula, Montana, 1927.

Chaffee, Eugene B. Nez Perce War Letters. Idaho Historical Society Fifteenth Biennial Report. Boise, Idaho, 1936.

Clark, J. Stanley. "The Nez Perces in Exile." Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Vol. 36, 1945.

Drury, Clifford M. "The Nez Perce Delegation of 1831." Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. XL, No. 3 (September, 1939).

Bibliography

Forse, Albert A. "Chief Joseph as a Commander." Winners of the West, No. 12, November, 1936.

Gibbon, John. "The Battle of the Big Hole." Harper's Weekly, December 21 & 28, 1895.

Haines, Francis. "Northward Spread of Horses to the Plains Indians." American Anthropologist, Vol. 5, No. 3 (July, 1938).

Haines, Francis. "Problems of Indian Policy." Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 3 (July, 1950).

Haines, Francis. "Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce Warriors." Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XLV (January, 1954).

Horner, J. H. and Butterfield, G. "The Nez Perce-Findley Affair." Oregon Historical Quarterly, XL (March, 1939).

Hunt, Garret. "Sergeant Sutherland's Ride: An Incident of the Nez Perce War." Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 14, No. 1 (June, 1927).

Joseph, Chief. "An Indian's View of Indian Affairs." Also cited as "Chief Joseph, His Own Story." North American Review, Vol. CCLXIX (April, 1879).

Josephy, Alvin M. "The Last Stand of Chief Joseph." American Heritage, Vol. 9, No. 20. New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1958.

Kearns, William E. "The Nez Perce War." Yellowstone National Park Nature Notes, Vol. 12, No. 5-6 (May-June, 1935).

Mesplie, Rev. Father. "Report of Chaplin Mesplie of Fort Boise." Army and Navy Journal (April 6, 1878).

Miles, Nelson A. "The Future of the Indian Question." North American Review, April, 1879: also, January, 1891.

Miles, Nelson A. "Chief Joseph's Surrender." New York Tribune Supplement, August 4, 1907.

Pennypacker, I. R. "Military Historians and History." Pacific Magazine of History, January, 1929.

Phillips, Paul C. "Battle of the Big Hole." Frontier, Missoula, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1926.

Pinkerton, Robert E. "The Indian Who Beat the U. S. Army." True Magazine, April, 1953.

Pond, George E. "Major-General Nelson A. Miles." McClures Magazine, November, 1895.

Redfield, Francis M. "Reminiscences." Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Seattle: University of Washington, Vol. 27, No. 1 (January, 1936).

Redington, J. W. "Scouting in Montana in the 1870's." Frontier, Missoula, Vol. 13, No. 1 (November, 1932).

Bibliography

Sass, Herbert R. "The Man Who Looked Like Napoleon: Joseph, Chief of the Nez Perce Tribe." Colliers, CVI (September, 1940).

Shearer, George. "The Skirmish at Cottonwood." Idaho Yesterdays, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1958.

Stranahan, C. T. Pioneer Stories. Lewiston, Idaho: 1942.

Titus, Nelson C. "The Last Stand of the Nez Perces." Washington Historical Quarterly, Vol. 6, No. 11 (July, 1915).

Wood, Charles E. S. "Indian Epic is Re-told." The Spectator, September 14, 1929.

Wood, Charles E. S. "Indian Epic is Re-told." Century Magazine, May, 1884.

Government Reports a nd Publications

Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Annual Reports of Department of Interior, 1878, 1881, 1838, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1897, 1898, 1899.

Executive Documents. No. 93, 34th Congress, 1st Session.

Executive Documents. No. 39, 41st Congress, 3rd Session.

Executive Documents. No. 198, 42nd Congress. "Treaty with the Nez Perce Indians."

Executive Documents. No. 307, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session.

Executive Documents. No. 156, 43rd Congress, 1st Session. "Nez Perce Indian Reservation in Idaho." Also, 1st and 2nd Sessions of the 45th Congress.

Executive Documents. No. 386, 48th Congress. House of Representatives Report, "Nez Perce and Bannack Indian Wars."

Executive Documents. No. 12. "Langford Land Claim Against Indian Agent at Lapwai."

Executive Documents. No. 70, 51st Congress, 1st Session, 1889-90. "Agitation to Arouse the Nez Perce Indians."

Executive Documents. No. 552 and 257, 56th Congress, 1st Session. "Claims of the Nez Perce Indians."

Executive Documents. No. 97, 62nd Congress, 1st Session. "Memorial of the Nez Perces Indians," 1911.

Executive Documents. No. 1, 36th Congress, 2nd Session. Report of Secretary of Interior, 1859-60; 1872-73 (Report of Special Commission). Also each Annual Report to 1877 in House Executive Documents.

Idaho Militia Records, Nez Perce War 1877. Territorial Exedutive File. Boise, Idaho.

Bibliography

Report of the Joint Special Committee. "Condition of the Indian Tribes," Congressional Report, Appendix, 1867.

Reports of Secretary of War, 1854-55; 1858-59. Also each Annual Report to 1876-77.

Report of Secretary of Interior, Executive Documents, No. 4, 1867. Report to the Senate.

Report of Secretary of War, Executive Documents, No. 2, 46th Congress, 2nd Session. Letter to the United States Senate.

Reports of the Secretary of Interior, 1877-78.

Report of the U. S. Army Military Division of the Missouri. Government Printing Office, 1882.

Wood, H. Clay. The Status of Young Joseph and his Band of Nez Perce Indians. Assistant Adjutant General's Office. Portland, Oregon, 1876.

Special Books and Pamphlets

Bond, Fred G. Flatboating on the Yellowstone 1877. New York: New York Public Library, 1925.

Bradford, Ned. Battles and Leaders of the Civil War. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1956.

Brady, Cyrus Townsend. Northwestern Fights and Fighters. New York: The McClure Co., 1907.

Burdick, Usher L. and Hart, Eugene D. Jacob Horner and the Indian Campaigns of 1876-1877. Baltimore : Worth Brothers, 1942.

Crawford, Mary M. The Nez Perces Since Spalding. Berkeley: Professional Press, 1936.

Cullum, George W. Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of West Point. Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1891.

Haines, Francis. The Nez Perces Tribesmen of the Columbia Plateau. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955.

Haines, Francis. Red Eagles of the Northwest. Portland, Oregon: The Scholastic Press, 1939.

Howard, Helen Addison, and McGrath, Dan L. War Chief Joseph. Caldwell: Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1935.

Kip, Lawrence. Indian Council at Walla Walla, 1855. Eugene, Oregon: Star Job Office, 1897. Clark Memorial Library, Los Angeles.

Kirkwood, Charlotte M. The Nez Perce Indian War under Chiefs Joseph and Whitebird. Grangeville, Idaho: Idaho County Free Press, 1928.

Bibliography

Lipps, Oscar H. Laws and Regulations Relating to Indians and Their Lands. Lewiston, Idaho: Lewiston Printing Co., 1913.

Malone, Dumas. Dictionary of American Biography. New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, Vol. 18, 1936.

McBeth, Kate C. The Nez Perce Since Lewis and Clark. New York: F. H. Revell, 1908.

McWhorter, Lucullus Virgil. Hear Me, My Chiefs. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1952.

McWhorter, Lucullus Virgil. Yellow Wolf: His Own Story. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1940.

Phillips, Paul C. Historical Reprints, "The Battle of the Big Hole." Sources of Northwest History, No. 8, University of Montana, Missoula, 1929.

Phinney, Archie. Nez Perce Texts. New York: Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology, 25, 1934.

Romeyn, Henry. "The Capture of Chief Joseph and His Nez Perce Indians." Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana. Helena: 1896, Vol. 2.

Spinden, Herbert Joseph. The Nez Perce Indians. Lancaster, Pa.: New Era Print Co., 1908.

Woodruff, C. A. "The Battle of the Big Hole." Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana. Helena: 1910, Vol. 7.

General Secondary References

Allen, William. Chequemegon. New York: The Wm. Frederick Press, 1949.

Bailey, Robert G. Nez Perce Indians. Lewiston, Idaho: Bailey Publishing Co., 1943.

Beal, Merrill D. The Story of Man in Yellowstone. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1949.

Britt, Albert. Great Indian Chiefs. New York: Whittlesby House, 1938.

Brown, Mark H. and Felton, W. R. The Frontier Years. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1950.

Brown, Mark H. and Felton, W. R. Before Barbed Wire. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1956.

Burlingame, Merrill G. and Toole, K. Ross. A History of Montana. New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1957.

Burlingame, Merrill G. The Military-Indian Frontier in Montana, 1860-90. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1938.

Burlingame, Merrill G. Montana Frontier. Helena: State Publishing Co., 1942.

Bibliography

Catlin, George. North American Indians. London: Published by the Author, 1841.

Clark, Thomas D. Frontier America. New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1959.

Collier, John. Indians of America: The Long Hope. New York: New American Library, 1951.

Cullum, George W. Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891.

Drury, Clifford M. Nez Perce Indian Missions. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1936.

Finerty, John F. War-path and Bivouac. Chicago: M. A. Donohue & Co., 1890.

Federal Writers. Montana, A State Guide Book. New York: Hastings House, 1939.

Francis, Bertha Agnes. The Land of Big Snows. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1955.

Garst, Shannon. Chief Joseph of the Nez Perces. New York: Julian Messer, 1953.

Glassley, Howard. Pacific Northwest Indian Wars. Portland, Oregon: Binfords & Mort, 1953.

Guie, Heister D. and McWhorter, Lucullus Virgil. Adventures in Geyser Land. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1935.

Heitman, Francis B. Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903.

Howard, Oliver O. Famous Indian Chiefs I have Known. New York: The Century Co., 1907.

Howard, Oliver O. My Life and Experiences Among Hostile Indians. Hartford: A. D. Worthington Co., 1907.

Howard, Oliver O. Nez Perce Joseph. Boston: Lee and Shepherd, 1881.

Judson, Katharine B. Montana, the Land of Shining Mountains. Chicago: A. C. McClurg Co., 1909.

Kastner, George Charles. Riders From the West. Portland, Oregon: Metropolitan Press, 1932.

Leeson, Michael A. History of Montana. Chicago: Warner, Beers & Co., 1885.

Lowe, Martha Perry. The Story of Chief Joseph. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co., 1881.

Madsen, Brigham D. The Bannock of Idaho. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1958.

Mangam, William D. The Clarks of Montana. Privately published, 1939.

Bibliography

Miller, Joaquim. An Illustrated History of the State of Montana. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1894.

Mulford, A. F. Fighting Indians. Corning, N. Y.: Paul Lindsley Mulford, no date.

Noyes, A. J. In the Land of the Chinook. Helena: State Publishing Co., 1917.

Parker, Francis. Winding Waters, the Story of a Long Trail and Strong Hearts. Boston: C. M. Clark Publishing Co., 1909.

Payne, Robert. The Chieftain, A Story of the Nez Perce People. New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1913.

Pollack, Dean. Joseph, Chief of the Nez Perce. Portland, Oregon: Binfords and Mort, 1950.

Priest, Loring B. Uncle Sam's Stepchildren. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1942.

Raymer, Robert G. Montana the Land and the People. New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1930.

Ross, Alexander. The Fur Hunt of the Far West. London: Smith & Elder, 1855.

Sanders, Helen Fitzgerald. A History of Montana. New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1913.

Schmitt, Martin F. and Brown, Dee. Fighting Indians of the West. New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1948.

Scott, Hugh Lennox. Some Memories of a Soldier. New York: The Century Co., 1928.

Seymour, Flora. The Story of the Red Man. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1929.

Silloway, Perley M. History of Central Montana. Lewistown, Mont.: Fergus County Democrat, 1935.

Stanley, Edwin J. Rambles in Wonderland. New York: LaMarr & Whitmore, 1878.

Steele, Matthew Forney. American Campaigns. Harrisburg, Pa.: The Telegraph Press, 1946.

Stevens, Hazard. The Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1900.

Stout, Tom. Montana, Its Story and Biography. Chicago: American Historical Society, 1921.

Stuart, Granville. Forty Years on the Frontier. Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1925.

Swanton, John R. The Indian Tribes of North America. Smithsonian Institute, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin No. 145. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953.

Bibliography

Toole, K. Ross. Montana An Uncommon Land. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959.

Townsend, John K. Westward to Oregon. Philadelphia: Henry Perkins, 1839.

Warner, Frank W. Montana Territory. Helena: Fisk Bros. Printers, 1879.

Wellman, Paul I. Death on Horseback. New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1945.

Wheeler, Olin Dunbar. Trail of Lewis and Clark, 1804-1904. New York: G. P. Putnams' Sons, 1904.

Wissler, Clark. Indians of the United States. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1951.

Personal Correspondence and Interviews

Barry, J. Neilson. Portland, Oregon.

Brenner, Charles. Armstead, Montana.

Buck, Charles A. Stevensville, Montana.

Campbell, Calvert. Laurel, Montana.

Cary, Alvin. Cody, Wyoming.

Chaffin, Alexander. Hamilton, Montana.

Chaffin, Moses. Corvallis, Montana.

Cochran, William. Stevensville, Montana.

Cottrell, Mary N. Wisdom, Montana.

Cypher, Ralph D. Bridger, Wyoming.

Darrow, George. Billings, Montana.

Doyle, Blaine T. Dillon, Montana.

England, Roy. Baker, Idaho.

Francis, Bertha. Wisdom, Montana

Fry, W. E. Dillon, Montana.

Gallogly, James. Sula, Montana.

Golden, Lloyd. Laurel, Montana.

Gregg, Mrs. Robert. Dillon, Montana.

Groff, Albert S. Corvallis, Montana.

Bibliography

Harrington, J. A. Boise, Idaho

Henderson, Floyd A. Craters of the Moon National Monument, Idaho.

Henninger, Elvin. Dubois, Idaho.

Hirschy, Flora B. Wisdom, Montana.

Looney, Mrs. Rella. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Luckenville, Lee. Cody, Wyoming.

Ovitt, Mable. Bannock, Montana.

Lord, Herbert. Conner, Montana.

Mansfield, Mrs. James. Armstead, Montana.

Martin, Charles E. Billings, Montana.

McCormick, Wm. J. Stevensville, Montana.

Mitchell, A. C. Hamilton, Montana.

McWhorter, Luculus V. Fifty letters concerning the Nez Perce War and the Battle of the Big Hole addressed to Flora B. Hirschy and/or Merrill D. Beal.

Sassman, H. H. Dillon, Montana.

Scott, Parke T. Armstead, Montana.

Sherrill, Mrs. T. E. Conner, Montana.

Stearns, Hal. Harlowtown, Montana.

Templeton, C. C. Seattle, Washington

Wampler, Cloyed. Wisdom, Montana.

White, Thain. Lakeside, Montana.

Zimmerman, Charles. Billings, Montana.

Newspaper Accounts

The Anaconda Standard, "Chief Joseph was a Good Indian Before He Died." September 25, 1904.

The Anaconda Standard, "The Story of Joseph, Chief of the Nez Perce," by Donald MaCrae, August 16, 1925.

The Avant Courier, Bozeman, Montana. See all issues from June 18, 1877 to October 10, 1877.

Bibliography

The Benton Record, "Snake Creek Battle" by J. J. Healy, October 12, 1877.

The Big Hole Basin News, Wisdom, Montana.

Big Hole Breezes, Jackson and Wisdom, Montana.

The Boise Capital News, Boise, Idaho. See all issues from June 17, 1877 to October 10, 1877.

The Butte Miner, "Captive of Chief Joseph," August 5, 1926.

The Clearwater Tribune, Orofino, Idaho.

The Daily Bee, Portland, Oregon, Nov. 11, 1877.

The Dillon Examiner, Dillon, Montana.

The Great Falls Tribune, Great Falls, Montana. Various issues from June 17, 1877 to October 10, 1877.

The Helena Herald, Helena, Montana. See all issues from June 17, 1877 to October 10, 1877.

Helena Evening Herald, "Battle of the Big Hole," August 8, 1902.

Helena Independent Weekly, "An Account of Richard Dietrich's Death," September 6, 1877.

The Idaho Semi-Weekly World, Idaho City, Idaho.

The Idaho Statesman, Boise, Idaho.

The Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman, June 19, 1877 to October 6, 1877. (Boise)

The Lewiston Morning Tribune, Lewiston, Idaho. All issues from June 17, 1877 to October 10, 1877.

The Lewiston Teller, Lewiston, Idaho. All issues from June 17, 1877 to October 10, 1877.

The Missoulian, Missoula, Montana, "The Battle of Big Hole Fought Sixty Years Ago," August 8, 1937.

The Missoulian, "An Interview with Sergeant Martin Brown," June 14, 1925.

The Missoulian, "When Charlot Changed," February 1, 1925.

The Missoulian, "Last Survivor of Big Hole Tells Story," August 5, 1934.

The Montana Standard, Butte, Montana, "Battle of Big Hole was a Major Engagement in Indian Wars," August 10, 1958.

The New Northwest, Deer Lodge, Montana. See all issues from June 17, 1877 to October 10, 1877.

Bibliography

The New Northwest, "The Battle of the Big Hole," by John Gibbon, August 17, 1877.

The New Northwest, "The Nez Perce Indian War" by Duncan McDonald, November, 1877 - April, 1878.

New York Sun, September 25, 1904, "An Account of the Death of Chief Joseph." Reprinted in Cyrus T. Brady's Northwestern Fights and Fighters.

Seattle Post-Intelligence, June 25, 1905, "Reburial of Chief Joseph and the Potlatch Ceremonies."

The Spokesman-Review, Spokane, Washington.

The Wallace Press Times, Wallace, Idaho.

Weekly Oregonian, Portland, Oregon, March 31, 1877.

The Western News, Hamilton, Montana.

The Yakima Herald, Yakima, Washington.

THE BIG HOLE BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT

The marking, commemoration, and preservation of historical sites result from a combination of the interest and cooperation on the part of patriotic people. Local and regional residents want the world to know that an event of historic interest and significance happened in their neighborhood. The case in point being a battle: certain claims could also be made upon the War Department and the nation. Surely battlefields, where men die for the flag, should be marked, and those who gave their full measure of devotion should be remembered. This was one of them.

In 1877, Big Hole Basin was unoccupied, but the battle fought there attracted visitors from the outset. Among the visitors were cattlemen, who eyed the meadows with appreciation. In 1883, Alva J. Noyes and others established the first homesteads. The federal government made the first move toward commemorating the battlefield that same year.

The Erection of a Stone Monument

In 1883, Montana Territory was represented in the Congress by Martin Maginnis. Through his efforts the War Department was authorized to erect a suitable monument on the battle ground. This matter was attended to by a delegation of officers and enlisted men from Fort Missoula in May, 1883. A six-ton granite stone was shipped to Dillon and freighted to the battlefield. The monument was erected on the spot recommended by Colonel Gibbon, on the east end of the siege-line overlooking the battle ground proper. The battle legend inscribed on the east side of the monument states:

> On this field seventeen officers and 138 enlisted men of the 7th U. S. Infantry, under its Colonel B.V.T. Major General John Gibbon, with eight other soldiers and 38 citizens surprised and fought all day a superior force of Nez Perce Indians. More than one third of the command being killed and wounded.

On the North side, "Erected by the United States," and on the South side, "To the officers and soldiers of the army, and citizens of Montana, who fell at the Big Hole August 9, 1877, in the battle with the Nez Perce Indians." On the West side, the names of those who died in the battle are engraved:

Killed - 7th Infantry
Capt. William Logan
1st Lt. James H. Bradley
1st Lt. William L. English
1st Sgt. Robert L. Edgeworth, Co. G
1st Sgt. Frederick Stortz, Co. K
Sgt. Michael Hoggan, Co. I
Sgt. William H. Martin, Co. F
Corp. Robert E. Sale, Co. G
Corp. Daniel McGaffery, Co. I
Corp. Dominick O'Connor, Co. G
Corp. Jacob Eisenhut, Co. D
Musician Michael Gallagher, Co. D
Musician Thomas Stinebacker, Co. K
Artificer John Kleis, Co. K
Privates
Matthew Butterly, Co. E
James McGuire, Co. F
Gottlde Maue, Co. G
Herman Broete, Co. I
William D. Pomeroy, Co. F
John OBrien, Co. G
McKindra L. Drake, Co. H
John B. Smith, Co. A
. . . . . .
Sgt. Edward Page, Co. 4, 2nd Cavalry
H. S. Bostwick, Post Guide at Fort Shaw
. . . . . .
Citizen Volunteers
L. G. Elliott, John Armstrong, Davis Morrow, Alvin Lockwood, Cambell Mitchell

During the summer of 1883, General P. W. Sherman visited the Gibbon's Battlefield on a tour of inspection. Gibbon's name was frequently applied to the battle area for several decades.

It does not appear that much attention was paid to the matter of securing title to the land at this time. Indeed, no recommendation was made until

March 23, 1906, when Secretary of Interior, E. A. Hitchcock, proposed that a block of land be reserved from inclosure in the proposed Big Hole Forest Reserve, which was imminent. It appears that a bill, H. R. 12699, had been introduced in the Fifty-fifth Congress, looking toward the establishment of the Big Hole Battle Ground National Park. This bill failed to pass; whereas, the Big Hole Forest Reserves (North and South) came into being on November 5, 1906. Officials in both Interior and Agriculture departments were of the opinion that this development would not preclude the segregation of a battlefield tract at some future date.

On January 1, 1907, the North and South Big Hole Forest Reserves were consolidated under the name of Beaverhead National Forest. C. K. Wyman became the supervisor, with headquarters in Dillon, Montana. On November 5, 1907, C. R. Pierce wrote a recommendation to Wyman for the withdrawal of Section 24, Gibbon's Battlefield, from the forest reserve. Pierce felt that some other service might provide better protection to this area. Wyman passed the recommendation along to Chief Forester G. F. Pollock and, in due course, the proposition reached the attention of Secretary of Interior R. A. Ballinger. The Nez Perce camp and principal battle ground was privately owned, so Ballinger's recommendation did not demand a full section; as a result, the order that reached President Taft's desk only called for the transfer of five acres.

Big Hole Battlefield National Monument

On June 23, 1910, President William Howard Taft established the Big Hole National Monument by Executive Order No. 1216.

> It is hereby ordered that the E½ of the NE¼ of the SE¼ of the NW¼, Sec. 24, T. 2 S., R. 17 W., Montana, containing 5 acres of unsurveyed land, as represented upon the accompanying diagram, embracing the Big Hole Battlefield Monument in Beaverhead County, be, and the same is hereby, reserved for a military purpose for use in protecting said monument, in accordance with the act of Congress approved June 8, 1906 (34 Stats., 225).

In due course, when A. P. Warner made a general survey of the battlefield area, he discovered that the five-acre tract described in the Executive Order was actually situated between the Monument and Indian Village sites. (The error was duly noted by an official in the General Land Office and officially corrected by a Presidential Proclamation on June 29, 1939.)

The Monument thus created was placed under the supervision of the War Department. This area was so registered by the General Land Office on July 19, 1917. Still no provision was made for any improvements or for a systematic administration of this pygmy-sized national monument.

Twenty-three years passed uneventfully, with little attention being given to the status of the Monument. Then, on July 28, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 6228, which transferred the jurisdiction of the Monument from the War Department to the Department of the Interior. Of course the National Park Service, created by Act of Congress in 1916, was expected to automatically assume the responsibility for the administration of the Monument. For various reasons, the National Park Service failed to establish a seasonal ranger position until 1938. However, Robert Condie was employed the previous summer and he did a considerable amount of clean-up work in the siege area. A seasonal ranger was assigned to the Battlefield after 1938.

In 1939, the Director of the National Park Service and the Secretary of Interior reached an agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture, providing for the relinquishment of one hundred ninety-five acres of land from the Beaverhead National Forest. This tract was to be added to the Big Hole Battlefield National Monument. Accordingly, on June 29, 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a proclamation which effected the transfer, described the boundaries, and defined jurisdiction for the area in accordance with the National Park Service Act. Even then, the most obvious adminis-

trative needs were only partially met for the next score of years. Finally, in 1959, the National Park Service faced up to the task of doing something constructive about the long-neglected Big Hole National Monument. Under "Mission 66", it was destined to become the beneficiary of the planning and experience characterizing that great enterprise throughout the entire National Park Service System.

Upon this broad outline the details of administration of the battlefield may now be delineated. As mentioned, the Big Hole National Forest Reserve, consisting of 908,500 acres, was created in 1906. In due course, a vast tract was organized in the Wisdom area, called the Battlefield District. By 1917, the station for this district was established a few rods up Battle Bulch, directly west of Gibbon's trench area.

Marshall G. Ramsey's Administration

Marshall G. Ramsey was the first Forest Ranger for the Battlefield District. Therefore, the headquarters buildings were constructed under his direction about 1914. He lived at the Battlefield from 1917 to 1929, and whatever attention the Monument received was entirely due to his patriotic interest and splendid energy.

Living on the site, he could hardly dodge the visitors, but the fact is he did not try. Instead, he patiently oriented them upon the area and explained what transpired there. Lacking funds for the Monument, he nevertheless found ways of taking care of absolute necessities. Since range cattle were always abroad in the area, he persuaded Fred Morrell, District Forester, to authorize the expenditure of $400 for a woven wire fence to enclose the siege trenches.[1] Other funds were used to construct public toilets and several camp tables. Getting funds for such purposes was not easy, and yet the public pressure situation demanded these facilities and much more.

As a rule, the local residents were uncomplaining, although hopeful of better conditions. They aimed to hold a public barbecue at the Battlefield each August. Upon such occasions, notable speakers were called upon to review the battle, horses were raced, and much visiting was done. People came regularly from Bitter Root Valley, Salmon River country, Anaconda, Butte, and Helena. These regular patrons loved the place for its own sake; it offered superb scenery and fishing. Patriotic sentiments concerning area history induced a general attachment. Although newcomers from metropolitan centers were pleased with the setting and character of the proceedings, they deplored the almost total lack of facilities. One wrote a cogent line, "No one would be sore at Uncle Sam if he made the approach to the ranger station a bit wider at the turn of the highway."[2]

The Howitzer Returned

Before 1923, there wasn't a relic on the grounds to remind one of the battle. Then, John B. Somers, Forest Supervisor, became interested in the howitzer taken from Gibbon's detachment on August 9, and dismantled by the Nez Perce. He learned that a party of Deer Lodge people found the parts that fall and took them home. Broken wheels were repaired, and the restored howitzer was placed in front of the State Penitentiary in Deer Lodge.

Sommers persuaded Governor James M. Dixon that this relic should be returned to the Battlefield, and on January 30, 1922, he signed an order authorizing the transfer.[3] The snow fall in Big Hole Basin is so deep that even a cannon ought not to be left outside. Hence, Mr. Sommers started a move for the erection of a museum cabin. The project finally materialized in 1928, when the War Department was induced to provide the sum of $500. Anaconda Copper Company furnished the lumber, and Ranger Frank Bishop and a Mr. Hoar did the work.[4]

Thereafter, the howitzer was sheltered. Only a third of the space was

necessary for that purpose, but no other exhibits were available until 1945. Thus, it is obvious that the power of the Battlefield to attract visitors and hold their interest was not due to facilities or exhibits. Indeed, the most fascinating era for visitation in the history of the Monument was during the time Thomas C. Sherrill was employed as custodian by the Forest Service.

Tom Sherrill's Regime as Custodian

In 1919, Mr. Ramsey found the attention of visitors so exacting that he persuaded the Forest Service officials to employ Tom Sherrill at $90 per month during the summer season. A Bitter Root Valley volunteer who was in the thick of the fighting, possessed of a nimble mind and excellent memory, Tom Sherrill had much to offer a visitor. He liked people and was fond of talking; as a result, his narratives improved with the telling. Conventional accounts of his experiences were recorded by two people, namely, A. J. Noyes and Ella C. Hathaway. If either of these authors, or anyone else, exhibited dubiety concerning a given incident, Sherrill had the means of compelling belief. To illustrate, on one occasion when he was describing the battle, he struck the posture of the typical Old Timer and declared: "Right over there, against the cut-bank, on a line with those old Mormon diggin's, there ought to be the bones of a squaw. I saw her fall. She was on the run with the rest of the Redskins, and turned to look back. Just as she did, a rifle ball caught her in the jaw and tore the whole side of her face off. She tried again and again to get up that cut-bank, but couldn't make it, and finally quit trying. She must have died there."[5]

Several auditors expressed doubt and suggested making an investigation. Accordingly, the group went to the spot designated and unearthed a skeleton by a bit of digging in the sand.

Upon another occasion, Amos and Henry Buck ". . . spent several days exploring the Big Hole battle grounds, and excavated the bodies of several

Indians. . . ."[6] Perhaps Sherrill was searching for the body of the young white girl that rumor had associated with the Nez Perces from the beginning of their flight. In any case, he related this story: ". . . I dug up the leather robe of a woman, which had been richly trimmed with many beads, and right where the head or skeleton of the head should have been I found the braid of hair which I shall now show you."[7] Whereupon, he produced a braid of light-colored, fine-textured hair, and expressed his belief that it had belonged to the unknown white girl. Of course, he held the opinion that the Indians had killed her, incident to Gibbon's attack.

Surely an hour or two with Tom Sherrill at Big Hole Battlefield was something to remember. Whatever one's opinion of these excavating activities and speculations may be, there can be no doubt as to the net value of Sherrill's contribution. His graphic descriptions and concrete illustrations did much to stimulate interest in the Monument. His contacts with other volunteers were imperative in the preservation of factual data pertaining to battle stations in the siege-camp. In 1921, he was sufficiently diligent to paint and post forty markers such as the following:

Sign No. 1
"Where the Indian was killed that sang his death chant for thirty minutes before he died."

Sign No. 25
"This marks the place where Billy Edwards was when General Gibbon called for a volunteer to carry a dispatch to Deer Lodge for help. . ."

Sign No. 28
"Where citizen Otto Leifer laid when he killed the Indian that sang his death chant before he died."

Sign No. 33
"M. F. Sherrill and T. C. Sherrill dug this rifle pit and got in it after two o'clock Friday morning waiting for the massacre that never came."

Marshall G. Ramsey reported to his supervisor that many travelers praised these signs.[8]

After 1923, the signs served in lieu of their author, because he did not return to the Battlefield. He spent his last years with Mr. and Mrs. T. E. Sherrill on their ranch at Conner, Montana. When he passed away in 1927, an era was ended in the history of the Monument, because no one would ever again be able to point and say:"See the flag down on the river bank, on a line with battle gulch, those were two sharp shooters who gave us a lot of trouble, killing Elliott and wounding Lockhart, and making it interesting for everyone near here. John Shean located them, and drove them from there by firing thirteen shots at them in rapid succession. This was Shean's rifle pit for several hours, those Indians fired 75 shots from this position I counted the shells after the fight, I was laying just beneath the muzzle of Shean's rifle."[9]

Perhaps he was next to the last volunteer survivor. The following notation was entered upon the Visitor Record at the Battlefield on June 13, 1932: "Barnett Wilkinson, the last citizen a living that fought in the Battle of the Big Hole on the 9 day of August 1877. Mi age is 73. Mi pals are all gone to Home ranch across the Big Divide." Signed - Barnett Wilkinson, Missoula, Montana, P. O. Box 398. Mr. Wilkinson passed away at Missoula in March, 1939. He was given military honors as befitting the last civilian survivor of the battle.

In due time, National Park Service planning, conceptions, and interpretation, under the supervision of a trained historian, was bound to improve upon the primitive presentation described. However, the contributions of those who experienced the terror and pathos of the terrible Battle of Big Hole will never pass away.

Forest Service Planning for the Monument

For more than a decade after Sherrill left the Battlefield in 1922, visitors had to fend for themselves. Hence, they ambled about, reading the

signs and receiving impressions according to their knowledge and apperception. In his 1925 annual report, M. G. Ramsey estimated that an average number of three thousand campers had used the Monument facilities each year since 1922. According to his records the number was about equally balanced between regional dwellers and through visitors. Most of them signed the register, and from that record fairly accurate appraisals were made of the annual attendance. A memorandum written by Alva Simpson, Beaverhead Forest Supervisor, on May 23, 1932, reveals these statistics:

> The Battlefield National Monument attracts a considerable number of visitors each year. Many of them camp for from one night to a week, since there is good fishing and other recreational attractions. Annually, one and one-half standard registration books are filled by visitors. These books have room for 2000 signatures and this indicates that no less than 3000 people register. Assuming that registration is 75%, about 4000 people visit the Battlefield each year. Probably 15%, or 600, camp overnight or longer. It is evident that use is heavy and that our facilities are woefully inadequate for proper sanitation, fire protection, or comfort of the visitors.
>
> No summer residences are planned in proximity to the National Monument. Any developments of this character will be diverted to areas not in direct connection with the Monument and camp grounds.[10]

The same document discloses that Mr. Simpson was fully informed about the problems pertaining to facilities and administration. He made an inventory of everything on the combined Forest Service and Monument premises. He also recommended the segregation of the two interests and the removal to Wisdom of all Forest Service buildings, except the caretaker's dwelling, water supply, and barn. Other recommendations included the development of specific campsites, reservation of ample parking space, and rearrangement of administrative improvements. Mr. Simpson referred to his recommendations as a Forest Service Unit Recreational Plan.

On October 19-20, 1925, Theodore Shoemaker, Division of Information and Education, visited the Battlefield with John B. Somers. Several days later, Shoemaker wrote a memorandum containing the following recommendations:

1. Build a museum for the cannon, and acquire a gun collection.

2. Employ a Forest Ranger nearing retirement as a caretaker.

3. Provide a suitable campground and facilities.

4. Assign numbers to battle station stakes; these to be coordinated with data in a bulletin.

5. Publish a bulletin containing a brief account of the Nez Perce War, Big Hole Battle, names of men killed, illustrations and maps.

Comparable interest in general improvements had also been expressed by other foresters from time to time. On June 6, 1930, M. H. Wolff, Assistant Regional Forester, wrote to J. C. Whitham, Beaverhead Forest Supervisor, in which he proposed high priority for the Monument in the allocation of Salary, Expense, Protection, and Management Funds. He, too, desired the expansion of campground facilities.[11] In spite of these fine desires and practical plans for improvements, the Monument was destined to look much worse before any amelioration came.

Mountain Pine Beetle Infestation

Even Mother Nature visited the Battlefield in a vandalistic role. In the late twenties, the mountain pine beetle infested about a million acres of the Beaverhead National Forest. Practically all of the mature trees were killed on the east side of the entire range. The result was a ghastly, ghost-like forest. Thus, the trees that had sheltered Gibbon's men from the heat became bare and grim. E. D. Sandvig estimated that two thousand trees should be removed from the Battlefield Monument. A waste of effort and money to be sure, but, otherwise the scene would be more depressing:

> Some of these trees are falling down and naturally present a picture of untidiness and forlornness. . . . The fence enclosing the rifle pits, museum, etc., is also falling over and casts its shadow of despair upon the area so that it can be truthfully said that the only bright spots remaining are the new R-I style of campground toilets, tables and garbage pits that stud the nearby landscape. These, I regret to state, have not been heavily used since the public evidently became imbued with the spirit of decadence that invades the environment and go elsewhere to seek recuperation in association with conventional Forest settings.[12]

Sandvig also recommended the employment of a caretaker during the summer months.

In the winter of 1935, a crew moved from one dead tree to another upon deep, firmly packed snow, and sawed the dead trees off at the ten-foot level. Although this work removed a hazard, it did not fully dispel the influence of ghostly arboreal decadence that pervaded the area.

Marking the Nez Perce Situation

Several bright spots in Battlefield history were provided by a series of visitations by L. V. McWhorter and several Nez Perce warriors. The first occurred in 1927, when Many Wounds and Yellow Wolf accompanied "Big Foot" McWhorter. This trip was the latter's first one, and it became the basis of his orientation. During July 11-15, 1928, McWhorter and the following men were at the Battlefield: Peo Peo Tholekt, Black Eagle, Many Wounds, Yellow Wolf, and a sculptor from Seattle named Alonzo V. Lewis. Upon that occasion they placed the Chief Joseph monument prepared by Mr. Lewis. This small but elegant shaft, crowned by an image of Chief Joseph's head, bears the following inscription on a bronze tablet:

> To the Everlasting Memory
> Of the Brave Warriors
> Chief Joseph's Band
> Who fought on these Grounds
> In the Nez Perce War of 1877
> . . . . .
> Erected by the Nez Perce Indians
> And the Chief Joseph Memorial
> Association
> June 1928

M. G. Ramsey arranged a simple ceremony in which the Indians participated.[13]

In August, 1935, McWhorter, Many Wounds, and White Hawk visited the Battlefield again. At that time McWhorter was preparing the manuscript on Yellow Wolf: His Own Story for publication. He was also taking field notes for what was destined to become his valedictory, Hear Me, My Chiefs.

During each visit M. G. Ramsey arranged to be present, and he induced the chiefs to assist in locating Indian positions around the siege-camp. Furthermore, he constantly urged McWhorter to come prepared to stake the entire battlefield in accordance with the warriors' memories. Instead, McWhorter and company went on to the Bear Paw Battlefield and attended to the historical staking of those grounds. That work proved to be so satisfactory to all concerned that McWhorter wrote to Ramsey on November 18, 1936, and offered to return to the Big Hole for the same purpose. His letter stated: "Whatever is done must be soon. There are only six of the actual warriors now living, two of them very old, one at least in his nineties. Barring these two older men, it simmers down to about two who might be counted on should it be decided to do the staking.[14] He offered to bring a delegation if a $60 traveling expense account could be defrayed.

Notwithstanding the tenuous character of these vital threads of knowledge, 1936 passed without an acceptance of the generous offer. However, on July 1, 1937, Ramsey sent McWhorter $75 so that the delegation could be at the Battlefield on July 11. On that day the Big Hole Road Association sponsored a gathering and picnic.

Accordingly, the citizens were able to behold several tepees nestled inside the Monument fence, under the rustling and shadows of the flag whose servants had dealt them such a crushing blow fifty years before. Now there was nothing to make anyone afraid.

A National Park-Forest Service Stalemate

The Big Hole Battlefield, consisting of a five-acre enclave within the Beaverhead National Forest Reserve of the same name, was transferred from the War Department to the Department of Interior on July 28, 1933. It has been noted that the War Department administration of the area had been next to nothing. It had placed a monument, enclosed it in an iron cage, removed

the remains of the soldiers, and made a small contribution toward the construction of a museum cabin. Therefore, whatever attention the Battlefield received derived from those physical circumstances and patriotic influences that governed the Big Hole Battlefield District rangers and their superiors.

If President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Secretary Harold L. Ickes intended to inaugurate a new and better order of things in 1933, there was little tangible evidence of the fact. The change of jurisdiction was duly made on paper, but nothing was done to implement any improvements on the spot. Actually, injury was sustained in that the Forest Service proceeded to withdraw its sustaining influence, but the National Park Service failed to assume any responsibility for administration until 1937. Thus, a sort of vacuum evolved, and the resulting neglect and frustration was distasteful to all concerned. Of course, all federal agencies had their hands full during the depression years. It was a period of retrenchment, emergency service, and not expansion. Accordingly, the newly acquired Big Hole Battlefield was not given autonomous status, but it was simply attached as an adjunctive to Yellowstone National Park.

On May 21, 1935, Director Arno B. Cammerer asked Superintendent Roger W. Toll to serve in the capacity of Coordinating Superintendent of the Big Hole Battlefield National Monument. Toll readily accepted the assignment; however, he pointed to the fact that he lacked both funds and personnel to properly discharge the duties inherent in the task. The Director did not manage to correct this deficiency for two years. Meantime, it appears that the Washington officials entertained the hope that in some manner the "Mother of Parks" might tuck this adopted monument under a protective arm.

The Forest Service Pulls Out

Accordingly, the Forest Service made plans in its own interest. Since no one was crowding, a slow pace of transition eventuated. By June, 1935,

the process of moving district headquarters from the Battlefield to Wisdom village had taken place. Thereafter, the Battlefield had ". . . the appearance of an abandoned dry land farmer's abode, and presents a despicable picture to all who view it. Likewise, the old garage, chicken house, toilet, remnants of the woodshed, and a number of picket fences. . . reflect a faded picture of neglect."[15]

That was the way things looked to Maynard Barrows on August 2, 1935, when he made a tour of inspection in behalf of Superintendent Roger W. Toll, Yellowstone National Park. A week later the superintendent made a number of suggestions to E. D. Sandvig, Supervisor of the Beaverhead National Forest. According to the contents of this letter, the Forest Service was expected to place the Battlefield in apple pie order before the Park Service could take it over. Three improvements were stipulated, namely, dead trees were to be cut at ground level, old latrines removed from the Monument area, and a bridge repaired.[16] District Ranger Ramsey was urged to have the Emergency Relief Crew members split the trees and recover battle lead, and to be on the lookout for other battle relics.

Supervisor Sandvig's reply disclosed a spirit of cooperation toward effecting a transition. He indicated that the tasks mentioned would be performed. He stated that the Forest Service would neither move or raise the Ranger's home, but leave it for the Park Service man, although ". . . our existing house is a frame building and does not blend well aesthetically with its surroundings."[17] He hoped plans would soon be made to construct a more suitable building.

In line with this fine hope, M. G. Ramsey proposed, as McWhorter had also recommended, an increase in the size of the Monument. In his view, the Forest Service should release more of the mountain side; and the village site and battle ground proper should be purchased from the Huntley Cattle Company.[18]

On November 20, 1935, the most comprehensive memorandum ever prepared upon the Big Hole National Monument was submitted to the Forestry Department by V. T. Linthacum, Assistant Forester, Recreation Surveys. It was based upon study and a visit to the Battlefield with M. G. Ramsey in September. After describing the purpose of the National Monument as one of commemoration, Mr. Linthacum postulated that the best results could be achieved by removing extraneous objects and activities. Therefore, he proposed that such things as fences and camping facilities should be eliminated from the Monument. This was not the place for picnics; National Forest recreation should be provided elsewhere. A caretaker should take over in lieu of the Forest Ranger, and all paraphernalia appertaining to the latter's functions should be taken away. Otherwise, the single purpose of the Monument could not prevail. The author strongly recommended an enlargement of the Battlefield so that there could be appropriately located campgrounds for those visitors who found it expedient to remain over night. Specific suggestions were made with respect to timber cover, museum, rifle pits, parking area, signs, building facilities, and administrative action. Linthacum's points were all well-conceived; their essence being to preserve, improve, enlarge, and beautify. His suggestions concerning exhibits, maps, and an intelligent presentation generally were all well taken. Indeed, they were fully in accord with National Park policies.

However, Yellowstone National Park officials needed money instead of advice, and funds were not made available for the Monument until 1937. Hence, administrative responsibility was simply dodged. Thus, on May 16, 1936, Evan W. Kelley, Regional Forester, felt justified in writing the following letter to Superintendent Edmund B. Rogers: "You may be interested in knowing that the Supervisor reports that the Battlefield area is still more dilapidated than last year. . . . There is considerable unfavorable comment from the

public concerning the condition of this area which it is difficult for local Forest offices to explain away."[19] Stirred by such an appeal, Rogers took the necessary steps to secure funds for administering the area. Upon receiving an assurance that funds would be made available, he visited the area in June. However, funds did not come through, and therefore nothing was done. As time passed, Rogers received complaints from all ranks of Forest Service personnel. On September 4, 1936, E. D. Sandvig wrote: "We have been besieged by novelists, sentimentalists, historians, and natives of the community for an explanation of the neglect of such an important area. We have tried to answer the flood of abuse by stating that you intended to arrive any day. . . People are beginning to think that we are either untruthful, or that the Park Service doesn't intend to carry out its obligations."[20] Three months later, W. B. Willey, Forest Supervisor, informed Rogers that a large tree blew over, missing the Chief Joseph monument by inches!

Thus, 1936 proved to be a year of great neglect, but 1937 was little better since Yellowstone Park officials, having their hands full of problems, could not come to the relief of the Battlefield. One wonders whether the Forest Service officials were more miserable over the situation than Rogers and his associates. The year 1937 was not entirely barren of tangible results, because in June, three National Park Service officials visited the area and made a recommendation. Assistant Regional Landscape Architect Howard W. Baker, Superintendent Edmund B. Rogers, and Chief Ranger Francis D. LaNoue concluded that a National Park Service historian should visit and study the Battlefield with a view of ascertaining the degree of its national significance. He should also make recommendations in respect to boundaries. They also made a request for sufficient funds to inaugurate service within the area. Their request for Battlefield funds was honored in the 1938 budget. Whereupon, a small step was taken to provide for the administration

of the Big Hole Battlefield Monument. Robert Condie was employed to clean up the dead trees in part of the Monument.

National Park Record

On July 18, 1938, five years lacking ten days since the Big Hole Battlefield National Monument had been established, National Park Service administration was inaugurated. Edward A. Hummel, Acting Regional Historian, and Hugh Peyton, Assistant Chief Ranger in Yellowstone National Park, accompanied Floyd A. Henderson, who became the Resident Attendant of the Monument. Ranger M. G. Ramsey and Assistant Supervisor K. D. Flock represented the Forest Service and briefed the visitors upon the status of the Monument. A transition of jurisdiction was thereby effectuated. The principal difference in administration related to giving primary consideration to the visitors. Rock-curbed paths were planned and developed for their convenience in viewing the battle-trenches and signs. The National Park Service attendant endeavored to conduct all visitors around the area, describe the battle, and answer questions. Unaided by museum exhibits or maps, the knowledge and personality of the Ranger was significant. Although a little folder was soon provided for visitors, no publication containing a comprehensive account of the Nez Perce War, or even the Battle of the Big Hole, was made available until 1940, when a four-page folder was printed.

Although historian Edward A. Hummel regarded the Big Hole Battlefield National Monument as unworthy of national recognition, he recognized that the Monument was too small. He therefore recommended minimum and maximum plans for the enlargement of the area. The minimum plan recommended the addition of two hundred acres of National Forest land. This plan included all of the NW¼ of Section 24 and the East 495 feet of the NE¼ of Section 23, Township 2 South, Range 17 West, with the exception of the land already set aside as a national monument by the Presidential Proclamation of June 23, 1910.

The maximum plan, which included most of the battlefield, consisted of Forest Service land as described, and would include the E½ of the NE¼ and the NE¼ of the SE¼ of Section 23; the NW¼ and the SW¼ of the SW¼ of Section 24, with the exception of the land already set aside as a national monument. The private land which should be necessary in the maximum boundary includes the E½ and SW¼ of the NE¼; the NE¼ of the SW¼, and the NW¼ of the SE¼ in Section 24. These plans were recommended without reference to the issue of national significance.

Hummel flatly said, "This Monument with its present boundaries and in its present condition is not a suitable State or County historic site and obviously would not be accepted by the State or County for administration." However, Hummel's recommendation to enlarge the boundaries of the Battlefield were held in abeyance by Regional Director Thomas J. Allen, pending a report setting forth the national significance of the area. As no such study was made, the report was not pressed by the Regional Director.

A memorandum by Howard W. Baker, dated August 19, 1938, stated: "I feel that we should consider Mr. Hummel's maximum boundary recommendations, as they actually include the Indian camp site. . . and other points such as the place where the Indians captured the soldiers' cannon. I feel that his (Hummel's) boundary extension is necessary, regardless of the ultimate disposition of the area. . . ."

On August 23, 1938, Regional Forester Frank W. Childs agreed with Baker by saying, "I feel that the Service should do everything possible to obtain the necessary land called for in the maximum extension proposed by Mr. Hummel and Mr. Peyton. This should be done regardless of what the final disposition of the area may be."

In a memorandum dated September 9, 1938, Thomas J. Allen advised the Director as follows: "I hesitate to recommend any addition to an area that

is not felt to be qualified. There is agreement, however, . . . that if the area is kept, it should be rounded out to its proper boundaries. Certainly the history involved, even if it is local in character, is not all encompassed in the present boundaries of the Monument (five acres)." Allen recommended the acquisition of the lands necessary to include all the historical area concerned that could be secured without purchase.

Accordingly, in 1939 the matter of enlarging the boundaries of the Monument was brought to Secretary Harold L. Ickes' attention, and he wrote a letter to the Secretary of Agriculture, proposing that a small part of Section 23 might be relinquished by the Forest Service. On June 29, 1939, these negotiations were consummated by a Presidential proclamation signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt, which excluded one hundred ninety-five acres from the Beaverhead National Forest and added them to the Big Hole Battlefield National Monument. However, the principal battle area was still privately owned.[21] Still, being insignificant in area, isolated geographically, and administered by remote control on a small budget, the Monument simply marked time.

Then, on July 18, 1939, Superintendent Rogers appointed Sanford Hill, Hugh Peyton, and William E. Kearns to make recommendations for the development of the Monument. They presented two schemes entitled "A" and "B". Scheme "A" called for the purchase of two hundred acres of private land. This plan proposed the establishment of facilities upon the east bench overlooking the entire Battlefield. The report further proposed the restoration of the Indian Village. This report was unacceptable to Regional Director Allen. In a memorandum dated February 13, 1940, he reminded all concerned that "The Director decided to establish the minimum proposed boundary on the basis that the area was of state significance only. . . ." Scheme "B" outlined development upon the existing area; however, Hill deplored that prospect in these words: "If the latter is adopted, then a very poorly planned

national monument will result. The Service cannot afford to lower its standards in this area. . . ."

In January, 1940, Director A. E. Demaray sent a memorandum to Regional Director Allen, requesting him to discuss the matter of transferring the Monument to the Montana State Park officials. Accordingly, on February 5, G. F. Ingalls presented the proposition to Chairman Rutledge Parker. Parker disclosed surprise that the National Park Service regarded the Battlefield as of regional interest only. Otherwise he showed little concern over the matter.

Director Demaray's reaction to Stanford Hill's development plans and to Parker's indifference was made clear in a memorandum to Allen, dated March 30, which stated:

> This is to inform all concerned in the Service that no further boundary adjustments in the case of this area should be undertaken by the Service. Any developments planned should be restricted to the protection and use of the present area. If we are successful in transferring the area to an appropriate local authority, the boundary probably can be adjusted through action by that authority, if desirable.

The matter rested there until March 2, 1942, when Director Newton B. Drury sent the following memorandum to the Regional Director:

> The desirability of extending the boundaries of the Big Hole Battlefield National Monument to include the site of the Indian Village and to provide sufficient additional land for administrative, protective, and interpretive requirements has recently been the subject of discussion in this office. In the light of recommendations submitted with early development studies and subsequent suggestions contained in recent correspondence from Acting Superintendent J. W. Emmert to you relative to the preparation of a revised Master Plan for this area, I am inclined to believe that the existing area is inadequate to properly protect and present the essential historical features associated with it.

On April 2, 1945, Rogers again urged a historical study to "determine whether the boundaries should be extended to include the site of the Indian Village. . . and interpretive requirements and any necessary boundary adjustments for developments."

In 1945, several exhibit cases were provided and the attendant acquired a number of guns representative of the ones used in the battle. Otherwise, contributions of articles found on the grounds were indeed slender. Possible donors seem reluctant to part with their relics until a permanent fire-proof and generally satisfactory place of exhibition is provided. The policy of closing the Monument for three-fourths of each year has also contributed to hazard.

Affairs in the Big Hole Basin and at the Battlefield were quite uneventful until 1949, when eighteen miles of Highway 43 were oiled up Wise River from Divide. Coordinating Superintendent Rogers learned that the Montana Highway Commission planned to construct an all-year highway from Divide on 191 to Gibbon Pass on 93. This link would eventually become an integral part of an Alaska-Mexico Highway connecting Great Falls, Butte, Sun Valley, Twin Falls, Reno, and San Francisco.

On March 23, 1950, Rogers informed Regional Director Lawrence C. Merriam about these plans and added this comment, "With the completion of this all-year road, the Monument will no longer be isolated. It will require all-year protection and adequate development."

Merriam responded to this challenge in a decisive manner, ". . . A new paved highway. . . will require a reorientation of our thinking as to boundaries, development, and future disposition of the area. . . . Your memorandum points up the need of tackling the problem. . . of studies to thoroughly evaluate the historical significance of the area."[24]

Another eight years passed before the problem was finally tackled. In 1958, studies and experience incident to Mission 66 suggested a procedure for examining the requirements of the Big Hole Battlefield National Monument under the concepts of Mission 66. Accordingly, Regional Director Howard W.

the long proposed historical study to achieve that end. In June, an agreement was reached between officials of the National Park Service and Idaho State College for Dr. Merrill D. Beal to produce "A History of the Nez Perce Campaign, 1877." Dr. Beal's monograph was made available to the National Park Service in January, 1960. Upon the basis of this research and other studies and considerations, policies and plans were formulated for the development and effective administration of the Monument.

Meantime, many people derived pleasure and inspiration from visiting the area. An entry in the Monument Register by Garfield Pomeroy on June 7, 1946, conveys appreciation for whatever has been done: "I have lived here in this Big Hole Valley since shortly after the battle. I have seen this spot at least once a year since, and have seen it slowly fixed up to somewhat of a decent memorial finally. Much improvement has been made since 1938, and we people are glad to see it!"

There have been critics of what has been done, and still more have found fault with omissions. Some would have discarded the monument long ago, but they forget the magnetism of Chief Joseph and Colonel Gibbon, the warriors, soldiers, and volunteers. There is a definite aura of heroism and sacrifice upon these battle grounds. The people who left their affairs and came to the rescue of the wounded and weary will never be forgotten. The suffering of the disconsolate Nez Perces seems to abide in the sepulchral atmosphere that pervades this strange Monument. It has the air of a cemetery---there are monuments and posters commemorating the dead, but there are no known grave sites. Burial spots were opened by friends, enemies, vandals, and wild beasts. Surely, the winds whispering in the pines remind the sensitive and informed visitor of a savage day and a reckless era in the evolution of Western America. Thus, the Battleground serves as a prick or nettle to our national conscience. Tragic as the events of the battle may appear, the place today is not without a chastening influence and an air

of peace. In fact, a spirit of decorum and sanctity seems all-pervading.[25] This feeling seems tangible, because some surviving warriors, soldiers, and volunteers returned to the scene in attitudes that conveyed much more understanding and humanity than was in evidence on August 9, 1877.

The old Nez Perce warriors who returned from time to time, did not say how they felt about that situation, but their attitude and posture implied forgiveness. A half-century enabled their spirits to respond to memories of that battle, in the manner of a bed of flowers to hobnailed boots. Dark images have all but passed away, and a sweet influence prevails upon the Big Hole Battlefield National Monument.

An unauthorized gesture that transpired on August 9, 1951, the seventy-fourth anniversary of the battle, exemplified this spirit. At that time, under cover of darkness, two unknown white men placed a memorial between the Soldier Monument and Chief Joseph marker, which bears this inscription:

> In memory of the Indians, infants, children, women,
> and old men who were wounded and killed near this
> battlefield by white soldiers, August 9, 1877.

Although this placement was made in violation of National Park Service procedures, the marker has not been removed. Instead, an appeal was made for the sponsors to set forth a justification for thus memorializing the Indians. Since this invitation was not accepted within a decade the intent of the donors seems obvious: GIVE THE INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE BIG HOLE BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT AN INDIAN SLANT!

Perhaps the general tenor of the Nez Perce Campaign would warrant such a portrayal without any prejudice whatever against the energy and valor of the soldiers and volunteers who risked and gave their lives for the conquest of civilization upon the western borders.

The Big Hole Battlefield National Monument

Footnotes

1. Letter from Fred Morrell, District Forester, to the Forester, Washington, D. C., November 27, 1925.

2. Big Hole Basin News, September 2, 1915. Actually, the first approach road to Battle Gulch was built by the settlers.

3. Letter from John B. Somers to L. V. McWhorter, December 5, 1927. A letter from the Chief of Ordnance, forwarded from Will C. Barnes to Fred Morrell on January 26, 1926, contains this data pertaining to the relic:

   It is a Bronze Mountain Howitzer Model 1841, Serial Number 111; made in 1863 by A.C.M., manufacturer, and inspected by A.B.C. The gun weighs 224 pounds.

4. Letter from Fred Morrell to W. C. Lubrect, General Manager of Anaconda Copper Co., November 14, 1928.

5. Ella C. Hathaway, op. cit.

6. Henry Buck, op. cit., December 24, 1944.

7. Ella C. Hathaway, op. cit.

8. Letter from M. G. Ramsey to K. D. Flock, November 27, 1936. John B. Somers informed Fred Morrell in a letter dated November 24, 1925, that the annual expenditure upon the Battlefield was $350 when Sherrill was employed, and $100 thereafter.

9. T. C. Sherrill, Sign No. 10.

10. E. D. Sandvig, Memo. for the Regional Forester, June 19, 1935.

11. Letter from M. H. Wolff to J. C. Whitham, June 6, 1930.

12. E. D. Sandvig, op. cit., June 19, 1935. In 1937, cement was placed around the bases of several historic trees in a vain effort to keep them from falling down.

13. The Montana Free Press, Butte, Montana, December 2, 1928. The costs incident to the construction and erection of this and other identical markers placed at strategic points on the Nez Perce Trail were paid by the Nez Perce Historical and Memorial Association.

14. Letter from L. V. McWhorter to M. G. Ramsey, November 18, 1936.

15. E. D. Sandvig, Memorandum for the Regional Forester, June 19, 1935.

16. Letter from Roger W. Toll to E. D. Sandvig, August 8, 1935.

17. Letter from E. D. Sandvig to Roger W. Toll, August 15, 1935.

Footnotes - The Big Hole Battlefield National Monument

18. Letter from M. G. Ramsey to E. D. Sandvig, October 8, 1935.

19. Letter from Evan W. Kelley to Edmund B. Rogers, May 16, 1936.

20. Letter from E. D. Sandvig to Edmund B. Rogers, September 4, 1936. Sandvig might have enclosed a clipping from The Dillon Tribune, July 9, 1936: "Historic Battlefield Lapses to Decay. . . with no caretaker. . . fallen timber. . . monument. . . chipped and marred by souvenir hunters. . . extinction of its former historic charm. . . threatened."

21. Letter from Harold L. Ickes to Henry A. Wallace, February 9, 1938. A letter dated July 16, 1940, from the Wisdom Post of the American Legion to Superintendent Edmund B. Rogers, expressed interest in helping the National Park Service acquire the 120 acres where the Indian Village was situated. One week later, Rogers replied that the National Park Service had decided to favor developments within the present boundaries.
In 1940, National Park officials turned down an offer from Senator James E. Murry to secure a Civilian Conservation Corps unit to develop the Battlefield. Plans were not sufficiently mature to justify such an undertaking. See Charles H. Gerner's letter to Murry, July 5, 1940. National Park Service File No. 621, Region 2, Omaha, Nebraska.

22. A report of the fiscal affairs of the Monument for 1945, disclosed a total expenditure of $1,099.

23. File No. 600-01, National Park Service, Region 2, Omaha, Neb.

24. Ibid.

25. One "Old Timer" who prefers to be anonymous wrote this: "I'm not superstitious, but if you listen close you can hear the birds and insects, plus running water, tell you everything about the battle once a year on the morning of August 9th. . . You try it. . . you must spend about one-half the night up above the old Indian trail west of the monuments."