



RANI-HENRIK ANDERSSON

WANÁĜI WACHÍPI KĪ
The Ghost Dance Among
the Lakota Indians in 1890

A Multidimensional Interpretation



ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

To be presented, with the permission of
the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Tampere,
for public discussion in the Paavo Koli Auditorium of the University,
Kanslerinrinne 1, Tampere, on June 7th, 2003, at 12 o'clock.

Acta Universitatis Tampereensis 939
University of Tampere
Tampere 2003

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION
University of Tampere, Department of History
Finland

Distribution



University of Tampere
Bookshop TAJU
P.O. Box 617
33014 University of Tampere
Finland

Tel. +358 3 215 6055
Fax +358 3 215 7685
taju@uta.fi
<http://granum.uta.fi>

Cover design by
Juha Siro

Printed dissertation
Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 939
ISBN 951-44-5689-0
ISSN 1455-1616

Electronic dissertation
Acta Electronica Universitatis Tamperensis 262
ISBN 951-44-5690-4
ISSN 1456-954X
<http://acta.uta.fi>

Tampereen yliopistopaino Oy Juvenes Print
Tampere 2003

The man had died and yet he had not died,
And he had talked with God, and all the dead
Were coming with the whirlwind at their head,
And there would be new earth and heaven!

John G. Neihardt: The Song of the Messiah

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is a result of years of hard work and dedication, but it is also a result of a lifelong interest toward Native American cultures. The fact that I am a Finn, living far away from the Indians and far away from the primary sources, has made this project challenging. To some people it has even seemed rather strange. Why did I not heed the advice of those who urged me to choose a more familiar and easy topic? Once you are interested in something, however, you have to pursue that ambition; otherwise action might lead to a lifelong questioning of *what if?* Now I do not have to ask myself that question, I have traveled this journey and the result is this book.

Still, there has been great understanding toward my work here in Finland. It would have been impossible to complete this study without this support. Now, when I look back, I can see that I always met exactly the right people at the right moment. Since I am a historian, I feel that it is only natural that these people should be mentioned here in the order in which they appeared in my life.

My academic life began at the History Department of the University of Tampere in 1988. During my first years as a student I pushed my interest toward the Native Americans aside; there was simply too much other work to do. When I finally had to decide the topic for my Master's thesis, I naturally thought about Indians. I was, however, afraid of taking the first step. I knew that there would no longer be a return from that path; it would be a life altering decision. At a critical moment my good friend, Riitta Savola, said: "If you don't do it, you will regret it all your life." I would like to thank her for those encouraging words.

In 1992, I met my former Middle School teacher Doctor Rainer Smedman, who laughed at me when learning about my interest in Indians. His amusement was not malicious; on the contrary, he was also working with his Ph.D. dissertation focusing on the history of the Lakota people. From that moment he has helped and guided me; he has been a good friend, and he has read and commented on many versions of my dissertation manuscript. His help has been of utmost value, and he deserves my warmest thanks. During the early period Professors Seikko Eskola

and Olli Vehviläinen gave me the chance to continue with my project. After their retirement Professor Marjatta Hietala supported my work with equal enthusiasm and helped me to receive funding for several years. When I was starting my dissertation, I met again with Professor Markku Henriksson, who had introduced me to the field of American Studies years earlier. He encouraged me to continue my work and has helped and supported me ever since. In 1998 he grabbed me by the arm and threw me into an office; there I met, for the first time, with Professor Robert E. Bieder. I spent several hours with Professor Bieder talking about my project and listening to him sing Iroquois songs. Afterwards I was convinced that I did not make a good impression because I was thrown there totally unprepared. Now I have to thank Markku Henriksson for his wise action; despite my fears, Professor Bieder took me under his wing, and has been a constant supporter and a friend ever since. He has tirelessly read, commented upon and corrected my text. Without his help this work would have never been possible. I owe him my deepest gratitude.

Professor Bieder also introduced me to Professor Raymond J. DeMallie, who has taught me more about the Lakota people than I ever could hope for. His advice has been worth more than I can put into words. At Indiana University I was allowed to study the Lakota language under Professor Douglas R. Parks. The fact that he put up with me, and with my pronunciation of the Lakota *z*, tells a lot of his attitude toward me. I am glad to express my gratitude to these two men, and I am delighted over the fact that we were able to establish a good professional relationship but also a friendship that will hopefully last for years to come. I also want to express my thanks to the people at the American Indian Studies Research Institute, who helped me to feel at home. I am also indebted to Francis Flavin, who was always there for me when I had problems in adjusting to the American way of life. Also Damon D. Bergen, Sebastian Brown and Jeffrey R. Rollins made my life in America a pleasant experience.

Furthermore, I owe my gratitude to the nice people at various libraries and archives in the United States. Especially worth mentioning are the people at the Government Documents room and the Microfilm Reading room at the Indiana University Main Library. It would have been impossible to carry out this project

without proper funding. I express my thanks to The Fulbright Foundation, and the kind people there, for awarding me the ASLA-Fulbright Graduate Grant. The Finnish Academy deserves my gratitude for awarding me a research grant for the year 2000-2001. The University of Tampere helped my work with several grants during the period of 2000-2002, and I am grateful for their assistance.

I have also received support from Professors Auvo Kostiaainen and Markku Hyrkkänen, who both showed understanding toward my work. Sari Pasto at the University of Tampere helped me with various practical problems, and I am glad to express my thanks to her. Countless discussions with Riku Hämäläinen have been both fun and helpful. I am also grateful to my American friends, who read and corrected the final version of the manuscript. It was an enormous challenge to write several hundred pages in English. I thought that I was quite a fluent writer, but I discovered that nothing that I know about Finnish grammar applies to English. Still, all the mistakes that can be found in the book are mine, and I would like to think that some Finnish expressions here and there, give a special character to the book - a character that makes this work ultimately mine.

Finally, I want to thank Siiri and Martti Tikka, who have always welcomed me to their home and who have helped me in so many ways. Martti, Ville Smedman and Toni Lassila helped me with countless computer problems. My sister Aretta and her friend Susanna allowed me to establish a base in their home. My sister always found the best, not the cheapest, but the most flexible airplane connections. I know it was not always an easy task. My parents Auli and Mauno have always been there for me and believed that I was smart enough to carry out this project. They deserve very special thanks. Then there is Issun, who has put up with me for the past years; she even followed me across the Atlantic Ocean and spent a year with me in America. Although she has never said that she would like to see this project to be finished as soon as possible, I am certain that she finds it a welcome change in our lives. Even if this project has been fun and exciting, I believe that when this book is finally printed, she finds it equally rewarding as I do.

Rani-Henrik Andersson, Pietarsaari Finland, March 2003

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Topic and Method

In the late 1880s a revitalization movement known as the ghost dance swept across the North American plains and galvanized tens of thousands of Indians from more than 30 tribes.¹ The ghost dance was a religious movement that took many forms as it passed from one tribe to another, yet its core message of return to the old ways and a future of peace and happiness remained the same. The ghost dance was the physical expression of a religious movement that advocated peace. The most important instructions of the prophet of the religion, a Paiute Indian called Wovoka, were: “You must not...do harm to anyone. You must not fight. Do right always.” According to Wovoka, the whites were going to disappear in a great earthquake, and only those Indians who believed in his message were to survive. Then they would live forever in a world of happiness where no hunger or disease would exist. To make all this to happen, the Indians were to dance a certain sacred dance. Thus no fighting was needed to bring about this new Indian paradise.²

In the late 1880s Indians in the United States were living on reservations where they were fed and clothed by the government. They were basically “poor wards” of the government with little hope for the future. The ghost dance offered new hope to Indians, who had been forced to give away their lands and abandon their traditional ways of living. Even their religious ceremonies were forbidden. The ghost dance, however, returned religious ceremonies to a central place in the daily lives of the Indians. All over the Western United States Indians started to dance and pray as Wovoka taught. Unfortunately, among the Lakotas, the western branch of the Sioux people, the dance produced tragic consequences. The United States military, under orders to put a stop to what many whites thought was a war

¹ For the area covered by the ghost dance see Appendix 1, map 1.

² Mooney, James, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (orig. The 14th Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1892-1893, Washington D.C. 1896), Lincoln, Nebraska 1991, pp. 780-781. More about Wovoka and his message in, chapter 2.3.

dance, opened fire on Lakotas in December 1890 resulting in what would become known as the Wounded Knee massacre.³

For my Master's thesis, "The Ghost Dance – A Promise for a Better Future. The Ghost Dance and the Lakota Indians 1889-1890," I studied the special forms of the ghost dance among the Lakotas and the ghost dance's significance for their culture. While I studied the events leading to the Wounded Knee tragedy, I discovered that many mixed feelings prevailed about the ghost dance, and that different interest groups perceived the events in totally different ways. This gave me the idea of studying the ghost dance from a new perspective.

The Lakota ghost dance has been the subject of a wide scholarly and public interest from the late nineteenth century throughout the twentieth century. The first publications about the Lakota ghost dance that used historical documents as source material were published as early as 1891. **James P. Boyd's** *Recent Indian Wars, Under the Lead of Sitting Bull and Other Chiefs; With Full Account of the Messiah Craze and Ghost Dances* and **Willis Fletcher Johnson's** *The Red Record of the Sioux. Life of Sitting Bull and History of the Indian War of 1890-1891*, for example, were among the very first to set the tone in studying the Lakota ghost dance. Articles in various journals and magazines soon followed.⁴

The first and foremost study of the ghost dance is *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* by the early anthropologist **James Mooney**. The book was originally a part of the *14th Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1892-1893* and was a result of several years' investigation of the ghost dance among various Indian tribes. **Mooney's** work is still essential and invaluable, but also somewhat problematic and contains some errors. Among the Lakotas, for example, **Mooney** was not able to get any information from the Indians. The Lakotas simply refused to talk to him: "The dance was our religion...we will not talk any more about it," was their reply to **Mooney's** requests. For this reason his study, although the first actual attempt to try to understand the ghost dance as a religious movement, lacks information from

³ More about U.S. Indian policy in, chapter 2.1. and about the Lakotas in, chapter 2.2.

⁴ See, chapter 1.2. and the List of Sources.

the Lakotas themselves. Even the Lakota ghost dance songs he published were received from a local schoolteacher Emma C. Sickles who, in turn, got them from George Sword, an Indian informant. **Mooney** constructed his story of the Lakota ghost dance and the outbreak, as he calls it, from *primary* government documents and newspapers, but not with the help of Indian informants like he was able to do among several other Indian tribes.⁵

From the very beginning the Lakota ghost dance was studied mainly from the perspectives of white Americans, and the Lakotas' views were only briefly incorporated into this main narrative. These earliest accounts created a tradition of treating the Lakota ghost dance as a military, political, or "religious-political" movement. Their approach is well characterized by phrases such as "Sioux outbreak," "Messiah Craze" or "ghost dance war," so often used even in the titles of these works. This tradition continued into the late twentieth century, when alternative interpretations have emerged. While some of these accounts do incorporate the Lakotas' point of view as a legitimate part of the story, most fail to put the ghost dance in a wider cultural and social context. Often these accounts are written to convey a particular perspective, focus narrowly on some specific aspects of the Lakota ghost dance, or are analyzed chronologies. All too often the story of the Lakota ghost dance, even in some of the most recent accounts, is based on already existing literature or one-sided interpretations of the primary documents. However, critical analysis of the primary sources is essential, since they do not simply reveal "facts," but must be interpreted in the context of the late nineteenth century.

Mooney's work, however, has been the cornerstone on which scholars throughout the twentieth century have built their interpretations about the Lakota ghost dance. It has become a tradition to treat **Mooney's** study almost as a primary source on the Lakota ghost dance; his interpretations have survived in the works of several historians and anthropologists. Some of these include: Anthropologist **Robert H. Lowie's** *Indians of the Plains* (1954), historian **George E. Hyde's** *A Sioux Chronicle* (1956), **Robert M. Utley's** *Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (1963) and

⁵ See, Mooney 1991, p. 1016 and foreword by Raymond J. DeMallie. pp. XV-XXV.

Rex Alan Smith's *Moon of the Popping Trees* (1975), to name a few. Thus a standard tradition of writing the history of the Lakota ghost dance emerged. Only recently have different interpretations arisen. One of these was written by anthropologist and scholar of the Lakota people, **Raymond J. DeMallie**. In his brief, but insightful article, "The Lakota Ghost Dance: An Ethnohistorical Account" (1982), **DeMallie** looks at the Lakota ghost dance from the point of view of the Lakota people. Another recent attempt by historian **William S. E. Coleman** looks to move beyond the traditional mainstream interpretation of the Lakota ghost dance. In his work, *Voices of Wounded Knee* (2000), **Coleman** presents several documents relating to the Lakota ghost dance and the Wounded Knee massacre. Unfortunately this work is marred by too little editing and analysis. Thus his effort is interesting, but insufficient. The Lakota ghost dance has been widely studied, but there is still need for reevaluation.⁶

In the present work, I am considering the Lakota ghost dance from a larger perspective. I have drawn upon the growing number of studies in the U.S. that stress multicultural approaches, that is, include a multidimensional interpretation.⁷ One example of this approach that I have found valuable is **Patricia N. Limerick's** *Legacy of Conquest* (1987), in which she considers the American West as a meeting ground of several groups who compete over economic, cultural and political control over the area.⁸ Recent theoretical work by **Robert F.**

⁶ For a useful survey of the literature relating to the Lakota ghost dance see, Sievers, Michael A., *The Historiography of "The Bloody Field...That Kept the Secret of the Everlasting Word": Wounded Knee*, *South Dakota History*, Vol. 6, No. 1, passim.

⁷ Bieder, Robert E., *Multiculturalism: The Term, The Debate*. A paper held at The Nordic American Studies Association Conference, August 9-13, 1995, Oslo, Norway (the paper is in the author's possession); Discussions with Professor Robert E. Bieder in Tampere, Finland during the winter 1997-1998 and in Bloomington, Indiana, USA, during the period of 1999-2001. More about multiculturalism in, for example, Taylor, Charles (et. al.), *Multiculturalism, Examining the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton, New Jersey 1994, passim.

⁸ See, Limerick, Patricia N., *The Legacy of Conquest. The Unbroken Past of the American West*, New York, N.Y. 1987, pp. 20-40. Historians **Patricia N. Limerick** and **Richard White**, for example, represent a new tradition of writing Western history known as "The New Western History." This approach challenges the traditional frontier ideology set forth by Frederick Jackson Turner in the late nineteenth century. Recently "The New Western History" has raised extensive debate among scholars in the United States. As examples of this debate see, Limerick 1987, pp. 18-55; White Richard, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own. A New History of the American West*, Norman, Oklahoma, 1991, passim.; Limerick, Patricia N., "What on Earth is the New Western History?" in, *Trails: Toward a New Western History* (ed. Limerick, Patricia N., Millner, Clyde A. II & Rankin, Charles E.), Lawrence, Kansas 1991, pp. 81-88; Thompson, Gerald, *Another Look at Frontier/Western Historiography* in, *Trails: Toward a New Western History* (ed. Limerick, Millner & Rankin 1991), pp. 89-96; Malone, Michael P., *The "New Western History,"*

Berkhofer Jr. that emphasizes the importance of identifying conflictory “voices” including gender, ethnicity, race and class, suggest new approaches to writing history.⁹

Berkhofer suggests that by presenting different voices on events, a more comprehensive picture of the past can be presented. When all these conflicting voices are accepted as legitimate “sub-stories” of the same (hi)story, and when the “...various viewpoints of evidentiary sources, others’ stories, other scholars’ texts, and the historian’s own text are incorporated into one interpretive system,” a multidimensional interpretation of the past can be achieved. This ultimately is what **Berkhofer** refers to as “The Great Story.” The more comprehensive the selection of voices and viewpoints is, the fuller can the final historical analysis, “The Great Story,” be. However, the historian’s task, **Berkhofer** argues, is not only “...to reclaim voices, but also to contextualize them, to reconstruct the discursive world, which the subjects inhabited and were shaped by.”¹⁰

In this study these ideas by **Berkhofer** serve as a basis for constructing “The Great Story” of the Lakota ghost dance. This work is, therefore, an attempt to apply **Berkhofer’s** theoretical approach to actual historical narrative. Each of the chapters in this study presents a “sub-history” of the Lakota ghost dance viewed from a certain perspective creating the voice of that particular group of people. At the end of each chapter an analysis of that voice is presented. In chapter 8, a

An Assessment in, Trails: Toward a New Western History (ed. Limerick, Millner & Rankin 1991), pp. 97-102; West, Elliot, *A Longer, Grimmer, but More Interesting Story* in, *Trails: Toward a New Western History* (ed. Limerick, Millner & Rankin 1991), pp. 103-111; Dippie, Brian W., *American Wests: Historiographical Perspectives* in, *Trails: Toward a New Western History* (ed. Limerick, Millner & Rankin 1991), pp. 112-136; Nash, Gerald D., “Point of View: One Hundred Years of Western History,” *Journal of the West*, No. 32, 1993, p. 4; Faragher, John Mack, “The Frontier Trail: Rethinking Turner and Reimagining the American West,” *American Historical Review*, No. 98, 1993, pp. 107-108; Hurtado, Albert R., *Whose Misfortune? Richard White’s Ambivalent Region*, *Reviews in American History*, 22, June 1994, pp. 281-286; Allen, Michael, “The New Western History Stillborn,” *The Historian*, 1994, p. 203; Flavin, Francis E., “What is The New Western History?” 1997, pp. 1-10, (Unpublished manuscript in the possession of the author). See also, Berkhofer, Robert F. Jr., *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1995, pp. 161-190. More about **Turner’s** theories on the West and the Frontier in, for example, Turner, Frederick Jackson, *The Frontier in American History*, Huntington, N.Y. 1976 (orig. 1920), passim.; Turner, Frederick Jackson, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* in, *History, Frontier and Section: Three Essays*, Albuquerque, New Mexico 1993 (orig. 1893); passim.

⁹ See, Berkhofer 1995, pp. 139-201.

¹⁰ See, Berkhofer 1995, pp. 157-201.

“Great Story” is achieved by combining these different voices into one interpretive system of the Lakota ghost dance.

In my study, the voices of five different groups of actors will be presented: the Lakotas, the Indian Agents, the U.S. Army, the Press, and the U.S. Congress. My basic questions are, 1) did misunderstandings exist about the ghost dance and, if so, 2) how were they compounded, leading eventually to the tragic end at Wounded Knee. I will also 3) demonstrate that the method I have chosen for this study can provide a more realistic and historically sound reconstruction of the Lakota ghost dance than any other now available. My study will go beyond merely collecting the views of these groups and will seek to explore and analyze the political, cultural and economic linkages between them in order to gain a fuller understanding of what the ghost dance represented.

This study is arranged so that the voices of the five actors are analyzed in different chapters. Because the Lakotas were living at several different agencies, and events took place simultaneously at each one (See appendix 7, map 4), strict chronology is necessary to avoid confusion. News of the ghost dance spread from west to east, so I have arranged the chapters in a similar - natural - order; the Lakota voice is the first to be dealt with, followed by the voices of the agents, the army, the press and, finally, the voice of the Congress.

Limerick argues that events that took place in the West have usually been portrayed from the East. In this sense the East is the center, representing white civilization, while the West represents the uncivilized frontier that merely reacts to Eastern actions. In this study the actual center of events was indeed in the West, but my approach allows us to look at several centers, which react to each other creating a complex structure of equally important viewpoints. These viewpoints then, as anthropologist **Raymond J. DeMallie** has noted, “...may contradict one another not because one is right and one is wrong, but because they are composed for different purposes and are based on different cultural premises.”¹¹

¹¹ DeMallie, Raymond J., “*These Have No Ears*” : *Narrative and the Ethnohistorical Method*, *Ethnohistory*, 40:4, 1993, p. 526 and p. 532. See also, Limerick 1987, p. 26 and pp. 291-292.

Each of the chapters in this study presents different kinds of challenges. In order to understand the Lakota voice, I have put the Lakota ghost dance in a larger cultural perspective, or as **DeMallie** notes: “To attempt an understanding of the Sioux [Lakota] past it is essential to come to an understanding of Sioux [Lakota] culture, which provides the context.”¹² For this reason, the history and culture of the Lakota people is briefly explained in the beginning of this study and further discussed whenever deemed necessary. To achieve an understanding of the Lakota ghost dance from the Lakota perspective, I have found that the traditional historical approach is not sufficient to answer all the questions raised in this study. To gain a fuller understanding I have incorporated methodology derived from ethnohistory and anthropology that enables me to deal with problems that arise from studying a culture so different from our own Western culture. I have, for example, used oral history as source material, and I have portrayed the Lakota ghost dance in terms that derive from the Lakota culture and were familiar to the Lakotas. In this, knowledge of Lakota language has been invaluable. By accepting history, ethnohistory and anthropology as fields of science that support each other, this study has become, not only multidimensional, but also interdisciplinary.¹³

The chapters on the army, the agents and the Congress presented fewer methodological challenges, but more of a challenge to decipher handwritten historical documents. These chapters also required extensive reading on various topics: the Congress, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Indian agents and U.S. Indian policy in general. Becoming familiarized with the U.S. military and its relations with Indians throughout the nineteenth century was essential for the writing of the voice of the army. The voice of the press presented yet another challenge: how to deal with material that was not only voluminous, but also

¹² DeMallie 1993, p. 532.

¹³ For a discussion about the ethnohistorical method and ethnohistory’s place as an intermediary between anthropology and history see, for example, Dark, Philip, *Methods of Synthesis in Ethnohistory*, *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1957, pp. 249-254; Hudson, Charles, *Folk History and Ethnohistory*, *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 13, No. 1-2, 1966, pp. 52-67; Sturtevant, William C., *Anthropology, History, and Ethnohistory* in, *Introduction to Cultural Anthropology. Essays in the Scope and Methods of the Science of Man* (ed. Clifton, James A.), Boston, Massachusetts 1968, pp. 451-475; Euler, Robert C., *Ethnohistory in the United States*, *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 19, 1972, pp. 201-205; Martin, Calvin, *Ethnohistory: A Better Way to Write Indian History*, *The Western Historical Quarterly*, January 1978, pp. 42-56; Limerick 1987, p. 222. More about the use of oral tradition in writing history see, Sturtevant 1968, pp. 455-467; Euler 1972, p. 204; Vansina, Jan, *Oral Tradition as History*, Nairobi, Kenya 1985, passim.

contradictory and inconsistent. These chapters, however, are the results of what may be considered a straightforward historical research.

To aid in a fuller understanding of the ghost dance, a brief survey of revitalization movements as well as some main features of official United States Indian policy are presented in this study. The Lakota ghost dance has to be placed in these broader contexts, but the emphasis in this work is on the events of the year 1890.

1.2. Source Material

1.2.1. Previous studies

Research literature on the Lakota people, and indeed on the Lakota ghost dance, is voluminous. Below are some important studies on the Lakota history. **George E. Hyde**'s classic trilogy *Red Cloud's Folk: A History of the Oglala Sioux Indians* (1937), *Spotted Tail's Folk. A History of the Brulé Sioux* (1961) and *A Sioux Chronicle* (1956), are despite their age still valuable reading. **James C. Olson**'s *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem* (1965), **Robert W. Larson**'s *Red Cloud. Warrior-Statesman of the Oglala Lakota* (1997), **Stanley Vestal**'s *Sitting Bull. Champion of the Sioux* (1989, orig. 1932), **Robert M. Utley**'s *Lance and the Shield. The Life and Times of Sitting Bull* (1993), **Mari Sandoz**' *Crazy Horse. The Strange Man of the Oglalas* (1992, orig. 1942) and **Mike Sajna**'s *Crazy Horse, The Life Behind the Legend* (2000) focus on the lives of some of the great Lakota leaders, but they also provide insights into the political history of the Lakota people. Anthropologist **Catherine Price**'s *The Oglala People, 1841-1879. A Political History* (1996), and **Royal B. Hassrick**'s *The Sioux. Life and Customs of a Warrior Society* (1964) are studies that shed light on the political structure as well as on the daily life of the Lakota people. **Edward Lazarus**' *Black Hills, White Justice. The Sioux Nation Versus the United States, From 1775 to the Present* (1991), is a study that concentrates on the legal aspects of the Lakota's struggle for their lands. General studies that deal with the U.S. army and the Lakotas are, for example, **Utley**'s *The Indian Frontier of the American West 1846-1890* (1984) and **Ralph K. Andrist**'s *The Long Death. Last Days of the Plains Indian* (1969).

Important studies on the Lakota society and culture are **James R. Walker's** *Lakota Society* (ed. DeMallie, Raymond J. 1992) and *Lakota Belief and Ritual* (ed. DeMallie, Raymond J. & Jahner, Elaine A. 1991). **James R. Walker** worked as a physician among the Lakotas on Pine Ridge Reservation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His interviews with the Lakotas are, in fact, the primary sources on the Lakota culture and society. **John G. Neihardt's** *Black Elk Speaks. Being the Life story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux* (1961, orig. 1932) is one of the best insights into the world of the Lakota people. **John G. Neihardt**, an author and a poet, spent several years in the 1930s and 1940s in recording the teachings of a Lakota medicine man, Black Elk, who saw **Neihardt's** effort as an attempt to save the traditional Lakota way of thought. *The Sixth Grandfather. Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt* (ed. DeMallie, Raymond J. 1985) provides further understanding to Black Elk's teachings. *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown, Joseph Epes 1973) is also based on Black Elk's teachings and is valuable in understanding Lakota religious life. **William K. Powers'** studies *Oglala Religion* (1977) and *The Sacred Language. The Nature of Supernatural Discourse in Lakota* (1986), are of great value. An important study, which includes articles by non-Indian scholars and Lakotas alike, is *Sioux Indian Religion. Tradition and Innovation* (ed. DeMallie, Raymond J. & Parks, Douglas R. 1987).

Important works on the Lakota ghost dance include, as mentioned above, **Utley's** *Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (1963), which is an excellent study of the Lakota ghost dance from the military and political point of view. A brief, but insightful military analysis is also *Prelude to Wounded Knee: The Military Point of View* by historian **Stephen D. Youngkin** (1974). Historian **Hyde** tries to look at the Lakota ghost dance from economical and political aspect in *The Sioux Chronicle* (1956). *Moon of the Popping Trees* (1975) by historian **Rex Alan Smith** is a general look at the Lakota ghost dance, and *Eyewitness at Wounded Knee* (ed. Carter, Jensen, Richard E, Paul, Eli R. & Carter, John E. 1991) is an attempt to study the ghost dance, and especially the Wounded Knee massacre, from different perspectives. **James H. McGregor's** *The Wounded Knee Massacre From the Viewpoint of the Sioux* (1940) gives valuable information about the actual massacre told by the

Indian survivors. Despite its popularistic style and uncritical use of Indian testimony, **David Humphreys Miller's** *Ghost Dance* (1985) is interesting and useful when used with caution. **George R. Kolbenschlag's** *Whirlwind Passes. News Correspondents and the Sioux Indian Disturbances of 1890-1891* (1990) is by far the best study now available on the press and the ghost dance "trouble." It is also noteworthy that Indian scholars, although renown for their general studies of the Lakota and Indian - white relations, touch the ghost dance only randomly. As an example of these **Ella C. Deloria's** *Speaking of Indians* (1998, orig. 1944) is worth mentioning.¹⁴

1.2.1. Primary Sources

The most important primary sources used for this study are the following: For the chapter on the agents the *Special Case No. 188* (SC 188), which includes the correspondence between the Indian agents and the commissioner of Indian affairs, has been invaluable. This material is supported by *Letters Sent to the Office of Indian Affairs by the Agents or Superintendents at the Pine Ridge Agency 1875-1914* (LSASPR) and the *James McLaughlin Papers* (JMLP).¹⁵ For the voice of the army, the most important source has been the *Reports and Correspondence Relating to the Army Investigations of the Battle at Wounded Knee and to the Sioux Campaign of 1890-1891* (AIWKSC). This is a comprehensive collection of the correspondence between the military officers during the campaign of 1890-1891.¹⁶ *The Congressional Records* (Cong. Rec.) provides insights into the congressional debate during the period. Additional information has been sought from the *Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Papers* (SCIAP) and *House*

¹⁴ Some of the best-known works by Indian scholars include, for example, *Custer Died for Your Sins; an Indian Manifesto*, New York, N. Y. 1969 and *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, Golden, Colorado 1994 by **Vine Deloria Jr.**

¹⁵ The Special Case No. 188 and the Letters Sent to the Office of Indian Affairs by the Agents or Superintendents at the Pine Ridge Agency 1875-1914 belong to The National Archives and Records Service, Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Together they create a body of almost 3,000 pages of letters and telegrams relating to the ghost dance on three microfilm rolls. The James McLaughlin Papers are the personal correspondence of James McLaughlin, the Indian agent at the Standing Rock reservation. In this study the microfilmed version at the Minnesota Historical Society Archives at St. Paul, Minnesota, has been used.

¹⁶ This material is part of the National Archives and Records Service, Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office 1780-1917. The almost 2,000 pages, on two microfilm rolls, provide the essential correspondence between the military officers, and the investigations to the Wounded Knee affair conducted first in 1891 and later in 1898 by the U.S. army.

Committee on Indian Affairs Papers (HCIAP).¹⁷ The *Eli S. Ricker Manuscript Collection* (ESRMC) and the *Walter Mason Camp Manuscript Collection* (WMCC) include interviews with actual Lakota ghost dancers, and have been of utmost importance.¹⁸

Equally important sources have been the documents published by the U.S. government. These include the *Annual Report of the Secretary of War 1891* (ARSOW) and the *Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (ARCIA). The Annual Reports of the Indian Agents are included in the Commissioners' reports. These documents can be found in the *U.S. Serial Set* collection. Very important for the understanding of the background of the Lakota ghost dance are the proceedings of the negotiations held in 1888 and 1889 between the Lakotas and the so-called Sioux Land Commissions. The aim of these negotiations was to reduce the size of the Great Sioux Reservation, which ultimately happened in 1889 causing great anxiety among the Lakotas (See chapter 2). These documents are also found in the *U.S. Serial Set* collection.¹⁹

In addition, edited documentary collections like *American Indian and the United States. A Documentary History* (AIUSD), Volume I-IV, (ed. Washburn, Wilcomb E. 1979), *Documents of the United States Indian Policy* (DUSIP), (ed. Prucha,

¹⁷ In this study the Congressional Record collection used, is the edited version that can be found at the Library of Parliament in Helsinki, Finland.

¹⁸ Judge Eli S. Ricker interviewed several Lakotas in the early twentieth century. These interviews dealt with many aspects of Lakota life from the early contacts with the whites to the ghost dance and Wounded Knee. The interviews are originally written on paper and are deposited at the Nebraska Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska. American Indian Studies Research Institute, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana owns copies of the material, these copies with some selected transcripts made by Professor Raymond J. DeMallie, have been used in this study. Walter Mason Camp, an army engineer also interviewed several Lakotas about Lakota life much like Eli S. Ricker. The collection is at Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. The material is written on very fragile paper notes, and is very difficult to read. In interpreting this material, the transcripts provided by Professor Kenneth Hammer have been valuable. Both of these collections contain enormous amount of information, and are worth a look for anyone interested in Lakota culture and history.

¹⁹ The Annual Records of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs are important, since they contain the reports by the Lakota agents. These are valuable in understanding the daily life on the reservations. They include reports on farming, education, rations etc. The Annual Report of the Secretary of War includes the reports by the Commanding Officers Major General Nelson A. Miles and Brigadier General John R. Brooke as well as reports by lower ranked officers. Also letters and telegrams are included. The U.S. Serial Set is a voluminous collection containing, for example, a variety of Government documents and reports.

Francis Paul 1975) and *Documents of American Indian Diplomacy* (DAID), (ed. Deloria, Vine Jr., & DeMallie, Raymond J. 1999), have been used.

In order to write the voice of the press, The New York Times and The Washington Post were selected to represent the Eastern newspapers. These two newspapers were selected for the simple reason that they were widely read newspapers, and very likely read by the Eastern decision makers also. The Chicago Tribune was important, since the army headquarters for the 1890-1891 campaign was located in that city. Furthermore, The Chicago Tribune was also geographically located between the Lakota reservations and Washington. The Omaha Daily Bee represents the local, Western newspapers. Its importance lies in the fact, that The Omaha Daily Bee became the most widely quoted newspaper during the “trouble.” Harper’s Weekly Magazine represents the nationwide magazines, and was chosen mainly because of its long traditions in writing about Indian related issues.

In this study, some Lakota names and words are used to give authenticity to the Lakota voice. Generally English names are used, but when a name appears for the first time the Lakota name is provided in parenthesis, like Red Cloud (Maḥpíya Lúta). In writing the Lakota words I have chosen the orthography used by several universities in the U.S. in teaching the Lakota language. This orthography by Allan R. Taylor & David S. Rood is, as anthropologist and linguist **Douglas R. Parks** put it, by far the best and richest orthography on the Lakota language currently available. A brief phonological key is provided in Appendix A.²⁰

Throughout the study the books and articles appear in the footnotes by the author’s last name and the year of publication, except for the first time the material is used; then bibliographical information is provided. If several items are published in the same year by the same author, a letter is provided after the

²⁰ Discussion with Professor Douglas R. Parks, December 25, 2000, Bloomington, Indiana. This orthography is used in, Taylor, Allan R. & Rood, David S., *Elementary and Intermediate Lakota*, University of Colorado Lakota Project. These textbooks are used by the American Indian Studies Research Institute at Indiana University in teaching the Lakota language. Another valuable guide into the Lakota language is, Buechel, Eugene S. J., *Lakota English Dictionary*, Pine Ridge, South Dakota, 1983.

publishing year to identify the item, for example, Henriksson 1986a and Henriksson 1986b. Whenever there are authors who share the same last name, the initial of their first name is used to differentiate between the authors, for example Johnson D. and Johnson W. Generally items appear in the footnotes in the order of the year of publication, so that the older is mentioned first. When there are exceptions from this rule, the source, which is considered more important, will be mentioned first. Some abbreviations are used in connection with the primary sources and documentary collections. A full list of abbreviations is provided in Appendix B.

2. FROM EARLY CONTACTS TO GHOST DANCE

2.1. Isolation and Assimilation

From early contact between Europeans and Native Americans it was obvious that these different peoples could not coexist without conflict. As early as in 1763, by a royal proclamation of King George III of England, a boundary line was drawn along the Appalachian Mountains leaving the area to the West for the Indians. Separation became national policy in the United States during the early nineteenth century.²¹ The idea was, that in this way conflicts might be avoided and Indians would gradually become civilized and need less land. The whites could then inhabit the land that was left over. This policy of separation culminated in the reservation policy, which still exists.²²

This chapter explores some of the consequences of reservation policy. In order to understand the ghost dance and its impact not only on the Indian people of the United States, but also on the white population, it is essential to understand the ideologies behind the relations between whites and Indians. For this reason, a brief survey of the official Indian policy and the ideologies behind it during the nineteenth century is presented. In order to understand the ghost dance among the Lakota Indians, special attention is also given to the effect that Indian policy had upon the Lakota people. A brief survey of the history and culture of the Lakotas is also presented.

²¹ See, Dippie, Brian W., *The Vanishing American. White Attitudes & U.S. Indian Policy*, Lawrence, Kansas 1982, pp. 3-11, Henriksson, Markku, *Siirtokunnista kansakunnaksi. Johdatus Yhdysvaltain historiaan*, Jyväskylä Finland 1990, p. 72. For accounts of the early days of the U.S. Indian policy see, for example, Prucha, Francis Paul, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years. The Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790-1834*, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1970, passim.; Viola, Herman J., *Thomas L. McKenney. Architect of America's Early Indian Policy: 1816-1830*, Chicago, Illinois 1974, passim. ; Prucha, Francis Paul, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indian*, Vol. I, Lincoln, Nebraska 1986, pp. 35-314. See also, *Documents of American Indian Diplomacy. Treaties, Agreements, and Conventions, 1775-1979*, DAID, Vol. I, (ed. Deloria, Vine, Jr. & DeMallie, Raymond J.), Norman, Oklahoma 1999, pp. 6-8.

²² Prucha 1970, pp. 224-225; *Americanizing the American Indian. Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880-1900* (ed. Prucha, Francis Paul), Cambridge, Massachusetts 1973, pp. 2-3; Hoxie, Frederick E., *A Final Promise. The Final Campaign to Assimilate the Indian 1880-1920*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1984, p. 2.

The reservation policy can be roughly separated into two phases. The first phase was adopted as the official Indian policy in the 1820s during the presidency of James Monroe, although similar ideas had been presented even earlier. The aim of this policy was to create an Indian territory west of the United States. The second phase, which started officially in the 1850s, suggested that the Indians should be removed tribe by tribe to individual reservations that were to be established for them.²³ Indian removal was considered necessary in order to prevent the total extinction of the Indian, but also to free more land to the white settlers. The Indian could not remain as a hindrance to the expanding nation as it fulfilled its destiny of exploring and conquering new lands. This idea of Western expansion became known in the U.S. as Manifest Destiny.²⁴

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the United States was divided into citizens and non-citizens. Indians, as well as African-Americans and later also Asians, were excluded from citizenship, whereas European immigrants were taken in as full members of society.²⁵ After the Civil War the situation changed as slavery was abolished and as the number of immigrants increased. The non-white minorities were given a second-class membership in the nation - a membership that allowed them to serve the white upper class, but at the same time "feel at home."²⁶ Indian policy after the Civil War initiated by President Ulysses S. Grant was known as the Peace Policy. The basic idea of this policy was to locate the Indians on tribal reservations where they could be civilized and gradually absorbed into the social and economic system of the United States. This task was given to the Indian office, which at first was situated as a part of the War Department. In 1849, however, when the Interior Department was created, the Indian Office was taken out of the War Department and relocated into the new department as the Bureau of Indian Affairs (See appendix 2, figure 1). During the

²³ Viola 1974, pp. 200-201; Washburn, Wilcomb E., *Indian in America*, New York, N.Y. 1975, pp. 209-213; Berkhofer, Robert F. Jr., *The White Man's Indian. Images of the American Indian From Columbus to the Present*, New York, N. Y. 1979, p. 157; Bieder, Robert E., *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820-1880. The Early Years of American Ethnology*, Norman, Oklahoma 1986, pp. 94-99; Smedman, Rainer, "*Intiaani valkoisen vaatteissa*" - rauhanpolitiikan mukainen intiaanien sivistäminen ja lakotat, Licentiate Thesis at the University of Tampere, Tampere Finland 1997, p. 17.

²⁴ Henriksson 1990, p. 72 and pp. 130-132. About Indian Removal see, for example, Prucha 1970, pp. 224-249; Viola 1974, pp. 200-222; Dippie 1982, pp. 56-78. See also, Bieder 1986, pp. 94-99.

²⁵ Berkhofer 1979, pp. 33-69; Hoxie 1984, Preface, p. XIV.

²⁶ Prucha 1973, p. 3; Dippie 1982, pp. 81-94; Hoxie 1984, Preface, p. XIV.

Peace Policy the Interior Department then handed the actual control of the reservations down to different missionary groups.²⁷

Despite the Peace Policy, the most famous Indian wars were fought during the 1860s and 1870s. In the 1880s Indian resistance was basically over and the tribes were confined to reservations. The Indians had truly become wards of the government. Confinement brought with it the need for change in official Indian policy. The Peace Policy was considered a failure and the struggle over the control of Indian affairs continued between the Interior and War departments and among the different religious denominations, which were “fighting over souls.” Whether the Peace Policy had ever been an effective policy is a question that may remain without an answer.²⁸

By the 1880s dissatisfaction toward Indian policy was growing in the United States Congress. The Peace Policy was considered to be partly responsible for the disturbances that had occurred on several reservations. Democrats accused the Bureau of Indian Affairs of powerlessness and corruption.²⁹ Both the Democrats and the Republicans were tired of the fact that money invested in Indian affairs had no lasting effects. A well-known Peace Policy supporter, the Republican senator from Massachusetts, Henry L. Dawes, even claimed that \$2,700 000 had

²⁷ About the Peace Policy see, for example, Mardock, Robert W., *The Plains Frontier and the Indian Peace Policy, 1865-1880*, Nebraska History, Vol. 49, No. 2, 1968, pp. 187-201; Prucha, Francis Paul, *American Indian Policy In Crisis. Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900*, Norman, Oklahoma, 1976, pp. 33-71; Prucha 1986, Vol. I, pp. 479-533; Grobsmith, Elizabeth S., *Native North Americans. An Ethnohistorical Approach*, (ed. Boxberger, Daniel L.), Dubuque, Iowa 1990, p. 197. In 1872, for example, seventy-three agencies were assigned to 13 different religious groups. The division, however, was not equal. The Methodists were the largest group with 14 agencies. The Catholics were in charge of seven agencies, and the smallest were the Lutherans with only one agency. (Prucha 1976, p. 53; Prucha 1986, Vol. I, pp. 516-519; Grobsmith 1990, p. 197) More about the controversy between the Protestants and the Catholics regarding Indian education in, for example, Prucha, Francis Paul, *The Churches and the Indian Schools, 1888-1912*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1979, pp. 144. For contemporary accounts see, for example, *The Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of the Friends of the Indian 1891* (ed. Barrows, Isabel C.), New York, N.Y. 1891, pp. 54-58. A good account of the development of the Indian Office can be found in, Stuart, Paul, *The Indian Office. Growth and Development of an American Institution 1865-1900*, Ann Arbor, Michigan 1979, passim.

²⁸ Mardock 1968, pp. 187-201; Hoxie, Frederick E., *The End of the Savage: Indian Policy in the United States Senate, 1880-1900*, The Chronicles of Oklahoma 1977, p. 150; Stuart 1979, pp. 32-35; Prucha 1986, Vol. I, pp. 516-519. For Peace Policy's problems see, for example, Prucha 1973, p. 4; Prucha 1976, pp. 72-102; Hoxie 1977, p. 158; Utley, Robert M., *The Indian Frontier of the American West 1846-1890*, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1984, pp. 129-201.

²⁹ Hoxie 1977, p. 160. About the disturbances on several reservations see, for example, Andrist, Ralph K., *The Long Death, Last Days of the Plains Indian*, New York, N.Y. 1969, passim.

been appropriated in order to solve what he called “the big Indian question.” According to Senator Dawes: “... we have made no advance toward it; we have not even touched it; but we have aggravated it.”³⁰

The problem was how to deal with the Indians. The reservation system had precipitated wars during the 1860s and 1870s. The basic question was whether the reservation system should be continued or not. The reservations helped Indians to maintain their tribal autonomy while at the same time they protected them from white aggression. Another problem was Indian education, not whether they should be educated, but who would educate them. By the 1880s Indian education was very much in the hands of the different religious groups who, as noted above, struggled against one another for the control of Indian education. For many whites, education, Christianity, and Indian civilization walked hand in hand.³¹

Behind these problems was the basic question of whether the Indians should be considered as an exceptional minority, to be protected and separately civilized, as had been the case during the Peace Policy. By the end of the 1860s powerful groups were formed in order to get answers to these difficult questions. These so called “Friends of the Indians” were religious and humanitarian individuals who thought that their duty was to help the Indians to become civilized. They based their actions on the idea of benefiting the Indians, but since their work was based on their own values and not on the values of the Indians, the results were - despite their sincere efforts - devastating for the Indians. However, the government could not ignore these powerful groups and their suggestions for the reorganization of official Indian policy.³²

³⁰ Senator Henry L. Dawes as quoted in, Hoxie 1977, p. 160.

³¹ Prucha 1976, pp. 132-168; Henriksson, Markku, *The Indian on Capitol Hill. Indian Legislation and the United States Congress, 1862-1907*, Jyväskylä Finland 1988, pp.109-110. About Indian education and Christianity see, for example, Prucha 1976, pp. 265-327; Bowden, Henry Warner, *American Indians and Christian Missions. Studies in Cultural Conflict*, Chicago, Illinois 1981, pp. 164-197; Coleman, Michael C., *Presbyterian Missionary Attitudes Toward American Indians 1837-1893*, Jackson, Mississippi 1985, passim.; Prucha 1986, Vol. II, pp. 688-715. For information regarding the development of Indian education and Christianity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries see, Prucha 1979, passim. About contemporary attitudes toward Indian civilization, education and Christianity see, for example, Prucha 1973, passim.; Bieder 1986, pp. 191-195 and pp. 234-239.

³² See, for example, Bannan, Helen Marie, *Reformers and the “Indian Problem” 1878-1887 and 1922-1934*, Syracuse, New York 1976, pp. 87-89; Prucha 1986, Vol. I, pp. 500-501. Several organizations were established by “the Friends of the Indians.” Most notable of them were perhaps

Before the 1880s the basis for Indian “exceptionalism,” that is, the question whether the Indians owned their lands in common as tribes or as individual persons as the whites did, lay in the land base that they owned. After the 1880s almost all Indian land was confined to reservations, so such reasoning was no longer relevant. The facts that there were so few Indians left on the continent, and that they did not inhabit their land, but “roamed on it as the game they hunted” were seen as justifications for taking away the rest of their lands.³³ Demands to dismantle the whole reservation system arose during the 1880s. The reservations were seen as “islands surrounded by civilization,” where barbarism could continue to exist. Many whites also thought that the reservations denied Indians all the beneficial possibilities open to other people.³⁴

At the bottom of this was the idea of the superiority of the white race, although the Indian was generally believed to have the possibility to develop from savagery to civilization. Some of the most notable American ethnologists, such as Lewis Henry Morgan and Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, believed that by teaching Christianity to the Indians they could gradually be raised up from barbarism. Morgan pointed out that the process would be slow, but it would be possible, since all mankind possessed the same ability to progress. Others, Samuel G. Morton for example, believed that the Indians could not progress at all and would eventually die out as a race. These ideologies provided a scientific basis for the Indians’ position as well as for the taking of their lands. Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer were among the many foreign scientists whose theories of the development of the human race were used for this purpose.³⁵ The fact that white

The National Indian Defense Association headed by Thomas A. Bland and The Indian Rights Association lead by Episcopalian Herbert Welsh. (Bannan 1976, pp. 87-102; Prucha 1986, Vol. II, pp. 612-629; Smedman, Rainer, *Sotureista ja metsästäjistä maanviljelijöitä. Oglalat valkoisen miehen tiellä (1868-1870)*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 803, Tampereen yliopisto, Tampere Finland 2001, pp. 68-71) More about the The Indian Rights Association in, for example, Hagan, William T., *The Indian Rights Association. The Herbert Welsh Years 1882-1904*, Tucson, Arizona, 1985, pp. 11-37; Prucha 1973, passim.

³³ Prucha 1973, p. 33; Hoxie 1977, p. 160. Some nineteenth century ideas were based on the belief that, if the Indian could no longer hunt he would not only need less land, but eventually die out as a race. (Bieder 1986, pp. 96-99)

³⁴ Prucha 1973, pp. 31-37; Hoxie 1984, p. 12; Hagan 1985, pp. 65-76; Prucha 1986, Vol. II, pp. 655-658.

³⁵ Eggan, Fred, *American Indian Perspectives for the Study of Social Change*, Chicago, Illinois 1966, pp. 142-170; Berkhofer 1979, pp. 33-69; Dippie 1982, pp. 95-111; Bieder 1986, pp. 55-105,

society offered the Indian the road to civilization justified the treatment of the Indian. Becoming civilized and thus being able to receive United States citizenship was believed to be sufficient compensation for the Indians' loss of their lands and cultures. What was good for the white man should certainly be good for the Indian as well.³⁶

The question of Indian "exceptionalism" was discussed in Congress for several years, especially in the 1880s. At times the Indians were believed to have a kind of treaty right for exceptional treatment and at other times they were considered to be in no different position than other landowners. At the same time it was thought peculiar that Indian illiteracy remained high despite the large amounts of money that was spent on Indian education.³⁷ Senator Dawes demanded that the United States should spend as much money for Indian education as it had spent in vain trying to kill off the Indians. The Republicans, especially, believed that it was the duty of the U.S. government to educate the Indians, even if the government at times was reluctant to do its duty. As mentioned above, it was generally believed that education was the key to Christianity and eventual civilization.³⁸ Many Indians, in fact, understood how important education was for their future; reading especially was considered a valuable skill.³⁹

Despite the debate, the idea of "exceptionalism" remained: many reservations were divided, changed and broken, but they remained. One solution for the Indian question was sought from *The General Allotment Act (The Dawes Act)* of 1887, which provided the mechanism for dividing the reservation lands among

pp. 191-195 and pp. 234-239. About the theories of the development of the human see, for example, Siikala, Jukka, *Kulttuurispesifisyys metafysiikkana: Eräiden antropologian teorioiden metafysisyydestä ja sen perusteista*, Karjalan yliopiston julkaisuja, No. 31, Joensuu Finland 1978, pp. 65-73; Sarmela, Matti, *Kulttuuriantropologia ja historia* in, *Ihmistieteet ja historia*, Turku Finland 1979, pp. 34-39; La Barre, Weston, *The Ghost Dance. Origins of Religion*, Prospect Heights, Illinois 1990, pp. 33-40; Henriksson, Markku, *Toinen aalto. Eurooppalaiset rosvo- ja löytöretket Amerikoissa*, Tampere Finland 1997, pp. 298-311. More about the effect of the idea of linear development on Indian legislation in, Henriksson 1988, pp. 276-286.

³⁶ Berkhofer 1979, pp. 117-118; Hoxie 1984, pp. 14-19 and pp. 38-39; Bieder 1986, pp. 94-99.

³⁷ Prucha 1976, pp. 265-327; Hoxie 1977, p. 165.

³⁸ Hoxie 1977, p. 165; Bieder 1986, pp. 191-195, p. 216 and pp. 234-239; Prucha 1976, pp. 292-352; Smedman 1997, p. 247.

³⁹ Coleman, Michael C., "Education as Transformation: Indian Schooling 1800-1930," An unpublished paper held at The "Indian" Symposium at The University of Tampere January 8, 1998. Interesting Lakota thoughts about education can be found in, for example, 50th Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 17, Vol. I, Serial, 2610, passim.; 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 51, Vol. V, Serial 2682, passim.

individual Indians.⁴⁰ This was a satisfactory solution for many whites. For them, an independent Indian who was engaged in farming had long been the goal. Farming was thought to be the highest form of civilization, and was considered as a God-given duty. This idea of an agrarian society as the highest form of civilization was based on the ideas of philosopher John Locke, among others.⁴¹ Also, those who were considered as supporters of “exceptionalism” saw this as the last chance to protect Indians from land-hungry settlers who were growing in numbers and in power. The allotment of Indian lands would at least allow them to keep individually some of the land they previously had owned communally.⁴² Finnish scholar of American Studies **Markku Henriksson** believes that *The General Allotment Act* can be seen as a “...clear sign of a change in Indian policy from isolation to assimilation.”⁴³

The General Allotment Act meant in practice that the Indians who took up allotments could no longer maintain tribal ownership of the reservations and the tribes would no longer be considered as independent nations. The land was to be divided among individuals and the remaining lands were to be sold to white settlers.⁴⁴ The act meant also that the Indian had to learn to work like a white man. As Senator Dawes put it: “The Indian will be an Indian as long as he lives unless he is taught to work.”⁴⁵ And working he could learn only through education. Thus Indian education and the allotment of the Indian lands went hand in hand.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ See, U.S. Statutes at Large, 24 Stat., The Statutes at Large, Laws, Treaties and Proclamation of the United States of America 1859-1975, Little Brown and Company, Boston, Massachusetts 1863-1866 & Government Printing Office, Washington D. C. 1877-1976, pp. 388-391. See, for example, Dippie 1982, pp.171-176; Hoxie 1984, pp. 72-73; Prucha 1986, Vol. II, pp. 659-671; Henriksson 1988, pp. 165-172. The idea of the allotment of Indian lands was not totally new. It was already explored and, to some extent, tried in the 1830s. (Bieder 1986, pp. 241-243)

⁴¹ See, Locke, John, *Tutkielmia hallitusvallasta. Tutkimus vallan oikeasta alkuperästä, laajuudesta ja tarkoituksesta*. Transl. Mikko Yrjönsuuri, Tampere Finland 1995, pp. 26-27 and 72. See also, Henriksson 1988, p. 247, p. 270 and pp. 276-286; Henriksson, Markku, “*Amerikkalaisen ja euroamerikkalaisen kulttuurin linjoja*” in, *Kulttuurista ja kulttuureista* (ed. Hautamäki, Pirkko & Myllyniemi, Varpu), Renvall instituutin julkaisu 4, Helsinki Finland 1991, pp. 33-34; Smedman 1997, pp. 61-62; Smedman 2001, pp. 91-99.

⁴² Hoxie 1977, pp. 166-167; Dippie 1982, pp. 172-177; Hagan 1985, pp. 65-66.

⁴³ Henriksson 1988, p. 177. More about acculturation and assimilation in, for example, Taske, Raymond H. C. Jr. & Nelson, Bardin, H., *Acculturation and Assimilation: a Classification, American Ethnologist*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1974, pp. 351-367. See also, chapter 2.3.1.

⁴⁴ U.S. Statutes at Large, 24 Stat., Section 10, p. 390. See, Hoxie 1977, p. 167.

⁴⁵ Senator Henry L. Dawes as quoted in, Hoxie 1977, p. 169. In this case the word “work” refers to farming.

⁴⁶ Prucha 1973, p. 7; Hoxie 1977, p. 168; Bieder 1986, pp. 7-8 and pp. 36-37; Henriksson 1988, p. 108.

However, it remained the duty of the government to protect the individual Indian in his efforts toward civilization and eventual citizenship.⁴⁷

Even if *The General Allotment Act* was an answer to many problems and it seemed to satisfy all white parties that were involved, it also produced many problems - especially in the 1890s as surplus Indian land was diminishing. Indian education also, continued to cause problems. The government did not want to fund Indian education sufficiently, even though it had become compulsory for Indians to attend school in 1889.⁴⁸

Whereas the Indian Policy in the 1860s and 1870s had separated the whites from the Indians, the Indian Policy in the 1880s, especially toward the end of the decade, tried to protect the Indians from the whites - reservations became areas of refuge. Reservations were a way to protect a conquered race and on reservations the Indian could become a "beginning of a man."⁴⁹ During the 1880s the idea, especially among the so-called "Friends of the Indians," was no longer to destroy, but to raise Indians up to civilization. Senator Dawes believed that the duty of the white man was to "...take him [the Indian] by the hand and set him upon his feet, and teach him to stand alone first, then to walk, then to dig, then to plant, then to hoe, then to gather and then to *keep*."⁵⁰ Whether these efforts benefitted the Indians, is a totally different question.

⁴⁷ U.S. Statutes at Large, 24 Stat., Section 6, p. 390; Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs J. D. C. Atkins, October 5, 1885, AIUSD, Vol. I, pp. 358-360. More about Indian citizenship in, for example, Prucha 1973, pp. 57-65; Hoxie 1984, pp. 52-53 and pp. 77-80; Bieder 1986, pp. 36-53, pp. 73-80 and pp. 241-243; Henriksson 1988, pp. 92-95 and pp. 165-177.

⁴⁸ Hoxie 1977, pp. 172-175; Smedman 1997, p. 247. For information about Indian education in the late nineteenth century see, Prucha 1979, passim.

⁴⁹ Hoxie 1977, pp. 178-179.

⁵⁰ Senator Henry L. Dawes at a meeting of the Board of Indian Commissioners in Washington, Fifteenth Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners 1883, pp. 69-70 as quoted in, Prucha 1973, p. 29. See also, Hagan 1985, passim.

2.2. The Lakota – A Look at the People

2.2.1. Thítħųwą – Dwellers on the Plains

Until the beginning of eighteenth century, the Lakotas were living between the Minnesota and Missouri rivers on the prairies of today's Minnesota and the Dakotas. By the mid-eighteenth century pressure from Ojibwas and eastern Santee Dakotas forced the Lakotas to move westward and as they acquired horses they crossed the Missouri River in small groups and pushed west reaching the Black Hills sometime during the latter part of the century. The Great Plains, with their tremendous herds of bison, drew the Lakotas west. The plains offered everything that was needed, not only in daily life, but also in the expanding trade with the white man.⁵¹

The Lakotas were a part of the people known as the Sioux or, the Dakota.⁵² The Sioux were divided into seven groups, also known as the seven council fires (ochéthi šakówi). The seven council fires was the mythological origin of the Dakota people.⁵³ The seven groups spoke the same language. Despite different dialects, they were fully capable of understanding each other. The easternmost groups living in Minnesota were called the Santee. Together with the Yankton and Yanktonai, the Santee formed the branch of the nation known as the Dakota. Traditionally scholars have referred to the Yankton and Yanktonai as the Nakotas, but this term should be used to designate the Stoney and Assiniboine Indians, who

⁵¹ Hyde, George E., *Spotted Tail's Folk. A History of the Brulé Sioux*. Norman, Oklahoma 1961, pp. 4-5; Hassrick, Royal B., *The Sioux. Life and Customs of a Warrior Society*, Norman, Oklahoma 1964, pp. 3-6 and pp. 61-75; White, Richard, *The Winning of the West: The Expansion of the Western Sioux in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Journal of American History, 1978, pp. 321-324; DeMallie, Raymond J., *The Sioux*, Manuscript for the Handbook of North American Indians, Plains Indian Volume (The manuscript is in the authors' possession and will from now on be referred to as DeMallie 2001), pp. 718-720, p. 794; Personal correspondence with Professor Raymond J. DeMallie, February-March 2003.

⁵² For a discussion of the usage of the terms Dakota and Sioux see, DeMallie 2001, p. 719 and p. 749.

⁵³ It is worth noting that during the nineteenth century, the Santees spoke of the Seven Councilfires as an ancestral league from which all Sioux people descended. However, no eighteenth-century writer mentions the Seven Councilfires, which suggests that it is a nineteenth-century origin myth, probably of Santee origin. The Lakotas seem not to have spoken of the Seven Councilfires until the twentieth century, and when they did, they associated it with the stars of the big dipper, and they usually thought of the seven as being all the Lakota groups excluding the other Sioux. (DeMallie 2001, p. 735, p. 748; Personal Correspondence with Professor Raymond J. DeMallie, February-March 2003)

were close relatives to the Sioux.⁵⁴ The Lakotas (Lakhóta) formed the western branch of the seven council fires. They are also known by the name Teton, a name deriving from the Lakota word thíthųwā “dwellers on the plains.” The Lakotas, the subjects of this study, are further divided into seven tribes: Oglala (Oglála), Hunkpapa (Hųkpaphaya), Minneconjou (Mnikhówožu), Brulé (Sicháğu), Two Kettle (O’óhenupa), Sans Arc (Itázipcho) and Black Feet (Sihásapa) (See appendix 3, figure 2).⁵⁵

The Lakotas arrived on the plains in small, independent groups. The Oglalas and Brulés moved first, the remaining five bands, also known as the Saones, gradually following them. The Lakotas were able to drive away some of the tribes already living on the plains. This was partly due to the diseases that took their toll on the Plains Indian population, and partly due the numerical strength of the Lakota people. The Lakotas adapted quickly to the life on the plains, and by the late eighteenth century became a dominant Plains Indian tribe. On their way farther west, the Lakotas pushed aside the Kiowa, Arikara, and Crow tribes. Alongside the Cheyennes and Arapahos, the Lakotas became the rulers of the North-Central Plains. By 1825, the Lakotas occupied an area stretching from the Missouri River to the Black Hills. The Oglalas and Brulés lived in the southern parts, and the Saones occupied the Northern parts of that area (See appendix 4, map 2).⁵⁶

Hunting buffalo provided the Lakotas with their primary means of living. The acquisition of horses allowed them to hunt more efficiently, which immediately resulted in a higher living standard, and a rise of population. Diseases caused havoc among the Lakotas also, but because they lived in small groups, constantly on the move, they were less vulnerable to epidemics than the tribes living in larger, permanent villages. While other plains tribes were struggling, the Lakotas were prospering. The population growth was rapid: in 1804 the whites estimated

⁵⁴ Discussion with Professor Douglas R. Parks and Professor Raymond J. DeMallie, December 25, 2000, Bloomington Indiana. See also, DeMallie 2001, pp. 718- 719.

⁵⁵ John Blunt Horn, Antoine Herman and James R. Walker in, Walker, James R., *Lakota Society* (ed. DeMallie, Raymond J.), Lincoln, Nebraska 1992, pp. 13-21. See, Hyde, George E., *Red Cloud's Folk. History of the Oglala-Sioux Indians*, Norman, Oklahoma 1937, p. 3; Hassrick 1968, pp. 3-6; DeMallie 2001, p. 725.

⁵⁶ Hyde 1961, p. 5; Hassrick 1968, pp. 36 and pp. 61-75; White 1978, pp. 321-333; DeMallie 2001, pp. 731-732 and p. 794.

that there were approximately 8,000 Sioux, of them perhaps 3,000 Lakotas, but in 1850 the approximate number was already 24,000 Sioux; of that number around 13,000- 14,000 were Lakotas. By the early nineteenth century the whites were not yet their enemies, but important trade partners, who provided the Lakotas with guns, ammunition, and utensils that helped their daily life.⁵⁷

Warfare was an essential part of Lakota life. The main enemies were the Pawnee, Crow and Arikara Indians. Warfare, however, was not constant full-scale war, but periodical skirmishing. The goal was not necessary to cause great destruction to the enemy, but, for example, to show individual courage or to steal horses. Counting coup, that is, touching the enemy, was considered to be the highest form of bravery. Bravery, indeed, was one of the highly respected virtues in a Lakota man. Enemies, who were taken as prisoners, were sometimes released after a short period of captivity, or they might be adopted into the tribe. They were then treated as full members of society.⁵⁸

Indian wars were fought mainly during the summer; war was put aside for the winter and possibly taken up again the following summer. Summer in general was a time of great activity. It was the time for communal buffalo hunts, and the time for the most important religious ceremonies, like the sun dance (*wíwáyag wachípi*). For this ceremony the Lakotas gathered into a great summer camp. After the ceremonies, the people dispersed for the coming winter into small individual groups called *thiyóšpaye*.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Lowie, Robert H., *Indians of the Plains. Anthropological Handbook Number One*, New York, N.Y. 1954, p. 4; Hyde 1961, pp. 34; White 1978, pp. 328-330; DeMallie 2001, pp. 719-721 and pp. 731-734. More about the Lakotas' daily life in, for example, Hassrick 1968, pp. 107-242; DeMallie 2001, passim. For estimations of the Lakota population see, DeMallie 2001, Table 6, p. 748.

⁵⁸ Hyde 1937, p. 126; Hassrick 1968, pp. 76-100; Standing Bear, Luther, *My People the Sioux*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1975 (orig. 1928), p. 57; DeMallie 2001, pp. 805-806. Historian **Richard White**, for example, believes that Lakota warfare was not only periodical skirmishing, but at times also aimed at economical success, or at conquering lands from other tribes. (White 1978, p. 320; Smedman 2001, p. 28)

⁵⁹ See, Thomas Tyon, Little Wound, American Horse, Lone Star, George Sword, Bad Heart Bull and Short Bill in, Walker, James R., *Lakota Belief and Ritual* (ed. DeMallie, Raymond J. & Jahner, Elaine A.), Lincoln, Nebraska 1991, pp. 176-191; Spotted Elk and James R. Walker in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 21-23. See also, Powers, William K., *The Oglala Religion*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1977, pp. 40-41; Powers, William K., *Sacred Language. The Supernatural Discourse in Lakota*, Norman, Oklahoma, 1986, p. 35. An interesting eyewitness account of these periodical group movements is provided by Francis Parkman, who lived among the Lakotas in the

The basic unit in the society was the thiyóšpaye, the extended family or lodge group. Every thiyóšpaye had its own headman or chief (itháchą). These men, however, were not considered as chiefs whose authority was unquestionable. Every man could basically decide for himself. The itháchą was a man, who possessed the virtues that made him respected among the people. He was a person to be trusted and followed. The next level in Lakota society was the band, which consisted of several thiyóšpaye. The bands then formed the different oyáte, best translated in English as tribes. Thus, a Lakota could, for example, belong to the band of itéšica (Bad Face) of the Oglala tribe, as did the famous Red Cloud (Mašpíya Lúta). Traditionally and ideally the Lakotas constructed their society following their sacred number - seven, owing to the seven council fires, the mythological origin of the group known as the Sioux. Still, the structure was very flexible and the number seven seldom was actually the exact number of the bands.⁶⁰

The Lakotas, however, consisted of the seven tribes mentioned above: Hunkpapa, Oglala, Brulé, Blackfeet, Two Kettle, Sans Arc and Minneconjou.⁶¹ During larger gatherings each of these tribes had their own position in the camp circle. The camp circle was of extreme importance to the Lakotas. Everything inside was Lakota (ólakhota, alliance), outside was the hostile world. For the Lakotas, other Indians not belonging to the Lakota people were potential enemies, thóka. Other Indians were called “common men” ikcéwichaša, and were “related as enemies” thókakičhiyapi. Sometimes, however, a peace was made with other Indians who then became a part of the Lakota alliance, lakhólkičhiyapi. This was the case, for example, with the Cheyennes and Arapahos. The whites were not considered as

1840s. See, Parkman, Francis, *The Oregon Trail*, New York, N.Y. 1991, pp. 110-253. More about the significance of the buffalo in, for example, Brown, Joseph Epes, *Animals of the Soul. Sacred Animals of the Oglala Sioux*, Rockport, Massachusetts 1997, pp. 5-17.

⁶⁰ For accounts of the structure of the Lakota society see, Antoine Herman, James R. Walker, Charles Garnett, Bad Bear, Thomas Tyon, John Blunt Horn and Iron Tail in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 37, pp. 14-19 and pp. 20-36. See also, Hassrick 1968, pp. 3-31; Price, Catherine, *The Oglala People, 1841-1879. A Political History*, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1996, pp. 217; DeMallie 2001, pp. 800-803. The fullest account of the Lakota bands and sub-bands during the nineteenth century can be found in, DeMallie, 2001, pp. 742-748.

⁶¹ In this study the Lakota band and tribe names are usually written as they are generally written in English literature.

enemies; they were called *wašícú*. The whites acquired this name because of their mysterious powers, especially due to their powerful guns. The word *wašícú* actually referred to guardian spirits, particularly to those related to war.⁶²

The camp circle, *hóčhoka*, symbolized this unity of the Lakota people. Within the circle the sacred hoop (*čhagléška wakhá*) was unbroken. In the middle of the circle was a large lodge *thíyothi*, where important meetings were held. In the circle, the Hunkpapas camped at the ends of the circle, close to the opening (*húkpa*), which always faced east. From there, every tribe put up their tipis in the position that was selected. Even within the tribes, the bands camped in certain order, so that the most important band or even family was closer to the center of the circle. Here too, the flexibility of the society can be seen as the rise in status of a band or family allowed it to move to a more respected place in the camp circle. Thus, as the structure of the society was constantly changing, it also caused changes in the daily lives of the Lakotas. Although there were different rules for large camp circles where different tribes were present, the basic form of the circle was present in the camp of the smallest *thiyóšpaye* to the largest Lakota camp.⁶³

The camp circle also affected the power structure in the society. For different times and situations the power structure shifted from the chief of the *thiyóšpaye* to the warrior societies (*akíchita*) or to a war leader, *blotáhuka* at times of war. At times of larger gatherings, power was held by the chiefs' council (*načá omníciye*), which consisted of elderly men who were too old to be active hunters and warriors. The chiefs' council then selected men to perform different duties in the camp and during hunting or war. The council appointed men called "deciders," *wakícúza* whose task was to mediate between the chiefs and the people, and to direct the camp movements. Other important leaders selected by the council were the "shirt wearers," *wicháša yatápika*. They were prominent younger men, known

⁶² DeMallie 2001, p. 799.

⁶³ For accounts of the camp circle and the divisions of the Lakota see, John Blunt Horn, Antoine Herman, James R. Walker and Spotted Elk in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 13-23. See also, Hassrick 1968, pp. 12-16; Price 1996, pp. 28; DeMallie 2001, pp. 800-803. The largest Lakota camp was probably the one that faced the forces of Colonel George A. Custer in 1876. There too the camp circle was built according to traditional "rules." See, for example, Statement of Flying By in, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 1, Envelope 41.

for their success in war and bravery. All these different leaders were known as the *wicháša itháča*, “leader men.” So, among the Lakotas, there was never a single chief, who could make decisions in behalf of all the people. The power and authority was divided, and every person belonged to certain groups and associations depending, on one hand, their kinship and, on the other hand, their own actions. (See appendix 5, figure 3)⁶⁴

The whites never really understood this system in where the leading warriors were more visible actors than the actual chiefs, who acted in the background. In fact, not even the chiefs were able to act in behalf of the people, unless all the chiefs and the chiefs’ council approved their decisions. This caused many misunderstandings in the negotiations between the whites and the Lakotas. There were times, when the whites announced that they had agreed on something with all Lakotas, while they, in fact, agreed with a representative of, for example, a village or a band. The whites mistook such famous men as Red Cloud, or Crazy Horse (*Thašŭke Witkô*) as head chiefs who could decide for the whole tribe, whereas they were leading warriors, not chiefs at all. Partly because the whites deemed Red Cloud as the primary chief, he later achieved such a powerful position that even the Oglalas themselves started to consider him as their head chief.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ For further information on the distribution of power among the Lakotas see, James R. Walker, Charles Garnett, Bad Bear, Thomas Tyon, John Blunt Horn, Iron Tail, Woman Dress and Red Feather in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 23-36. See also, Lowie 1954, *passim*; Pennington, Robert, *An Analysis of the Political Structure of the Teton-Dakota Indian Tribe of the North America*, *North Dakota History*, July, 1953, pp. 146-153; Hassrick 1968, pp. 24-31; Densmore, Frances, *Teton Sioux Music and Culture*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1992 (orig. Teton Sioux Music, Bulletin 61 of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution 1918), pp. 284-332; Price 1996, pp. 8-18; DeMallie 2001, pp. 801-803. About the importance of kinship see, James R. Walker and Thomas Tyon in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 44-50; Deloria, Ella, C., *Speaking of Indians*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1998 (orig. 1944), pp. 24-38. See also, DeMallie, Raymond J., *Change in American Indian Kinship Systems: The Dakota* in, *Currents in Anthropology: Essays in Honor of Sol Tax* (ed. Hinshaw, Robert), The Hague, Mouton, 1979, pp. 222-238; DeMallie, Raymond J., *Kinship and Biology in Sioux Culture* in, *North American Indian Anthropology* (ed. DeMallie, Raymond J. & Ortiz, Alfonso), Norman, Oklahoma 1994, pp. 130-143; DeMallie, Raymond J., *Kinship. The Foundation for Native American Society* in, *Studying Native America. Problems and Prospects* (ed. Thornton, Russell), Madison, Wisconsin, 1998, pp. 306-350.

⁶⁵ Hyde 1937, pp. 67-68; Pennington 1953, p. 153; Hyde, George E., *A Sioux Chronicle*, Norman, Oklahoma 1956, p. 164. More about Red Cloud in, Olson, James C., *Red Cloud and The Sioux Problem*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1965, pp. 3-340; Larson, Robert W., *Red Cloud. Warrior-Statesman of the Lakota Sioux*, Norman, Oklahoma 1997, pp. 3-302. About Crazy Horse see, for example, Sandoz, Mari, *Crazy Horse. The Strange Man of the Oglalas*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1992 (orig. 1942), pp. 3-413; Sajna, Mike, *Crazy Horse. The Life Behind the Legend*, New York, N. Y. 2000, pp. 24-327.

Until the 1840s, the Lakotas had relatively little contact with the whites. By then, however, immigrants traveling to California and Oregon started to arrive to the Lakota country. The immigrants traveled through the Lakota lands mostly along the Oregon Trail, which followed the Platte River. The Oglalas and Brulés living in the Platte River valley started to collect “fines” from the travelers and became gradually dependent on the white man’s trade goods. Alcohol was introduced to the Lakotas around 1820-1830s, but when contacts with the immigrants became more frequent, so did contacts with alcohol. This brought problems to the Lakotas, and drunken brawls became common. Under the influence of alcohol, small disputes were resolved more often with violence than before. For example, in 1841 a dispute between two Oglala chiefs resulted in the death of one of them, and eventually in a division within the Oglala tribe.⁶⁶

As the number of immigrants traveling west increased, the United States government considered it necessary to protect the travelers. In 1845 soldiers, for the first time, entered the Platte River valley. Four years later, in 1849, a military base was established on Lakota lands. This base, Fort Laramie, was the scene of the first major negotiations between the United States government and the Plains Indian tribes in 1851. The government sought to establish safe traveling for the immigrants. For this reason the negotiations’ primary goal was to end hostilities between the warring Indian tribes. Even though the Indians seldom directly attacked the travelers, Indians fighting each other caused instability to the region making traveling unsafe. Another goal was to set up individual areas for different Indian tribes. These were not actual reservations, but areas where each tribe was supposed to live and hunt without interference from other tribes. Almost 10,000 Indians arrived at the negotiations. Even sworn enemies like Lakotas, Arikaras and Crows were present.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ See, Hyde 1937, pp. 53-54; Olson 1965, pp. 19-22; White 1978, p. 338; Larson 1997, pp. 58-61; Eastman, Charles A., *The Soul of An Indian. An Interpretation*, Boston, Massachusetts, 1980 (orig. 1911), pp. 108-110; Parkman 1991, pp. 138-139.

⁶⁷ See, Treaty of Fort Laramie, September 17, 1851, DUSIP, pp. 84-85. See also, Hyde 1961, pp. 45-46; Uteley 1984, p. 61; Lazarus, Edward, *Black Hills/White Justice. The Sioux Nation Versus the United States, 1775 to the Present*, New York, N.Y. 1991, pp. 16-18; DeMallie 2001, pp. 794-795.

The Indians agreed to let the government build forts on their lands, they also promised to let the immigrants travel freely, and they promised to end all hostilities between themselves. Each tribe was shown their living areas. The Lakotas gave the Crows areas that they considered their own, and Platte River became the southern border of the Lakota country. Thus the Oglalas discovered that, although some of them lived south of the Platte River, the area was no longer part of Lakota country. Intertribal peace on the plains, however, did not last long. The Indians continued to fight each other. Peace with the whites, however, lasted for a while. This was partly due to the annual appropriations the government gave to the Indians in compensation for peace. Some Brulés and Oglalas became so dependent on the whites that they remained close to Fort Laramie, where they lived off the white men in the fort. They became known as the Loafers (Wágluñe).⁶⁸

In 1854 the peace was over. The reason for hostilities was a cow. A Minneconjou shot a cow belonging to Mormon immigrants, and even though the Indians offered to give compensation for the cow, Lieutenant John L. Grattan wanted to arrest the responsible Indian. In the following battle Lieutenant Grattan and all 30 of his men were killed. The Lakotas did not understand that they were now at war with the United States. They saw no reason to sustain hostilities after inflicting what they considered a major blow to the U.S. Army. The United States government, however, was of different opinion. In September 1855 the army destroyed a Brulé-village. The Lakotas lost 86 people dead and 70 people were taken as prisoners. A defeat like this was incomprehensible to the Lakotas; never before had a whole village fallen in the hands of the enemy. In 1856 the Lakotas made peace with the United States, and gave away the Platte River valley.⁶⁹

After this incident, the Lakotas called together a council, which was possibly attended by as many as 7,500 Lakotas. They unanimously decided to oppose the white man's future encroachment on their lands. Instead of taking action, however, the Lakotas dispersed into their traditional winter camps. They

⁶⁸ Treaty of Fort Laramie 1851, Article 5, DUSIP, pp. 84-85. See, for example, Hyde 1961, p. 46; Lazarus 1991, p. 18.

⁶⁹ See, for example, Hyde 1961, p. 55 and p. 61; Lazarus 1991, pp. 23-24; Larson 1997, pp. 66-75; DeMallie 2001, p. 795.

compensated for the lost Platte River valley by taking the Powder River country from the Crow Indians, and expanded their territory farther west to the Big Horn Mountains. The Treaty of 1851 caused the Lakotas to expand their influence at the cost of other Indian tribes. So did the United States. Before the 1851 Treaty, the United States' and the Lakotas' interests were not necessarily in conflict, but by now these two expanding peoples were competing over the same land base.⁷⁰

2.2.2. Defending the Lakota Homeland 1860-1881

During the early part of the 1860s, the Lakotas tried to avoid hostilities with the whites. War arrived on the Northern Plains from the east, where the Santee Sioux were thrown into a war against the United States Army in 1862. The army, however, defeated the Indians, and some of the Santees sought refuge among their relatives living on the plains. The army followed the refugees, drawing the Lakotas in the war.⁷¹ The Lakotas were undecided over the wisdom of joining their relatives in the war. Most of the Lakotas did not want to fight against the U.S. Army, but at the same time they were prepared to defend their country against white encroachment. Part of the people was convinced that the best way to survive was to stay in peace with the whites. So, already by the 1860s, the Lakotas were divided in their basic approach toward the white man. The whites used this division to differentiate between the so-called friendly and hostile Lakotas. Those who preferred to "walk the white man's road" that is, those, who maintained a friendly attitude toward the whites, were called progressives. Those who preferred to defend their lands and their way of life were called non-progressives. At times of war these respective groups were referred to as "friendlies" and "hostiles."⁷²

In the summer of 1864, the Oglalas and Brulés were at war with the whites. They even gained some success in the campaign. By the fall they, however, stopped

⁷⁰ See, Indian Peace Commission Report to President Andrew Johnson, January 7, 1868, AIUSD, Vol. I, p. 153. See, White 1978, pp. 341-342. For fuller accounts of the events between 1850-1860 see, for example, Hyde 1937, pp. 69-98; Olson 1965, pp. 15-26; Larson 1997, pp. 50-73.

⁷¹ Utley 1984, pp. 78-79. More about the so-called Minnesota incident in, for example, Andrist 1969, pp. 27-68.

⁷² Lazarus 1991, pp. 27-28. In this study these terms are also used, when the white attitudes are described. This gives authenticity to the text, and is convenient, since these terms are generally used in research literature.

fighting as they used to do in traditional warfare. Spotted Tail (Šíté Glešká), the most powerful leader among the Brulés, was in favor of peace, but Colonel John M. Chivington's brutal attack against a Cheyenne Indian village in November 1864 made his efforts to fail. The massacre of Indian women and children caused the Cheyennes, Arapahos and Lakotas to unite against the common threat. For the first time, these tribes entered a war during the winter.⁷³ The war continued throughout the winter of 1864 and summer of 1865. Red Cloud's status was rising among the warring Indians, whereas Spotted Tail was looking for peace. Spotted Tail finally led some of the "friendly" Oglalas and Brulés close to Fort Laramie.⁷⁴

The fighting in the summer 1865 was remarkable in the sense that for the first time the Lakotas, together with the Cheyennes and Arapahos, fought according to careful plans and under a unified leadership. They were able to create a fighting force of perhaps as many as 3,000 men. This was never accomplished before. During the summer the Indians caused much havoc, almost humiliating the U.S. Army. The summer was very successful for the Indians, but by fall they again dispersed to hunt buffalo for the winter. They could not wage war indefinitely; they had to take care of their families. The war in the summer of 1865 showed that the Indians were able to work together, and they were learning to wage a new kind of war.⁷⁵

In 1866 the government again called the Lakotas to Fort Laramie for negotiations. Spotted Tail with his followers arrived early, but Red Cloud, now a leader of the warring faction, stayed in the Black Hills and the Powder River country. Sitting Bull (Thathāka Íyotake) led the other Lakota group living north of the Powder River Country. Red Cloud's presence at the negotiations was considered essential,

⁷³ Hyde 1937, pp. 101-113; Hyde 1961, pp. 90-92; Andrist 1969, pp. 88-92; Utley 1984, p. 93. More about Spotted Tail in, Hyde 1961, passim. As noted above the Cheyennes and Arapahos were thus included in the Lakota alliance, lakhólkičhiyapi.

⁷⁴ Hyde 1961, pp. 102-103; Brown, Dee, *Haudatkaa sydämeni Wounded Kneehen* (orig. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee. An Indian History of the American West*, New York, N.Y. 1971, transl. Esko Hamilo), Keuruu Finland 1996, pp. 111-119.

⁷⁵ See, Hyde 1937, pp. 114-133; Mardock 1968, pp. 187-190; Utley 1984, pp. 95-100; Brown D. 1996, pp. 119-135.

and when he finally arrived, the government officials were jubilant. A permanent peace was now thought to be possible.⁷⁶

The whites obviously thought that Red Cloud, although most likely only a war leader (blotáhũka), would possess the power to decide tribal matters all by himself.⁷⁷ During the negotiations the government tried to convince the Lakotas of the benefits of peace. More importantly, they wanted to get the Indians' permission to open roads through Lakota lands and to build forts alongside the roads to protect travelers. During the negotiations, however, the Indians learned that there was already a military detachment on the way to build forts along the already existing Bozeman trail, which ran through the Lakota country to the gold fields in Montana.⁷⁸

This action enraged most of the Lakotas who, led by Red Cloud, marched away from the conference. The final result of the negotiations of 1866 was that only few of the most "progressive" headmen signed the treaty. The most notable of these was Spotted Tail, who was the first Indian to sign. When the treaty was finally concluded, the government representative officially declared that a satisfactory result was achieved, and the Indians had participated in great numbers. He did not mention that the majority of Lakotas did not sign at all. Thus the government thought that the problems with the Lakotas were solved, when the United States was, in fact, at war with Red Cloud's Lakotas.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Hyde 1937, pp. 115-116; Hyde 1961, pp. 107-113; Olson 1965, pp. 27-40; Larson 1997, pp. 88-92. More about Sitting Bull's role during the war of 1865-1866 in, for example, Vestal, Stanley, *Sitting Bull. The Champion of the Sioux*, Norman, Oklahoma 1957, pp. 70-82; Hoover, Herbert T., *Sitting Bull* in, *American Indian Leaders: Studies in Diversity* (ed. Edmunds, R. David), Lincoln, Nebraska 1980, pp. 155-157; Utley, Robert M., *The Lance and the Shield. The Life and Times of Sitting Bull*, New York, N.Y. 1993, pp. 65-75.

⁷⁷ Red Cloud's position among the Lakotas has raised questions also among scholars. Some argue that he was already a chief in 1866; others believe that he was only a shirt wearer or a war leader. In any case he was not the kind of head chief the whites thought he was. For this discussion see, Hyde 1937, pp. 142-143; Olson 1965, pp. 22-26; Andrist 1969, p. 103; Utley 1984, p. 99; Lazarus 1991, pp. 35-36; Brown D. 1996, p. 145; Price 1996, pp. 66-67; Larson 1997, pp. 88-90.

⁷⁸ See, Hyde 1937, pp. 138-143; Olson 1965, pp. 34-37; Andrist 1969, 101-103; Mattingly, Arthur H., *The Great Plains Peace Commission of 1867*, *Journal of the West*, Vol. XV, No. 3, 1976, pp. 23-24; Price 1996, pp. 57-58; Larson 1997, pp. 91-93.

⁷⁹ See, Treaty with the Oglala and Brulé Sioux, June 27, 1866, DAID, Vol. II, pp. 1368-1370. See also, Hyde 1961, pp. 114-116; Olson 1965, p. 37; Lazarus 1991, pp. 36-37.

The war, known as Red Cloud's war, lasted for two years. During the war, the Indians again learned to fight in a new fashion – and very successfully. The Indians' tactics resulted in some of the most famous Indian victories, and the United States government was eventually forced to give in to the Lakotas and their allies. The forts along the Bozeman trail were abandoned, and Red Cloud could declare a victory over the United States army.⁸⁰ Their victory, however, was not only caused by the Indians' ability to wage war; the government's new Indian policy also played a role. The new Peace Policy sought to put an end to the hostilities. Furthermore, the war against the Lakotas turned out to be extremely expensive. It was cheaper to feed the Indians than to fight them.⁸¹

The war officially ended in 1868 when a new treaty was signed at Fort Laramie. The 1868 Treaty established a reservation for the Lakotas, which included the sacred Black Hills and a large area north of the Platte River. White men were not allowed to enter this Great Sioux Reservation without permission. In addition, the Indians were allowed to continue to hunt on an area known as the unceded Indian Territory (See appendix 6, map 3).⁸²

According to the treaty, all future treaties regarding the Lakota lands would have to be signed by 75 per cent (3/4) of all adult male Lakotas. Unless a sufficient number of signatures was received, the treaty would be ineffective. This, Article 12, was to be a guarantee for the Lakotas that they would have control over their lands in the future. The Indians promised to maintain peace, and as a reward for this, the government agreed to give them annual provisions. The provisions, however, were to be distributed far away from the Lakota homelands at the new Indians agencies closer to the Missouri River.⁸³ The goal was to force the Lakotas to move eastward, and to live permanently within the borders of the Great Sioux Reservation. This particular article of the treaty was probably not properly

⁸⁰ More about Red Cloud's war in, for example, Hyde 1937, 134-161; Olson 1965, pp. 41-57; Andrist 1969, pp. 97-134; Brown D. 1996, pp. 131-161; Larson 1997, pp. 74-104.

⁸¹ See, Indian Peace Commission Report to President Andrew Johnson, January 7, 1868, AIUSD, Vol. I, pp. 144-145. See also, Mardock 1968, pp. 187-201; Mattingly 1976, pp. 23-37.

⁸² Treaty of Fort Laramie 1868, Article 2, Article 11 and Article 16, AIUSD, Vol. IV, pp. 2517-1525. See also, Olson 1965, pp. 58-95.

⁸³ Treaty of Fort Laramie 1868, Article 4, AIUSD, Vol. IV, pp. 2517-1525. See, Olson 1965, pp. 58-96.

explained to the Lakotas before 1870, when Spotted Tail and Red Cloud visited Washington.⁸⁴

The 1868 Treaty resulted in a division within the Lakota people. Red Cloud and Spotted Tail with their respective followers decided to live within the Great Sioux Reservation, but thousands of Lakotas who did not want to have anything to do with the treaty remained off the reservation. The whites soon started to refer to these Lakota as the “wild” Indians. Several Indian agencies were established within the reservation. Red Cloud and Spotted Tail were given agencies that carried their names. In addition to these, the Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, Lower Brulé and Crow Creek agencies were later established.⁸⁵

At first, life on the reservation was not particularly restricted. The Lakotas were still able to go on hunting trips, visit their relatives on and off the reservation, and they were able to live far away from the Indian agencies. Some of the Lakotas returned to the agencies only for the days when rations were issued. Especially in the winters, even Lakotas living outside the reservation came to the agencies for provisions.⁸⁶ Despite this flexible arrangement, life on the reservation was constantly balanced between war and peace. The regular visits by the “wild” Lakotas also kept tensions alive. Furthermore, the government moved the Lakotas from one place to another hoping that they would eventually settle down and take up farming. The Lakotas strongly opposed this idea. The Friends of the Indians, who were now heading the government’s Indian Policy, were convinced that in only a few years time, the Lakotas would be self-supporting farmers. The reality, however, was that by 1873 no farms, or even gardens, were established by full-blood Lakotas at the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Agencies.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Hyde 1937, p. 177; Olson 1965, pp. 58-263; Lazarus 1991, pp. 61. For accounts of Indian delegations to Washington see, Viola, Herman J., *Diplomats in Buckskins. A History of Indian Delegations in Washington City*, Bluffton, South Carolina 1995, passim. See also, Turner, Katherine C., *Red Men Calling on the Great White Father*, Norman, Oklahoma 1951, passim.

⁸⁵ Hyde 1937, p. 253; Olson 1965, p. 83-84 and a map between pages 270-271; Schusky, Ernest L., *The Lower Brulé Sioux Reservation: A Century of Misunderstanding*, South Dakota History, No. 7, 1977, pp. 423-424.

⁸⁶ Hyde 1961, p. 182.

⁸⁷ 44th Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Serial 1749, DUSIP, pp. 147-151. See, Hyde 1961, p. 182 and p. 187. More about life and struggles on the Great Sioux Reservation between 1868-1874 in, for example, Olson 1965, pp. 114-213; Larson 1997, pp. 137-169;

The government spent large sums of money to support the Lakotas, and there were many who wanted to take their share of this money. Inexperienced and often dishonest Indian agents cheated the Indians as well as the government. At times the Lakotas were able to run things as they pleased; weak agents were no match for strong leaders like Spotted Tail or Red Cloud. By 1874 military forts were established near the Spotted Tail and Red Cloud agencies. The Christian policy seemed not to be working for the Lakotas; order was to be maintained by force if need be.⁸⁸

In 1874 gold was discovered in the Black Hills. This caused a rush of white gold seekers to the Lakota lands. The United States army was ordered to stop and arrest the white men entering the Black Hills. The few men that were arrested were quickly released, and consequently many returned to the gold fields. The threat of war was imminent already in 1875, when the government invited the Lakotas to listen to a new proposal. In order to avoid a war, the government wanted to buy the Black Hills. The government reasoned that, since the Indians were not able to feed themselves, but were supported by the government, the land the Indians did not use belonged to the government. The government offered the Lakotas six million dollars for the land, far less than its true value. The Lakotas refused to sell. The government did not want to use force to stop the gold miners, so the white miners' rush to the Black Hills continued.⁸⁹

Since the Lakotas did not sell the Black Hills, all Lakotas, including those who lived outside the reservation, were ordered to move close to the Indian agencies by January 1, 1876. Those who failed to arrive were considered as hostiles. This, in fact, was an ultimatum and practically a declaration of war. Most Lakotas had no chance of reaching the agencies by the date they were given. Traveling in the middle of the winter was difficult and slow. Furthermore, some of the Indians

Smedman, 2001, pp. 100-121 (See, English Summary, "From Warriors and Hunters to Farmers": Oglalas on White Man's Road, 1868-1887, pp. 381-394)

⁸⁸ Hyde 1961, p. 188 and pp. 194-196; Olson 1965, passim. See also, 42nd Cong., 3rd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Serial 1560, DUSIP, pp. 137-141.

⁸⁹ Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Edward P. Smith, November 1, 1874, AIUSD, Vol. I, pp. 200-201. See, Hyde 1961, pp. 202, p. 206 and p. 215; Olson 1965, pp. 199-216; Lazarus 1991, pp. 80-83; Larson 1997, pp. 1185-198.

learned about the ultimatum only after the deadline was passed. The date given by the government actually meant little to the Lakotas anyway. They were not used to strict time schedules like the whites; they could wait until the following spring.⁹⁰

Since the Lakotas failed to meet the deadline, the United States army marched into the Lakota country during the winter and spring of 1876. From the beginning of the war, it was clear that the government had underestimated the Lakota forces. Crazy Horse, Gall (Phiži) and Sitting Bull, among others, were leading a fighting force of united Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians. During the summer of 1876 many of the most famous battles between the Lakotas and the U.S. army were fought. The Indians were able to inflict serious defeats to the army. The culmination of the fighting happened at Little Big Horn River. The Indians completely destroyed the troops of the 7th Cavalry led by Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer.⁹¹ After the battle, however, the Indians again dispersed; some even returned to the agencies expecting to get provisions and same kind of treatment as before.⁹²

Following Custer's death more troops were sent to force the Lakotas onto the reservation. Small groups gradually came to the agencies, but the army was not capable of destroying all the "hostile" Lakotas. Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, for example, decided to continue the war. Since the government could not punish these Indians who were living outside the reservation, the peaceful Indians living on the reservation were the sufferers of the government's actions. By the fall of 1876 they no longer received the provisions and food that the government promised them. They were threatened with starvation, and unless they gave up the Black Hills, the government would transfer them eastward by force.⁹³

⁹⁰ See, Hyde 1961, pp. 219-221; Olson 1965, pp. 215-217; Larson 1997, pp. 197-199.

⁹¹ The literature relating to the summer 1876 fighting and Little Big Horn is extensive. Accounts of these events are included in, for example, Vestal 1957, pp. 138-180; Andrist 1969, p. 248-252 and pp. 261-292; Hoover 1980, pp. 157-162; Sandoz 1992, pp. 302-359; Utley 1993, pp. 122-164; Sajna 2000, pp. 271-299. An interesting interpretation about the events surrounding the Little Big Horn battle can be found in, DeMallie 1993, pp. 515-534.

⁹² Hyde 1961, pp. 224-225.

⁹³ See, for example, Hyde 1937, pp. 277-293; Vestal 1957, pp. 181-213; Olson 1965, pp. 199-235; Andrist 1969, p. 297; Schusky 1977, p. 433; Hoover 1980, pp. 157-161; Lazarus 1991, pp. 91-92; Sandoz 1992, pp. 335-359; Utley 1993, pp. 174-182; Sajna 2000, pp. 300-320.

Since the war was still going on, it was highly unlikely that 75 per cent (3/4) of adult male Lakotas would give up the Black Hills as the 1868 Treaty called for. It is of interest to note that in 1871 the United States government ceased to make treaties with the Indians. Instead of treaties, the government made only agreements, or acts, with the Indians. The congress ratified these agreements.⁹⁴ So under tremendous pressure even Red Cloud and Spotted Tail, who did not join the fighting Indians, signed a new agreement. By signing this agreement, the Lakotas gave away the Black Hills and their rights to the unceded Indian Territory, which had been promised them by the 1868 Treaty (See appendix 6, map 3).⁹⁵

The army under General George Crook and Colonel Nelson A. Miles followed the Indians led by Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull all through the winter 1877. In the spring even Crazy Horse surrendered, and Sitting Bull had to take his people to Canada. After Crazy Horse's surrender, life at the Indian agencies was restless. Almost 10,000 "wild" Lakotas were gradually starting a difficult journey of adaptation to the reservation life. Crazy Horse's presence, and rumors of his plans to escape and resume the hostilities, kept the tensions alive. Things started to gradually calm down after he was killed at Fort Robinson, Nebraska in September 1877.⁹⁶

By this time, the Lakotas were forced to move eastward to the Missouri River where a new agency was established. The government refused to distribute

⁹⁴ Indian Department Appropriations Act (Termination of Treaty Making Process), March 3, 1871, AIUSD, Vol. III, pp. 2181-2185. See, DAID, Vol. I, pp. 233-248. See also, Henriksson 1988, pp. 70-74. The Indian tribes were no longer considered as independent nations, but domestic dependent nations. Treaties were no longer needed, agreements ratified by both the Senate and the House of Representatives were considered sufficient. This gave more power to the House of Representatives, since earlier treaties were ratified by the Senate alone. Thus the treaties made with the Indians suffered in 1871 a kind of fall in status. Indians, however, did not understand this technical difference. In practice, treaty making continued after 1871, but the legal status was no longer the same. (Henriksson, Markku, *Intiaanilakien oikeutus*, Historiallinen Aikakauskirja, No. 1, 1986, pp. 302-305; Henriksson 1988, pp. 70-74. See, Hyde 1937, pp. 277-293; Smedman 2001, pp. 65-66)

⁹⁵ U.S. Statutes at Large, 19 Stat., Act of February 28, 1877, Article 1-11, pp. 254-257. See, Hyde 1937, pp. 277-293; Olson 1965, pp. 223-230; Lazarus 1991, pp. 92-93.

⁹⁶ See, for example, Vestal 1957, pp. 181-230; Hyde 1961, p. 248; Andrist 1969, p. 298; Hoover 1980, pp.160-162; Sandoz 1992, pp. 259-262 and pp. 406-413; Utley 1993, pp. 165-210; Sajna 2000, pp. 320-324. For an account of the events leading to Crazy Horse's surrender from the Indian viewpoint see, DeMallie 1993, pp. 526-532. Several Indian accounts relating to Crazy Horse's death can be found in the Eli S. Ricker Manuscript Collection.

annuities elsewhere. Since there were no longer any buffalos in the vicinity of the Lakota agencies, and the army prohibited the Lakotas from following the buffalo off the reservation, the Lakotas had no other option but to move east. The next summer, however, Red Cloud and Spotted Tail were allowed to take their people to locations they chose by themselves. After many problems, Red Cloud took the Oglalas to Pine Ridge, and Spotted Tail with his Brulés chose a location along the Rosebud River for their new agency.⁹⁷

The whites considered Spotted Tail and Red Cloud as the most notable Lakota leaders on the reservation in the late 1870s. Because of this, their influence grew in proportions never seen among the Lakotas before. After Spotted Tail's death in 1881, the government considered Red Cloud alone as head chief of the Lakotas, even though there were other chiefs among the Lakotas, who were more entitled to such a position. The government policy, in fact, was to try to undermine the power of the chiefs. The idea was to break the traditional structure of the society by emphasizing individualism. The government thought that by breaking up the band structure of the Lakotas, they could make the Indians individual farmers. The chiefs were seen as obstacles to individual thinking and civilization. Indians were considered to be under their chiefs' tyrannical rule. In daily life, however, ordinary Lakotas still turned to their chiefs. They could not function individually as the whites hoped. The chiefs, like Red Cloud and Spotted Tail, who visited Washington several times, understood the white men better than other Indians, so their influence grew even though the government tried to accomplish the opposite. In fact, whenever there was major trouble on the reservation, government agents had to turn to the chiefs. The chiefs were leading the Lakotas' struggle for survival on the reservations.⁹⁸

In 1881 Sitting Bull returned from Canada and surrendered. These last "wild" Lakotas settled around Standing Rock Agency. After Sitting Bull's return all Lakotas settled on the Great Sioux Reservation. The Lakotas' era as independent

⁹⁷ Hyde 1937, pp. 302-303; Hyde 1961, pp. 254-263; Olson 1965, pp. 247-263.

⁹⁸ 44th Cong., 2nd Sess., Serial 1749, DUSIP, pp. 145-151 See, Hyde 1956, p. 29-30; Hyde 1961, pp. 266-267; Olson 1965, passim.; Utley 1984, pp. 235-241; McLaughlin, James, *My Friend the Indian*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1989 (orig. 1910), p. 90. More about the Lakota delegations to Washington in, Viola 1995, passim.

hunters on the plains was over. Their culture had changed dramatically in a very short time period. They had resisted white encroachment as well and as long as they could, but now the Lakotas faced a new kind of challenge: life on the reservation.⁹⁹

2.2.3. The Lakotas and U.S. Indian Policy in the 1880s

The goal of the U.S. government was to make all Indians - including the Lakotas - self-supporting through farming. For most of the Lakotas the concept of work as the whites knew it was a totally unfamiliar idea. For them, hunting was the only natural means of living. In the 1880s the Lakotas also believed, that the government owed them support in compensation for lost lands.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the lands and the climate prevented the Lakotas from adopting farming. The Indian agent at Pine Ridge Reservation, Valentine T. McGillicuddy, described the situation saying that if 7,000 white settlers were located on the same land and given all that they needed for one year, they would starve to death if they had to live on the products of their own farms.¹⁰¹

The fact that the government emphasised farming, built schools and created the Indian police system was a part of its deliberate effort to break down the traditional structure of Lakota society. Already in 1877 Commissioner of Indian Affairs Ezra A. Hayt expressed the idea of Indian police forces, and in 1878 a law creating an Indian police force on all Indian reservations was passed.¹⁰² Among the Lakotas, the creation of the police force was difficult, since they saw the police as a rival to traditional men's societies.¹⁰³ Gradually the Lakotas' attitudes toward the police changed as they realized that, if they would not allow the police

⁹⁹ See, Hyde 1956, pp. 76-77; Vestal 1957, pp. 231-234; Utley 1993, pp. 234-259.

¹⁰⁰ The Lakotas based their demands on the treaties of 1851 and 1868. In these treaties the government promised to pay annual appropriations for them. See, Treaty of Fort Laramie 1851, AIUSD, Vol. IV, pp. 2479-2480; Treaty of Fort Laramie 1868, AIUSD, Vol. IV, pp. 2517-2525.

¹⁰¹ Hyde 1956, p. 69; Youngkin, Stephen D., *Prelude to Wounded Knee: The Military Point of View*, South Dakota History, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1974, p. 335.

¹⁰² 45th Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document No. 1, Serial 1800, pp. 398-399, DUSIP, p. 151.

¹⁰³ Report of Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs E. M. Marble, November 1, 1880, AIUSD, Vol. I, pp. 288-289; Valentine T. McGillicuddy in, IULL, WMCC, Box 4, Folder 3, Envelope 4. See also, Twiss, Gayla, *A Short History of Pine Ridge*, The Indian Historian, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1978, pp. 36-37. More about traditional men's societies in, for example, Thomas Tyon and John Blunt Horn in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), pp. 260-270; Hassrick 1968, pp. 14-25.

to keep order on the reservation, the duty would be left to the United States Army. In the end the police system was not so strange to the Lakotas. In traditional society the “camp police,” akíčhita, kept order in society. The Indian police system basically replicated this structure and gradually replaced it to some extent. Eventually the Indian police forces became very loyal to the Indian agents.¹⁰⁴

The schools were also dividing the Lakota people. The people whom the whites called progressives were willing to try the “blessings” of the schools, whereas the so-called non-progressive Lakotas resisted education in all possible ways. They, for example, moved to the remote parts of their reservation in order to be able to avoid schools. For many Lakotas the school was a place where the boys’ hair was cut off and they were forced to wear white man’s clothes. Others saw the schools as a chance to learn the ways of the white man, which would eventually benefit the whole Lakota people.¹⁰⁵ The aim of the school system was to make the Lakotas a happy, prosperous people by showing and teaching them the supremacy of the white way of life.¹⁰⁶

The reservation life of the Lakotas in the 1880s was a constant struggle over power. This struggle was fought both between the agents and the chiefs and among the chiefs themselves. The bitterest struggle was that of Red Cloud and Agent Valentine T. McGillicuddy. This fight on Pine Ridge Reservation lasted for seven years and can be said to have ended in Red Cloud’s favor when the agent was removed from duty in 1886.¹⁰⁷

According to historian **Edward Lazarus**, one sign of the success of the government’s disintegration policy was the explosive increase in the number of

¹⁰⁴ Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Hiram Price, October 24, 1881, AIUSD, Vol. I, pp. 308-309. See, DeMallie 2001, pp. 814. For accounts of the role of the akíčhita see, Thomas Tyon, John Blunt Horn and Iron Tail in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 28-34; Hassrick 1968, pp. 16-24.

¹⁰⁵ Twiss 1978, p. 38; Dippie 1982, p. 263; Smedman, Rainer, “*I Have Learnt To Write*”: *U. S. Educational Policy Toward Lakota, 1868-1878*, A paper held at “The Sixth Tampere Conference on North American Studies,” Tampere, April 20, 1995; DeMallie 2001, pp. 814-815.

¹⁰⁶ 47th Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Serial 2018, pp. 1-3, DUSIP, pp. 155-157.

¹⁰⁷ Hyde 1956, p.164. More about Agent Valentine T. McGillicuddy and Red Cloud in, for example, Olson 1965, pp. 264-285; McGillicuddy, Julia, B., *Blood on the Moon. Valentine McGillicuddy and the Sioux*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1969, passim.; Larson 1997, pp. 217-248.

Lakota chiefs, even though many of those who wanted to be referred to as chiefs lacked the achievements that were traditionally needed for that position. For example, in 1878 the Lakotas had 12 chiefs, but in the beginning of 1880s there were 63 men, who called themselves chiefs. The number of sub-bands also rose dramatically.¹⁰⁸ Historians **George E. Hyde** and **Robert M. Utley** claim that this lessened the power of the traditional hereditary chiefs, but, on the other hand, it made possible the tremendous rise in authority for Red Cloud and Spotted Tail. The fact that Spotted Tail was killed by Crow Dog (Khaǵí Šúka), also a Brulé, has been interpreted as a sign of the breakdown of traditional values.¹⁰⁹

There is, however, some indication that the structure of Lakota society was not as badly broken in the late 1880s as **Edward Lazarus** suggests. The fact that the number of “chiefs” and “sub-bands” increased does not necessarily mean the breakdown of traditional society. Rather it reflects the traditionally very flexible structure of Lakota society. As noted earlier in this study, Lakota society could adapt to the needs of time. In reservation life, the traditional band structure was gradually replaced by district structure, according to where each band lived (See appendix 8, maps 5-6). Despite this, basic elements of traditional Lakota society remained; people moved to these districts in traditional *thiyóšpayes*, where the strong bonds of kinship remained as a unifying force. And indeed, when for example, the proceedings of the councils held with the so-called Sioux commissions in late 1880s are studied, it can clearly be seen that the Lakotas acted as they had traditionally acted in councils. In fact, while reading the proceedings of the councils one cannot deny the fact that the Lakotas were in total control of the situation. This was especially true during the negotiations of 1888. This might suggest that the structure of the society had certainly suffered a blow, but the blow might not have been as dramatic as believed, for example, by **Lazarus**.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Lazarus 1991, pp. 98-99.

¹⁰⁹ Hyde 1956, p.164; Utley 1984, p. 236.

¹¹⁰ See, Hassrick 1968, p. 31; Price 1996, pp. 172-173; DeMallie 2001, p. 812. For a sense of the negotiations of 1888 and 1889 see, 50th Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 17, Vol. I, Serial, 2610, pp. 1-283; 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 51, Vol. V, Serial 2682, p. 1215. More about the communities living on the new districts at Pine Ridge in, ARCIA 1884, Report of Agent Valentine T. McGillicuddy, House Executive Document, No. 1, 48th Cong., 2nd Sess., Serial 2287, Vol. 12, p. 82. See also, Vassenden, Kaare, *Lakota Trail on Man Afraid of His Horses*, Bergen, Norway 2000, pp. 56-69; DeMallie 2001, p. 812.

In 1882 the government planned to reduce the size of the Great Sioux Reservation. By threatening and cheating, the representatives of the United States government tried to make the Lakotas cede almost half of the area of their reservation. The Lakotas, however, were once more able to unite, and with the help of some Eastern white friends, were able to keep their lands.¹¹¹ Despite all the restrictions there was still plenty of room to escape the white man's influence on the Great Sioux Reservation. As long as this was possible, there was no way of making the Lakotas farmers. The government decided to reduce the reservation, thus forcing the Lakotas to be "bound to the land." Since the Lakotas did not cultivate their land, they would still have unused land even if they gave away half of the land in their possession.¹¹² The idea culminated then in 1887 when *The General Allotment Act* was passed. This act decided the fate of Lakota lands.¹¹³

The Great Sioux Reservation had already in 1876 been divided into six separated Indian agencies, but this division was only for administrative purposes. These agencies served as the basis for the planned reduction of the Great Sioux Reservation. The division was first attempted in 1888 and then again in 1889. The government sent delegations to negotiate with the Lakotas over the reduction of their lands. The first attempt was a failure. The Lakotas confronted the commissioners refusing almost unanimously to give up their lands. As noted above, during these negotiations the Lakotas were clearly present as one unified people. The government, however, did not give up. The next year another commission was sent. One of the members was a famous Indian fighter, General George Crook, who knew the ways of the Indians. This commission acted differently than the previous commission. By trying to persuade individual Indians behind the scenes the commission sought to break the strong opposition from the previous year. And, indeed, this strategy proved to be successful. By

¹¹¹ Hyde 1956, pp.107-144; Prucha 1976, pp. 169-177; Hagan 1985, pp. 38-41; Smedman, Rainer, *Tetonien ja Yhdysvaltain hallituksen välillä solmittujen Fort Laramien ja vuoden 1876 sitoumuksen rikkoutuminen vuosina 1851-1876*, Master's Thesis at the University of Turku, Turku Finland 1990, pp. 123-127.

¹¹² Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs J. D. C. Atkins, September 28, 1886, AIUSD, Vol. I, p. 405.

¹¹³ U.S. Statutes at Large, 24 Stat, pp. 388-391. See also, Prucha 1976, pp. 177-192; Hoxie 1977, pp. 167-172; Prucha 1986, Vol. II, pp. 659-671; Henriksson, Markku, *Alkuperäiset amerikkalaiset. Yhdysvaltain alueen intiaanien, inuitien ja aleutien historia*, Jyväskylä Finland 1986, p. 143; Henriksson 1988, pp. 165-172.

threatening and by promising many things for the Lakotas, the commission was able to obtain enough names so that the reduction of the Great Sioux Reservation could legally be carried out. The reduction was then ratified in *The Sioux Act of 1889*. During the negotiations the Lakotas' strong unified opposition gradually broke down. This would prove a major blow to Lakota people. The split within the Lakota people deepened dramatically, and some of the major seeds of the troubles of 1890 were planted as those who opposed the reduction started to draw away from those who signed the act.¹¹⁴

Thus, after tremendous pressure from the government, the Lakotas were finally in 1889 forced to give away land that the whites considered as surplus. The Great Sioux Reservation was divided into smaller reservations based on the former administrative areas. The Hunkpapas, Minneconjous, Sans Arcs, Two Kettles and Blackfeets settled on two adjoining reservations, Standing Rock and Cheyenne River. The Pine Ridge reservation became the home for the Oglalas and the Brulés settled on Rosebud Reservation. Two smaller reservations Crow Creek and Lower Brulé were also established (See appendix 7, map 4).¹¹⁵

After the year 1881 the Lakotas living on the Great Sioux Reservation and later on the six smaller reservations were in different phases in their assimilation to the white culture. There were Lakotas, the so-called, Loafers who got their name because they had been living with the whites already since the 1850s. Part of the Lakotas settled on the reservation in the 1860s, part in the 1870s, and the last part as late as in the 1880s. Thus a very rough division can be set up: Those who had lived for a longer time on the reservation formed the group that the *whites* called

¹¹⁴ See, 50th Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 17, Vol. I, Serial, 2610, pp. 1-283; 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 51, Vol. V, Serial 2682, p. 1-215. See also, U.S. Statutes at Large, 25 Stat., Act of 1889, Section 17, pp. 888-890; Statement of American Horse in, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., House of Representatives Committee on Indian Affairs, Unpublished Hearing, April 15, 1890, IUL, Microfiche, Card 1, p. 13. Fuller analysis of the negotiations can be found in, for example, Greene, Jerome A., *The Sioux Land Commission of 1889: Prelude to Wounded Knee*, South Dakota History, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1970, pp. 41-72; Youngkin 1974, pp. 337-340; Prucha 1976, pp. 177-192; Hagan 1985, pp. 47-64; Hoover, Herbert T., *The Sioux Agreement of 1889 and Its Aftermath*, South Dakota History, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1989, pp. 57-75; Utley 1993, pp. 268-280.

¹¹⁵ U.S. Statutes at Large, 25 Stat., Act of 1889, Section 1-7, pp. 888-890. See also, Greene 1970, pp. 50-66; Hoxie, Frederick E., *From Prison to Homeland: The Cheyenne River Reservation Before WW I*, South Dakota History, No. 10, 1979, p. 2; Utley 1984, p. 232; Prucha 1986, Vol. II, pp. 631-640; Hoover 1989, pp. 67-70.

progressives and the newcomers were considered as the non-progressive people. This, however, is too simplistic a picture, because there were many non-progressives among those who had lived on the reservation since the 1860s, and there were also progressives among those who had moved onto the reservation in the 1880s. Furthermore, it is almost impossible to say definitely who was really progressive and who was not.

This artificial division set up by the whites existed throughout the 1880s and, although a white invention, started to affect the daily lives of the Lakotas. Despite the efforts and partial success of white officials to break down the unity of the Lakotas as a people, it was clear by the end of the 1880s that an ordinary Indian could not live outside the tribal community without his chief or headman. Individualism, as the white understood and wanted it, had not yet set roots in the Lakota society. So, despite all the efforts to break down the tribal structure and the power of the chiefs, even Agent James McLaughlin at Standing Rock Reservation said that it was much easier to deal with the Indians through their chiefs than to try to deal with Indians as individuals.¹¹⁶

An understanding of the division into progressives and non-progressives is somewhat easier, if we look at the most notable chiefs. This division occurred on all Lakota reservations, the people following the example of their chiefs, as they had always done. And more importantly, the whites considered the people who followed a progressive chief as progressives and vice versa. So for the whites, a person living, for example, in Sitting Bull's village was automatically a non-progressive like Sitting Bull. Sitting Bull, although a medicine man, was the leading non-progressive chief on Standing Rock while Gall and John Grass (Pheží) were the leading progressives. On Pine Ridge, Red Cloud and Big Road (Čhākú Thâka) were heading the non-progressives and, for example, Young Man Afraid Of His Horse (Thášŭke Khókiphapi), Little Wound (Thaópi Cík'ala) and American Horse (Wašícŭ Thašŭke) led the progressives. Hump (Čakáhu) and Big Foot (Sí Thâka) were the leading non-progressives on Cheyenne River Reservation. On Rosebud they were led by Two Strike (Nŭpa Aphápi) and Crow

¹¹⁶ Youngkin 1974, pp. 340-341 and p. 343; McLaughlin 1989, p. 90.

Dog. After Spotted Tail's death in 1881, the leadership among the progressives on Rosebud was very unclear. These were of course only the most notable leaders at the time, but this allows us to some extent to follow the division within the Lakota people.¹¹⁷

In 1883 traditional Lakota religious ceremonies were forbidden. The last sun dances of the nineteenth century were held on Pine Ridge in 1882 and on Rosebud a year later. This was a very great blow for Lakota society, since religion and religious ceremonies had always been a part of their daily life. When these ceremonies were forbidden, the culture lost an essential foundation. The Lakotas, however, tried to continue their traditional practices secretly, but the time for large religious ceremonies, like the sun dance, was over. In this impossible situation many Lakotas turned to Christianity, preached by missionaries for decades but previously rejected by many Lakotas. The reality, however, was that for many, the Christian God remained as only one godlike being among others. So, by the end of the 1880s the Lakota people were also divided into different religious groups; there were Christians, those who tried to find a balance between Christianity and traditional beliefs, and those who tried to perpetuate the old system of belief. (Lakota religious life is more carefully studied in chapter 3.3.)¹¹⁸

On the reservations, the life of the Lakotas changed rapidly. Nonetheless, they had not yet by the end of the 1880s assimilated as well as the whites had expected. The non-progressives kept tensions constantly alive. There were tensions within the Lakota people as well as between the Indians and the white agents. In the late 1880s the Lakotas faced terrible famine. There was no more game left to hunt, the crops failed year after year, and adding to the Lakotas' distress the government cut down the amount of the annual appropriation and delayed its delivery. The cut in rations was partly justified by arguments blaming the lack of sufficient government funds. It was also justified by the fact that the actual number of Lakotas had turned out to be smaller than expected in the census that was being

¹¹⁷ Hyde 1956, pp. 152-153; Utley 1984, pp. 234-236.

¹¹⁸ Eastman 1980, pp. 45 and pp. 18-21; Lazarus 1991, pp. 100-101; Deloria E. 1998, pp. 98-109. About the official ideas concerning "barbarous" rituals, the power of the chiefs and the non-progressives see, for example, 48th Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document No. 1, Serial 2190, pp. X-XII, DUSIP, pp. 160-162.

carried out among the Lakotas during the year 1890. If this really was the fact, it was probably the result of famine and disease, but that fact was not taken into account when the decision to reduce the rations was made. The cut was included in *The Sioux Act of 1889*, which reduced not only the Great Sioux Reservation to almost half of its size, but also the annual beef allowance to almost half of the previous amount. The cut in rations was also a part of a government policy that sought to use the gradual reduction of rations, and subsequent hunger, to make the Lakotas realize that labor was the only way to survive and achieve self-sufficiency. As late as December 1890 Senator Henry L. Dawes noted that hunger was the only way to make an Indian work.¹¹⁹

The famine also brought devastating epidemics with it. Furthermore, the planned reduction of the Great Sioux Reservation caused great anxiety. The Sioux Commission of 1889 made many promises to the Lakotas in order to acquire enough signatures, but the government carried out the partitioning of the Great Sioux Reservation without fulfilling practically any of the Commission's promises. When the division of the Great Sioux Reservation was carried out in 1890, many Lakotas saw it as a final evidence of the white man's untrustworthiness.¹²⁰

The once independent warriors of the Great Plains had become poor and desperate prisoners with little hope for a better future. In 1888-1889 the Lakotas, however, heard about a new kind of hope. Somewhere in the west a Messiah was preaching about a better future for the Indians. Thousands of Indians were reportedly

¹¹⁹ Letters by Little Wound, Young Man Afraid of His Horse and Fast Thunder in, Gallagher to CIA, July 23, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, pp. 335-338; ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, no. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 132-133. See also, Treaty of Fort Laramie 1868, Article 8-10, AIUSD, Vol. I, pp. 2517-2525; 19 Statutes at Large, Act of 1877, Article 3-8, pp. 255-256. About the discussion of the Lakota rations see, for example, Gallagher to CIA, August 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, p. 385; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, pp. 15-21; Agent Valentine T. McGillicuddy to General Colby January 15, 1891 as quoted in, Mooney 1991, pp. 831-833; Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. XXII, Part I, December 3, 1890, pp 46-47. Senator Henry L. Dawes for example, had already for several years demanded protection and education of the Indians in order to civilize them. Still he had always emphasized that an Indian remained an Indian unless he was able to work. (Hoxie 1977, pp. 168-169) About the promises and suggestions made by General George Crook and other commissioners see, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 51, Vol. V, Serial 2682, pp. 23-32. More about the rations in, chapters 4, 5 and 7.

¹²⁰ Youngkin 1974, pp. 340-343; Lazarus 1991, pp. 112-113. More about the reduction of rations in, for example, chapter 7.

listening to him, and the Lakotas decided to learn more about the wonderful things he was promising for the Indians.

2.3. Revitalization Movements – Hope for Suppressed People

2.3.1. Revitalization Movements and the Cultural Conflict

The ghost dance that spread among the many North American Indian tribes in the late 1880s was not only a peculiarity of the history of the American Indians. Similar phenomena have occurred all over the world when indigenous peoples have come face to face with European expansion and colonialism.¹²¹ The roots of the North American ghost dance can be found in this collision between Native American and Euro-American cultures, and in the devastation this contact gradually brought to Indian cultures.¹²²

Europeans, and in the case of North America, Euro-Americans, tried to replace all aspects of native cultures with the achievements of their own culture. Among the native peoples this caused strong resistance resulting in a cultural conflict and warfare. This conflict eventually led to cultural assimilation, as the weaker culture had to yield to the demands of the stronger, that is, the Euro-American culture.¹²³

When Europeans and Euro-Americans succeeded in suppressing the political, military, economic and religious resistance of the natives, they sometimes encountered another, often unexpected, form of resistance. When the structure of a certain society had been crushed, or when that society no longer had the power to continue traditional forms of resistance, new possibilities arose through a

¹²¹ See, for example, Siikala Jukka, *Cult and Conflict in Tropical Polynesia. A Study of Traditional Religion, Christianity and Nativistic Movements*, Helsinki Finland 1982, p. 15.

¹²² Lesser, Alexander, *Cultural Significance of the Ghost Dance*, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 35, 1933, p. 115; Clemhout, Simone, *Typology of Nativistic Movements*, *Man*, No. 7, 1964, p. 14.

¹²³ La Barre 1974, pp. 277-296; Linton, Ralph, *Nativistiset liikkeet* in, *Uskonto ja yhteisö: Tutkimuksia uskontososiologian alalta* (ed. Pentikäinen, Juha), Helsinki Finland 1974, pp. 196-202; Siikala 1982 p. 15. Cultural assimilation is considered as one aspect of cultural change and acculturation processes, which stem from a cultural contact and conflict. Cultural assimilation eventually leads to a total submission of the weaker culture. See, for example, Taske & Nelson 1974, pp. 351-367.

religious prophet. These prophetic leaders then combined aspects deriving from the new, dominant culture with their own traditional cultures.¹²⁴

These “religious-prophetic” mass movements have occurred all over the world. Among American Indians similar movements occurred among the Pueblos in the late seventeenth century, among the Iroquois in the late eighteenth century and among the Shawnee in early nineteenth century, to name only a few. In Africa the mau mau-, in China the taiping-, in Polynesia the mamaia-, and in New Zealand the hau hau-movement are some examples of this worldwide phenomenon. All of these movements were typically born as a result of tremendous cultural change and in a middle of cultural crisis. For this reason they are also called crisis cults.¹²⁵

Such movements are mainly aimed at getting rid of the dominant culture and restoring traditional ways of living. Through religion, religious ceremonies, and with the help of a religious prophet the object was to bring about a new world without the conquerors. Typically the destruction of the world was prophesied, and it would then be replaced by a new paradise like world promised by the prophet or Messiah. These movements can also be called eschatological or messianic movements. A messianic doctrine is usually a doctrine of peace; the believers need only to pray, perform certain ceremonies and wait. The fact that the whites are excluded from the new world does not necessarily reflect hatred felt toward whites. Very often it simply symbolizes the fulfillment of the expected return of the old way of life. Messianic movements are always preceded by a socio-cultural situation that could be described as “harsh time.” A special characteristic for the birth of these movements is an extensive feeling of spiritual, physical and social deprivation as well as social disintegration. When a society no longer can achieve those aspects of culture that traditionally made life satisfactory, the result is desperation. The attraction of a messianic movement is

¹²⁴ Linton 1974, pp. 191-192; Siikala 1982 p. 52. For a fuller account of the prophetic process see, for example, Overholt, Thomas W., *The Ghost Dance of 1890 and the Nature of the Prophetic Process*, *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1974, pp. 38-58.

¹²⁵ More about these movements in, Wallace, Anthony, *Revitalization Movements*, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 58, 1956, p. 264; Clemhout 1964, p. 14; La Barre 1974, pp. 197-223, pp. 225- 248, pp. 253-273 and pp. 299-321; Siikala 1982 pp. 15-19, p. 32 and p. 52; Mooney 1991, pp. 657-763.

that it includes all those things that previously brought pleasure to life. When those things are lost, the result is the prevalent destitute state of society.¹²⁶

Because the roots of these movements or religions were in the conflict between Europeans and Natives, and because they mainly occurred among Native peoples, they are also called as nativistic movements. Anthropologist **Ralph Linton** claims that a nativistic movement generally begins when a person takes on the role of a religious prophet, and when a group of people accepts his message and position. These movements rest strongly on the supernatural. In these movements the new millennium is based on the model taken from the old way of life. The members of society believe that they can recreate the whole situation and circumstances in which their ancestors lived. They try to recreate those aspects of their ancestors' life, which are considered to make life good and satisfying.¹²⁷

Because the object of these movements was to create a more satisfactory culture by reviving the old way of life, they are also called revitalization movements. According to anthropologist **Anthony Wallace**, the term revitalization movement covers movements that can be at the same time nativistic, messianic, millenaristic and revivalistic. Thus the term "revitalization movement" can be used as a general name to describe these various religious movements¹²⁸

The ghost dance of 1890, the object of this study, was in a way a typical revitalization movement; it was born in the midst of cultural change, it included aspects that allow us to designate it by all the names mentioned above; it was nativistic, eschatological, religious-political as well as messianic, its object was to

¹²⁶ Barber, Bernard, *Akkulturaatio ja messiaaniset liikkeet* in, *Uskonto ja yhteisö: Tutkimuksia uskontososiologian alalta* (ed. Pentikäinen 1974), pp. 216-221; Overholt 1974, pp. 37-38; Siikala 1982 pp. 18-19.

¹²⁷ Clemhout 1964, p. 14; Linton 1974, pp.192-196. Linton divides the Nativistic Movements into revivalistic and perpetuative according to, whether they try only to maintain the prevalent culture or whether they try to revive a culture that is dying. He also differentiates between Rational and Magic Nativistic Movements. He further separates Nativistic Movements from Millenaristic Movements that try to create something new and extraordinary, they do not try to revive the old. (Linton 1974, pp. 192-196) Clemhout divides Nativistic Movements in Resistive and Reformativ movements. A Reformativ movement tries to unite new and old culture, whereas a Resistive movement tries to resist the effect of the dominant culture with violence or passive resistance. (Clemhout 1964, p. 14) Additional commentary can be found, for example in, Taske & Nelson 1974, pp. 357-367.

¹²⁸ Wallace 1956, pp. 265-267. More about the division of the Revitalization Movements in, for example, Clemhout 1964, p. 14.

create a new kind of world, and it was born at a time when the military resistance of North American Indians was crushed - at a time when most Indian cultures were in deep crisis and the Indians were forced to live on reservations set aside for them by the United States government.

2.3.2. Wovoka and the Ghost Dance of 1890

The prophet of the ghost dance of 1890, Wovoka, was a Paiute Indian born about 1858 in Mason Valley, Nevada. Not much is known about his early life, but his father, Tavivo, was a well-known shaman and medicine man. Through him Wovoka learned the secrets of the spirit world and religion. Already as a young man Wovoka was famous for his ability to hear voices and see visions.¹²⁹ During his younger years, the Paiutes were forced to give up their old ways of living as well as their lands. Like many Paiutes, Wovoka went to work on a farm owned by a white man David Wilson, where he became known by the name Jack Wilson. There he also learned about Christianity.¹³⁰

Around the mid-1880s Wovoka started to hear voices from heaven and fall unconscious on the ground. When he awoke he told his people that he had been in heaven, where God had given him a new dance for the Indians. Already in 1887 he taught his people this new dance, which was basically his transformation of the traditional Paiute circle dance. This, however, did not cause great excitement among the Paiutes, although they danced for a while as Wovoka instructed.¹³¹ His real religious revelation came on January 1, 1889, when he was sick and lying in his cabin. On the same day there was an eclipse of the sun and as the sun “died,” Wovoka also “died.” He traveled to heaven where he, according to his own words,

¹²⁹ Moses, L. G., “*The Father Tells Me So!*” *Wovoka the Ghost Dance Prophet*, *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. XL, No. 3, 1985, p. 36; Mooney 1991, pp. 764-765; Hittman, Michael, *Wovoka and The Ghost Dance*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1997, p. 29.

¹³⁰ Boring, Mel, *Wovoka, the Story of an American Indian*, Minneapolis, Minnesota 1981, pp. 17-20; Fowler, Catherine S. & Liljeblad, Sven, *Northern Paiute* in, *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. XI, Great Basin (ed. Sturtevant, William C.), Washington D.C. 1986, pp. 455-458. For accounts of Wovoka’s life among the whites and his early years see, for example, Bailey, Paul, *Ghost Dance Messiah*, Tucson, Arizona 1986, pp. 11-37; Hittman 1997, pp. 27-62 and pp. 107-124. See also, Phister, Nat P., *The Indian Messiah*, *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. IV, No. 2, 1891, p 105; Boring 1981, pp. 20-23; Moses 1985, pp. 337-338; Mooney 1991, pp. 764-765 and pp. 771-772.

¹³¹ Boring 1981, p. 27; Moses 1985, p. 339; Mooney 1991, pp. 771-772. For information on the Paiute circle, or round dance see, Hittman 1997, pp. 63-65.

saw God and people who had died a long time ago. These people were happy and young forever. God gave Wovoka a new dance and new instructions for life, which he was supposed to teach to his people. He also received the power to control the weather. When Wovoka came back from “death,” he began to preach as he had been instructed while in heaven. After this incident, his influence as a shaman and mediator between God and human beings was guaranteed among the Paiute Indians. His influence grew when he made some correct predictions about the weather; he also performed many miracles, as the shamans always do to convince their followers of their supernatural powers.¹³²

Wovoka’s message appealed to Indians. During the years 1888-1890 several Indian tribes sent representatives to Mason Valley to learn his message. The news of his message, and the hope his predictions about a new world that was about to appear in the near future spread across the Indian reservations in the West (See appendix 1, map 1).¹³³

The roots of Wovoka’s doctrine can be found in several earlier revitalization movements among North American Indians. As noted above, similar movements occurred already in the eighteenth century in the northwestern parts of the United States, and in the early nineteenth century, for example, among the Shawnee Indians.¹³⁴

In most of these movements Christianity played an important role. The idea of loving your neighbor as yourself was adopted as a part of the new doctrine, although it was generally thought to apply only to Indians. Typical of these

¹³² Mooney 1991, pp. 771-774; Fowler & Liljeblad 1986, pp. 451-452. For an analysis of the eclipse of the sun in 1889 and its’ effect upon Indians see, Hittman 1997, pp. 63-68. About Wovoka’s trances, miracles and tricks see, for example, Danberg, Grace, *Wovoka, Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. XI, No 2, 1968, p. 12-15; Hittman 1997, pp. 66-84.

¹³³ For accounts of Wovoka as a person and a shaman see, Danberg 1968, passim.; Boring 1981, passim.; Hittman 1997, passim. About his later years see, for example, Danberg 1968, pp. 40-52; Stewart, Omer C., *Contemporary Document on Wovoka (Jack Wilson) Prophet of the Ghost Dance in 1890*, *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 1977, pp. 219-222; Moses 1985, pp. 343-346; Hittman 1997, pp. 167-176.

¹³⁴ See, McCann, Frank. Jr., *The Ghost Dance, Last Hope of the Western Tribes, Unleashed the Final Tragedy*, *Montana the Magazine of Western History*, No 1, 1966, pp. 28-30; La Barre 1974, pp. 205-223; Mooney 1991, pp. 662-763 and pp. 928-947; Virrankoski, Pentti, *Yhdysvaltojen ja Kanadan intiaanit. Intiaanikansojen historia Rio Grandelta Yukonjoelle*, Helsinki Finland 1994, pp. 23-24.

movements was also the idea of resurrection after death, and the arrival of a paradise upon earth. The followers made it clear that Indian customs were respected; only things and ideas that were not harmful for Indians were taken from the white culture. For example, the use of alcohol was rejected. These movements were usually peaceful in their basic nature, but violence was often present in one way or another.¹³⁵

The movement that most affected Wovoka originated in 1869 in Western Nevada, it was led by a Northern Paiute shaman named Wodziwob. He taught new prayers, songs and a certain dance for his people, the Northern Paiutes. The aim was to bring back to life all the dead Indians and to restore the old ways of life. This movement, known as the ghost dance of 1870, spread widely among the Indians in the Great Basin area. As Wodziwob's promises were not fulfilled, the religion died out in a relatively short time.¹³⁶ Wovoka was well acquainted with Wodziwob's religion, since his own father, Tavivo, was one of Wodziwob's followers.¹³⁷

The 1870 ghost dance appealed, not only to Indians but also to the Mormons, who also saw it as an answer to the expectations of their religion. They too expected a Messiah to arrive in the near future. How much Mormons actually affected or participated in the 1870 ghost dance, and later in the 1890 ghost dance, has remained unclear.¹³⁸ Whatever the case, there is no doubt that Wovoka was very

¹³⁵ Thornton, Russel, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival. A Population History Since 1492*, Norman, Oklahoma 1987, pp. 138-140.

¹³⁶ Jorgensen, Joseph G., *Ghost Dance, Bear Dance and Sun Dance* in, *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. XL, Great Basin (ed. Sturtevant, William C), Washington D.C. 1986, pp. 660-661; Thornton 1987, pp. 138-140. More about the 1870 ghost dance in, Hittman, Michael, *The 1870 Ghost Dance at the Walker River Reservation: A Reconstruction*, *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 1973, pp. 247-271.

¹³⁷ McCann 1966, pp. 28-30; Bailey 1986, pp. 11-18; Thornton 1987, p. 136; Mooney 1991, pp. 764-766; Utter, Jack, *Wounded Knee & the Ghost Dance Tragedy. A Chronicle of Events Leading to and Including the Massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, on December 29, 1890*, Lake Ann, Michigan 1991, p. 3. **Mooney** wrote that Wodziwob and Tavivo (known also as Tavibo, Waughzeewaughber and Numitaivo) were the same person. If so, Wovoka's father had been the founder of the 1870 Ghost Dance. He, however, was not absolutely sure that this was the case. Today's scholars believe that Tavivo was a follower of Wodziwob, not the founder of the religion. (Hittman, 1973, pp. 250-251; Hittman 1997, pp. 29-34; Thornton 1987, p. 136; Mooney 1991, p. 765; Utter 1991, p. 3)

¹³⁸ **Mooney** claims that Mormon influence on these religions cannot be disputed, but later scholars are somewhat doubtful, although they do not totally rule out the idea of Mormon influence. More about this discussion in, for example, Utley, Robert M., *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, New Haven, Connecticut 1963, p. 65; Smoak, Gregory E., *Mormons and the Ghost Dance of 1890*,

much aware of the ghost dance of 1870 when he created his own religious movement 20 years later.

The second movement that is generally believed to have affected Wovoka was the Dreamer movement founded in the Northwest coast by the prophet Smohalla in the 1870s. This was a peaceful movement that hoped to create a paradise on earth, which would be brought about through the performance of certain ceremonies. Visions that were seen in a dreamlike physical state were one of the main features of the Dreamer religion, which was basically a combination of older Indian traditions and Christianity.¹³⁹

The Shaker movement that was founded in 1881 by John Slocum (known also as Squasachtun) and Mary Slocum was the third movement that affected Wovoka. The Shakers tried to abandon the culture that the whites were forcing upon the Indians. They did not oppose Christianity; instead they combined it with older Indian traditions. There were many similarities to the Dreamers, but the Shakers tried to achieve a state of trance through certain body movements. This was not done by the Dreamers. Both movements, however, ended up in trouble with the whites and the United States army.¹⁴⁰

Wovoka's doctrine is similar to all these movements and includes aspects of each as well as aspects from Christian and Mormon beliefs. His doctrine was probably most strongly affected by Christianity and Wodziwob's teachings. Wovoka received Christian education when he lived on the Wilson farm and Wodziwob was a member of his own people, the Paiute.

South Dakota History, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1986, pp. 269-294; Bailey 1986, pp. 143-149; Jorgensen 1986, pp. 661-662; Thornton 1987, p. 13; Mooney 1991, pp. 766 and pp. 792-793; Hittman 1997, pp. 84-86.

¹³⁹ More about the Dreamers in, for example, McCann 1966, pp. 28-30; Trafzer, Clifford E. & Beach Margery Ann, *Smohalla, the Washani, and Religion as a Factor in NorthWestern History*, American Indian Quarterly, Vol. IX, No. 3, 1985, pp. 313-322.

¹⁴⁰ Moses 1985, pp. 337-338; Trafzer & Beach 1985, pp. 311-313; Mooney 1991, p. 771; Virrankoski 1994, p. 341; Hittman 1997, pp. 79-80. It has remained somewhat unclear, whether Wovoka personally saw or met any of the Shakers or the Dreamers. **Mooney** claims that Wovoka never left Mason Valley, but **Moses** and **Bailey**, for example, believe that he had traveled in California, Oregon, Washington and Nevada. **Moses** bases his opinion on the memoirs of E. A. Dyer, a long time friend of Wovoka. Whatever the truth, Wovoka seemed to be well aware of the teachings of Smohalla and John Slocum as well as he was aware of the teachings of the Mormons and the Christians. (See, Moses 1985, pp. 337-338; Bailey 1986, 34-51; Mooney 1991, pp. 763-771; Utter 1991, p. 4; Hittman 1997, pp. 19-22, pp. 55-61 and pp. 79-80)

2.3.3. The Doctrine and the Spread of the Ghost Dance

The basic idea of the ghost dance was that there would be a time when all the Indians, the living and the dead, would live happily forever in a world where no death, sickness or misery would exist. There was no room for the white people in the new world; only the Indians were to survive the great earthquake that would bring about the new world. This was supposed to happen through supernatural power, without the help of the humans and without their interference. The only thing humans were expected to do was to dance, pray and believe. Wovoka left the day of the great transformation open, but generally it was expected to take place in the spring, when nature was recovering from winter. Wovoka himself spoke of several different years, but his followers generally believed that the spring of 1891 would be the time of the expected transformation.¹⁴¹

Even though Wovoka's doctrine left the white race to be destroyed in the trembling of the earth, the doctrine was not directed against the whites. According to Wovoka, there was no need of fighting against the whites; there would simply be a natural transformation into the new world where no whites would exist. Wovoka's religion was a religion of peace. He told people to do right always; he prohibited telling lies as well as harming other people. Above all he forbade fighting. (More about Wovoka's teachings in appendix 9)¹⁴²

Wovoka gave also precise orders concerning how the Indians should act in order to survive the great earthquake unharmed. He ordered the organization of a dance for four consecutive nights, and on the fifth night dancing should continue until morning. After the dance every one had to take a bath in a river. The dances were to be held every sixth week, and during the dancing great festivities were to be arranged. Wovoka introduced two sacred things that should be worn when

¹⁴¹ Mooney 1991, pp. 771-773 and p. 777. See also, Phister 1891, p. 117.

¹⁴² Mooney 1991, pp. 771-772 and pp. 780-786. When doing his research Mooney saw a letter among the Cheyenne Indians. An educated Arapaho Indian wrote this letter and it was written directly from Wovoka's speech. The letter includes Wovoka's doctrine. **Mooney** received two versions of the letter. Wovoka gave the other to the Arapahos and the other to the Cheyennes. (Mooney 1991, pp. 771-772 and pp. 780-786) These letters, which **Mooney** refers to as "The Messiah Letters," are in Appendix 9. See also, Hittman 1997, pp. 297-298.

dancing. One was a feather, which would transform into a wing that would lift the wearer up in the air when the earth was trembling. The other was red paint, which was supposed to ward off illness until the new world appeared. There was nothing else the Indians were expected to do but to live according to these instructions and wait.¹⁴³

Wovoka's religion was very simple and clear, but as it spread from one tribe to another, it changed. Each tribe understood his message in its own way and explained it according to its own cultural traditions. Also the lack of a common language among the different tribes led to transformations and misrepresentations of the original message. Thus, the earthquake was replaced by flooding among some tribes and others wanted to give even the whites a place in the new world. Wovoka, however, forbade anyone from telling anything about what was going to happen to the white people. It was only meant to benefit the Indians.¹⁴⁴

Whereas the 1870 ghost dance spread mainly toward the west, Wovoka's religion got followers from all directions. By the fall of 1890 it covered an area reaching from Canada to Texas and from California to the Missouri River. More than 30 tribes and tens of thousands of Indians were following the teachings of the Paiute medicine man (See appendix 1, map 1).¹⁴⁵ Ironically, the inventions of the whites were helping to spread Wovoka's religion. Educated Indians spread the news with letters and telegrams, and the railroads helped the Indians to travel long distances to meet Wovoka. Furthermore, the Indians were also able to read newspapers.

¹⁴³ Boring 1981, p. 34; Mooney 1991, pp. 777-786. More about the symbolism of colors in Wovoka's doctrine in, Hittman 1997, pp. 179-194.

¹⁴⁴ Mooney 1991, pp. 777-786. See, Phister 1891, p. 107; Hittman 1997, p. 90. See also, Appendix 9.

¹⁴⁵ Mooney 1991, pp. 802-819 and pp. 926-927. See, Boring 1981, p. 36; Thornton 1987, p. 144. In addition to the Paiute, the ghost dance had followers in at least the following tribes: Arapaho, Arikara, Assiniboin, Bannock, Cheyenne, Gosi-Ute, Gros Ventre, Hidatsa, Mandan, Nez Percé, Shoshone, Sioux, Ute, Canadian Sioux, Southern Arapaho, Caddo, Comanche, Delaware, Iowa, Kansa, Kickapoo, Kiowa, Kiowa-Apache, Oto-Missouri, Pawnee, Wichita, Chemehuevi, Walapai, Havasupai, Taos Pueblo and Kichai. **Mel Boring** claims that there might have been more than 60,000 active dancers, but he does not say how he has got this number. Perhaps he has misinterpreted **Mooney**, who maintains that there were more than 60,000 people in these 30 tribes. It is very difficult to estimate the number of active dancers, since not all of the people in those tribes can be considered as active dancers, although they might have known Wovoka's doctrine. Thus the number 60,000 has to be considered as a rough and somewhat exaggerated estimation. **Mooney** does not give an exact account of the dancers, but we can safely speak of tens of thousands of Indians who were affected by the ghost dance in one way or another. (Boring 1981, p. 36; Mooney 1991, pp. 802-819. See also, Hittman 1997, 89-90)

Thus, the English language, as well as the traditional Indian sign language, became the primary means of communication between different tribes.¹⁴⁶

Many tribes sent delegations to Mason Valley to meet with Wovoka. When these delegations returned home, they told their people of the wonderful things they had seen and heard. Wovoka performed many miracles and convinced the Indians of his powers.¹⁴⁷ As noted above, the doctrine changed as it traveled through the country, and so did the name of the dance. Some tribes called it “The dance in a circle,” or “The dance with the clasped hands.” On the Great Plains the Lakotas called it wanáǵi wachípi. This could best be translated as the spirit dance, the word wanáǵi referring to the spirits of the dead. The frightened whites, however, gave it the name it became known by all over the world - the ghost dance.¹⁴⁸

Wovoka’s religion was a mixture of traditional Indian beliefs and customs added to teachings from Christianity. Dancing and feasting had always been vital parts of religious ceremonies among the Indians. Seeing visions and believing in their message was also natural for Indians. Those aspects, which were taken directly from Christianity, were probably less familiar, but it has to be taken into account that by the late 1880s thousands of Indians were members of Christian churches. How much the Mormons affected the ghost dance is not clear, but perhaps Wovoka got the idea of a returning Messiah from them, since the Mormons were waiting their own revelation in 1890. Thus, many of the ideas that Wovoka gave to the Indians were not strange to them at all, but old familiar concepts put in a slightly new package. The ghost dancers, however, were looked upon with suspicion throughout the western United States, but only among the Lakotas did the ghost dance produce tragic consequences.

¹⁴⁶ Utley 1963, p. 67; Thornton 1987, p. 145.

¹⁴⁷ About the miracles Wovoka made see, for example, Hittman 1997, pp. 66-70, pp. 75-77 and pp. 82-88. See also, Danberg 1968, pp. 13-15; Mooney 1991, pp. 775-776; Utter 1991, pp. 4-5.

¹⁴⁸ Mooney 1991, pp. 785-786 and p. 791. See, Curtis, Natalie, *The Indians’ Book. Songs and Legends of the American Indians*, New York, N.Y. 1950 (orig. 1907), pp. 45-47. For accounts of Lakota concepts of spirits see, Good Seat and Thomas Tyon in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), pp. 71-72 and p. 123; *The Dakota Indian Religion*, Bulletin 473. February 1959, Rural Sociology Department. Agricultural Experiment Station South Dakota State College, Bookings 1959, p. 10 (from now on Bulletin 473). See also, chapter 3.3.

3. WANÁŃGI WACHÍPI KĪ – THE SPIRIT DANCE

3.1. The Journey of the Delegates - the First Changes

The first news of the ghost dance reached the westernmost Lakota reservation, Pine Ridge, in the fall of 1889. The news was mainly received through letters written in English by Shoshone and Arapaho Indians. William T. Selwyn, a full-blood Yankton Sioux who worked as a postmaster on Pine Ridge Reservation, translated these letters for the Oglalas.¹⁴⁹ According to these first letters the Son of God had come upon earth somewhere to the west of the lands of the Shoshones and the Arapahos.¹⁵⁰

Because of these letters and other rumors, the Oglalas decided to call a council that included both the progressive and the non-progressive chiefs. The meeting was held in a traditional way and every chief was allowed to present his views. The council decided to send a delegation to the west to find out the reliability of the rumors. The chiefs' council appointed Good Thunder (Wakíya Wašté) as the leader of the delegation.¹⁵¹

The delegation returned in January 1890. The delegates were fully convinced that the story of the Messiah was true. The Lakotas then decided to send another delegation to meet the Messiah, since the first delegation had not traveled beyond the land of the Shoshones.¹⁵² Accompanying Good Thunder on this second delegation were other Oglalas from Pine Ridge; Short Bull (Thatháka Cík'ala)

¹⁴⁹ William T. Selwyn to E. W. Foster (Agent at the Yankton Agency), November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/97-3/2. See also, Hyde 1956, p. 239; Smith, Rex Alan, *Moon of the Popping Trees, The Tragedy at Wounded Knee and the End of the Indian Wars*, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1975, p. 70. Some rumors were possibly heard as early as July 1889. (Goodale Eastman, Elaine, *The Ghost Dance War and Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890*, Nebraska History, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, 1945, p. 1)

¹⁵⁰ Selwyn to Foster, November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/97-3/2. See also, Mooney 1991, p. 819-820; Larson 1997, pp. 265-266; Coleman, William S. E., *Voices of Wounded Knee*, Lincoln, Nebraska 2000, pp. 5-7.

¹⁵¹ Selwyn to Foster, November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/97-3/2. See, Mooney 1991, p. 820. See also, Hyde 1956, p. 240; Smith 1975, p. 71; Miller, David Humphreys, *Ghost Dance*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1985, pp. 40-41; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 8-10.

¹⁵² Selwyn to Foster, November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/97-3/2. See also, Hyde 1956, p. 240; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 9-10.

from Rosebud Reservation, represented the Brulés; Kicking Bear (Mathó Wanáhtaka), from Cheyenne River Reservation, represented the Minneconjous; a few Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians also joined the delegation en route. Both Short Bull and Kicking Bear were veterans of the war of 1876. They were among the last of Sitting Bull's warriors to surrender and they were openly non-progressive. They were against the reforms forced upon the Lakotas by the white men. Short Bull was known as a warrior as well as a medicine man. These two men became the leaders of the ghost dance religion among the Lakotas.¹⁵³

The trip to Nevada where the Messiah lived was in itself a journey to the unknown for the Lakota delegates. They had almost no knowledge of the lands and peoples that lived west of the Shoshones. That a part of the trip was made by train added to the strangeness of the journey.¹⁵⁴

In Nevada the delegates met Wovoka and other Indians from many different tribes. When the delegation returned to Pine Ridge they told Oglala George Sword, captain of the Pine Ridge Indian police, about their meeting with Wovoka, the Messiah. Sword then wrote the story of the delegates' journey in the Lakota language. The English version of the story was initially published in *The Folk-Lorist* -magazine by Emma C. Sickels and later in **James Mooney's** work.¹⁵⁵ The following is the essence of their story.

¹⁵³ Short Bull as quoted in, Buechel Eugene S.J., *Lakota Tales and Texts. Wisdom Stories, Customs, Lives, and Instruction of the Dakota People* (ed. Manhardt, Paul SJ), Red Cloud Indian School, Holy Rosary Mission, Pine Ridge South Dakota 1978, pp. 277-278 (The text is written in the Lakota language and translated here by the author). See also, Hyde 1956, p. 240; Smith 1975, pp. 80-81; Miller 1985, pp. 45-47; Coleman W. 2000, p. 10. More about Kicking Bear in, for example, Miller 1985, pp. 288-289 and about Short Bull in, Wildhage, Wilhelm, *Material on Short Bull, European Review of Native American Studies*, 4/1, 1990, pp. 35-41. When the word apostle is used from now on, it refers to Kicking Bear, Short Bull and other delegates as is generally done in research literature.

¹⁵⁴ Kicking Bear in, McLaughlin 1989, pp. 185-186; Short Bull in, Buechel 1978, pp. 277-279. Short Bull's account of the journey is somewhat obscure, especially with times and places. (ibid.) See also, Hyde 1956, pp. 240-241; Thornton 1987, p. 145; Mooney 1991, pp. 820-822.

¹⁵⁵ See, Captain George Sword in, Sickels, Emma C., *The Story of the Ghost Dance, Written in the Indian Tongue by Major George Sword, An Ogallala Sioux, Captain of Indian Police, The Folk-Lorist*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1892, pp. 28-36; Mooney 1991, pp. 820-822. Mooney got the story from Emma C. Sickels who at the time was the superintendent of the Indian school at Pine Ridge. (See, DeMallie, Raymond J, Introduction to the 1991 reprint of Mooney's *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890*, p. XXIII) George Sword was the first captain of the Pine Ridge Indian police force. (Valentine T. McGillicuddy, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 4, Envelope 41) Shorter versions of the delegates' journey were told by Short Bull in, Curtis 1950, pp. 45-47; Short Bull in, Buechel 1978, pp. 277-284 and Kicking Bear in, McLaughlin 1989, pp. 185-189. One

According to Sword, the delegates told him that smoke came from heaven to the place where the Messiah was to appear. When the smoke disappeared, there was a man about 40 years old, who was the Son of God. The delegates told that they had seen the signs of crucifixion in the man's body. This was considered as a true sign and evidence that they were indeed dealing with the one who was called the Son of God by the Christians. He had come upon the earth again. Because the whites had once abandoned and crucified him, he had now come to help the Indians and to punish the whites for their evilness and wrongdoings toward the Indians. According to the delegates, Wovoka promised also to transpose those Indians who would not believe his message, or who would take the side of the whites. They added that Wovoka announced that he was able to destroy the whites simply by stretching out his arm. He had also urged all Indians to take up farming as well as to send their children to school.¹⁵⁶

The delegates told also about many miracles they had seen on their journey. They were able to meet their relatives who had been dead for a long time. On their way home they killed a buffalo and after eating only those parts that the Messiah had advised, the buffalo came to life again. Wovoka had also promised to shorten their way home. This came true, when the delegates made camp in the evenings, but in the mornings they woke up much closer to home. In addition, Wovoka taught them a new dance and wanted them to call him "Father" – Até.¹⁵⁷

The Lakota delegates traveled far from home and undoubtedly experienced many strange things, yet it is very difficult to comprehend these remarkable stories, told by men highly respected among their own people. Either the delegates agreed to tell such stories, or they simply *believed*. It is very hard to imagine that they would have consciously made up these stories, as implied by scholars like **Robert**

version is also published in, Coleman W. 2000, pp. 25-32. **Coleman** uses a document, which he found at the Buffalo Bill Memorial Museum, Golden Colorado. This document, according to him, is Short Bull's statement of the ghost dance. (Coleman W. 2000, Preface, p. XVI)

¹⁵⁶ Captain Sword in, Sickles 1892, pp. 28-36; Mooney 1991, pp. 797-798 and pp. 820-22; Short Bull in, Curtis 1950, pp. 45-46; Kicking Bear in, McLaughlin 1989, pp. 185-189; Kicking Bear and Short Bull in, Appendices 11 and 12. See also, Coleman W. 2000, pp. 29-31.

¹⁵⁷ Captain Sword in, Sickles 1892, pp. 28-36; Mooney 1991, pp. 797-798 and pp. 820-822; Short Bull in, Curtis 1950, pp. 45-47. See, Kicking Bear and Short Bull in, Appendices 11 and 12. See also, Miller 1985, pp. 51-53.

M. Utley. One explanation is presented by **James Mooney**, who claimed that perhaps these men were “...under some strange psychologic influence as yet unexplained.”¹⁵⁸

When considered from the Lakota point of view, however, these stories were not so unusual. For example, the idea of the return of the buffalo makes sense when the Lakota concepts of the buffalo are taken into account. It has to be realized that for the Lakotas human beings and buffalos were linked to each other; they had both originated from the earth and would eventually go back there. From beneath the earth they could then be restored upon the earth, perhaps by a Messiah. One of the delegates gave a simple reason for believing. He said that he was an ordinary man, but he had to believe, because *he had seen*; yet he could not explain.¹⁵⁹

Once back home the Lakota delegates started to spread a message that was already somewhat different from the doctrine as preached by Wovoka. According to the Lakota delegates, Wovoka announced that he was the Son of God, who had been crucified by the whites. **James Mooney** states that Wovoka never claimed to be the Son of God or Jesus. He was only a mediator. However, in the so-called Messiah letters, Wovoka said “Jesus is now upon the earth.” Also Porcupine, a Cheyenne Indian who was with the Lakota delegation, told about the Son of God and the signs of crucifixion.¹⁶⁰ That the Lakota delegates and other Indians became confused in things related to Christian teachings can probably be explained by the fact that - in the end - they were not that familiar with Christian teachings, or they mixed Christianity with their own belief systems. Furthermore, that the Lakota delegates were particularly interested in the Christian aspects of the doctrine can be doubted. In fact, they had been very negative toward Christianity and the white man’s civilization. Very soon the Lakotas started to

¹⁵⁸ See, Utley 1963, pp. 72-73; Mooney 1991, p. 822.

¹⁵⁹ DeMallie, Raymond J., *The Lakota Ghost Dance: An Ethnohistorical Account*, Pacific Historical Review, 1982, pp. 390-391; Bad Wound and Short Bull in, Walker, (ed. DeMallie. & Jahner 1991), p. 124 and p. 144. See also, Miller 1985, p. 53 and p. 106. For comparison see, for example, Utley 1963, pp. 71-75.

¹⁶⁰ Porcupine’s account of the journey, June 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/16-20. Published also in, Mooney 1991, pp. 793-796. See, Short Bull in, Buechel 1978, pp. 278-284. See also, Moses 1985, p. 340. For the Messiah letters see, Mooney 1991, pp. 780-781. See also, Appendix 9.

consider the “Father” as one aspect of their own Great Spirit (Wakhâ Thâka¹⁶¹) rather than as the Christian Son of God.¹⁶² Nonetheless, the Lakota delegates *did* keep some Christian aspects in their teachings, as will be seen throughout this study.¹⁶³

The Lakota delegates made several small changes in Wovoka’s “doctrine.”¹⁶⁴ According to them, Wovoka was able to destroy the whites with a wave of his hand. In addition, they said that because the whites were bad and had treated the Indians badly, they had to be punished. It was for this reason that Wovoka came to help the Indians, according to the Lakota delegates. This, however, was not what the original message said. Wovoka did explicitly demand that the Indians live in peace with the whites until the dawn of the new world. No one was to be harmed, but the white race would perish in the forthcoming transformation to a new world (See chapter 2.3.).

So it seems that the doctrine preached by the Lakotas took a more negative tone toward the whites than the doctrine as preached by other Indian tribes. For example, Porcupine, the Cheyenne among the Lakota delegation, said that all the whites and Indians they met on their journey lived in peace with each other. He even claimed that some white men had participated in the ghost dance ceremonies. The Lakota delegates made no mention of the friendly feelings between the Indians and whites they had met on their journey. Short Bull, however, later claimed that the dance was for whites and Indians alike.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ About Wakhâ Thâka and Lakota traditional beliefs see, chapter 3.4.

¹⁶² Selwyn to Foster, November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/97-3/2; Selwyn to Foster, November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/85-96. See, the report of William T. Selwyn in, Mooney 1991, pp. 820-821. See also, Miller 1985, p. 45 and pp. 51-53.

¹⁶³ See, Kicking Bear and Short Bull in, Appendices 11 and 12. See also, DeMallie 1982, pp. 394-398.

¹⁶⁴ The Lakota concept of religion is different from the Euro-American concept. The Lakota language, for example, has no specific word for religion. For this reason, to avoid confusion, such words as religion and doctrine are used in this study, as they are understood by Euro-American culture.

¹⁶⁵ Porcupine, June 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/16-20. See also, Mooney 1991, p. 793-796 and pp. 817-818. For comparison see, Captain Sword in, Sickels 1892, pp. 28-36 and in, Mooney 1991, pp. 797-798 and pp. 821-822. **Mooney** believed that these white men who Porcupine mentioned might have been Mormons. (Mooney 1991, p. 792 and pp. 812-813) See also, Short Bull in, Curtis 1950, p. 46; Short Bull as quoted in, Coleman W. 2000, p. 31.

The Lakota delegates traveled far and they were convinced of the truthfulness of the new religion. However, they understood Wovoka's doctrine in their own way - through their own attitudes, expectations and beliefs. It has to be taken into account that delegates like Kicking Bear and Short Bull were non-progressive traditionalists. They refused to live as the whites demanded them to do, and they expected the destruction of the white man and the return of the old way of life. Thus the doctrine probably transformed in their minds to meet their own expectations. There is no evidence, however, that the delegates deliberately made changes in the doctrine at this point. Such changes have to be understood through the delegates' personal values and expectations, and also through the events that led to the destitute situation in which the Lakotas were living. The delegates returned home to tell about things they had seen and heard, but also to tell about things they had *wanted* and *hoped* to see and hear.

There is also no doubt that the lack of common language led to distortions in the ghost dance doctrine. The only common languages these Indians from many different tribes had were the sign language and - ironically - English. Translating and interpreting through several Indian languages must inevitably have resulted in changes to Wovoka's doctrine.¹⁶⁶ Considering these facts, it would be far too strong an argument to claim that the Lakota delegates "... perverted Wovoka's doctrine into a militant crusade against the white man" as suggested by historian **Utley**. Also far too simple an explanation is presented by historian **Robert W. Larson** who has suggested "...being a more militaristic people, the Lakota Sioux also gave the ghost dance a certain twist never endorsed by the pacifistic Wovoka." This, however, has become a standard interpretation of the Lakota ghost dance doctrine.¹⁶⁷ And, in fact, it should be noted that the Lakota delegates did *not* talk about war against the whites; they said that the whites would be punished, but it would be the Messiah who would punish them.

¹⁶⁶ See, for example, Phister 1891, p. 107; Hittman 1997, p. 90.

¹⁶⁷ See, Utley 1963, p. 87; Larson 1997, p. 266. Similar ideas have been expressed also in, for example, Boyd, James P., *Recent Indian Wars, Under the Lead of Sitting Bull and Other Chiefs; With a Full Account of The Messiah Craze, and Ghost Dances*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1891, passim.; Johnson, Willis Fletcher, *The Red Record of the Sioux. Life of Sitting Bull and History of the Indian War of 1890-1891*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1891. p. 171; Lowie 1954, p. 181; Johnson, Dorothy M., *Ghost Dance, Last Hope of the Sioux*, Montana, The Magazine of Western History, No. 3, July 1956, pp. 45-46; Utley, Robert M. & Washburn, Wilcomb E., *Indian Wars*, Boston, Massachusetts 1977, pp. 294-295; Smith 1975, p. 75; Utter 1991, pp. 12-17.

Furthermore, when the changes in the ghost dance are studied, it has to be taken into account that there was never any single doctrinal form of religion in the traditional Lakota belief system. As anthropologist **Raymond J. DeMallie** has noted, “Each individual man formulated a system of belief by and for himself. There was no standardized theology, no dogmatic body of belief. Basic and fundamental concepts were universally shared, but specific knowledge of the spirits was not shared beyond a small number of holy men. Through individual experience every man had the opportunity to contribute to and resynthesize the general body of knowledge that constituted Lakota belief.”¹⁶⁸ Thus the traditional Lakota system of belief was constantly changing and adapting to new circumstances. The Lakota ghost dance followed perfectly this pattern for the evolution of belief. There was no single universal doctrinal teaching in the Lakota ghost dance, and it was constantly changing through personal experiences. This can already be seen in the message the delegates brought home with them, but it is even more obvious in later phases, when individual trances and visions started to have their effect on the Lakota ghost dance ceremony.¹⁶⁹

3.2. The Initial Enthusiasm and the Catastrophes of Summer 1890

Drawing enthusiastic crowds of Lakotas, the first meetings and ceremonies to consider the ghost dance were held on Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations in April 1890, not long after the return of the delegation. The first meeting was held at Cheyenne Creek, a half mile north of Pine Ridge Agency, and was led by Kicking Bear. On Rosebud Reservation Agent J. George Wright arrested Short Bull after learning that his preaching was taking the Lakotas away from their farms. Under the agent’s pressure, Short Bull promised to stop the ceremonies. Also on Pine Ridge Reservation Agent Hugh D. Gallagher arrested the apostles of the new religion and ordered them to stop preaching. At this point they promised to do as the agent wanted. Thus it seemed that the agents were able to prevent the

¹⁶⁸ DeMallie, Raymond J., *Lakota Belief and Ritual in the Nineteenth Century* in, *Sioux Indian Religion. Tradition and Innovation* (ed. DeMallie, Raymond J. & Parks, Douglas R.), Norman, Oklahoma 1987, p. 34.

¹⁶⁹ See, DeMallie 1982, pp. 387-388.

organization of large public meetings and dance ceremonies, but on both reservations the Lakotas continued their ceremonies in secrecy.¹⁷⁰

On Cheyenne River Reservation Kicking Bear was able to preach without intervention. He invited all Lakotas to take part in a great dance on Cheyenne River, but since the agents had prevented the Lakotas from attending the ceremonies on other reservations, the dance was never held and enthusiasm faded also on Cheyenne River. At this point Kicking Bear left the reservation and traveled to see the Arapaho Indians, who were already dancing frequently.¹⁷¹ On the other Lakota reservations the ghost dance did not yet take hold of the people. In fact, it was never really adopted by the people of Crow Creek and Lower Brulé Reservations. So far no one had introduced the dance on Standing Rock Reservation, since they had not sent a representative to join the delegation on their journey to the west.¹⁷²

None of the agents on the Lakota reservations considered the ghost dance as a serious threat in the spring and summer of 1890. They were too busy with farming programs and other daily routines. The situation was reported to be perfectly peaceful.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ About the first meetings see, Agent Hugh D. Gallagher to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan (from now on CIA), June 10, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, p. 307; Gallagher to CIA, June 14, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, p. 315. See also, Utley 1963, pp. 74-75; Standing Bear 1975, p. 218; Smith 1975, pp. 71-73; Miller 1985, pp. 56-57 and pp. 63-64. See, chapter 4. About the allotment of the Lakota lands and the Lakotas' development in farming during the 1880s and 1890s see, for example, Textor, Lucy, *Official Records Between the United States and Sioux Indians*, Palo Alto, California 1896, p. 154; Paulson, Howard W., *The Allotment of Land in Severalty to the Dakota Indians before the Dawes Act*, *South Dakota History*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1971, passim.; Henriksson 1988, p. 183; Smedman 1990, pp. 139-140; Smedman 2001, passim.

¹⁷¹ Utley 1963, p. 75.

¹⁷² ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 126-127. See also, Utley 1963, p. 75; Schusky, Ernest L., *The Roots of Factionalism Among the Lower Brule Sioux* in, *North American Indian Anthropology. Essays on Society and Culture* (ed. DeMallie, Raymond J. & Ortiz, Alfonso), Norman, Oklahoma 1994, p. 269.

¹⁷³ ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 126-127; Gallagher to CIA, June 10, 1891, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, pp. 305-307; Gallagher to CIA, June 14, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, p. 314. See also, Hyde 1956, pp. 243-244; Smith 1975, pp. 81-82; Miller 1985, pp. 71-72. More about the agents in, chapter 4.

The reports and actions of the agents in June do show that at that time the ghost dance had not become a major movement on the Lakota reservations. However, **Mooney** states that already on June 20, there was a large and excited ceremony in the village of No Water (Mní Waníce) at White Clay Creek. **Mooney** bases his account on an eyewitness description that he says is dated June 1890. Nonetheless, this description starts with the words “We drove to this spot about 10.30.am on a delightful October day...” The text continues with a description of a large and “fanatic” ceremony, which became typical later in the fall. If such a major ceremony had been organized already in June, it is unlikely that the agent would not have been familiar with it, and therefore mentioned it in his letters. The agent’s letters, however, do not report any such gatherings of Indians. This seems to be a mistake on **Mooney’s** part. He most likely took this eyewitness account from a report by Daniel Dorchester, the Superintendent of Indian Schools, but misread the date. The camp of No Water was a major religious center for the ghost dance, but became so only later in the summer. Historian **Utley** concurs that there were no large gatherings of ghost dancers on any of the Lakota reservations as early as June 1890.¹⁷⁴

The ghost dance religion might have died out altogether if July had not brought with it yet another drought and crop failure. The crops failed even worse than in previous years, and the drought was followed by severe famine. Even white settlers were abandoning their farms. Unlike them, the Lakotas were unable to move away. During this time of greatest hardship, Congress again reduced the annual appropriations for the Lakota reservations. After this they received only half of the annual amount due them according to earlier treaties. This left the Lakotas in a devastating condition. The Lakotas tried to ask for help. Several chiefs wrote letters to the commissioner of Indian affairs in where they asked for help. They tried to explain the destitute situation they were facing, and the effect the cut in rations would have upon their people. They even feared that another winter of starvation might cause some trouble. They could not understand why the

¹⁷⁴ ARCIA 1891, Report of Superintendent of Indian Schools Daniel Dorchester, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 529-531. See, Mooney 1991, pp. 916-917; Utley 1963, p. 76. See also, Gallagher to CIA, June 10, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, pp. 305-307; Gallagher to CIA, June 14, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll. 10, p. 315; Gallagher to CIA, August 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, p. 385. See also, chapters 4 and 6.

government had done this to them. They simply wanted to live in peace and receive what was promised to them in treaties and in negotiations with General Crook the previous year.¹⁷⁵

As the summer of 1890 advanced, the Lakotas became more desperate. Obviously no relief could be expected from the whites, and more and more people gathered around their traditional leaders looking to them for help and guidance. On Pine Ridge, Red Cloud was still a prominent figure among the non-progressive traditionalists, even though he had joined the Roman Catholic Church. Big Road and Little Wound were among the leaders whose influence was growing. The so-called progressive leaders American Horse and Man Afraid of His Horse found themselves in a difficult situation. This was especially true of American Horse, who, having signed the Agreement of 1889, was considered by many to be responsible for the pitiful situation in which the Lakotas now found themselves.¹⁷⁶

In fact, American Horse himself complained to the commissioner of Indian affairs through a letter written by Agent Daniel F. Royer that the Lakota people had never had such bad times as since signing the Agreement of 1889. According to American Horse, he had signed because he thought that some good would result from it, but it had only brought misery and divisiveness to the Lakota people. Now the split between the progressives and non-progressives was intensifying, blamed American Horse. Those who had not signed joined the ghost dance to separate themselves from those who had signed.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Letters by Little Wound, Young Man Afraid of His Horse and Fast Thunder in, Gallagher to CIA, July 23, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, pp. 335-338; Statement of American Horse in, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., House of Representatives Committee on Indian Affairs, Council Held with a Delegation of Sioux Indians, Unpublished Hearing, April 15, 1890, IUL, Microfiche, Card 1, pp. 1-9. See also, chapter 2.

¹⁷⁶ Gallagher to CIA, August 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, pp. 385-387. See, Eastman, Charles A., *From Deep Woods to Civilization. Chapters in the Autobiography of an Indian*, Boston, Massachusetts 1916, pp. 99-101. See also, Miller 1985, pp. 127-130. About the role of American Horse and other chiefs during the negotiations of 1888 and 1889 see, 50th Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 17, Vol. I, Serial 2610, passim.; 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 51, Vol. V, Serial 2682, passim.; Gallagher to CIA, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, pp. 385-387. See also, Utley 1993, pp. 268-280; Larson 1997, pp. 257-264.

¹⁷⁷ Complaints made by American Horse in, Royer to CIA, October 17, 1891, as a part of, ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Nelson A. Miles, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 136. See also, Statement of American Horse in, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., House of Representatives Committee on Indian Affairs, Unpublished Hearing, April 15, 1890, IUL, Microfiche, Card 1, p. 1-3.

On Rosebud the prominent non-progressive leader was Two Strike, who was assisted by Crow Dog. On Cheyenne River the non-progressives were lead by Big Foot and Hump, the latter considered by many whites to be extremely dangerous.¹⁷⁸ On Standing Rock the non-progressives were mainly followers of Sitting Bull. In fact, there was a tremendous power struggle at Standing Rock. It was fought between Sitting Bull and Agent James McLaughlin, between Sitting Bull and the Indian police, and between Sitting Bull and prominent progressive leaders John Grass and Gall.¹⁷⁹

By the end of July dissatisfaction among the Lakotas was deepening and hostility toward whites was more openly shown. Just at this time Kicking Bear returned from his visit to the Arapaho Indians. He told the Lakotas that the Arapahos were already dancing. His return coincided with a time when the Lakotas were desperate to believe anything that offered them hope. As Kicking Bear told them about the miracles he had seen and experienced among the Arapahos, as well as about the bright future those Indians had ahead of them, he found many interested listeners among his people. Also Short Bull “forgot” the promise he had made to his agent and started to preach again. According to amateur historian **David Humphreys Miller**, Short Bull later even assumed the role of the Messiah, which antagonized Kicking Bear and others.¹⁸⁰

The helplessness and hopefulness felt by the ghost dancers in general is well illustrated by this famous Arapaho ghost dance song:¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, Agent Perain P. Palmer to CIA, October 29, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 29.

¹⁷⁹ ARCIA 1891, The Report of James McLaughlin October 17, 1890 in, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 126-127. See, Zahn, Frank B., *The Crimson Carnage of Wounded Knee. An Astounding Story of Human Slaughter*, American Indian Authority 1940, p. 3; Hagan, William T., *Indian Police and Judges. Experiments in Acculturation and Control*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1966, pp. 96-97. In his letters, reports and memoirs James McLaughlin blames Sitting Bull for all the problems on the reservation. More about Agent McLaughlin in, chapter 4.

¹⁸⁰ Mooney 1991, p. 843 and pp. 848-849; Prucha 1984, Vol. II, p. 727; Miller 1985, 120-123. See also, Short Bull as quoted in, Coleman W. 2000, p. 54.

¹⁸¹ Mooney 1991, p. 977.

Father, have pity on me,
Father, have pity on me,
I am crying for thirst,
I am crying for thirst;
All is gone -- I have nothing to eat,
All is gone -- I have nothing to eat.

3.3. The New Winds of the Lakota Ghost Dance

Soon after Kicking Bear's return the Lakotas started to organize ceremonies in several places under the leadership of the apostles of the ghost dance. Despite being a Roman Catholic and later claiming that he never even saw a dance himself, Red Cloud gave his blessing for the dances. He commented that the religion would die by itself, if it were not true.¹⁸² Little Wound, who was also Christian - an Episcopalian - and considered very progressive, urged the people to organize a dance quickly, so that the Messiah would not leave them when the time was about to arrive. He did not know if the dance could help, but saw nothing wrong in it.¹⁸³

In the early August of 1890 approximately 300 Oglalas were dancing in Little Wound's camp. Other dance camps were established in various places around Pine Ridge reservation under the leadership of Little Wound, Big Road, Good Thunder and Jack Red Cloud, the son of the famous chief. Large dance camps emerged on Pine Ridge in four places. The biggest was No Water's camp at White Clay Creek, where as many as 600 people were reported to be dancing. At Wounded Knee Creek, Big Road was the leader of the 250 Lakotas who took up the ghost dancing there. At Porcupine Creek 150 Lakotas started to dance, and at Medicine Root Creek more than 500 people were dancing under the leadership of Little Wound. In August almost 1,200 Oglalas of the more than 5,500 Lakotas

¹⁸² Red Cloud to T. A. Bland, December 10, 1890 in, Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., December 19, 1890, pp. 702-703; Red Cloud as quoted in, Charles A. Eastman to Frank Wood (forwarded to ACIA), November 11, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/98-100. See also, Eastman 1916, p. 100; Miller 1985, pp. 40-41 and p. 56; Larson 1997, pp. 268-269.

¹⁸³ Little Wound as quoted in, The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,244, November 23, 1890, p. 5; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXVIL, November 23, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 158, November 23, 1890, p. 1; Little Wound as quoted in, Hyde 1956, p. 250; Little Wound as quoted in, Goodale Eastman 1945, p. 30. See, Phillip Wells, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3541, Reel 1, Box 4, Tablet 5. See also, Miller 1985, p. 56; Coleman W., 2000, p. 48-49.

living on Pine Ridge Reservation were participating regularly in the ghost dances and their number grew during the fall, reaching perhaps 1,500 by November.¹⁸⁴ Many moved out of their log cabins and away from the agency to be able to live in the dance camps in traditional tipis. After the problems of midsummer, Oglalas were rapidly turning to the new religion.¹⁸⁵

The ghost dance enthusiasm on Pine Ridge grew as August wore on. Agent Gallagher became worried about the situation, and on August 22 he tried to stop a dance, taking with him 30 members of the Indian police force. Instead of stopping the dance, he found that the Indians knew about his arrival in advance, and were ready to defend their new ceremony with arms if necessary. In the end the presence of Man Afraid of His Horse prevented further trouble. For the first time the ghost dancers had defied the authority of the agent and were even ready to fight the Indian policemen, even though they were also Lakotas.¹⁸⁶

The news of the ghost dancers' success spread across the Lakota reservations, but it also spread among the white settlers. Those situated close to the Lakota reservations began to flee, abandoning their homes. Officials in Washington grew restless as the rumors of Indians arming themselves reached the capital.¹⁸⁷ The focus of the ghost dances on Pine Ridge in August was the camp of No Water at White Clay Creek, where more and more people were falling in trances and "dying." After returning from the land of the spirits, they told wonderful stories about their journey. Hope started to replace the destitute feeling that had prevailed during the summer.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Royer to CIA, November 8, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll. 1, Vol. 1, pp. 62-65. See, Boyd 1891, p. 183. For the location of different Lakota communities on Pine Ridge Reservation see, Appendix 8, maps 5 and 6. For an estimation of the number of Lakota ghost dancers see, chapter 3.6. Table 1.

¹⁸⁵ Utley 1963, pp. 84-85; Olson 1965, p. 323.

¹⁸⁶ See, Phillip Wells, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3541, Reel 1, Box 4, Tablet 15; Gallagher to CIA, August 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, pp. 387-388; ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 274-275. See also, Boyd 1891, p.179; Olson 1965, p. 325; Miller 1985, p. 82-85.

¹⁸⁷ Cong., Rec., 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. XXII, Part I, December 12, 1890, pp. 47-48. See, *Ghost-Dances in the West. Origin and Development of the Messiah Craze and the Ghost - Dance*, The Illustrated American, January 17, 1891, p. 327; Boyd 1891, p. 179.

¹⁸⁸ Hyde 1956, p. 251; Miller 1985, p. 82.

On Rosebud, where Short Bull was eagerly preaching the new religion, the news of the ghost dancers' success on Pine Ridge, was greeted with enthusiasm. The Brulés began to abandon their homes and take their children out of school, heading for the dance camps.¹⁸⁹ Later in August a rumor spread across Rosebud Reservation that the army came to the reservation and captured some Lakota women and children. This caused a big stir and both the progressives and the non-progressives started to go for their arms. The Indians rushed to meet the soldiers in order to release the captured women and children. The rumor, however, turned out to be false.¹⁹⁰ The panic and the confusion following the spread of this rumor demonstrate extremely well the delicate situation that defined life on the Lakota reservations at that point. According to Luther Standing Bear (Mathó Náži), an Indian put the rumor forward, but the reason for his actions remained unclear.¹⁹¹

During the fall of 1890 the agents on the Lakota reservations were replaced. Only James McLaughlin at Standing Rock remained. The new Republican administration wanted to get rid of the agents appointed by the previous Democratic administration. The new agent at Pine Ridge was Daniel F. Royer, who did not have much experience with Indians - rather he seemed to be afraid of them. At least the Indians felt that he was afraid, since very soon the amused Lakotas at Pine Ridge gave him the name Young Man Afraid of His Indians (Lakhóta Khokípha Khoškálaka).¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ According to the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty the Government was supposed to build a school for every 30 Lakota children. However, in 1880 there was only 15 schools on the Great Sioux reservation and the average attendance was 319 pupils. In the Act of 1889 it was agreed that 30 more schools would be established. In 1890 there were 44 schools on the Lakota reservations, with the capacity of approximately 2,700 pupils, but the average attendance as late as 1891 was only 1,300 pupils. (Treaty of Fort Laramie 1868, AIUSD, Vol. IV, pp. 2517-2525; Statutes at Large, The Sioux Act of 1889, sec. 20, p. 896; ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1st 1891, AIUSD, Vol. I, pp. 549-552. See also, Smedman 1990, pp. 142-143) During the ghost dance troubles some of the schools were closed as long as three or four months. (ARCIA 1891, Report of Superintendent of Indian Schools Daniel Dorchester, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, p. 533)

¹⁹⁰ Standing Bear 1975, p. 221; Mooney 1991, p. 92; Miller 1985, pp. 91-93.

¹⁹¹ Standing Bear 1975, p. 221. Luther Standing Bear was a prominent progressive leader on the Rosebud reservation. He was educated at the Carlisle Training School in Pennsylvania, and acted as a schoolteacher at Rosebud. (See, Standing Bear 1975, *passim*.)

¹⁹² ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 127-128. Also, Mooney 1991, p. 848; Hyde 1956, p. 254; Prucha 1984, Vol. II, pp. 727-728. More about the agents in, chapter 4.

The new agent at Rosebud, Elisha B. Reynolds, was unconcerned, a fact of which Short Bull and his followers took advantage. The Rosebud ghost dancers were camped approximately five miles west of the agency at Little White River. The camp was quite large, and was growing larger daily. The ghost dances were reportedly going on daily, but the dancers were not particularly excited. In fact, Luther Standing Bear says they were troubled by the fear of a possible military arrival.¹⁹³

On Cheyenne River Kicking Bear gathered almost all the non-progressives away from the agency in a safe place where the new agent, Perain P. Palmer, could not bother them. Altogether about 700 Minneconjous joined Kicking Bear's believers under the leadership of Hump and Big Foot at Cherry Creek (See appendix 7, map 4). Although Hump had previously served in the Indian police force, he now joined the ghost dancers. Big Foot had been hoping to get more schools on the reservation, but as nothing happened despite many promises, he became disillusioned and looked to the ghost dance for help.¹⁹⁴ Cheyenne River soon became the center for the Lakota ghost dance. People from other Lakota reservations came over to participate and to learn the ceremonies and the doctrine of the ghost dance as Kicking Bear taught it.¹⁹⁵

By the end of September, however, ghost dancing started to interfere with the daily reservation routines. The ghost dancers no longer obeyed their agents or the Indian police forces, which could not perform the duties they were given. Under normal circumstances the policemen had been faithful to the agents, but now they had to choose over and over again between the white agents and their own people.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Standing Bear 1975, pp. 219-220; Short Bull as quoted in, Coleman W. 2000, p. 54. See, Hyde 1956, p. 254 and pp. 260-261; Utley 1963, p. 95. See also, chapter 4.

¹⁹⁴ Joseph Horn Cloud, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Dewey Beard, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30. The Eli S. Ricker Interviews with Joseph Horn Cloud and Dewey Beard are also published in, Danker, Donald F., *The Wounded Knee Interviews of Eli S. Ricker, Nebraska History*, Vol. 62, No. 2, 1981, pp. 164-200. See also, Hyde 1956, p. 258; Smith 1975, pp. 88-94; Seymour, Forrest W., *Sitanka. The Full Story of Wounded Knee*, West Hanover, Massachusetts 1981, p. 53; Miller 1985, p. 95; Mooney 1991, p. 848.

¹⁹⁵ See, for example, Joseph Horn Cloud, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Dewey Beard, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30.

¹⁹⁶ Hagan 1966, pp. 82-96. About the success of the Lakota Indian police force before the ghost dance troubles see, for example, ARCIA 1889, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August

The ghost dance, together with the disasters of the summer of 1890, led most of the Lakotas to turn once again to their traditional chiefs. Those who did not take up the new religion also sought guidance from their chiefs instead of siding with the agents. When the Lakotas moved to the ghost dance camps, they recreated the traditional camp circles. These camps embodied the sacred hoop of the Lakota people and the feeling of unity grew stronger. The ghost dance camp was a reflection of the old way of life.¹⁹⁷ Thus, the government policy that sought to break the unity of the Lakota people and the power of the chiefs faced a serious setback during the fall of 1890.¹⁹⁸

From the beginning, the Lakota ghost dance differed somewhat from the original doctrine preached by Wovoka. Historians like **Utley** and **Larson** claim that only the so-called non-progressives and those older Lakotas who had experienced most of the conflicts between the old and the new values were interested in the new religion. The progressives and the young who had already partly adapted to reservation life considered the promises of the ghost dance unbelievable.¹⁹⁹ There is, however, no actual evidence to support this claim. The ghost dance was, as will be shown below, extremely appealing to the Lakotas regardless of their basic approaches to the whites. The ghost dance's religious nature appealed to the Lakotas across the artificial progressive-non-progressive line. Anthropologist **DeMallie** also noted: "Even Lakota nonbelievers accepted the religious motivation of the ghost dance."²⁰⁰

By the end of the summer of 1890, even greater numbers of those considered as progressive turned to the ghost dance. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J.

26, 1889, p. 134, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 25, 1889, p. 153, Report of Agent L. F. Spencer, August 23, 1889, p. 159, Report of Agent James McLaughlin 1889, August 26, 1889, p. 169; Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, September 5, 1890, AIUSD, Vol. I, pp. 476-477; Valentine T. McGillicuddy, IULL, WMCC, Box 4, Folder 3, Envelope 4.

¹⁹⁷ See, Standing Bear 1975, p. 219. See also, Hyde 1956, pp. 269-270. About the significance of the camp circle see, Spotted Elk and James R. Walker in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 21-23. See also, chapter 2.2.

¹⁹⁸ About the United States Indian policy during the 1880s see, chapter 2 and, for example, Hoxie 1977, pp. 157-179.

¹⁹⁹ Utley 1963, p. 74; Larson 1997, pp. 266-268.

²⁰⁰ DeMallie 1982, p. 56; Discussion with Professor Raymond J. DeMallie, April 30, 2000, Bloomington, Indiana. This was also the opinion of Agent James McLaughlin. See, chapters 4 and 6.

Morgan noted in his annual report that progressive Indians were almost "... universally loyal" and did not turn to the ghost dance unless forced to do so.²⁰¹ This claim however, is proved false by Little Wound's actions alone as well as by the actions of many other progressives who followed his example in joining the ghost dancers. This was partly due to the failure of crops and the resulting famine. When the annual appropriations were cut further, the ghost dance seemed to be the only way of surviving. The exact number of progressives who at this point actually joined the ghost dancers is very difficult to estimate. The fact that during the fall of 1890 schools and churches were left empty, and the farms were abandoned reflects the actions of the progressives. Still, it has to be emphasized that these people can not be directly counted as ghost dancers, since many simply left these things unattended when order on the reservations collapsed. Many joined the ghost dance only as spectators, and in general the movement to and from the ghost dance camps was extensive.²⁰²

After considering all these aspects we have to conclude that the ghost dance was not simply a protest by the old, non-progressive Lakotas, who tried to advance their own political and military goals as suggested by scholars like Utley. Its religious nature appealed to the Lakotas, who were left into a religious confusion after their own religious ceremonies were forbidden. Without the catastrophes of the summer of 1890 the ghost dance might even have died out altogether, but during the fall the ghost dance became the religion of a growing numbers of Lakotas. It was developing, it was changing, and it was adding new features and new meanings.

²⁰¹ ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, p. 131. This claim made by Commissioner Morgan either reflects his lack of knowledge of the situation or was an attempt to convince the authorities that the situation was better managed than it actually was. There are many examples of this kind of falsifications of facts and even corruption within the Bureau of Indian Affairs from earlier times when, for example, several official investigations were conducted to solve these matters. See, for example, The Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1869, DUSIP, pp. 127-129; House Miscellaneous Report No. 167, 44th Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 5, Serial 1702, p. 118 and pp. 180-187. See also, Hyde 1961, p. 188; Olson 1965, *passim.*; Henriksson 1988, pp. 43-44.

²⁰² Neihardt, John G. & Black Elk, *Black Elk Speaks. Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1961 (orig. 1932), pp. 241-242; *The Sixth Grandfather. Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt* (ed. DeMallie, Raymond J.) Lincoln, Nebraska 1985, pp. 258-260; Miller 1985, p. 76. See also, Palmer to CIA, November 10, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll. 1, Vol. 1, pp. 30-32.

3.4. The Forbidden Lakota Traditions and the Ghost Dance

3.4.1. The Traditional Belief System

For the Lakotas, religion was an inseparable part of everyday life. There was no idea of atheism or life without religion. Like other Plains Indians, the Lakotas believed in a sacred cosmic system that manifested itself everywhere in the surroundings of human beings. They differentiated between the ordinary, everyday world and the supernatural, mysterious world. The Lakota sacred cosmic world was embodied in religious beliefs, mythology and ceremonies. Through these, the original, sacred world was recreated in religious symbols.²⁰³

The basis for Lakota religion lay in the belief in a general spirit force, which was everywhere in the visible world as well as in the invisible. This force was known as Wakhâ Thâka, which is usually translated as the Great Spirit or the Great Mystery. Wakhâ Thâka was not really a God in a Euro-American sense, rather a divine or a godlike being. It embodied all those things that could not be understood or explained. It was above all, all-governing, paramount among all supernatural powers and beings. However, it was a spiritual being without any physical appearance; it was always present and it incorporated the visible and the invisible, the material and the immaterial; it was the highest spirit. Perhaps the best words to characterize Wakhâ Thâka are the divine or the godlike.²⁰⁴

Wakhâ Thâka, however, was not one single godlike being, rather it had 16 different forms, which were divided hierarchically in four categories, each of which included four aspects of Wakhâ Thâka. Thus Wakhâ Thâka was comprised

²⁰³ Hultkrantz, Åke, *Naturfolkets religion* in, *Primitiv religion och magi* (ed. Hultkrantz, Åke), Stockholm Sweden 1955, p. 6; DeMallie, Raymond J., Jr. and Lavenda, Robert H., *Wakan: Plains Siouan Concepts of Power*, Reprinted from: *The Anthropology of Power. Ethnographic Studies from Asia, Oceania, and the New World*, New York, N.Y. 1977, passim.; Eastman 1980, pp. 27-28.

²⁰⁴ Little Wound, Good Seat and James R. Walker in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), pp. 68-74. See, Hultkrantz, Åke, *De Amerikanska indianernas religion*, Stockholm Sweden 1967, p. 5; DeMallie & Lavenda 1977, pp. 153-159 and pp. 163-164; Powers 1986, pp. 111-113 and p. 118; Smedman 1990, p. 54. According to Hultkrantz most "primitive peoples" perceive God as a kind of higher being, Deus otosius, which observed the world from high above. (Hultkrantz 1967, p. 107)

of the multiples of the Lakota sacred number four (tóbtob kǐ).²⁰⁵ The highest category of Wakhâ Thâka was the sun (wí), energy (šká), earth (makhâ) and rock (íya), and these were given very high value in religious life. For this study the most significant is the fourth category of Wakhâ Thâka, the Wakhâlapí, which includes those godlike beings that are usually called spirits.²⁰⁶

The spirits were extremely important beings. They helped people, took care of them and warned them of dangers. They were given gifts in order to appease them and make them helpful and beneficial. Without proper attention spirits could also be harmful and dangerous. The Lakotas believed that all things that move or do something have a spirit. In a way it was like a shadow from another world. The human spirit, however, was different from other spirits, because after an individual's death it went to a special spirit world. From there the spirit of the dead could return to the world of the living to meet people and even to take part in their daily lives. However, this spirit, called naǵí was only one of the four spirits that were part of the human being. In addition to naǵí, there was, niyá "life breath," naǵíla "the little ghost" and šicǔ, the spirit of personal power. Furthermore, evil spirits wandered around the earth causing trouble and pain for people and they were highly feared. Their actions, however, could be restricted with proper ceremonies. Spirits were therefore not strange beings for the Lakotas, but were a part of their normal, everyday world. Meeting the spirits and visiting the spirit world were totally normal things.²⁰⁷ The Lakotas actually used a specific word, Wanáǵiyatapi, to describe the visits to the spirit world.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ Little Wound, Good Seat and James R. Walker in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), pp. 68-74; Little Wound, Good Seat, James R. Walker, George Sword, Bad Wound, No Flesh, Short Feather, Ringing Shield, Finger, John Blunt Horn, William Garnett, Thomas Tyon and Thunder Bear in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 68-124. See also, DeMallie & Lavenda 1977, pp. 154-159; Powers 1977, pp. 170-171; DeMallie 1987, pp. 27-32. For the different aspects of Wakhâ Thâka see, Appendix 10.

²⁰⁶ Bulletin 473, p. 8; Powers W. 1977, pp. 170-171; DeMallie 1987, p. 29.

²⁰⁷ Little Wound, Good Seat, James R. Walker, George Sword, Bad Wound, No Flesh, Short Feather, Ringing Shield, Finger, John Blunt Horn, William Garnett, Thomas Tyon and Thunder Bear in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), pp. 68-124. See, Bulletin 473, p. 10; DeMallie & Lavenda 1977, pp. 153-159 and pp. 163-164; DeMallie 1987, pp. 29-31; Amiotte, Arthur, *The Lakota Sun Dance. Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* in, *Sioux Indian Religion* (ed. DeMallie & Parks 1987), pp. 86-89; Grobsmith 1990, p. 190.

²⁰⁸ Short Bull in, Buechel 1978, p. 277.

Spirits and all other things that could not be understood were called wakhâ. Wakhâ can be conceptualized as a kind of power best described by the words sacred, holy or mysterious. Human connection to wakhâ things was established through holy men. They were able to perform “wakanlike” things, and were therefore called wichâša wakhâ, holy men or - as they are usually called in the English literature - medicine men. These medicine men were the leaders of religious ceremonies, and they held the secrets of Lakota religion and ceremonies in their possession. Thus they could be considered as the “priests” of the Lakotas.²⁰⁹

The holy men were divided into groups according to their purpose and the manner in which they gained their power. The most powerful were the men who had received their power in a vision from, for example, a bear or a buffalo. The holy men were divided into four main groups and further into subgroups, so that some were healers or doctors (phežúta wichâša), who cured people with medicines. Although the English literature usually uses the term medicine men to designate all holy men, this term should perhaps refer only to this one group - the phežúta wichâša.²¹⁰ Above these men in the hierarchy of medicine men were the true holy men, who could heal and knew the use of medicines but who also cured through their own power. They were men whose visions had been particularly powerful.²¹¹ These medicine men acted as leaders of religious ceremonies as well as mediators between the spirit world and the human world. Their actions were always shadowed by great secrecy and they were often the most respected members of their society. For example, Sitting Bull, who is often referred to as a medicine man, was not only a healer, but also a holy man. Since medicine men were the leaders of ceremonies, it was only natural that many of the leaders of the ghost

²⁰⁹ James R. Walker in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), pp. 73-74. See, Bulletin 473, pp. 12-13; *The Sacred Pipe. Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux* (ed. Brown, Joseph Epes), Forge Village 1973 (orig. 1953), p. 45; Powers W. 1977, pp. 56-63. See also, DeMallie 1987, p. 29; Grobsmith 1990, p. 191.

²¹⁰ More about the division of the wichâša wakhâ in, for example, *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown J. 1973), p. 45; Powers W. 1986, pp. 164-165, pp. 180-183 and p. 194. For the convenience the term medicine man will be used also in this study to describe all wichâša wakhâ unless specifically otherwise mentioned.

²¹¹ See, for example, Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 28-47; DeMallie 1987, pp. 33-42; Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), p. 68, pp. 73-74 and pp. 91-96.

dance - Short Bull, Black Elk (Heháka Sápa) and Sitting Bull - were holy or medicine men.²¹²

The Lakotas practiced many religious ceremonies. Through them the things that could not be understood were transformed into the sacred - wakhá.²¹³ The unifying symbol for all these ceremonies was the sacred pipe – or more correctly the Buffalo Calf pipe (Ptéhǰčala hú chǰnúpa). The pipe symbolized the whole Lakota universe. Smoking the pipe was a part of all religious ceremonies and the smoke had a special, purifying effect. The smoking, or rather the offering of the pipe, was always performed with certain rituals. Smoking the sacred pipe and even touching it was allowed only in the presence of a medicine man and under his instructions. Although every person could own a pipe of his own, it was considered to be sacred and related to the Buffalo Calf Pipe.²¹⁴ Smoking the pipe was so sacred that if, for example, a person who was suspected of a crime wanted to prove his innocence by smoking the pipe, he was believed. A guilty person would not have taken the pipe.²¹⁵

One of the sacred ceremonies included as a part of all major Lakota ceremonies was, the sweat lodge – inípi. This was one of the oldest Lakota ceremonies. The sweat lodge ceremony was always performed under strict rules and it often preceded other ceremonies. The purpose of the inípi was to purify a person both physically and mentally and to strengthen the human spirit, the ní.²¹⁶ Especially sacred too, was the ceremony of ghost keeping (or keeping of the soul). The

²¹² Little Wound, American Horse, Lone Star, James R. Walker, George Sword, Bad Wound, No Flesh and Thomas Tyon in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), p. 68, pp. 73-74 and pp. 91-96. See, Bulletin 473, pp. 12-13; *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown J. 1973), p. 45; Powers W. 1986, pp. 164-165; Grobsmith 1990, p. 191.

²¹³ Powers W. 1986, pp. 111-113. Powers makes the comparison to Christian ritual of baptism, where the water becomes sacred. (ibid.) A similar comparison is also presented by, Deloria, Vine Sr., *The Establishment of Christianity Among the Sioux* in, *Sioux Indian Religion* (ed. DeMallie & Parks 1987), p. 109.

²¹⁴ *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown J. 1973), pp. 3-9; Powers W. 1977, pp. 86-88. More about the significance of the pipe in, for example, George Sword in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), pp. 82-83 and pp. 87-90; Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 1-6 and pp. 291-296; Hassrick 1964, pp. 257-265; Looking Horse, Arval, *The Sacred Pipe in Modern Life* in, *Sioux Indian Religion* (ed. DeMallie & Parks 1987), p. 62-73.

²¹⁵ Hassrick 1964, p. 260; Mooney 1991, pp. 1062-1063.

²¹⁶ *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown J. 1973), pp. 31-43; Powers W. 1977, pp. 135-136. For further information of the Lakota sweat lodge ceremony see, Bucko, Raymond A., *The Lakota Ritual of the Sweat Lodge. History and Contemporary Practice*. Studies in the Anthropology of North American Indians, Lincoln, Nebraska 1998, passim.

purpose of this wanáǵi yuhápi was to keep the spirit of a dead person close to home for a while. Sometimes a lodge was erected for the spirit of the departed where it could live until finally released to the spirit world in a special ceremony.²¹⁷

Visions were at the heart of Lakota religion. They helped a person to find a direction for his life. Many religious ceremonies were also born in visions. The vision quest, ḥabléchéyapi, was a very important ceremony for every male (and sometimes also female) Lakota, although some never obtained a vision. The idea was to find a connection to the spirits and acquire power from them or to get their protection for life. In a vision a person might be given a medicine bundle and a song for himself, and also knowledge of his guardian spirit, šicú. The visions were then interpreted by the medicine men who gave the instructions how to live according to the vision. As suggested earlier, people with strong visions could become medicine men themselves.²¹⁸

The annual sun dance (wiwáyǵg wachípi) was the only Lakota calendrical ritual. It was connected with the annual communal buffalo hunt and for the ceremony the Lakotas gathered into great summer camps, where several religious ceremonies and rituals were held during consecutive days. The high point was reached in a dance held around the sacred tree. In this actual sun dance, the dancer was attached to the sacred tree with a leather thong, which was attached to a stick inserted through the skin of his chest or back. The goal was to dance and pull against the thong until the skin tore and the dancer was released. No food or drink was allowed during the dance; the pain and suffering helped the dancer reach another world. Self-mortification convinced the spirits of the dancer's sincerity and pitifulness. The suffering and offering of one's own body was the most valuable sacrifice. The rite itself was a ceremony of renewal and regeneration, during which everything was reborn; it reflected the mythical and supernatural

²¹⁷ See, *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown J. 1973), pp. 10-30; Powers W. 1977, pp. 93-95; Eastman 1980, pp. 18-24; DeMallie 1987, pp. 34-42; Densmore 1992, pp. 77-84.

²¹⁸ Bulletin 473, pp. 12-1; Hultkrantz 1967, pp. 63-64; *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown J. 1973), pp. 44-46; Grobsmith 1990, pp. 190-191; Densmore 1992, pp. 172-203. About the importance of the vision and of Black Elk's development into a medicine man see, Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 160-216 and for further understanding of his experience see, *The Sixth Grandfather* (ed. DeMallie 1985), pp. 111-141.

events that took place in early times when the world was first created. The ritual sought to establish and maintain unity between the earth, the sun and the spirits, to ensure that the buffalo would never disappear and that the people would prosper.²¹⁹

In addition to these four, the other sacred ceremonies were the girls' puberty ceremony (or the ceremony of preparing a girl for womanhood), išnála awíchalowąpi, the throwing of the ball, thápa wákáyapi, and the making of relatives, hųká. Hųká was important in that it dealt with relationships and the establishment of kinship. In Lakota society blood relationship was not the only determinant of kinship, and hųká was one way of making relatives of people who were not related by blood.²²⁰

Thus there were altogether seven of the most sacred ceremonies. The numbers seven and number four were sacred for the Lakotas. In Lakota beliefs almost everything was conceptualized in terms of fours and sevens or their multiples. There were four cardinal directions, four seasons, the human life consisted of four stages, the Sioux "nation" was formed of seven council fires and Wakhâ Thâka had 16 different aspects (4x4=16). These numbers were frequently present in religious ceremonies, which, for example, frequently lasted four consecutive days, there were seven songs in the sun dance and they were always sung four times.²²¹

Also very important and sacred was the form of the circle, which united human beings with nature. In nature, many things operated in circles. The sun and the moon were round and they moved across the sky along the path of a circle. The heavens were also a circle and the seasons came in circles. Thus the form of the

²¹⁹ Thomas Tyon, Little Wound, American Horse, Lone Star, Bad Heart Bull, Short Bull and James R. Walker in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), pp. 176-191. See, *The Sacred Pipe*, (ed. Brown J. 1973), pp. 67-100; Grobsmith 1990, pp.192-194. A good description of the communal buffalo hunt is given by James R. Walker in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 74-94 and of the sun dance by High Bear, pp. 96-99. See also, Hassrick 1964, pp. 188-200; Densmore 1992, pp. 84-151.

²²⁰ *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown J. 1973), pp. 101-138. About Lakota kinship see, Thomas Tyon and James R. Walker in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 44-67; Deloria E. 1998, pp. 24-38. See also, DeMallie 1979, pp. 221-237; DeMallie, 1994, pp. 130-143; DeMallie 1998, pp. 330-334 and pp. 339-350; DeMallie 2001, p. 808.

²²¹ Powers W. 1977, pp. 47-54; Powers W. 1986, pp. 127-144; Amiotte 1987, pp. 75-88; DeMallie 1987, p. 29. About the seven councilfires, the ochéthi šakówį see, chapter 2.2.1.

circle was taken as a part of everyday life, from the camp circle to sacred dances.²²²

In order to understand the Lakota ghost dance, it is essential to have knowledge not only of the history of the Lakota people, but also of their cultural heritage. For that reason a very general picture of Lakota religion and traditions is presented in this chapter. There is no need to go deeper into it in this study, but for further understanding of the Lakota way of life, the books cited here are very valuable.

Lakota religious life continued on the reservation until 1883, when the government forbade the practice of traditional religious ceremonies, including the sun dance. Christianity was the only acceptable form of public religious ceremony. Indeed, Christian churches had already found supporters among the Lakotas, since their own understanding of religion did not rule out the possibility of accepting the Christian God as well. This new God did not set aside Wakhá Tháka, but joined the other sacred beings as a part of the totality of Wakhá Tháka. Some Lakotas tried to go on with their lives relying on their old traditions, while others turned to Christianity. However, many of those Christian Lakotas saw Christianity as an extension of their old religion. In a way they lived between two different religious worlds, and therefore it is extremely difficult to say exactly how many of the Lakotas were Christians at the time of the ghost dance.²²³

An interesting comment is made by anthropologist **Marla Powers**, who claims that only those who were listed as Christians were able to receive their annual appropriations. If this really was the case, the number of the so-called nominal Christians was probably higher than is generally stated. **Clifton Olmstead**, who believes that as late as 1914 more than 40% of American Indians were nominally Christians, substantiates this view. In the case of the Lakotas, for example, the

²²² About the importance of the circle see, Wissler, Clark, *Some Protective Designs of the Dakota*, Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. I, Part II, New York, N.Y. 1907, pp. 40-43; Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 198-200; *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown J. 1973), p. 7. More about the camp circle in, chapter 2.2.1.

²²³ Utley 1984, pp. 243-245; Powers, Marla, *Oglala Woman, Myth, Ritual and Reality*, Chicago, Illinois 1988, 192; Smedman 1990, pp. 146-147; Lazarus 1991, pp. 100-101. About Christianity and traditional Lakota religion see, Eastman 1980, pp. 18-24; Deloria E. 1998, p. 98-108. See also, Markowitz, Harvey, *The Catholic Mission and the Sioux. A Crisis in the Early Paradigm in, Sioux Indian Religion* (ed. DeMallie & Parks 1987), pp. 113-137.

official report for 1878 says that 1/5 of the Lakotas (4,751) were Christians, while the report of Agent Gallagher in 1889 says that there were 2,213 Christian Lakotas on Pine Ridge alone. All and all, the question is a difficult one, but need not be investigated further in this study. The issue has been raised to demonstrate how complex the situation was at the time of the ghost dance.²²⁴

When the ghost dance arrived at the Lakota reservations in 1890, the people there had already lived for many years between the forbidden worldview of their own beliefs and the worldview delivered by Christian missionaries and schoolteachers. For Christian Lakotas, and those Lakotas who were trying to find a balance between two different religions, the ghost dance offered the means of combining the old and the new worldviews. Fast Thunder (Wakíya Lúzahą) a Christian ghost dancer provides a wonderful example of such a combination. He told that in his vision:

...two holy eagles transported me to the happy hunting grounds. They showed me the Great Messiah there, and as I looked upon his fair countenance, I wept, for there were nail-prints in his hands and feet, where the cruel white men had fastened him to a large cross. There was a small wound in his side also, but as he kept his side covered with a beautiful blanket of feathers this wound could only be seen when he shifted his blanket. He insisted that we continue the dance and promised me that no whites should enter his city nor partake of the good things he had prepared for the Indians. The earth, he said, was now worn out and it should be repopled. He had a beard and a long hair and was the most handsome man that I ever looked upon.²²⁵

Another example is provided by the vision of Little Wound, who speaks of God and the Great Spirit interchangeably (See chapter 3.4.3).

For those who longed for the traditional life, the ghost dance brought back dancing and the possibility of actually practicing religion. Although seven years had passed since forbidding the Lakota religious practices, there were still many Lakotas who looked back nostalgically for the old ways. Many features of the

²²⁴ ARCIA 1889, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 27, 1889, p. 157; ARCIA 1878, House Executive Document, No 1, 45th Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. IX, Serial 1850, pp. 779-781. See, Olmstead, Clifton E., *History of Religion in the United States*, Eaglewood Cliffs 1961, p. 415; Powers M. 1988, p. 192-193.

²²⁵ The vision of Fast Thunder as told in, The Illustrated American, 17, January 1891, p. 332. Published also in, Boyd 1891, pp 193-194.

teachings of the ghost dance were very familiar to the Lakotas. The idea of spirits returning on the earth was not strange. On the contrary, spirits had always been an integral part of life, and so were the visions, which were so important in the ghost dance also. Equally understandable was the idea of the returning buffalos. Those who missed their old ways and religion found the ghost dance easy to accept. For example, Black Elk provides us with a description of his development into a ghost dancer after seeing a ghost dance ceremony, which included so many features that were familiar to him. He believed that his duty was to try to restore the unity of the Lakota people with the help of the ghost dance.²²⁶ As with Christianity, the ghost dance itself did not threaten the power of Wakhâ Thâka, but became incorporated into Lakota religion. Thus it is essential for the understanding of the Lakota ghost dance to study it through this background, not as an isolated phenomenon. As anthropologist **DeMallie** says, the ghost dance was not a break in the Lakota way of life; it was a continuation. Today it is still part of ongoing Lakota tradition and history.²²⁷

3.4.2. The Ceremony of the Lakota Ghost Dance

The ceremony of the Lakota ghost dance was not performed according to one single formula. In fact, there were many variations, for example, in the use of songs or in the number of leaders of the ceremony. Nonetheless, the general characteristics remained the same from one ceremony to another, which allows us to create a picture of a “typical” ghost dance ceremony.

The preparation for the ghost dance began with a purification ceremony. The dance was often preceded by a fast, and the dance ground was blessed by the medicine men. Sometimes the medicine men also blessed the dancers by first touching the blessed ground and then touching the head of the dancer.²²⁸ The most important purification ceremony was the sweat lodge. The sweat lodge ceremony

²²⁶ See, Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 241-242; The Sixth Grandfather (ed. DeMallie 1985), pp. 82-88 (introduction) and pp. 260-266. Black Elk had a vision, which became real in the form of the ghost dance ceremony. He saw the sacred tree and people dancing in a circle. In the vision he saw the return of the Lakota way of life and the restoration of the sacred hoop. To him, this was exactly what the ghost dance represented. (ibid.)

²²⁷ DeMallie 1982, p. 404.

²²⁸ Mooney 1991, pp. 918-919. See, Miller 1985, p. 59.

was in principle performed in the same manner as it had been performed in the past. The sweat lodge was built so that the entrance faced east, the sacred path to the fireplace where the stones were heated was built, and inside the lodge the ritual was performed as usual. Some variations, however, occurred when the sweat lodge was attached to the ghost dance. There were several sweat lodges erected for both men and women, in order to allow as many as possible to be purified. They were also larger than normal, and in the ghost dance the sweat lodge sometimes had two doors, an entrance and an exit. Individuals who came into the lodge through the entrance were considered to be heavy with dirt of the white man; after the ceremony they left from the other door, cleansed, and were then given clean clothing. In this way the sweat lodge served the purpose of cultural purification. As anthropologist **Raymond A. Bucko** says, it was a symbolic universe purged of foreign elements and it was a return to the origins of the power of the past.²²⁹ Although many other Indian nations used the sweat lodge, it appears that only the Lakotas, and perhaps the Shoshones and Cheyennes, associated it with the ghost dance.²³⁰

Most of the traditional Lakota ceremonies started with the smoking of the sacred pipe, but, in the ghost dance, smoking the pipe was associated with the preparatory sweat lodge ceremony. In the actual ghost dance the pipe was also present, but in a different way. During the ceremony, a young woman stood in the center of the dance circle holding the pipe upwards, pointing to the west, the direction of the Messiah. In this case the woman symbolized the sacred Buffalo Calf Woman, who, according to legend had first brought the pipe to the Lakotas.²³¹

After purification in the sweat lodge the Lakotas started to prepare for the dance. The faces of the dancers were decorated with sacred symbols, including circles, stars and crescents. This preparation could take all morning, so the dance often did

²²⁹ Bucko 1998, pp. 40-41 and p. 255. See also, The Illustrated American, 17, January 1891, p. 323; Boyd 1891, pp. 183-184; Deloria E. 1998, p. 81.

²³⁰ Mooney 1991, pp. 822-823; Bucko 1998, p. 40.

²³¹ Mooney 1991, pp. 823-824 and pp. 1062-1063; The Illustrated American, 17, January 1891, p. 331; Boyd 1891, p. 184. More about the sacred pipe and the legend of the White Buffalo Calf Woman in, for example, *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown J. 1973), pp. 3-9 and pp. 74-76; Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 16 and pp. 291-296; Hassrick 1964, pp. 257-265; Looking Horse 1987, pp. 67-73.

not start before afternoon, when the dancers gathered around the sacred tree. The sacred tree, *châ wakhâ*, had been an essential part of the sun dance and it symbolized the unity and the center of the Lakota people. Before the actual dance began, a vessel with beef was passed to each of the participants, the meat symbolizing the vanished buffalo. Along with the woman who held the pipe stood another woman who shot four arrows to the four cardinal directions symbolizing the Lakota, Arapaho, Crow and Cheyenne Indians. The arrows were picked up and hung together with a gaming wheel to the sacred tree.²³² The gaming wheel itself symbolized the four directions, the reproduction of buffalo and human beings. It was a ceremony of renewal, and was thus naturally incorporated into the ghost dance.²³³

In the center of the circle were the leaders of the dance and the lead singer who started the ceremony with an opening song. The following is one of the commonly used opening songs:²³⁴

Até héye é ya yo	The father says so- E'yayo!
Até héye é ya yo	The father says so-E'yayo
Até héye lo	The father says so,
Até héye lo	The father says so.
Nithúkâšila waníglakî kta é ya yo	You shall see your grandfather-E'yayo!
Nithúkâšila waníglakî kta é ya yo	You shall see your grandfather-E'yayo!
Até héye lo	The father says so,
Até héye lo	The father says so.
Nitákuye waníeglakî kta é ya yo	You shall see your kindred-E'yayo!
Nitákuye waníeglakî kta é ya yo	You shall see your kindred-E'yayo!
Até héye lo	The father says so,
Até héye lo	The father says so.

²³² Mooney 1991, p. 823, pp. 915-916 and pp. 1063-1064; *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown J. 1973), p. 69; Miller 1985, p. 60-61. A good description of a Lakota ghost dance ceremony is written by Special Agent E. B. Reynolds who witnessed a ghost dance on Pine Ridge in September 1890. For his account see, Special Agent Elisha B. Reynolds to CIA, September 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/22-26. Another description can be found in, Goodale Eastman 1945, pp. 32-33. Also Short Bull later described the ceremonies. See Short Bull in, Buechel 1978, pp. 282-288.

²³³ Discussion with Professor Raymond J. DeMallie, Bloomington, Indiana April 30, 2001. See, Wissler 1907, pp. 40-41.

²³⁴ Powers, William K., *Voices from the Spirit World. Lakota Ghost Dance Songs*, Kendall Park, New Jersey 1990, p. 28; Mooney 1991, p. 1061. Another opening song in, for example, Mooney 1991, p. 1070. See also, Reynolds to CIA, September 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/24-25.

During the song the dancers held their hands stretched toward the west, which was the direction of the land where the Messiah lived, but also the direction in which the Buffalo Calf Woman had departed. When the song ended the dancers cried together, then took each other by the hand, joined in the singing of the next song and started to move slowly in a circle from left to right.²³⁵

Gradually the leader increased the pace, crying and praying toward each cardinal direction, especially toward the west. When the leader became excited, the dancers started to share his excitement and the dance grew more intense.²³⁶ As the people danced, they also cried out the names of their dead relatives and expressed their grief loudly. The dancers also threw dirt in their hair to signify their grief and tried to work themselves into a state in which visions could be seen.²³⁷

While the singing and dancing continued, the excitement grew gradually and increasing numbers of people left the circle, making tremendous leaps into the air. Finally, those who left the circle fell to the ground with trembling limbs and lay motionless - seemingly dead. According to one witness, there could be as many as one hundred unconscious ghost dancers lying on the ground simultaneously.²³⁸

The Illustrated American claimed in an article on January 17, 1891 that the excited ghost dancers were sacrificing human flesh and blood to their sacred tree, which was covered with blood. In addition to The Illustrated American, other newspapers also reported that the Lakotas were sacrificing human flesh in the ceremony, or were even resorting to cannibalism. However, Black Elk says that the sacred tree was often painted red, which was the sacred color of the ghost dance as well as the sacred color of the sun. **Mooney** also notes that the offerings for the sacred tree were small gifts for the spirits; these gifts included, for

²³⁵ Reynolds to CIA, September 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 24-26. See also, Mooney 1991, p. 823, pp. 920-921 and p. 1061. For comparison to the Paiute ghost dance ceremony see, Hittman 1997, pp. 90-96. More about traditional Lakota dances in, for example, Densmore 1992, pp. 84-151 and pp. 468-484.

²³⁶ Reynolds to CIA, September 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 24-26. See, Mooney 1991, pp. 920-921; The Illustrated American, 17, January 1891, p. 329.

²³⁷ Reynolds to CIA, September 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 24-25. See, Mooney 1991, pp. 920-922.

²³⁸ Mooney 1991, pp. 915-921.

example, tobacco or small ceremonial objects, such as stuffed animal skins. Such offerings had previously been made in the sun dance.²³⁹

The ghost dance ceremony ended when enough people had fallen into a trance. Then everybody sat down in a circle and the medicine men who led the dance began to interpret the dancers' visions. After a while, the ceremony started again. There could be as many as three ceremonies a day; inbetween, people feasted and played traditional games.²⁴⁰ The ceremony always ended at the command of the medicine men, with a final song. The circle dispersed, the dancers shook their blankets to remove any bad influence from them, and finally they purified themselves by bathing in water.²⁴¹

By the late fall of 1890 the Lakota ghost dance ceremonies grew more intense. According to the original instructions given by Wovoka the dances were to be organized at six-week intervals, four days in a row, and then the fifth day the dance was supposed to last all night long. The Lakotas, however, danced much more frequently, and the dances might continue several days and nights.²⁴²

The Lakotas made many changes in the original, rather simple, ceremony. They attached to the ghost dance their own traditional ceremonies, such as the sweat lodge and dancing around a sacred tree under the protection of the sacred pipe. Also, traditional games were revived during the ceremony. From the beginning, the ceremony was performed in a circle, which was very common for the Lakotas as well as for many other Indian tribes. By attaching their own traditions to the ghost dance the Lakotas made the ceremony more familiar and meaningful. In the

²³⁹ See, The Illustrated American, 17, January 1891, p. 329; Thomas Tyon, William Garnett, George Sword and John Blunt Horn in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), p. 108; Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, p. 241; *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown J. 1973), pp. 78-79; *The Sixth Grandfather* (ed. DeMallie 1985), pp. 258-260; Mooney 1991, pp. 823-824 and p. 788. The newspapers are studied more carefully in, chapter 6.

²⁴⁰ Reynolds to CIA, September 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/25-26. See, Mooney 1991, p. 920-921. See also, Wissler 1907, pp. 40-45; Lesser 1933, p. 110; Feher-Elston, Catherine, *Raven Song. The Natural and Fabulous History of Ravens and Crows*, Flagstaff, Arizona 1991, p. 79. About traditional games see, Densmore 1992, pp. 485-491.

²⁴¹ Mooney 1991, pp. 916-917 and p. 921; Feher-Elston 1991, p. 79.

²⁴² Mooney 1991, pp. 915-916. See, The Illustrated American, 17, January 1891, p. 332. See also, chapter 4.

ghost dance traditions were alive again. The visions and songs of the Lakota ghost dance reflect these traditions.

3.4.3. The Message of the Songs and Visions

In traditional Lakota religious ceremonies, like the sun dance, drums and rattlers were used, but the ghost dance was always performed without musical instruments. On the other hand, there were many songs, and trance experiences were often turned into songs. Since there were a tremendous number of such experiences, it seems obvious that there must have been a great number of songs also. **James Mooney** published altogether almost 200 songs, but only 27 of them are Lakota ghost dance songs. These Lakota songs were originally collected by Emma C. Sickles, a schoolteacher on Pine Ridge, and later used by **Mooney** in his own work. Anthropologist **William K. Powers** gathered altogether 55 Lakota ghost dance songs from various sources, including those used by Mooney and Sickles. In his brief book *Voices from the Spirit World. Lakota Ghost Dance Songs*, he provides a short analysis of each song. A similar collection was published by **Wilhelm Wildhage** in *Geistertanz-Lieder der Lakota. Eine Quellensammlung*. He, however, does not analyze the songs at all.²⁴³ Those songs that have been preserved provide a good picture of the expectations and hopes the Lakotas had for the ghost dance.

Several of the songs refer to ancestors and to meeting dead relatives, which, of course, were among the basic ideas of the new religion. Other very popular themes included the return of the buffalo, as well as organizing and leaving on a hunting trip. Many songs referred to the Messiah or Father, and to the eternal life he promised.²⁴⁴ The following two songs are examples of these:²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Sickles 1892, pp. 32-36; Mooney 1991, pp. 1061-1075. These songs are also published in, Colby, L. W., "Wanagi Olovan Kin," Nebraska State Historical Society Proceedings and Collections, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1895, pp. 131-150. Three songs are also found in, Curtis 1950, pp. 47-48 and pp. 63-67. See also, Powers 1990, pp. 876; Wildhage, Wilhelm, *Geistertanz-Lieder der Lakota. Eine Quellensammlung*, Wyk auf Foehr, 1991, pp. 940. Performances of some of these Lakota ghost dance songs can actually be listened to at The Willard Rhodes Collection of North American Indian Music, Catalog 54-022-F, Archives of Traditional Music, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

²⁴⁴ Sickles 1892, pp. 32-36; Mooney 1991, p. 1061 and pp. 1065-1070; Powers W. 1990, pp. 27-45; Wildhage 1991, pp. 9-40.

²⁴⁵ Mooney 1991, p. 1064 and p. 1069.

Waná yamáni ye,	Now he is walking,
Waná yamáni ye,	Now he is walking.
Thatáka wə máni ye,	There is a buffalo bull walking,
Thatáka wə máni ye,	There is a buffalo bull walking,
Até héye lo,	Says the father,
Até héye lo,	Says the father.

Até hé ú we,	There is the father coming,
Até hé ú we,	There is the father coming.
Até eyáya hé ú welo,	The father says this as he comes,
Até eyáya hé ú welo,	The father says this as he comes,
Yanípi kta ú welo,	“You shall live,” he says as he comes,
Yanípi kta ú welo.	“You shall live,” he says as he comes.

The songs did not tell about violence or the destruction of the white race. In general the songs were sad, but they reflected the hope the Lakotas had put into the new religion. For example, the next song was born of young woman’s vision, where she saw her dead mother.²⁴⁶

Iná hé kuw6;	Mother, come home;
Iná hé kuw6,	Mother come home.
Misúkala chéyaya	My little brother
omániye,	goes about always crying,
Misúkala chéyaya	My little brother
omániye,	goes about always crying,
Iná hé kuw6,	Mother come home;
Iná hé kuw6.	Mother come home.

Often the songs told about the spirits and the spirit world. Messages from that world were brought over to this world by such sacred birds as the eagle (wəblí) and the crow, or raven (khaǵǵí). Traditionally, among many Plains tribes, these birds - especially the crow - acted as a mediator between humans and the

²⁴⁶ Mooney 1991, p. 1070. This song was sung by Short Bull to Natalie Curtis and is also published in, Curtis 1950, p. 48 and p. 66; Wildhage 1991, pp. 9, p. 15, p. 18 and p. 26. The song is also found in The Willard Rhodes Collection of North American Indian Music, Catalog 54-022-F, ATL 58.6, ATMIU.

spirits.²⁴⁷ Many of the songs that refer to the crows, or belonging to the “crow nation,” in fact symbolize union with the spirits and the spirit world.²⁴⁸ The following song well illustrates the whole message of the ghost dance, promising the return of both the buffalo and the spirits of the dead, just as the “Father” had prophesized. In the song the knowledge of these events is brought to the Lakotas by the eagle and the crow:²⁴⁹

Makhá sitómniya ukíye,	The whole world is coming,
Oyáte ukíye, Oyáte ukíye,	A nation is coming, a nation is coming,
Wāblí oyáte wā,	The eagle has brought
hošíhi yelo,	the message to the tribe,
Até héye lo,	The father says so,
Até héye lo.	The father says so.
Makhá ówāchaya ukíye,	Over the whole earth they are coming.
Pté kī ukíye,	The buffalo are coming,
Pté kī ukíye,	The buffalo are coming,
Khaǵí oyáte wā,	The crow has brought
hošíhi yelo,	the message to the tribe,
Até héye lo,	The father says so
Até héye lo.	The father says so.

When the songs of the Lakota ghost dance are studied, they provide no support for the belief that the Lakotas were organizing the ghost dances against the whites as suggested by many contemporary white observers and scholars alike (See chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8). Furthermore, if these songs are actually listened to, it is quite obvious that they differ from Lakota war songs in all aspects; the words and the rhythm are completely different. Although only a fraction of the Lakota songs are preserved, they have nothing to do with the destruction of the white race. Instead, they are like the ghost dance songs of other Indian peoples, such as the Arapahos, the Cheyennes, the Kiowas, or the Paiutes.²⁵⁰ What is revealed in the songs is that

²⁴⁷ See, for example, Feher-Elston 1991, p. 79. More about the Lakota concepts of birds in, for example, Brown J. 1997, pp. 32-37.

²⁴⁸ Mooney 1991, p. 1068 and p. 1072. See also, Feher-Elston 1991, p. 80.

²⁴⁹ Mooney 1991, p. 1072. Also published in, Wildhage 1991, p. 27

²⁵⁰ For comparison of the ghost dance songs of other nations see, Mooney 1991, pp. 958-1055 and pp. 1081-1102. For additional information on traditional Lakota songs see, for example, Curtis 1950, pp. 49-90; Densmore 1992, pp. 12-62 and pp. 332-427. For comparison of the Lakota ghost dance songs and war songs, listen to the Lakota ghost dance songs in The Willard Rhodes Collection of North American Indian Music, ATMIU, Catalog 54-022-F and war songs in The Joseph K. Dixon Collection, ATMIU, Catalog 54-109-F.

the Lakotas were extremely unhappy and longed for the traditional way of life and for the time before the white man interfered with their lives.

Trances and visions were the source of many of these songs, and falling into a trance and seeing visions were, of course, major elements in the ghost dance ceremony. Those who received a vision were considered as special during the ceremony. They were expected to help other people reach the excited condition where seeing visions became possible. At the time when the ghost dance was beginning to be established among the Lakotas, hypnotism may have been used to help people gain visions. The correspondent of *The Illustrated American* describes how a medicine man was able to hypnotize and make the young men and women act as he pleased simply by looking at them. However, by the late fall of 1890, more and more people fell into a trance without the need for hypnotism.²⁵¹

These trances could be very deep and spectacular. Mrs. Z. A. Parker described how she saw a person falling into a trance with these words:

... One woman fell a few feet from me. She came toward us, her hair flying over her face, which was purple, looking as if the blood would burst through; her hands and arms moving wildly; every breath a pant and a groan; and she fell on her back, and went down like a log. I stepped up to her as she lay there motionless, but with every muscle twitching and quivering. She seemed perfectly unconscious...²⁵²

During their trances many were able to see their dead relatives, who were living happily in the spirit world. Some saw a whole new world where white men did not exist. In a vision, medicine man Black Elk saw men who took him with them and showed him spectacular things:

...Then I went to the center of the circle with these men and there again I saw the tree in full bloom. Against the tree I saw a man standing with outstretched arms...The man with outstretched arms looked at me and I didn't know whether he was white or an Indian. He did not resemble Christ. He looked like an Indian, but I was not sure of it. He had long hair, which was hanging down loose. On the

²⁵¹ *The Illustrated American*, 17, January 1891, p. 330; Boyd 1891, p. 189; Mooney 1991, pp. 922-926.

²⁵² An account given by Mrs. Z. A. Parker in, ARCIA 1891, Report of Superintendent of Indian Schools Daniel Dorchester, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 529-531; Z. A. Parker as quoted in, Mooney 1991, p. 917.

left side of his head was an eagle feather. His body was painted red...I stood there gazing at him and tried to recognize him. I could not make him out. He was a nice-looking man. As I looked at him, his body started to transform. His body changed into all colors and it was very beautiful. All around him there was light. Then he disappeared all at once. It seemed as though there were wounds in the palms of his hands...The day was beautiful - the heavens were all yellow and the earth was green. You could see the green ward of the earth. The men that I saw were all beautiful and it seemed there were no old men in there. They were all young...²⁵³

Little Wound told that:

...a great and grand eagle came and carried me over a great hill, where there was a village such as we used to have before the whites came into the country. The tepees were all of buffalo hides, and we made use of the bow and arrow, there being nothing of white man's manufacture in the beautiful land. Nor were any whites permitted to live there. The broad and fertile lands stretched in every direction, and were most pleasing to my eyes. I was taken into the presence of the great Messiah, and he spoke to me these words: My child I am glad to see you. Do you want to see your children and relations who are dead? I replied: Yes, I would like to see my relations who have been dead a long time. The God then called my friends to come up to where I was. They appeared, riding the finest horses I ever saw, dressed in superb and most brilliant garments, and seeming very happy. As they approached, I recognized the playmates of my childhood, and I ran forward to embrace them while the tears of joy ran down my cheeks. We all went together to another village, where there were very large lodges of buffalo hide, and there held a long talk with the great Wakan Tanka. Then he had some squaws prepare us a meal of many herbs, meat, and wild fruits and "wasna" [pounded dried beef and choke-cherries]. After we had eaten, the Great Spirit prayed for our people upon the earth, and then we all took a smoke out of a fine pipe ornamented with the most beautiful feathers and porcupine quills. Then we left the city and looked into a great valley where there were thousands of buffalo, deer, and elk feeding. After seeing the valley we returned to the city, the Great Spirit speaking meanwhile. He told me that the earth was now bad and worn out; that we needed a new dwelling-place where the rascally whites could not disturb us. He further instructed me to return to my people, the Sioux, and say to them that if they would be constant in the dance and pay no attention to the whites he would shortly come to their aid. If the high-priests would make for the dancers medicine-shirts and pray over them, no harm could come to the wearer; that the bullets of any whites that desired to stop the Messiah Dance would fall into the ground without doing any one harm, and the person firing such shots would drop dead. He said that he had prepared a hole in the ground filled with hot water and fire for the reception of all white men and non-believers. With these parting words I was commanded to return to earth.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ The Sixth Grandfather (ed. DeMallie 1985), pp. 263-264. See also, Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, p. 245.

²⁵⁴ The Illustrated American, 17, January 1891, pp. 330-331. Little Wound told about his vision through an interpreter. According to the writer of the article, the English text is an exact translation

Given the situation among the Lakotas in 1890, it is easy to understand that such experiences made an impact. In the visions, happy people were hunting, dancing, playing games and did all those things that were done in the past. The traditional way of life seemed to be returning. Since this was happening in the visions, it was clear that this was going to happen in real life as well.²⁵⁵ There was no reason not to believe the message of the visions. Visions had always been an important part of Lakota life, and medicine men had always been able to interpret them, so why not now? Visions were always believed, and the leaders and medicine men could interpret them to suit their own expectations and hopes. Thus, as religious excitement among the Lakotas grew and the tension between whites and Indians increased, the original doctrine and ceremony of the ghost dance was in the process of changing through visions and their interpretations. Perhaps the most dramatic of these developments was the new kind of dance shirts mentioned in Little Wound's vision.

3.5. The Height and Decline of the Lakota Ghost Dance

3.5.1. From Pine Ridge to Standing Rock

During the fall of 1890 the ghost dances gradually became more intense on both Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations. The ghost dancers started to arm themselves and, according to many contemporaries, and some scholars, even carried them when they danced. This despite the fact that according to the Lakota ghost dance doctrine they were not supposed to wear anything that reminded of the white man. Bows and arrows, however, were a part of the ceremony from the very beginning.²⁵⁶

of Little Wound's speech. (ibid.) Little Wound's vision is also published in, Boyd 1891, pp. 189-191.

²⁵⁵ See, Deloria E. 1998, p. 83.

²⁵⁶ See, Colby, L. W., *The Sioux Indian War of 1890-91*, Transactions and Proceedings of the Nebraska Historical Society, Vol. III, Fremont, Nebraska 1892, p. 147; Mooney 1991, pp. 788-789. See, Zahn 1940, p. 2; Hyde 1956, p. 261 and p. 269. Scholars, except for **Mooney**, generally believe, that arms were carried during the ceremonies, but they are unsure about how frequent this really was. Also the number of guns in the possession of the ghost dancers is unclear. (Mooney 1991, p. 788. See, for example, Zahn 1940, p. 2; Hyde 1956, p. 261 and p. 269) See also, chapters 5-7.

Short Bull, however, later denied that arms were carried during the dances. “We went unarmed to the dance. How could we have held weapons? For thus we danced, in a circle, hand in hand, each man’s fingers linked in those of his neighbor,” he said. Previously, on November 26, 1890, Big Road also denied that arms were carried in the ceremony.²⁵⁷ In fact, there is no actual evidence that the Lakotas carried arms during the ghost dance ceremonies; it seems that no one actually saw guns carried during the ceremonies. Elaine Goodale Eastman, for example, witnessed a ghost dance as late as November 1, but saw no guns in the ceremony.²⁵⁸ Therefore, it has to be concluded that it was not a common feature among the Lakota ghost dancers to carry arms while dancing, but perhaps they started to keep arms at hand in order to be ready at any moment to defend themselves should the whites try to interfere with their religious ceremonies.

On October 9, 1890, Kicking Bear arrived at Standing Rock without authorization to teach the new religion to the people there and to meet with Sitting Bull, who had invited him. Agent James McLaughlin sent a detachment of Indian policemen to escort Kicking Bear off the reservation. The policemen, however, did not dare to carry out their assignment. The ghost dance also affected these men, even though they were used to discipline and the ways of the white man. Kicking Bear’s teachings seemed to appeal to the policemen, who were afraid of his power. Finally on October 15, two policemen dared to escort Kicking Bear off the reservation.²⁵⁹

After Kicking Bear left, Sitting Bull’s camp became the center of the ghost dance religion on Standing Rock Reservation. The sacred tree was erected and Sitting

²⁵⁷ Short Bull in, Curtis 1950, p. 45; Big Road as quoted in, *The Chicago Tribune*, Vol. L, No. CCCXXX, November 26, 1890, p. 1 and p. 5; Anonymous eyewitness as quoted in, *The Omaha Daily Bee*, No. 161, November 26, 1890, p. 1.

²⁵⁸ Goodale Eastman 1945, p. 33. There were incidents when the ghost dancers met the authorities with arms in their hands. An incident like this took place, for example, on Pine Ridge on August 24, but the dancing was already stopped, so no one can say whether guns were carried during the dance. (Gallagher to CIA, August 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, pp. 387-388)

²⁵⁹ The policemen’s story as told in, McLaughlin to CIA, October 17, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/31-43. Published also in, ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, no. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 125-126. See also, McLaughlin 1989, p. 191; Hagan 1966, pp. 98-100; DeMallie 1982, p. 394.

Bull put up a big lodge where he interpreted the visions and led the ceremonies. It is not clear whether Sitting Bull himself really believed in the doctrine of the ghost dance or not. It seems that he at first really tried to experience a vision, which would verify the authenticity of the religion. Historian **Utley** suspects that Sitting Bull hated the whites too much to believe in a religion that had so many Christian aspects. This seems to be a far-fetched interpretation. Several people, who knew Sitting Bull, suggest that he was in general not opposed to all Christian teachings and had many friends among the missionaries. Some scholars suggest that Sitting Bull tried to believe in the ghost dance at first, but when he did not experience a vision, he just gave his blessing to others who wanted to dance. He had nothing against the new religion. Even Agent McLaughlin thought that Sitting Bull did not really believe in the ghost dance.²⁶⁰

Many scholars believe that Sitting Bull saw the ghost dance as his final chance to rise against the white man, and to gain more prestige among his own people. These arguments are often supported by Sitting Bull's alleged actions. He is said to have stated that he was ready to fight the white men and to die for the ghost dance. As an assurance of this belief he supposedly broke the sacred pipe that he had used to seal the peace. If he really did that, there is no doubt what it meant for the Lakotas; it was an extreme act of disrespect and, in this case, an extreme form of provocation.²⁶¹ But it seems unlikely that Sitting Bull would have abused a sacred pipe.

Also, Sitting Bull's words have been used against him. He supposedly urged all of his people to continue the dance, and predicted that the winter would be warm and mild. He believed that the whites were afraid of the Indians, and, as an example,

²⁶⁰ See, Utley 1963, p. 98; Miller 1985, pp. 107; Vestal 1989, pp. 272-273; Brown D. 1996, p. 454; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 74-75. Sitting Bull was reported to be interested in Christianity, he was especially fond of the Episcopalian denomination. Even James McLaughlin noted that Sitting Bull was sympathetic toward Christianity. (Mary C. Collins, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 3, Envelope, 78; Berghold, Alexander, *The Indians' Revenge; or Days of Horror. Some Appalling Events in the History of the Sioux*, San Francisco, California, 1891, pp. 193-196; Statement of Bishop Martin Marty in, Berghold 1891, pp. 225-227; Statement of Father Aaron Beede as quoted in, Hoover 1980, pp. 166-167; Discussion with Professor Raymond J. DeMallie, April 30, 2001, Bloomington, Indiana. About James McLaughlin's comments see, chapter 4.) Furthermore, the old Lakota religion, as noted above, did not rule out Christianity as such.

²⁶¹ See, for example, Johnson D. 1956, p. 46; Malm, Einar, *Dödsdans I Dakota*, Stockholm Sweden 1961, p. 92; Smith 1975, p. 106; McLaughlin 1989, p. 192; Mooney 1991, pp. 854-855; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 74-75. About the significance of the pipe see, chapter 3.4.1.

he used the incident on Pine Ridge in which the agent was forced to retreat in front of the ghost dancers. The Indians were to be as brave as ever, since the Great Spirit was ashamed of cowards. He also maintained that the Indians had every right to dance as they pleased on their own reservation.²⁶² Historian, and Sitting Bull's biographer, **Stanley Vestal**, gives an interesting interpretation of Sitting Bull's actions. According to him, Sitting Bull simply told the people they could dance and the weather would be good for that purpose, nothing more. As mentioned above, it seems that, if he tried, Sitting Bull did not receive a vision and remained skeptical. This view is substantiated by several Indian accounts, and also by missionary Mary C. Collins, who knew Sitting Bull well. However, Kicking Bear tried to convince Sitting Bull by claiming that Wakhâ Thâka could easily intervene in the life of the Indians since, according to the Bible the Christian God had done the same for the white people several times. According to **Miller**, his informants also told him that Sitting Bull considered it stupid even to try to resist the power of the whites, saying that the dance was not a very important undertaking and that it would eventually stop.²⁶³

At Standing Rock the ghost dance excitement grew rapidly after Kicking Bear's visit. The agent wanted to arrest Sitting Bull and other "troublemakers," but did not get permission. He demanded that Sitting Bull negotiate with him, but Sitting Bull would not come to the agency, where he would have been at the mercy of the agent and perhaps the army. Sitting Bull probably felt that he was safe only among his own people, far away from the agency (for the location of Sitting Bull's camp see appendix 7, map 4). Catherine Weldon of the Indian Rights Association, a good friend of Sitting Bull, warned him about plans for his arrest. She even tried to plead with the officials not to arrest him.²⁶⁴

²⁶² The Illustrated American, 17, January 1891, p. 328; Boyd 1891, p. 182. For newspaper accounts see, chapter 6.

²⁶³ See, One Bull, Mrs. One Bull and Four Blanket Woman, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 1, Envelope 41; Mary C. Collins, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 3, Envelope, 78. See also, Smith 1975, pp. 103-105; Miller 1985, pp. 100-105; Vestal 1989, p. 278; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 76-77. **Miller's** informants were, among others, One Bull (Sitting Bull's nephew), Henry Kills Alive, Louis Looking Horse and White Bird. (Miller 1985, p. 300)

²⁶⁴ Utley 1963, pp. 100-102; Miller 1985, pp. 112-116; Mooney 1991, p. 848. About Mrs. Catherine Weldon and Sitting Bull see, Johnson W. 1891, p. 187 and pp. 318-331; Smith 1975, pp. 101-103 and pp. 108-110; Miller 1985, pp. 66-69.

In October, dances were organized almost daily on the four Lakota reservations, although according to the original doctrine dances were supposed to be organized only at certain intervals (See chapter 2.3.).²⁶⁵ As the dancers now lived at the campsites, it was easy to keep the dances going on every day. The fact that work on the reservations was left undone, and schools and churches were basically empty, was justified by the ghost dancers, who claimed that they had to go to their own churches, the dance grounds, every day. They had no time to take care of other daily tasks.²⁶⁶

It seems that the sacred shirts mentioned above started to become more common in late October when the ghost dances were also getting more frequent and the number of participants was increasing. At this point tensions rose between the ghost dancers and the agents, and also between the ghost dancers and the non-ghost dancers, and the dancers started to prepare to defend themselves. In this situation the sacred shirt rapidly became an essential part of the Lakota ghost dance religion.²⁶⁷ In defiance of the orders of the agent and the Indian police, the ghost dancers started to kill cattle for food.²⁶⁸ The ghost dancers showed more openly that they were no longer afraid of the authorities.

²⁶⁵ The ghost dance was introduced to Lower Brulé and Crow Creek reservations in November 1890. It was promptly subdued by the agent and the ghost dance never got foothold on these reservations. (See, A.P. Dixon to ACIA (telegram), November 21, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/8-9; Dixon to CIA (telegram), November 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/52; Dixon to CIA (telegram), December 3, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 3/50; ARCIA, 1891, Report of Agent A. P. Dixon, August 28, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, p. 403; ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, p. 126. See also, Schusky 1994, p. 269) For this reason, these two reservations are left out of this study.

²⁶⁶ Torn Belly in, Reynolds to CIA, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/23. See also, Berghold 1891, p. 212; Utley 1963, p. 9 and pp. 96-98; Standing Bear 1975, p. 219.

²⁶⁷ Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 246-248; Malm 1961, p. 60; Mooney 1991, pp. 788-791.

²⁶⁸ Cattle raising was allowed on the Lakota reservations in the 1880s. At first the authorities were afraid of it, because it was too close to the traditional nomadic Lakota life. It might have been a hindrance to their progress on "the white man's road." However, in the Act of 1889 cattle raising was encouraged by promising more land to those who took up ranching. The harsh climate caused problems for cattle as well as for farming, but in some areas it was rather successful. Thus in 1890 the Lakotas had some cattle of their own in addition to the Government annual appropriations. (See, 25 Statutes at Large, Act of 1889, Sec. 8, p. 890. See also, Textor 1896, p. 150; Hoxie 1979, p. 4; Smedman 2001, *passim*.)

3.5.2. Ógle Wakhâ kî – the Sacred Shirt

During the Lakota ghost dance ceremony men, women and children started to wear a special kind of sacred garment prepared only for this purpose. During the ceremony these, which the whites called ghost shirts and the Lakotas knew as ógle wakhâ - sacred shirts, were worn as the primary clothing, but at other times they could be used under other everyday clothes.²⁶⁹ The ghost shirts were made of cloth, and were decorated with symbols of, for example, the sun, the moon, the stars, eagles, crows and buffalos. The colors that were used had their own significance. Red was commonly used because, as mentioned earlier, it was the sacred color of the ghost dance and traditionally the color of the sun. The collars of the shirt were often dyed blue, which was the color of the sky. Other colors, such as yellow, were also used. In addition, the shirts were decorated with feathers; eagle, magpie and crow feathers were especially valued.²⁷⁰ Furthermore, the motifs used in the ghost shirt decorations often symbolized the Lakota belief in world renewal and re-creation, which were important features in, for example, the traditional sun dance. The theme of world renewal was, of course, central to the ghost dance doctrine.²⁷¹

The eagle and the crow were once again extremely important. The eagle and its feathers were traditional symbols for the unity of the Lakota people. The crow feathers were reminiscent of the past, when the crow had acted as a pathfinder for hunting parties.²⁷² In addition to the shirts, the feathers of these birds were also attached to the hair of the dancers, both men and the women. Traditionally,

²⁶⁹ Mooney 1991, pp. 788-790. See also, Wissler 1907, p. 31. In this study these sacred shirts are called ghost shirts in order to avoid confusion.

²⁷⁰ A description of a ghost shirt given by captain George Sword in, Sickels 1892, p. 3; Mooney 1991, pp. 789-790, p. 798 and pp. 919-920; Thomas Tyon, William Garnett, Thunder Bear, George Sword and John Blunt Horn in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), p. 108. See also, Wissler 1907, pp. 31-40; Feher-Elston 1991, p. 92. A thorough study of the symbolism of colors, numbers, decorations and designs used in the ghost dance clothing is presented in, Thomas, Trudy Carter, *Crisis and Creativity: Visual Symbolism of the Ghost Dance Tradition*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University 1988, University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan 1990, pp. 55-202.

²⁷¹ See, Thomas 1988, pp. 190-202.

²⁷² See, for example, *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown J. 1973), p. 6; Brown J. 1997, pp. 32-37. For a comparison of the significance of birds in the traditional Lakota thought, and in the ghost dance see, Thomas 1988, pp. 72-78.

Lakota women never wore feathers, so this feature was a cultural innovation of the ghost dance. Each dancer was supposed to wear either one eagle feather or two crow feathers. The Lakotas believed that when the final whirlwind and flood would come and destroy the earth, these feathers would lift the ghost dancers from the ground to safety. In many visions the eagle also acted as a pathfinder in the spirit world.²⁷³

Only objects that derived from Lakota culture were used to decorate the ghost shirts. For example, metal objects were not used at all as they came from the whites. Many other Indian tribes, however, decorated themselves as beautifully as possible regardless of the origin of the objects used.²⁷⁴ Also Little Wound tells in his description of his vision that no objects from the white culture were to be used (see above). This fact has often been interpreted as a definite sign of hostility the ghost dancers felt toward the whites. Historian **David Miller** gives another, a very simple, explanation. A former ghost dancer told him that the idea came from Kicking Bear “in the heat of the moment” and then just caught on. The idea had no deeper roots.²⁷⁵ It is of interest to note that no firearms were depicted on the ghost shirts, even if bows and arrows were a common motif used as ghost shirt decorations.²⁷⁶

The ghost shirts were not used by all Indian tribes that were practicing the ghost dance. The Southern Cheyennes, for example, heard of these shirts for the first time as late as January 1891, when **Mooney** was among them recording material for his study.²⁷⁷ The origin of these shirts has remained somewhat unclear. Wovoka denied any responsibility and said he never gave any instructions to

²⁷³ Captain George Sword in, Sickels 1892, p. 3; Mooney 1991, pp. 797-798. See also, Feher-Elston 1991, p. 92; Miller 1985, p. 81.

²⁷⁴ Mrs. Z. A. Parker as quoted in, ARCIA 1891, Report of Superintendent of Indian Schools Daniel Dorchester, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 529-531; Mrs. Z. A. Parker as quoted in, Mooney 1991, pp. 916-917. Mrs. Parker says that she had asked why there were no metal objects or other commonly used decorations in the ghost shirts. The reply was that they were forbidden, since they were things brought by the white man. (ibid) See also, Goodale Eastman 1945, pp. 32-33. A comprehensive analysis of the designs and decorations used in the ghost shirts is presented in, Thomas 1988, passim.

²⁷⁵ Miller 1985, p. 60.

²⁷⁶ Thomas 1988, p. 53 and p.122.

²⁷⁷ Mooney 1991, p. 789-790.

make them.²⁷⁸ **Mooney** maintains that the original idea came from the gown used by the Mormons, who were very interested in the Indians and whose influence among the tribes close to the birthplace of the ghost dance had been strong. **Mooney** believes that the idea of this kind of sacred garment passed from tribe to tribe and finally reached the Lakotas.²⁷⁹

Mooney's assumption might be correct, since among the tribes that did use the ghost shirts were the Arapahos and Shoshones, from whom the Lakotas learned about the ghost dance in the first place (See chapter 3.1.). Although **Mooney** assumes that the Lakotas frequently used the ghost shirts as early as June 1890, it is very difficult to establish a definite time when they started to use them. **Mooney** basis his assumption on the eyewitness account quoted in the report of Daniel Dorchester mentioned above, but because **Mooney** misread the date of the report, this automatically renders his assumption of the date the shirts were used incorrect. Therefore there are no eyewitness accounts that would place the ghost shirts in such an early date. For example, Special Agent Elisha B. Reynolds tells in his description of a ghost dance in September 1890, that the dancers did not use any clothing except for leggings and blankets wrapped around their upper body. However, the ghost shirts probably became more common among the Lakotas after Kicking Bear returned from his visit to the Arapahos late in the summer of 1890. This might suggest that the Lakotas really learned about the ghost shirts from the Arapahos, and through Kicking Bear.²⁸⁰ On the other hand medicine man Black Elk claims that he received instructions in a vision that he was to bring a special kind of shirt to his people. He also said that he himself made the first ghost shirt. It is highly possible that Black Elk received his vision of the shirt after

²⁷⁸ See, Boring 1981, p. 50; Feher-Elston 1991, p. 93; Hittman 1997, p.82-86.

²⁷⁹ Mooney 1991, pp. 789-791; Hittman 1997, pp. 82-86. More about the Mormon influence in, for example, Smoak 1986, *passim*.

²⁸⁰ Mrs. Z. A. Parker as quoted in, ARCIA 1891, Report of Superintendent of Indian Schools Daniel Dorchester, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, p. 529; Reynolds to CIA, September 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 1/24. See, Mrs. Z. A. Parker as quoted in, Mooney 1991, pp. 916 and 917. See also, Hyde 1956, p. 250; Utley 1963, p. 76; Mooney 1991, pp. 789-791; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 40-41. It is also noteworthy that neither the army officers nor the press mentioned the ghost shirts before late November 1890. See, chapters 5 and 6.

talking with Kicking Bear. In fact, he even says that he received the vision in a ceremony led by Kicking Bear and Good Thunder.²⁸¹

Whatever the actual origins of the shirts, they became an essential part of the Lakota ghost dance ceremony. On October 17, 1890 Agent James McLaughlin at Standing Rock reported to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan, that Kicking Bear claimed in a speech to Sitting Bull's people that bullets could not harm the Indians. The powder made by the white men would be so weak that the bullets could no longer penetrate the skin of the Indians.²⁸² According to historian **George E. Hyde**, Kicking Bear further claimed that if the Lakotas would wear the sacred shirts, the bullets could not harm anyone, and that the shirts were so powerful the whites could now be destroyed altogether. Whether this speech was the one in which Kicking Bear initially introduced the bulletproof shirt cannot be determined. According to Agent McLaughlin, however, Kicking Bear spoke about the useless powder without mentioning the shirts at all.²⁸³

Short Bull also assured the Lakotas at the end of October that the white man's bullets could no longer harm the Indians. He, however, did not actually mention the bulletproof shirts; he only said that sacred shirts would help the ghost dancers if soldiers were to attack them.²⁸⁴

Even though the origin of the ghost shirts might be uncertain, it is clear that their bulletproof nature is a Lakota idea; no other tribe gave them such a feature. It

²⁸¹ Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 245-248; *The Sixth Grandfather* (ed. DeMallie 1985), pp. 259-262.

²⁸² McLaughlin to CIA, October 17, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/31-33. The letter is published partly also in, ARCIA 1891, The Report of James McLaughlin October 17, 1890 in, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 126-127. See also, Brown D 1996, p. 454; Miller 1985, p. 100.

²⁸³ McLaughlin to CIA, October 17, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/31-33. See, Hyde 1956, p. 248. Hyde does not tell where he got this information. **Larson** implies that the bulletproof shirts would have been used already in May 1890, but that is highly unlikely. (Larson 1997, p. 269) Kicking Bear's speech is also published in the memoirs of Agent James McLaughlin. The speech was repeated to McLaughlin by One Bull who was Sitting Bull's nephew, but at that time was also a member of the Indian police force at Standing Rock (McLaughlin 1989, pp. 185-189). Kicking Bear's speech is in, Appendix 11.

²⁸⁴ See, Short Bull in, ARSOW 1891, Report of the Major-General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. II, Serial 2921, pp. 142-143. The speech is also published in, Mooney 1991, p. 788-789. See, Appendix 12.

might be that the Lakota idea of the bulletproof shirts derived originally from Wovoka, who, among other miracles, let someone take a shot at him, but remained unharmed.²⁸⁵ Kicking Bear, Short Bull, or the other delegates might have seen or heard also about this miracle on their journey to meet Wovoka. It is also noteworthy that shirts impervious to arrows and bullets were an old cultural trait among the plains Indians.²⁸⁶

The final assurance of the power of the shirts was received through visions, such as that of Little Wound (see above).²⁸⁷ Like many other visions, those of bulletproof shirts ended up in songs:²⁸⁸

Mióñ'ǵa kǵ chic'ú che,	Verily, I have given you my strength,
Até héye lo,	Says the father,
Até héye lo,	Says the father,
Ógle kǵ nínȳi kte,	The shirt will cause you to live,
Até héye lo,	Says the father,
Até héye lo.	Says the father.

Belief in the protective features of the shirts grew rapidly as their power was affirmed in visions and songs. The belief in them was also strengthened by highly regarded leaders and medicine men, including Kicking Bear, Short Bull, Black Elk and Little Wound, who preached about that power - and indeed also undoubtedly believed in it. Short Bull, at least, seemed to have been fully convinced of the power of the ghost shirts; many years later told James Walker, the doctor at Pine Ridge, that the "... ghost shirt is Wakan. It is impervious to missiles."²⁸⁹ The ghost dancers had absolutely no reason to question the power of the shirts. In addition, all kinds of stories soon started to spread concerning people who were protected by the shirts. One eyewitness, for example, told about a

²⁸⁵ Phister 1891, p. 107; Danberg 1968, pp. 13-15; Thornton 1987, p. 149; Hittman 1997, pp. 82-86.

²⁸⁶ Discussion with Professor Raymond J. DeMallie, December 25, 2000, Bloomington, Indiana.

²⁸⁷ The Illustrated American, 17, January 1891, pp. 330-331.

²⁸⁸ Mooney 1991, pp. 1072-1073. Another song that refers to the ghost shirt is in, Mooney 1991, p. 1072. See also, Powers W. 1990, p. 21; Wildhage 1991, p. 27.

²⁸⁹ Short Bull in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), p. 143.

young girl who had struck herself with a knife, but the knife did not penetrate her shirt.²⁹⁰

The use of the ghost shirts reflects the Lakotas' traditional customs and beliefs. In traditional warfare the shields that were decorated with sacred symbols protected them from the enemies' weapons. In fact, the shield's power was rather in the symbols and paintings than in the material that was used. The Lakotas also believed that special paintings on the body of the warrior protected him and could make him bulletproof. The symbols for these paintings were derived from visions. This was the case, for example, with Crazy Horse, who was thought to be bulletproof. The same principle applied to the ghost shirt. The material was not important; the power was in its sacredness and in the sacred symbols.²⁹¹

When the ghost shirts are considered in this context it is no wonder that the ghost dancers believed their medicine men and leaders who told about the power of the shirts. The protective nature of the shirt made it easier for the Lakotas to maintain their belief in the ghost dance. With these shirts there was no need to be afraid of the Indian police or the white men. Even when tensions between the Lakotas and the whites increased, the ghost dancers could defy the whites and even the U.S. army with their new sacred shirts. Thus, as the tensions rose, there seemed to be a kind of *social call* for these miraculous shirts. The bulletproof ghost shirts united the ghost dancers both before and after the arrival of the military. In that sense it can be said that the ghost shirts added to the ghost dancers' defiant and warlike feeling. George Sword claimed that, since the enemy's bullets could not penetrate

²⁹⁰ The Illustrated American, 17, January 1891, p. 333; Wissler 1907, pp. 33-39; Utley 1963, p. 165.

²⁹¹ Mooney 1991, pp. 789-790. See also, Thunder Bear in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), pp. 270-281; James R. Walker in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 99-107. For an analysis of traditional protective designs and paintings used in shields and in the ghost shirts see, Thomas 1988, pp. 121-155. A good analysis of the significance of the shield in Plains Indian cultures can be found in, Hämäläinen Riku, *Tasankointiaanien kilvet uskonnollisina esineinä ja kulttuuristen muutosten ilmentäjinä*, Unpublished Licentiate Thesis, University of Helsinki, Helsinki Finland 2001, passim.; Hämäläinen, Riku, *The Study of the Plains Indian Shields. Some observations concerning previous studies and future tasks* in, *Styles and Positions: Ethnographic perspectives in comparative religion* (ed. Sakaranaho, Tuula, Sjöblom Tom, Utriainen, Terhi & Pesonen, Heikki) Helsinki Finland 2002, pp. 250-270. Vivid Lakota descriptions of Crazy Horse's "war-medicine" can be found in, the Eli S. Ricker Manuscript Collection. See also, Sandoz 1992, pp. 103-106; Sajna 2000, 139-146.

the shirts, the ghost dancers had "...these dresses for war."²⁹² However, as the vision of Little Wound explains, the shirts would protect the wearer from "... the bullets of any whites that desired to stop the Messiah Dance..."²⁹³

The growing excitement, the more intense and frequent dancing, and appearance of the ghost shirts started to worry the whites. Many began to feel that the frequent dancing was a sign that the Indians were preparing for war.²⁹⁴

3.5.3. Incidents on Pine Ridge and Rosebud

On October 27, Major General Nelson A. Miles visited Pine Ridge. He tried to convince the ghost dancers that it would be better to give up the new religion.²⁹⁵ Little Wound told the general that the Indians would stop living like white men and planned to dance as long as they pleased. Little Wound wanted the Lakotas to be Indians again and as a token of this, he invited people to join him in a great dance and feast where plenty of beef would be available. He wanted the general to tell all this to the president. It is remarkable that the Indians dared to use such hard words to a general of the U.S. army. It demonstrates how firmly they believed in the power of the ghost dance.²⁹⁶

Red Cloud, however, seemed to play a balancing role between the two sides. On several occasions he stated that he did not take part in the ghost dance. Red Cloud, however, allowed his son Jack Red Cloud to act as a leader in the ceremonies.

²⁹² Captain George Sword in, Sickels 1992, p. 31. See, Mooney 1991, p. 798.

²⁹³ The Illustrated American, 17, January 1891, pp. 330-331. See also, Appendix 12.

²⁹⁴ DeMallie 1982, p. 392-393. See, The Illustrated American, 17, January 1891, pp. 327-328. The general feeling among the whites is well illustrated in the newspapers, which are studied in, chapter 6.

²⁹⁵ Major General Nelson A. Miles was the Commander of the Division of Missouri and one of those military leaders who had subdued the tribes, including the Lakotas, during the 1870s. See, for example, Mattes, Merrill J, *The Enigma of Wounded Knee*, Plains Anthropologist, Vol. V, No. 9, May 1960, p. 3; Andrist 1969, pp. 286-300; Wooster, Robert, *The Military and United States Indian Policy 1865-1903*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1988, pp 65-66; Brown D 1996, pp. 292-333. More about General Miles' visit in, chapter 5.

²⁹⁶ Little Wound as quoted in, Royer to ACIA, October 30, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/48-49. See, Hyde 1956, p. 260; Utley 1963, pp. 104-105; Mooney 1991, p. 849.

Without too profound conclusion this might be seen as a sign of sympathy the old chief felt for the ghost dancers.²⁹⁷

On October 31, Short Bull announced to the Lakotas, who had gathered to listen to him at Rosebud that because the white men were interfering too much, he would shorten the time of the coming of the new world. He promised that all the beautiful things would happen after one more moon instead of the next spring as previously expected. Thus Short Bull took upon himself the position that had originally been Wovoka's - he made himself the Messiah and the fulfiller of the promises. He urged all believers to join together to dance for a month at Pass Creek, which was situated between Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations (See appendix 7, map 4). He promised that, if the soldiers came, he would instruct three men wearing the sacred shirts to sing, and that would cause the soldiers to fall off their horses and die. The ghost shirts would protect them from all evil, so there was no need to be afraid. Short Bull's speech reflects his personal combination of Lakota traditions, Wovoka's doctrine, and Christianity.²⁹⁸

Short Bull's speech, promising the earlier coming of the paradise led the Brulés and Oglalas to start moving toward the meeting point at Pass Creek. Kicking Bear also arrived, and Sitting Bull was urged to leave Standing Rock and join them.²⁹⁹

Short Bull emphasized that the supernatural powers would destroy the whites only if they attacked the ghost dancers. They would help only if the Indians had to defend themselves. **Utley**, however, states that in the minds of many Lakotas who were "...animated by religious excitement and driven by hatred of the whites" the

²⁹⁷ See, for example, Red Cloud to T. A. Bland, December 10, 1890 in, Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., December 19, 1890, pp. 702-703; Red Cloud as quoted in, Charles A. Eastman to Frank Wood (forwarded to ACIA), November 11, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/98-100. See also, Olson 1965, p. 327-328; Utley 1963, p. 104; Larson 1997, pp. 267-269 and p. 275. When Red Cloud's actions during the ghost dance troubles are studied, it has to be taken into account that he was already an old man, approximately 66, and he was going blind. (ibid.) See, Royer to ACIA, October 30, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/48-49. See also, chapter 4.

²⁹⁸ Short Bull as quoted in, ARSOW 1891, Report of the Major-General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. II, Serial, 2921, pp. 142-143. See also, Mooney 1991, pp. 788-789 and p. 849. For an interpretation of Short Bull's speech see, DeMallie 1982, pp. 394-395. The speech is in, Appendix 12.

²⁹⁹ Utley 1963, p. 106; Miller 1985, pp. 119-120; Mooney 1991, p. 788-790. Approximately 1,800 Indians from Rosebud moved toward Pine Ridge. See, chapter 4.

differences between defense and attack disappeared. According to him, talking about a holy war against the whites increased. This view, however, is not substantiated by Indian accounts used in this study.³⁰⁰

On November 11, the Indian police at Pine Ridge tried to arrest an Indian who was accused of killing some cattle. Two hundred angry ghost dancers led by Jack Red Cloud surrounded the policemen. When American Horse, who opposed the ghost dance, tried to intervene, Jack Red Cloud put a gun to his head and threatened to kill him. Finally the chief's brave demeanor resolved the situation. The policemen, however, failed to perform their duty.³⁰¹ The ghost dancers had once again gained a victory over the Indian police and the agent, but the life of a Lakota chief had been threatened. When this incident is studied, it has to be taken into account that the hostility between the Red Cloud faction and American Horse faction was old. The rivalry between these two groups had been going on for years. This incident, however, showed that the Lakotas were clearly divided into two groups, the ghost dancers and non-ghost dancers.³⁰² The people were almost ready to fight against each other. After this incident the general feeling on Pine Ridge was extremely tense.³⁰³

The fact that the ghost shirts created a sense of security, since there was no longer any any fear of being killed by the whites must be regarded as factors contributing to the growing ghost dance excitement. When Short Bull in addition promised that intensive dancing for one more month would hasten the arrival of the new world, enthusiasm rose dramatically. From the end of September a more defiant attitude toward the authorities increased among the ghost dancers. It is, however, important to notice that these tensions between the ghost dancers and the non-

³⁰⁰ Utley 1963, p. 106-107. See also, The Illustrated American, 17, January 1891, p. 328.

³⁰¹ See, Reynolds to CIA, September 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/22-23; Robert O. Pugh, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12. See also, Eastman 1980, p. 94-95; Miller 1985, pp. 127-130. More about the old rivalry within the Oglala people see, Hyde 1937, pp. 55-57; Olson 1965, pp. 19-21.

³⁰² Although the division followed the progressive-non-progressive line to some extent, these groups will from now on be referred to as the ghost dancers and the non-ghost dancers when their attitudes directly toward the ghost dance are described. These terms illustrate the situation better, and do not reflect the contemporary white attitudes. When the words non-progressive and progressive, or hostiles and friendlies are used, they describe these groups as understood by the contemporary whites, and do not necessarily relate to the ghost dance.

³⁰³ Eastman 1916, p. 95; Mooney 1991, p. 848.

ghost dancers were often manifested in clashes with the Indian police; the ghost dancers did not threaten the white population on the reservations.

Some individuals, like Kicking Bear, Short Bull and perhaps also Sitting Bull, strengthened this defiant attitude. However, these three men alone cannot be personally blamed for the increase of the excitement. The importance of the medicine men and other leaders should not be underestimated. As religious leaders and interpreters of visions the medicine men could use their influence to guide the ghost dancers in the direction they wanted or in the direction that became *necessary* after the arrival of the military. The problem in any study of their influence and motives is that only a few records are left for us to study. Still, medicine man Black Elk gives us a rare glimpse into the ideas of a religious leader. He said that his goal in the ghost dance was to try to restore the unity of the Lakota people and to make all Lakotas walk again “the good red road.” No idea of using the ghost dance for war, let alone for a “holy war” as suggested by **Utley**, is present in Black Elk’s memoirs. The ghost dance was only a way to help the Lakota people.³⁰⁴ Traditionally it has been said that at least Sitting Bull saw the new religion as a last chance to lead a struggle against the whites, but that view has to be doubted. There is no reason, however, to doubt the sincere belief Kicking Bear and Short Bull had in the message they were preaching.

As the excitement and the possibility of war increased some Lakotas perhaps saw their chances to once more excel on the battlefield. In part, that might explain the “warlike” reputation that the ghost dance acquired. But even if the ghost dance represented for some Lakotas a chance to gain military honor, it does not mean that they were not sincere believers at the same time. Despite some changes in the original doctrine, there is no indication that the Lakota ghost dancers were hostile toward the whites when the ceremonies were first started on the Lakota

³⁰⁴ Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, p. 242; Utley 2963, p. 106. See also, Little Wound, Kicking Bear, Two Strike and American Horse as quoted in, Colby 1892, pp. 186-190. About the symbolic meaning of the good red road, and the black road of error and destruction, see, *The Sacred Pipe* (ed. Brown J. 1973), p. 7.

reservations. The Lakota ghost dancers became hostile, or warlike, only when the whites tried to interfere with their religious ceremonies.³⁰⁵

3.5.4. The Flight of the Frightened, the Stronghold and a Battle

The excitement on the Lakota reservations led finally on November 20, 1890, to the arrival of U.S. army troops at Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations. Their intervention was prompted by several excited communications from the new Lakota agents, especially from Agent Daniel F. Royer. For the first time in almost a decade the Lakotas found themselves face to face with the U.S. army.³⁰⁶

Although the Lakotas were struggling with their agents almost from the beginning of their reservation life, during the 1880s, however, they did not take matters so far that the army would have been called on the scene.³⁰⁷ The power of the United States army was well known and it was feared. The arrival of the army caused much confusion and panic among the Indians on Pine Ridge and Rosebud. In fear of possible military actions, hundreds of the so-called progressives arrived close to the agencies to show their friendly attitude, but hundreds also fled the soldiers to the ghost dancers' camps. Both Charles Eastman, a doctor at Pine Ridge Agency, and Luther Standing Bear described the "friendly" Indians at Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations as extremely frightened and panic-stricken.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Little Wound, Kicking Bear, Two Strike and American Horse as quoted in, Colby 1892, pp. 186-190. See also, DeMallie 1982, p. 393-394.

³⁰⁶ See, for example, Royer to ACIA, October 30, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/47-50. Published also in, ARSOW 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 144; Royer to CIA (telegram), November 15, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/91-92. Published also in, ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, p. 128. See also, Hyde 1956, p. 263; Uitley 1963; p. 109; Mooney 1991, p. 849. More about the developments leading to the troops' arrival in, chapters 4 and 5.

³⁰⁷ Most notable, as noted in chapter 2.2.3, was the seven-year long struggle of Red Cloud and Agent Valentine T. McGillicuddy at Pine Ridge. This power struggle came to an end when the agent was relieved from duty in 1887. It is also worth mentioning that despite extreme tensions on Pine Ridge, the agent never called for the army. The agent himself said that both he and Red Cloud understood the situation perfectly, and from the first moments they realized that they were rivals. From that point on it was a battle of wills. See, for example, Valentine T. McGillicuddy, IULL, WMCC, Box 4, Folder 3, Envelope 4; ARCIA 1883, Report of Agent Valentine T. McGillicuddy, August 10, 1883, p. 35; ARCIA 1884, Report of Agent Valentine T. McGillicuddy, September 1, 1884, House Executive Document No. 1, 48th Cong., 2nd Sess, Vol. 12, Serial 2287, p. 81. See also, Olson 1965, pp. 282-286; Larson 1997, pp. 217-248.

³⁰⁸ Eastman 1916, pp. 100-101; Mattes 1960, p. 3; Standing Bear 1975, p. 223.

At first the arrival of the troops caused confusion among the ghost dancers. However, the dances on Pine Ridge were continued, at least in the camps of Little Wound, Big Road and No Water. Little Wound acted as the principal leader. **Utley** and **Miller** claim that on November 21 and 22, his warriors rode around the reservation urging people to join the ghost dancers. They announced that they were planning to dance all winter and were ready to defend themselves if the army attacked. They were not going to initiate hostilities, but if necessary they could humiliate the army as they had humiliated the Indian police and the agent.³⁰⁹ According to one ghost dancer, however, they were riding around the reservation that night singing their ghost dance songs, because they wanted to be ready to flee if the soldiers charged their village. “The priests called upon the young men at this juncture not to become angry but to continue the dance...We did not carry our guns nor any weapons, but trusted to the Great Spirit to destroy the soldiers,” he explained later.³¹⁰

After the arrival of the troops several hundred, perhaps as many as 1,100 Brulés, started to move camp toward the western border of Rosebud Reservation. Under the leadership of Two Strike and Crow Dog, they planned to meet with Short Bull and his followers in order to join the Oglalas at Pine Ridge. On the way some 700 Oglalas, who had been living close to the border of the reservation joined the Brulés, making the total force grow to approximately 1,800 people.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ Utley 1963, p. 117; Miller 1985, pp. 137-138.

³¹⁰ Weasel as quoted in, Boyd 1891, pp. 194-195.

³¹¹ Two Strike and Crow Dog as quoted in, Colby 1892, pp. 187-189; George Little Wound, NSHS, ESRMC, M3544, Reel 4, Box 6, Tablet 32. See also, Utley 1963, p. 118; Mooney 1991, p. 850-852. These 700 Oglalas were dissatisfied, because they had been forced to move from their homes due to the new line of the reservation border, established by the act of 1889. Their location had caused problems during the census and they were not allowed to move to Pine Ridge, even if they wanted. (Gallagher to CIA, July 18, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, pp. 327-328.) About the borders see, 25 U.S. Statutes at Large, Act of 1889, Sec. 1-2, pp. 888-890. In general, the problem of reservation borders had been going on for several years. An old Indian commentary was that “... why does not the white man take boundaries made by God, like the rivers and mountain ranges or buttes?” (“An Indian Joke”, IULL, WMCC Box 4, Folder 3, Envelope 4) The issue of the borderlines became a major problem both during the negotiations of 1888 and 1889. By this time the Indians clearly understood the importance of new borderlines and they were strongly opposed to all new arrangements. Although they still had difficulties in understanding the maps the commissioners showed them, they realized the main thing – the borderlines were not what they were promised in treaties. For more information see, 50th Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 17, Vol. I, Serial, 2610, passim.; 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 51, Vol. V, Serial 2682, passim. See also, chapter 4.

The news of the arrival of the troops led also to the unification of the Cheyenne River ghost dancers under two chiefs. Altogether approximately 600-700 Minneconjous were dancing in the camps of Big Foot and Hump. At this point both men were true believers in the ghost dance. According to Agent Perain P. Palmer, Big Foot urged all believers to stay together and to gather as much arms and ammunition as possible. The whites considered Hump to be so dangerous that they did not even dare to contact him. Progressive Indians, who visited the camp on November 22, informed Agent Palmer that the ghost dancers were prepared to fight at any moment.³¹² In November, Sitting Bull was leading the dancers on Standing Rock Reservation, although the Indian police and Agent McLaughlin were watching them closely.³¹³

The arrival of the troops did not calm the Indians as the military and other officials expected.³¹⁴ On the contrary, it united the ghost dancers, and caused hundreds of frightened Indians to flee their homes and seek protection among the ghost dancers. In fear of being treated as hostiles by the army, others decided to leave their homes in order to seek protection at the agencies. They sought to cooperate with the army. For example, 40 Oglalas were immediately recruited as scouts.³¹⁵ In this sense, the arrival of the U.S. army led to a deepening split within the Lakotas; they became divided into ghost dancers and non-ghost dancers. Therefore the military's presence caused much tensions and confusion among the Indians.

The presence of the military on Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations made the tensions to mount between the whites and the Indians also. Several delegations of chiefs and army scouts who were not engaged in the ghost dancing, but whom the ghost dancers knew, went to their camps to try to negotiate with them. Suddenly, on November 27, their efforts bore fruit when Little Wound and Big Road brought their people close to Pine Ridge Agency announcing that they had left the ghost

³¹² ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Nelson A. Miles, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 147. See also, Mooney 1991, pp. 861-862. More about Agent Palmer in, chapter 4.

³¹³ Zahn 1940, p. 3; Malm 1961, pp. 164-166; Hagan 1966, p. 100.

³¹⁴ Wooster 1988, p. 193-194. More about the army's strategy in, chapter 5.

³¹⁵ Eastman 1916, p. 101; Utley 1963, p. 118; Miller 1985, pp. 139-140

dancers. The events leading to their decision remain somewhat unclear, but perhaps the “overwhelming show of force” by the army had affected them, or, perhaps Little Wound, who had been a Christian before joining the ghost dancers, had begun to doubt the new religion.³¹⁶

The defection of the two chiefs did not affect the rest of the ghost dancers, now led by Two Strike, Short Bull and Kicking Bear. This group consisted of several hundred Brulé and Oglala men, women and children. Their goal was to travel to the Badlands in the northern part of Pine Ridge Reservation, where they sought protection on a plateau that was easy to defend. On their way to this Stronghold, or onâži - place of shelter, as they called it, the Indians destroyed some property and stole cattle owned by Indians and mixed bloods who had left their homes and moved to the agency. The Stronghold was an ideal place for defense. All the routes were easy to guard and defend. The plateau was practically invincible, and it offered food and water for the people and animals (See appendix 13, map 7).³¹⁷

The destruction the ghost dancers caused worried the non-ghost dancers living at the agencies. It seemed that not even the army could stop them from plundering. Even the property of American Horse was destroyed. According to **George E. Hyde**, for some Christian and progressive Lakotas these acts were convincing evidence that the ghost dance was stronger than Christianity; consequently they turned their backs on the white man’s civilization and joined the ghost dancers.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Hyde 1956, p. 271; Utley 1963, pp. 120-121; Smith 1975, p. 134.

³¹⁷ See, Two Strike and Short Bull as quoted in, Coleman W. 2000, pp. 112-114. Descriptions of the Stronghold can be found in, for example, Malm 1961, p. 159; Utley 1963, pp. 121-122; Smith 1975, pp. 134-135; Standing Bear 1975, pp. 226-227; Miller 1985, pp. 152-158; *The Sixth Grandfather* (ed. DeMallie 1985), p. 269; Mooney 1991, pp. 852-853. After the trouble several hundred Lakotas filed claims for the depredations the ghost dancers caused. Special Agent James A. Cooper conducted an investigation where he found that 744 of these claims were acceptable, and altogether \$98,383.46 was finally appropriated for these claimants. Interestingly among the 744 Lakotas who received money were Short Bull, No Water, Jack Red Cloud, Red Cloud and Big Road, all more or less accused of being ghost dance leaders. (52nd Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 93, Vol. 8, Serial 3062, pp. 1-13. See also, Paul, Eli R., *Dakota Resources: The Investigation of Special Agent Cooper and Property Damage Claims in the Winter of 1890-1891*, *South Dakota History*, Vol. 24, No. 3-4, 1994, passim.)

³¹⁸ Hyde 1956, p. 270 and p. 272. Hyde does not give any source for this information.

Red Cloud



Denver Public Library

Kicking Bear



Denver Public Library

Sitting Bull



Denver Public Library

Short Bull



Denver Public Library

A Sioux Drawing of the Ghost Dance



Mooney, James, The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890

A Ghost Dance



Denver Public Library

A Lakota Camp



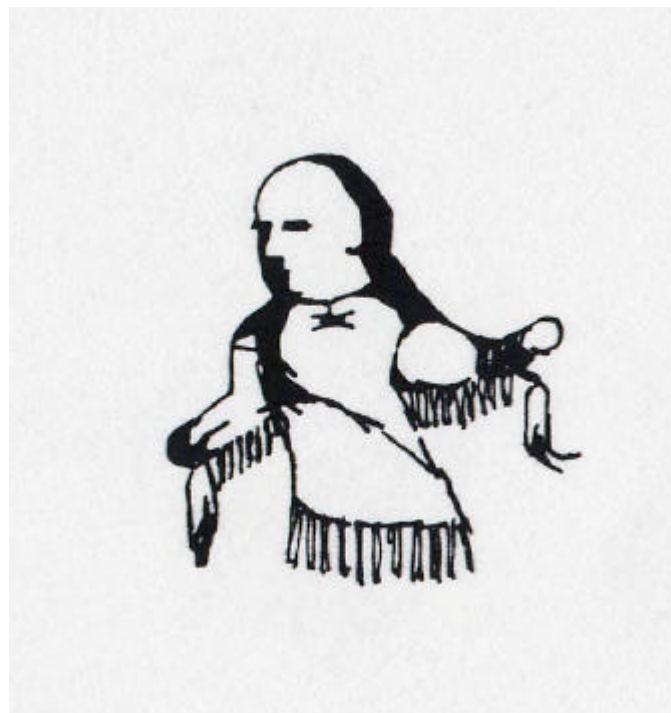
Denver Public Library

A Ghost Shirt



Adapted from Thomas, Trudy Carter, *Crisis and Creativity: Visual Symbolism of the Ghost Dance Tradition*

Lakota Wintercount of 1890: The Year When Big Foot Was Killed



Adapted from Cheney, Roberta C., *The Big Missouri Wintercount*

By joining the ghost dancers and even turning sometimes to violence, a few educated Lakotas sought to show that they were still part of the Lakota people, despite having attended white man's schools. An extreme example of this is the case of Plenty Horses (ᠮᠠᠰᠢᠵᠢᠬᠡ ᠣᠲᠠ), who in January 1891 shot an army officer. When asked later why he did it, he simply said that now he had shown that he was a Lakota.³¹⁹ This and few other cases show clearly the difficult situation in which many of the progressive Indians found themselves. **Miller** gives the example of a girl who had been a devoted Christian. She visited the mission church, left her belongings there, and went away to join her ghost-dancing relatives. She could not leave her family despite her Christian beliefs. Another example as told by Luther Standing Bear, is the case of Hollow Horn Bear (ᠮᠠᠲᠤ ᠬᠡ ᠬᠣᠯᠦᠭᠡᠴᠠ), who only wanted to go and see the ceremony, but never returned to the progressive camp.³²⁰

By the end of November and early December the ghost dancers from Rosebud gathered at the Stronghold, and dancing was resumed. Oglala ghost dancers from Pine Ridge and Kicking Bear from Cheyenne River also arrived. This made the total strength of the ghost dance camp approximately 3,000 people. In the Stronghold old Lakota camp activities were put into effect. The camp circle was formed in a traditional manner, with the opening to the east. In the eastern part were the Brulés and next to them the Sans Arcs. Some Minneconjous were in the west and the Oglalas formed the southern part of the circle. Some Two Kettles were among the Brulés. Only Sitting Bull's Hunkpapas, and the Minneconjous led by Hump and Big Foot, were missing. The absence of the Hunkpapas left the place at the opening of the camp circle for the Brulés. The camp was in wartime mode and Kicking Bear took the role of the head war leader (ᠪᠣᠯᠲᠠᠬᠤᠭᠠ).³²¹ The stronghold camp was probably the biggest Lakota camp since the Little Big Horn.³²² From the Stronghold the ghost dancers carried out raids to capture livestock from the ranches of Indians and mixed bloods inside the reservation, but

³¹⁹ About Plenty Horses and the killing of Lieutenant Casey see, for example, ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, no. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, p. 132. See also, Utley, 1984, p. 245.

³²⁰ Standing Bear 1975, pp. 221-222; Miller 1985, pp. 91-93 and pp. 139-140.

³²¹ About the traditional role of the *ᠪᠣᠯᠲᠠᠬᠤᠭᠠ* see, chapter 2.

³²² Utley 1963, p. 121; Smith 1975, pp. 133-135; Miller 1985, pp. 152-158; Mooney 1991, p. 851.

they never committed any depredations outside the reservation. The Stronghold was to be their sanctuary until the coming of the new world.³²³

During the latter part of November and early days of December the non-ghost dancers gathered closer to the agencies for fear of possible military actions. At Pine Ridge, the people of Little Wound and Big Road had now moved closer to the agency, but were not allowed to join the “real” progressives, since the commanding general did not trust them. Many of the people still spoke in favor of the ghost dance and came to the agency only out of fear of the army, because their chiefs had wanted to, or because food was issued there. Several thousand Oglalas living at Pine Ridge were gathered around the agency.³²⁴

The people gathered at the Stronghold were dancing frequently. They had fortified the area, making the natural fortress even more inaccessible. However, they soon realized that they were surrounded by troops. Almost daily from the beginning of December they received emissaries, mainly Indian scouts and progressive chiefs, sent by General Brooke, who tried to use the tactics of negotiation rather than open warfare.³²⁵ According to these emissaries, the feeling among the ghost dancers was very sullen, the emissaries were even shot at, and they told about fanatical speeches given by Kicking Bear and Short Bull. The dances were also growing very intense; the people were planning to dance all winter. They believed that they had enough food and water, and that the army could not attack them there. After several days of negotiation, the ghost dance leaders announced that they did not want to talk about surrender, they were sure there was only prison waiting for them if they gave up. They wanted to die in freedom and planned to defend their final sanctuary until the end. Furthermore, they expressed their dissatisfaction for the reduction that had been made in their rations. They also

³²³ Man Above, NSHS, ESRMC, M3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, p. 131. See, Short Bull and Two Strike as quoted in, Coleman W. 2000, pp. 112-114. See also, Miller 1985, p. 301.

³²⁴ Miles to the Adjutant General (from now on AG), (telegram), November 24, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll. 1, Vol. 1, p. 209 and p. 219. See also, Colby 1892, p. 152; Uteley 1963, p. 135; Standing Bear 1975, pp. 219-221.

³²⁵ Man Above, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12. See, Johnson W. 1891, pp. 304-310; Miller 1985, pp. 162-152; Kreis, Karl Markus, *Rothäute, Schwartzröcke und Heilige Frauen. Deutsche Berichte aus den Lakota-Missionen in den Reservationen Rosebud und Pine Ridge (Sud-Dakota) 1886-1891*, Fachhochschule Dortmund Germany 1999, pp. 83-84.

complained about the new reservation boundaries established by the Act of 1889.³²⁶

The Lakotas gathered at Pine Ridge Agency also wanted to talk to their former Agent Valentine T. McGillicuddy, who had arrived at the reservation as an emissary from the governor of South Dakota. Even Red Cloud, who opposed McGillicuddy when he was the agent, welcomed him. Red Cloud considered him a man of courage, since he never called for the army. The Indians told the former agent that they were suspicious of the army, and hoped he could have them sent away. Also, the people in the Stronghold wanted to talk with McGillicuddy rather than with the emissaries sent by General Brooke. However, McGillicuddy was not able to, or rather General Brooke did not allow him to, contribute significantly to matters at Pine Ridge, and he left without accomplishing anything.³²⁷

One of the emissaries sent by General Brooke was Father John Jutz, a Catholic priest. This man, according to Black Elk, was the black robe who came out and persuaded some of the chiefs to go to the agency for negotiations. Indeed, on December 7, Father Jutz led a delegation of Lakota ghost dancers to Pine Ridge Agency. Two Strike came riding in a wagon and was surrounded by fully armed warriors. The ghost dancers had decided to come to the agency in war regalia to make an impression, but agreed to give up their arms during the negotiations. Many expressed willingness to leave the Stronghold, but feared to come closer to the agency as requested by General Brooke. They explained that there was not enough food for the horses and cattle near the agency. During the negotiations the ghost dancers and the Indians already at the agency held a great feast and a dance together, but no real results were achieved. The delegation returned to the ghost dance camp.³²⁸

³²⁶ Man Above, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12. See also, Hyde 1956, p. 274; Standing Bear 1975, p. 227; Smith 1975, pp. 143-145; Kreis 1999, p. 84. About the new borders see above.

³²⁷ Utley 1963, p. 120; McGillicuddy 1969, pp. 259-263; Miller 1985, pp. 142-152.

³²⁸ Johnson W. 1891, pp. 304-310 and pp. 414-419; Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, p. 252; Miller 1985, pp. 169-171; Kreis 1999, pp. 102-103. The footnote in Black Elk Speaks says that the Black robe was Father J. M. Craft, but according to other sources, it was Father John Jutz. (Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, p. 252) The work by Karl Markus Kreis is interesting, because it contains discussions between the ghost dance leaders and Father John Jutz taken from the father's personal accounts, which can be found at Marquette University, and were published by Kreis with very little editing. (Kreis 1999, preface) See also, Short Bull as quoted in, Coleman W. 2000, p. 115.

Kicking Bear and Short Bull tried to use all their influence in order to keep the ghost dancers united. To show the power of the ghost shirts, one ghost dancer agreed to be shot at while wearing the sacred shirt. In the end the experiment turned against the ghost dance as the man was seriously wounded; the shirt failed to protect him. A number of other miracles promised by the ghost dance apostles were not fulfilled, and all these caused friction among the ghost dancers. Many lost their faith in the new religion.³²⁹

This friction among the people in the Stronghold deepened partly due to these incidents, but also because of the effect that the emissaries General Brooke continued to send had on the ghost dancers. These delegations were led by mixed-blood interpreter Louis Shangrau and few prominent Oglalas. They reported that a dance had been continuing for more than 30 hours, and feelings were very intense. Short Bull replied angrily to all requests of coming in. The general feeling among the ghost dancers was that the army was not to be trusted; they would kill all the ghost dancers in retaliation for their depredations. Short Bull wanted the people to remember what had happened to Crazy Horse after he surrendered in 1877.³³⁰ The dance continued for three more days. Finally, on December 12, when Two Strike and Crow Dog announced that the time to surrender had arrived, the ghost dancers came close to fighting each other. After some skirmishing, more than half of the Oglalas and some of the Brulés started to move their camps toward Pine Ridge Agency.³³¹ The ghost dancers' unity was broken. Only a few hundred of the most committed ghost dancers remained with Short Bull and Kicking Bear in the Stronghold. They continued to raid the nearby farms under Kicking Bear's

³²⁹ Hyde 1956, pp. 274-275; Miller 1985, p. 171. According to **Hyde**, the apostles had, among other things, promised that there would be no winter at all, but in December 1890 the cold weather arrived as always. (Hyde 1956, p. 274-275)

³³⁰ About the death of Crazy Horse see, for example, Sandoz 1992, pp. 259-262; Sajna 2000, pp. 320-324. See also, chapter 2.2.2.

³³¹ Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 252-253; Smith 1975, pp. 143-145; Miller 1985, pp 172-174. Short Bull himself later noted that he urged the ghost dancers to go back to the agency, sell their ponies, and with the money, pay for the cattle they had killed. He did not want any trouble and did not like the idea of killing other people's cattle. (Short Bull as quoted in, Coleman W. 2000, pp. 165-166) Whether this was an attempt by Short Bull to defend himself, or an actual description of the event, can not be determined. Still, the document **Coleman** uses, sheds additional light on the matter.

leadership. Some shots were exchanged with local cowboys, but the skirmishing caused no casualties.³³²

At Standing Rock the situation among Sitting Bull's ghost dancers remained unchanged, Agent McLaughlin still closely watched them. Sitting Bull had stayed at his camp on the Grand River 40 miles from the agency (See appendix 7, map 4). He did not respond to the requests made by the agent to come to the agency for talks. One Indian policeman tried to persuade Sitting Bull to put an end to the ghost dances and to come to the agency. In response to the policeman's request, Sitting Bull replied that he wanted to have nothing to do with the Indian police. He wanted the policemen to remember the old times when the young men had depended on him and he in turn could depend on them. But now, he continued, "...you have turned with the whites against me. I have nothing to say to you." Sitting Bull, however, did not refuse to talk with the agent, but it had to happen in his own camp where he could feel safe.³³³

During a meeting with Agent McLaughlin at Sitting Bull's camp, Sitting Bull suggested that he would like to make a journey to the west with the agent. There they could decide together whether the new religion was true or not. Although Sitting Bull promised that he would stop the dances if the story of the Messiah turned out to be false, the agent never warmed to the idea and the journey was never made.³³⁴

Dances were organized in Sitting Bull's camp throughout November. Early in December he was believed to be planning a trip to the Stronghold, since Kicking Bear had invited him there. Sitting Bull requested several times that Agent McLaughlin grant him a permission to go to Pine Ridge, but was refused each time. He wanted to go to see the people who best knew the new religion. Sitting Bull also publicly announced that he did not believe the message of the ghost dance, but he still urged the people to dance despite his own beliefs. After

³³² Utley 1963, pp. 143-144; Miller 1985, pp. 173-174.

³³³ Indian policeman Lone Man, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 1, Envelope 41. See also, Miller 1985, p. 49 and p. 116; Coleman W. 2000, p. 76. Agent McLaughlin's version of the events can be found in, chapter 4.

³³⁴ Miller 1985, pp. 116; McLaughlin 1989, pp. 206-207; Vestal 1989, p. 277.

publicly denouncing the ghost dance Sitting Bull lost some of his followers, who moved their camp away from him.³³⁵

Mary C. Collins, a missionary who visited Sitting Bull a week before he was killed, also thought that Sitting Bull did not really believe in the ghost dance. According to her, Sitting Bull said that there was nothing harmful in the dance itself, but they had already gone too far to stop now, even though he knew it would result in trouble. Sitting Bull said that their own religion was best for the Lakotas, but he believed that they should be allowed to worship as they pleased.³³⁶ He also had the idea that he was going to be imprisoned. Catherine Weldon, who still tried to work on Sitting Bull's behalf, strengthened these suspicions.³³⁷ About this time, Sitting Bull also received a message during a morning walk. The message was a special one as a messenger very familiar to Sitting Bull - a bird - brought it. The bird told him that he was going to be killed by his own people.³³⁸

Also, Indian policeman Grey Eagle (Wą́ablí Hóta), who was sent by Agent McLaughlin to watch Sitting Bull, told him that he would be arrested in the near future. Grey Eagle's sister was one of Sitting Bull's wives, but the two men did not get along. In fact, Grey Eagle was one of the men who warned Agent McLaughlin of Sitting Bull's intentions to leave the reservation. When learning that his life was in danger Sitting Bull, according to historians **Miller** and **Smith**, wondered: "Why would the Indian police come against me? We are of the same blood, we are all Sioux, we are relatives...If the white men want me to die, they ought not put up the Indians to kill me. I don't want confusion among my people. Let the soldiers come and take me away and kill me wherever they like..."³³⁹

³³⁵ Sitting Bull to James McLaughlin as quoted in, Vestal 1989, pp. 283-284. See also, Utley 1963, pp. 152-153; Smith 1975, p. 150; Miller 1985, p. 117; Vestal 1989, p. 279 and pp. 282-285.

³³⁶ Mary C. Collins, IULL, WMCC, Box 6 Folder 3, Envelope 78; Sitting Bull to McLaughlin 1989, as quoted in Vestal 1989, pp. 283-284. See also, Smith 1975, p. 150; Miller 1985, p. 116.

³³⁷ Johnson, W. 1891, p. 187 and pp. 318-331; Smith 1975, p. 152; Miller 1985, pp. 66-69.

³³⁸ Vestal 1989, pp. 278; Utley 1993, p. 290 refers to, One Bull "Prophecy of Sitting Bull Would be Killed by His Own People" in, Walter S. Campbell Collection, Box 104, Folder 20. See also, Miller 1985, pp. 116; Mooney 1991, p. 855. **Miller's** informant was also Sitting Bull's nephew, One Bull.

³³⁹ Smith 1975, p. 152; Miller 1985, pp. 134-136. Neither **Miller** nor **Smith** give any source for these words they have put into Sitting Bull's mouth.

Sitting Bull continued that he did not start the dance and he did stop it when requested. He even tried to ask for permission to leave the reservation.³⁴⁰

Sitting Bull's fears became true on December 15, 1890. Early in the morning the Indian police force sent by Agent McLaughlin entered his cabin. The Indian police consisted of 40 men and were led by some of Sitting Bull's enemies, including Lieutenant Bull Head (Thathâka Phé). The policemen tried to take Sitting Bull with them quickly, but finally allowed him to put on some clothes. After Sitting Bull got dressed, the police started to escort him out of the cabin. He followed at first without resistance, and, according to one eyewitness, even said that he would go with the police to the agency to see what they wanted with him. But as some of his followers gathered around his cabin, the women wailing and the men abusing the policemen, he refused. According to one Indian policeman, Sitting Bull's son Crow Foot (Sí Khăǵí) said that the police "...are making a fool of you," after which Sitting Bull refused to go. Lieutenant Bull Head asked the people to let them go, but then Catch The Bear (Mathó Wawóyuspa), Sitting Bull's old friend and Bull Head's enemy, came from behind the corner of the house with a rifle in his hand. It seems that the first bullet was fired from his gun. That bullet struck Lieutenant Bull Head, who, while he was falling, shot Sitting Bull. At the same time Sergeant Red Tomahawk (Chăǵipi Lúta) shot Sitting Bull in the head, killing him instantly.³⁴¹ The tensions that had been growing between the ghost dancers and non-ghost dancers finally culminated on December 15; Sitting Bull's death set the Lakotas against each other. One of the policemen even claimed later that they were all drunk from whiskey the agent had sent them the

³⁴⁰ Indian policeman Grey Eagle, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 1, Envelope 41. About Sitting Bull and Grey Eagle see, Mary C. Collins, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 3, Envelope 78; Reverend Reed, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 1, Envelope 41. Both Mary C. Collins and Reverend Reed were convinced that Sitting Bull had no intentions to leave. (ibid.) Reverend Reed furthermore said that the only indication that Sitting Bull had been planning to leave was that he was feeding his horses. (Reverend Reed, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 1, Envelope 41) Also Indian accounts say that Sitting Bull was not going to leave the reservation. (Four Blanket Woman, One Bull, Mrs. One Bull, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 1, Envelope 41) See also, Miller 1985, pp. 134-136.

³⁴¹ Four Blanket Woman, One Bull, Mrs. One Bull, Indian policemen Lone Man and Grey Eagle, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 1, Envelope 41. The events surrounding the arrest and death of Sitting Bull are documented in, for example, ARSOW 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 146-147. For Indian accounts of the arrest see, for example, Walter Mason Camp Collection, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 1, Envelope 41. See, Miller 1985, pp. 182-190; Vestal 1989, pp. 286-302. Miller's informants were policemen White Bull and Little Soldier, One Bull's wife, John Sitting Bull and Henry Sitting Bull. (Miller 1985, p. 303)

previous night. Another said that the mission was very strange and frightening as they were all “relatives.”³⁴²

Sitting Bull’s death precipitated a fight between his followers and the Indian police. The Indian policemen withdrew to Sitting Bull’s cabin, and were finally rescued by a detachment of the U.S. cavalry that had been left behind as back up. Sitting Bull’s followers tried to continue the fight, but were soon driven away by the army. In the end, eight ghost dancers and six Indian policemen died. The army had no casualties.³⁴³ During the fighting a strange event took place. A Hunkpapa warrior rode several times in the middle of the crossfire wearing his ghost shirt. He was not harmed at all by the soldiers’ bullets. This, naturally, was seen as a sign of the power of the ghost dance.³⁴⁴

Even if the situation seemed to be calming down on other reservations, there was a fight between the ghost dancers and the Indian police force, backed by the United States army, on December 15, 1890 on Standing Rock Reservation. Most

³⁴² Indian policeman Lone Man, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 1, Envelope 41. See also, Zahn 1940, p. 4; Malm 1961, p. 164; Hagan 1966, pp. 100-102; Miller 1985, p. 76. One Bull, Sitting Bull’s nephew, told about a policeman who asked One Bull to kill him because “...we’re all drunk. We ruined each other here.” (Miller 1985, p. 190) The policemen “...smelled of Whiskey,” claimed also Four Blanket Woman, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 1, Envelope 41. However, **Robert M. Utley** has noted that the stories of the policemen being drunk have not been substantiated by any credible source or by the actions of the policemen during the arrest. (Utley 1993, p. 310) About the dispute between Sitting Bull and Bull Head see, for example, Utley 1963, p. 150.

³⁴³ Indian policemen Grey Eagle and Lone Man, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 1, Envelope 41. Among the casualties was Crow Foot, Sitting Bull’s son. Policeman Lone Man said they killed him because he was the reason for the trouble. (ibid.) However, some eyewitnesses say that Crow Foot never said a word, and was viciously killed by the policemen. (Four Blanket Woman and Mrs. One Bull, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder, 1, Envelope 41) More about the army’s conceptions about the events in, chapter 5. Excellent studies of these events can be found in, for example, Miller 1985, pp. 182-190; Mooney 1991, pp. 857-858; Utley 1993, pp. 291-305. Sitting Bull’s death raised immediately questions about the circumstances under which he died and many stories were published in newspapers and books soon after his death. Some newspaper accounts are discussed in chapter 6. For early accounts of Sitting Bull’s life and death see, Johnson W. 1891, passim.; Boyd 1891, passim.

³⁴⁴ Johnson W. 1891, pp. 426-427; Utley 1963, p. 165; Miller 1985, pp. 186-188; Utley 1993, p. 396. Sitting Bull joined Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show in 1885 and his favorite horse learned to react to shooting. During the fighting on December 15, Sitting Bull’s horse became excited because of the gunfire and started to perform the tricks it had been taught during the years in the Buffalo Bill’s show. This made many Indians wonder whether the spirit of Sitting Bull had entered the horse. However, historian **Robert M. Utley** has noted that this story, although very often told, probably never took place and it is not substantiated by Indian accounts. Whatever the truth, the story is a good one and as **Utley** noted, it has lived through many accounts of Sitting Bull’s death. (See, Johnson W. 1891, p. 426-427; Utley 1963, pp. 165; Utley 1993, p. 396) About Sitting Bull’s life in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show see, for example, Utley 1993, p. 260-269.

interesting is the fact, that the fighting did not start on Pine Ridge or Rosebud, where the tension had been much higher than on Standing Rock, where only Sitting Bull's followers, approximately 250 people, were engaged in the ghost dance (See chapter 3.6, Table 1). The fact that fighting broke out on Standing Rock was caused by many things, the ghost dance being only one of them, and not even the most important.³⁴⁵ The other reasons were the power struggle between Agent McLaughlin and Sitting Bull, the power struggle between the progressive chiefs and Sitting Bull, and the power struggle between Sitting Bull and the Indian police. A good example of the third point is Indian policeman Grey Eagle, who warned Sitting Bull of the planned arrest, but also warned Agent McLaughlin of Sitting Bull's intentions to leave the reservation. Mary C. Collins commented that, at the time of the arrest, Grey Eagle's presence might have aggravated Sitting Bull, and was thus the final reason why Sitting Bull changed his mind and refused to go.³⁴⁶

These internal relations on Standing Rock Reservation kept the tension rising throughout the 1880s, while events during the negotiations in 1889 worsened the situation.³⁴⁷ When Sitting Bull put himself at the head of the ghost dancers, he also gave Agent McLaughlin a good excuse to get rid of him, even if the new religion did not present any imminent threat of war on that reservation (See chapter 4). If Sitting Bull had joined Kicking Bear's and Short Bull's ghost dance camp at Pine Ridge, his influence might have added to the ghost dancers' determination and hostility. Whether the arrest should have been organized otherwise is a question without an answer. Perhaps Sitting Bull would have followed an army detachment more willingly than a detachment of Indian police that included some of his enemies. Some of the policemen belonged to Yanktonai Sioux, whom the Hunkpapas generally considered as inferior to themselves, not worthy of capturing a man of Sitting Bull's standing. Maybe he already knew when the policemen entered his cabin that this would be the day the bird had foretold. Whatever the case, Sitting Bull was killed and the ghost dancers on Standing Rock were left without a leader.

³⁴⁵ See also, DeMallie 1982, p. 394.

³⁴⁶ Mary C. Collins, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 3, Envelope 78. See also, Reverend Reed, IULL, WMCC, Box 5, Folder 1, Envelope 41.

³⁴⁷ About the tensions during the negotiations with the Sioux commission see, chapter 2.2.2.

3.5.5. The Second and Third Flights

After Sitting Bull's death approximately 150-200 frightened Hunkpapas fled toward the Cheyenne River reservation seeking security in Big Foot's camp. Some also found their way to Hump's camp arriving in a very destitute condition. The flight of the Hunkpapas made things on both Standing Rock and Cheyenne River very confused. Rumors of the fight spread rapidly across the reservations; neither Indians nor whites knew what really happened in Sitting Bull's camp. Several groups of Indians were traveling around the reservations, some of them openly hostile and others simply looking for shelter from the cold and safety from the soldiers.³⁴⁸

The news of Sitting Bull's death caused much anger in the Stronghold. Kicking Bear started to prepare the men for war; dancing was no longer enough. Attacks on ranches continued and the ghost dancers suffered their first casualty. The ghost dancers also attacked an army supply wagon, which was rescued by the 6th Cavalry.³⁴⁹ On Cheyenne River the Minneconjous were also dancing. However, Hump's faith was wavering already before Sitting Bull's death. After negotiating with Captain E. P. Ewers, who was sent by General Miles, Hump decided to give up the ghost dance. On December 9, Hump brought his people to Cheyenne River Agency and enlisted as a scout. Hump had surrendered to General Miles in 1877, and acted as a scout for his army afterwards. He always considered General Miles to be a man of honor, and Captain Ewers was his friend during the time he was the agent on Cheyenne River Reservation. One of the most influential ghost dance leaders abandoned the religion without bloodshed.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30. See, Mattes 1960, p. 3; Utley 1963, p 173-186; Danker 1981, pp 164 –200; Miller 1985, pp. 198-200

³⁴⁹ Miller 1985, pp. 196-197. More about these events in, chapters 5 and 6.

³⁵⁰ Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30; Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90. See, ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Nelson A. Miles, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp.147. See also, Utley 1963, p. 132; Mooney 1991, p. 862. About General Miles' tactics and Captain Ewers' efforts see, chapter 5.

After Hump abandoned the ghost dance, Big Foot was the only ghost dance leader left on Cheyenne River Reservation. The army surrounded his people, and the chief saw no other way out than to agree to follow the army back to the village they had left in order to live in the ghost dance camps. Young men, who had expected much from the ghost dance, were unhappy and asked their leader to lead them to Pine Ridge, where they could join the other ghost dancers. Big Foot was invited by Red Cloud and other prominent leaders at Pine Ridge to come there and to help them to negotiate for peace. Still Big Foot hesitated; he did not want to cause trouble. He only wanted the army to allow his people to stay in their own village instead of staying at the agency as the army officers demanded.³⁵¹

The confusion on Cheyenne River continued to grow as Hump tried to persuade some of Sitting Bull's Hunkpapa refugees to follow him to Fort Bennett, at Cheyenne River Agency. Finally, a few of them joined him, but the rest decided to follow Big Foot. Also, 38 young men with their families, who belonged to Hump's own Minneconjou band, turned their backs on their leader and joined Big Foot.³⁵²

General Miles sent Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner [known as Three Fingers to the Indians] commanding the 8th Cavalry to watch over Big Foot and his ghost dancers. Already, on December 15, the soldiers surrounded Big Foot's band. Big Foot assured Colonel Sumner that he wanted only peace. He promised to go to Fort Bennett, but warned that the younger men were anxious to join the ghost dancers on Pine Ridge, and that it might be difficult to keep them quiet. He also worried that if they did not go voluntarily to the fort, the soldiers would force them to go.³⁵³

³⁵¹ Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90; Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30; Beard in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), p. 158; Dewey Beard, Louise Weasel Bear, Bertha Kills Close to Lodge, Rough Feather and Nellie Knife in, McGregor, James H., *The Wounded Knee Massacre. From the Viewpoint of the Sioux*, Rapid City, South Dakota 1940, p. 95, p. 101, p. 106, p. 119 and p. 130.

³⁵² Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30. See also, Utley 1963, p. 178; Smith 1975, pp. 166-168; Miller 1985, pp. 200.

³⁵³ Big Foot as quoted in, ARSOW 1891, Statement of Interpreter Felix Benoit, January 18, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. II, Serial 2921, pp. 237-238; Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Dewey Beard,

The news of Sitting Bull's death and the arrival of the Hunkpapa refugees on December 19, frightened the Minneconjous. Big Foot still wanted to follow the instructions Colonel Sumner gave and followed the soldiers to Cherry Creek, their former village site. Big Foot and his people hoped to stay in the village before going on to the fort the next morning. This was agreed to, but during the march to the village the Indians sighted another army detachment, which caused much alarm. So did the behavior of the soldiers. One of the members of Big Foot's band told later that they had bad feelings, because the soldiers acted in a strange manner.³⁵⁴

Their uneasy feeling was escalated by John Dunn, a white rancher who came to the camp as a messenger from Colonel Sumner. Interpreter Felix Benoit heard Big Foot saying to an assembly of Indians that Dunn told him that the soldiers would shoot them if they refused to go to Fort Bennett. Andrew Good Thunder (Wakíya Wašté) and Joseph Horn Cloud (Maḥpíya Hethú), both members of Big Foot's band, were present when this discussion took place in Big Foot's cabin. They told later that the white man, known as Red Beard [Dunn], urged them to go to Pine Ridge if they wanted to live. According to them, Dunn claimed that a force of 1,000 soldiers was on their way to kill the Indians. What Dunn really told Big Foot has remained somewhat unclear, but after his visit Big Foot seemed convinced that they had to get out of harm's way and go to Pine Ridge. According to Andrew Good Thunder, Big Foot said: "...It seems that Three Fingers [Colonel Sumner] has been trying for the past few days to make trouble and if his intentions are as you [Dunn] say, I will give him room and get out of his way." Big Foot then asked Benoit, whether Dunn's words were true. Benoit replied that they should not follow Dunn's advice; they really needed to go to Fort Bennett

NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30. See also, Bull Eagle, IULL, WMCC, Box 4, Folder 4, Envelope 5 and Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90. Also Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner was totally convinced that Big Foot's intentions were peaceful. See, Sumner to Miles, December 21 and December 22, 1890 in, ARSOW 1891, Report of Major-General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. II, Serial 2921, pp. 232-233; Miles to AG (telegram), December 24, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 608. See also, chapter 5.

³⁵⁴ Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90; Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30. See also, Beard in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 158-159.

instead of going to Pine Ridge. After that, however, the Indians seemed to be very scared and started packing. In his own statement Dunn later disputed other statements saying that Big Foot wanted to go to Fort Bennett and he had only told them that the soldiers were not there to harm the Indians. After much confusion, Big Foot decided to lead his people to Pine Ridge. On December 21, the flight of the Minneconjous began.³⁵⁵

At first the journey of the approximately 350 refugees progressed rapidly. However, when reaching the borders of Pine Ridge Reservation, they had to slow down because Big Foot had developed pneumonia and could not keep up the pace. The weather was extremely cold and the people were starving. On December 24, they made camp in a blizzard and, according to some sources, saw a strange light in the sky, which was generally believed to be Sitting Bull's spirit. At this time Big Foot sent a part of his people to try to find the ghost dance camp in the Stronghold, while the rest continued their journey toward Red Cloud's camp. He also sent messengers to the Pine Ridge Agency to report that he was coming in peacefully. Through these messengers, he learned that there were soldiers camped at Wounded Knee Creek, but instead of trying to avoid them, he decided to meet them openly. By December 27, however, the Indians had almost stopped, which gave a chance for the army to close in on them.³⁵⁶

Andrew Good Thunder was among the men who were sent ahead to scout. On their way, they met an Indian from Pine Ridge, who told that there were two factions there. One was peaceable and stayed at the agency, while the other remained at the Stronghold, although they were believed to be ready to come in.

³⁵⁵ Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90; Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30; ARSOW 1891, Statement of Interpreter Felix Benoit, January 18, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. II, Serial 2921, pp. 237-238; ARSOW 1891, Statement of John Dunn, no date, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. II, Serial 2921, pp. 235-237. See also, Beard in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 158-159. Despite their popularistic style of writing these events are quite well portrayed in, Smith 1975, pp. 172-174; Seymour 1981, pp. 127-131; Miller 1985, pp. 200-201.

³⁵⁶ Best accounts of the escape are given by Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30; Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90; Beard in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), p. 160. See also, Johnson W. 1891, pp. 426-427; McGregor 1940, pp. 95-98; Seymour 1981, pp. 136-147; Miller 1985, p. 205 and pp. 208-211. **Miller's** informants were Pipe-On-Head and Iron Hail. **Walker's** and **McGregor's** informant, Beard, is also known as Dewey Beard, Dewey Horn Cloud and Iron Hail. (Walker, ed. DeMallie, p. 122)

The man was taken to Big Foot, who told him that "...We have come to this reservation to avoid trouble and I will take the main road to the agency to join the peaceable people there." The men still continued to scout and met three Indians who were doing the same for the army. They all sat down and smoked a pipe. Big Foot's men learned that the army was looking for them as they had reportedly been in a fight with Colonel Sumner.³⁵⁷

The next day the Indians met a column of soldiers who, to their surprise, came toward them from the south rather than coming behind them from the north. The soldiers were closing in and lined up in front of the Indians as though ready for a fight. This despite a white flag the Indians were waving. After discussion, the Indian men also lined up and sent their women and children behind. As Andrew Good Thunder said: "We agreed not to fight but get in line and go toward them abreast and if the soldiers began firing we would charge and wipe them out." However, after a short parley with Major Samuel Whiteside, Big Foot agreed to surrender as the officer demanded.³⁵⁸

According to Beard (Iron Hail, Wasú Māža), the officer was happy to learn that Big Foot wanted peace, but the behavior of the ordinary soldiers was suspicious. They were laughing as they carried Big Foot to the wagon given to him by the officer. The Indians were afraid for their leader. Beard even asked a medicine man to lead a ghost dance and seek help from the Messiah. The column of Indians was then escorted Wounded Knee creek, where they camped. While the Indians put up their tents, the army moved around them, causing much fear and confusion. Rumors that the army was going to disarm them were also worrying. Being without arms at the mercy of the soldiers, was extremely frightening for the Lakotas. It also made them angry. However, they planned no resistance. Once

³⁵⁷ Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90; James Grass, 75th Cong., 1st Sess, House Committee on Indian Affairs, Published Hearing, March 7 and May 12, 1938, IULAL, Microfiche, Group 3, Card 5, p. 48. James Grass was one of the scouts for the troops. (ibid.)

³⁵⁸ Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90; Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30; John Shangrau, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 27; James Pipe On Head, 75th Cong., 1st Sess, House Committee on Indian Affairs, Published Hearing, March 7 and May 12, 1938, IULAL, Microfiche, Group 3, Card 4, p. 17. See also, James Pipe On Head, Louise Weasel Bear, White Lance and Dog Chief in, McGregor 1940, p. 98, p. 101, p. 109 and pp. 124-125.

again the medicine man was asked to seek help from the Messiah. In the evening a crier went around the camp announcing that there would be a council early in the morning and that they would then be taken to Pine Ridge Agency. During the night, more soldiers were heard to arrive, their movements sounding warlike to the Indians. In the morning the 120 Lakota men and 230 women and children woke up to find their camp surrounded by some 500 soldiers, who even brought cannons with them. Moreover, they aimed their cannons directly toward the Indian camp.³⁵⁹

In the morning food was first issued, but then suddenly the Lakotas were asked to give up their arms. The disarmament started about 8:30 in the morning of December 29. The Lakota men were separated from the women and children, who remained in the camp. The men were sitting in a semicircle in front of Big Foot's tent, peacefully smoking their pipes. When the men refused to give up all of their arms, Big Foot tried to explain to the officers that they had given up most of their arms previously. The soldiers then started to search in the camp, but the weapons they found were old and almost worthless. The men probably carried some weapons under their blankets. The search for weapons was carried out brutally. Some women were especially thoroughly searched. Even sharp objects, like knives and axes were removed.³⁶⁰

While the soldiers continued their search and the army moved around them, the Indians grew more and more restless. According to Beard and Joseph Horn Cloud, the interpreter told the Lakota men to march past the soldiers, who would be

³⁵⁹ Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30; Beard in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 161-163; Dewey Beard, Bertha Kills Close to Lodge, Edward Owl King, Kills Plenty, Peter Stand and Dog Chief in, McGregor 1940, pp. 95-96, p. 106, pp. 107-108, p. 116 and pp. 124-125. See also, Zahn 1940, p. 5; Mattes 1960, p. 3; Miller 1985, pp. 218-223; Jensen, Richard E., *Big Foot's Followers at Wounded Knee*, Nebraska History, Vol. 71, No. 4, 1990, pp. 194-199.

³⁶⁰ Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90; John Shangrau, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 27; Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30; James Pipe On Head, 75th Cong., 1st Sess, House Committee on Indian Affairs, Published Hearing, March 7 and May 12, 1938, IULAL, Microfiche, Group 3, Card 4, p. 17; Beard in, Walker (ed. DeMallie, 1992), pp. 163-164; Louise Weasel Bear, George Running Hawk, Mrs. Mousseau, Bertha Kills Close To Lodge and Mrs. Rough Feather in, McGregor 1940, p. 101, p. 102, p. 105, pp. 106-107 and pp. 119-120. Dewey Beard claimed later that the men carried no guns under their blankets when they were in the circle. He said that the soldiers who were killed there were shot by other soldiers, not by Indians. (Dewey Beard, 75th Cong., 1st Sess, House Committee on Indian Affairs, Published Hearing, March 7 and May 12, 1938, IULAL; Microfiche, Group 3, Card 4, p. 22)

holding their guns towards them. The Indians understood that the soldiers would be pointing their guns at them rather than holding the guns in front of them as the interpreter meant. This was seen as a plan to shoot the unarmed Indians, and once again the medicine man was requested to seek help. Then medicine man, Yellow Bird (Zitkála Zi), started to sing and threw dust in the air. He was wearing a ghost shirt, praying to the Great Spirit and singing about the power of the shirt. According to interpreter Phillip Wells, he was only planning to dance around the semicircle and then sit down, but Colonel James W. Forsythe, who was now in command, tried to stop him. Yellow Bird did stop for a while, but then continued, again promising that no harm would come to those who wore ghost shirts.³⁶¹

The actions of the medicine man have often been interpreted as a harangue for a fight. Especially, the fact that he was throwing dust in the air has been seen as a sign for the warriors to open fire on the soldiers (See chapters 4, 5 and 6). In some sense his actions probably caused restlessness among the Indians, but more than that, he caused restlessness among the soldiers. However, throwing dust in the air was traditionally a sign for the Lakotas to show grief and pity, and was part of the ghost dance ceremony (See chapter 3.4.2). This probably was what the medicine man was actually doing. He was not making signs to start a battle, but was praying for supernatural help. Furthermore, it has to be taken into account that all the women and children were in the danger zone. Some children were even told to be harmlessly playing around in the camp. It is highly unlikely that the Lakotas planned any resistance when their families would have been in danger. All Indian and half-blood accounts studied here assure that no plan of resistance existed.³⁶²

³⁶¹ Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30; Phillip Wells, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3541, Reel 1, Box 4, Tablet 15; Statement of the Survivors, IULL, WMCC, Box 4; Folder 4, Envelope 5 (The statement is written in Lakota and translated by the author); Beard in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 163-165; Dewey Beard, *Rough Feather, Bertha Kills Close To Lodge, White Lance, John Little Finger and Richard Afraid Of Hawk* in, McGregor 1940, pp. 95-96, pp. 99-100, p. 106, p. 109, p. 111 and p. 121; Testimony of Interpreter Phillip F. Wells, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 711-716. See also, Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 266-267; Smith 1975, pp. 184-188; Miller 1985, p. 224 and pp. 227-228.

³⁶² Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30; Louie Mousseau, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 26; James Pipe On Head, 75th Cong., 1st Sess, House Committee on Indian Affairs, Published Hearing, March 7 and May 12, 1938, IULAL, Microfiche, Group 3, Card 4, pp. 18-19; Dewey Beard, 75th Cong., 1st Sess, House Committee on Indian Affairs, Published Hearing, March 7 and May 12, 1938, IULAL, Microfiche, Group 3, Card 4, p. 22-24; Beard in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 164-165; Statements of the survivors in, McGregor 1940, pp. 95-130; Danker

Suddenly, one Indian was seen wandering about with a gun in his hand. According to some eyewitnesses, he was a deaf and dumb man, who did not really understand what was going on. **Miller** claims that this person told him later, with sign language, that he was Sitting Bull's son, and that he was only planning to put his gun down on the pile of other weapons. No other source mentions his identity in relation to Sitting Bull. Whether he really was his son and whether he really was the man who fired the first shot will remain in doubt. Whoever he was, he pulled the trigger when the soldiers grabbed him. Whether this was intentional remains unclear, but it seems that the first shot was fired accidentally. Beard also tells that the shot was fired during the confusion of the medicine man's performance; he heard a shot fired, but could not tell who fired it.³⁶³

Mooney claims that the first shot was deliberately fired by a fanatical Minneconjou called Black Fox (Coyote) (Šugmánitu Sápa). This is also the opinion of Andrew Good Thunder, who claims that he saw Black Coyote fire the first shot. However, this is not substantiated by other Indian accounts, or even by army sources used for this study. Nonetheless, **Mooney's** interpretation has survived in many studies of the Wounded Knee fight. For example, **Utley's** interpretation of the fight was mainly constructed from **Mooney's** study and from the "Army Investigation to the Wounded Knee Battle and Sioux Campaign of 1890-1891" (here referred to as, NARS, RG 75, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1). This report also contains accounts given by two Indians. It seems, however, obvious

1981, pp. 226-233. Phillip Wells, who was an army scout, maintains that if the Indians had planned any resistance, they had done so already before coming to Wounded Knee Creek, where they were actually prisoners of war. According to Wells the Indians could have taken advantage of the terrain and their number, for example, at the time they first met the soldiers. This, according to him, shows that no plan for resistance existed. (Phillip Wells, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3541, Reel 1, Box 4, Tablet 1-5) For different interpretations and for a discussion of the beginning of the fight see, for example, Zahn 1940, pp. 56; McGregor 1940, pp. 95-130; Mattes 1960, p. 4 and p. 6; Utley 1963, pp. 212-213; Sievers, 1975-1976, pp. 37-39; Seymour 1981, pp. 156-170; Miller 1985, pp. 229-230; Mooney 1991, pp. 884-886. About the significance of showing grief among the Lakotas see, Thomas Tyon in, Walker (ed. DeMallie & Jahner 1991), pp. 163-164.

³⁶³ Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30; Beard in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), p. 165; Statement of the Survivors, IULL, WMCC, Box 4; Folder 4, Envelope 5; James Pipe On Head, 75th Cong., 1st Sess, House Committee on Indian Affairs, Published Hearing, March 7 and May 12, 1938, IULAL, Microfiche, Group 3, Card 4, pp. 18-19; Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12. See, Sievers 1975-1976, p. 50; Miller 1985, pp. 229-230.

why these two accounts were included in the army investigation; they totally agree with the statements of the army officers.³⁶⁴

The stories of other Indian survivors present a different interpretation. Several Indian and half-blood accounts tell about an officer [evidently Forsythe] giving commands, which the Indians could not understand, in a very loud voice. His commands were followed by the sound like a “lightning crash” when the first volley was fired. Only Beard, Joseph Horn Cloud and Andrew Good Thunder tell about a single shot that preceded the first big volley. After the first shot, the army responded by opening fire on the Indians. The women and children who were in the camp were caught in the middle of exploding cannon shells. Big Foot was immediately shot and died instantly. The general understanding among the Indians was that after the morning talk they were going to be escorted to Pine Ridge Agency, and no trouble was supposed to come to anybody. Suddenly all expectations of a peaceful march to Pine Ridge Agency were destroyed.³⁶⁵

In few minutes around 100-300 Lakotas, and approximately 50 soldiers were lying on the ground dead or wounded. After the first volley, a hand-to-hand fight began, but at the same time the soldiers continued to fire on the Indians’ camp. The women and children tried to find refuge in the nearby ravine, but the soldiers kept shooting fleeing Indians regardless of their gender or age. A number of Lakota men managed to break through the soldiers’ circle and tried to organize some resistance. During the fight there were many brutal acts, and women and children were shot mercilessly. Some soldiers were yelling revenge for Custer and John Shangrau, a half-blood scout, claimed that an officer told him that now the

³⁶⁴ Mooney 1991, pp. 868-869 and pp. 884-886; Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90; Statements of the survivors in, McGregor 1940, pp. 95-130; Statements of Frog and Help Them, January 7, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 717-720. For comparison see, for example, Utley 1963, pp. 205-213; Smith 1975, pp. 187-198; Seymour 1981, pp. 171-182; Utter 1991, p 22. See also, chapter 5.

³⁶⁵ Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30; Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; William Garnett, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 22; Statement of the Survivors, IULL, WMCC, Box 4; Folder 4, Envelope 5; James Pipe On Head, 75th Cong., 1st Sess, House Committee on Indian Affairs, Published Hearing, March 7 and May 12, 1938, IULAL, Microfiche, Group 3, Card 4, pp. 18-19; Beard in, Walker (ed. DeMallie) p. 165; Dewey Beard, James Pipe On Head, Rough Feather, White Lance, John Little Finger, Donald Blue Hair, Afraid Of The Enemy, Richard Afraid Of Hawk, Dog Chief and Charlie Blue Arm in, McGregor 1940, pp. 97-100, p. 109, p. 111, p. 117-118, pp. 121-122, p. 125, and p. 128. See also, Smith 1975, pp. 188-191; Miller 1985, pp. 229-231; Mooney 1991, pp. 884-886.

soldiers had got their revenge. When asked what was the revenge for, he simply replied "... the Custer massacre." Other accounts by half-bloods and white men alike, claim that the soldiers were more or less drunk, and their plan was to fire on the Indians, if they showed any signs of resistance.³⁶⁶

The sounds of the gunfire were heard as far away as Pine Ridge Agency (See appendix 7, map 4), where the Oglalas and Brulés, who had just arrived from the Stronghold, were camped. When hearing the sounds of the battle they started to break camp immediately and fled once again. Approximately 150 Lakota men rode toward Wounded Knee and took part in the fighting. Partly because of these men the Lakotas were able to organize some resistance at Wounded Knee. The fight was over by 3 o'clock in the afternoon; 38 soldiers and between 100-300 Lakotas were dead. Several soldiers and an unknown number of Lakotas were also wounded in the affair.³⁶⁷

The situation among the Indians on Pine Ridge was chaotic. Some Indians opened fire on the agency buildings and agency employees. The fleeing Lakotas, led by Two Strike, Little Wound and Big Road, met Short Bull's and Kicking Bear's ghost dancers, who were on their way to the agency. They quickly abandoned the idea of continuing toward the agency and joined the people who were fleeing. The refugees stopped at the abandoned village of No Water at White Clay Creek. They numbered roughly 4,000 Indians, approximately 800-1,000 of whom were men.

³⁶⁶ Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30; Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; Man Above, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; John Shangrau, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 27; William Garnett, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 22; Peter McFarland, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3544, Reel 4, Box 5, Tablet 31; William Peano, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 10; Dewey Beard, 75th Cong., 1st Sess, House Committee on Indian Affairs, Published Hearing, March 7 and May 12, 1938, IULAL, Microfiche, Group 3, Card 4, p. 22-24; James Pipe On Head, 75th Cong., 1st Sess, House Committee on Indian Affairs, Published Hearing, March 7 and May 12, 1938, IULAL, Microfiche, Group 3, Card 4, pp. 18-19. More about the events during the fight from the Indians' point of view see, Beard in, Walker (ed. DeMallie 1992), pp. 165-168; Statements of the survivors in, McGregor 1940, pp. 95-130. See also, Miller 1985, pp. 233-244. See also the Indian descriptions about the events given on February 11, 1891 in, ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 179-181. Published also in, Mooney 1991, pp. 884-886. More about the army in, chapter 5.

³⁶⁷ A vivid description of these events is provided by Black Elk who was among the 150 warriors and who was wounded during the fight in, Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 259-268; *The Sixth Grandfather* (ed. DeMallie 1985), pp. 272-275. See, John Little Finger in, McGregor 1940, p. 112; Mooney 1991, p. 873. For a comprehensive account of the Indians with Big Foot at Wounded Knee see, Jensen 1990, pp. 194-208.

This, of course, was quite a considerable fighting force. Among them was also old Red Cloud, who barely had time to lower his American flag to half-mast before the fleeing people took him with them, most likely against his will. Some accounts claim that Red Cloud left after learning that an officer wanted to shell his house and the Indian camp behind it. Others claim that the fleeing people forced Red Cloud to leave, because he was their leader and they needed him.³⁶⁸

Those Indians who had already come in to make peace were now angrier and more afraid than ever. There was extreme tension among them. Even many of the progressives on Pine Ridge and Rosebud, who had previously not wanted to have anything to do with the ghost dance, started to arm themselves. The news of Wounded Knee was too much even for them. According to Luther Standing Bear many of those progressives, who did not join the fleeing people and remained at the agency were preparing to take part in the fighting, if necessary.³⁶⁹

All through the following night the wounded from Wounded Knee were streaming into the refugees' camp, where the mood was extremely warlike. The ghost dancing resumed, even though the new religion had not helped the people at Wounded Knee. The ghost dance, however, started to fade into the background as the people became more concerned with their very survival. The freezing weather and lack of food caused hardships for the Lakotas, who had fled in haste and with poor equipment. Big Foot's fate did not encourage them to surrender. The promises made by the soldiers were now mistrusted more than ever. Desperate ghost dancers decided that no one was allowed to leave the camp. For many of Kicking Bear's and Short Bull's followers it seemed to be better to die fighting than to surrender. Only Red Cloud of the major chiefs wanted to return to the agency, but the ghost dancers threatened to kill him if he tried. Thus, even the influence of Red Cloud vanished in the winds of the ghost dance.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ William Peano, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 10; W. A. Birdsall, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 25. See, ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 1230-131. See also, Mattes 1960, p. 4; Olson 1965, p. 330; Miller 1985, p. 245.

³⁶⁹ Standing Bear 1975, p. 224. See also, Mooney 1991, pp. 873-874.

³⁷⁰ Andrew Good Thunder, IULL, WMCC, Box 6, Folder 14, Envelope 90; Dewey Beard, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 30; Joseph Horn Cloud, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 2, Box 4, Tablet 12; William Garnett, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 22; Statement

During the next few days the Lakotas had several skirmishes with the troops. Kicking Bear led a force of few hundred warriors. They managed to gain some small victories, but each time the superior equipment and the overwhelming power of the army forced the Lakotas to withdraw. At one point the Lakotas almost managed to annihilate Colonel Forsythe and his 7th Cavalry. The Indians, possibly numbering only 40 men, kept the troops cornered for several hours. Only the arrival of additional troops saved the soldiers.³⁷¹

During the first days of January 1891 the Indians found themselves surrounded by the army. Even if they had managed to break through the first line of troops, they would almost immediately have faced a second line.³⁷² The feeling in the Indian camp was becoming divided. More and more people started to talk in favor of surrender. These opinions were encouraged by messages from General Miles, who promised fair treatment to all. Furthermore, Big Foot and his people were a good example of what could happen to those the army considered as enemies. On the other hand, it served also as an example of what could happen to those who trusted the army. Thus the feelings among the Indians were very mixed. Despite the fear the Lakotas felt toward the army, the messages sent by Miles during January 1-4 affected most of the leaders. Many of the Oglalas had surrendered to General Miles in the 1870s; they respected him as a man whom they could trust. In addition, according to Black Elk, Red Cloud gave a speech in which he urged an end to the fighting, since the winter was going to be hard on them. Also, Young Man Afraid Of His Horse, who had returned from a trip to Wyoming,

of the Survivors, IULL, WMCC, Box 4; Folder 4, Envelope 5; James Pipe On Head, 75th Cong., 1st Sess, House Committee on Indian Affairs, Published Hearing, March 7 and May 12, 1938, IULAL, Microfiche, Group 3, Card 4, pp. 18-19. See, statements of the survivors in, McGregor 1940, pp. 95-130. See also, Olson 1965, p. 330; Twiss 1978, p. 37; Miller 1985, p. 253; Larson 1997, p. 280.

³⁷¹ For the battles of January 1891 see, for example, John Shangrau, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 27; Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 263-270. See also, Utley 1963, pp. 236-241; Miller 1985, pp. 250-253 and pp. 256,257; Kreis 1999, pp. 106-108; *The Sixth Grandfather* (ed. DeMallie 1985), pp. 276-282. For different estimations of the Lakotas' numbers at the Drexel Mission fight see, chapters 5-7.

³⁷² Utley 1963, pp. 251-252. More about the Army's strategy in, chapter 5.

arrived at the camp and emphasized the fact that winter was no time for warfare. Eventually, the Oglalas decided to surrender.³⁷³

The ghost dancers directly under the leadership of Kicking Bear and Short Bull did not want to surrender. The apostles of the ghost dance, supported by the young men, rose against the Oglala chiefs. They created a “police force” that was meant to stop all attempts to escape from the camp. There were several small skirmishes between the two parties and some Lakotas were killed. On January 3, Big Road with four lesser leaders managed to escape. The results of their talks with General Miles at Pine Ridge Agency were brought back to the camp and many more wanted to surrender. Several Oglala groups left the camp. On January 7, Red Cloud escaped and was soon followed by 75 more Oglalas. Only younger men wanted to continue the struggle. Older men like Red Cloud wanted to give up the fighting as the weather and the lack of food threatened especially the women and children.³⁷⁴

Man Afraid Of His Horse continued to negotiate with the remaining ghost dancers. On January 10, his efforts, together with the cold weather, the lack of food, and the tightening army cordon around the Indians, made the ghost dancers gradually start moving their camp back toward Pine Ridge Agency. Although Kicking Bear and Short Bull, together with some younger men still objected to coming in, they had no choice but to follow those who started for the agency. They could not go anywhere else since the army surrounding them moved at the same pace as the Indians. Tensions, however, were extremely high all the time. A false move on either side had the potential to precipitate a battle or another panic-stricken attempt to escape.³⁷⁵

On January 13, a noteworthy event took place in the camp of the ghost dancers. Standing Bear (Mathó Náži), a progressive leader and father of Luther Standing Bear, went into the camp and offered a pipe to the ghost dancers. He did not know

³⁷³ Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 268-271; Utley 1963, p. 255; Miller 1985, pp. 257; The Sixth Grandfather (ed. DeMallie 1985), pp. 280-281.

³⁷⁴ Hyde 1956, p. 308; Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, pp. 270-271; Miller 1985, pp. 260-262; Utley 1963, p. 257-258.

³⁷⁵ Utley 1963, pp. 258-259; Mooney 1991, p. 887. More about the movements of the army in, chapter 5.

whether he would be killed or whether the pipe would be accepted. Finally, after much tension, the pipe was accepted. What makes this event interesting are the similarities to an event during the war of 1876-1877 when George Sword went to Crazy Horse's camp and offered a pipe to his people. The effect the offering of a pipe had upon the ghost dancers must not be underestimated. Here, as in 1877, a Lakota offered a pipe to other Lakotas. In this act we can see how strong the traditional bonds of Lakota relationship still were. Despite the confusion and the division within the Lakota people, the ghost dancers could not reject the messenger's offer. How much this event affected the decision to surrender cannot be estimated, but it must have had an impact. At the very least it shows that Lakota traditions were still important to both the ghost dancers and non-ghost-dancers, to the progressives and the non-progressives.³⁷⁶

On January 15, 1891, the resistance of the ghost dancers ended. A caravan of almost 4,000 Lakotas, 7,000 horses and 500 wagons marched to Pine Ridge Agency. A formal end to the ghost dance came when Kicking Bear surrendered his weapon to General Miles. Then also ended the largest military operation in the United States since the civil war. During the whole campaign almost 300 Lakotas had been killed; 31 soldiers and a few civilians had also lost their lives. The military operation had cost 1,200,000 dollars.³⁷⁷ Thus ended the year of the ghost dance, or the year the Lakotas later remembered as "Sí Tháka ktépi, the Year When Big Foot Was Killed."³⁷⁸

3.6. A Look at the Lakota Spirit Dance

The Lakotas initially learned about the Indian Messiah and the ghost dance during the summer and fall of 1889. The message was evidently extremely appealing to the Lakotas, since after consultation they unanimously decided to send a delegation to the west to find out more about the Messiah's teachings. When the Lakota delegation returned in the spring of 1890, the message they brought back

³⁷⁶ Neihardt & Black Elk 1961, p. 269; Standing Bear 1975, pp. 228-229; Miller 1985, pp. 264-265. For an account of George Sword's mission to Crazy Horse's camp see, DeMallie 1993, pp. 528-532.

³⁷⁷ Mattes 1960, pp. 4-5; Utley 1963, p. 261; Miller 1985, p. 266-268.

³⁷⁸ See, Walker, (ed. DeMallie 1992), p. 151; Cheney, Roberta C., *The Big Missouri Winter Count*, Happy Camp, California 1979, pp. 41-42.

was a message of hope, hope of a better future where the Indians could live without the white man, hope of a life without hunger, disease and misery. The Lakota delegates brought a new kind of religion, a new way to practice religion in a form so familiar to the Lakotas - a dance.

The Lakota delegates made some changes to the original doctrine as preached by Wovoka, the Messiah. These slight differences resulted from the delegates' personal hopes and expectations as well as their traditions and the history of the Lakota people. However, the delegates did not transform the ghost dance into a warlike demonstration against the white race as suggested by so many historians. The delegates did not deliberately pervert the doctrine in order to gain political prestige among the Lakotas, as, for example, **Utley**, has asserted.³⁷⁹ There is no doubt about the Lakota delegates' sincere belief in the ghost dance. Furthermore, it has to be taken into account that in the traditional Lakota system of belief there was no one doctrine to be followed; it was a system constantly changing and developing, for example, through people's personal experiences. The changes made in the ghost dance have to be understood from this perspective.

The Lakota version of the ghost dance doctrine did predict that the white men would be destroyed in a great earthquake, but so did Wovoka's original doctrine. There is absolutely no indication that the Lakota delegates called for taking up arms against the whites; on the contrary, they emphasized that the only things the Indians must do, were to dance, pray and believe! The Messiah would take care of the rest. This is a typical feature of revitalization movements throughout the world. When the ghost dance was initially inaugurated among the Lakotas in the spring of 1890, it was no more hostile toward the whites than the ghost dance among any other Indian tribe.

The Lakota ghost dance became quickly a mixture of old traditional Lakota beliefs, Christianity, and Wovoka's teachings as interpreted by, among others, Short Bull and Kicking Bear. Interestingly, scholars have often overlooked the fact that Christian aspects of the doctrine remained throughout the ghost dancing

³⁷⁹ More about scholars who hold this view in, chapters 3.1-3.4.

period. This, however, was one key factor in inducing many of the so-called Christian, or progressive, Lakotas to take interest in the ghost dance. In the ghost dance, they found a way to combine the complex worlds of Christianity and traditional Lakota beliefs. The ghost dance did not appeal only to the so-called non-progressive Lakotas, as suggested by many scholars; it filled a religious void left in the Lakota society by years of religious oppression and its *religious* message appealed to non-progressive and progressive Lakotas alike.³⁸⁰ The internal divisions within the Lakota people, and the problems with the whites, determined the Lakotas' different approaches to the ghost dance, not the ghost dance itself.

Not even the so-called progressive Lakotas denied the ghost dance's religious validity. That the so-called progressive people who were led, for example, by American Horse and Young Man Afraid of His Horse did not turn to the ghost dance in a unified body does not mean that they denied its' potential power. These people generally sided with the agents, and were therefore regarded as progressives by the whites. The agents, and the whites in general, were opposed to the ghost dance, and these progressive Lakotas did not change their basic approach toward the whites by siding with the ghost dancers. For years they had followed "the white man's road" as well as they could; their decision not to join the ghost dancers was based on their political convictions, not on a denial of the ghost dance as a religion.

Despite this, there is evidence that many progressive Lakotas did turn to the ghost dance, a proof of the ghost dance's religious power. The problem is how to determine how many progressive Lakotas actually became *active* ghost dancers. If, for example, a person joined the ghost dance camp for a day or two, and then returned to the progressive camp, does this make him a ghost dancer? Was he then no longer a progressive? There is convincing evidence that this kind of movement was extensive, but there is no way of finding out exact numbers of progressive Indians who visited a ghost dance camp or at times participated in the ghost dance ceremonies. Indeed, exact figures are not even necessary. There is enough

³⁸⁰ For the discussion of the accounts claiming that only non-progressive Lakotas turned to the ghost dance see, chapters 3.1. -3.2.

evidence to show that the ghost dance affected Lakotas across the artificial progressive-non-progressive line. Contemporaries, like Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan, as well as scholars following **Mooney**, have claimed that the ghost dance was a movement that affected only the non-progressive, i.e., warlike, Lakotas.³⁸¹ This, however, has to be dismissed as an insufficient analysis; it is political rhetoric used in an attempt to justify the military action and to support the assumption that the ghost dancers had warlike intentions.³⁸²

The Lakota ghost dance ceremony differed from the ceremony of other Indian tribes, not in that it was more militaristic than others, but in that it reflected Lakota traditions, which gave it special features not found among any other tribe. It is, however, noteworthy that other tribes also made changes in the ghost dance ceremony that reflected their own traditions; this was not a peculiarity of the Lakota ghost dance alone. Like the doctrine itself, the Lakota ghost dance ceremony transformed to meet the Lakotas' expectations; it became a ceremony in which the Lakotas could actually see their traditions come alive again. Furthermore, the ghost dance brought religious ceremonies back to the Lakotas' daily lives. It will be recalled that their religious ceremonies had been forbidden in 1883. The ghost dance brought back the ritual expression of belief, an aspect so central to the Lakota way of life. Despite some peculiarities, like that no musical instruments so commonly used in traditional Lakota dances were used, the ceremony included so many features of old Lakota religious ceremonies, including the sweat bath and dancing around a sacred tree under the protection of the sacred pipe that it is safe to say that the ghost dance was a reflection of the old traditions in a slightly new package. Therefore, neither the ghost dance nor the songs and visions so closely related to it were anything other to the Lakotas than expressions of their religious belief.

During the fall of 1890 the Lakotas organized ghost dances more frequently. They ignored Wovoka's instructions to dance only at certain intervals; instead they moved permanently to the ghost dance camps, where they could dance as much as they pleased. The camp, they said, was now their church. By November 1890,

³⁸¹ See, chapters 4,5,6 and 7.

³⁸² For this discussion see, chapters 3.1-3.2.

there had been several minor incidents between the ghost dancers and the non-ghost dancers, especially the Indian Police, and between the ghost dancers and the Indian agents. Due to these incidents the ghost dance apostles Short Bull and Kicking Bear urged the people to dance more intensely to bring about the expected paradise. The ghost dancers were prepared to dance all winter, despite the agents' requests to stop. But in order to do that, they needed to kill cattle for food. This further escalated the problems between the ghost dancers and their agents. Incidents such as that on November 11, when a fight almost broke out between the ghost dancers and non-ghost dancers on Pine Ridge, led to mounting tensions and excitement.

There is no doubt that the excitement among the Lakotas grew during October and November, but still there is no indication that the Indians planned any violence against the whites.³⁸³ They took advantage of the situation when the new agents took charge, but it has to be understood that the ghost dance alone did not excite the Lakotas. One major reason for the excitement was *The Sioux Act of 1889*, and the resulting partitioning of the Great Sioux Reservation, which left extremely deep wounds in Lakota society.

Those who did not sign the agreement blamed those who signed it for the Lakotas' pitiful situation. One major reason why so many finally did sign, was the Sioux Commission's promise that rations would be maintained at the same level as previously. When the rations, especially the beef rations, were cut in the summer of 1890, the Lakotas understandably interpreted this to be connected with the Agreement of 1889. This, of course, was not the case, but for many Lakotas this reduction clearly showed that the government did not keep its promises. Those who signed were then blamed for being fooled by the whites. This was, however, only one factor that contributed to the split within the Lakota people, but it was the most recent and the most dramatic. During the fall of 1890 this division can be seen behind the restless feeling among the Lakotas; the trouble mainly occurred between the ghost dancers and the non-ghost dancers, and between the ghost dancers and the Indian police forces; ultimately it was a conflict between

³⁸³ This was also the opinion of many of the army officers. See, chapter 5.

those, who did not sign the Agreement of 1889, and those who did.³⁸⁴ Since the agents sided with the non-ghost dancers, the agents also became a part of this clash.

All this led to a situation in which, at least, from the white point of view, order on the reservations collapsed. By mid-November the Lakota reservations were indeed in great turmoil, but the greatest misunderstanding by contemporaries and historians alike has been to interpret this, a sign of growing hostility toward the whites. While most historians recognize that the 1889 Act resulted in much dissatisfaction among the Lakotas, they fail to see that much of the ghost dance “trouble” was, in the above-described fashion, directly related to that Act and to the events that preceded the actual partitioning of the Great Sioux Reservation.

At this point it is necessary to take a closer look at the situation on the Lakota reservations at the time of the troops’ arrival on November 20, 1890. It seems that the situation on Pine Ridge and Rosebud was very volatile, and without the interference of the army it was only a matter of time before a serious confrontation would have erupted between the ghost dancers and the Indian police or between the ghost dancers and the agents. However, in order to evaluate the situation properly we have to look at the actual numbers of the Lakota ghost dancers. The exact number of the ghost dancers is impossible to determine, but by comparing different sources it is possible to give a rough estimate. Although the numbers in the table below (Table 1) are not exact, they are sufficient to estimate the number of ghost dancers compared to the total number of the Lakota population.³⁸⁵

³⁸⁴ This division is, however, only a rough estimation. It would, in fact, be an interesting subject for further scholarly research to go further into the relationship between the 1889 Act and the ghost dance in the sense of this division, ghost dancer- non signer vs. non-ghost dancer-signer.

³⁸⁵ The table has been constructed using ARCIA 1890, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1890, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 25, 1890, Report of Agent J. George Wright, August 26, 1890 and Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 28, 1890, 52nd Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2841, p. 37, p. 42, p. 50, p. 57 and p. 450. The percentages are taken from, Utley 1963 p. 112. There were 1,791 Yanktonai Sioux living on Standing Rock reservation and 167 Northern Cheyenne on Rosebud and 517 on Pine Ridge. Because these people were not Lakotas, they are excluded from Table 1. Since the ghost dance never became a major issue on the Lower Brulé and Crow Creek reservations the 2084 Indians living on those reservations are also excluded from Table 1.

Table 1: The Number of Lakota Ghost Dancers

Reservation	Tribe	Population	Ghost Dancers (%)	Number of Ghost Dancers
Standing Rock	Blackfeet	571		
	Hunkpapa	1734		
Total		2,305	10	231
Cheyenne River	Two Kettle	Not available		
	Sans Arc	Not available		
	Minneconjou	Not available		
	Blackfeet	Not available		
Total		2,823	15	423
Rosebud	Brule	1961		
	Loafer	1052		
	Wazahzah	1184		
	Two Kettle	228		
	Mixed	762		
	Total		5,187	30
Pine Ridge	Oglala	4486		
	Mixed	528		
Total		5,014	40	2,006
Grand Total		15,329	28	4,216

Historian **Robert M. Utley** used the reports of the agents and some eyewitness accounts when he constructed his percentile estimation of the number of ghost dancers. According to him, in November 1890 approximately 40% of the Pine

Ridge Indian population were ghost dancers. On Rosebud 30% were openly believers of the doctrine, whereas the number on Cheyenne River was 15% and Standing Rock only 10% of the Indian population.³⁸⁶ **James Mooney**, relying most likely on government documents, claims that as many as 50% of “the 26,000 Sioux took active part” in the ghost dances, but there is reason to believe that his estimation is not accurate, since there were not 26,000 Lakotas in the first place. Following **Mooney** the number of ghost dancers would then be almost 13,000, which is quite a high estimation when the total Lakota population did not number more than some 15,000.³⁸⁷

Mooney's estimates of the numbers of dancers on Pine Ridge and Standing Rock, however, do demonstrate that those made by **Utley** are close to the actual reality. **Mooney** claims that on Standing Rock approximately 450 Hunkpapas led by Sitting Bull were participating in the ghost dances. According to the table above, 10% of the population would make the number of ghost dancers on Standing Rock approximately 231, which is even less than **Mooney**'s estimate. As mentioned earlier, the Hunkpapas were divided into the progressives, led by Gall and John Grass, and the non-progressives, led by Sitting Bull. And as **Mooney** himself notes, only the followers of Sitting Bull took part in the ghost dance.³⁸⁸ In addition, there were also the very progressive Yanktonai Sioux living on Standing Rock Reservation. So it is highly unlikely that there would have been more actual ghost dancers on that reservation than 10% of the population, as suggested by **Utley**.

The danger of war seemed to be more eminent on Pine Ridge and Rosebud, where the numbers of ghost dancers were greatest. Considering the matter from the white

³⁸⁶ Utley, 1963, p. 112. Agent James McLaughlin also stated that the percentage on Standing Rock Reservation was approximately 10% (McLaughlin 1989, p. 192) See also, Royer to ACIA, October 30, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 1/48. The Lakota agents' estimations are more carefully studied in, chapter 4.

³⁸⁷ Mooney 1991, pp. 926-927; Andersson, Rani-Henrik, “*Henkitanssi – lupaus paremmasta tulevaisuudesta.*” *Henkitanssiuskonto ja Lakotat 1889-1890*, an unpublished Master's thesis at the University of Tampere, Tampere Finland 1996, pp. 92-94. The 2,084 people living on the Lower Brulé and Crow Creek reservations are not included in the 15,000 mentioned here. The total number of all the Sioux people was approximately 26,000, and **Mooney** mistakenly based his estimate on this number. (ibid.) The white estimations of the Lakota ghost dancers strength ranged from 6,000 to 27,000. For contemporary white estimations see, chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7.

³⁸⁸ Mooney 1991, pp. 847-848; Andersson 1996, pp. 92-94.

point of view, calling in the army was reasonable, especially when the official estimates of the number of ghost dancers were extremely high.³⁸⁹ However, looking at the table above, only about **28%** (4,200) of the Lakotas were ghost dancers, and as explained previously, there was much movement between the ghost dance camps and other camps, which makes it impossible to distinguish clearly who was a ghost dancer and who was not. Furthermore, especially after the arrival of the military, many of those who fled to the ghost dance camps were not ghost dancers at all. Thus even the 28% may be a high estimate.

The U.S. military, however, was sent to suppress a possible uprising. Their presence, beginning November 20, 1890 led to increasing tensions among the Lakotas. The fear the Lakotas felt toward the army deepened the above-mentioned division within the Lakota people, and it also increased the ghost dancers determination to continue dancing and defend themselves against possible army attacks. The growing tension led to some new features in the ghost dance. Most important of these was the new bulletproof ghost shirts that appeared after the military threat became real -- not as early as in June 1890 as suggested, for example, by **Mooney**. The ghost shirts were needed for physical protection, but also to keep the ghost dancers united despite the threat the military presented. The increasing sense of insecurity among the ghost dancers caused Short Bull and Kicking Bear, among others, to seek refuge in the area known as the Stronghold. After the military's arrival the situation gradually escalated into open warfare between the ghost dancers and the military, culminating first in the death of Sitting Bull and then in the Wounded Knee massacre.

By December 15, when Sitting Bull was killed on Standing Rock Reservation, the developments on the other three Lakota reservations seemed to suggest a gradual peaceful end to the trouble. Sitting Bull's death, however, threw the Indians into confusion. This eventually led to further problems when Big Foot decided to lead his people to Pine Ridge. There is no evidence that would suggest that he had any warlike plans. His exodus was a peaceful escape to seek protection among relatives at Pine Ridge. All Indian accounts also suggest that on December 29, Big

³⁸⁹ See, chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Foot's people had no plans for resistance; they expected to be escorted to Pine Ridge Agency. After some unfortunate misunderstandings, fighting erupted and Big Foot's people were massacred.

The battle at Wounded Knee caused a major exodus of the frightened Lakotas. They escaped and were led by the most influential ghost dance leaders, and those chiefs, who had only recently abandoned the ghost dance. Even progressives, who had nothing to do with the ghost dance, were ready to fight. Immediately after Wounded Knee it seemed that the Lakotas were forced to be ready for a full-scale war. After a few skirmishes that ended unfavorably for the Lakotas, many considered it impossible to carry on a war against the U.S. Army. Because the ghost dance did not help, the internal division among the Indians in the final camp deepened. The division was so complete that young men led by Kicking Bear and Short Bull turned against the Oglala chiefs. The influence of Red Cloud as head chief also suffered a blow, and Lakotas even killed one another.

Kicking Bear and Short Bull tried to stay in control until the end, but they were unable to both keep the ghost dancers united and to lead a successful war against the army. After Wounded Knee the cause of the ghost dance was hopeless. For many, the belief in it died with Big Foot. In the later stages Kicking Bear and Short Bull were probably very much motivated by the fear of being sent to prison. Whether they still believed in the ghost dance is difficult to estimate. However, some of their actions and words later reveal that their belief never faded.³⁹⁰

The events in the final camp show how far the unity of the ghost dancers had disintegrated. The ghost dance had restored the unity and reinvigorated traditions for the Lakota people, but it proved to be only temporary. Strong leaders who could keep the people united were either dead or their influence faded. At

³⁹⁰ See, for example, Curtis 1950, pp. 45-47. Kicking Bear and Short Bull together with 25 other ghost dance leaders were imprisoned after their surrender. Kicking Bear and Short Bull were even sent to Europe with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show. (See, for example, Utley 1963, pp. 271-272) An interesting comment on Kicking Bear's and Short Bull's experience with Buffalo Bill was written by William F. Cody himself. He stated that both men were doing perfectly well on the tour, and caused no problems whatsoever. See, William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) to General Nelson A. Miles, April 14, 1891, NAMFP, Box 1, Cody File.

Wounded Knee died also the hope the ghost dance brought to the Lakotas. Not even the ghost dance could bring back the old way of life.

4. THE INDIAN AGENTS AND THE LAKOTA GHOST DANCE

4.1. The Problem Arises

The government-appointed Indian agents for the Lakota Indians were a mixed lot of men, some of them political appointees with no actual experience of the Indians, others strong and independent men who made good agents but often collided with the Lakota chiefs. From the beginning of the reservation period to the latter part of the 1880s the agents were constantly at odds with the Indians. Military support was usually close by, but tensions never escalated to open warfare.³⁹¹ The agents' daily tasks varied from dealing with civilizing programs, like education and farming, to issuing rations, and to balancing between the so-called progressive and non-progressive Indians. In addition to all this, the agents were forced to deal with officials in Washington; every little incident, every request for money or other supplies, had to be carefully explained and justified. The agents were indeed in a difficult situation; they were expected to carry out the government's programs that were designed to lead the Indians toward civilization, but at the same time they were forced to face the realities of reservation life. This dilemma can clearly be seen, for example, in their annual reports. Even as the agents were complaining about the daily problems, they tried to convince their superiors that despite all, the Lakotas were advancing toward civilization.³⁹²

In addition to these daily problems, land issues caused problems. The Lakotas possessed much more land than they actually needed, at least from the whites' perspective. For this reason the government tried several times to reduce the size

³⁹¹ See, Utley 1963, pp. 18-59; Olson 1965, pp. 114-319; McGillicuddy 1969, *passim*; McLaughlin 1989, *passim*.

³⁹² See, for example, McLaughlin to CIA, May 5, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 21, pp. 10-224; ARCIA 1889, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 26, 1889, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 27, 1889, Report of Agent L. F. Spencer, August 23, 1889, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1889, Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, pp. 129-135, pp. 151-161 and pp. 165-170; ARCIA 1890, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 25, 1890, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 28, 1890, Report of Agent J. George Wright, August 26, 1890, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2841, pp. 37-62. See also, Olson 1965, *passim*; McGillicuddy 1969, *passim*; McLaughlin 1989, *passim*; Smedman 2001, *passim*.

of the Great Sioux reservation (See chapter 2). In order to carry out the suggested reduction of the reservation, the officials in Washington needed extensive help from the agents. When the reduction was finally carried out in 1889, the agents were the ones who had to face the disappointed Indians. The government negotiators were long gone, and the agents were left to explain away the commissioners' empty promises. The agents generally agreed that the reduction was justifiable, but the manner in which it was carried out was not satisfactory. The negotiations left the Indians with reduced lands, reduced rations, and reduced faith in the government and its agents. The Lakota agents complained that the negotiations planted the seed for future trouble. The Indians were suffering from lack of food and from disease even before the negotiations, and the months following the reduction of the reservation only aggravated the situation; the agents could do nothing to help the Indians.³⁹³

The situation became so serious during 1889-1890 that the agents several times asked Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan to do something to ease the suffering among the Indians. Farming proved impossible once again, the crops suffered almost a complete failure, and the Indians were on the brink of starvation. The cut in beef rations, which was carried out in the wake of the reduction of the Great Sioux Reservation, caused the agent at Pine Ridge to inform the commissioner that "...our beef allowance for present fiscal year was reduced one million pounds below any previous year, which is working a great hardship among the Indians," and further "...considerable distress prevails among the Indians of this agency...I am anxious to learn if it is intended that this deficiency will be made up..." so that "... I can at once afford some relief..." He complained rather pathetically "...we have several times been out of flour..." and "when will allowance of sugar, bacon, beef, beans and corn be shipped. Please hurry it up."³⁹⁴

³⁹³ ARCIA 1890, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 25, 1890, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 28, 1890, Report of Agent J. George Wright, August 26, 1890, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2841, pp. 37-62. See also, chapters 2 and 7.

³⁹⁴ Gallagher to CIA, January 21, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, p. 65; Gallagher to CIA, January 31, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, p. 108; Gallagher to CIA, February 17, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, p. 116; Gallagher to CIA, June 10, 1890, NARS, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, p. 305; Gallagher to CIA, October 4, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, p. 436; McLaughlin to CIA, August 9, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 21, pp. 154-156. See also, ARCIA 1890, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 25, 1890, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 28, 1890, Report of

While the Lakota agents were struggling with these problems they failed to take notice of the rumor of an Indian Messiah that caused excitement among the Lakotas already in the fall of 1889. Without the agents' permission the Lakotas sent a delegation to meet with the new Indian Messiah (See chapter 3.1.). The Lakota agents did not take notice of the ghost dance before late spring of 1890 when the commissioner of Indian affairs officially asked for information about the ghost dance excitement among the Lakotas. Secretary of the Interior John W. Noble received a letter from an alarmed citizen living in Pierre, South Dakota, who believed that the Lakotas were planning an outbreak in the near future. In addition, the newspapers, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Chicago Tribune and The Omaha Daily Bee, were already in April reporting a threatened uprising among the Lakotas. Secretary Noble promptly ordered the commissioner of Indian affairs to investigate the matter.³⁹⁵

The agent at Pine Ridge Reservation, Hugh D. Gallagher, was the first to respond to the commissioner's request. The agent assured the commissioner that no danger existed. The Indians on his reservation were all quiet and harbored no plans for an uprising, but he noted that they were somewhat excited by news regarding a "great Medicine Man in the North," who promised to bring about "...their primitive condition surrounded by herds of buffalo..." The Indians' first meeting was held without the agent's permission and he ordered the Indian police to disperse the meeting, after which three leading men were arrested and given "... a good lecture about the silliness of their teachings." The thing that concerned Gallagher was the deplorable condition of the Indians caused by crop failure and reduction in their beef ration. This, he believed, not the ghost dance, might lead to trouble. Despite this he did not consider the situation as dangerous in any way, and thought the excitement would soon die out.³⁹⁶

Agent J. George Wright, August 26, 1890, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2841, pp. 37-62.

³⁹⁵ See, Charles L. Hyde to the Secretary of the Interior John W. Noble, May 29, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 1/1. See also, Mooney 1991, p. 843. For the newspaper accounts see, chapter 6.

³⁹⁶ Gallagher to CIA, June 10, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, pp. 305-307; Gallagher to CIA, June 14, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 1/2. See also, for example, Hyde 1956, pp. 247-248.

Charles E. McChesney, the agent at Cheyenne River Reservation, replied in a similar manner denying all rumors of an uprising. From Rosebud Reservation came a somewhat more detailed explanation. Agent J. George Wright also denied all stories suggesting trouble, but reported that there had been excitement and secret communications passing from one reservation to another already in March 1890. The agent noted that these messages were exchanged between the "...disgruntled, dissatisfied, non-progressive Indians, who refused to sign the recent treaty and at one time recognized as chiefs, representing the older men who cannot accept the new order of things," and who were "...jealous of younger men." The agent continued that he was carefully watching the Indians' meetings and promptly arrested some ringleaders. This had a desirable effect, and the agent expected no further trouble. Very little importance was to be attached to this matter, but Wright suggested that Crow Dog and his followers should be removed from the reservation.³⁹⁷

With what seemed to him a growing tendency, Agent James McLaughlin at Standing Rock Reservation replied with a very long letter. The essence of the letter was that there was absolutely no reason for concern. He had traveled among the Indians for 19 days and was welcomed everywhere. "Best possible feeling prevailing," wrote the agent, and he emphasized that there were few malcontents on Standing Rock Reservation. These men were discouraging the more progressive element, but in the end the agent believed that only very few would unite in open resistance. The remedy for any uneasiness, he suggested, was to arrest Sitting Bull and his followers at Standing Rock Reservation, Big Foot at Cheyenne River, Crow Dog at Rosebud and "...many of the same kind" on Pine Ridge Reservation. This would quiet things down and give confidence to the majority of Indians, who were loyal to the overnment. McLaughlin was confident that his Indian police force would be able to control the reservation. He finished his letter saying that he had "...every confidence in the good intentions of the Sioux as people," and that "...they will not be aggressors in any overt act against

³⁹⁷ McChesney to CIA, June 16, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 1/3-4; Wright to CIA, June 16, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 1/5-7. See also, ARCIA 1890, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 25, 1890, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 28, 1890, Report of Agent J. George Wright, August 26, 1890, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2841, pp. 37-62.

white settlers, and if justice is only done them no uneasiness need be entertained.”³⁹⁸

The first comments made by the Lakota agents were thus quite calm; for them the new excitement seemed to be no particular threat. They all considered it more or less harmless, or as Agent Gallagher put it, “silliness.” The agents absolutely denied all rumors of an uprising that would be caused by the ghost dance. There were enough problems on the reservations without the ghost dance. The agents believed that, if there was going to be an outbreak, it would be caused by hunger and general feeling of dissatisfaction rather than religious excitement. They were concerned about the non-progressive element causing problems, but that was nothing new and had nothing to do with the ghost dance. As the summer of 1890 wore on, the Lakota agents were busy with their daily tasks, and the ghost dance seemed to be dying out. In his report in August, Gallagher however, briefly mentioned the ghost dance saying that there had been some excitement in the spring of 1890. To his surprise the excitement seemed to gain more followers as the summer passed. The agent wrote: “Strange as it may seem this story was believed by a large number of Indians and is this day.” Still, his and the other agents’ reports reveal that during the summer the ghost dance was not a major issue on the Lakota reservations.³⁹⁹

In late August, however, the first trouble between the ghost dancers and the agents occurred. Agent Gallagher at Pine Ridge learned that a dance camp of 2,000 Indians was established near White Clay Creek, eighteen miles north of Pine Ridge Agency (See appendix 8, maps 5-6). He sent a detachment of the reservation Indian police to disperse the dancers, but they were not able to do so. On August 24, Gallagher, accompanied with 20 Indian policemen and Special Agent Elisha B. Reynolds, set out in secrecy to witness the dance. When the

³⁹⁸ McLaughlin to CIA, June 18, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 1/8-10. The underlining was done by Agent McLaughlin.

³⁹⁹ Gallagher to CIA, August 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, M 1282, Roll 10, 385-387; McLaughlin to CIA, August 9, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 21, pp. 154-156; ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1891, Report of Agent Perain P. Palmer, August 17, 1891, Report of Acting Agent Charles G. Penney, September 1, 1891, Report of Agent J. George Wright, August 27, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 324-394 and pp. 408-412. See, Olson 1965, pp. 323-324; Mooney 1991, pp. 843-855.

company arrived, however, the dance was stopped, and the Indians, to the agent's great surprise, were expecting them. Instead of 2,000 Indians as expected, Reynolds states that there were approximately 150 lodges and 600 Indians, men, women and children, in the ghost dance camp. Interestingly, **Mooney**, for example, disregards Reynolds' statement, and relying on the initial estimations given by Gallagher, claims that there were 2,000 ghost dancers in the camp.⁴⁰⁰

Some men, according to Gallagher were "...stripped for fight, with Winchester rifles in hands and cartridge belts around their waists," and were "...prepared to do or die in defense of their new faith." The agent exchanged some angry words with the Indians, but interpreter Phillip Wells realized that the situation was becoming dangerous and advised the agent to use caution. Gallagher then urged the Indians to disperse, since they had no authorization to dance. He further assured the Indians that he meant no harm and was there only to witness the ceremony himself. Rather surprisingly, the ceremony was resumed and Reynolds and Gallagher became probably the first white men to witness the ghost dance ceremony among the Lakotas. Agent Gallagher reported four days later: "While nothing serious may result from this new religion as it is called by the Indians, I would greatly fear the consequences should there be no restrictions placed upon it." Reynolds fully agreed that measures should be taken to stop the dancing, but noted that it was a religious ceremony, which fulfilled the hopes the Indians had cherished for years.⁴⁰¹

In September the ghost dance spread to Rosebud Reservation where Agent J. George Wright had earlier in the summer arrested some of the leaders including, Short Bull, who, in fact, had remained quiet for the rest of the summer. In September, however, the agent realized that Short Bull was again preaching. The agent was clear in his view of the ghost dance: it had to be stopped, not because it was going to lead to an outbreak, but since it was "...interfering with schools and

⁴⁰⁰ Gallagher to CIA, August 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, Roll 10, pp. 387-388; Reynolds to CIA, September 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/22-26. See also, Utley 1963, p. 92; Mooney 1991, pp. 846-847.

⁴⁰¹ Gallagher to CIA, August 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, LSASPR, Roll 10, pp. 387-388; Reynolds to CIA, September 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/22-26; Phillip Wells in, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3541, Reel 1, Box 4, Tablet 1-5. An excellent account of the incident can be found in, Utley 1963, pp. 91-94. For a different interpretation see also, chapter 3. Underlining in the quotation was done by Agent Gallagher.

causing a total neglect of stock...” and it caused the Indians to become “...completely exhausted physically, morally, and intellectually,” making them “...reckless and defiant.” After a rumor that soldiers had entered the reservation caused major commotion among the Indians, Wright considered it necessary to act. He ordered all rations to be withheld until the ghost dancing stopped. As a result of this action the excitement subsided and, according to the agent, dancing was confined only to a few of its originators.⁴⁰²

However, Agent Wright’s problems were not over. Special Census Agent A. T. Lea, conducting a census among the Rosebud Indians, filed a report that stated that there were more than 2,000 fewer Indians living on Rosebud Reservation than Wright had been drawing rations for. This meant, according to Lea, that Wright had taken the money from the extra rations for himself. He was removed from office, and had to face charges of corruption. Meanwhile, Special Agent E. B. Reynolds arrived from Pine Ridge to take his place. Reynolds was not familiar with the Indians or with the circumstances on Rosebud Reservation, which enabled the ghost dancers to resume their ceremonies.⁴⁰³

Rosebud, however, was not the only Lakota reservation where a new man took charge. The term for the Democrat Agents Hugh D. Gallagher and Charles E. McChesney was over. Both of these men were relatively able as Indian agents, but the Republican government wanted to replace them with their own appointees.⁴⁰⁴ Only James McLaughlin at Standing Rock was allowed to stay in charge of his reservation. The new agent for Pine Ridge was a small-town Dakota politician, Daniel F. Royer, a man totally unfamiliar with Indian affairs and who did not

⁴⁰² ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent J. George Wright, August 27, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 411-412. About the excitement caused by the rumor see, chapter 3. Withholding rations was efficiently used in several occasions during the 1870s and 1880s to subdue restlessness on the reservations. (See, for example, Olson 1965, *passim*.)

⁴⁰³ ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent J. George Wright, August 27, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 411-412. See, Utley 1963, p. 95; Mooney 1991, p. 847. Agent Lea’s role is studied in, chapters 3, 5 and 7.

⁴⁰⁴ Changing the agents was a part of the so-called spoils system, and the new Home Rule, which allowed the Governor of each state to appoint Indian agents for the reservations located in the state. See, for example, Hyde 1956, pp. 249-250; Olson 1965, p. 307; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 59-61.

want to become an Indian agent in the first place.⁴⁰⁵ Perain P. Palmer took charge of Cheyenne River Reservation. The change could not have occurred in a more unfortunate time; the new agents did not know how to deal with the growing ghost dance excitement.⁴⁰⁶

Although ghost dancing was in progress on Pine Ridge, Rosebud and Cheyenne River Reservations in October 1890, the new agent on Cheyenne River Reservation was at first unaware that ghost dances were held on his reservation. The ghost dance leader, Kicking Bear, arrived at Cheyenne River in mid-September and the camps of Hump and Big Foot became centers on this reservation for the new religion. Their camps, however, were located far away from the agency, which made it difficult for the agent to act. When finally learning about the ghost dances, Agent Palmer repeatedly sent his Indian police to stop the dancing. They, however, were not able to do anything; instead many of them resigned their jobs and joined the ghost dancers. On October 11, Palmer informed the commissioner of Indian affairs that Big Foot and his band were growing very excited over the coming of the Messiah. He reported that the Indians, armed with Winchester rifles, were growing hostile.⁴⁰⁷ This was the first time Big Foot's alleged hostile intentions received the agent's attention. Interestingly, two months later General Miles took up the idea, declaring that Big Foot was the most defiant and hostile of the ghost dance leaders.⁴⁰⁸

A couple of weeks later on October 29, however, Agent Palmer wrote that Big Foot was at the agency and was very friendly, talking freely about things that concerned him. He told the agent that the whites, too, had been waiting for a

⁴⁰⁵ Olson, p. 325. Daniel F. Royer wanted to be Receiver of the Land Office at Huron, but was sent to Pine Ridge. (ibid.)

⁴⁰⁶ Much has been written about the change of agents and especially about Agent Royer's character and his abilities as agent. Historians and even contemporaries generally agree that he was totally unfit for becoming an Indian agent. (See, for example, Phillip Wells in, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3541, Reel 1, Box 4, Tablet 1-5; Colby 1892, p. 184; Eastman 1916, p. 84; Goodale Eastman 1945, p. 32; Johnson D. 1956, p. 47; Hyde 1956, p. 254; Utley 1963, p. 96 and p. 103; Olson 1965, p. 325; Smith 1975, pp. 120-121; *Sister to the Sioux. The Memoirs of Elaine Goodale Eastman 1885-1891* (ed. Graber, Kay), Lincoln, Nebraska 1985 p. 145; Mooney, 1991, p. 848; Coleman W. 2000, p. 60)

⁴⁰⁷ Agent Perain P. Palmer to CIA, October 11, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/29-30. See also, Utley 1963, pp. 96-97; Mooney, 1991, p. 848.

⁴⁰⁸ For General Miles' thoughts on Big Foot see, chapter 5. A different view of Big Foot's alleged hostile intentions is presented in, chapter 3.

Messiah many times and were always disappointed, and it would be so with the Indians. Hump, on the other hand, appeared quiet and sullen. He complained that he had lost influence by signing 1889 agreement, and as a result of this, resigned his job as a policeman and joined the ghost dancers. The agent wrote that Hump was by far the most dangerous character on Cheyenne River Reservation. By removing him, all problems would be removed, or so Palmer believed.⁴⁰⁹

By early October the ghost dance was introduced at Standing Rock Reservation. Sitting Bull invited Kicking Bear, who arrived at Sitting Bull's camp on the Grand River on October 9 (See appendix 7, map 4). Agent McLaughlin was quick to blame Sitting Bull for taking up the doctrine and becoming "...the high priest and leading apostle of this latest Indian absurdity." Already on October 1, McLaughlin suggested to the commissioner of Indian affairs that all demoralizing Indian dances should be stopped. At that time, however, the ghost dance was not a problem at Standing Rock Reservation. Only few days later McLaughlin learned about Kicking Bear's presence in Sitting Bull's camp. This made the agent furious; he ordered his Indian police to go to Sitting Bull's camp and escort Kicking Bear off the reservation. Once again the policemen were not able to perform their duty. The policemen came back in a "...dazed condition," reported McLaughlin. The second delegation finally escorted Kicking Bear off the reservation on October 15. This, according to McLaughlin, showed that Indian policemen were brave enough to keep order on the reservation. For McLaughlin, however, the damage was done; ghost dancing had started on Standing Rock Reservation also. For McLaughlin the idea of Sitting Bull being a leader of a forbidden ceremony was difficult to accept.⁴¹⁰

In a long letter to the commissioner of Indian affairs Agent McLaughlin launched his assault on Sitting Bull and the ghost dance. In the letter he recalled his letter of June 18, in which he had suggested Sitting Bull's arrest. Now, in October, Sitting Bull was still at large, and heading the most non-progressive element on the

⁴⁰⁹ Palmer to CIA, October 29, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/51-53.

⁴¹⁰ Agent James McLaughlin to CIA, October 17, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/31-43; ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 327-339. See, McLaughlin 1989, pp. 184-191. See also, Utley 1963, pp. 97-98.

reservation. According to McLaughlin, there would have been no sign of the ghost dance on Standing Rock Reservation if Sitting Bull had been removed in time. McLaughlin blamed Sitting Bull for all the trouble and described him with words that clearly reveal his personal hatred toward him. Some of the expressions McLaughlin used included adjectives like “worthless,” “coward,” “liar” and phrases describing him as “a man of low cunning,” and “devoid all noble traits of character.” Indeed, Agent McLaughlin and Sitting Bull did not get along from the beginning. After meeting Sitting Bull for the first time in 1881, McLaughlin described him as “...a stocky man with an evil face and shifty eyes.” Their relationship remained tense throughout the 1880s. Even long after Sitting Bull’s death McLaughlin kept blaming and accusing him. In his memoirs, *My Friend the Indian*, McLaughlin described Sitting Bull very negatively: “Crafty, avaricious, mendacious and ambitious, Sitting Bull possessed all of the faults of an Indian and none of the attributes which have gone far to redeem some of his people from their deeds of guilt.”⁴¹¹

In October, however, McLaughlin’s major problem was Sitting Bull’s relationship to the ghost dance. McLaughlin was convinced that Sitting Bull used the ghost dance to promote his leadership, which, according to the agent, was diminishing among the Indians. “Like a drowning man grasping at a straw [he] is working upon the credulity of the superstitious and ignorant Indians and reaping a rich harvest of popularity,” wrote McLaughlin. War, he believed, was in Sitting Bull’s mind. A convincing evidence of this, reported McLaughlin, was that Sitting Bull broke his peace pipe. McLaughlin quickly ordered the ghost dancing to be stopped and called for Sitting Bull to come to the agency for a talk. Sitting Bull, however, refused. The agent sent several delegations of Indian policemen to Sitting Bull’s camp in order to enforce his orders. Despite this, the dancing continued. McLaughlin again suggested to the commissioner of Indian affairs that Sitting

⁴¹¹ See, McLaughlin to CIA, October 17, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/31-43; ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 327-339. See, McLaughlin; 1989, pp. 180-183; Hoover 1980, pp. 163-170. See also, chapter 7.

Bull should be removed from the reservation. After that an end could be put to the dance, which he deemed as "...demoralizing, indecent, and disgusting."⁴¹²

Thus by late October the ghost dance had spread to all of the major Lakota reservations. All the agents, old and the new, condemned it as immoral and dangerous. The agents, however, did not yet in October consider the ghost dance dangerous in a military sense. They did not believe that it would lead to an uprising. Special Agent Reynolds and Agent Gallagher even called it a religious rite, and Agent McLaughlin considered it dangerous only in the sense that Sitting Bull was leading it on Standing Rock Reservation. For the Lakota agents the ghost dance at this time was dangerous because it excited the Indians and thus interfered with the daily reservation routines. Schools, churches and farms were left unattended and the Lakotas' advancement in civilization came to a halt. Agent Royer, at Pine Ridge, summarized the agents' concerns saying that unless the ghost dancing, which was "...the most heathenish practice," was stopped the Indians would "...go backwards until they reach the savage mark of the sixties." That was the agents' real concern in September and October, but their emphasis was about to change.⁴¹³

4.2. The Question of Control

4.2.1. The Bewildered New Agents

Agent Daniel F. Royer assumed charge of Pine Ridge Reservation in October 1890. Quite soon after his arrival he informed his superiors at the Bureau of Indian Affairs that, because of the present excitement, he was not able to perform the duties he was sent there to do. He complained that his job was to lead the Indians ahead in civilization, but under the present circumstances there was no way of doing that. "They are tearing down more in a day than the government can

⁴¹² McLaughlin to CIA, October 17, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/31-43; ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 327-339. See, McLaughlin 1989, pp. 192-193. See also, for example, Johnson D. 1956, pp. 46-47; Utley 1963, pp. 97-100; Hoover 1980, pp. 167-170; Mooney 1991, pp. 847-848. For a discussion about Sitting Bull and the episode with the peace pipe see, chapter 3.

⁴¹³ Royer to ACIA, October 30, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/47-50.

build up in a month,” he wrote. The agent got some relief for his concerns from General Miles, who visited the reservation on October 28, and negotiated with the Indians as well as with Royer. The agent, however, was not fully convinced by the general’s assurances that the excitement was dying out.⁴¹⁴

On October 30, Royer complained that 50% or perhaps as many as two thirds of the reservation Indian population supported the ghost dance, and were thus beyond control (For comparison see chapter 3.6, Table 1). The agent complained that the ghost dancers defied the law, threatened the police, took children out of schools, and harbored wanted criminals. He listed Red Cloud, Little Wound and Big Road as the main leaders, although he reported that Red Cloud’s role was to encourage the ghost dancers rather than to lead them. Little Wound, according to the agent, was the most difficult person to deal with. He allegedly urged all the Lakotas to join the ghost dancers and to “...be Indians again.” He told the agent that they would not stop dancing in any case. Royer tried to use the “friendly” leaders, American Horse and Young Man Afraid Of His Horse, against the ghost dance, but to no avail. Even these influential men could not stop the ghost dances, Royer saw only one option left; he called for military intervention. This was the first time any of the agents asked for military protection against the ghost dancers.⁴¹⁵

Agent Reynolds at Rosebud followed in a similar tone on November 2. Three weeks earlier, he reported, the ghost dance was thought to be abandoned, but had since then gained new adherents. The ghost dancers were becoming more threatening and defiant. They were openly killing cattle saying, that they were given to them by the Great Father (the president), so they could do whatever they pleased with them. The policemen, who were sent to arrest those who killed cattle, were forced to withdraw. The agent feared the policemen would all lose their lives in the process. The ghost dancers were thus beyond the control of the police, and Reynolds thought that an outbreak was imminent. The agent noted that the ghost dancers’ actions were partly due to the lack of food; the ghost dance was

⁴¹⁴ Royer to ACIA, October 30, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/47-50. More about General Miles’ visit in, chapters 3 and 5.

⁴¹⁵ Royer to ACIA, October 30, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/47-50. See also, Eastman 1916, pp. 88-100.

“religious excitement aggravated by almost starvation,” wrote Reynolds, and continued “...the Indians say better to die fighting than to die a slow death of starvation.” He believed that the Indians were clearly more in favor of war now than before. As evidence of this he mentioned that he had received several reports indicating that the Indians were trading their belongings for ammunition. Furthermore, the ghost dancers were no longer afraid of being killed, since their new religion promised that everyone would be resurrected in the near future. Realizing this state of affairs the agent decided to call for troops.⁴¹⁶

Meanwhile at Pine Ridge, Royer was growing more and more concerned. On November 8 he reported that there were four major ghost dance camps on his reservation. The agent wrote that 600 people were dancing in a camp at White Clay Creek, not far from the agency. At Wounded Knee Creek 250, at Porcupine Creek 130 and at Medicine Root Creek 300 Indians were regularly participating in the ghost dances (See appendix 8, maps 5-6). Thus altogether almost 1,300 Indians were engaged in these ceremonies and the agent believed that they were all very hostile and out of control. Little Wound was again singled out as the leader of the ghost dancers. According to the agent, Little Wound was most “...stubborn, head-strong, self willed, unruly Indian on the reservation.” Kicking Bear was the other one, who caused major concern for the agent. These two men kept exciting the others, who grew more boisterous every day. The condition of things was such, according to Royer, that it was going to “...render this administration a failure.”⁴¹⁷ Interestingly, only a week earlier Royer claimed that 50%, that is approximately 2,500 Indians, were participating in the ghost dance ceremonies; now he was able to count only 1,300.⁴¹⁸ Nonetheless, he believed that the situation was going from bad to worse and he was absolutely powerless to enforce his orders. Troops were needed in order to stop “...this most outrageous

⁴¹⁶ Reynolds to CIA, November 2, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/56-59.

⁴¹⁷ Royer to CIA, November 8, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/65-68. See also, Royer to CIA (telegram), November 11, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/64-68; Royer to CIA (telegram), November 12, 1890, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/75-79.

⁴¹⁸ See above.

practice.” “We have no protection and are at the mercy of these crazy dancers,” he wrote on November 12.⁴¹⁹

His request was probably triggered by a minor incident that took place on November 11. Tensions were extremely high, but violence was narrowly avoided (See chapter 3). The policemen, however, were not able to arrest the offender. The agency physician, a full-blood Santee Sioux, Charles A. Eastman, later described how this incident affected Royer. He summoned some of the chiefs, policemen, Dr. Eastman and Special Agent James A. Cooper, who was sent to Pine Ridge to give assistance to Royer, to the agency building and frantically asked for their advice. Despite all their efforts to calm him, Royer was certain that the incident was plotted by the ghost dancers from the beginning. While others tried to convince him that intervention by the army would only worsen the situation, he ignored their warnings and called for troops.⁴²⁰ Quite interestingly, in the wake of this scare of his life, Royer asked both the commissioner of Indian affairs and the acting commissioner of Indian affairs for permission to come to Washington to explain things in person. “Please grant me authority to come at once,” he begged. He promised that during his absence no trouble would occur at Pine Ridge; the Indians would remain quiet! His request, however, was denied.⁴²¹

Three days later Royer sent another frantic telegram to R.V. Belt the Acting Commissioner of Indians Affairs. This telegram has become a standard quotation in almost every study of the ghost dance, since it has been seen as the final appeal that prompted military action. The telegram read as follows:

Indians are dancing in the snow and are wild and crazy. I have fully informed you that employees and government property at this agency have no protection and are

⁴¹⁹ Royer to CIA, November 8, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/65-68; Royer to CIA (telegram), November 11, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/64-68; Royer to CIA (telegram), November 12, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/75-79, Royer to ACIA, November 12, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/93.

⁴²⁰ See, Royer to CIA, November 11, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/91-92. See also, Eastman 1916, pp. 93-99; Utley 1963, pp. 107-109.

⁴²¹ Royer to CIA (telegram), November 12, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/75-79, Royer to ACIA, November 12, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/93. See, Utley 1963, pp. 107-109.

at the mercy of these dancers. Why delay further by investigation, we need protection and we need it now.⁴²²

In a sense this appeal was unnecessary. President Benjamin Harrison had already on November 13 directed the military to assume full responsibility for the ghost-dancing Lakotas.⁴²³

Agent Royer has often been accused of being the major cause for the decision to send the military to the Lakota reservations. Indeed, his appeals for help were by far the most alarming and frantic, but Agent Palmer on Cheyenne River Reservation and Agent Reynolds on Rosebud Reservation also contributed significantly to the general scare that prompted the military action. In the beginning of November both agents were still sending relatively mild letters to their superiors, but interestingly enough, about the same time as Royer was growing more scared, the tone in the reports by Palmer and Reynolds also changed. Palmer especially was exhibiting concern. He reported that the Indians were trading cattle for guns and ammunition. He also complained that Indians from other reservations were coming to Cheyenne River where they together planned an outbreak. He reported that the Indians were being very bold in their replies to the agent's request to stop dancing. When he told them that the government was displeased with them, they replied that they were displeased with the government, and would continue to dance. This, the agent thought, was ultimate defiance; he even labeled the ghost dancers as "hostiles." Reynolds was concerned about the killing of cattle and about the fact that several hundred Indians were heading from Rosebud toward Pine Ridge. Both Reynolds and Palmer listed several of the ghost dance leaders, recommending that they be arrested as soon as possible.⁴²⁴

⁴²² Royer to ACIA (telegram), November 15, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/89-90. See, for example, Utley 1963, pp. 111; Olson 1965, pp. 325-327; Smith 1975, pp. 123-125. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Thomas J. Morgan, was in Oklahoma inspecting Indian schools. (Utley 1963, p. 100)

⁴²³ See, chapter 5.

⁴²⁴ See, Palmer to CIA, November 4, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/60-61; Palmer to CIA, November 5, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 1/55; Palmer to CIA, November 6, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/64-72; Palmer to CIA, November 10, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/82-84; Palmer to CIA (telegram), November 20, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/5; Reynolds to CIA, November 2, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/56-59; Reynolds to CIA

All these repeated pleas for help, together with the alarming newspaper accounts, prompted President Benjamin Harrison to act. Consequently, on November 20, the military arrived at the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations. Before that, however, one peculiar event took place. Agent Royer, as mentioned, wanted to visit Washington, but was not allowed to. Instead he decided, after sending his telegrams to Washington, to leave Pine Ridge without permission. On November 17, he packed his belongings, left his clerk in charge of the reservation, and headed to the town of Rushville, Nebraska. There he stayed until the troops arrived, and then returned to the reservation under military protection. In his own words he wanted to meet the troops in advance to explain the situation, but his action seems more like an escape for fear that his life was threatened. Supported by Special Agent Cooper, who also joined Royer on his trip to Rushville, Royer later tried to deny that he had left his post out of fear. Cooper first stated that Royer never left his post, but later emphasized that it was necessary for him to leave. Brigadier General John R. Brooke, in command of the arriving troops, later reported that Royer had gone to Rushville at Brooke's request. Whatever the truth, Royer's rush to Rushville made headlines in the newspapers, and at least in the public eye, it appeared that he was not in control of either his nerves or his reservation.⁴²⁵

Agent Royer's growing excitement can easily be traced to the incident on November 11, but the other agents' rapid change in attitude is not so easily explained. It seems that nothing more alarming or serious took place on either Cheyenne River or Rosebud Reservations than what had been going on for the past few months.⁴²⁶ Still, by November the two agents joined Royer's pleas for military help. Perhaps, repeated minor incidents exhausted their patience, or,

(telegram), November 21, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/6. For further commentary on the movement of the Rosebud ghost dancers to Pine Ridge see, chapters 3 and 5.

⁴²⁵ See, Special Agent James A. Cooper to CIA (telegram), November 21, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/7; Cooper to ACIA, November 21, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1., pp. 2/16-17; Royer to ACIA (telegram), November 21, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/17; Royer to ACIA, November 21, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/66; Cooper to ACIA, November 21, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/68-69. See also, for example, Utley 1963, p. 116; Smith 1975, p. 126. For newspaper accounts of Royer's trip to Rushville see, chapter 6.

⁴²⁶ See, chapter 3.

perhaps inexperienced as they were, they simply could not deal with the situation. The latter possibility is supported by the actions of the experienced James McLaughlin at Standing Rock Reservation; he did not call for troops, on the contrary, he wanted to deal with the situation by himself.

4.2.2. The Old Rivalry Renewed

On Standing Rock Reservation Agent James McLaughlin's view of the military intervention was opposite to that of his colleagues on the other Lakota reservations. From the beginning he emphasized that the danger lay in Sitting Bull, not in the ghost dance. McLaughlin, of course, disapproved of the ghost dance, but for him there was only one problem on the reservation, Sitting Bull. As mentioned above, his rivalry with Sitting Bull was not new, but it is noteworthy that, while the other agents were clamoring for troops, McLaughlin's views did not change at any stage in favor of military intervention. In fact, all through November he kept assuring both his superiors and the general public that absolutely no danger of an uprising existed. He personally wrote to some citizens, who were concerned about the situation. He also gave interviews to the newspapers, although he later claimed that the newspapers distorted the reports concerning his reservation. In all these letters and interviews he put the full blame for the restlessness on Sitting Bull. He kept on insisting that, if Sitting Bull were to be arrested, no trouble would occur on Standing Rock. His major point, however, was that he could take care of the situation by himself, and with the help of his Indian police force.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁷ See, McLaughlin to Reverend Martin Marty, October 18, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 20, pp. 450-451; McLaughlin to Emma Harnet, November 13, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 21, p. 421; McLaughlin to John Haget, November 17, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 21, p. 427; McLaughlin to George Bingenheimer, November 18, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 21, p. 428; McLaughlin to David Carey, November 19, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 21, p. 429; McLaughlin to CIA, November 19, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 21, pp. 430-437; McLaughlin to Marty, November 20, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 21, p. 467; McLaughlin to Miss Francis, November 24, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 21, pp. 450-451; McLaughlin to A. C. Hewdekoper, November 25, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 21, pp. 454-455; McLaughlin to John Dady, November 28, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 21, p. 463; McLaughlin to Mrs. A. Langenworthy, November 28, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 20, p. 464; McLaughlin to Herbert Welsh, November 25, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 20, pp. 469-472. For Agent McLaughlin's comments published in the press see, chapter 6.

Agent McLaughlin's correspondence during November and early December clearly shows that he approached the ghost dance purely through Sitting Bull's persona. It seems that he was obsessed with Sitting Bull and the idea of getting rid of him. He repeatedly reiterated that he was able to confine the ghost dancing to approximately 450 people, all connected to Sitting Bull's immediate following (For comparison see chapter 3, Table 1). In this sense, as McLaughlin insisted, he seemed to have his reservation under relatively good control. He did not want or need any troops to aid him; he was convinced that he knew better than anyone how to deal with the Indians on his reservation. He assured the commissioner of Indian affairs in several communications that he would be able to arrest Sitting Bull when the time was right. Military intervention, he believed, would only lead to bloodshed.⁴²⁸

Despite his obvious dislike of Sitting Bull, McLaughlin tried to convince him that it would be best for him and his people to stop the ghost dances. On November 16, he visited Sitting Bull's camp and talked at length with Sitting Bull. He became convinced that Sitting Bull did not "...fully believe in what he was professing and endeavoring so hard to make others believe." McLaughlin thought that Sitting Bull's proposition to go with the agent to the west to see the Messiah and learn whether his teachings were true or not was evidence enough of his disbelief. He had long discussions with many of the Indians and was convinced that his talk had a good effect upon them. Even Sitting Bull said that his reasoning was good and that he believed McLaughlin "...was a friend to the Indians as people..." but did "...not like him [Sitting Bull] personally..."⁴²⁹

This visit to Sitting Bull's camp further strengthened the agent's belief that he would be able to restrict the ghost dancers to a few of Sitting Bull's followers, and that he would eventually be able to implement Sitting Bull's arrest. Following his talk with Sitting Bull, McLaughlin reported that many Indians had abandoned the ghost dance. On November 21, he again wrote that Sitting Bull and 50 other

⁴²⁸ McLaughlin to CIA, November 19, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/18-25; McLaughlin to CIA, November 29, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/75-81. See also, McLaughlin 1989, pp. 193-200; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 69-71.

⁴²⁹ McLaughlin to CIA, November 19, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/18-25. See, McLaughlin 1989, pp. 201-208; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 68-70 and 79-82.

malcontents should be removed from the reservation before spring. At present, however, there was no need for arrests; everything was quiet. The agent also remarked that the press was exaggerating the situation, and accusing him of losing control. He had not lost control, he assured his superiors.⁴³⁰ This, indeed, seemed to be the agent's main concern; it was about being in control.

Agent McLaughlin, however, was threatened with loss of control when William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) arrived at Standing Rock on November 28. Cody was sent by General Miles to discuss matters with Sitting Bull and to attempt to persuade him to abandon the ghost dance; failing this he was authorized to arrest Sitting Bull. This infuriated McLaughlin, who immediately asked for permission to stop Buffalo Bill's mission. He did not share Miles's opinion that Buffalo Bill's friendship with Sitting Bull would have an effect upon him. McLaughlin once again expressed his view that any interference in matters at Standing Rock would lead to trouble. He also stated that the time was not right for an arrest; he wanted to wait until the weather got colder, which would calm the ghost dancers. He wrote to the commissioner of Indian affairs, "Few Indians still dancing, but [this] does not mean mischief at present...I have matters well in hand, when [the] proper time arrives [I] can arrest Sitting Bull by Indian police without bloodshed." His requests were agreed to, and President Benjamin Harrison ordered Buffalo Bill to turn back. With some nice maneuvering, McLaughlin managed to prevent Buffalo Bill from even meeting with Sitting Bull. Thus McLaughlin won the first round in the "battle" against the military and General Miles over the control of Standing Rock Reservation.⁴³¹

The matter of arresting Sitting Bull, however, was not over. In early December Secretary of the Interior John W. Noble, under instructions from the president,

⁴³⁰ McLaughlin to CIA, November 19, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/18-25; McLaughlin to CIA (telegram), November 21, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/10-11; McLaughlin to CIA, November 29, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/75-81. See also, Johnson W. 1891, pp. 170-177; Utley 1963, pp. 100-102; McLaughlin 1989, pp. 201-208; Vestal 1989, pp. 277-278; Mooney 1991, pp. 854-855; Utley 1993, pp. 287-289.

⁴³¹ McLaughlin to CIA (telegram), November 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/8-9; McLaughlin to CIA, November 29, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/75-81; McLaughlin to CIA, December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp.2/93-94; McLaughlin to CIA, December 4, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 21, pp. 483-486; McLaughlin 1989, pp. 209-211. About William F. Cody's mission see, for example, Utley 1963, pp. 122-126; Vestal 1989, pp. 280-285. See also, chapters 3 and 5.

informed the agents that arrests were to be made, but only after great consideration was taken, and bloodshed was to be avoided. Furthermore, the agents were not to act on their own; they were ordered to follow the orders and instructions given by army officers, ultimately those of General Miles.⁴³²

The events following this message up to the tragic death of Sitting Bull have been well explored and will not be repeated here in detail. Some interesting points, however, are worth mentioning. When he received orders to follow military instructions, Agent McLaughlin, instead of dropping the idea of using his own police force in Sitting Bull's upcoming arrest, managed to talk Lieutenant Colonel William F. Drum, the commanding officer at Fort Yates, to follow his suggestions. Thus a plan was made to use the Indian police as the arresting force, and to have the army units only as a backup. The arrest was planned for December 20, but according to McLaughlin's reports, which were actually submitted after Sitting Bull's death, he had learned already by December 14 about rumors suggesting that Sitting Bull planned to leave the reservation. The arrest was, therefore, moved to an earlier date, December 15. To conduct the arrest, McLaughlin put together a police force of more than 40 men, some of them Sitting Bull's enemies and many of them Yanktonai Sioux.⁴³³

When the arrest failed and resulted in the killing of Sitting Bull on December 15, 1890, McLaughlin blamed Sitting Bull for his fate. According to the agent, all accusations made in the press against the agent's actions were false. There was no one to blame but Sitting Bull himself. When the police entered Sitting Bull's cabin, he initially agreed to go with them, but then changed his mind, and when

⁴³² President Benjamin Harrison to Noble, December 4, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/96-97; Noble to CIA, December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/25; Noble to CIA, December 6, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/83. See, chapter 5.

⁴³³ For accounts of Sitting Bull's death and of the events leading to it see, for example, Johnson W. 1891, pp. 183-188; Utley 1963, pp. 146-166; Hoover 1980, pp. 168-170; Vestal 1989, pp. 280-307; Mooney 1991, pp. 854-860; Utley 1993, pp. 291-305. See also, chapter 3. Agent McLaughlin's own accounts can be found in, McLaughlin to CIA, December 16, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 4/96-5/1; McLaughlin to CIA, December 24, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 5/55-77; ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 327-338. Agent McLaughlin further explained the events surrounding Sitting Bull's death in, McLaughlin 1989, pp. 211-222 and pp. 406-417; McLaughlin, James, *Account of the Death of Sitting Bull and of the Circumstances Attending It*, Philadelphia 1891, Internet <http://www.pbs.org/weta/the west/wpa ges/wpgs680/sbarrest.html>. November 25, 1997.

outside the cabin, assisted by his followers, tried to escape. The agent wrote that the Indian policemen only fired when fired upon; they acted bravely under very trying circumstances and remained loyal to the government. McLaughlin further noted that there was no doubt that Sitting Bull had been planning to leave the reservation in order to join the Pine Ridge ghost dancers. This made the attempted arrest not only necessary but also justifiable. It is noteworthy, however, that prior to Sitting Bull's death, McLaughlin made no mention to his superiors of Sitting Bull's plan to leave the reservation. In fact, on December 6, he assured Brigadier General Thomas Ruger that "Sitting Bull can be kept on reserve by Indian police without fear of escape..." Only *after* Sitting Bull's death, did the agent explain that Sitting Bull was planning to leave the reservation and that he was "...in open rebellion against constituted authority and deluding the more ignorant Indians into the Messiah Craze and firing their minds against the government and all whites."⁴³⁴

Despite organizing the arrest practically on his own, McLaughlin claimed that Sitting Bull's arrest had been ordered by General Miles. Indeed, that was the case, but the orders said that the military, under Colonel Drum's command, was to conduct the arrest.⁴³⁵ In fact, on December 1 Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs R. V. Belt ordered McLaughlin to "co-operate and fully obey the orders of the military officers." In a second telegram on December 5 he ordered the agent to "...make no arrests whatever except under orders of the military or upon order from the Secretary of the Interior." In this sense McLaughlin disobeyed the direct order that came from his superiors and ultimately from the president.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ McLaughlin to CIA (telegram), December 15, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, no page number; McLaughlin to CIA, December 16, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 4/96-5/1; McLaughlin to CIA, December 24, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 5/55-77; ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 327-338; John M Carignan to McLaughlin (telegram), December 14, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 5/5-6. It was this message by the Grand River Day schoolteacher John M. Carignan that prompted McLaughlin's actions. Carignan reported that Sitting Bull was asking for permission to leave for Pine Ridge, but would leave even if he would not get the permission. (Carignan to McLaughlin (telegram), December 14, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 5/5-6. See, McLaughlin 1891, internet <http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/wpages/wpgs680/sbarrest.html>, November 25, 1997; Utley 1963, pp. 247-148; McLaughlin 1989, pp. 211-222; Mooney 1991, p. 855; Utley 1993, pp. 296-297; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 176-193)

⁴³⁵ See, chapter 5.

⁴³⁶ See, for example, McLaughlin to CIA, December 16, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 4/96-5/1; McLaughlin to CIA, December 24, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728,

This, of course, was not McLaughlin's opinion. Immediately following Sitting Bull's death Secretary of the Interior John W. Noble demanded the agent to explain who authorized him to arrest Sitting Bull. In his reply, McLaughlin again explained that the orders came from General Miles, and that he had only cooperated with the army. The plan to arrest Sitting Bull was made jointly with Colonel Drum, so the agent claimed that he had only done what he was asked to do.⁴³⁷

Quite soon after Sitting Bull's death the press accused McLaughlin of planning his assassination. Even Congress reacted and ordered a thorough investigation into the matter.⁴³⁸ Agent McLaughlin's decisions and actions have long puzzled historians. The circumstances certainly leave room for speculation. As early as 1891 **Willis Fletcher Johnson** put these speculations in words: "There was a quiet understanding between the officers of the Indian and Military departments that it would be impossible to bring Sitting Bull to Standing Rock alive...under arrest he would still be a source of great annoyance, and his followers would continue their dances and threats...there was, therefore, a complete understanding...that the slightest attempt to rescue the old medicine man should be a signal to send Sitting Bull to the happy hunting grounds."⁴³⁹ Sitting Bull's followers, at least, concurred with this view. Some of them later told an army

Reel 1, pp. 5/55-77; ACIA to McLaughlin (telegram), December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 5/3; ACIA to McLaughlin (telegram), December 5, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 5/4; ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 327-338; McLaughlin 1989, pp. 211-222; McLaughlin to Miss Winfield Jennings, January 4, 1891, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 22, p. 33. See also, Utley 1963, pp. 146-166; Smith 1975, pp. 147-152; Hoover 1980, pp. 168-171; Vestal 1989, pp. 286-287; Mooney 1991, pp. 854-860.

⁴³⁷ Noble to McLaughlin (telegram), December 20, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 7/56; McLaughlin to Noble (telegram, never sent), December 30, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 7/56-58, McLaughlin to CIA, January 23, 1891, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 7/60-64.

⁴³⁸ See, chapters 6 and 7.

⁴³⁹ Johnson W. 1891, pp. 178-179. For a discussion about McLaughlin's motives see, for example, Utley 1963, pp. 147-148 and pp. 167-169; Hoover 1980, pp. 168-169; Vestal 1989, p. 287, Mooney 1991, pp. 854-860. Agent McLaughlin later explained his actions and motives in several occasions. See, for example, McLaughlin to CIA, December 16, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 4/96-5/1; McLaughlin to CIA, December 24, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 5/55-77; McLaughlin 1989, pp. 215-222 and pp. 406-417; McLaughlin 1891, Internet <http://www.pbs.org/weta/the west/wpa ges/wpgs680/sbarrest.html>. November 25, 1997.

officer that “at Standing Rock all they [the whites] thought of was to...kill Sitting Bull.”⁴⁴⁰

Be that as it may, it is certainly true that McLaughlin wanted to get rid of Sitting Bull, though we may never know whether he actually wanted him dead. No actual evidence of this exists. Some of his actions, however, like the selection of the policemen, might suggest that he hoped that the result would be what it eventually became. As an experienced agent, he surely knew that Sitting Bull, a Hunkpapa medicine man and leader, would find it difficult to surrender to policemen, especially to those, who were Yanktonai Sioux. Furthermore, in a message to Bull Head, the leader of the police force, McLaughlin wrote only one day before the arrest: “You must not let him escape under any circumstances.”⁴⁴¹ We can only guess how Bull Head, a known enemy of Sitting Bull, interpreted these orders.

Agent McLaughlin had all along assured his superiors that by using the Indian police bloodshed would be avoided. He said that he insisted upon this, because he wanted to show that he was being consistent in his policies in running the reservation, and that he wanted to put it on record that he never asked for the military. Interestingly, as late as February 1891, when Sitting Bull was already dead and the military had assumed control of the Lakota reservations, McLaughlin continued to declare that he could control his reservation. He did not want the military there. He wrote to the commissioner of Indian affairs on February 4, 1891: “In the future, as in the past, I feel fully competent to manage this reservation and agency without interference of any supervising power...”⁴⁴²

Whether his policy was that of consistence, or stubbornness taken to extremities, is a question without a definite answer. One person who still was not completely satisfied, was Secretary of the Interior John W. Noble, who, after reading McLaughlin’s report on Sitting Bull’s death, wrote to the commissioner of Indian affairs that “Agent McLaughlin is so proud of his exploit that he rather suppresses

⁴⁴⁰ Statement of Hunkpapa and Blackfoot prisoners of war in, Guy H. Preston to the Commanding Officer, February 17, 1891, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4729, Reel 2, pp. 9/91-92.

⁴⁴¹ McLaughlin to Bull Head, December 14, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 20, pp. 502-503.

⁴⁴² McLaughlin to CIA, November 29, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/75-81; McLaughlin to CIA, February 4, 1891, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, Reel 2, pp. 8/63-69.

the source of his action. But it is necessary that it be shown and understood that this was the act of Military, without qualification.” Secretary Noble seems to have thought that Agent McLaughlin was not only acting on his own, but also tarnishing the reputation of both the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Interior Department.⁴⁴³

It seems, however, quite certain that for McLaughlin the ghost dance, although to be condemned and stopped, was not his major concern. The major concern, as it had been for almost a decade, was Sitting Bull. It is of interest to note that McLaughlin had complained already in an October 17 letter to the commissioner of Indian affairs that Sitting Bull was “...such an abject coward that he will not commit any overt act at open offense himself...” that would allow the agent to demand his arrest.⁴⁴⁴ When Sitting Bull became the leader of the ghost dancing faction at Standing Rock, the agent got exactly what he wanted, an excuse to get him out of the way. Thus it can safely be said that Sitting Bull’s death was more closely related to the power struggle on Standing Rock Reservation than to the ghost dance; it was all about control.

4.3. The Loss of Control

4.3.1. Co-operation and Complaints

Other Lakota agents welcomed the military’s arrival. On Pine Ridge, however, Special Agent Cooper, assisted by Agent Royer, kept on sending confusing messages to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In the days following the military’s arrival both men reported that the ghost dancers were assuming a hostile attitude and were preparing for a fight. “Serious trouble seems inevitable,” wrote Cooper on November 22, but continued two days later that the excitement was subsiding and the military’s presence had a calming effect. He also blamed the newspapers for spreading exaggerated and false reports, but it seems likely that he himself was

⁴⁴³ Noble to CIA, December 31, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 5/81. Underlining by Secretary Noble.

⁴⁴⁴ McLaughlin to CIA, October 17, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 1/36. See also, McLaughlin 1989, p. 197; Vestal 1989, p. 287.

equally responsible for believing the same rumors on which the newspapers based many of their stories.⁴⁴⁵

On November 22, Cooper received a telegram from Special Agent Lea, who had witnessed a ghost dance ceremony a few days earlier on Pine Ridge. In his telegram Agent Lea described the dancers as extremely hostile and ready to take the warpath. They want to see the white men dead, wrote Lea and continued: "... they say they are going on a big hunt as soon as grass comes next spring, and that means warpath." This message obviously affected Cooper, who informed the acting commissioner of Indian affairs about it, and on November 28 wrote that the hostile Indians were "...riding their horses in a circle, a custom denoting war in past years." In his and Royer's opinion, some arrests should be made immediately. They listed 66 men who were to be imprisoned. There could be even more, Royer believed, but the 66 would do at first.⁴⁴⁶

Both agents, Cooper and Royer, thought that the arrests should be made before December, since by November 24 most of the Indians would be at the agency for rations. They believed that it would be easy to arrest the main leaders and to disarm the rest. Military officers, however, did not agree; they knew that disarming several hundred Lakota men would not be an easy task, especially since

⁴⁴⁵ See, Cooper to CIA, November 20, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/2-4; Cooper to CIA (telegram), November 21, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/7; Cooper to CIA (telegram), November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/12; Cooper to ACIA, November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/31; Cooper to CIA (telegram), November 24, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/13-14; Royer to CIA, November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/31-33; Royer to CIA (telegram), November 26, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/43-44. For newspaper accounts see, chapter 6.

⁴⁴⁶ Cooper to CIA, November 20, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/2-4; Cooper to CIA (telegram), November 21, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/7; Cooper to CIA (telegram), November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/12; Cooper to ACIA, November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/31; Cooper to CIA (telegram), November 24, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/13-14; Special Agent A. T. Lea to Cooper (telegram), November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/38-40; Cooper to CIA (telegram), November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/41-42; Royer to CIA, November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/31-33; Royer to CIA (telegram), November 26, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/43-44; Cooper to CIA (telegram), November 27, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/45-46. Historian **Robert Utley** maintains that Agent Royer listed 65 men to be arrested, but the correct number is 66. (Royer to CIA, November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/31-33; Utley 1963, p. 123)

the army officers believed that the Indians were very well armed.⁴⁴⁷ Interestingly, the agents reported that most of the Indians, even the ghost dancers, were camped close to the agency, while at the same time, as mentioned above, they thought trouble was certainly ahead. The agents were also very concerned about a party of several hundred Brulés, who arrived from Rosebud Reservation. These Brulés were committing depredations and were reportedly very hostile. They were also dancing the ghost dances throughout the night only 20 miles from the agency. Despite this, the agents also reported that the presence of the military had "...brought the ghost dances to a sudden stop" at Pine Ridge. The Brulés, "or lawless parties," as the agents called them, were also to be disarmed and arrested. The agents even wrote in a tone of complaint that General Brooke had been notified of the situation and that he should do something about it. The army's inaction obviously began to bother the agents.⁴⁴⁸

The agents, however, were not the only ones who complained about the army's decision to "wait and see." The white population living close to the reservations, and the newspaper correspondents, shared the agents' eagerness to see some action. The Nebraska Militia, consisting of volunteers, was called on duty and the settlers were organizing their own militia; both were prepared to attack the Indians.⁴⁴⁹

While listing the ghost dance leaders who should be arrested, Agent Royer exonerated Red Cloud from all accusations made against him. Royer noted that it was generally assumed that he belonged to the ghost dancers, but "...I am not in

⁴⁴⁷ See, chapter 5.

⁴⁴⁸ Cooper to ACIA, November 24, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 2/52; Cooper to ACIA, November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 3/18; Royer to ACIA, November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 3/36; Cooper to CIA, (telegram), November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/41-42; Cooper to CIA (telegram), November 26, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/43-44; Cooper to CIA (telegram), November 27, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/45-46; Royer to CIA (telegram), November 27, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/47-50; Royer to ACIA, November 27, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/34-35; Cooper to ACIA, November 27, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/38-39; Royer and Cooper to CIA (telegram), November 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/59-60. See also, chapters 3, 4 and 5.

⁴⁴⁹ As examples of the settlers' feelings see, for example, R. M. Tuttle to President Harrison, November 18, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/55-56; J. Fitzgerald to CIA, November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/65-66. For accounts of the Militia see, for example, Colby 1892, pp. 144-177; Utley 1963, pp. 143-144; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 167-172. For an account of the newspaper correspondents see, chapter 6.

possession of any evidence that goes to show that he is connected with the ghost dance, and since taking charge he has given me no trouble of any character," he wrote on November 25.⁴⁵⁰

During the early part of December, Royer and Cooper continued to be very much dissatisfied with how things were shaping up. They repeatedly wrote about depredations and reported that after receiving reinforcements from Rosebud, the ghost dancer's fighting force on Pine Ridge had grown to 1,000 warriors. These Indians, they believed, were very hostile; the only remedy they could think of was to round them up, arrest them, and to send the Rosebud Indians back to their reservation. To the agents' annoyance, General Brooke did not concur. They promised, however, to leave the decision concerning the use of force to military officers. The agents further complained that there was no order on the reservation, the day schools were all closed, the white employees and "friendly" Indians were forced to come to the agency for safety, and the "friendly" Indians had lost all their property the depredations of the ghost dancers.⁴⁵¹

Meanwhile, Agent Reynolds, in charge of Rosebud Reservation, reported everything quiet. Indeed, the majority of the Rosebud ghost dancers had gone to Pine Ridge. The agent reported that his Indian police force was watching Short Bull, but despite this he managed to leave to Pine Ridge. Other than that, there was no cause for concern. The Indian scare, as the agent put it, would be settled in ten days: "It is my judgment, that within the next ten days the greater portion of the Indians now led astray by their leaders, will see the absolute folly of further resistance and return to their homes and to obedience to the powers that be," Reynolds wrote. He was convinced that the schools would be soon reopened and the teachers would return to their jobs.⁴⁵²

⁴⁵⁰ Royer to CIA, November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/31-33. See also, Uteley 1963, pp. 135-136. For further discussion about Red Cloud's role in the ghost dance see, chapter 3 and chapter 7.

⁴⁵¹ Royer to ACIA, December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/86-87; Royer and Cooper to ACIA, December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/88-90; Royer to ACIA, December 4, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/98-99; Royer to ACIA, December 5, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 4/18; Royer to CIA, December 8, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 4/6.

⁴⁵² Reynolds to CIA, November 26, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/15-17.

In fact, Reynolds did not blame the Indians for the current trouble; he blamed the press and other irresponsible people for exaggeration and falsification. Reynolds complained to the commissioner of Indian affairs: "About two thirds of all the reports in the daily papers about the state of affairs on the reservation, especially from Pine Ridge, is the most stupendous rot ever printed and if the Department had some way of suppressing it, it would be God's blessing," and continued, "it is well calculated to alarm the friends and relatives of those who are here in control and prejudice unjustly the public against the whole body of Indians and thus cripple future efforts for their civilization and development." The problem for Reynolds, however, was soon to be over; Agent J George Wright who, it will be recalled, was accused of pocketing money from "extra" rations, was reinstated on December 1, 1890 when the investigation did not show any misconduct on his part.⁴⁵³

Wright concurred with Reynolds. Only a day after his arrival to Rosebud he informed the commissioner of Indian affairs that everything was quiet; the Indians who remained on the reservation were "...well disposed..." and ready to go to work. He also commented on the people who left for Pine Ridge, saying that, since they were destroying property and disobeying orders, their leaders should be arrested. Otherwise life on Rosebud was to be soon restored to normal. This included an increase in rations, which would be carried out as soon as the ghost dance leaders were arrested.⁴⁵⁴

Three days later, on December 5, Wright further explained to the commissioner of Indian affairs his views about the ghost dance excitement. The ghost dance had started on Rosebud in September, but the Indians did not plan to harm anybody. "No violence of any kind was contemplated nor arms carried," the agent wrote. He continued that non-progressive leaders like Two Strike and Crow Dog took up the ghost dance mainly because they felt that their influence was diminishing, and they wanted to get some recognition from the government. Short Bull, he said, was neither a troublemaker nor aggressive; in fact, the agent believed that Short

⁴⁵³ Reynolds to CIA, November 26, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/15-17. See also, Utley 1963, p. 95.

⁴⁵⁴ Wright to CIA (telegram), December 2, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/47-49.

Bull was used by others for their own purposes. The ghost dance, however, had to be stopped since it was causing "...excitement and physical prostration and attracting the Indians from other camps, abandoning their stock and homes, taking away the children from school and having a demoralizing effect generally." According to Wright there was no longer need for the military on Rosebud Reservation.⁴⁵⁵

In fact, Wright believed that it was the sudden appearance of the troops on November 20 that caused the exodus of approximately 1,100 Indians toward Pine Ridge. They had, indeed, previously asked for permission to go to Pine Ridge, but were denied and told that those who did leave would be punished. Despite this, and purely out of fear of the army, they finally fled, the agent wrote. Furthermore, a few hundred Indians who lived in the borderlands between Pine Ridge and Rosebud joined the fleeing ghost dancers. Together these two groups numbered approximately 1,800 people. These people from the borderlands, the agent noted, were not ghost dancers at all, and by December many of them were willing to return. Since they had committed depredations en route to Pine Ridge they were afraid to return, Wright believed. "All Indians remaining at the agency [are] quiet and will remain so," he wrote continuing that they were afraid of the army and asked for protection. Military presence, believed Wright, would become necessary only, if those who went to Pine Ridge returned. He did not expect any trouble at Rosebud, but suggested that it would not be wise to disarm the Indians. The Indians at the agency did not buy their guns for any "...evil purposes." This made disarmament completely unnecessary. The Indians, as well as the agent, wanted to return to normality; at first the increased rations would restore confidence, then eventually the Indians could leave the agency and go to their homes where they could take up their jobs, care for their stock, and send their children to school.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁵ Wright to CIA, December 5, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 4/50-56; ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent J. George Wright, August 27, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 411-413.

⁴⁵⁶ Wright to CIA, December 5, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 4/50-56; Wright to CIA (telegram), December 14, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 4/58. See also, Report of The Superintendent of Indian Schools, Daniel Dorchester, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Serial 2934, Vol. II, pp.532-533.

On Cheyenne River Reservation Agent Palmer was much more concerned than Agents Reynolds and Wright on Rosebud. On November 28, he briefly stated that he had visited several ghost dance camps. He wrote that the ghost dancers refused to talk to him and their "...temper was very bad." According to the agent, Big Foot was urging everyone to buy guns and to stay in one big camp for safety. The Indians were "...very disobedient and do not respect any order or regulation," Palmer wrote to the commissioner of Indian affairs.⁴⁵⁷

On December 1, Palmer described at length his visit to the ghost dance camps, which were located at Cherry Creek, approximately 60 miles from the agency on the Cheyenne River (See appendix 7, map 4). The agent took every precaution to arrive secretly at the Indian camps, but the Indians were prepared for his arrival and stopped dancing. The agent concluded that many had gone home when they learned about his visit. He, however, found 348 Indians who had been dancing day and night for six consecutive days. In addition, there were 200 onlookers. The information the agent gathered on this trip convinced him that the ghost dancers were well armed with "... the best make of guns, revolvers and cartridges," sold to them by white traders. He also complained that none of the ghost dancers had worn citizen's clothes, that is, white man's clothes, in more than a month.⁴⁵⁸ He believed that the ghost dancers were preparing for a fight and were planning for "...an outbreak of some sort." Big Foot and Hump should be arrested, Palmer suggested.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁷ Palmer to CIA, November 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/62-63. See, chapter 3.

⁴⁵⁸ By late 1880s Indians wore white man's clothing quite extensively. In fact, wearing citizen's clothing was considered as an important part of the Lakotas' civilization process. Reports of the number of Indians using citizen's clothes were included in the agents' annual reports. See, for example, ARCIA 1889, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 26, 1889, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 27, 1889, Report of Agent L. F. Spencer, August 23, 1889, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1889, pp. 498-501; ARCIA 1890, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 25, 1890, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 28, 1890, Report of Agent J. George Wright, August 26, 1890, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2841, pp. 450-451; ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1891, Report of Agent Perain P. Palmer, August 17, 1891, Report of Acting Agent Charles G. Penney, September 1, 1891, Report of Agent J. George Wright, August 27, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 764-76 and pp. 768-769. For a historical analysis of this aspect of the civilization process see, Smedman 2001, passim.

⁴⁵⁹ Palmer to CIA, November 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/62-63; Palmer to CIA, December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/64-67; ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent Perain P. Palmer, August 17, 1891 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, p. 390.

On December 9, however, Palmer had come to a different conclusion. “I apprehend no great trouble in stopping the dance at Cherry Creek,” he wrote. Since Hump had abandoned the ghost dance, the only reason for concern was Big Foot. The agent believed that not even Big Foot would cause major trouble, since there were only about 200 people in his camp.⁴⁶⁰ More and more people were abandoning the ghost dance after becoming convinced that the ghost dance was only a “...delusion,” as Palmer put it. Many had been dancing out of curiosity, but were now listening to the Christian Indians, who were doing good service for the government. Agent Palmer was so delighted over the developments in the past days that he was “...hoping soon to be able to report the dancing at this agency entirely ended.”⁴⁶¹ Ghost dancing on Cheyenne River was indeed coming to its end, but not in the manner the agent envisioned.

4.3.2. The Army Takes Over

By December 15, things seemed to be quieting down on all four Lakota reservations. Agent McLaughlin, as seen above, continued to insist that everything was under control on Standing Rock Reservation. Agent Wright on Rosebud was reporting that everything was quiet there. On Pine Ridge, despite ongoing depredations, things seemed to be relatively calm, and on Cheyenne River, Agent Palmer hoped to settle the issue of ghost dancing in the near future. Then, however, came the news of Sitting Bull’s death.⁴⁶²

The refugees from Standing Rock arrived at Cheyenne River during the days following Sitting Bull’s death. Agent Palmer’s initial response was great concern; the refugees had gone to the camp of, among others, Big Foot, and the agent worried about the effect their arrival might have on the ghost dancers. Dancing was continuing in Big Foot’s camp, and he even refused to come to the agency for rations. Palmer reported that the Standing Rock Indians were fleeing from the

⁴⁶⁰ For comparison see, Jensen 1990, pp. 194-198.

⁴⁶¹ Palmer to CIA, December 9, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/61-63; ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent Perain P. Palmer, August 17, 1891 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, p. 390. More about Chief Hump in, chapters 3 and 5.

⁴⁶² For the effect Sitting Bull’s death had upon the Indians see, chapter 3.

troops and were scared, but he would try to send them back to Standing Rock. Despite his concerns, the agent did not expect any trouble. He was in daily communication with all the camps on the reservation, and was concerned only about Big Foot. He even believed that many Christian Indians were happy about Sitting Bull's death.⁴⁶³

On December 22, Agent Palmer reported that 400 ghost dancers from the Cherry Creek camp were coming to the agency. Big Foot, however, was not among them, but 50 families of the Standing Rock people were willing to come in. After this, the agent believed, Big Foot would only have about 50 men with him. All the Indians who arrived at Cheyenne River Agency gave up their arms willingly. The agent informed the commissioner of Indian affairs that no Indians were absent from his reservation, rations were issued to those at the agency, and everything seemed to be peaceful. The agent's positive expectations were rewarded when he learned that Big Foot had surrendered to the military.⁴⁶⁴

The day, December 22, did not end as happily as Palmer anticipated. Big Foot surrendered, but he also escaped. The agent was as astonished as everybody else, but believed that Big Foot had already planned his escape when he surrendered to the military. In his annual report to the commissioner of Indian affairs on August 17, 1891, Palmer, however, contradicted himself by writing that it was not probable that Big Foot had any hostile plans when he left for Pine Ridge. He also noted that the ghost dance was not alone to be blamed for the trouble; the circumstances on the reservations were equally responsible. "The Indians alone have been the sufferers so far as to relates to this reserve," the agent wrote, and he further noted that all reports of Indians committing depredations on Cheyenne River Reservation were without foundation. In fact, he believed that some white men carried out these depredations. After Big Foot's disappearance the remaining Indians on the reservation gathered at the agency, and Palmer was able to report

⁴⁶³ Palmer to CIA, December 17, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 4/92-94; Palmer to CIA, December 2, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 5/15; ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent Perain P. Palmer, August 17, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, p. 390.

⁴⁶⁴ Palmer to CIA, December 22, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 5/15; Palmer to CIA, December 22, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 5/37-38; Palmer to CIA, December 22, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 5/39.

that they were willing to obey orders. The Indians planned to stay at the agency until Big Foot was "...in some way taken care of." The majority of them actually stayed there until mid-January 1891, when all trouble was settled. In his annual report, Palmer wrote that the majority of Indians remained loyal to the government, and that their assistance proved the key to a peaceful settlement on Cheyenne River Reservation.⁴⁶⁵

After Big Foot and his followers left, ghost dancing practically ended on Cheyenne River Reservation; Agent Palmer had survived the ghost dance trouble without blood shedding on his reservation. On Pine Ridge, however, things were still unsettled.

While the search for Big Foot continued, things seemed to be calming down also on Pine Ridge. The ghost dancers camped in the Badlands started their slow trek toward Pine Ridge Agency.⁴⁶⁶ A relative calm must indeed have existed, since Agents Royer and Cooper, who previously were so anxious to report to the commissioner of Indian affairs, had practically no correspondence with him between the period of December 8 and the massacre at Wounded Knee on December 29. It seems that the agents were finally satisfied, and allowed the military to take care of the business. In fact, General Brooke quite efficiently took over control of things on Pine Ridge; the agents were more onlookers than participants in the events that took place there during December. Elaine Goodale Eastman, Inspector of Indian schools, also noticed this state of affairs. She wrote in her memoirs that in December 1890, the Pine Ridge reservation was practically under martial law, the military having control of all daily business. By this time Brooke had issued orders restricting the newspapermen's rights to use the telegraph; perhaps these restrictions were extended to the agents also.⁴⁶⁷

Still, it is quite interesting that the agents practically reported nothing about the several councils and negotiations that took place on Pine Ridge, nor did they

⁴⁶⁵ Palmer to CIA, December 27, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 5/89-90; ARCIA 1891, Report of Agent Perain P. Palmer, August 17, 1891 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, p. 390.

⁴⁶⁶ See, chapters 3 and 5.

⁴⁶⁷ See, Goodale Eastman 1945, pp. 33-34. See also, chapters 3, 5 and 6.

inform their superiors that in late December most of the ghost dancers were coming toward the agency, and that their surrender was imminent. They had been complaining about depredations and hostilities, but now when peace efforts were in progress, Royer and Cooper remained silent.

Then on December 29, Royer telegraphed to the commissioner of Indian affairs that earlier that morning the military had been in a battle with Big Foot's Indians. The agent was not present at the battle, but he reported that while the Indians were being disarmed a fight took place killing and wounding several soldiers. The agent also noted that 300 Indians were killed. He, however, seemed to be more concerned about matters at the agency, where Two Strike and his Indians opened fire on the agency buildings. The skirmishing there caused casualties on both sides, Royer reported. He noted, however, that it was the Indians from Rosebud and Cheyenne River who were causing trouble; the Pine Ridge Indians took no part in the war, as the agent called it.⁴⁶⁸

Cooper wrote in the same tenor on December 30. He also told about the incident at Pine Ridge Agency, but believed that the Indian casualties at Wounded Knee were not more than 150 killed. The agent did not directly blame the Indians for the Wounded Knee fight, but noted "Big Foot's band attacked the military..." Royer agreed, and further stated that the army's plan was to feed and care for the Indians, but while being disarmed a medicine man yelled: "Kill the soldiers," after which the Indians opened fire on the soldiers. Cooper also reported an incident in which the 9th Cavalry was attacked by the ghost dancers, and on January 2, 1891, Royer reported that the Indians attacked and burned two day schools and an Episcopal church. They also killed a rancher.⁴⁶⁹ Royer continued saying that more than 3,000 Indians were camped at approximately 15 miles distance from the agency; they were hostile, committing depredations, and refused to surrender to the military. Among these people were Red Cloud, Little Wound and Big Road, but the agent believed that they wanted to return to agency. Short Bull, Kicking

⁴⁶⁸ Royer to CIA (telegram), December 29, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 5/46-48. More about the battle at Wounded Knee and the skirmish at the Pine Ridge Agency in, chapters 3, 5 and 6.

⁴⁶⁹ For an account of the killing of the rancher see, for example, Utley 1963, p. 254 and p. 265. The Indians did not actually burn or destroy any churches during the trouble. (See, chapter 3)

Bear and Two Strike, however, threatened to kill them, if they tried to leave, Royer reported.⁴⁷⁰

The early days of January 1891 were full of turmoil and minor skirmishes between the army and the Lakotas. The focus was on Pine Ridge Reservation, and the other Lakota agents were able to report that everything was peaceful on Rosebud, Cheyenne River and Standing Rock Reservations. The agents filed reports about the recent events trying to find causes for the trouble. The agents were clearly expecting the trouble to be over soon, and were in an explanatory mood. Agent McLaughlin's main theme in his communication with his superiors in January 1891, and indeed during the following months, seemed to be to defend his actions relating to Sitting Bull's arrest. He insisted that he had all along, and could still be, in full control of his reservation. The other agents seemed to be eager to return to normal life.⁴⁷¹

The return to normal life came sooner than the agents expected. By January 12, General Miles was able to finally push through his plan to replace all civil agents in charge of the Lakota reservations with army officers. The agents were allowed to stay on location; Cooper was even assigned to investigate the depredations committed by the ghost dancers, but the military took over control of the reservations. The Lakota agents, who a couple of months earlier had reported that they had lost control of their respective reservations, finally lost actual control, not to the Indians but to the U.S. Army. Even McLaughlin, who claimed that he had never lost control, finally had to yield to the military authority.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷⁰ Cooper to CIA (telegram), December 30, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 5/49-50; Royer to CIA, December 31, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 6/6-8; Royer to CIA (telegram), January 2, 1891, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 5/91-93.

⁴⁷¹ See, for example, Wright to CIA (telegram), January 6, 1891, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 6/9; McLaughlin to CIA, January 7, 1891, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 6/36; McLaughlin to CIA, January 9, 1891, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 6/68-69; McLaughlin to CIA (telegram), January 10, 1891, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 6/28-29; Cooper to CIA, January 10, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 7/23-28; Palmer to CIA, January 19, 1891, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 7/22; Wright to CIA, January 23, 1891, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 7/86-95. Agent James McLaughlin's attempts to defend his actions can be found randomly in the Special Case 188 collection and will not be singled out in detail here.

⁴⁷² See, chapter 5. See also, Utley 1963, pp 279-281. For the results of Agent Cooper's investigations see, Paul 1994, pp. 211-223.

4.4. The Indian Agents – A Failure in Leadership?

During the period of the Lakota ghost dance “trouble,” that is a time period of less than a year starting in the spring of 1890 and ending in January 1891, altogether seven agents were assigned to the Lakota people. In addition to these, there was Special Agent James A. Cooper, whose task was to give assistance to Agent Royer at Pine Ridge Reservation. When the ghost dance began on the Lakota reservations, the more experienced agents were still in charge of their reservations. When learning about the ghost dances, the agents first sought to investigate what it was all about. After that they tried to convince the Indians, partly by reasoning and partly by threatening, to give it up. In this the agents had some limited success, since during the summer of 1890 there were no major ghost dance ceremonies among the Lakotas. At this point the agents were fully convinced that the ghost dance had to be stopped, not because it presented a military threat, but because it was demoralizing and, as they stated, sent the Indians back to savagery.

By the fall 1890, the ghost dances began again, and the agents grew more concerned. They reported that order on the reservations was about to collapse, the ghost dances caused all kinds of problems, but still no uprising was predicted. Agent McLaughlin was not at all concerned about the ghost dance, which was introduced at Standing Rock Reservation as late as October 9, 1890. For reasons mentioned above, McLaughlin wanted to remove Sitting Bull and other troublemakers from the reservation. Indeed, arrests and the removal of the ghost dance leaders were suggested by other agents also. This, they believed would have a calming effect on the ghost dancers. The agents still did not predict any immediate cause for alarm.

Then, in October, the change of agents occurred. With this change, changed also the manner in which the agents reacted to ghost dancing. Only Agent Reynolds, who took charge of Rosebud Reservation, seemed to maintain a degree of self-control and calm, although he too asked for military assistance. Agent Palmer, in charge of Cheyenne River Reservation, soon became very much excited and started to call for troops. Even more anxious was Agent Royer at Pine Ridge. His

excited appeals for help convinced the acting commissioner of Indian affairs to send Special Agent Cooper to Pine Ridge for Royer's assistance. Unfortunately, however, Cooper seems to have been equally excited over the situation. Together they kept on sending excited, even frightened, messages to their superiors. This, along with reports by newspapers and alarmed citizens, finally prompted the military action.

Royer's actions have been condemned by both his contemporaries and historians alike. This study also shows that there is no doubt that he was totally unfit to handle the situation. Perhaps in a less turbulent time he would have been able to perform adequately as an Indian agent, but on this occasion he was simply the wrong man for the purpose. The name the Lakotas gave him is quite illuminating of their view of him – Young Man Afraid of Indians. Still, some sympathy has to be given to Agent Royer. As historian **James C. Olson** has noted, Royer had not even wanted the job of Indian agent.⁴⁷³ He had absolutely no experience with Indians, let alone the Lakotas. By the time he took over Pine Ridge Reservation the Lakotas were already dissatisfied and restless. They were distressed over the recent land agreement, lack of food, diseases and finally the ghost dance. Things were in such turmoil on Pine Ridge Reservation that it is no wonder the inexperienced agent become scared. Does this justify his actions? Probably not, but perhaps it explains them to a certain degree.

It is generally considered that the change of agents contributed significantly to the eventual bloodshed. I completely agree with that argument, but it has to be noted that Standing Rock, where the very experienced James McLaughlin was allowed to retain his position, was the first reservation where blood was spilled. The new agents certainly were inexperienced and brought about the military intervention, but McLaughlin did no better.

On Standing Rock only perhaps 250 people were active ghost dancers, whereas on other reservations the number was much higher (See chapter 3.6, Table 1). This has been seen as evidence of McLaughlin's successful policy in preventing the

⁴⁷³ Olson 1965, p. 325.

ghost dance from spreading among the rest of the people living on the reservation. It is, however, noteworthy that on Standing Rock Reservation the Indians were divided into rival factions; only those who followed Sitting Bull took active part in the ghost dance. The rest either took no side or sided with the agent. So, in fact, the agent did not have to do that much in order to prevent the ghost dancing from spreading. Sitting Bull was his problem, not the ghost dance. McLaughlin's actions contributed to the death of several people and to the flight of approximately 150 of Sitting Bull's followers. Some of them were later killed at Wounded Knee. Therefore it has to be concluded that McLaughlin played a role at least as critical – although in a different way - as did Royer in contributing to the general confusion on the Lakota reservations, and even among the white population.⁴⁷⁴

The events at Standing Rock, however, do not contradict the fact that the change in agents certainly escalated the problem, but whether more experienced agents could have prevented bloodshed altogether, is an unanswerable question. Perhaps they would not have called in troops so quickly, but as we have seen there were other forces in play also. When the army was finally sent to the Lakota reservations, the agents, except for McLaughlin, became more or less observers. They welcomed the army, and despite some complaints, co-operated with the military in all the major issues. By January 16, when the last ghost dancers surrendered, military officers had already replaced the civilian agents.

Thus the Lakota agents' major contributions as a group during the "trouble" was from the beginning condemning the ghost dance, demanding that it be stopped, arguing for the arrest of ringleaders, contributing to the general excitement, and finally calling for troops. All this consequently played a role in the events that led to the tragic affair at Wounded Knee.

⁴⁷⁴ See, chapters 6 and 7.

5. THE ARMY AND THE LAKOTA GHOST DANCE CAMPAIGN

The relationship between the United States Army and the Lakota Indians culminated in the Wounded Knee massacre on December 29, 1890. The relationship was characterized not only by years of warfare and hatred but also by mutual respect. The army had a long tradition of dealing with the Lakota Indians. Before the Civil War, however, general knowledge of the western Indians among the white population and within the army had been quite poor. In fact, before the Civil War the army built a chain of forts in the western regions in order to protect settlers and to establish contacts with the many Plains Indian tribes, including the Lakotas. After the war, the army turned its attention increasingly to the Plains Indians. This was due in part to the increasing number of settlers traveling through the Plains. During the era of the so-called Grant's Peace Policy, the Army's knowledge of the western Indians rapidly improved as the need for protecting the growing numbers of settlers increased. During the years following the Civil War and continuing throughout the 1870s, the army faced the task of fighting what eventually became its most famous Indian wars. Despite the lack of decisive Indian policy and many political problems within the army, it managed to end most Indian hostilities by the mid 1880s.⁴⁷⁵

Although the major Indian campaigns ceased following the surrenders of Sitting Bull in 1881 and the Apache leader Geronimo in 1886, the army maintained its readiness to wage war against the Indians. Historian **Robert Wooster** has noted that the army did not know the Indian wars would be over.⁴⁷⁶ The army was still necessary, but its strategy was changing. With improving technical innovations, such as the telegram and the railroad, the army sought to quickly put down any

⁴⁷⁵ McDermott, Louis M., *The Primary Role of the Military on the Dakota Frontier*, South Dakota History, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1971, pp. 12 and p. 22; Mattingly 1976, p. 22; Socolofsky, Homer E., *Great Plains Studies – Part 1, Military Organization, Functions, and Personal Activities*, Journal of the West, Vol. XV, No. 3, 1976, p. 2; Wooster 1988, pp. 2-16 and p. 30. For an account of the structure of the U.S. Military before 1890 see, Wade, Arthur P., *The Military Command Structure: The Great Plains, 1851-1891*, Journal of the West, Vol. XV, No. 3, 1976, pp. 5-20. About the power struggle within the army and the problems with the army and other Government institutions see, McDermott 1971, p. 1; Youngkin 1974, pp. 334-335; Wooster 1988, pp. 19-21 and pp. 77-89.

⁴⁷⁶ McDermott 1971, p. 1; Wooster 1988, p. 29; Paul, Eli R., "Your Country is Surrounded" in, *Eyewitness at Wounded Knee* (ed. Jensen, Paul, & Carter), Lincoln, Nebraska 1991 p. 25.

Indian uprisings that might occur. The basic idea was to use trains to move and concentrate “overwhelming” forces at scene of trouble. This tactic proved effective, for example, in subduing the Cheyenne Indians in 1885.⁴⁷⁷

During the late 1880s the army was in total control of the vast area that used to be the Sioux country. The Lakotas now lived on reservations, which were surrounded by army forts. Fort Niobrara and Fort Robinson in Nebraska controlled the Lakotas who lived on Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations. Fort Yates in North Dakota and Fort Bennett in South Dakota watched the Hunkpapas on Standing Rock Reservation and the Minneconjous, who lived on Cheyenne River Reservation (See appendix 7, map 4). These forts were well connected to other parts of the country by rail and telegraph, and rapid response to troubles caused by Indians was now possible.⁴⁷⁸

By 1890 the army was prepared to move forces quickly. Traditionally the Division of the Missouri was more involved in the Indian campaigns than other divisions.⁴⁷⁹ At the time when the ghost dance seemed to cause problems, the task of dealing with it once again fell to the Division of Missouri. In 1890 the commanding general of that division was Major General Nelson A. Miles, one of the most successful Indian fighters of the 1870s and 1880s. It is worth noting that General Miles was one of the military leaders who hunted down the Lakotas during the winter 1876-1877, after the Little Big Horn battle.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁷ Socolofsky 1976, pp. 2-3; Wade 1976, p. 16; Wooster 1988, p. 40 and pp. 192-193.

⁴⁷⁸ Boyd 1891, pp. 200-201; Colby 1892, p. 146; Mattingly 1976, p. 22; Paul 1991, pp. 25-26. A general account of the military and its efforts to control the Great Plains area can be found in, Wade 1976, pp. 5-21.

⁴⁷⁹ Wade 1976, p. 15. The Military Division of the Missouri was composed of subordinate departments, which varied from time to time. By 1890 the Department of the Platte and the Department of the Dakota belonged to the Division of the Missouri. (ibid.) About the structure of the United States Army see, Wade 1976, pp. 5-20; Wooster 1988, pp. 17-26. For a historical account of the role of the Division of Missouri from 1860s to 1891 see, Wade 1976, pp. 9-20.

⁴⁸⁰ Wade 1976, pp. 14-15; Utley 1984, p. 255. For accounts of General Miles' life and career before the ghost dance troubles see, for example, Miles, Nelson A., *Personal Recollections and Observations of General Nelson A. Miles. Embracing a Brief View of the Civil War or From New England to the Golden Gate and the Story of His Indian Campaigns with Comments on the Exploration, Development and Progress of Our Great Western Empire*, Chicago, Illinois, 1896, pp. 1-590; Miles, Nelson A., *Serving the Republic. Memoirs of the Civil and Military life of Nelson A. Miles*, New York, N.Y. 1911, pp. 1-232; Johnson, Virginia Weisel, *The Unregimented General. A Biography of Nelson A. Miles*, Boston, Massachusetts 1962, pp. 3-257; Wooster, Robert, *Nelson A. Miles and the Twilight of the Frontier Army*, Lincoln, Nebraska 1993, pp. 1-162. According to **Robert Wooster**, General Miles was a successful officer, but his success was somewhat shadowed by accusations of taking credit for the work other officers had done. Also his political ambitions

General Miles was appointed as Commander of the Division of Missouri in September 1889, following Major General George Crook's death, and just prior to the spread of rumors concerning the ghost dance troubles.⁴⁸¹ Under General Miles's leadership, the Division of Missouri was granted wide authority during the ghost dance period. By the end of the disturbances, the largest United States Army force since the Civil War had been mobilized to subdue the anticipated Lakota outbreak. Brigadier General John R. Brooke was head of the Department of the Platte, and was sent to the scene of the Lakota "outbreak," where he served as commanding officer on the field. General Miles remained as overall commander of the troops. He kept his headquarters in Chicago until the early days of December 1890, later moving the headquarters to Rapid City, South Dakota, closer to the scene of the trouble. On December 30, General Miles took the field personally and established his headquarters at Pine Ridge Agency.⁴⁸²

5.1. The Early Rumors

Months before the army arrived on the scene of the alleged trouble there was general interest in the ghost dance religion as rumors of an Indian Messiah spread across the United States. The first news that some kind of Messiah or "delusion" had taken hold of several Indian tribes reached army officials in the East in the fall of 1889. Indian agents in Oklahoma reported that Indians in Wyoming were captivated by a new belief that promised the return of the old way of life. The Oklahoma rumors said that an Indian Messiah was living in the mountains

have caused some discussion. **Virginia Weisel Johnson**, however, claims that General Miles did not use the military to boost his political career. **Wooster** maintains that General Miles was more concerned of his own success than the welfare of the Indians. (Johnson V. 1962, pp. 274-275; Wooster 1988, p. 66; Wooster 1993, pp. 163-175. See also, Seymour 1981, pp. 143-147)

⁴⁸¹ See, Miles 1911, pp. 233-234; Johnson V. 1962, pp. 261-263; Utley 1984, p. 255; Wooster 1993, pp. 163-175.

⁴⁸² Usually major generals were headed the divisions and brigadier generals headed the departments. At the time of the ghost dance troubles the chain of command was the following: Brigadier Generals John R. Brooke and Thomas H. Ruger reported to Major General Nelson A. Miles whose superior was Major General John M. Schofield, the General of the Army, in Washington. Schofield's superior was Secretary of War Redfield Proctor, who was appointed by the President. The President at this time was Benjamin Harrison. (Wooster 1988, p. 17; Paul 1991, p. 26) See also, Miles 1911, pp. 233-234; Socolofsky 1976, pp. 2-3; Wooster 1993, p 175; *After Wounded Knee. Correspondence of Major and Surgeon John Vance Lauderdale While Serving with the Army Occupying the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, 1890-1891* (ed. Green, Jerry), East Lansing, Michigan 1996, p. 27. More about the military command structure in general in, for example, Wade 1976, pp. 5-21.

somewhere north of the Shoshone lands. These rumors, mainly stories about strange events that had taken place in the West, excited the Indians in Oklahoma so much that they sent a delegation to meet with the Shoshones. Their return caused some excitement among the Oklahoma Indians. Even Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan, who toured the West in person, mentioned in his annual report the early excitement among several Indian tribes. The commissioner called the excitement by the name “Messiah Craze.”⁴⁸³

The rumors continued to spread during the winter of 1889-1890. This restless feeling in the West concerned some officials in Washington. The commissioner of Indian affairs, however, did not think that the spreading “superstition” would cause any considerable trouble among the Indians, although it obviously affected their progress toward civilization. Moreover, despite the rumors, no actual information about the doctrine or the teachings of the “Messiah,” known also as the Great Medicine Man of the North, were received.⁴⁸⁴

Nobody knew the Messiah’s identity, or even whether he was Indian or white. Some suggested that he was a Mormon. The first news that seemed to give some substance to the rumors reached officials in Washington through the War Department during the summer of 1890. This was the story of Porcupine, a Cheyenne Indian who traveled with the Lakota delegation to meet the Messiah (See chapter 3). On June 15, Porcupine told his story to the Commander of Camp Crook, at the Tongue River Agency, Montana. The Messiah’s identity, however, still remained a mystery. As late as October 1890, contradictory stories regarding the Messiah’s identity and whereabouts were reported. Stories suggested that he lived around the Snake River in Idaho or at Walker River in Nevada. His name was Johnson Sides, John Johnson, Bannock Jim or Quitze ow, depending on the report. One thing, however, became more and more evident as the year 1890

⁴⁸³ ARCIA 1891, Report of The Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 123-124. See also, Kelley, William F., *The Indian Troubles and the Battle of Wounded Knee*, Transactions and Reports of the Nebraska State Historical Society, Vol. IV, Lincoln, Nebraska 1892, p. 31.

⁴⁸⁴ ARCIA 1891, Report of The Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 123-124. For rumors and newspaper accounts regarding the ghost dance among the Shoshones, Arapahos and Cheyennes see, chapter 6.1.

passed. This Messiah was creating great excitement among the Indians. Delegations from many tribes headed west to meet with him. The officials were most concerned about the possibility that the Lakotas might also send people to meet with the Messiah. They did not know that a Lakota delegation had already done so.⁴⁸⁵

No real answers regarding the true origins of the “Messiah Craze” were received until the army took up the investigation. This task was given to Indian scout Arthur I. Chapman. Under orders to find the “Indian Christ” he started out in late November 1890 from San Francisco, California, to Nevada, where the Messiah was rumored to live.⁴⁸⁶

Chapman eventually found his way to Mason Valley, Nevada, where he learned that the name of the Messiah was Jack Wilson or Quitze Ow, Wovoka. He still had to search for the Messiah. On December 4, 1890, he finally contacted Wovoka at Walker River, Nevada, and recorded the first interview with the Indian Messiah. Wovoka explained his beliefs to Chapman and said that he hoped to protect Indians from white soldiers. He also urged all Indians to live in peace with the white men. Wovoka discovered that the soldiers were looking for him, but he did not care. He wanted only to meet them and show them that no bad feelings existed. According to Chapman, the Messiah was well-known throughout Nevada and had performed many successful miracles. The Indians followed his teachings, and Wovoka claimed that he was the chief of all the Indians who sent representatives to meet with him. Finally, Chapman mentioned in his report that the local whites considered the Paiutes very good and industrious people; only a

⁴⁸⁵ See, Major Guy W. Henry to the Assistant Adjutant General (hereafter AAG), October 14, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 12; Major E. R. Kellog to AAG, October 27, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 45; ARSOW 1891, Report of A. I. Chapman in, Report of Operations Relative to the Sioux Indians in 1890 and 1891, October 19, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 190-194. Porcupine’s account of the journey, June 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/16-20. See, Mooney, pp. 812-813. For newspaper accounts of the Messiah’s identity see, chapter 6. See also, chapters 3 and 4.

⁴⁸⁶ ARCIA 1891, Report of The Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 123-124; ARSOW 1891, Report of A. I. Chapman, December 6, 1890 in, Report of Operations Relative to the Sioux Indians in 1890 and 1891, October 19, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 190-194. See, Hittman 1997, pp. 7-12 and pp. 231-336. For early newspaper accounts of the Paiute ghost dance see, Hittman 1997, p. 259.

few of the whites believed that the “Indian superstition” would cause any problems. Chapman also said that the story he learned was similar to the one told earlier by Porcupine, the Cheyenne.⁴⁸⁷

Remarkably, Chapman’s interview with Wovoka took place as late as December 1890, when the army had already been sent to the Lakota reservations. It appears that the army arrived on the Lakota reservations before accurate information about the origins and nature of the “Indian Messiah’s” teachings was gathered. Information about the Lakotas, however, had been received, for example, through the Lakota agents. In order to take proper action, the army started to carry out its own investigation about the situation on the Lakota reservations.

5.2. “To Protect and Suppress Trouble”

In 1890 the army took notice of troubles among various Indian tribes. Some unrest occurred among several tribes. Among the Lakotas, however, nothing serious was reported; only the partitioning of the Great Sioux Reservation and the resulting opening of the Lakota lands caused dissatisfaction among the Indians.⁴⁸⁸

The army learned about the ghost dance from Porcupine in June 1890, but did not act on the information. Only in the fall of 1890 did army officials turn their attention toward the ghost dance, focusing specifically on the Lakotas. According to Brigadier General John R. Brooke, the dissatisfaction and uneasiness among the Lakotas grew during the summer of 1890, but did not reach serious proportions until the fall. The commissioner of Indian affairs grew more alarmed as Indian agents started to report discontent among the Lakotas. These reports and

⁴⁸⁷ ARSOW 1891, Report of A. I. Chapman, December 6, 1890 in, Report of Operations Relative to the Sioux Indians in 1890 and 1891, October 19, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 190-194. See also, Hittman 1997, pp. 7-12 and pp. 231-236.

⁴⁸⁸ Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, p. 1670; ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Nelson A. Miles, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 55. For newspaper accounts of restlessness among other Indian tribes see, chapter 6.2.

letters were the most important sources of information regarding conditions on the Lakota reservations during September and October 1890.⁴⁸⁹

In late October, however, one of the major sources of information was Major General Nelson A. Miles himself. During the month, he traveled to several western army forts and outposts. On October 28, he arrived at Pine Ridge. There he was able to make first-hand observations about the situation, which had already caused problems between Agent Daniel F. Royer and the ghost dancers. He consulted with the agent and progressive leaders American Horse and Young Man Afraid Of His Horse urging them to use their influence to try to stop the ghost dances. More importantly, he also tried to persuade the ghost dancers to stop dancing for their own best interest, although he did not think that anything serious would result from the ghost dance. In fact, he told Agent Royer that, if left alone, ghost dancing would probably eventually stop by itself.⁴⁹⁰ Despite this, however, some sources claim that General Miles threatened the ghost dancers. If they would not stop he would bring such a big force of soldiers that he would be able to destroy everyone who caused trouble.⁴⁹¹

Soon after he returned from his trip Miles received orders to conduct a proper investigation into conditions on the Lakota reservations. On October 31, Brigadier General Thomas H. Ruger, commander of the Department of Dakota, was sent to Standing Rock to investigate the situation there. Captain C. A. Earnest of the 8th Cavalry, Inspector for Indian Supplies at Rosebud Agency, was ordered to report on the condition of the Indians who lived on that reservation. Captain J. H. Hurst, commanding officer of Fort Bennett, South Dakota, conducted the investigation

⁴⁸⁹ Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, p. 1670. For the reports and letters of the agents see, chapter 4.

⁴⁹⁰ Major General Nelson A. Miles to Major General John M. Schofield, November 14, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 34; ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Nelson A. Miles, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 143; Royer to ACIA, October 30, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel. 1, p. 47-50. See, Hyde 1956, p. 260; Utley 1963, pp. 104-105; Paul 1991, p. 26; Wooster 1993, pp. 177-178. See also, chapters 3 and 4.

⁴⁹¹ See, for example, Coleman W. 2000, pp. 65-66. See also, chapter 7.

on Cheyenne River Reservation. General Brooke eventually made the report regarding Pine Ridge.⁴⁹²

Before these investigations were completed, however, the excited letters from the Lakota agents to the commissioner of Indian affairs and to the army officers caused much concern in Washington. According to General Brooke, these letters were very alarming and needed to be sent forward to the highest authorities in the country.⁴⁹³ Secretary of the Interior John W. Noble, alerted by Royer's letters, counseled the president to consider sending troops to Pine Ridge. Secretary Noble wanted to send a force, which would be "... so great it will overwhelm the Indians from beginning."⁴⁹⁴

Interestingly, in the midst of all these alarming letters and news an army memorandum listed ten reasons for the existing trouble. The memorandum reported all the complaints made by the Lakotas, from the reduction of their reservation to the failure of crops and the reduction of their beef rations. It also stated that the beef was of poor quality, and there were serious delays in issuing it. The memorandum noted that the Lakotas were starving, which directly resulted in dissatisfaction, and the "Messiah Craze" was a symptom of this ill feeling. According to the memorandum, however, the "Messiah Craze" was used by malcontents to excite others, and acted as a cover for outbreak. Sitting Bull was believed to be urging people to join him the following spring when he would distribute 1,500 stands of concealed arms to the Lakotas. The memorandum is

⁴⁹² AAG to Miles, October 31, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 6; Miles to Schofield, November 14, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 34; Brigadier General John R. Brooke to the Commanding Officer at Fort Niobrara (telegram), November 17, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 1, p. 1704; Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke, in Brooke to AAG March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, p. 1671; ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Nelson A. Miles, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 134-139. See also, Youngkin 1974, pp. 334-337.

⁴⁹³ Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, p. 1671. See also, Paul 1991, p. 27. More about the agents' letters in, chapter 4.

⁴⁹⁴ Secretary of the Interior John W. Noble to President Benjamin Harrison, November 7, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 33.

interesting because it accuses the Lakotas of concealing weapons and planning an outbreak, but at the same time also sympathizes with them.⁴⁹⁵

The first actual investigation results by the army regarding the different Lakota reservations were received by mid-November. Captain Earnest reported from Pine Ridge and Rosebud on November 12 that there was disaffection among the Indians. Their disaffection stemmed from the total failure of crops, the cut in government rations, and the delay in ration issuance. He also mentioned the new census figures, which were one of the reasons for the cut in rations. The shortage of jobs for Indians on the reservations and the resulting lack of money caused problems in the Indians' daily lives. Furthermore, the Lakotas at Rosebud opposed Agent J. George Wright's suspension.⁴⁹⁶

Captain Earnest pointed out that the "Messiah Craze" was only a symptom of this bad feeling, a superstitious mania that would eventually die out by itself. For this to happen, however, it was necessary to fulfill all the Lakotas' expectations. They needed to receive their full rations, and needed something to do on the reservations. Captain Earnest concluded that they also needed to get Agent Wright back. The best way to deal with the ghost dancers would have been to leave them alone, but the situation had deteriorated because, according to Captain Earnest, "...busybodies told them that if they didn't stop soldiers would come and take away their ponies. As they originally meditated no violence, this gave the Indians war hearts."⁴⁹⁷

By mid-November Brigadier General Thomas H. Ruger reported from Cheyenne River Reservation that approximately 200 Minneconjous were dancing under the leadership of Hump and Big Foot. The Indians started around September 20, and

⁴⁹⁵ Memoranda, Undated (between letters dated November 6 and November 10, 1890), Unsigned, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 47. The belief that the Lakotas had concealed weapons for future purposes was quite common among the army officers as well as other officials in Washington. As examples of this discussion see, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, pp 1-14; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 9, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, pp. 2-51.

⁴⁹⁶ Report of Captain C. A. Earnest, November 12, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 78-82. See, chapters 3 and 4.

⁴⁹⁷ Report of Captain C. A. Earnest, November 12, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 78-82.

were out of the agent's control. Despite this, General Ruger's report emphasized that there was no need for further action; it was unlikely that an outbreak would occur. The ghost dancers made no threats against the agent or other employees at the agency. Ruger believed that there was more excitement on Pine Ridge Reservation than on either Cheyenne River or the Standing Rock Reservations.⁴⁹⁸ Both of these reports echoed the sentiment in the undated memorandum mentioned above.

On November 13, however, the rumors about the restless Lakotas caused the president to act. In a letter to the secretary of war, President Benjamin Harrison ordered the War Department to "...assume the direction and responsibility for steps that may be necessary to prevent an outbreak." The president wanted to have troops in readiness in case of emergency. The troops should be "...impressive and effective." Concurrently, the president also wanted to avoid any issue that would cause an outbreak.⁴⁹⁹

As a direct result of this order, Major General John M. Schofield ordered General Miles to take actions that

...may be necessary in view of the existing situation, the object being first to prevent an outbreak...and second to bring to bear upon the disaffected Indians such military force as will compel prompt submission to the authority of the government; the arrest of such of the leaders as may be necessary to insure peaceful conduct of the tribes and such other measures as may hereafter be necessary to prevent the occurrence of like difficulties.⁵⁰⁰

In a telegram of November 17, General Schofield gave authority over the situation to General Miles: "You will please take such action as the circumstances require,

⁴⁹⁸ Report of Brigadier General Thomas H. Ruger in, AAG to Miles (telegram), November 16, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 85-86; ARSOW 1891, Report of Brigadier General Thomas H. Ruger, November 26, 1890, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 189-191.

⁴⁹⁹ President Harrison to the Secretary of War Redfield Proctor (telegram), November 13, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 19-20. See also, Noble to President Harrison, November 7, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 33.

⁵⁰⁰ Schofield to Miles, November 14, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 71.

if in your judgment immediate action is necessary.” A telegram from Agent Royer had prompted Schofield’s concern.⁵⁰¹

Despite army investigations reported no imminent danger, the Lakota agents’ pleas for help caused the army to move forces onto the Lakota reservations. The army wanted to rapidly deploy enough troops by railroad to suppress any outbreak attempts. The concentration of troops was to be carried out in secrecy. The army was under orders to capture and destroy any hostile Indians leaving their reservations, to separate the “friendly” Indians from the “hostile,” and to arrest the leaders as necessary. According to **Robert Wooster**, the idea to punish Indians who left their reservations without permission, and the idea of separating the friendly Indians from the hostile Indians, was a common strategy throughout the Indian fighting period.⁵⁰² In this case, however, the infantry was going to be used as protection for white settlements while the task of fighting and destroying the “hostile” Indians fell to the cavalry. The cavalry gained additional firepower from Hotchkiss guns, although the difficult terrain was expected to prevent their efficient use. Despite this, one of these mountain howitzers was given to each cavalry squadron. Although the army received direct instructions on how to wage war against the Lakotas, the orders included a directive to avoid open confrontation and to give support and confidence to the “loyal” Indians.⁵⁰³

The army was expected to require very large numbers of men and equipment in order to carry out its duties promptly. The concentration of the troops, however, was not an easy task. The Division of Missouri received the assignment for this operation, but it alone was not considered to be a sufficient force. In fact, General Miles complained that the troops in his division were ill equipped, and the troops’ efficiency was severely impaired, since there had been no war for a long time. Furthermore, he believed that the hostile Lakotas far outnumbered his troops.

⁵⁰¹ Schofield to Miles (telegram), November 17, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 36. More about Agent Royer in, chapter 4.

⁵⁰² Wooster 1988, pp. 31-34.

⁵⁰³ AAG to Brooke (telegram), November 17, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 94; AAG to Brooke (telegram), November, 17, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 97; AAG to Brooke (telegram), November 17, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 98; AAG to Brooke (telegram), November 17, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 99; AAG to Brooke (telegram), November 18, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 100.

Miles complained that he had only 28 troops of cavalry, 1,400 mounted men scattered across a vast area. These troops faced, according to Miles, altogether 30,000 “disaffected” Indians. Miles believed that as many as 6,000 of them would be fighting warriors.⁵⁰⁴

In order to solve these problems, General Miles was given wide authority to attach troops from other divisions under his command. Troops were eventually called to the Lakota reservations from as far as New Mexico and Arizona.⁵⁰⁵ At first, however, the troops sent to Pine Ridge and Rosebud belonged to the Department of the Platte. These units were under the command of Brigadier General John R. Brooke, who was also very concerned about the troops’ condition and the number of men he could use at this point.⁵⁰⁶

While the army prepared to move sufficient forces to overwhelm the Indians, the officers were clearly aware of the fact that a sudden appearance of troops might frighten the Lakotas and cause a general stampede of both “friendly” and “hostile” Indians. There was also a general understanding that the situation was serious, and that some of the seriousness was caused by Agent Royer, who was considered to be “...much alarmed and at the same time inexperienced.”⁵⁰⁷ The army, however,

⁵⁰⁴ Miles to AG (telegram), November 17, 1890, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 104-105; ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Nelson A. Miles, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 145. See also, Utley 1963, pp. 114-115. General Miles had already for a few years been concerned about the condition of the army, and had been asking for additional appropriations for his division. On this issue he was in constant collision course with several army officers and also with the Congress. (Wooster 1993, pp. 163-175) About different estimations of the number of Lakota warriors see, chapters 3, 6 and 7.

⁵⁰⁵ See, Orders of Major General John M. Schofield, November 21, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 145-147; Schofield to Miles (telegram), November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 176; Memorandum. Troops Ordered to the Division of the Missouri, December 4, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 422. Altogether General Miles had approximately 3,500 troops under his direct command; this was almost half of the infantry and cavalry of the United States regular army. Additionally 2,000 troops were in readiness. (Utley 1963, p. 251)

⁵⁰⁶ Brooke to AAG (telegram), November 16, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 75. See, Utley 1963, pp. 115-116.

⁵⁰⁷ AAG to Brooke (telegram), November 18, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 100; AAG to Brooke (telegram), November 18, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 101.

could not take the situation lightly. The white citizens living close to the Lakota reservations were growing very alarmed. They wanted protection.⁵⁰⁸

Despite all the problems the army had in mobilizing the troops, it executed a simultaneous arrival at Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations during the night of November 19-20, 1890. The army even succeeded in arriving at both reservations in relative secrecy and took the Indians by surprise.⁵⁰⁹

5.3. To Divide and to Conquer

5.3.1. The Threatening Uprising

After he received orders, Brigadier General John Brooke acted rapidly. He positioned his troops strategically around the reportedly most troublesome reservations, Pine Ridge and Rosebud. The general himself arrived at Pine Ridge from Rushville, Nebraska early on the morning of November 20, 1890. After investigating circumstances on the reservation he carried out his first major task, the separation of the well-disposed from the disaffected, the “friendlies” from the “hostiles,” that is, the non-ghost dancers from the ghost dancers. He asked Agent Royer to call on those who had not defied the agent’s authority to come to the agency. As a result, a large number of Oglalas arrived at the agency during the following few days.⁵¹⁰

The tension on the reservation, however, was still high. At first, both General Brooke and General Miles, expected that separating the well-disposed Indians from those who were affected by the ghost dance would prove a simple task. General Miles, however, pointed out that any “...violent overt act of any small

⁵⁰⁸ See, for example, Governor of North Dakota John Miller to Noble (telegram), November 17, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 106; Settlers of New England N. D. to Proctor, November 26, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 246-247; Senator Gilbert A. Pierce N. D. to Proctor (telegram), November 18, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 109; R. M. Tuttle to President Harrison, November 18, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/55-56; J. Fitzgerald to CIA, November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/65-66.

⁵⁰⁹ Utley 1963, pp. 114-116; Paul 1991, pp. 27-28.

⁵¹⁰ Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, p. 1671. See also, chapters 3 and 4.

party of the desperate ones may cause a general uprising.” He also believed that Sitting Bull was sending emissaries around the country in an attempt to persuade other tribes to join him in the spring of 1891 at the Black Hills, where a general uprising would occur.⁵¹¹

A few days after arriving at Pine Ridge, General Brooke realized that separating the “friendly” Indians from the “hostiles” was not going to be an easy task. Although some Indians gathered at the agency, even more fled to the ghost dancers’ camp. Brooke reported that the disaffected were mostly those who had not signed the agreement of 1889, and were led by Little Wound, Jack Red Cloud and Big Road. Both generals, Brooke and Miles, believed the chiefs were in full control of the ghost dancers and were gaining in prestige. The ghost dancers were reported to be well armed and were assuming a hostile attitude, disobeying all directions or regulations. According to Brooke, the ghost dancers did not plan to attack the whites, but prepared to defend themselves if necessary.⁵¹²

On Rosebud Reservation the arrival of troops had a similar impact. Some of the Brulés started to move toward Pine Ridge. Brooke noted that the immediate cause for the Indians’ exodus was a rumor saying that soldiers were coming to take away their ponies. Other similar rumors circulated among the Indians, causing a movement that according to Brooke, was “...like prairie fire, the people dropped everything when they heard the news...started for the White River and then turned toward Pine Ridge.”⁵¹³

The Brulés’ attempt to join the Oglalas on Pine Ridge Reservation was seen as a very dangerous development, especially since concurrent reports told of the Indians’ intention to fight. Special Census Agent A. T. Lea at Pine Ridge filed

⁵¹¹ Miles to AAG (telegram), November 20, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 142; Miles to AAG (telegram), November 21, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 144.

⁵¹² Miles to AG (telegram), November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 180-181; Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1673-1674.

⁵¹³ Miles to AG (telegram), November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 180-181; Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1673-1674. For the movement of the Rosebud Indians toward Pine Ridge see, chapters 3 and 4.

reports saying that one-half of the Indians of Pine Ridge and Rosebud were affected by the ghost dance, and these Indians were planning to go on the warpath. Special Agent James Cooper at Pine Ridge backed Lea's reports.⁵¹⁴

Partly due to this information, General Miles was certain that the Indians planned an attack against General Brooke at Pine Ridge. As a result, more troops were ordered to the scene. On November 23, Brooke assured Miles that there was no danger at the present time and the troops on Pine Ridge were perfectly safe. In his telegram, Brooke strongly noted that the Indians had just and fair grievances. "This should be corrected at once...their just claims to be granted without delay," he suggested. In this Miles agreed with Brooke.⁵¹⁵

General Miles also believed in the necessity of employing as many Indian scouts as possible. This action was needed rather to give employment to Indians than to expect them to do any real fighting. As a result of his requests, Miles was allowed to employ 500 Indians as scouts and additional police force on the Lakota reservations. At this point, Miles received orders from General Schofield not to disturb the ghost dancers or do anything that might precipitate a conflict. Although the ghost dancers were greatly excited, there seemed to be no imminent threat of war. Miles, however, needed to continue to send more troops on the scene. Schofield urged Miles to use caution and take no action before enough troops were present. Miles, however, wanted to act quickly, while many of the Indians were close to Pine Ridge Agency for the issuing of rations. Schofield thought that careful consideration was required before they undertook any action, and the army needed to prepare for a long winter campaign. He was not going to take the matter lightly. He pointed out that the decision to act against the Indians depended on the president, and much discretion was needed from the commanding officers.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁴ Agent Cooper in, ACIA to Secretary Noble, November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 177; Agent Lea in, Miles to AG (telegram), November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 180-181. More about Agent Cooper in, chapter 4 and about Agent Lea in, chapters 3, 4 and 7.

⁵¹⁵ Miles to AG (telegram), November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 184; Miles to AG (telegram), November 23, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 192.

⁵¹⁶ Miles to AG (telegram), November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 184; Miles to AG (telegram), November 23, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1,

General Schofield added on December 3 that disarming the Indians would be an immensely difficult and dangerous task. He reasoned that the Indians could be disarmed, and kept disarmed, only if they were taken as prisoners of war and kept under full military control for an indefinite period of time. This was not a practical solution, and, in fact, would have violated the government's general Indian policy. Schofield also noted that the Indians had not so far shown any deliberate intention to commence hostilities against the whites. Therefore disarming them was irrelevant. In fact, Schofield thought that if the Indians were actually to start a war, it might eventually be easier for the army to respond to that than to deal with the Indians in the current situation where they had simply put themselves in an attitude of defiance. It remained, however, the War Department's duty to determine the initial action in any possible case. Secretary of War Redfield Proctor was of the opinion that the military should not make any move against the Indians unless it was absolutely necessary.⁵¹⁷ Thus, it seems that after the arrival of the troops, General Miles was looking for a quick military solution. His superiors and General Brooke tried to convince him to find a more tolerant approach.

During the last days of November and the early days of December the army continued to move additional troops onto the Lakota reservations. The army was not going to take any chances, and the plan of "showing overwhelming force" was put into effect.⁵¹⁸ While the army concentrated troops, the general feeling on

Vol. 1, p. 192; Miles to AG (telegram), November 24, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 201; Schofield to Miles (telegram), November 24, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 202; Schofield to Miles (telegram), November 24, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 206-207; Miles to AG (telegram), November 24, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 209; Schofield (copy of 1st endorsement), November 26, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 210.

⁵¹⁷ Schofield to Proctor, December 3, 1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, pp. 2-3; Proctor to the President of the United States Senate, December 6, 1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, p. 1. Agents Royer and Cooper kept on insisting that the Indians were to be disarmed and imprisoned. See, chapter 4.

⁵¹⁸ For troop movements see, for example, Schofield to Miles (telegram), November 24, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 226; Miles to Schofield (telegram), November 24, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 228; Brigadier General Wesley Merritt to Schofield (telegram), November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 236 Schofield to Merritt (telegram), November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 238; Miles to AG (telegram), November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 243; Memorandum. Troops Ordered to the Division of the

the Lakota reservations seemed peaceful. The Indians were said to be at the agencies for rations, and only a few of the disaffected stayed away from the agencies. During the issue of the rations things remained quiet and, according to Miles, the ghost-dancing element was believed to be subsiding and all indications were peaceful.⁵¹⁹

On November 27, General Brooke reported that everything was quiet at Pine Ridge, and "...every hour lessens the strength of the ghost dancers." Little Wound and Big Road arrived to the agency, and even Short Bull visited the agency the previous night. Brooke believed that Pine Ridge was now the place where all the restlessness would be settled. Furthermore, the 7th Cavalry arrived at Pine Ridge. Everything was also reported to be quiet on Rosebud, and Brigadier General Thomas H. Ruger had already sent word from Cheyenne River that settlers who left their homes and fled to nearby cities were now quietly returning to their homes.⁵²⁰

Despite these favorable reports from his officers, General Miles was worried. Some settlers living around the reservations still wanted protection. The rumor was that the Indians planned a full-scale outbreak, and reportedly said that they would once again "...beat out the brains of children and drink women's blood." The settlers also said that Indians were damaging homes and stealing horses and other goods.⁵²¹ On November 26, Miles learned about a great Indian gathering at Pass Creek where Short Bull reportedly preached about the new Indian paradise. General Miles believed that Short Bull had gathered together 1,500 warriors under his direct leadership, and that these Indians were prepared to fight, if the soldiers attempted to arrest them. Additionally, these Indians claimed that they had bulletproof shirts. Miles grew more and more concerned about the condition of the

Missouri, December 4 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 422. See also, Utley 1963, pp. 118-119.

⁵¹⁹ Miles to AG (telegram), November 24, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 219; Miles to AG (telegram), November 25, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 235.

⁵²⁰ Ruger to AG (telegram), November 23, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 195; Miles to AG (telegram), November 26, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 263; Miles to AG (telegram), November 27, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 268. See, Boyd 1891, pp. 217-218.

⁵²¹ See also, chapter 6.

troops under his command. The Indians, he believed, could easily wipe out the poorly equipped soldiers.⁵²²

During the early days of December 1890, the army carried out an astonishing military build up on the Lakota reservations. At the same time, however, more and more information about the ghost dance and about the living conditions of the Lakotas was gathered. Army officers from each Lakota reservations filed their reports by the end of November. The main points expressed in these reports were that the Indians had suffered for want of food, they had been unjustly and unfairly treated, their land was not suitable for farming, the time between beef issues was too long, and the beef that was issued shrunk during the wintertime to almost half of its original size. The Lakotas had no means to support themselves and they suffered physically and mentally. In addition, the census conducted by Special Agent Lea gave a smaller figure than the actual number. According to the officers, the Indians saw the ghost dance as a feast where food was given to starving people. One officer thought that the dancing would stop if the Indians were given enough food. General Brooke was still convinced that all the Lakota grievances should be met. Brooke believed that the ghost dance was only a "...means to an end." Although he clearly understood the suffering of the Lakota people, General Brooke concluded his report saying that the suffering did not justify the ghost dancers' current behavior. Therefore, all the Indians living on Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations should be disarmed.⁵²³

On November 28, General Miles filed a report based on his own investigations and his officers' reports. Miles pointed out that although the army had subjugated

⁵²² Miles to AG (telegram), November 26, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 244-245; Miles to AG (telegram), November 26, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 264. For the feelings of the settlers see, for example, Letter by Settlers of New England City N. D. to Proctor, November 26, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 246-247; Letter by settlers of Chadron NE (no recipient), November 26, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 252-254. See, Boyd 1891, p. 227. For Short Bull's speech see, chapter 3 and Appendix 12. These rumors were spread by the newspapers also. See, chapter 6.

⁵²³ Report of Lieutenant Colonel J. S. Poland to AAG (telegram), November 29, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 288-292; Brooke to AAG (telegram), November 30, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 296-301; Report of Captain F. A. Whitney, November 27, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 307-311; ARSOW 1891, List of Causes of Disaffection in Different Reservations, November 27, November 30, December 7, 1890, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 134-139.

the Indians, but this did not mean an end to the Indian wars. In fact, he believed that Indians in general were better equipped for war than ever. While on the warpath, they could more successfully live on livestock than they did on buffalo during previous times. "There never has been a time when the Indians were as well armed and equipped for war as the present..." the general wrote. It would not surprise him if the Indians made a final attempt in "...the death struggle of their race." According to him, the Indians still remembered the old times of freedom, and had enough intelligence to see that their race was doomed. This caused much hatred, and since they generally believed in supernatural powers, they naturally grasped onto the hope the ghost dance offered. When they reached a religiously frenzied state, they saw visions of a place from which their enemies were eliminated, and then their "...ferocious nature of savage takes over," Miles wrote. "The doctrine of destruction of [the] white race, restoration of their dead relatives and return of buffalo is close to their heart."⁵²⁴

General Miles believed that the original doctrine was peaceful, but the false prophets, especially Sitting Bull, transformed it so that "...deeds were necessary to show belief and hasten the coming of the Messiah." This caused the turbulent warriors to believe that they were on a rightful crusade that could end in a "...terrible pillage and massacre of innocent and unprotected settlers," Miles believed. He added that the "Messiah delusion" became even more dangerous because the Indians believed that they would be resurrected in the near future, so they might as well die. Miles stated that the "craze" had taken hold of Indians on an area larger than the States east of the Mississippi, and that "...most positive and vigorous measures should be taken." Despite the call for "vigorous measures," Miles also listed several causes of the Lakotas' disaffection and their just grievances. He recommended that Congress should immediately fulfill all its obligations to the Lakotas. "What the Indians need is sufficient food, occupation and just and positive government," Miles remarked. By just and positive government he meant that all civilian agents should be removed and the agencies put under military control. He strongly indicated that poor and inexperienced

⁵²⁴ Miles to AG, November 28, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 279-285; ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Nelson A. Miles, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 132-144.

agents were partly to blame for the current troubles. Only the military knew the Indian's needs and only the military could control the turbulent element.⁵²⁵

General Miles wrote these strong words about the abilities of the civil agents after an occasion when he felt that Agent McLaughlin at Standing Rock had overstepped his authorities. Both Miles and McLaughlin wanted to get Sitting Bull arrested. The general and the agent, however, could not agree about how to resolve the matter. In order to prevent the agent from conducting the arrest, Miles ordered William F. Cody, also known as Buffalo Bill, to arrest Sitting Bull. He gave Buffalo Bill instructions to go to Sitting Bull's camp and eventually take him a prisoner. Buffalo Bill arrived at Standing Rock on November 27, but McLaughlin prevented him from meeting with Sitting Bull. This angered General Miles and strengthened his conviction that the agents could not control the reservations. He repeated these sentiments several times during the following days. On November 28, General Miles left for Washington, where he hoped to convince the federal officials to follow his suggestions.⁵²⁶

On his way to Washington Miles told newspaper reporters that the situation was very grave and required more vigorous measures. On this trip to Washington, Miles himself became one of the sources of alarmist reports. He told the press, and later repeated it in his memoirs, that the ghost dance was a "...threatened uprising of colossal proportions, extending over a far greater territory than did the confederation inaugurated by the Prophet and led by Tecumseh, or the conspiracy of Pontiac."⁵²⁷ He continued in a similar vein in his official report about the

⁵²⁵ Miles to AG, November 28, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 279-285; ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Nelson A. Miles, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 132-144. More about Miles' ideas about resolving the "Indian question" in, The North American Review, Vol. 152, No. 411, January 1891, pp. 1-11. See also, Youngkin 1974, pp. 341-343.

⁵²⁶ Proctor to Miles (telegram), November 28, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 348; Schofield to Miles (telegram), November 29, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 347; ARSOW 1891, Report of the Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 145-146. See also, Miles 1911, pp. 238-239; Zahn 1940, p. 3; Johnson V. 1962, pp. 278-279; Utley 1963, pp. 122-127; Youngkin 1974, pp. 342-343; Paul 1991, pp. 31-32; Wooster 1993, pp. 181-182. For Agent McLaughlin's opinions about Buffalo Bill's mission see, chapter 4.

⁵²⁷ Miles 1911, p. 238; Seymour 1981, pp. 143-147. General Miles' comments were directly quoted in the newspapers. (See, chapter 6) Tecumseh was a Shawnee chief, who led a war against the whites in the early nineteenth century. Pontiac was an Ottawa chief, who led a long campaign

disturbances. He still maintained that the most positive measures were necessary as "...the most serious Indian war of our history was imminent." The states of Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada and the territory of Utah, said Miles, "...were liable to be overrun by hungry, wild, mad horde of savages."⁵²⁸

Miles's comments are somewhat surprising as almost all the reports from his officers on the reservations said that no imminent threat of an outbreak existed. As **Robert M. Utley** has noted, Miles was so concerned about the public opinion of the outcome of his efforts that he suddenly began to emit declarations of alarm. It certainly seems that Miles deliberately exaggerated the danger. Perhaps he feared that this "Indian War" would not match the glory of past Indian Wars. The political gains of a small or unsuccessful Indian campaign might have remained marginal.⁵²⁹

Whatever his personal motivations or political goals were at this point, the fact is that his comments were widely reported by newspapers and caused much discussion in the Congress.⁵³⁰ The direct result of his visit to Washington was that the military was given full control over the Lakota reservations. The agents were ordered to obey the military's orders and fully co-operate with the commanding military officer on their respective reservations. The president gave Miles extraordinary authority to use all possible means to deal with the situation. Everything in "...the way of men and material that can be spared from other points will be supplied," promised the president.⁵³¹ This was exactly what Miles had hoped for, and without a doubt, the public sensation he had caused with his "alarmist" reports helped him achieve this goal. At the same time, however, he

against the whites in the 1760s. More about Tecumseh in, for example, Sugden, John, *Tecumseh: A Life*, New York, N.Y. 1998, passim. About Pontiac see, for example, Parkman, Francis, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, New York, N.Y. 1991, pp. 621-846.

⁵²⁸ ARSOW 1891, Report of the Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., Huse Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 144. See, Seymour 1981, pp. 145-147.

⁵²⁹ Utley 1963, p. 127. See also, Seymour 1981, pp. 143-147; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 97-98 and pp. 145-146.

⁵³⁰ See, Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. XII, Part I, December 3-8, 1890, pp. 44-48 and pp. 68-74. For the effects Miles' comments caused in Congress and in the press see, chapters 6 and 7.

⁵³¹ Noble to CIA, December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 392; Proctor to Miles, December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 401.

pointed out publicly how important it was for the government to fulfill all treaty obligations with the Lakotas.⁵³²

In late November and early December, the army took measures to suppress an Indian outbreak and to protect the settlers. At first the army had been forced to act before it had any concrete information about the ghost dance itself, or about ghost dancing on the Lakota reservations. It acted because officials in Washington became alarmed by various rumors and excited letters from the Indian agents and settlers. Soon after the arrival of the troops at Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations, information about the situation on the Lakota reservations started to arrive at Miles's headquarters in Chicago.

Army officers who were convinced that no real, imminent threat of war existed gathered most of this information. Their investigations showed that the Lakotas were suffering and that they had justifiable grievances. The army officers on the reservations understood why the Lakotas were restless. They also noted that the best way to deal with the restless Indians would be to fulfill all treaty obligations, especially important was to give the Indians food. This was also General Miles's opinion, although for some reasons, whether personal or political, his trip to Washington created an even greater sense of alarm than had existed earlier. He had always been convinced that only the army could deal with the Indians righteously. This, of course, was only one symptom of the decades-long struggle between the War Department and the Interior Department for control of Indian affairs.⁵³³ Perhaps Miles believed that with some slight exaggeration he could gain more control for the army – or himself. If so, his tactics proved to be successful.

⁵³² See, Hyde 1956, pp. 279-280; Johnson V. 1962, p. 275; Utley 1963, pp. 127-130; Youngkin 1974, pp. 334-335 and pp. 347-349; Wooster 1993, p. 182.

⁵³³ Youngkin 1974, pp. 333-335 and pp. 342-344; Wooster 1993, p. 182. For General Miles' ideas of the Indian and the Indian policy see, The North American Review, Vol. 152, No. 411, January 1891, pp. 1-11; Miles 1896, pp. 320-351. As examples of the problems between the Department of the Interior and the Department of War see, Transfer of Indian Affairs to the Department of the Interior, March 3, 1849, DUSIP, p. 80; House Debate on Civil Versus Military Control of Indian Affairs 1866, AIUSD, Vol. III, pp. 1444-1455; Senate Debate on the Administration of Indian Affairs 1867, AIUSD, Vol. III, 1456-1487. See also, Prucha 1984, Vol. I, pp. 473-478; Henriksson 1988, pp. 3-37; Wooster 1988, p. 73-110

Although the officers of the United States army showed sympathy toward the Lakotas, they also realized that trouble might lie ahead. Two courses of action were suggested: The first plan was to let the ghost dances subside by themselves during the coming winter. The second idea involved removing all “troublemakers” from the reservations and then eventually disarming all the Indians. Both plans stemmed from the notion that ghost dancing was harmful, and that it had to stop. There was no doubt among the army officers that the Lakotas could wreak considerable havoc, if they actually took the warpath. For this reason the concentration of troops continued, and firm handling of the situation was called for. Although they planned to avoid open hostilities, by December 1890 the army was ready to wage a full-scale war against the ghost dancing Lakotas if need be.

5.3.2. Struggling to Avoid a Battle

The military build-up on the Lakota reservations continued during Miles’s visit to Washington.⁵³⁴ While Agent Royer on Pine Ridge filed reports about Indian depredations, the army officers reported that everything was relatively quiet on the Lakota reservations. Their biggest concern was the concentration of Indians at the Stronghold in the Badlands. According to army officers, the Indians stole some cattle on their way, but no serious acts of violence occurred. Some Lakotas were reported to be dancing in Sitting Bull’s camp, but otherwise life on Standing Rock Reservation was peaceful; the Indian children were even attending schools.⁵³⁵

In order to keep things quiet on the reservations, a general issue of rations was carried out. Authorized by the secretary of war, General Brooke decided to supplement the inadequate issues with additional beef. The politics of

⁵³⁴ See, Schofield to the Commanding Generals of the Division of the Missouri, Division of the Pacific, Department of Dakota, Department of the Platte, Department of Texas (telegrams), December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 363-366; Miles to AAG (telegram), December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 389.

⁵³⁵ ACIA to Proctor, December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 356; AAG to AG (telegram), December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 360; AAG to AG (telegram), December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 371; AAG to AG (telegram), December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 397; Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1675-1676.

conciliation, said Brooke, soon bore good results. On Pine Ridge, the Indians started to feel confidence in the army and remained quietly in their camps. Brooke further noted that much of the excitement on Pine Ridge and Rosebud was caused by a general belief that the army was sent to the reservations as an act of war. Thus, the most important task for the army was to prove to the Indians that this was not the case. Issuing rations was the first step in assuring the Indians of the army's peaceful intentions. At the same time, however, Brooke reported that the cavalry was in good shape on Pine Ridge as well as on Rosebud, and was ready to take the field at any moment.⁵³⁶

During the early days of December, the army sought to maintain peace. Several delegations of "friendly" Lakotas were sent to the ghost dancer's camp. Much information regarding the Lakotas' complaints came to the commanding officers, who promptly submitted them to the officials in Washington. All reports from Pine Ridge seemed to indicate that a peaceful end was in sight. Two Strike and Big Road were expected to arrive at Pine Ridge Agency and to camp close to the "friendly" Indians. Brooke was so delighted about these developments that he wrote, "...trouble with these Indians is in a fair way to speedy settlement." Miles, who believed that the presence of the troops had demoralized the Indians, echoed this sentiment. Those who were warlike a week earlier started to show signs of submission, Miles reported. The possible arrival of Two Strike and Big Road would be a clear sign of the disintegration that supposedly was taking place among the ghost dancers. Miles also referred briefly to allegations made in the press that Two Strike planned to stab Brooke. According to Miles, this threat was not serious.⁵³⁷

The main reason for these favorable predictions was the council held on Pine Ridge on December 6. Brooke sent Father John Jutz to the Stronghold to negotiate with the ghost dancers. Finally, after long talks in the ghost dance camp, Father

⁵³⁶ Noble to CIA (telegram), December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 395; Brooke to Schofield (telegram), December 1, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 393; Brooke to AAG (telegram), December 5, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 428; Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1675-1676.

⁵³⁷ Miles to AG, (telegram), December 5, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 430; Miles to AG (telegram), December 7, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 451-452; Miles to AG (telegram), December 10, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 485. For the allegations made in the press against Two Strike see, chapter 6.

Jutz managed to bring approximately 30 Indians to Pine Ridge. Despite their warlike appearance, a white flag waved in front of their column. Although the public press made big news about the “warlike” arrival of the Indians, it is rather interesting that Brooke did not mention that aspect in his report or telegrams.⁵³⁸

The negotiations between Brooke, Two Strike and few other prominent ghost dance leaders started immediately following the Indians’ colorful arrival. According to Brooke, the Indians once again explained their grievances and complained that they had tried to get some understanding from the United States government, but received none. They had nothing to eat and they became frustrated. They asked Brooke for advice and suggestions about what to do. Brooke replied that he would give them food and try to find some employment for as many of them as possible. But for all this to happen, he asked the Indians to go back to the ghost dance camp and to bring all of their following, both Oglalas and Brulés, back to the agency. Brooke explained that there would be time for further negotiations after this first goal was achieved. According to Brooke, the Indians were happy to hear this and promised to go back to the Badlands and bring all the people to the agency as soon as possible. Brooke was very satisfied with the results of the council. General Miles in Chicago, however, was convinced that the Indians had controlled the council. He blamed Brooke for mismanaging the situation.⁵³⁹

While these seemingly favorable events took place on Pine Ridge, Miles had to deal with the ghost dancers on Cheyenne River Reservation, where they had gathered around Big Foot and Hump. The first thing to do was to assure the Indians living on Cheyenne River Reservation of the army’s peaceful intentions. According to Miles, the best way to do this was to give them more clothes. They had not got their annuity clothing, and winter was fast approaching. On Cheyenne River and Pine Ridge Reservations, Miles tried to appease the ghost dancers by

⁵³⁸ Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1676-1678. See, Boyd 1891, pp. 235-238; Utley, 1963, pp. 137-139. See also, chapter 3.

⁵³⁹ Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1676-1678. For the mission of Father Jutz see, chapter 3. About newspaper accounts of his efforts and the negotiations of December 6 see, chapter 6. See also, Hyde 1956, pp. 273-276; Utley 1963, pp. 137-140.

sending negotiators to their camps. Most successful was Captain Ezra P. Ewers, who was called for duty from Texas. He had served with Miles during the so-called Lame Deer and Nez Percé campaigns during which Hump had served as a scout under Ewers's command.⁵⁴⁰

Captain Ewers later served seven years as agent for the people living on Cheyenne River Reservation. He earned the Indians' respect and befriended Hump. General Miles hoped that this friendship would bear results. Indeed, Hump followed Ewers's advice and enlisted as an army scout. This, according to Miles, was a most favorable development. It removed one of the most feared leaders from the ghost dance and caused much disintegration among the remaining ghost dancers on Cheyenne River Reservation. Miles believed that Big Foot would now start obeying orders. The presence of troops seemed to have had such favorable results that on December 11, Miles once again noted that the army's presence had averted a serious war. According to him, the agents lost control of their agencies 24 days earlier, and only the army could take full control of the Indians. In order to take proper care of the agencies, all civil agents must be removed and replaced by military officers.⁵⁴¹

Despite these favorable reports, Miles continued to ask for more troops and equipment. He wrote that additional troops were needed "...in view of the possible outbreak of the Indians, and it would be remarkable if it did not occur." In a telegram to General Schofield, he hinted at the fact that Agent McLaughlin at Standing Rock had interfered with Buffalo Bill's mission to arrest Sitting Bull, which might have serious consequences. According to Miles, Sitting Bull was now aware of the plan to arrest him, making him more dangerous than ever. He also pointed out that Buffalo Bill's failed mission might cause Sitting Bull to flee

⁵⁴⁰ For accounts of the Lame Deer and Nez Percé campaigns see, for example, Miles 1896, pp. 248-256 and pp. 259-280; Miles 1911, pp. 169-181; Johnson V. 1962, pp. 173-209; Beal, Merrill D., *"I Will Fight No more Forever"*. *Chief Joseph and The Nez Perce War*, New York, N.Y. 1989, pp. 233-311; Wooster 1993, pp. 92-93 and pp. 96-110.

⁵⁴¹ Miles to AAG (telegram), December 10, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 485; Miles to AG, December 10, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 504-505; ARSOW 1891, Report of the Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 147. See also, Johnson V. 1962, pp. 277-278; Utley 1963, pp. 131-133; Mooney 1991, p. 862.

to Canada. Securing Sitting Bull's return from Canada would be an immensely difficult task. General Miles predicted that all future attempts to arrest Sitting Bull would be much more difficult than before.⁵⁴²

While General Miles's attention again turned toward Sitting Bull, General Brooke gained positive results for his efforts on Pine Ridge. More troops arrived almost daily, and Brooke was confident that the troops were ready for a long winter campaign if necessary. Despite this, on Pine Ridge everything seemed calm. General Brooke later recalled that the situation on Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations on December 7 was as follows: "All the Oglalas, except those with the Brulés on [the] edge of [the] Badlands and Young Man Afraid Of His Horse's band were in camp about the agency. All the Indians of Rosebud Agency not near the Badlands were at their homes on their reservation. There were seven (7) companies of infantry and two (2) troops of cavalry at Rosebud agency, (9) nine companies of infantry, (12) twelve troops of cavalry and Capron's battery [1st artillery under the command of Captain Allyn Capron] at Pine Ridge Agency." More troops were still on their way. He reported in his report that on December 7 "...the temper of the Indians at Pine Ridge was apparently all that could be desired."⁵⁴³

Two Strike was on his way toward Pine Ridge Agency with almost 1,500 Indians, just as he had promised General Brooke. Before they reached the agency, however, a quarrel took place among the Indians and approximately 600-700 returned to the Badlands. Eventually, Two Strike led 850 Lakotas to a camp close to Pine Ridge Agency, where they received extra provisions. Brooke was extremely satisfied with the developments and noted that all efforts to avoid war and bloodshed had been made. The only issue which still concerned Brooke were those Brulés and Oglalas who returned to the Badlands.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴² Miles to Schofield (telegram), December 6, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 448; Miles to AG (telegram), December 8, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 458. For accounts of General Miles' previous campaign against Sitting Bull and Sitting Bull's surrender see, for example, Miles 1911, pp. 137-168; Johnson V. 1962, pp. 75-170; Utley 1984, pp. 186-189; Wooster 1993, pp. 76-94.

⁵⁴³ Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1679-1682.

⁵⁴⁴ Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1679-1682; Miles to AAG (telegram), December 11,

While Brooke filed favorable reports from Pine Ridge, the settlers around the Lakota reservations and even in Wyoming asked for protection, reporting that hostile Indians were seen all over the country. Officials in Washington, secretary of the interior, the secretary of war and the commissioner of Indian affairs received letters from alarmed citizens and Indian agents who demanded that the army would move against the hostile Indians. Generals Brooke and Ruger tried to assure citizens that there was no cause for alarm. The Indians seen in Wyoming, led by Young Man Afraid Of His Horse, were on a peaceful trip to visit the Crow Indians. Despite the army officials' opinions, the press made a great deal of the growing sense of alarm among settlers. Soon, rumors about battles between the Indians and the army started to spread.⁵⁴⁵

Meanwhile, General Miles grew more and more concerned about Sitting Bull. According to Miles, Sitting Bull was behind all the trouble. On several occasions he noted that Sitting Bull sent runners to various Indian reservations urging the Indians to gather together for a final campaign against the whites. Only by arresting Sitting Bull could the army reach a permanent peace. "No Indian has had the power of drawing to him so large a following of his race, and molding and wielding it against the authority of the United States, or of inspiring it with greater animosity against the white race and civilization," Miles wrote.⁵⁴⁶

After Buffalo Bill's unsuccessful mission, the president authorized General Miles to use his own judgment regarding Sitting Bull's possible arrest. On December 10,

1890, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 510; Miles to AG (telegram), December 13, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 516; AAG to AG (telegram), December 15, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 556.

⁵⁴⁵ See, for example, Petition by Citizens of Keya Paha Country NE in, Congressman W. E. Dorsey to Proctor, December 9, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 177-179; Governor F. E. Warren WY to Proctor, December 13, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 518-519; Mayor M. S. Elliot WY, to Proctor (telegram), November 22, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 521; Statement of Brigadier General Thomas H. Ruger, December 19, 1890 in, Proctor to Dorsey, January 5, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 484; Brooke to Warren, November 21, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 525-526; Ruger to AG (telegram), December 14, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 534; Miles to AG (telegram), December 14, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 543. For accounts in the press see, chapter 6.

⁵⁴⁶ ARSOW 1891, Report of the Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 143 and pp. 146-147. See also, Johnson V. 1962, p. 281.

Miles instructed Brigadier General Ruger to send orders to Lieutenant Colonel William F. Drum, the commanding officer at Fort Yates, North Dakota, "...to secure the person of Sitting Bull, using any practical means." The arrest was planned for issue day, December 20, but as rumors that Sitting Bull planned to leave the reservation spread, the original plan was abandoned. The date was reset for December 15. Colonel Drum's orders included instructions for Agent McLaughlin to render all assistance and necessary co-operation, and interestingly, McLaughlin did more than co-operate. He convinced Colonel Drum that the best way to arrest Sitting Bull was to leave the actual work to the reservation Indian police. This was agreed upon and the army detachments of the 8th Cavalry under Captain E. G. Fechét were left behind as backup.⁵⁴⁷

Because the army was not actually present when the attempt to capture Sitting Bull was made, no army eyewitness accounts of Sitting Bull's death exist. The troops arrived on the scene after Sitting Bull and some of the Indian policemen were already dead, and skirmishing between the rest of the policemen and Sitting Bull's men was going on. At first, the army could not tell the difference between the policemen and the ghost dancers, but after a few cannon shells were fired at Sitting Bull's cabin, the policemen waved a white flag to signal their location. After a short skirmish with Sitting Bull's men, the army quickly drew the Indians away. According to Captain Fechét, the Indians showed no desire to engage in hostile actions against the soldiers. Colonel Drum noted that Sitting Bull's people did not attempt to fight the troops, but scattered to the nearby woods and hills in great alarm. Eventually they either surrendered to the army or found their way to Cheyenne River Reservation. The army had no casualties.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁷ ARSOW 1891, Report of Operations Relative to the Sioux Indians in 1890-1891, by Brigadier General Thomas H. Ruger, October 19, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 181-182. See, Johnson V. 1962, pp. 278-280; Utley 1963, pp. 146-148; Hagan 1966, p. 100; Utley 1993, pp. 294-295; Wooster 1993, pp. 183-184; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 183-189. See also, chapter 4.

⁵⁴⁸ ARSOW 1891, Report of Captain E. G. Fechét, December 17, 1890, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 197-198; Report of Lieutenant Colonel W. F. Drum, February 27, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 194-197; Report of Brigadier General Thomas H. Ruger in, Ruger to AAG, March 26, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1275-1276. For a list of casualties see, for example, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 84, Vol. 6, Serial 2901, pp. 1-11. See also, Utley 1963, pp. 161-164; Wooster 1993, pp. 183-184.

Immediately after Sitting Bull's death, the press, as well as Agent McLaughlin, praised the conduct of the army and the Indian police. Their opinions were echoed by General Ruger, who said that "...the conduct of [the] Standing Rock police was remarkable for fidelity as well as courage." The blame for Sitting Bull's death was put entirely upon Sitting Bull himself. Later, after an investigation into the matter had been conducted, 37 Medals of Honor were awarded to the Indian policemen involved.⁵⁴⁹ The result pleased Miles, who wrote in his report that "...the action of Captain Fechét was gallant, judicious and praiseworthy, and it had the effect of striking the first and most serious blow to the hostile element...and totally destroyed the hostile element in Standing Rock." Miles continued saying that Sitting Bull's "...death, for which he alone was responsible, was a great relief to the country in which he had been the terror for many years."⁵⁵⁰ In his memoirs, General Miles continued to emphasize the importance of arresting Sitting Bull, portraying him as one of the greatest Indian war chiefs. In a nostalgic tone, Miles wrote that it was a tragedy that he had to die at the hands of his own people.⁵⁵¹

On December 15, 1890, the "struggle to avoid a battle" was over. The ghost dance had its first casualties, all Lakotas. Interestingly, the fight took place on Standing Rock, where only a small percentage of the population was ghost dancers (See chapter 3.6, Table 1). Although the army was not directly involved in Sitting Bull's killing, during the aftermath the first actual battle between the United States army and the ghost dancing Lakotas took place. The process of finding a peaceful end to the trouble had to begin all over again.

5.3.3. Negotiations by Force

The news of Sitting Bull's death spread rapidly across the Lakota reservations. Immediately after his death, the situation on Standing Rock Reservation was

⁵⁴⁹ See, Report of Brigadier General Thomas H. Ruger in, Ruger to AAG, March 26, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1275-1276; 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 84, Vol. 6, Serial 2901, pp. 1-11. For the newspaper accounts see, chapter 6. More about Agent James McLaughlin in, chapter 4.

⁵⁵⁰ ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 146-147. See, Utley 1963, p. 169.

⁵⁵¹ Miles 1911, pp. 239-240.

chaotic. The army tried to find a way to gain control of the fleeing Sitting Bull people, who sought refuge among Big Foot's people on Cheyenne River Reservation. Most of Sitting Bull's people surrendered during the days that followed, but many also found their way to Cheyenne River. After Sitting Bull's death, General Miles considered Big Foot one of the most hostile chiefs, and was not happy to hear that Sitting Bull's people had joined Big Foot.⁵⁵²

On Pine Ridge, the news caused all the favorable developments to stop. The Indians, led by Two Strike, returned back to the Badlands. While Two Strike traveled toward the agency, General Brooke planned to surround and attack the group of ghost dancers who remained in their Stronghold in the Badlands. Brooke hoped to act quickly in order to prevent any possible attempts by the ghost dancers to leave the reservation. General Miles, however, did not support that plan and instructed Brooke to postpone the attack. He believed that the Indians could defeat the army in the difficult terrain so familiar to the Indians. Although Brooke did not agree with the orders he received from Miles, he was already obediently retreating from his plan when the news of Sitting Bull's death arrived at Pine Ridge. The events following Sitting Bull's death called for a different kind of approach. Attacking the Stronghold was no longer an option, not even for General Brooke. Now, the plan was to position troops around the Indian Stronghold and gradually force the Indians to abandon their refuge.⁵⁵³

Since the plan to attack the Stronghold was abandoned, General Brooke decided to continue with efforts to cause disintegration among the ghost dancers. Sending delegations of "friendly" Indians to the "hostile" camp proved successful; the earlier delegations caused much disintegration among the ghost dancers. Brooke now sent 40 Oglalas and Brulés to the ghost dance camp. This time, however, their mission was unsuccessful. The ghost dancers met the delegates with great anxiety and contempt. After the delegation returned, a council was held at Pine Ridge Agency where, according to Brooke, the Indians themselves decided to

⁵⁵² Miles to AG (telegram), December 22, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 604. See, Hyde 1956, pp. 291-292; Mattes 1960, p. 3; Utley 1963, pp.168-172.

⁵⁵³ Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1682-1683. See also, Miles 1911, pp. 240-241; Johnson V. 1962, pp. 276-277; Wooster 1993, pp. 182-183.

send another delegation 500 men strong to the ghost dance camp to try to persuade the ghost dancers to surrender. The plan, however, was abandoned, and eventually a smaller delegation of 140 men led by Little Wound and Big Road, both former ghost dancers, tried to use their influence upon the ghost dancers. A few days later, Brooke was happy to learn that this mission proved successful. He received a message that the delegation would bring in all the people from the ghost dance camp.⁵⁵⁴

During the negotiations on Pine Ridge, other events needing the army's attention took place on Cheyenne River Reservation. Big Foot welcomed the refugees from Sitting Bull's camp and provided them with as much shelter as he could. This did not please General Miles, who was already growing more and more suspicious about Big Foot's intentions. He believed that Big Foot was planning to unite with the ghost dancers in the Badlands.⁵⁵⁵

On December 3, the army sent troops under Lieutenant Colonel Edwin V. Sumner to watch over Big Foot and his ghost dancers. By now Big Foot had brought his people back from their ghost dance camp at Cherry Creek to their cabin village near the Cheyenne River (See appendix 7, map 4). During the two weeks Colonel Sumner had watched over Big Foot, the two men developed mutual understanding and respect. On December 8, after talking to Big Foot and other leaders, Sumner reported, "...they are peacefully disposed and inclined to obey orders...I believe that they are really hungry, and suffering from want of clothing and covering." He later told that he also understood why Big Foot gave shelter to Sitting Bull's people. The fleeing Indians were their relatives and were in terrible condition.⁵⁵⁶ During the following days Sumner commented in a similar fashion, maintaining that the Indians on Cheyenne River Reservation were under control.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁴ Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1863-1864.

⁵⁵⁵ Miles to AG (telegram), December 22, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 604; Miles to Colonel H. C. Merriam (telegram), ARSOW 1891, Report of Colonel H. C. Merriam, January 30, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 205. See, Miles 1911, p. 241; Utley 1963, p. 173; Paul 1991, p. 32.

⁵⁵⁶ For commentary on Lakota concept of kinship and family relationships see, chapter 2.

⁵⁵⁷ Sumner to Miles (telegram), December 8, 1891, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 228; Sumner to AAG (telegram), December 16, 1891, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House

Despite Sumner's reports, General Ruger thought that arresting Big Foot and his people was a necessity. According to Ruger, Big Foot was talking war while Hump tried to talk peace. He considered Big Foot as a threat to the settlers living close to Cheyenne River Agency. To comply with the orders he received, Colonel Sumner promised to escort Big Foot and his people to Camp Cheyenne, a temporary military outpost.⁵⁵⁸ Sumner, however, was not satisfied with his orders. He complained that he did not have enough troops to properly execute all the required tasks: to watch Big Foot, to prevent him from leaving the reservation, to capture Sitting Bull's fugitives and to protect settlers. He believed that his superiors mixed his orders.⁵⁵⁹

The officers in the field, Lieutenant Colonel H. C. Merriam and Lieutenant Colonel Sumner were not convinced that capturing Big Foot was necessary in the first place. Colonel Merriam noted several times that Big Foot's people planned to surrender peacefully; they were hungry and greatly scared. He did not expect any problems with Big Foot. In addition 175 of the fugitives from Standing Rock already surrendered peacefully.⁵⁶⁰ Sumner also informed Miles that no danger

Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 229; Sumner to Miles (telegram), December 19, 1891, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 230. See also, Utley 1963, pp. 173-174; Seymour 1981, pp. 115-143; Wooster 1993, pp. 184-185. See, chapter 3.

⁵⁵⁸ Ruger to Merriam (telegram), December 18, 1890, ARSOW 1891, Report of Colonel H. C. Merriam, January 30, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 204-205; Sumner to Miles, February 21, 1891, LC, NAMFP, Box 4; ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 223-224; ARSOW 1891, Statement of Second Lieutenant H. E. Hale, December 26, 1890, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 200-210; ARSOW 1891, Statement of Captain J. H. Hurst, January 9, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 201-202. See also, Utley 1963, pp. 173-174; Jensen, Richard E., *Another Look at Wounded Knee* in, *Eyewitness at Wounded Knee* (ed. Jensen, Paul & Carter 1991), p. 17; Wooster 1993, pp. 184-185.

⁵⁵⁹ Sumner to Brooke (telegram), December 12, 1890, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 228-229; Sumner to Miles (telegram), December 18, 1891, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 229; Sumner to Colonel E. A. Carr (telegram), December 19, 1891, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 230-231; Sumner to Miles, February 21, 1891, LC, NAMFP, Box 4.

⁵⁶⁰ Merriam to Miles (telegram), December 20, 1891, ARSOW 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 206; Merriam to AG (telegram), December 20, 1891, ARSOW 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive

existed, since even the Sitting Bull people obeyed orders. “They were willing to do anything I wish,” he informed Miles on December 21. The next day he said, “They seem a harmless lot, principally women and children. There is no danger of their going toward the Badlands...”⁵⁶¹

Colonel Sumner wanted to let the Indians stay the night in their own village, where he could give them additional provisions. He did not consider it necessary to start moving them immediately toward Cheyenne River Agency as his orders demanded. Later he explained this contradictory action, saying that Big Foot asked him to let them stay in their homes rather than in a military camp. Sumner agreed, because the Indians had done nothing wrong, and he thought that they were “...so pitiable, in sight that I at once dropped all thought of their being hostile or even worthy of capture.” Moreover, the Indians were afraid of the army, which caused much restlessness, especially among the women and children. Had he taken the Indians to the military camp by force, it might have resulted in trouble. Sumner also fully trusted Big Foot, and was sure that Big Foot had the power to control his people. When all this was done, Sumner was again able to report that Big Foot and his people, altogether more than 330 Indians, were under military control.⁵⁶²

By December 22, 1890, General Miles informed his superiors that Big Foot and his Indians had been captured. This was most satisfying news as, according to Miles, Big Foot had been “...most defiant and threatening.” The next day, Miles

Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 206; Merriam to AAG (telegram), December 20, 1891, ARSOW 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 206; Merriam to Miles (telegram), December 22, 1891, ARSOW 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 209.

⁵⁶¹ Sumner to Miles (telegram), December 21, 1891, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 232; Sumner to Miles (telegram), December 21, 1891, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 232; Sumner to Miles (2 telegrams), December 22, 1891, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 233; ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 224-225. For an account of Big Foot’s followers see, Jensen 1990, pp. 194-199.

⁵⁶² ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 224-228; Sumner to Miles, February 21, 1891, LC, NAMFP, Box 4. See also, Jensen 1991, p. 17.

sent orders to Sumner authorizing him to put Big Foot or any of his people under arrest. Because Big Foot was still showing signs of hostility, Miles ordered Sumner to "...secure Big Foot and the Standing Rock Indians there, round [them] up, if necessary and disarm them." General Ruger also felt that arresting Big Foot was necessary. It was a good step toward ending all trouble, he believed.⁵⁶³

The next day, however, the news was no longer so positive. Miles received information that Big Foot had escaped. This proved Miles's theory that Big Foot was indeed just as hostile and treacherous as he had believed. Colonel Sumner had not acted according to instructions and the army suffered great humiliation. "Your orders were positive, and you have missed your opportunity..." wrote Miles to Sumner. Miles could not understand how a force of 200 men, armed with two Hotchkiss guns could not handle Indians, who had approximately 100 men. "Big Foot has been defiant both to the troops and to the authorities, and is now harboring outlaws and renegades from other bands," continued the general. After this, all possible measures were taken to capture the fleeing Indians. Big Foot was to be captured, disarmed and arrested.⁵⁶⁴

Big Foot's escape came as a total surprise to Colonel Sumner. The Indians, according to him, had been packing their belongings in preparation to move toward Fort Bennett, Cheyenne River Agency, as planned on December 23. Then, according to Sumner, "...a white man by the name of Dunn, however, got into their camp and told them I was on the road to attack and kill them all...so they just stampeded and like rabbits they fled for shelter in the Badlands, carrying nothing and tracking so fast I could not overtake them." Sumner also believed that the approaching column of Colonel Merriam's soldiers had frightened the Indians, and Big Foot had no other option than to lead his people away from the soldiers.

⁵⁶³ Miles to AG (telegram), December 22, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 604; Miles to Sumner (telegram), December 23, 1890, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 231; Ruger to AG (telegram), December 22, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 615.

⁵⁶⁴ Miles to Sumner (2 telegrams), December 24, 1890, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 235. Sumner later replied to General Miles' accusations saying that he had obeyed his orders, and he had only tried to avoid bloodshed. (Sumner to Miles, February 21, 1891, LC, NAMFP, Box 4)

Sumner did not want to pursue Big Foot too far because rumors, which reported that more hostile Indians were approaching from other directions, required his attention. Instead, he sent messages to other officers who could intercept the Indians on their way to the Badlands.⁵⁶⁵

General Miles acted quickly. Troops were ordered to the field from all possible directions. Soldiers were sent to follow Big Foot and troops were sent from Pine Ridge to intercept his journey. Miles wanted to stop him before he could join the ghost dancers at Pine Ridge. Meanwhile the developments on Pine Ridge Reservation suggested a speedy settlement of the troubles there, but Miles feared that Big Foot's arrival might cause problems. The troops pursued the Indians through a blizzard for several days without seeing a trace of them. Finally on December 28, contact was made.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁵ Sumner to Carr (telegram), December 23, 1890, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 234; Sumner to Miles (telegram), December 23, 1890, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 234; ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 225-226; Sumner to Merriam (message by courier), December 26, 1890, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel H. C. Merriam, January 30, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 210; Sumner to Merriam (message by courier), December 27, 1890, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel H. C. Merriam, January 30, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 210-211. About John Dunn see, for example, Jensen 1991, pp. 17-18. See also, chapter 3.5.3.

⁵⁶⁶ For a sense of the search for Big Foot see, Miles to AG (telegram), December 24, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 608; Miles to AG (telegram), December 25, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 609; AAG to Merriam (telegram), December 26, 1890, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel H. C. Merriam, January 30, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 211-212; Miles to Merriam (telegram), December 27, 1890, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel H. C. Merriam, January 30, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p.212; Merriam to Sumner, December 28, 1890, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel H. C. Merriam, January 30, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 212-213; Sumner to Merriam, December 28, 1890, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel H. C. Merriam, January 30, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 212-213; Sumner to Carr, December 26, 1890, ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel H. C. Merriam, January 30, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 215; Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, p. 1684-1686. The movements of troops during the search of Big Foot are well described in, for example, Utley 1963, pp. 187-199. See also, Report of Major Samuel M. Whiteside, January 1, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 822-823.

Major Samuel M. Whiteside finally captured Big Foot and his following of 120 men and approximately 250 women and children on December 28. General Miles immediately ordered General Brooke to send more troops to ensure that Big Foot would not escape. The task fell to Colonel James W. Forsyth, commanding the 7th Cavalry. He had specific orders to hold troops at a safe distance, to be ready for treacherousness, hold Big Foot, disarm him, and, if necessary, destroy him.⁵⁶⁷ The next day, however, both Miles and Brooke seemed confused. Something happened, and a fight took place while Big Foot's men were being disarmed. No one knew what really happened, but there were casualties among the soldiers and only a few Indians reportedly escaped. It was reported that the engagement took place at Wounded Knee Creek.⁵⁶⁸

During the following days more and more information about the Wounded Knee fight was received. According to army sources, Big Foot surrendered without resistance and was escorted to a camp at Wounded Knee Creek. During the night, Colonel Forsyth brought in the 7th Cavalry for reinforcement. The plan was to issue rations to the Indians in the morning, disarm them and take them to Pine Ridge Agency.⁵⁶⁹

On the morning of December 29, however, while being disarmed, the Indians did not want to surrender their guns. Only a few old carbines were given up. Because the Indians did not give up their guns voluntarily, Colonel Forsyth ordered the soldiers to conduct a search among the women in the Indian camp while the men were searched for arms. While the disarmament was carried out, the medicine man started to harangue the young men. He danced, shouted and threw dust in the air. Finally, he signaled something to the men and suddenly one of them opened

⁵⁶⁷ Miles to AG (telegram), December 28, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 626; Lieutenant Fayette W. Roe (for Brooke) to Colonel James W. Forsyth, December 26, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 751; Brooke to Major Samuel M. Whiteside, December 27, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 752; Roe (for Brooke) to Whiteside, December 27, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 753; Testimony of Brigadier General J. R. Brooke, January 18, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 740-747. See also, for example, Zahn.1940, p. 5; Mattes 1960, p. 4; Smith 1975, p. 179; Seymour 1981, pp. 74-75.

⁵⁶⁸ See, Forsyth to Brooke, December 29, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 758; Miles to AG (2 telegrams), December 29, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 633-634. See also, Jensen 1990, pp. 194-199.

⁵⁶⁹ ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 150.

fire on the soldiers. The Indians fired some 50 shots before the army returned fire. The Indians dispersed in all directions and were followed by troops who kept calm, and even helping wounded women and children. In the resulting fight most of Big Foot's men were killed, even some women and children had fallen. This, however, was mostly due to the confusion, as the soldiers could not differentiate between women and men. Army officers also claimed that the Indians themselves shot some of their own women and children during the confusion. The army lost one officer and 25 soldiers dead and 39 wounded. The earliest army accounts mostly described the Indian resistance as vicious, the conduct of the troops as excellent, and blamed the incident entirely on the Indians. Colonel Forsyth, for example, said that desperate Indians, crazed by religious fanaticism, started the fight, and that only a few non-combatants were killed. Some accounts even claimed that no women or children were killed.⁵⁷⁰

This view, however, was about to change when more and more bodies of women and children were found on the battlefield, and even miles away from the actual scene of the battle. The behavior of the 7th Cavalry quickly became a subject of

⁵⁷⁰ For actual army accounts of the battle see, Forsyth to Brooke, December 29, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 758; Forsyth to AAG, December 31, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 760-761; Testimony of Major S. M. Whiteside, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 656-664; Testimony of Captain M. Moylan, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 664-667; Testimony of Captain C. A. Varnum, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 667-668; Testimony of Lieutenant W. J. Nicholson, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 669-671; Testimony of Assistant Surgeon J. V. B. Hoff, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 672-675; Testimony of Captain E. S. Godfrey, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 676-679; Testimony of Lieutenant S. Rice, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 679-681; Testimony of Lieutenant C. W. Taylor, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 681-683; Testimony of Captain G. S. Ilsley, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 684-686; Testimony of Captain H. Jackson, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 686-689; Testimony of Captain W. S. Edgerly, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 689-692; Testimony of Lieutenant W. W. Robinson Jr., NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 692-695; Testimony of Lieutenant T. Q. Donaldson Jr., NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 696; Testimony of Lieutenant S. R. H. Tompkins, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 697-698; Testimony of Captain A. Capron, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 698-700; Testimony of Captain H. J. Nowlan, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 700-701; Testimony of Assistant Surgeon C. B. Ewing, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 703-707; Testimony of Colonel J. W. Forsyth, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 709-710. An excellent account of the Wounded Knee affair from the military point of view can be found in, Utley 1963, pp. 200-230. See also, Colby 1892, pp. 155-157; Kelley 1892, pp. 40-44; Zahn 1940, pp. 5-6; Mattes 1960, pp. 3-8; Smith 1975, pp. 184-196. An interesting account of the battle can be found in, Lathrop, Alan K., *Another View of Wounded Knee*, South Dakota History, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1986, pp. 248-268. Lathrop has used a soldier's diary to construct a story of Wounded Knee and the days following it from a regular soldier's point of view. Since the diary's authenticity cannot be fully established, the article will not be used more in this study. Still, the it is worth mentioning.

controversy. President Benjamin Harrison directed that an inquiry should be conducted into the killing of women and children on the Wounded Knee battlefield. Major J. Ford Kent and Captain Frank D. Baldwin were ordered to investigate the matter. The inquiry was conducted during January 1891.⁵⁷¹

General Miles relieved Colonel Forsyth from duty on January 4, 1891, because he believed that the disposition of troops had been such that it caused the soldiers to shoot each other. This, according to Miles, showed that Forsyth was incapable of commanding U.S. Army troops. Although Miles regretted the death of women and children, calling the army's actions unjustifiable and injudicious, he was more concerned about how his orders had been executed. The Kent-Baldwin investigation found no evidence of misconduct or disobedience. Eventually the 7th Cavalry was acquitted, and Colonel Forsyth resumed the command.⁵⁷²

Even though the bodies of a woman and three children who had been shot at close range were found three miles from the battlefield, the official feeling was that the army had performed well, and the treacherous Indians caused all the trouble. General Schofield noted in February 1891 that "...the conduct of the 7th Cavalry under very trying circumstances was characterized by excellent discipline and in many cases, by great forbearance..." No further investigations would be necessary. In fact, 18 Medals of Honor were later awarded for the soldiers involved in the Wounded Knee affair.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷¹ Special Orders, No. 8, January 4, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 653-654; Special Orders, No 10, January 6, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 655. For a full account of the Kent-Baldwin investigations see, Report of Investigations Into the Battle at Wounded Knee Creek, South Dakota, Fought December 29 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 651-1134. See also, Kelley 1892, pp. 41-44; Godfrey, Edward S., *Tragedy at White Horse Creek. Edward S. Godfrey's Unpublished Account of an Incident Near Wounded Knee*, The Westerner's Brand Book, Vol. 19, No. 34, 1977, pp. 1-11; Wooster 1993, pp. 189-192. For a discussion of the 7th Cavalry's role in the Wounded Knee affair see, Sievers 1975-1976, pp. 39-40.

⁵⁷² Colonel Forsyth submitted later two reports where he defended his conduct and expressed his opinions about the circumstances surrounding the Wounded Knee affair. See, Reports of Brigadier General James W. Forsyth to Secretary of War Daniel S. Lamont, September 1, 1895, December 21, 1896, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 4, pp. 1-41. See, ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 149-150. See also, Miles 1911, p. 243; Wooster 1993, pp. 189-192.

⁵⁷³ See, Captain Frank D. Baldwin to AAG, January 21, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 732-733; Report of Brigadier General John M. Schofield, February 4, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 268; Lieutenant Colonel R. H. Brennan, 75th Cong. 1st Sess., House Committee on Indian Affairs, Published Hearing, March 7 and May 12,

The news of the battle at Wounded Knee Creek caused great excitement at Pine Ridge Agency. Miles reported that the news alarmed those who had already surrendered at Pine Ridge; 3,000 Indians fled the agency and joined Kicking Bear and Short Bull, who were still on their way to the agency. In addition, some 150 men led by Two Strike reportedly headed toward Wounded Knee, where they engaged in a battle with the 7th Cavalry. Afterwards, the Indians returned to Pine Ridge Agency where they fired toward the agency buildings, wounding two soldiers. General Brooke did not allow the soldiers to engage in a battle with the Indians and the soldiers at the agency did not return fire. One officer, however, wanted to fire on the Indian camp behind Red Cloud's house, but fearing the results of such an act, Brooke gave strict orders not to respond to the Indians' fire. Only the Indian police fired back and drove the attacking Indians away. According to Brooke, the young Brulés and Oglalas now controlled the majority of the Indians who had fled the agency. Many Indians soon showed their desire return to the agency, but they were held in the camp by the younger "hostile" element.⁵⁷⁴

Immediately after the Wounded Knee affair, the army had to take action in order to prevent a major Indian war. According to Miles, the Wounded Knee affair had caused great loss of life, but instead of a speedy settlement, it caused 3,000 Indians to be "...thrown into a condition of hostility with a spirit of animosity, hatred and revenge." During the days following the Wounded Knee battle, several

1938, IULAL, Microfiche, Group 3, Card 5, pp. 33-40. See also, The Illustrated American, No. 7, February, 1891, p. 334; Miles 1911, pp. 242-243; Mattes 1960, pp. 8-9; Green, Jerry, *The Medals of Wounded Knee*, Nebraska History, Vol. 75, No. 2, 1994, pp. 200-208.

⁵⁷⁴ Miles to AG (telegram), January 1, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 771; Forsyth to Brooke, December 31, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 760-761; Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1686-1687; William Peano, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3542, Reel 1, Box 4, Tablet 10; George E. Bartlett, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3544, Reel 4, Box 6, Tablet 44; General Corliss, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 24. See also, Twiss 1978, p. 37; Utley 1963, pp. 231-234; Mooney 1991, pp. 874-876; Paul 1991, pp. 35-26. Interesting accounts of military life on Pine Ridge during the early days of January 1891 can be found in, Erisman, Fred & Erisman, Patricia L., *Letters from the Field: John Sylvanus Loud and the Pine Ridge Campaign of 1891*, South Dakota History, Vol. 26, No 1, 1996, pp. 28-45; *After Wounded Knee* (ed. Green 1996), pp. 48-74; Buecker, Thomas R., "The Men Behaved Splendidly": Guy V. Henry's Famous Cavalry Rides, Nebraska History, Vol. 78, No. 2, 1997, passim. For contemporary accounts see, W. A. Birdsall, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 25; E. M. Keith, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 29; Peter McFarland, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3544, Reel 4, Box 5, Tablet 31.

skirmishes between the Indians and the army occurred, the most notable of them at the Holy Rosary Catholic Mission (Drexel Mission) near Pine Ridge Agency. Troops of the 7th Cavalry, again under the command of Colonel Forsyth, were nearly annihilated by a force of Indian warriors. The arrival the 9th Cavalry troops, however, saved the day for the army. The small skirmishes following Wounded Knee resulted in few casualties on both sides, but kept the tension high.⁵⁷⁵

Following the Wounded Knee battle, General Brooke prepared his troops for any Indian attacks. He ordered troops to surround the “hostile” camp, now situated at White Clay Creek. By the end of December General Miles arrived at Pine Ridge Agency and assumed command of the military operations. Miles continued to encircle the Indians, and sent Brooke to the field to monitor operations. The military operations were conducted to cut off the Indians’ escape routes, forcing them to move gradually toward Pine Ridge Agency.⁵⁷⁶

While the military cordon around the Indian camp tightened, negotiations with the Indians resumed. General Miles sent negotiators, both Indian and white, to the “hostile” camp in order to restore confidence. These negotiations bore favorable results and on January 7, 1891, Miles reported that 70 Indians from the hostile

⁵⁷⁵ For contemporary accounts of the Mission fight and other skirmishes see, ARSOW 1891, Report of Brigadier General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 150-152; Report of Lieutenant Colonel James W. Forsyth, December 31, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1092-1094; Reports of Brigadier General James W. Forsyth to Secretary of War Daniel S. Lamont, September 1, 1895, December 21, 1896, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 4, pp. 141; Report of Captain J. B. Kerr, January 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1710-1712; Report of Major G. V. Henry, January 17, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1792-1793; John Shangrau, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 27; Phillip Wells, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3541, Reel 1, Box 4, Tablet 3-5; Peter McFarland, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3544, Reel 4, Box 5, Tablet 31. More about these events in, for example, Utley 1963, pp. 231-241; John V. Lauderdale to Josephine (Joe) Lauderdale, January 5-16, 1891 in, *After Wounded Knee* (ed. Green 1996), pp. 53-70; Erisman & Erisman 1996, pp. 28-45; Buecker 1997, passim.

⁵⁷⁶ See, Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1689-1694; ARSOW 1891, Report of Brigadier General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 150-152; Miles to AG, January 5, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 812-815; Peter McFarland, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3544, Reel 4, Box 5, Tablet 31. See also, Miles 1911, pp. 242-243.

camp came to the agency and surrendered. The rest, led by Red Cloud, Little Wound, Big Road and Two Strike were expected to arrive in the near future.⁵⁷⁷

According to Miles, utmost care was taken to prevent further hostilities, food was issued, and Miles assured the Indians that they would receive different treatment than they had at Wounded Knee. He noted that the Indians were very suspicious and afraid; building any confidence after Wounded Knee would be extremely difficult. Miles felt the Indians would surrender only, if the army would leave the reservations, or if army officers replaced the civil agents. "An immediate and thorough change is needed," he said. He emphasized that the blame for the trouble lay partly on the agents and the general mismanagement of the government's Indian policy. Following Miles's repeated demands to replace the agents, orders for putting military officers in charge of the Lakota reservations came on January 6, 1891. General Miles quickly replaced the agents with army officers.⁵⁷⁸

On January 10, the Indian camp, surrounded on three sides, started to move slowly toward Pine Ridge Agency. The military followed the Indians closely, preventing them from escaping in any direction. The only way open to them was toward Pine Ridge Agency. The next day the whole group, altogether 3,000 Indians, camped at White Clay Creek five miles from Pine Ridge Agency. Most of the Indians reportedly wanted to surrender. General Brooke kept the pressure on by following the Indians closely.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁷ Miles to AG (telegram), January 5, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 810; Miles to AG (telegram), January 7, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 881. See also, Utley 1963, pp. 254-257; Mooney 1991, p. 887; John V. Lauderdale to Josephine (Joe) Lauderdale January 7-11, 1891 in, *After Wounded Knee* (ed. Green 1996), pp. 58-60.

⁵⁷⁸ Miles to Schofield (telegram), January 3, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 795; Miles to AG (telegram), January 6, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 825; Schofield to Miles (telegram), January 6, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 827; Miles to Schofield (telegram), January 7, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 917; Report of Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, ARSOW 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 151-152. See, The North American Review, Vol. 152, No. 411, January 1891, pp. 1-11; Miles 1911, pp. 243-244; Wooster 1993, pp. 186-187 and pp. 191-192.

⁵⁷⁹ For troop movements during January 1891 see, for example, Miles to Schofield (telegram), January 3, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 795; Miles to AG (telegram), January 11, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 941; Miles to AG (telegram), January 12, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 942; ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 151-152; Report of Brigadier General John R. Brooke in, Brooke to AAG, March 2, 1891, NARS, RG 94,

Two days later, on January 12, 1891, the camp moved closer toward Pine Ridge Agency, and Miles believed that the trouble was coming to an end. Nothing but an accident or a mistake could prevent a favorable result. He noted that the Indians were still very excited and wild. There were many wounded people in the camp, which kept tensions high and caused the most desperate and depressed feeling among the Indians. There was still a lot of work to be done before a permanent peace could be achieved, Miles noted. It was of utmost importance that the government show its good intentions to the Indians. A delegation of chiefs needed to go to Washington to meet with the commissioner of Indian affairs and the president. Miles believed that only in this way could a bridge between war and peace be established.⁵⁸⁰

During the following two days the Indian camp moved even closer to the agency. Finally, the long column of Indians arrived at Pine Ridge Agency, under the watchful eyes of the U.S. Army. Miles gave orders to the chiefs to collect all arms from the Indians. According to Miles, Kicking Bear was the first to give up his gun and others soon followed. Altogether approximately 600-700 guns were gathered, 200 of which were rifles. This, Miles believed, was more than the Lakotas had ever surrendered before. The number of guns collected, however, was much less than had been generally believed to be in the possession of the Lakota warriors.⁵⁸¹ The general impression throughout the trouble was that the Lakotas were armed with very modern guns, some even with two Winchester rifles. These estimates are quite revealing, especially if it is taken into account that the Lakotas were poor, and that new guns were expensive. The events at Wounded Knee and at the final surrender do show that these estimates were highly exaggerated.

AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 2, Vol. 2, pp. 1693-96. See also, for example, Johnson V. 1962, pp. 290-299; Utley 1963, pp. 251-261.

⁵⁸⁰ Miles to AG (2 telegrams), January 12, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 942 and p. 946; Miles to AG (telegram), January 14, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 954; ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 152-155.

⁵⁸¹ ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 154-155. See also, Utley 1963, p. 260-261. For further discussion about the guns in the Lakotas' possession see, for example, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 2, Vol. 1, Serial, 2818, pp. 1-14; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 2, Vol. 1, Serial, 2818, pp. 2-51. See also, chapters 3, 6 and 7.

By January 15, 1891, the military campaign was over. Altogether almost 7,000 Lakotas were now in camp around Pine Ridge Agency under the full control of the army. The campaign had cost \$1,200 000, and almost 30 soldiers and more than 250 Indians lost their lives. Despite this, General Miles informed his superiors that the campaign had been most satisfactory. It had ended with a total submission of the Indians. "A more complete submission to the military power has never been made by any Indians," he concluded.⁵⁸²

The military campaign formally ended in a spectacular military parade. The parade took place at Pine Ridge Agency during a snowstorm, and must have made great impression upon the Indians who witnessed it. That, at least, was the opinion of Miles who depicted the scene in his memoirs: "...this review was one of the most interesting in my experience, as it occurred in midwinter and during a gentle snow storm. The vast prairie, with its rolling undulations, was covered with the mantle of winter. That cheerless, frigid atmosphere, with its sleet, ice, and snow, covered all the apparent life of nature. That scene was possibly the closing one that was to bury in oblivion, decay, and death that once powerful, strong, resolute race..."⁵⁸³

⁵⁸² Miles to Schofield (telegram), January 15, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 964; Miles to AG (telegram), January 15, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, p. 967; ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 154-155. See also, Miles 1911, pp. 243-244; Mattes 1960, pp. 4-5; Utley 1963, p. 267.

⁵⁸³ Boyd 1891, pp. 281-186; Miles 1911, pp. 245-246. The belief in the Indian as a dying race was nothing new, and was entertained by many scientists and politicians as well. See, chapter 2.

5.4. The Military Campaign – A Success or a Disaster?

Before the military was sent to the Lakota reservations there was not much information about the ghost dance available, and the information concerning the Lakota ghost dance was mainly received through rumors and from the Indian agents. The army was sent to suppress an outbreak that was considered imminent. It is, however, significant that the army officers, who were on the Lakota reservations constantly repeated that no real threat of war existed. There was, however, a lot of tension; the army needed to prepare the troops for possible trouble. The officers, however, generally seemed to think that no bloodshed would occur. Especially hopeful was Brigadier General John R. Brooke stationed on Pine Ridge Reservation. He believed that the army's presence and an increase of rations would eventually bring the ghost dancing to a peaceful end. How realistic Brooke's belief in a peaceful settlement really was is an open question. General Miles, at least, did not fully share his optimism. The fact is, however, that during the early days of December growing numbers of "hostile" Indians were moving closer to the agencies and by mid December it looked like the situation on Pine Ridge, Rosebud and Cheyenne River Reservations was calming down.

The situation on Standing Rock Reservation became the focal point because of the interest the press, Congress, Agent McLaughlin and General Miles showed in Sitting Bull.⁵⁸⁴ It is extremely difficult to explain why Miles believed that Sitting Bull was behind the whole ghost dance phenomenon. McLaughlin certainly promoted this belief, but his motives differed from those of Miles. Perhaps Miles really believed that his old foe was still the principal enemy.⁵⁸⁵ To him, Sitting Bull seemed the personification of Lakota resistance. Miles believed that by removing Sitting Bull the whole problem of Lakota resistance would possibly be removed. On December 19, he wrote to his wife, "I was intensely anxious to know

⁵⁸⁴ See, chapters 3, 4 and 6.

⁵⁸⁵ For accounts of previous encounters between Sitting Bull and General Miles see, for example, Miles 1896, pp. 212-256 and pp. 306-318; Miles 1911, pp. 137-168; Johnson V. 1962, pp. 117-170; Hoover 1980, pp. 158-163; Vestal 1989, pp. 190-205; Wooster 1993, pp. 76-95.

whether I would have to encounter my old antagonist, Sitting Bull...’’⁵⁸⁶ He clearly did not want to enter once again into a long campaign against Sitting Bull.

It is also noteworthy that Miles knew perfectly well about the problems the Lakotas faced, and several times strongly urged Congress to fulfill all treaty obligations with them.⁵⁸⁷ He was also well aware of the favorable developments of early December. Despite this, he continued to ask for more troops and urged the arrest of Sitting Bull. Perhaps he thought that in order to maintain the army’s authority it was necessary to arrest Sitting Bull before Agent McLaughlin could take credit for the operation. In his account of Sitting Bull’s death, Miles also characterized it as a “first and serious blow to the hostile element.” According to the army’s orders, the original goal was to avoid hostilities and to suppress a possible outbreak. This first blow, which pleased Miles, did not comply with those orders. It should be noted that during late November and early December 1890, Miles seemed more anxious to pursue a quick military action against the Lakotas than most of his superiors or the highly ranked officers who served under his command. In fact, already during the campaign of 1890-1891 accusations were made by some army officers and even by the public that Miles was using the Indian troubles to boost his own political career. Whether his reasons were political, whether he wanted more power for the army, or whether he believed that an Indian uprising of extreme proportions was going to occur, as his memoirs and reports seem to indicate, is a question without a definite answer.⁵⁸⁸

To what extent Miles’s personal ambitions affected his decisions and actions throughout his career is a question that has caused controversy among scholars. **Wooster**, for example, has noted that the sympathies Miles showed toward the Indians in his memoirs were not necessary evident in his official correspondence. This is also the case with the correspondence used for this study. According to **Wooster**, these late-born sympathies could well have been aimed at gaining the

⁵⁸⁶ Nelson A. Miles to Mary Miles, December 19, 1890 as quoted in, Johnson V. 1962, p. 281.

⁵⁸⁷ See, for example, Miles to Schofield (telegram), December 19, 1890, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, p. 585. See also, Youngkin 1974, pp. 332-335 and 345-351.

⁵⁸⁸ See, for example, Frank Wood to ACIA, November 24, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/28-29. See, chapter 6. See also, Seymour 1981, pp. 144-147; Wooster 1993, pp. 181-182.

support of the influential Eastern humanitarian groups for a projected presidential campaign.⁵⁸⁹

After Sitting Bull's death the military faced three major problems. The first was trying to induce the Indians in the Badlands to surrender peacefully. The second was dealing with the refugees from Sitting Bull's camp. The third was stopping the ghost dancing on Cheyenne River Reservation. On Pine Ridge, the tactics of negotiation in order to divide the Indians proved successful. Gradually, growing numbers of ghost dancers from the Badlands camp came back to the agency. By late December, almost all of them were on their way, and a peaceful settlement seemed certain.

Matters were more complicated on Cheyenne River Reservation. For some reason Miles believed that Big Foot was the man who, after Sitting Bull's death, would most likely cause trouble. Miles insisted that Big Foot and his band had to be captured, and the chief eventually imprisoned. It is remarkable that Miles judged Big Foot so harshly. Colonel Sumner, who spent some time with Big Foot, had a different opinion. Sumner claimed that the day Miles ordered the arrest of the hostile and defiant Big Foot, Big Foot was in fact "...quietly occupying his village with his people, amenable to orders, having given no provocation whatever to my knowledge for attack, and no more deserving punishment than peaceable Indians at any time on their reservation." Sumner said later, "I was not aware that Big Foot or his people were considered hostile, and am now at a loss to understand why they were so considered, every act of theirs being within my experience directly to the contrary, and reports made by me were to the effect that the Indians were friendly and quiet."⁵⁹⁰

When Big Foot eluded the soldiers, Miles was furious. He accused the Indians of treachery, and demanded that Big Foot be captured at all costs. When he was eventually captured every measure were to be taken to keep him under control. He

⁵⁸⁹ See, Miles to Mary Miles as quoted in, Johnson V. 1962, pp. 288-289. See also, Miles 1911, pp. 241-243; Youngkin 1974, pp. 333-337 and pp. 340-351; Seymour 1981, pp. 143-147; Uteley 1984, p. 257; Wooster, 1988, pp. 65-66; Wooster 1993, pp. 188-192; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 96-97.

⁵⁹⁰ ARSOW 1891, Report of Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, February 3, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, pp. 227-228; Sumner to Miles, February 21, 1891, LC, NAMFP, Box 4.

was to be disarmed and imprisoned. According to Miles, Big Foot's escape was a major embarrassment to the army, and the army could not let that happen again.⁵⁹¹ Clearly Miles believed that Sumner's opinion of Big Foot was incorrect. As the overall commander, Miles probably understood the situation as a whole better than Sumner did. General Miles was in constant communication with his superiors, who informed him about the excited letters from agents and citizens living near the Lakota reservations. He was under pressure to keep those citizens safe. However, it is difficult to understand why the opinions of these officers differed so radically. Big Foot's escape, of course, assured Miles that he had been correct all along.

The Wounded Knee affair resulted directly from this controversy. The army was now prepared to act against Big Foot. No chances were taken. The orders were given to disarm, to capture and, if necessary, to destroy. They were clear enough. When the fighting eventually broke out, the army was prepared. Whether the 7th Cavalry sought revenge for Custer's defeat 14 years earlier or whether they were drunk as sometimes suggested, are questions without a definite answer. Some eyewitnesses, scouts, mixed-blood interpreters and a few white men who were with the army, claim that alcohol was given to both the men and the officers. Some claim that Colonel Forsythe was especially annoyed during the early morning disarmament because of the heavy drinking the previous night. This matter, however, will not be further investigated here. The fact is that the tragedy occurred and the Indians were destroyed.⁵⁹²

After Wounded Knee, a threat of war was imminent. Through negotiations and the skillful use of military pressure further major conflicts were averted. Throughout the trouble, General Miles seemed more convinced than most of his officers that a major Indian uprising was at hands. As noted earlier, he expressed this feeling several times during the campaign and also in later years. At least once, however,

⁵⁹¹ Report of Brigadier General Nelson A. Miles, January 5, 1891, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 2, pp. 812-813.

⁵⁹² For a discussion about the possible use of alcohol before the Wounded Knee battle see, for example, Richard C. Stirk, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3541, Reel 1, Box 4, Tablet 8; William Garnett, NSHS, ESRMC, M 3543, Reel 3, Box 5, Tablet 22; Zahn 1940, pp. 67; Mattes 1960, p. 9; Johnson V. 1962, p. 286; Utley 1963, p. 199; Smith 1975, p. 179; Sievers 1975-1976, pp. 39-40; Twiss 1978, p. 37; Seymour 1981, p. 156; Miller 1985, pp. 233-239; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 293-294.

in his official report on September 24, 1891, he wrote that a careful investigation "...seems to justify the opinion that no considerable number of them had seriously intended to engage in hostilities against the United States, unless driven to such a course by unbearable hardship, or in self-defense..."⁵⁹³

Throughout the trouble Miles, along with his fellow officers, seemed to empathize with Indians to a certain extent, but at the same time the officers, especially Miles, called for firm action. The officers clearly wanted justice to be done for the Indians. Their job, however, was to command the army and to prevent an outbreak, which might have led to great loss of life. Miles's actions were particularly divided. At times he called for justice for the Indians, but at the same time he talked about the biggest Indian war ever, and called for decisive military action. Although **Utley** has noted that Miles had to combine force and diplomacy in the right proportions in order to prevent a major Indian war, it seems that in several cases he managed to ignore his officers' opinions, and based his actions on reports that amounted more to rumors than actual facts. Miles believed that his tactics would have been successful if not for a few incompetent officers, including Sumner and Forsyth, spoiling his carefully drawn plans.⁵⁹⁴

Undoubtedly, the political play behind the scenes was a factor during the ghost dance troubles also. The political play in which the military was involved occurred on two main levels: First there were General Miles's own political goals, and secondly there was the tension between the War and Interior Departments over the control of Indian affairs. The latter manifested itself in the question of who was to control the Lakota reservations, civilian or military agents, and also in Miles's attempts to gain more power for the military in general.

Although the military campaign was over in January 1891, many questions went unanswered and many problems remained to be solved. During the following months, many investigations and inquiries were made into the ghost dance

⁵⁹³ ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 56. See, for example, Miles 1911, p. 238.

⁵⁹⁴ Youngkin 1974, pp. 333-337 and pp. 340-351; Utley 1984, p. 257.

troubles, into the military's conduct, and also into official Indian policy.⁵⁹⁵ Even if no evidence to condemn the army's actions were found, and no hard historical evidence can be found today that goes to show there were any plans to kill so many Indians, it has to be noted that there was an undercurrent of feeling around the reservations, among the reservations' white residents, ordinary soldiers, newspapermen, and Indians alike that the army was there to teach the Lakotas a lesson. The idea that the Lakotas needed to be shown that it was impossible to resist the power of the United States Army was not the military's official policy, but it is worth noting that even General Miles stated as early as on December 30, 1890, that the Wounded Knee affair was a good lesson for the Lakotas.⁵⁹⁶

Be that as it may, the army ended the ghost dance troubles without loss of life or property among white settlers. The ghost dancing was stopped, the Indians were disarmed, and military officers controlled the Lakota reservations. The army had accomplished all that was expected. It had protected the settlers, it had divided the Indians, and it had conquered.

⁵⁹⁵ For additional information of the army's actions and of the investigations relating to the ghost dance troubles during the year 1891 see, for example, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document No. 58, Vol. 5, Serial 2900, pp. 1-185; NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1-2, Vol. 2-4, pp. 651-2006. See also, Wooster 1993, pp. 188-192.

⁵⁹⁶ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 196, December 30, 1890, p. 1. Elaine Goodale Eastman, for example, noted that many officers thought that the army's presence was not necessary, while at the same time ordinary soldiers were bored with the inaction and were "spoiling for a fight." (Goodale Eastman 1945, p. 30) See also, chapters 6 and 7.

6. “THE GHOST DANCE TROUBLE” IN THE PRESS

6.1. “From our Special Correspondent”

The role of the press during the ghost dance troubles is very important, interesting and complex. Several newspapers sent reporters to the scene of the “Sioux troubles.” Many of them arrived at Pine Ridge Agency on November 20, 1890 together with the army. The reporters represented some of the largest newspapers in the country, such as The New York Herald, The New York World, and The Chicago Tribune, as well as many small local newspapers.⁵⁹⁷

One of the most significant newspapers was The Omaha Daily Bee, published in Omaha, Nebraska. The paper sent Charles “Will” Cressey to Pine Ridge where he arrived with General John R. Brooke on November 20, and stayed until the Indians’ surrender. Another reporter, possibly Charles H. Copenharve, subsequently joined him. Their role in the ghost dance news reporting is important since their, especially Cressey’s, reports ended up in the pages of many of those newspapers that did not send reporters to the scene. The New York Times, for example, never sent a reporter to the Lakota reservations but used extensively the reports written by The Omaha Daily Bee correspondents. The Washington Post did not send a correspondent to the west either, and probably used some of The Omaha Daily Bee’s material, but never specifically acknowledged the source as The New York Times and The Chicago Tribune did. The Chicago Tribune also sent at least one, possibly two reporters to Pine Ridge. Despite this, The Chicago Tribune used The Omaha Daily Bee’s material widely, especially after the Wounded Knee battle. Perhaps The Chicago Tribune correspondents, Edward B. Clark and Irving Hawkins, left Pine Ridge by the end of December 1890.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁷ More about the correspondents in, Watson, Elmo Scott, *The Last Indian War, 1890-1891 – A Study of Newspaper Jingoism*, *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1943, pp. 208-210; Kolbenschlag, George R., *Whirlwind Passes. News Correspondents and the Sioux Indian Disturbances of 1890-1891*, Vermillion, South Dakota, 1990, Introduction p. XI and p. 15-26.

⁵⁹⁸ See, Watson 1943, pp. 208-209; Kolbenschlag 1990, Introduction, p. XI and pp. 15-26.

The reporters stayed at a small hotel run by a local entrepreneur, James A. Finley, and the hotel soon became known as Hotel de Finley. There the reporters got together in the evenings to discuss the day's events and to compare notes. In Hotel de Finley this varied lot of newspapermen wrote the stories that they then sent to their respective papers via telegraph from Rushville, Nebraska. Thus many of the articles appearing in the newspapers became known as "specials from Pine Ridge via Rushville." The papers often referred to the articles as "specials" or as articles from "our special correspondent." The articles were often presented as "eyewitness accounts" or as "reports from reliable sources," even though, in fact, what they reported were merely rumors. Although some of the newspapermen were there only to report sensational events, others, as historian **George R. Kolbenschlag** has noted, were professional reporters. Interestingly, at the same time as the dispatches were taken to Rushville, newspapers were brought back to Pine Ridge. This allowed the correspondents – and the Indians – to see the results of their work within a few days. Even the eastern papers arrived to Pine Ridge relatively quickly, often in a week. These newspaper reports added to the already confusing situation on the Lakota reservations. They, for example, angered and frustrated Brooke, but also allowed the Indians to get first-hand information about the sensation they were causing.⁵⁹⁹

By mid-December there were 17 correspondents, including two women, representing 16 daily newspapers, two magazines and the Associated Press. One of the magazines that had its own reporter was Harper's Weekly. The famous western artist Frederick Remington was their representative. Remington first arrived at Pine Ridge with General Miles in October, but stayed only for a while. He returned to Pine Ridge in early January 1891, and his articles were published in the magazine issues of January and February 1891. Some of the reporters were very inexperienced and were hired only for this one occasion, while others, as noted above, were professional newspapermen. The "ghost dance war" became a media event widely documented not only in printed articles, but also in

⁵⁹⁹ Watson 1943, pp. 205-206 and p. 214; Jones, Douglas C., *Teresa Dean: Lady Correspondent Among the Sioux Indians*, *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 49, 1972, p. 659, Kolbenschlag 1990, pp. 15-16 and p. 40. See also, chapters 3 and 5.

photographs.⁶⁰⁰ Some reporters came even from Europe, one all the way from Finland, then an autonomous part of Russia. This reporter, Konni Zilliacus, represented the Svenska Dagbladet, a Swedish newspaper.⁶⁰¹

6.1.1. Those Dangerous Indian Dances

Although the Indians were not the most important issue in the newspapers during the early part of 1890, some articles were written about Indians in general, and a few about the Lakotas during the first months of 1890.⁶⁰² Harper's Weekly magazine opened the year with a romantic article about life on an Indian reservation. The magazine portrayed the issue of beef, the Indians' daily life and the education they were receiving. The Omaha Daily Bee started the year by announcing that Sitting Bull was not as angry with the division of the Great Sioux Reservation as was generally believed. He understood that only those who signed the Act of 1889 were invited to Washington to meet with government officials. The paper quoted Agent James McLaughlin, who said that the relations between him and Sitting Bull were "...most amicable," although Sitting Bull was "... very conservative Indian," and had "...small faith in civilized habits." He was therefore "...opposed to any measures that look to a radical change."⁶⁰³

The Washington Post and The Chicago Tribune also reported briefly about the Lakota chiefs who visited Washington in January and February 1890. The

⁶⁰⁰ Watson 1943, p. 209; Kolbenschlag 1990, pp. 15-26; Carter, John E., *Making Pictures for a News-Hungry Nation* in, *Eyewitness at Wounded Knee* (ed. Jensen, Paul, & Carter 1991), p. 39 and pp. 44-45. A comprehensive selection of pictures taken during the ghost dance troubles is presented in, *Eyewitness at Wounded Knee* (ed. Jensen & Paul & Carter 1991), pp. 62-192. For an analysis of earlier Indian wars and the press see, Coward, John M., *The Newspaper Indian. Native American Identity in the Press, 1820-1896*, Urbana, Illinois 1999, pp. 23-154.

⁶⁰¹ Watson 1943, p. 210; Malm 1961, passim.; Jones 1972, pp. 656-662; Kolbenschlag 1990, p. 82; Lindberg, Christer, *Foreigners in Action at Wounded Knee*, *Nebraska History*, Vol. 71, No. 4, 1990, pp. 170-181. **Coleman** erroneously writes Zillucus instead of Zilliacus. He also maintains that he represented Chicago Swedish Tribune. He attributes this information to **Watson**, but **Watson** does not mention this at all. **Kolbenschlag** believes that he was not a working journalist, but was named honorary correspondent by the other correspondents. Zilliacus, however, later went on to publish a book of his experiences. (Watson 1943, pp. 210; Kolbenschlag 1990, p. 82; Lindberg 1990, pp. 170-171; Coleman W. 2000, p. 388)

⁶⁰² The newspapers used the word Sioux instead of the word Lakota. In this chapter I have changed the word Sioux to Lakota whenever possible.

⁶⁰³ Harper's Weekly, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1,724, January 4, 1890, pp. 10-11; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 194, January 1, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 196, January 3, 1890, p. 1.

Washington Post quoted John Grass, who worried about the results of the summer 1889 negotiations. He noted that the Indians were promised many things, but it seemed that they were not getting anything. Other Indians also complained to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan that they did not have enough schools for their children. The Omaha Daily Bee wrote about the “Wide Awake Indians,” referring to the fact that they knew very well what they wanted and expected the government to do for them.⁶⁰⁴

The opening of the Great Sioux reservation to white settlers was major news on February 11, 1890. Settlers were reportedly rushing in for new sites, while Indian policemen, who were assigned to stop all attempts of moving onto those lands before they were officially opened, were watching helplessly and confused as the whites hurried onto their former lands. “Towns spring up like magic,” reported The Washington Post. Harper’s Weekly had a different opinion. Because the drought caused suffering in the Dakotas, many settlers were afraid of moving to the opened lands. Therefore the rush to the lands was not as wild as expected, Harper’s Weekly reported on March 8, 1890. The New York Times and The Washington Post published articles about the Sioux Commission’s final report, and about the promises the commission made to the Lakotas. The Omaha Daily Bee was especially interested in the newly opened lands saying that the opening of the reservation was a “...transformation from darkness to light, from idleness to activity, from barbarism to civilization.”⁶⁰⁵

After the first excitement caused by the opening of the reservation, no major articles about the Lakotas appeared until April 1890. Instead, the Indians who attracted interest were the Apaches, who were believed to be planning some trouble. A number of papers also reported the suffering caused by the lack of food

⁶⁰⁴ See, The Washington Post, No. 4,218, January 3, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 194, January 1, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 196, January 3, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, January 4, 1890, p. 4; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 11, 971, January 9, 1890, p. 4. More about the Lakota delegations to Washington in, chapters 3 and 7.

⁶⁰⁵ The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 232, February 11, 1890, p. 1 and p. 4; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 234, February 13, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 238, February 17, 1890, p. 2; The Washington Post, No. 4,317, February 11, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 11,999, February 11, 1890, p. 1; Harper’s Weekly, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1,738, March 8, 1890, p. 534; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, February 11, 1890, p. 2. About the Sioux Commission see, for example, chapter 2.2. About Agent McLaughlin and Sitting Bull see, chapters 3, 4 and 7.

among various Indian tribes. The destitute situation among white farmers in the Dakotas received wide attention, while the suffering Lakotas received none.⁶⁰⁶

The next time attention turned to the Lakotas was on April 6 and 7, when all four newspapers reported that the Lakotas were gathering together to hold great councils and dances. None of the papers, however, mentioned the ghost dance. In fact, The Washington Post reported that the Lakotas were dancing their last “war dance.” The Omaha Daily Bee, The Chicago Tribune and The New York Times claimed that they were holding their last “Pow-wov,” that is, a council or a feast. The major issue during this council was whether or not the Lakotas were going to take up lands in severalty. According to all these papers, Sitting Bull and his followers were strongly opposed to any farming efforts, and the result of the council was that only some half bloods and “squaw men” agreed to take allotments.⁶⁰⁷ Whether this council was one of the earliest in which the Lakotas talked about the ghost dance after their delegation returned from Nevada cannot be determined, but it might well have been (See chapter 3.1).

The next time The Washington Post reported about the Lakotas, the tone was more alarming. The paper followed the news of the “war dance” by reporting on April 16 that the Lakotas have “Gone to Warpath.” The article told about Big Foot, who allegedly was on the warpath, and was surrounded by soldiers. He refused to obey orders, and the army had cornered him and his band. Great trouble was expected. The paper, however, never followed the developments further.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁶ See, for example, The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, January 28, p. 2; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, January, 30, p. 2; The Omaha Daily Bee, January 17, 1890, Vol. XIX, No. 210, p. 8; The Omaha Daily Bee, February 1, 1890, Vol. XIX, No. 223, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,303, January 28, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,319, February 13, 1890, p. 5; The Washington Post, No. 4,343, March 8, 1890, p. 6; The Washington Post, No. 4,344, March 9, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,352, March 18, 1890, p. 4; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 11,987, January 28, 1890, p. 3; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,001, February 13, 1890, p. 4; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,028, March 17, 1890, p. 4.

⁶⁰⁷ The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 286, April 6, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,371, April 6, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, April 7, 1890, p. 9; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,045, April 6, 1890, p. 1. More about the allotment of Lakota lands in, chapters 2 and 7.

⁶⁰⁸ The Washington Post, No. 4,371, April 6, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,381, April 16, 1890, p. 2.

A couple of days earlier The Omaha Daily Bee reported on “An Indian Prophecy.” This was the first article regarding the ghost dance, although the paper did not actually use the name ghost dance. The article told about a prophecy that was circulating among the tribes in the northwest causing great excitement. According to the article, the Shoshones and the Cheyennes were among the many tribes waiting for the arrival of a new world. They were expecting a great flood that would kill all the whites, after which all the dead animals would be restored upon the earth. This was supposed to happen in three months.⁶⁰⁹ On April 27, the paper published about the Indian Messiah, and wondered how the Indians, who lived thousands of miles apart, could be sharing the same belief. The Indians seemed to be mixing their old beliefs and Christianity into a new kind of religion.⁶¹⁰

In May 1890, The Omaha Daily Bee reported on the problems caused by the census conducted among the Indians at Rosebud Reservation. The paper believed that white speculators who were “...indifferent to the welfare of the Indians” were causing problems among the Lakotas. The paper also noted that the Shoshones and Arapahos had been preparing for the coming of a new millennium for over a year with invocations and ceremonies. This had been going on in total secrecy, and the whites learned of their hopes only recently. The Chicago Tribune was also very much concerned about the Indians expecting their dead to be resurrected.⁶¹¹

During May and June the attention of the eastern papers, The New York Times and The Washington Post, was still turned away from the Lakotas. Trouble among the Apaches was again reported, and 1,500 Menominee Indians in Wisconsin were said to be armed and ready for war. Also, articles concerning the success of Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania appeared in The Washington Post and The New York Times. The school, according to the papers, did great work in civilizing Indian children.⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁹ The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 292, April 12, 1890, p. 1.

⁶¹⁰ The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 307, April 27, 1890, p. 1.

⁶¹¹ The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 312, May 2, 1890, p. 2; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 324, May 14, 1890, p. 4; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 339, May 29, 1890, p. 4; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, May 28, p. 1.

⁶¹² See, The Washington Post, No. 4,399, May 4, 1890, p. 9; The Washington Post, No. 4,411, May 16, 1890, p. 2; The Washington Post, No. 4,432, June 6, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times,

On June 6, The Washington Post reported that some railway men had been killed by Indians in Colorado, and continued two days later with an article stating that the Cheyenne Indians had gone on the warpath, killing several settlers in Wyoming and Montana. Soldiers were sent after these Indians who were excited "...over some news of a coming Christ," who would give them "...horses, cattle and firewater." This was the first time The Washington Post alluded to, although indirectly, the ghost dance. The New York Times mentioned the incident also, but did not connect it with the ghost dance.⁶¹³ It was later discovered that white settlers who hoped to drive the Cheyennes away from their reservation were responsible for spreading these rumors. According to their agent, the Cheyennes had caused no major trouble.⁶¹⁴

The Omaha Daily Bee was also interested in the Cheyennes. The paper did not connect the reported trouble with the new Messiah beliefs; rather, the paper blamed the lack of subsistence among the Cheyennes. The paper referred to it as the annual Indian scare, started by rumors that were greatly exaggerated by settlers and newspapers. The paper, however, emphasized the seriousness of the matter, since the Indians were well armed and would probably receive reinforcements from Pine Ridge and Standing Rock, if there was going to be real trouble.⁶¹⁵ In late June, The Omaha Daily Bee commented that the Lakota Indians in the region were peaceable and had no desire of going on the warpath as long as "...the government lives up to its agreement with them." The article suggested that the Indian reunion in April was wrongfully believed to be indication of an uprising, but added that trouble might be ahead because the government

Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,075, p. 10; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,079, May 5, 1890, p. 5.

⁶¹³ The Washington Post, No. 4,432, June 6, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,434, June 8, 1890, p. 2; The Washington Post, No. 4,435, June 9, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,098, June 6, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,100, June 9, 1890, p. 2. See also, The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, June 7, 1890, p. 2.

⁶¹⁴ 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 58, Vol. 5, Serial 2900, pp. 169-184.

⁶¹⁵ The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 353, June 12, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 354, June 13, 1890, p. 1 and p. 4; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 335, June 14, 1890, p. 2. More about the arms in the Lakotas' possession in, chapters 3, 5 and 7.

postponed the ration issue until July 1. This would cause hardship for the Lakotas, The Omaha Daily Bee predicted on June 20, 1890.⁶¹⁶

The first news regarding the Lakota ghost dance connected the ceremony to a “war dance” and to an eventual uprising. Indians dancing surely meant trouble. The Omaha Daily Bee was perhaps the most analytical and least alarmist of these newspapers. The general feeling, however, was that the Messiah Craze would eventually cause trouble.

6.2. Careful but Confused Reporting

6.2.1. “The Air is Full of Rumors”

During the latter part of the summer of 1890 neither the ghost dance nor the Indians were considered important enough to be given space in The Washington Post or The New York Times. In fact, there were only a few articles that commented on the situation in the Dakotas and Nebraska. These articles reported mostly about the difficult situation the white farmers faced all over the West. On July 21, for example, The Washington Post reported that there had been no rain at all in Nebraska or in the Dakotas. On August 24, the paper reported that when there finally was rain, the rainfall was so heavy that it destroyed the remaining crops.⁶¹⁷

The New York Times was also very concerned with the fate of the Western farmers. According to the paper, hot winds and drought destroyed crops all over the West.⁶¹⁸ There was a lot of concern about the white farmers, but there seemed to be no concern about the welfare of the Indians, who were expected to support themselves by farming on their reservations. On July 23 and 24, however, The

⁶¹⁶ The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 360, June 19, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XX, No. 2, June 20, 1890, p. 1. See also, The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, June 12, 1890, p. 1. More about the ration issuance in, chapters 3-7.

⁶¹⁷ The Washington Post, No. 4,477, July 21, 1890, p. 6; The Washington Post, No. 4,511, August 24, 1890, p. 1. See also, The Washington Post, No. 4,491, August 4, 1890, p. 7; The Washington Post, No. 4,505, August 18, 1890, p. 5.

⁶¹⁸ See, The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,132, July 16, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,143, July 29, 1890, p. 2; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,150, August 5, 1890, p. 1.

Washington Post reported on the need of “Caring for the Red Man.” The Indians in the West were in great need of money and appropriations, but that need was not because the Indians were suffering or starving; the money was necessary for educating and civilizing the Indians.⁶¹⁹

Not until August 28 was there any report of trouble among the Lakotas. Then The Washington Post quoted Special Agent A. T. Lea, who claimed that there were fewer Indians living on Rosebud Reservation than reported. Therefore they were getting too many rations.⁶²⁰ The Washington Post, however, tried to be impartial. The paper also quoted J. George Wright, the agent on Rosebud Reservation. He claimed that diseases such as the measles and smallpox took their toll of the population. The reservation physician, who claimed that only 19 people had died in the reservation during past 12 months, made the problem more complex. Thus the headline “Who Drew the Rations?” seemed to be quite proper.⁶²¹ There is no reason to go further in Lea’s report here, but this shows that the Eastern newspapers were not worried about the ghost dance or an Indian rebellion during the summer of 1890.⁶²² In fact, after early spring no articles regarding the ghost dance appeared in The Washington Post or The New York Times until September 1890.

During the summer, The Omaha Daily Bee and The Chicago Tribune on the other hand, were quite interested in the development of the “Messiah Craze.” Both papers reported widely about the Indians becoming “...crazed by religion,” dancing and “...having [a] good time.” The papers also reported that Porcupine, the Cheyenne, had seen the Messiah (See chapter 3.1). They told Porcupine’s story and expressed astonishment of its similarity to Christian teachings. What especially impressed the papers were the “Commandments” the Messiah gave to the Indians (See chapter 2.3. and appendix 9). Despite the doctrine’s reportedly peaceful nature, the Indian excitement was causing fear among the settlers. The Omaha Daily Bee, however, reported that there was no need for panic, since the

⁶¹⁹ The Washington Post, No. 4,479, July 23, 1890, p. 7; The Washington Post, No. 4,480, July 24, 1890, p. 7.

⁶²⁰ More about Agent Lea in, chapters 3, 4 and 7.

⁶²¹ The Washington Post, No. 4,515, August 28, 1890, p. 6.

⁶²² The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,157, August 14, 1890, p. 1.

Indians were totally peaceable, did not want to go on the warpath, and, in fact, could not do so even if they so wanted. According to the paper, “These annual Indian scares are getting very tiresome.”⁶²³ During the summer both The Chicago Tribune and The Omaha Daily Bee reported that the drought was causing problems for farmers, but like the eastern papers, nothing really alarming regarding the Indians was reported before September 1890.⁶²⁴

Then, on September 26 and 27, The Washington Post and The Chicago Tribune published stories concerning 5,000 “excited” Indians. The papers, however, did not specify who these excited Indians really were. The papers obtained the information from an officer of the 7th U.S. Cavalry, who claimed that the biggest Indian uprising ever was ahead; the Indians were expecting a certain medicine man, who would destroy the whites. The waiting for the medicine man had already led to “...incantations and religious orgies.” As soon as the medicine man appeared the trouble would begin. With this brief comment the officer demanded that the number of soldiers be doubled in all garrisons in the West.⁶²⁵ So the first news of the ghost dance to reach white audiences was quite alarming.

After this first alarm there were no more articles about the ghost dances in any of the newspapers until October 24, when The Omaha Daily Bee reported the discontent of Indians living in Indian Territory. They were greatly excited over the expected coming of the new Christ. The situation there was considered very serious. The Washington Post, however, published an interview with Brigadier General John Gibbon, commanding officer of the Department of Columbia, who said that the Indians would stay peaceful if they were left alone.⁶²⁶ In fact, on October 28, The Omaha Daily Bee, The Chicago Tribune and The Washington

⁶²³ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, July 12, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 360, June 19, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XX, No. 2, June 20, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XX, No. 19, July 7, 1890, p. 6.

⁶²⁴ See, for example, The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, July 22, 1890, p. 6; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, July 25, 1890, p. 9; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, August 8, 1890, p. 9; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XX, No. 52, August 9, 1890, p. 2; The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XX, No. 55, August 12, 1890, p. 4.

⁶²⁵ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L. No. CCCLXIX (The number of the issue appears for the first time), September 26, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,544, September 27, 1890, p. 1.

⁶²⁶ The Omaha Daily Bee, (the volume number disappears), No. 128, October 26, 1890, p. 6; The Washington Post, No. 4,574, October 28, 1890, p. 4.

Post started to report the ghost dance's development more frequently. The New York Times followed on November 8, 1890.

On October 28, the major headline in The Washington Post was: "Led by Sitting Bull. A General Uprising of the Sioux Indians Feared Next Spring." The article quoted Agent McLaughlin, who said that the ghost dance appealed to many Indians - even to those who were considered progressive and reasonable. According to McLaughlin, all the trouble was caused by Sitting Bull, who was "...high priest and leading apostle of this latest Indian absurdity; in a word, he is the chief mischief-maker at this agency, and if he were not here this craze so general among the Sioux would never have gotten a foothold at this agency." McLaughlin also blamed Mrs. Catherine Weldon of the Indian Rights Association, who gave Sitting Bull gifts that made him even more influential among the Indians. He also wanted to make clear that the ghost dance was very dangerous; even the Indian policemen feared to interfere with the dancing. Quoting the words of Agent McLaughlin The Washington Post noted that the ghost dance was very "...demoralizing, indecent and disgusting."⁶²⁷

The Chicago Tribune published a similar article also quoting McLaughlin, but added that the soldiers were ready for Sitting Bull. The Omaha Daily Bee noted that Sitting Bull was in a very ugly mood, and was exciting the "...young bucks." The paper called for a swift military response.⁶²⁸ Thus the first substantial articles concerning the Lakota ghost dance blamed Sitting Bull for causing the trouble, and gave a very alarming picture of the Indians' new religion. The New York Times did not at this time notice the ghost dance at all. Instead, there was a long article about work and education among the Indians.⁶²⁹

On October 29, the tone in The Washington Post was totally different. The paper published an article written by Herbert Welsh, a representative of the Indian

⁶²⁷ The Washington Post, No. 4,574, October 28, 1890, p. 1. More about Agent McLaughlin in, chapter 4. More about Catherine Weldon in, chapter 3.

⁶²⁸ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L. No. CCCL, October 28, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 132, October 28, 1890, p. 1. See also, Smith 1975, pp. 110-112.

⁶²⁹ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,221, October 28, 1890, p. 3. For an account of Sitting Bull's image in the press before the ghost dance see, Coward 1999, pp. 158-191.

Rights Association.⁶³⁰ He claimed that Sitting Bull was being wronged. Sitting Bull was not trying to make war, Welsh claimed; he had even received a letter from Sitting Bull in which he assured Welsh that he was not causing any trouble. The accusations made by McLaughlin against Mrs. Weldon were also without foundation. Mrs. Weldon was, in fact, trying to convince the Lakotas about the foolishness of their new religion, Welsh believed. He also made strong remarks about McLaughlin's comments on Sitting Bull's person.⁶³¹ The Washington Post did not take any stand for or against these accusations. At this point it simply allowed both parties involved to make their views clear to the public. Even Sitting Bull was allowed to speak, though through the representative of the Indian Rights Association.

The Omaha Daily Bee also noticed the ghost dance on October 29, calling it "The Indian Millennium." The paper also published articles focusing on other similar movements among American Indians. Such superstition was caused by Indians' inability to cope with the whites without supernatural help. The paper did not believe that it would lead to any major uprising, since the Indians had practically no means to wage war against the whites; towns and soldiers surrounded them. Some local outbreaks and bloodshed, however, might occur. Sitting Bull's involvement was the only reason for concern, according to the Omaha Daily Bee.⁶³²

The next time the ghost dance appeared on the pages of The Washington Post was on November 7, when Major General John M. Schofield tried to calm the public. He claimed in the paper that the Indian question was resolved, and the Indians were to receive humane treatment on their reservations. The army was only needed to control the young and restless elements, so that they would not cause any trouble.⁶³³

⁶³⁰ The paper wrote that Herbert Welsh represented the Indian Defense Association, but he actually represented the Indian Rights Association. See, chapter 2.

⁶³¹ The Washington Post, No. 4,575, October 29, 1890, p. 7. More about Herbert Welsh and The Indian Rights Association in, Hagan 1985, *passim*. About the Indian Rights Association and the ghost dance see, Hagan 1985, pp. 115-126.

⁶³² The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 133, October 29, 1890, p. 1.

⁶³³ The Washington Post, No. 4,584, November 7, 1890, p. 7. See also, The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L. No. CCCX, November 7, 1890, p. 6. More about General Schofield's views in, chapter 5.

The next day the New York Times and The Washington Post concentrated on the origins of the whole ghost dance phenomenon. They accused the Mormons of instigating the whole “madness.” General Nelson A. Miles, who traveled around Montana and Utah investigating the ghost dance religion, claimed that the Mormons, who believed “...in prophets and spiritual manifestations,” were behind the trouble. This was not considered surprising since the Mormons had missions among some tribes for a long time. Both papers reported that, according to Miles, the person or persons, who claimed to be the Messiah, were whites. This was believed to be almost certain, no one had seen the Messiah’s face; he always kept his face disguised.⁶³⁴

Accusing the Mormons is not surprising either, when the contemporary newspapers are studied. There were many articles, for example, in The New York Times, about the Mormons’ strange customs.⁶³⁵ The fact that Miles believed the Messiah to be a white man reflects the “mystery” surrounding the Messiah’s identity and, indeed, the whole ghost dance phenomenon.⁶³⁶

When Miles was asked about a possible Lakota outbreak, he answered: “...the situation is not alarming in any way,” and about Sitting Bull he said, “...no one is more ardent than Sitting Bull, who is intensely Indian in all his ideas.”⁶³⁷ The New York Times noted that even though Miles did not believe an outbreak was pending, he noted that it would be difficult to know what the fanatics might eventually do.⁶³⁸ Already on October 22, Miles stressed that it was very difficult for the Indians to escape from their reservations, as the Cheyennes had done a few years earlier, because they were now surrounded by civilization and railroads.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁴ The Washington Post, No. 4,585, November 8, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,231, November 8, 1890, p. 5. More about the Mormons and the ghost dance in, chapter 2 and about General Miles’ opinions in, chapter 5

⁶³⁵ See, for example, The New York Times, Vol XL, No. 12,207, October 12, 1890, p. 9; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,210, October 15, 1890, p. 3; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,238, November 17, 1890, p. 2. See also, Smoak 1986, pp. 269-294.

⁶³⁶ More about Wovoka in, chapter 2.

⁶³⁷ The Washington Post, No. 4,585, November 8, 1890, p. 1.

⁶³⁸ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,231, November 8, 1890, p. 5.

⁶³⁹ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,216, October 22, 1890, p. 2. About the flight of the Cheyennes see, for example, Brown D. 1996, pp. 352-370; Andrist 1969, pp. 320-330. More about General Miles in, chapter 5.

The first articles show clearly that very little knowledge about the ghost dance was available. The army officers who were quoted were trying to assure the public that there was nothing to fear; they expected no major outbreak.⁶⁴⁰ Despite this, however, the ghost dance and an eventual outbreak were discussed in the papers as facts obvious to most people. The four newspapers studied here considered the ghost dance and the Lakota outbreak as one inseparable and inevitable phenomenon. The ghost dance and an eventual outbreak went hand in hand. The situation is well described by the following quotation from *The Washington Post*: “...the air is full of rumors...over an outbreak.”⁶⁴¹ It is significant that only a few articles were written about the nature or origins of the ghost dance, and only a few articles were written about the more than 30 tribes who were dancing. The Lakota ghost dance was the one that was causing the headlines – especially Sitting Bull’s involvement was of great concern.

6.2.2. Sensing a Sensation

“Gone to Fight the Indians,” said a headline of *The Washington Post* on November 15. According to the paper, the situation was worse than anyone in the East had imagined. The Indians were so hostile that the settlers close to the Lakota reservations were terrified. The paper demanded that the army be sent to help the agents whom the Indians had defied. *The New York Times* worried also about the fact that the ghost dancers acted against their agents, but wondered whether the Indians would really attempt an outbreak when the winter was coming on so quickly. Both papers were certain, however, that the military officers’ idea was to show force and to avoid actual battle. The showing of force had been a successful tactic a few years earlier when more than 4,000 soldiers were sent to silence some Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians.⁶⁴² Although, the *Washington Post* headline mentioned above suggested that the army had already been sent to fight the Indians, the army did not arrive at Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations until

⁶⁴⁰ See also, chapter 5.

⁶⁴¹ *The Washington Post*, No. 4,595, November 18, 1890, p. 1.

⁶⁴² *The Washington Post*, No. 4,592, November 15, 1890, p. 6; *The New York Times*, Vol. XL, No. 21,237, November 15, 1890, p. 1. For information of other newspaper reports during November and December 1890 and January 1891 see, Kolbensschlag 1990, pp. 26-86; Smith 1975, pp. 126-141. See also, *Eyewitness at Wounded Knee* (ed. Jensen & Paul & Carter 1991), pp. 39-183.

November 20. The president's orders to the military had been given on November 13; perhaps The Washington Post had some inside information relating to the upcoming military operation, or perhaps it was just relying on rumors. Whatever the case, the paper was five days ahead of actual events.⁶⁴³

The Chicago Tribune and The Omaha Daily Bee reported in a similar tone on November 16 and 17. Both papers told about Indians arming themselves and defying their agents. Settlers were reported to be fleeing, and the army was called for. Both papers believed that the Lakotas were ready to go on the warpath. The excitement was again attributed to Sitting Bull, who reportedly had influence even over the Cheyennes and the Kiowas in the Indian Territory. Interestingly, in the middle of these articles, a small note appeared in The Chicago Tribune saying that the excitement was subsiding, and the Indians were quietly hauling their supplies for the winter.⁶⁴⁴ This was the first time during the ghost dance reporting that any of these newspapers clearly contradicted itself.

The Washington Post briefly stated that the Indians were unable to make war in the winter, since no food was available for the Indian ponies. Despite that, however, the Lakotas seemed to be continuing their war and sun dances, which were exciting the "...young bucks," as the paper put it.⁶⁴⁵ At the same time, November 16, The New York Times published a lengthy report about the ghost dance religion. The article was written by a correspondent, who toured among various tribes and even participated in several ghost dance ceremonies. The correspondent wrote about the ghost dance very objectively and described, for example, the experiences of the Cheyenne prophet Porcupine and the Arapaho prophet Sitting Bull. The story of the Lakota delegates was also published, and some of the Lakota ghost dance ceremonies were described. This article attempted to describe both the doctrine and the ceremony of the ghost dance from the Indian point of view, depicting the ghost dance as a religious movement rather than as an expression of war or a revolt. The article, however, also told about a clash - which

⁶⁴³ For the military operation see, chapter 5.

⁶⁴⁴ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXX, November 16, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXI, November 17, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 151, November 16, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 152, November 17, 1890, p. 1.

⁶⁴⁵ The Washington Post, No. 4,593, November 16, 1890, p. 1.

is not reported anywhere else - between the ghost dancers and the soldiers. The only surviving soldier in the clash was reportedly General Miles.⁶⁴⁶ An amazing report, since at the time Miles was not even close to the Lakota reservations.⁶⁴⁷

During the days prior to November 20, when the army finally entered the Lakota reservations, all the papers were filled with reports of Indians arming themselves and riding around with their weapons. Some were reported to be armed with two rifles each. The New York Times quoted some local newspapers, published close to the Lakota reservations, which claimed that white settlers were being evacuated all over the West because the army could not protect them. The Indians were supposed to be well armed, since some white traders sold all their ammunition to them. The Omaha Daily Bee also reported settlers were fleeing and estimated that there could be between 15,000-27,000 warriors ready for war. The New York Times, however, published a report by General Miles, who emphasized that the settlers were not being evacuated. Only some fearful people left their homes, and reports of danger were, according to him, greatly exaggerated. Miles, however, stressed that if the Indians started trouble they could do much harm, because they had at least 15,000 well-armed warriors available. That, of course, would have been a tremendous fighting force. Miles claimed that there was no immediate danger; all necessary measures were taken, but the spring might bring an uprising if the “madness” continued. The Chicago Tribune reported that the Indians were already committing depredations, and even some Indian Policemen turned their backs on civilization and joined the ghost dancers.⁶⁴⁸ Generally the restlessness in the West, however great it was, was expected to be of short duration.⁶⁴⁹ It is of interest to note that the estimations of the number of Lakota warriors ranged from 15,000-27,000, when the actual number of adult Lakota men was only approximately 5,000.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁶ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,237, November 16, 1890, p. 11. About Porcupine, Sitting Bull and the Lakota delegates see, chapter 3.

⁶⁴⁷ General Miles came to Pine Ridge in late December 1890. See, chapter 5.

⁶⁴⁸ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,238, November 17, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,239, November 18, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 152, November 17, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 153, November 18, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXII, November 18, 1890, p. 1.

⁶⁴⁹ The New York Times, Vol XI, No. 21,239, November 18, 1890, p.1.

⁶⁵⁰ For comparison see, chapters 3 and 7.

On November 19, both Eastern papers printed very alarming headlines. “Sioux Outbreak. Varying Rumors of Trouble,” reported The New York Times. The headline in The Washington Post noted, “The Avenging Messiah. Indians Say That Their Savior Will Do All of Their Fighting.” Despite the headlines, both articles were, in fact, very mild in nature. The New York Times reported troop movements and quoted Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs R. V. Belt, who said that while the settlers’ alarm was justified, no harm would occur if the Indians were left alone. According to Belt, no one should be arrested or the dances stopped if no act of violence occurred. Otherwise, action might lead to violence. “Let [the] Indians dance themselves out. They will loose faith eventually and [the] whole delusion collapses...” said he. The commissioner quoted a letter from Charles A. Eastman. Eastman had talked with Red Cloud, who believed that “...the enthusiasm of the men in it [the ghost dance] will melt away like a spring snow.”⁶⁵¹

The Washington Post quoted an officer who toured the reservations. The officer claimed that the religion was not opposed to whites. “It is just [a] harmless religious affair equivalent to Christian communion that is a preparatory ceremony before the coming of the master,” he said. He also noted that some agents, who were unused to the Indians’ ways, caused the trouble.⁶⁵² This was the first time the articles were totally opposite in nature to their headlines.

The Washington Post also reported on November 19 that settlers living close to the Lakota reservations were in full stampede, fleeing to Mandan, North Dakota. They were threatening to kill all Indians on sight if the government would not do something. The citizens were said to be arming themselves, and they believed the Indians on Pine Ridge reservation were totally out of control. The New York Times noted just the opposite; the rumors of an uprising were unfounded, and the

⁶⁵¹ The New York Times, Vol. XI, No.21,240, November 19, 1890, p. 2. See, Charles A. Eastman to Frank Wood (forwarded to ACIA), November 11, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 1/98-100. For an account of the agents’ reports and letters see, chapter 4. Charles A. Eastman was an educated Santee Sioux, but chose to work as a physician among the Lakotas. For his life see, for example, Eastman 1916, passim.; Eastman 1980, passim.

⁶⁵² The Washington Post, No. 4,596, November 19, 1890, p. 1. More about the Lakota agents in, chapter 4.

Indians were living peacefully on their reservations, although there was some excitement.⁶⁵³

The Omaha Daily Bee was of the same opinion. "All Sorts of Contradictory Rumors About the Indian Excitement," was the November 19 headline. The paper also quoted Commissioner Belt, but at the same time it told about excited soldiers who were anxiously waiting to meet Sitting Bull, "...the old foe." The paper blamed the new inexperienced agents for the trouble, and quoted General Miles, who believed that the soldiers were going to face 27,000 fighting Indians. The Chicago Tribune reported that troops had already been sent to the scene of the trouble, but at the same time it told that the danger had been averted and the settlers were returning to their homes. So, on the eve of the military invasion of the Lakota reservations, the newspapers reported about trouble and quietness, peace and war at the same time.⁶⁵⁴

Toward the end of November, reports regarding the ghost dance took on more alarming characteristics. Immediately after the military's arrival at Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations stories of battles started to spread. The Chicago Tribune and The Omaha Daily Bee noted on November 20 that a fight had taken place in which up to 60 people were killed. This, however, was not confirmed. Another rumor reported that several hundred warriors belonging to Sitting Bull's band were missing from Standing Rock. Yet another rumor told that Sitting Bull was already put in irons. Both papers reported extensively about the hostile Indians led by Little Wound, Red Cloud and Sitting Bull, who were allegedly planning to start a battle the morning of November 21.⁶⁵⁵

While reporting about danger and fleeing settlers, both papers quoted Miles, who believed that the army's appearance had a quieting effect. Agent McLaughlin was of the same opinion, adding that Sitting Bull had only approximately 100

⁶⁵³ The Washington Post, No. 4,596, November 19, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,240, November 19, 1890, p. 2. See, Boyd 1891, pp. 216-217; Smith 1975, pp. 114-116. About the organization of local militia groups against the Lakotas see, Colby 1892, *passim*. and chapter 4.

⁶⁵⁴ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 154, November 19, 1890, p. 2; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L. No. CCCXXII, November 19, 1890, p. 1.

⁶⁵⁵ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 155, November 20, 1890, p. 1 and p. 4; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L. No. CCCXXIV, November 20, 1890, p. 1 and p. 4.

followers dancing the ghost dance. Agent Royer at Pine Ridge, on the other hand, told reporters that his life was in grave danger and he had taken his family to Rushville, Nebraska. The Omaha Daily Bee expressed a wish that Sitting Bull might accidentally "...run before federal rifles." The Chicago Tribune, however, claimed that there was no reason to expect an uprising. The paper pointed out that white men were sometimes equally excited by religion. The article blamed the government for mistreating the Indians; it also blamed the local settlers, who from pure greed sold weapons and liquor to Indians. The Omaha Daily Bee noted that the ghost-dancing Indians were wearing some kind of holy shirts.⁶⁵⁶ This was the first time the newspapers mentioned the Lakota ghost-dance shirts.

The New York Times was convinced that the Indians were very well armed and very well supplied with food. The paper also claimed on November 21 that Sitting Bull was already in irons, but Red Cloud and Little Wound declared that they were going to meet the troops in battle the next day, that being the day when the Messiah would appear in the form of a buffalo. These two chiefs were, according to the paper, fomenting trouble and belonged to the so-called "bad Indians." The article was in fact almost identical to the articles published in The Chicago Tribune and The Omaha Daily Bee one day earlier.⁶⁵⁷

On November 21, The Omaha Daily Bee and The Chicago Tribune reported extensively about the trouble among the Lakotas. The papers claimed that the Indians at Pine Ridge had the agency and the surrounding country in a state of terror. Sitting Bull was going to lead more than 200 warriors to meet other dancers, who were dancing with guns strapped to their backs, and who were becoming more boisterous and threatening all the time. Officers on the ground feared that up to 8,000 Indians could destroy the army detachments whenever they pleased. One officer described the danger with the following words: "I hope to God that reinforcements come before the red devils make their break." Sitting Bull, who was reported to have been in irons a day before, was now blamed for

⁶⁵⁶ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 155, November 20, 1890, p. 1 and p. 4; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L. No. CCCXXIV, November 20, 1890, p. 1 and p. 4. More about newspaper reporting after the military's arrival in, for example, Boyd 1891, pp. 220-221; Smith 1975, pp. 126-128; Kolbenschlager 1990, pp. 35-42. For Agent Royer's trip to Rushville see, chapter 4.

⁶⁵⁷ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,242, November 21, 1890, p. 1.

encouraging warriors to steal cattle and to kill settlers. His influence was now believed to be so great that even some of the Indian policemen threw off their uniforms and joined the dancers. They were threatening Agent McLaughlin, who was afraid to punish them. According to McLaughlin, however, the Indian police remained loyal to him throughout the ghost dance troubles (See chapter 4). The scene on Pine Ridge was portrayed as one where fully armed Indians were swarming around the reservation looking for every opportunity to launch a major attack against the whites.⁶⁵⁸

The New York Times published the same story as The Omaha Daily Bee on November 22, noting that the Indian office discredited the stories of an uprising saying that the stories were greatly exaggerated. Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs R. V. Belt did not believe "...that the Indians entertain hostile designs against the whites." He said that the Indians expected their Messiah to do it for them, so there was no need for fighting. "The doctrine itself prevents them from fight[ing]..." Belt believed, but worried that trouble would be ahead when the promises of the doctrine were not fulfilled.⁶⁵⁹

The New York Times also published a series of articles expressing a variety of opinions about the ghost dance on November 22. The first article was written by a reporter who had visited a dance scene. The title was "How the Indians Work Themselves Up to a Fighting Pitch." The article portrayed the ceremony as very hostile and, in fact, the dancers were for the first time called hostiles.⁶⁶⁰ The dancers were wearing white shirts, evidently ghost shirts, and the writer claimed that "...many of the reds were in war paint." He believed that "...the ceremony showed the Sioux to be insanely religious...banging their heads until blood runs."

⁶⁵⁸ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXV, November 21, 1890, p. 1-2 and p. 9; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 156, November 21, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,243, November 22, 1890, p. 1. Interestingly, the actual army reports were totally different in nature. See, chapter 5.

⁶⁵⁹ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,243, November 22, 1890, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁰ As mentioned above in, chapter 2, during Indian wars whites traditionally divided the Indians into friendlies and hostiles. During the ghost dance troubles the newspapers, as well as the whites in general, quickly adopted these terms to differentiate between the ghost dancers and those who did not openly join them. To retain some of the style of the newspaper reporting, the words hostiles and friendlies are used in this chapter like the newspapers used them. See also, Kolbenschlager 1990, p. 34.

The ghost dance was “...simply a dance of cruel endurance which is far more barbarous than the sun dance.”⁶⁶¹

Postmaster James Finley’s wife at Pine Ridge reservation gave an even more barbarous picture of the ceremony. She said that the Indians lost all their senses in the dance believing that they were animals. She claimed that the Indians believed a man had turned into a buffalo even though he still looked like a man. “I suppose they have killed and eaten him by this time,” the report concluded. Nonetheless, she wanted to emphasize that, if the Indians were left alone, there was no need for troops. The description that she gave of the Lakota ghost dance ceremony seem to be quite accurate in other aspects, when compared with other descriptions.⁶⁶²

The opinion of Richard H. Pratt, head of Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, was also published as a part of The New York Times article series. Pratt believed that the ghost dance was the work of a white man; it was too well managed to be Indian. He also noted that the Indians were all the time fully aware of developments, since they were sending letters to each other and they were reading newspapers.⁶⁶³ All in all, this article series in The New York Times on November 22, gave some additional information, albeit some of it false and misleading, to the Eastern audience.

On November 22, Harper’s Weekly reported very critically on the government’s Indian policy. The magazine believed that allotment and civilization were good for the Indians, but criticized the effect of the spoils system on the civilizing process. “So long as our practical relations with the Indians are in the hands of men appointed to promote the political fortunes of some man – or party, the Indian question...continue[s] to be what it long has been – a disgrace.” The article demanded honest men to take charge of the Indian affairs.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶¹ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,243, November 22, 1890, p. 1-2.

⁶⁶² The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,243, November 22, 1890, p. 2. Mrs. Finley’s account was also published in, The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L. No. CCCXXVI, November 22, 1890, p. 2. For a description of the ghost dance ceremony see, chapter 3.

⁶⁶³ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,243, November 22, 1890, p. 2. Pratt expressed similar thoughts in a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on December 26, 1890. (Richard H. Pratt to CIA, December 26, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 5/34-35)

⁶⁶⁴ Harper’s Weekly, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1,770, November 22, 1890, p. 902.

Meanwhile, The Omaha Daily Bee and The Chicago Tribune reported further developments on the Lakota reservations. Both papers once again blamed Sitting Bull, and expressed belief that there would be no uprising unless he ordered it. These papers also reported the army's and General Brooke's actions. Brooke had his hands full in trying to separate the friendly Indians from the ghost dancers. The Chicago Tribune listed all the leaders of the ghost dance; one of them was Red Cloud, even though he denied his involvement. Both papers, however, portrayed Red Cloud as an intelligent man and a true politician. The papers published the speech in which he explained his views:

...I don't want to fight and I don't want my people to fight. We have lots of old women and we have lots of old men. We've got no guns and we can't fight, for we have nothing to eat, and are too poor to do anything...I haven't been to see the dancing...I will try to stop it. Those Indians are fools. The winter weather will stop it, I think. Anyway, it will be over by spring. I don't think there will be any trouble. They say that I have been in the dance. That is not right. I have never seen it.⁶⁶⁵

Yet, the papers still presented him as one of the ghost dance leaders, since his son Jack Red Cloud was one of the "... leading spirits of the ghost dance."⁶⁶⁶ The same day The Omaha Daily Bee also described the Lakota ghost dance ceremony. Whereas other papers portrayed it as a horrible, even cannibalistic ritual, The Omaha Daily Bee claimed that there was nothing warlike in the ceremony. It was "...nothing more or less than wild religious fanaticism."⁶⁶⁷

The next day The New York Times, The Omaha Daily Bee and The Chicago Tribune all published a letter sent to Agent Royer by Little Wound. The letter read as follows:

I understand that the soldiers have come on the reservation. What have they come for? We have done nothing. Our dance is a religious dance and we are going to dance until spring. If we find then that the Christ does not appear we will stop dancing; but, in the meantime, troops or no troops, we shall start our dance on this creek in the morning. I have also understood that I was not to be recognized as a

⁶⁶⁵ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXVI, November 22, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 158, November 22, 1890, p. 1.

⁶⁶⁶ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXVI, November 22, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 158, November 22, 1890, p. 1. More about Red Cloud's role in, chapters 3, 4 and 7.

⁶⁶⁷ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 158, November 22, 1890, p. 1.

chief any longer. All that I have to say to that is neither you nor the white people made me a chief and you can throw me away as you please, but let me tell you, Dr. Royer, that the Indians made me a chief, and by them I shall be so recognized so long as I live. We have been told that you intended to stop our rations and annuities. Well, for my part, I don't care; the little rations we get do not amount to anything, but Dr. Royer, if such is the case, please send me a word so that me and my people will be saved the trouble of going to the agency. We do not intend to stop dancing.⁶⁶⁸

Remarkably, the papers interpreted this letter as open defiance of the troops. According to Royer, "...the Sioux [Lakota] mean war. They have been ordered to stop dancing. They have refused to do so. It now remains for the soldiers to enforce their orders."⁶⁶⁹ If the letter is read objectively, it is not written in a defiant tone; it is almost polite. Understandably for Royer the letter meant that he could not control the Indians, but it certainly was not an open declaration of war; rather it was an explanation of the Indian point of view, giving their reasons for their actions. This, however, was overlooked both by Royer and by the newspapers.

In the wake of this "letter of defiance," the newspapers went on to speculate on how the Lakotas would strike against the settlers and then go to the Big Horn Mountains or the Badlands to fight the soldiers. This rumor was strengthened by reports saying that some Lakotas were seen heading to the Big Horn Mountains. They, however, were people led by Man Afraid Of His Horse, who had permission to leave the reservation to visit the Crow Indians.⁶⁷⁰

The New York Times reported that the Indians were massing, and that even Pawnees, Arapahos, Shoshones and Kiowas were ready to join the Lakotas. All three newspapers reported that the Indians were dancing in a wilder manner than ever before, and that they were threatening to shoot anyone who attempted to suppress the dance. The New York Times estimated that there could be up to

⁶⁶⁸ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,244, November 23, 1890, p. 5; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXVIL, November 23, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 158, November 23, 1890, p. 1.

⁶⁶⁹ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,244, November 23, 1890, p. 5; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXVIL, November 23, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 158, November 23, 1890, p. 1.

⁶⁷⁰ About Man Afraid Of His Horse's trip see, for example, The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21, 242, November 21, 1890, p. 5. See also, Andersson 1996, p. 115.

40,000 Indians dancing throughout the United States. Those people were led by some of the most "...desperate and treacherous redskins in this part of the country," the paper claimed. By this the paper referred to, among others, Red Cloud. The Omaha Daily Bee even revealed "A Devilish Plot" to ambush the soldiers somewhere in the Badlands. Despite this, the papers also reported that thousands of peaceful Lakotas were coming to the various agencies. According to the papers, everything was reported quiet at Standing Rock and Rosebud. Sitting Bull reportedly lost almost all of his following, but still the settlers were fleeing and additional troops were called for.⁶⁷¹

Whereas the other newspapers were reporting frequently about the ghost dance, The Washington Post kept silent since November 19, but on November 24 published a headline that said: "They Plot a Massacre." The paper took up The Omaha Daily Bee's report from the previous day about the Indians' plan to ambush and kill the soldiers. Likewise, The New York Times noted the Indians' treacherous plan. Both papers believed that the Indians were better equipped for war than ever, and the country was better suited for Indian warfare than earlier, since there were cattle for the Indians to steal.⁶⁷²

The Omaha Daily Bee and The Chicago Tribune reported Two Strike's alleged plan to stab Brooke during negotiations. This was to be a sign to commence hostilities. The Omaha Daily Bee reported that hostile Indians, who were using Short Bull and his ghost dance as pretence for starting a war, surrounded Pine Ridge Agency. Even the so-called friendlies could no longer be trusted, the Omaha correspondent claimed. The Washington Post and The New York Times reported that Sitting Bull was planning a major assembly in the spring, which would mean war. At the same time these papers reported that no outbreak was

⁶⁷¹ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 158, November 23, 1890, pp. 1-2; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L. CCCXXVII, November 23, 1890, pp.1-3; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,244, November 23, 1890, p. 5. More about Sitting Bull in, chapter 3.

⁶⁷² The Washington Post, No. 4,601, November 24, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,244, November 24, 1890, p. 1.

expected. The Omaha Daily Bee and The Chicago Tribune reported that everything was peaceful in Sitting Bull's camp.⁶⁷³

All these articles were contradictory; they told about whites killed by Indians and settlers fleeing from roving bands of Indians. At the same time, however, they maintained that the situation was quiet and the friendly chiefs were fully supporting the agents. A good example is The Omaha Daily Bee, which reported on November 24 that the Indians were generally not well armed, but continued a couple of paragraphs later that the Pine Ridge reservation was surrounded by heavily armed Indians. The papers also reported that more than 6,000 Lakota warriors had broken loose and that some Cheyennes had tried to join them; at the same time the papers also reported that everything was quiet among the Cheyennes in Montana, and that Short Bull and Red Cloud were denying all hostile intentions. At this point the situation seemed very confusing for the settlers, agents, army officials and reporters alike. There were simply too many rumors afloat. The army, however, moved more soldiers to the scene and every soldier in the Division of the Missouri was reported to be in readiness to start for the Dakotas at a moment's notice. Agent Royer at Pine Ridge, who requested reinforcements for the Indian police, added to the confusion.⁶⁷⁴

At this point, however, The Washington Post published an article with a totally different tone. This article quoted an army officer, who believed that the Indians

...should be allowed to dance because they are naturally religious people. Dancing will give them something to do. The present system fails because the Indians have nothing to do. Farming is impossible in that country. Indians believe that Great Spirit doesn't want them to farm when always year after year crops fail. It is human nature to believe so and with Indians we are dealing with human nature.

⁶⁷³ The Washington Post, No. 4,601, November 24, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,244, November 24, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXVIII, November 24, 1890, pp. 1-2; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 159, November 24, 1890, p. 1.

⁶⁷⁴ The Washington Post, No. 4,601, November 24, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,244, November 24, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXVIII, November 24, 1890, pp. 1-2; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 159, November 24, 1890, p. 1. More about Agent Royer in, chapter 4.

The officer also criticized the reservation system, where the agents represented a kind of despot that did not exist anywhere else in the United States.⁶⁷⁵

Somewhat surprisingly, the same day The New York Times published two articles about the effect the ghost dance had upon the Indians. The first article was, in fact, a letter from an Indian agent who had worked among the Arapahos and Cheyennes for many years. In his letter, he assured that the doctrine was not meant to harm the whites, even if it caused great excitement. He only heard vague rumors about the origin of the doctrine, but he believed that it started somewhere near Pine Ridge. According to the agent, it was a doctrine that appealed mainly to the most non-progressive Indians. It, however, caused Indians to "...neglect their work and to loose interest in their own progress and advancement and to spend a good part of their time in talking over the expected change which this Christ is about to make in their circumstances and surroundings."⁶⁷⁶

In the second article the author really doubted the need for military action. He believed that

...the present excitement may have been purposely exaggerated in the reports in order to get an increase of the army. No doubt some frontiersmen and traders find a profit in the presence of the soldiers and would be very glad to see a larger number of them, for purpose of trade...Still the alarm seems to be genuine enough now; and although it has been based in most cases on unsupported rumors...protection is due to them [the settlers].

He also noted that the important thing was not, whether the army was able to put down a rebellion, but the cost of such action in human lives, time and money. He referred to the costs of capturing the small bands of Geronimo and Chief Joseph some years earlier. He feared the possible effects of a joint uprising of 10-20 tribes.⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷⁵ The Washington Post, No. 4,601, November 24, 1890, p. 1. About the Lakotas' success in farming see, chapters 2 and 7.

⁶⁷⁶ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,244, November 24, 1890, p. 2.

⁶⁷⁷ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,244, November 24, 1890, p. 2. More about the campaigns against Geronimo and Chief Joseph in, for example, Beal 1963, pp. 61-291; Andrist 1969, pp. 301-317, 1879-201; Brown D. 1996, pp. 335-351 and pp. 410- 432.

The following day The Omaha Daily Bee joined the eastern papers by changing its tone. “Hounded On By Hunger,” “Famine Rather than Religious Enthusiasm Has Excited the Indians,” were two of the headlines on November 25. “The Indians are slowly starving to death. That is the real, the way down, deep cause of this war scare,” the paper believed. The article further noted that it was no wonder that the Indians took up whatever hope they could get. General Brooke and Agent Royer were of the same opinion. Royer even commented that the only thing the Indians had enough of, was soap. The Omaha Daily Bee interviewed Two Strike and Little Wound, who said that they would stop dancing, but they did not like the way the newspapers portrayed them as “bad” people. The paper went on to say that the Indians on Pine Ridge made no hostile demonstrations and the general feeling seemed to be that the immediate threat of war was subsiding, but the situation was still so delicate that one mistake could lead to a war. The paper also reported that the actual ghost dance ceremony was not hostile at all; it was wild, but purely religious.⁶⁷⁸

These articles are striking, because they followed a series of articles that basically told about treacherous and barbarous Indians trying to go on the warpath. The change was very sudden, and can probably be seen as an effort to bring better information into the very confusing and sensational picture of the ghost dance that was created by the news reporting alone. These articles were in a sense additional or supplementary to actual news reporting. Comments about newspaper sensationalism were even published by the papers themselves. It is also worth noticing that Indians like Little Wound and Two Strike willingly gave their opinions to the newspapers, and perhaps even tried to use the papers for their own purposes.⁶⁷⁹

6.2.3. “In an Atmosphere Pregnant With Mysteries”

Despite the above-mentioned change in attitude, the newspapers continued to report threatened hostilities. Reports included descriptions of the fate of fleeing

⁶⁷⁸ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 160, November 25, 1890, p. 1 and p. 4.

⁶⁷⁹ See, for example, The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 160, November 25, 1890, p. 4. For additional commentary on the ghost dance reporting in November 1890 see, Boyd 1891, p. 217; Smith 1975, pp. 131-132 and pp. 137-141; Kolbenschlag 1990, pp. 35-42.

settlers, stories that the Indians had done no harm, and claims that the Indians still planned to massacre the troops. The Eastern papers agreed that Sitting Bull's influence was growing, and that it was dangerous even to try to negotiate with the rest of the dancers, since the whites could not offer them what they wanted - their lands. The Chicago Tribune believed that Sitting Bull invented the whole Messiah craze, but there was no need for alarm on Standing Rock Reservation. All three papers, however, agreed that the monthly ration day might cause trouble. The issue of rations would cause much apprehension, since thousands of Indians - including a few prominent ghost dancers - were coming to their respective agencies. The situation was considered very delicate, and that at Pine Ridge it was believed to be even more alarming than on other reservations; all kinds of rumors were afloat. The Washington Post noted that it was very difficult to get reliable information because the correspondents were working "...in an atmosphere pregnant with mysteries."⁶⁸⁰

The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Chicago Tribune continued their reports on November 25 with articles about the army. Even though it was the largest number of troops mustered since the campaign of 1876-77, the papers believed that they were under orders not to attack the Indians. Furthermore, the army's task was, according to the Eastern papers, to find out the truth about the amount of rations the Indians were getting, and whether or not the lack of rations was the reason for the trouble (See also chapter 5). According to The Chicago Tribune, the ghost dancers would not be pacified without strong measures. The paper added that General Miles was in earnest promising to suppress any attempted outbreak. Both Eastern papers also claimed that the Indian Messiah had finally been found. He was allegedly living close to the city of Reno, Nevada, and he was known by the name Johnson Sides.⁶⁸¹

The New York Times again published several different opinions about the ghost dance on November 26. According to the paper, the Indians were afraid that they

⁶⁸⁰ The Washington Post, No. 4,602, November 25, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,245, November 25, 1890, p. 5; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXIX, p. 1 and p. 5.

⁶⁸¹ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,245, November 25, 1890, p. 5; The Washington Post, No. 4,602, November 25, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXIX, p. 1 and p. 5. More about various names attributed to Wovoka in, chapters 2 and 5.

would be corralled by the army and then annihilated. The fear they felt toward the army was seen as a major problem, which might eventually lead to a disaster. The paper also claimed that the Indians agreed that there was no use to make war, because they were surrounded by railroads and settlements, and even if they could destroy the soldiers at hand, they would finally perish. Episcopal Bishop William B. Hare, who visited many Lakota camps, was also interviewed. His opinion was that no trouble would occur if the dancers were left alone. He described the doctrine of the ghost dance and claimed that the Indians did not need to attack the settlements because all the whites would be destroyed anyway. He understood that "...it [the ghost dance] revives many dear memories and appeals to the race feeling even in the civilized Indians." He also said that many missionaries had long been expecting something like this to happen. The same kind of opinions were expressed by Herbert Welsh of the Indian Rights Association, who blamed the government and the Interior Department for removing all able Indian agents and replacing them with unable men. A totally different opinion about the ghost dance was that of an anonymous missionary woman, whose regular position was close to Sitting Bull's camp. She described the dances as horrible sun dances with a new name. According to her, the Indians were wearing wardresses and war paint. "Sitting Bull means war. He is thoroughly and hopelessly bad," she claimed.⁶⁸² The Washington Post reported that the Indians were threatening to beat out children's brains and to drink women's blood.⁶⁸³

The Chicago Tribune gave a totally different description of the situation on Pine Ridge Reservation on November 26. The people who were truly frightened were the Indians, not the whites. The army's movements around the reservation almost caused a general stampede of the panic-stricken Indians, according to The Chicago Tribune. There was a rumor that the soldiers killed Indians at Wounded Knee Creek. As a result, the Indians camped close to Pine Ridge Agency were preparing to leave for the ghost dance camps, where they would be safe. The Omaha Daily Bee told a similar story, but added that Agent Royer was angry,

⁶⁸² The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,246, November 26, 1890, pp. 1-2. Bishop William B. Hare was stationed at Sioux Falls, South Dakota. During the ghost dance trouble he personally visited several Lakota camps. More about Bishop Hare's opinions on the ghost dance in, William B. Hare to Noble, December 6, 1890, NARS, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 4/34.

⁶⁸³ The Washington Post, No. 4,604, November 27, 1890, p. 1. For comparison see, chapter 5.

because he believed that the “friendlies” were going to go on the warpath. Interestingly, both papers commented about the ghost dance ceremony. The Chicago Tribune published an interview with Big Road, who described the journey of the apostles and the first dances. He also strongly denied the rumors that the Indians were dancing with their guns on their backs. The Omaha Daily Bee quoted another eyewitness who also said that no guns could be seen during the ceremony. “They have no idea of being warlike and never had and are surprised that any objections should be had to such a dance.” He noted that the dancers wore simple shirts without ornaments. The Omaha Daily Bee continued with an interview of a “squawman” who explained that the Indians were not preparing for war for three reasons: first, they had no place to go; secondly, if they killed the soldiers on location, they knew that more would come; and, finally, they would starve on a winter campaign.⁶⁸⁴

These articles were followed by several contradictory reports. Some told of a major battle between Indians and soldiers, while at the same time Miles reportedly denied any hostilities. Instead he told about the peaceful and satisfactory developments when the ghost dancers were moving closer to the agencies. Among them were the people led by Short Bull and Little Wound. Even though the soldiers saw this as a good sign, the settlers and local newspapers saw it as an attempt to raid the settlements, or as an attempt to join forces with Hump and Big Foot. The Indians were also reported to have been destroying property en route. An example of these rumors and counter rumors, as The Omaha Daily Bee called them, was received on November 26, when it was reported that Indians led by Red Cloud invaded a town. The truth turned out to be that Red Cloud visited the town as a witness in a legal case. The Chicago Tribune published an interview with Little Wound, who denied sending Agent Royer a letter a few days earlier and explained that the Indians needed this dance because it was a prayer. The chief claimed that they did not want to cause trouble and that the dance was a dance of peace for all nations. Despite Little Wound’s promises to stop dancing, The Chicago Tribune estimated that 100,000 soldiers would be needed to suppress the

⁶⁸⁴ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXX, November 26, 1890, p. 1 and p. 5; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 161, November 26, 1890, p. 1.

trouble.⁶⁸⁵ Little Wound's denial of sending the "letter of defiance" to Agent Royer is interesting. Did he lie about it, or was the letter actually invented by someone else? Whatever the case, it was not included in Royer's official correspondence (See chapter 4).

On November 28, The New York Times reported that the Indians were dancing in circles and preparing to take the warpath. A scout verified this by claiming that Indians danced that particular way only when they were preparing for war. Furthermore, the ghost dancers' camps were made in the form of circles, which was considered further evidence of their preparation for war (about the significance of the camp circle see chapter 2.2.). The army was put on alert and, according to The New York Times, there were soldiers who had sworn eternal vengeance on the Lakotas. Miles considered the situation grave, and believed that the army faced a winter campaign unless the Indians were dismounted and disarmed.⁶⁸⁶

The Washington Post predicted on November 29, "...within thirty-six hours the troops will be ordered to disarm or shoot down the marauders and when the troops do start after them the end will be no Custer affair." The word marauders referred to the Rosebud Indians, who were reportedly going to Pine Ridge destroying property en route and threatening to kill every white man along the way. In the same article, however, The Washington Post reported that citizens in North Dakota were no longer as afraid as they had been a week earlier. The paper also claimed that Sitting Bull was dancing his men more vigorously; he was reported to be more hostile and determined than ever. The Omaha Daily Bee published a similar article on November 28.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸⁵ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,247, November 27, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,248, November 28, 1890, p. 5; The Washington Post, No. 4,604, November 27, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,605, November 28, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 161, November 26, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 162, November 27, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXXI, November 27, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXII, November 28, 1890, p. 2

⁶⁸⁶ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,249, November 29, 1890, p. 5.

⁶⁸⁷ The Washington Post, No. 4,604, November 29, 1890, p. 1. See, The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 163, November 28, 1890, p. 1. More about Colonel George A. Custer in, chapter 2. For accounts of the movement of the Brulés see, chapters 3 and 4.

The New York Times added to the confusion by reporting that the Rosebud Lakotas were spoiling for a fight. They were panic-stricken, since they believed that they would be disarmed and their ponies would be taken away. They were dancing with war paint on, and the ghost dance had become a real war dance. The dancers were even wearing new war shirts, as the paper called them. In the same article an Indian spy, who had been among the ghost dancers, was interviewed. According to him, many educated Indians who could read the newspapers, were among the ghost dancers. Because of this, the ghost dancers were able to laugh at the great alarm they were causing, but they could also read about troop movements and plans to disarm the Indians. This had two consequences; the alarm seemed to them a sign of their power, a sign that the whites would eventually flee or disappear. On the other hand, since they knew the troop movements, they could better plan their own strikes against the army. The Chicago Tribune reported similarly, in a tone slightly more alarming, predicting a major battle between the Rosebud people led by Two Strike and the full army force led by General Brooke. The battle was expected to happen in the very near future. The Indians were swearing vengeance on the soldiers, but the article added that the trouble was largely caused by mismanagement of Indian affairs, inexperienced agents, lack of food and, finally, the unnecessary concentration of troops.⁶⁸⁸

Harper's Weekly ran the most warlike headline: "An Indian War." The article, however, only speculated about the possibility of an uprising, but believed that the winter would prevent major hostilities. The situation was reported to be serious since the Indians were very much crazed over their new religion, which was considered a hostile movement. This, however, was only natural, since the government treated the Indians so badly. The paper went on to criticize the United States' method of treating its uncivilized wards as foes of the nation. The paper rejoiced over the fact that General Miles, who knew and sympathized with the Indians, was in command of the troops sent to the Lakota reservations.⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁸ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,250, November 30, 1890, p. 2; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXXIII, November 29, 1890, p. 12. See also, the Omaha Daily Bee, No. 164, November 29, 1890, p. 1.

⁶⁸⁹ Harper's Weekly, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1,771, November 29, 1890, pp. 922-933.

“A Great Military Move,” claimed The Omaha Daily Bee on November 30, but never explained what the actual move was. Instead, the paper reported great excitement on Pine Ridge Reservation and told the story of an incident where a ghost shirt had failed to protect a man, who deliberately was shot at as a test of the garment’s efficacy. According to the paper, General Brooke commented on the incident by saying, “Probably the shirt was not long enough.” The Chicago Tribune headline was, “To Arrest Sitting Bull,” and the article briefly commented the prospects of Sitting Bull’s capture. Despite its headline, the article focused more on Brooke’s plans to wait and see. This waiting tactic was believed to be very effective, since more and more Indians were reported to be taking part in ordinary daily tasks on Pine Ridge Reservation. The greatest concern were the Rosebud Brulés, who arrived at Pine Ridge under Two Strikes’s and Short Bull’s leadership. The Chicago Tribune suggested that Brooke’s plan was to wait for an opportunity, then arrest the leaders and eventually disarm the rest of the Indians.⁶⁹⁰

At the same time all four newspapers reported that Indians on Pine Ridge were holding a council with Agent Royer, but Little Wound’s clever answers to all questions left the whites in the dark. According to The Washington Post, Little Wound said that dancing was just their way of expressing their feelings and their need of things. This was interpreted by Royer as “Sioux have grievances.” Little Wound blamed the government for sending them a bad agent, in times of trouble. The final note about the council was that Little Wound was “...the champion liar of the Sioux nation” and that, in fact, the Lakotas were planning to take General Miles’s scalp, who for his part hoped for a bloodless suppression of the ghost dance.⁶⁹¹ A remarkable comment, because at the time Miles was not even close to the Lakota reservations. Scalping him at his headquarters in Chicago, or in Washington, was most likely not planned by the ghost dancers.

⁶⁹⁰ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 165, November 30, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXXIV, November 30, 1890, p. 4. See also, chapters 3 and 5.

⁶⁹¹ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,250, November 30, 1890, p. 2; The Washington Post, No. 4,607, November 30, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 165, November 30, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXXIV, November 30, 1890, p. 4. More about the problems between the Lakotas and their agents during the 1880s in, chapter 2.

November reporting ended with articles in The New York Times where some of the well-known so-called Friends of the Indians were allowed to present their opinions about the “craze.” According to them, the Indians were not alone with their beliefs in a false Christ. More civilized and educated white men, and black men alike, waited for their Messiah within few years time. They described the doctrines of several movements and one article concluded that the Indian “...is neither stronger nor weaker than his brother of other hues.” The ghost dance was compared to movements that occurred among oppressed people all over the world from Siberia to Arabia. It was stressed that the ghost dance “...is not a craze.” The Omaha Daily Bee, on the other hand, reported about the “Messiah orgies,” but believed that empty stomachs and white men’s cruelty caused it.⁶⁹²

Finally, on November 30, the true Messiah of the ghost dance religion was found. All four newspapers quoted a Special Census Agent for Indians in Nevada, who told that the Messiah was not Johnson Sides, but Jack Wilson, known also as We-Wo-Kar or Co-We-Jo. He lived in Mason Valley, Nevada. The agent described the Messiah as an intelligent man with strong visions, and noted that the religion was not dangerous. The Indians should be allowed to dance, the agent believed. He hoped that the Indians would be allowed to visit the Messiah, who expressed his wish to meet with Sitting Bull.⁶⁹³

6.3. From Confusion to Wounded Knee

6.3.1. Anticipating a War

“Pinned in by Troops. The Indian Problem to be Solved by a Single Crashing Blow,” was the headline in The Washington Post on December 1. The New York

⁶⁹² The New York Times , Vol. XL, No. 21,249, November 29, 1890, p. 8; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,250, November 30, 1890, p. 11; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 165, November 30, 1890, p. 1, p. 4 and pp. 9-11; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXXIV, November 30, 1890, p. 4. The New York Times did not specify, who the whites expecting their Messiah were. The paper most likely meant Mormons. (The New York Times , Vol. XL, No. 21,249, November 29, 1890, p. 8. See also, Smoak 1986, passim.)

⁶⁹³ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,250, November 30, 1890, p. 2; The Washington Post, No. 4,607, November 30, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 165, November 30, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXXIV, November 30, 1890, p. 4. For a contemporary account of the Messiah’s identity see, John C. Mayhugh to CIA, November 24, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 2/74-79. See also, chapters 2 and 5.

Times ran the same article under the headline “General Miles’s Plan Revealed.” The article itself told about a plan to surround the Indians. The New York Times, however, admitted that military officials were keeping quiet, so the article was purely speculative. An army of newspaper reporters was reported to be moving to the front while the Indians were reported to be pillaging and burning the cabins of the settlers, who were fleeing for their lives. There was also a brief note in both papers that an Indian was killed, when a shirt that was “...dipped in a fluid of wonderful charm” did not protect him.⁶⁹⁴

Although the Eastern papers claimed that Indians were destroying property, they also quoted Brooke, who failed to confirm the reported depredations. On the contrary, he was very understanding toward the Indians. “The Indians here are suffering for food. I have nothing to give them. The proverbial improvidence of the Indian and the insufficiency of his food causes this,” Brooke claimed.⁶⁹⁵

The New York Times published extracts from The Annual Report of The Secretary of the Interior, urging Congress to keep its promises to the Indians. At the same time the secretary expressed the opinion that the 250,000 Indians in the United States possessed far more land than they needed. About the Lakotas, the report said that it “...is believed that this tribe will presently be distinguished for its rapid progress toward civilization as it has heretofore been for bravery and intelligence in savage warfare.” In his report the secretary also expressed his belief that “...fair and generous treatment by the government is the best means to bring about this desirable condition.” He also noted that rations should be reduced, because the census showed that there were fewer Indians living on Rosebud Reservation than previously reported.⁶⁹⁶

The Chicago Tribune and The Omaha Daily Bee also printed reports about the fleeing settlers and the ghost dancers who were said to be pillaging the settlers’

⁶⁹⁴ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,251, December 1, 1890, p. 5; The Washington Post, No. 4,608, December 1, 1890, p. 1.

⁶⁹⁵ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 166, December 1, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,251, December 1, 1890, p. 5; The Washington Post, No. 4,608, December 1, 1890, p. 1. More about General Brooke in, chapter 5.

⁶⁹⁶ The Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior as quoted in, The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,251, December 1, 1890, p. 10.

abandoned property. Both papers were much concerned about the movements of the Rosebud Brulés, who were moving toward Pine Ridge and the Badlands. These Indians were considered to be very hostile and uncontrollable. Their presence on Pine Ridge Reservation was expected to lead to confusion, because many of the “friendlies” there reportedly decided to join the Brulés. This, it was believed, made the moving column a tremendous fighting force. Both papers reported that the ghost dancers shot at some Indian policemen, but at the same time the papers explained that there were so many rumors that there was no way of knowing the truth. The Chicago Tribune listed several contradictory stories. “White liars, red liars, and all the intermediate tinges are busily at work. Stories of the most alarming character are told about once an hour and contradicted in less time,” the Tribune correspondent complained. Despite their somewhat alarming reports, both papers, in fact, understood the Indians’ situation quite well. The Omaha Daily Bee believed that the Indians were suffering from lack of food, and that it was understandable for superstitious people to believe in supernatural forces when there was no other hope left for them.⁶⁹⁷ The reporting in December started with as much confusion and as many contradictions as November had ended.

On December 2, reports were very contradictory. All four newspapers reported that 1,000-2,000 of the “friendlies” were moving toward the Badlands to join the “hostile” camp there. On their way they were plundering other “friendlies” and stealing thousands of cattle and wagonloads of flour. The army was sent after “...this thieving band of rebels,” as The New York Times put it, even though it admitted that the army officials did not confirm that the depredations had occurred. Even as the newspapers reported depredations and mounting danger, The Washington Post concluded that the “...danger is believed to be over.” The Omaha Daily Bee reported that there was “...no new move at Pine Ridge.” This, according to the paper, was especially annoying to Royer, who thought that the army’s inaction was inexcusable.⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹⁷ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXXV, December 1, 1890, pp. 1-2; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 166, December 1, 1890, p. 1. More about the Brulés in, chapters 3-5.

⁶⁹⁸ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,252, December 2, 1890, p. 2; The Washington Post, No. 4,609, December 2, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 167, December 2, 1890, p. 1; The

At this point the papers took notice of Buffalo Bill's mission to capture Sitting Bull and the disagreements it caused between the Interior and War Departments. The Washington Post reported that Buffalo Bill believed Sitting Bull, with some other "crafty" leaders, was behind the trouble, but that Buffalo Bill did not believe an uprising would occur before spring. Although Sitting Bull was not directly violating reservation rules, The New York Times accused him of violating the rules of the Indian Department by keeping children out of school. The Chicago Tribune reported that Sitting Bull was in Nevada exciting the Indians there. Sitting Bull's planned arrest became an issue of controversy; most frontiersmen quoted by the papers, however, believed that it would cause a general uprising.⁶⁹⁹

On December 2, The New York Times, under the headline "Our Indian Policy," questioned why no action had been taken earlier, especially when the lack of rations and Indian disaffection had been reported by Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan and Secretary of the Interior John M. Noble as early as April 1890. According to the article, there might have been a miscalculation in rations sent to the Rosebud Lakotas, the Indians getting more than they were entitled to, but miscalculations in the opposite direction may have occurred as well. If a band received less food than it was entitled to, it was only natural to expect some depredations on cattle. The article suggested that disaffection was expectable given the fact that the Indians were losing their lands very quickly. The New York Times further noted that stealing Indian land was the main feature of Indian policy in the year 1890. Such action was elevated into a moral and educational platform, while, in fact, economic and other reasons were behind the land theft.⁷⁰⁰

The following day, December 3, The New York Times, The Omaha Daily Bee and The Washington Post devoted considerable space to Miles's thoughts. Like

Chicago Tribune, Vol. L. No. CCCXXXVI, December 2, 1890, p. 1. More about Agent Royer's complaints on the army's inaction in, chapter 4.

⁶⁹⁹ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,252, December 2, 1890, p. 2; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,253, December 3, 1890, p. 2; The Washington Post, No. 4,609, December 2, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,610, December 3, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 167, December 2, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L. No. CCCXXXVI, December 2, 1890, p. 1.

⁷⁰⁰ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,252, December 2, 1890, p. 4.

Brooke, he did not blame the Indians for the situation, but blamed white men who were holding back rations. "These hostiles have been started [it is "starved" in The Omaha Daily Bee] into fighting and they will prefer to die fighting than starve peaceably." According to The Washington Post, Miles commented: "...we have overwhelming evidence from officers, inspectors, and testimony of agents as well, and also from Indians themselves, that they have been suffering for the want of food, more or less, for two years past, and one of the principal causes of disaffection is this very matter." Other causes included "...the religious delusion and the innate disposition of the savage to go to war."⁷⁰¹

Despite the sympathy Miles felt toward the Indians, he noted that the "Seriousness of the situation has not been exaggerated. The disaffection is more widespread than it has been at any time in years...the conspiracy extends to more different tribes...over a larger area of country than in the whole history of Indian warfare." He continued, "...it [the ghost dance] is a more comprehensive plot than anything ever inspired by the prophet Tecumseh or even Pontiac." The New York Times noted that Miles was convinced the 30,000 Indians in the northwest could muster more than 6,000 fighting men. Of these 4,000 would go on the warpath, and they could easily be joined by 4,000 from other parts of the country. This formidable force could cause much trouble. Thus Miles's objective was to avoid hostilities, even if he believed that "...such a happy ending to the trouble seems improbable." He was certain that the Indians were able to go on the warpath in the winter because they had good horses, were well armed, and could live on cattle much as they had lived on buffalo before.⁷⁰² It is noteworthy that previously the newspapers estimated the Lakotas' fighting force as numbering 15,000 to 27,000 men.

By early December some peaceable news was also reported. Some of the ghost dancers were willing to come to the agency at Pine Ridge. This raised hopes for a speedy settlement of the situation. Also reports from officers who had visited the

⁷⁰¹ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,253, December 3, 1890, p. 2; The Washington Post, No. 4,612, December 5, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 168, December 3, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 170, December 5, 1890, p. 1.

⁷⁰² The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,253, December 3, 1890, p. 2; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 168, December 3, 1890, p. 1. For comparison see, chapters 5 and 7.

ghost dancers' camps claimed that everything was quiet. The only alarming element in the Indian situation was, according to one officer, the newspaper accounts.⁷⁰³ On December 4 and 5, all four newspapers published articles focusing on the discussion that was going on in Congress regarding the situation on the Lakota reservations. The New York Times called for an investigation of the hunger among the Lakotas, and blamed the spoils system for causing change in the agents at a critical time. This was considered especially significant for Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations.⁷⁰⁴

During the next few days the newspapers focused on Father John Jutz's mission to the Stronghold (See chapter 3) They reported the conference between Short Bull, Kicking Bear, Two Strike, Crow Dog and Father Jutz [the papers write Jule]. According to Father Jutz, the Indian Stronghold was "...remarkably well fortified" and "...wholly inaccessible." He believed that there might be more than 2,000 armed men in the camp. During the conference the Indians tried to explain the reasons for their actions and told the priest that they did not want to go to the agency because they feared punishment. The Omaha Daily Bee listed their grievances and described Father Jutz's mission in great detail on December 6. The New York Times followed the next day with exactly the same story under the headline "The Hostile Camp Visited." According to the paper, there seemed to be no doubt about the ghost dancers' ability to defend themselves. The New York Times also published General Schofield's letter to the secretary of the interior. In the letter the general said that the Indians were well armed and supplied with ammunition. "Should they commence hostilities, there will be no room for doubt about the course to be pursued," he maintained, but added that disarming the Indians would cause immense problems, including the fact that holding Indians as prisoners of war would be against the policy of civilizing the Indians. However, "...it does not appear...that the Indians have had any deliberate purpose to

⁷⁰³ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,253, December 3, 1890, p. 2; The Washington Post, No. 4,612, December 5, 1890, p. 1.

⁷⁰⁴ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,252, December 4, 1890, p. 4 (The number series in The New York Times is 21,252 and continues from that. The mistake is the paper's not the author's); The Washington Post, No. 4,611, December 4, 1890, p. 2; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 169, December 4, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 170, December 5, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXXXIV, December 5, 1890, p. 5. About the congressional debate in, chapter 7 and about the agents in, chapter 4.

commence hostilities against the whites; they have so far as known simply put themselves in an attitude of defiance,” the general concluded.⁷⁰⁵

The Chicago Tribune and The Omaha Daily Bee reported on December 7 that a meeting was held at Pine Ridge Agency between the ghost dance chiefs and General Brooke. In this council, the ghost dance leaders gave Brooke all the same reasons for their actions that they had given to Father Jutz a day earlier. These articles however, had a somewhat nostalgic tone as they described the Indians marching to the council as “noble savages” wearing their feathers and war paint. The Omaha Daily Bee correspondent added that these Indians were “grim looking fellows,” the most “brutal looking Indians” he had ever seen. Despite the tone, the papers reported the proceedings of the council in an unbiased manner. The Washington Post ran a similar article on the following day, but added that some Indians were at the same time stealing horses and robbing houses. The article noted that such action by savages would not be tolerated in any other civilized country.⁷⁰⁶

The Omaha Daily Bee and The Chicago Tribune believed that the council was beneficial, and that Brooke hoped to settle the whole trouble in a couple of days. General Miles was also reported to be of the opinion that the disintegration among the ghost dancers would settle the trouble soon. Interestingly, The Omaha Daily Bee correspondent, Charles Cressey, claimed that it was totally absurd for the newspapers to pay so much attention to “...this utterly groundless agitation about an Indian scare.”⁷⁰⁷

Both papers continued in similar vein the following day. The Omaha Daily Bee published several articles focusing on the poor living conditions on Pine Ridge Reservation. Under the headlines “Life Among Red Men” and “The Monotony of Existence at the Pine Ridge Agency,” the paper expressed deep sympathy for the

⁷⁰⁵ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 171, December 6, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 21,255, December 7, 1890, p. 14. See also, chapter 5.

⁷⁰⁶ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 171, December 7, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L. No. CCCXLI, December 7, 1890, p. 3 and p. 25; The Washington Post, No. 4,615, December 8, 1890, p. 1.

⁷⁰⁷ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 171, December 7, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L. No. CCCXLI, December 7, 1890, p. 3 and p. 25.

Lakotas. The article described Indian life as "...aimless existence," with sadness and misery a part of daily life. In addition, The Omaha Daily Bee correspondent invited Red Cloud and Little Wound to a dinner and characterized as a great honor to have been allowed to host these men. In an attempt to understand the ghost dance, The Omaha Daily Bee also focused on other Messianic religions from ancient Egypt to the Mormons. The Chicago Tribune ran a similar article and added Porcupine's story. Both papers, however, noted that the situation on Pine Ridge was still alarming, since more and more Indians, or "hostiles" as the papers called them, were heading toward the Badlands. The Chicago Tribune described in great detail the disposition of the troops and speculated about Miles's plans to surround and disarm the Indians. The Omaha Daily Bee went a step further, saying that Miles did not like the current system, which allowed "...savages to terrorize several states."⁷⁰⁸

While the newspapers were concerned with current events at Pine Ridge, Harper's Weekly published two articles by Frederic Remington. The first was titled "Chasing a Major-General," and was a romantic description of his trip with Miles to Pine Ridge in October 1890. The general was portrayed as a true "western hero," and the soldiers' life was described as hard but honest. The second article told about the possibility of an Indian war. It was also written earlier, perhaps in October or November, and Remington predicted that before his story was printed "...the biggest Indian war since 1758 will be in progress, or that the display of military force will have accomplished its object, and the trouble gone." He added that the troop movements were to be carried out in secrecy, because the Indians were able to read the newspapers and make their own moves accordingly. Remington blamed the Interior Department for mismanagement, and believed that the blame for the trouble was to be divided among the Interior Department, some old medicine men and the most desperate war chiefs.⁷⁰⁹

On December 6, Harper's Weekly published a third article relating to the Indians, written by Lieutenant Marion P. Maus titled "The New Indian Messiah." The

⁷⁰⁸ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 173, December 8, 1890, p. 2, p. 4 and p. 6; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L. No. CCCXLII, December 8, 1890, p. 5 and p. 9. More about General Miles' opinions in, chapter 5.

⁷⁰⁹ Harper's Weekly, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1,772, December 6, 1890, pp. 946-947.

author claimed that he visited a dance scene at Pine Ridge with Remington. The new religion was nothing more than a version of Christianity that suited the Indians' hopes and expectations. Most of the Indians were sincere in their beliefs, and even Red Cloud believed that the religion would "...spread over all the earth," Lieutenant Maus wrote. He described the doctrine and the visions seen in the ceremony. He listed Red Cloud, Sitting Bull and Little Wound as the main apostles of the doctrine, and reported that Sitting Bull had visited the Messiah. Despite some obvious mistakes, the article clearly sympathized with the Lakota ghost dancers.⁷¹⁰

On December 9, The New York Times reported that Lakotas attacked three cowboys, and claimed that other skirmishes between the Indians and the settlers had also occurred. It also reported that the Cheyennes, Arapahos and Comanches were planning an uprising after a Lakota runner had organized ghost dances among the Oklahoma Indians. Two days later the paper disputed the news of fighting. That day the headline was, "A False Indian Alarm," caused by a white man's joke. Also, the Cheyennes and Arapahos were now reported to be quiet and peaceable.⁷¹¹ This was the first time that a correction of previously reported news was announced in a headline.

The Washington Post tried to get a new perspective on the Indian uprising by interviewing an old Indian fighter, General William T. Sherman. He declared that there would never be an Indian uprising in the winter and, if there were, it would become an "...injin downrising." Sherman blamed the newspapers, "...who try to add to the scare," for much of the trouble. The Omaha Daily Bee continued in a similar tone as the day before, reporting on the poor living conditions among the Lakotas. According to this article, "They are always hungry," and it would take years before the Indians would become civilized. The Chicago Tribune quoted the commissioner of Indian affairs, who claimed that the Indians had several just

⁷¹⁰ Harper's Weekly, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1,772, December 6, 1890, pp. 946-947.

⁷¹¹ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,257, December 9, 1890, p. 6; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,259, December 11, 1890, p. 2. (Here again the number series changes from 21,256 on December 8 to 12,257 on December 9. These were the actual numbers in the papers) The excitement in Oklahoma was also reported by The Omaha Daily Bee and The Chicago Tribune. (The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 174, December 9, 1890, p.2; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCXLVIII, December 9, 1890, p. 2)

grievances, and hunger was only one of them. The commissioner believed that the wrongs done to the Indians should be corrected. The paper also gave another opinion on the matter, that of Special Agent A. T. Lea, who claimed that, in fact, the Lakotas had no lack of food.⁷¹² General Miles was once again asked for his opinion and suggested this time that nothing serious would result from the ghost dance. The Chicago Tribune also reported that cowboys and settlers were organizing a militia force to attack Little Wound's ghost dancers, who were reportedly stealing cattle and pillaging white men's abandoned ranches.⁷¹³

During the next few days, before the attempted arrest of Sitting Bull, the newspapers were filled with reports of Indians fighting against each other, and also with reports of Indians fighting against the soldiers, or Indians fighting against the settlers. The fighting among Indians themselves was reported to have caused up to 40 casualties. Several casualties on both sides were reported in a fight that allegedly occurred between the soldiers and 500 ghost dancers lead by Kicking Bear. There were reports of cowboys ambushing Indians, as well as reports of Indians ambushing and killing cowboys. There were also reports of Indians surrendering, but they were outnumbered by reports of Indian hostilities. All in all, the situation seemed very unclear as the papers reported about fighting at the same time they quoted army officers who claimed that there was no need for alarm, no danger of an outbreak. These army officers only confirmed the fighting among the Indians themselves. Despite such assurances, however, the reports published between December 10-15 would have convinced readers that a full-scale war had finally begun. The difficult task of reporting accurately was well described by Charles Cressey of The Omaha Daily Bee, who wrote that it was impossible to know what was going on since there were "...lies all over."⁷¹⁴

⁷¹² More about Agent Lea in, chapters 3, 4 and 7. See also, Coleman W. 2000, pp. 147-148.

⁷¹³ The Washington Post, No. 4,616, December 9, 1890, p. 4; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 174, December 9, 1890, pp. 12 and p. 4; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCXLIII, December 9, 1890, p. 2. For commentary about the destruction the ghost dancers caused see, chapters 5 and 7.

⁷¹⁴ See, The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 175, December 10, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 176, December 11, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 177, December 12, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 178, December 13, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 179, December 14, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 180, December 15, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXLV, December 11, 1890, p. 2; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXLVI, December 12, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXLVII, December 13, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXLVIII, December 14, 1890, p. 2 and p. 31; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCXLIX, December 15, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol XL, No.

On December 13, Harper's Weekly printed an alarming story entitled "The Threatened War." The situation was deemed very serious; almost 4,000 Lakotas were preparing to take the warpath. They would be reinforced by 6,000 Indians from the Indian Territory. The article quoted Miles, who reportedly believed that the largest Indian uprising ever was at hand. For this reason it was fortunate that Miles, "a friend to the Indians," was in command of the troops. Despite the alarming tone, Harper's Weekly emphasized that the government was to be blamed for the current situation. The spoils system was again blamed, and the president and the secretary of the interior were blamed for allowing the spoils system to take over. "We teach the Indian to distrust us, and when they naturally turn against us, we destroy them," the article concluded.⁷¹⁵

The Washington Post published an article criticizing the reservation system as inhumane, although reservations enabled the government to civilize the Indians. The Omaha Daily Bee believed that it was "...bulls, not bullets, beef and not grief..." that the starving Indians wanted and needed.⁷¹⁶ On December 15, both eastern newspapers published articles criticizing the government's Indian policy. The New York Times claimed that the causes for Indian wars lay in the agents' incompetence, business swindles, lack of supplies and, finally, in the friction between the War and Interior Departments.⁷¹⁷

The Washington Post quoted an army chaplain who listed the mistakes made in the management of Indian affairs. "Gross injustice [has been] done to the native inhabitants of the continent," the chaplain claimed. He added: "...we made some of them savages...in sheer desperation they commit those acts which are caused by constant invasion and aggression." The ghost dance was a result of the mismanagement of Indian affairs. "To expect a race to yield in any considerable degree in ten years is unreasonable," he claimed. The ghost dance was, according to him, only a religious ceremony where people were dancing naked, carrying

12,260, December 12, 1890, p. 2; The New York Times, Vol XL, No. 12,262, December 14, 1890, p. 5; The Washington Post, No. 4,621, December 14, 1890, p. 1.

⁷¹⁵ Harper's Weekly, Vol. XXIV, No. 1,773, p. 967.

⁷¹⁶ The Washington Post, No. 4,621, December 14, 1890, p. 2; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 174, December 14, 1890, p. 4.

⁷¹⁷ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,262, December 15, 1890, p. 6.

absolutely nothing. “Does this look dangerous?” he questioned. He believed that the danger rose from the hunger and suffering. “We should feed those we keep as prisoners,” he added, and said that the ghost dancers planned no outbreak. Even if the general feeling among the whites seemed to expect an outbreak, it was mostly the result of the fact that some Indian agents had become frightened and spread their fear across the country. However, according to the chaplain, things had gone so far that “...a bloody Indian war could be started by one drunken white man, and perhaps a drunken Indian.” But this was caused by the mismanagement and oppression of the white men, not by the ghost dance, the chaplain concluded.⁷¹⁸

These comments, very critical toward whites and the government, and very sympathetic toward the Indians were published suddenly, in the midst of the many reports of fighting between Indians and whites. Clearly the newspapers wanted to add some independent analysis to the alarming news reports. This additional information was sought from various sources: government officials, army personnel, special agents, and even an anonymous army chaplain. The Omaha Daily Bee, however, relied heavily on its correspondents on location. Interestingly these “additional” or “supplementary” articles and editorials seemed to appear almost simultaneously in the four newspapers, almost as though they unanimously decided that it was time to change the tone of the news reporting. Harper’s Weekly contributed with only a few articles, written in what could be called a romantic style, a style that the magazine had employed for years. It, however, was also clearly sympathizing with the Indians, and basically blamed the government for the present difficulties.

6.3.2. First Blood and Chaos

“The Last of Sitting Bull” was the headline in The New York Times on December 16, and The Washington Post noted simply: “Sitting Bull Shot.” “Sitting Bull’s Last Fight,” reported the Omaha Daily Bee and the Chicago Tribune headline was, “Sitting Bull Shot Dead.” All four newspapers published several articles regarding Sitting Bull’s death, although admitting that the only thing that was

⁷¹⁸ The Washington Post, No. 4,622, December 15, 1890, p. 1. More about news reporting during December 1-15 in, for example, Kolbensschlag 1990, pp. 43-53.

certain was that a fight had occurred, and Sitting Bull, with several other Indians, was dead. No one seemed to know what really happened, whether Sitting Bull tried to escape or whether he tried to resist arrest. The general understanding was that Sitting Bull was going to leave the reservation, and that when the Indian policemen tried to arrest him, he made a desperate attempt to escape and was then killed by the policemen. The Chicago Tribune claimed that Sitting Bull's men attacked the Indian policemen before they were even able to demand Sitting Bulls' surrender. General Miles defended the attempted arrest, because he was convinced that Sitting Bull was going to lead more than 300 warriors to the Badlands. According to The Washington Post, Miles did not believe that Sitting Bull's death would cause any general outbreak. On the contrary, he believed that it would crush the ghost dancers' spirit, but admitted also that it "...may render them desperate and cause them to fight."⁷¹⁹

None of the papers could give exact particulars of the events, but they tried to find information through army officers and Agent McLaughlin. All papers published McLaughlin's report to the Secretary of the Interior. In this report McLaughlin defended his actions and decisions.⁷²⁰ The papers also published an article expressing the general feeling among the settlers living around the Lakota reservations: "The arch villain is dead," and "...before another sun has set Sitting Bull's celebrated chorus of dancers will be good Indians or prisoners," paraphrasing the old saying, "the only good Indian is a dead Indian."⁷²¹

Sitting Bull's death caused much speculation in the newspapers. There were reports of fleeing Indians and pursuing soldiers, reports of battles, and reports that denied any hostilities. The general sentiment, however, was that because Sitting Bull was killed by the Indian police, his blood was not on the hands of the whites.

⁷¹⁹ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCL, December 16, 1890, p. 1 and p. 6; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 181, December 16, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,263, December 16, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,623, December 16, 1890, p. 1. See also, chapters 3 and 5.

⁷²⁰ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCL, December 16, 1890, p. 1 and p. 6; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 181, December 16, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,623, December 16, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,263, December 16, 1890, p. 1. Agent McLaughlin's report and his account of the events is studied in, chapter 4.

⁷²¹ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCL, December 16, 1890, p. 1 and p. 6; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 181, December 16, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,263, December 16, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,623, December 16, 1890, p. 1.

In the midst of all these mixed news reports, there was an article in The Washington Post in which a merchant offered to pay \$800 for Sitting Bull's skin. At this point, official comments made by the president, several army officers and Secretary Proctor all expressed regret at Sitting Bull's death. They hoped that it would eventually have favorable results.⁷²²

The New York Times published two articles describing Sitting Bull's life. These articles portrayed him as a cruel, sagacious, bloodthirsty enemy of the whites, who was to be blamed for the death of Colonel Custer as well as for the ghost dance. Because he was "...well aware...of the political value of a Messiah," there was no doubt that he was behind the whole ghost dance hysteria. Finally, the paper compared his death to "...the slaying of a rogue elephant...though no quadruped ever did so much widely-extended and long-continued mischief as Sitting Bull." The Chicago Tribune also published articles in which such people as Buffalo Bill, Agent McLaughlin and General Miles expressed their views on Sitting Bull. Although the tone in these interviews was that Sitting Bull deserved his fate, a certain feeling of respect toward the dead leader could be detected in these comments. He was a man with "...more brains than courage," explained The Chicago Tribune, more of a politician than a warrior.⁷²³

The New York Times continued with a similar tone on December 17 and December 18. Two articles were published that described the events surrounding Sitting Bull's death quite accurately. The first, however, ended with a comment that the Indian police made "...a good Indian of him." The difficult situation on Standing Rock Reservation was also explained. The article described the powerstruggle among different chiefs, and between Sitting Bull and McLaughlin. It expressed firm belief that Sitting Bull saw his final chance in the ghost dance. "By nursing this doctrine [Sitting] Bull was fast regaining his old prestige," the paper claimed. It further noted that Sitting Bull "...was a shrewd politician and

⁷²² The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCL, December 16, 1890, p. 1 and p. 6; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 181, December 16, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,263, December 16, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,623, December 16, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,624, December 17, 1890, p. 1. For further commentary on newspapers and Sitting Bull's death see, for example, Coward 1999, pp. 184-191.

⁷²³ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,263, December 16, 1890, p. 1 and p. 4; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCL, December 16, 1890, p. 1 and p. 6. See also, Coward 1999, pp. 158-191. More about Sitting Bull in, chapters 3, 4, 5 and 7.

took advantage of the prevalent sentimental feeling.” The article on the following day suggested that although the facts were not yet known, the Indians were to be blamed for Sitting Bull’s fate. The army and the Indian police were praised for their actions. Somewhat surprisingly, despite all the negative reporting about Sitting Bull as a person, the paper also believed that his death “...has aroused much apprehension instead of easy feeling among whites roundabout.”⁷²⁴

An even more surprising article then followed those words as an army officer criticized the whole Indian uprising. “There is a great deal of humbug and political clap trap in the noise being made by the military officers on the frontier,” said the anonymous officer. He also claimed that “...these Indians despite all reports to the contrary are poorly armed” and “...the truth is that much more has been made of this threatened outbreak than the situation warranted.”⁷²⁵

The Chicago Tribune agreed that Sitting Bull’s arrest was necessary, but noted that Sitting Bull alone could not be blamed for the trouble. There were whites who shared the blame as well, and the article noted that the government should take better care of its wards. Although The Omaha Daily Bee portrayed Sitting Bull as a menace to peace, a bar to civilization, a savage and an enemy of the whites, it also described him as a great warrior, crafty leader and a man who possessed “...a devotion to his people, which among civilized mankind is called patriotism.”⁷²⁶

While analyzing the events surrounding Sitting Bull’s death, The Chicago Tribune and The Omaha Daily Bee also reported other developments on the Lakota reservations. “Slain by the Indians,” was the headline in The Chicago Tribune on December 17. More than fifty soldiers were reported dead after a bloody encounter with Indians. The soldiers were said to be on their way to apprehend the fleeing Sitting Bull people. At the same time both papers paid close attention to the effect Sitting Bull’s death had on the Indians of Pine Ridge. To their surprise no general stampede or outbursts of anger were expressed. On the contrary, hopes

⁷²⁴ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,264, December 17, 1890, p. 2; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,265, December 18, 1890, p. 2.

⁷²⁵ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,264, December 17, 1890, p. 2.

⁷²⁶ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLI, December 17, 1890, p. 4; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 182, December 17, 1890, p. 2 and p. 4.

for a peaceful settlement of the trouble were reported. The Omaha Daily Bee noted that the situation was still very delicate, since the full effect of Sitting Bull's death could not yet be predicted. The correspondent again apologized to his readers; it was impossible to gain accurate information about the Indians or the troop movements.⁷²⁷

Several days following Sitting Bull's death The New York Times and the Washington Post were filled with news of severe fighting between the "hostiles" and the soldiers. The news of a battle in which more than fifty soldiers and countless Indians lost their lives was repeated in the eastern newspapers. Settlers were reportedly killed, and their ranches burned by the "hostiles." These reports were partly denied by the military, but the general impression was of bloody encounters following Sitting Bull's death. Both papers reported that "...sounds of a battle..." and "...cannon firing has been heard..." but actual details of the fighting were lacking, even though the movements of the troops were followed carefully. The New York Times demanded an attack against the "hostiles," which would probably result in their annihilation. According to both papers, the hostilities were believed to be so severe that an uprising would take place also among the Southern Utes, Kiowas, Comanches and some tribes in Canada.⁷²⁸

The Chicago Tribune and The Omaha Daily Bee also printed reports about skirmishes between the troops and the ghost dancers. Their reports, however, were not as alarming as those in the eastern papers. Especially The Omaha Daily Bee seemed to be quite rational about the situation. An article listed all the problems the Lakotas had been facing for years, and told about the favorable development, in which more and more ghost dancers were coming closer to Pine Ridge Agency. Furthermore, both papers reported that a council was held at Pine Ridge Agency in which Red Cloud tried to convince the rest of the several thousand Indians to remain calm and quiet. Red Cloud regretted that there had been trouble, but said

⁷²⁷ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLI, December 17, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 182, December 17, 1890, p. 1.

⁷²⁸ The New York Times, Vol XL, No. 12,265, December 18, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,266, December 19, 1890, p. 2; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,267, December 20, 1890, p. 3; The Washington Post, No. 4,624, December 17, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,625, December 18, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,626, December 19, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,627, December 20, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,629, December 23, 1890, p. 1. For comparison see, chapters 3, 4 and 5.

that it was understandable that the soldiers would eventually kill those who refused to surrender. Both papers also now denied the previous report of the battle in which 50 men were said to have been killed. Instead, there was a skirmish on a ranch on Pine Ridge, and three Indians were killed. The Omaha Daily Bee, in fact, already reported this incident on December 14, since the Bee correspondent, Charles Cressey, took part in the skirmish.⁷²⁹

Interestingly, The Chicago Tribune quoted Miles, who believed that there was no hope for a peaceful settlement, since there could be up to 750 hostile warriors determined to fight it out with the soldiers. The Omaha Daily Bee also quoted Miles, but this time reporting the general's opinion that the situation was getting more favorable. This, despite the fact, that there were more than 1,000 warriors on the warpath, as the paper put it. Both papers, however, were concerned about the possibility that all the "hostile" Indians would join forces in the Badlands (See appendix 7, map 4). Sitting Bull's people were reportedly looking to get together with Big Foot, who would then lead a major fighting force toward Badlands, where the Pine Ridge ghost dancers still were camped.⁷³⁰ It is worth noting that now the estimates regarding the numbers of "hostile" warriors had dropped to around 1,000.

On December 20, The Chicago Tribune reported that Sitting Bull's band planned to avenge their leader's death: "The dead chief's band decide to lift some scalps." This, according to a reliable messenger, was the plan of approximately 100 warriors. Their plan, however, was revealed and it caused the settlers in the vicinity to flee to Fort Bennett. There was also a report of a lively skirmish between troops and several hundred Lakota warriors. The Omaha Daily Bee also reported this skirmish, and the Indians' plan to avenge Sitting Bull's death. Big Foot supposedly led the party. The paper, however, contradicted itself saying that approximately 30 of Sitting Bull's men had already surrendered as did Hump and

⁷²⁹ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 179, December 14, 1890, p. 1 The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLII, December 18, 1890, pp. 1-2; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLIII, December 19, 1890, p. 5. More about this incident in, for example, Utley 1963, pp. 143-144; Kolbensschlag 1990, p. 54; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 167-172.

⁷³⁰ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLII, December 18, 1890, pp. 1-2; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLIII, December 19, 1890, p. 5; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 183, December 18, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 184, December 19, 1890, p. 1.

Big Foot. The Omaha Daily Bee reported that Little Wound was extremely angry with the white officials for pitting Indians against Indians. In an almost romantic tone the article portrayed Little Wound as a magnificent chief in all his anger.⁷³¹

Little Wound was the focus of another article published in The Chicago Tribune on December 21. It was written by Emma C. Sickels, a schoolteacher on Pine Ridge Reservation, who visited Little Wound at his home at White Clay Creek. Little Wound explained to her all the reasons for the trouble, starting with broken promises continuing to the starvation of his people. He wished everybody to know that he wanted peace, but his heart was sad, since there was nothing left for the Indians. Sickels gave as her opinion that Little Wound had always been one of the most progressive and intelligent Indians; she strongly believed that he was a good friend, but when angered, a formidable enemy.⁷³²

Harper's Weekly focused on Sitting Bull and other noted chiefs at Standing Rock Reservation. The paper described the factions on Standing Rock, where Sitting Bull was the leader of the "hostile" faction, and Gall and John Grass were the "friendly" Hunkpapa leaders. Sitting Bull was portrayed as the major obstacle to civilization and the prominent ghost dance leader. John Grass and Gall were considered the most intelligible and progressive chiefs: "The strong faces of these two chiefs indicate their character, which unlike Sitting Bull, is fearless, upright, bright and progressive." Although the Sitting Bull faction was small, it was believed to be the most dangerous element, consisting of ambitious men who would be ready for war at any time. The paper also commented that the danger of war was imminent. The threat was considered to be great because never before had so many "...diverse Indian tribes been so generally united upon one single idea." The Indian fanaticism over this idea was reportedly so overwhelming that one single spark could precipitate an Indian war, far exceeding those led by Pontiac or Tecumseh. Despite this, however, Harper's Weekly suggested that the Indians were not wholly to blame. The current excitement was caused "...to some extent by unscrupulous white persons desirous of a war with the hope that it shall

⁷³¹ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLIV, December 20, 1890, p. 2; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 185, December 20, 1890, p. 1.

⁷³² The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLV, December 21, 1890, p. 25.

bring them employment, and in the end, in throwing open the reservation lands for settlement.”⁷³³ The article, clearly written before Sitting Bull’s death, was alarmist in tone, but continued Harper’s Weekly’s policy of placing a part of the blame on the white men.

The Omaha Daily Bee headline on December 21, read “Waiting for Developments,” indicating that nothing important was going on. The general feeling among the whites on Pine Ridge Reservation seemed to call for action. The army’s tactic of waiting and negotiating did not please everybody. The Omaha Daily Bee reflected this attitude by urging the army to go to the Badlands and end the trouble. If the army did nothing, the war was a farce. General Brooke was also quoted; he said that he did not understand the Indians, who promised one day this and another day that. One more peace effort, however, was going to be made.⁷³⁴

The following day “the peace party” was sent out. Miles believed that the party would succeed in bringing the ghost dancers to the agency, according to the Omaha Daily Bee. Other favorable developments were also reported; Hump was on his way to Cheyenne River Agency with 40 of Sitting Bull’s men. The paper also noted that so far the Indians had not killed any white settlers or soldiers, 23 Indians, however, were believed to be dead. The main concern now, according to The Omaha Daily Bee, was Big Foot. Colonel E. V. Sumner, who was leading the force sent to capture him, was expected to have “...a lively struggle.”⁷³⁵

On December 23, The Chicago Tribune and The Omaha Daily Bee reported that Sitting Bull’s band, now under Big Foot’s leadership, had been captured without resistance. The two eastern papers, The New York Times and The Washington Post, reported the same on December 24. General Miles believed that this force, had it not been captured before reaching the Badlands, “...could have massacred as many settlers as the Sioux did in the Minnesota troubles of 1862.” He also believed that Sitting Bull’s death left the Indians without a real leader. Since Big

⁷³³ Harper’s Weekly, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1,774, December 20, 1890, p. 995. See also, chapter 7.

⁷³⁴ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 186, December 21, 1890, p. 1 and p. 4.

⁷³⁵ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 187, December 22, 1890, p. 1. For comparison see, chapters 3 and 5.

Foot was now acting as a leader and was "...most defiant and threatening..." all trouble on Cheyenne River and Standing Rock Reservations was expected to end with his capture. Big Foot's Indians were reported to be protesting any plan to disarm them, but they were not believed to be planning serious resistance. Big Foot's capture was also expected to reflect positively on those who were still in the Badlands, since they no longer could hope to receive reinforcements from Cheyenne River Reservation.⁷³⁶

All four newspapers reported events among the "hostiles" in the Badlands, where the peace delegation sent by Brooke faced strong opposition and even threats against their lives. The general sentiment among the Indians in the Badlands was reported to be very hostile and, according to *The Washington Post*, Two Strike, leading the Brulés, announced that they would not surrender. The *Chicago Tribune* reported that some cowboys ambushed a party of Indians and killed at least one of them. Attention was again given to Sitting Bull's death. Agent McLaughlin's official report of his death was published, and Congress was reported to demand a full investigation into the matter.⁷³⁷

After Sitting Bull's death the actual news reporting continued in its usual contradictory fashion. The *Chicago Tribune* and *The Omaha Daily Bee*, however, took the situation somewhat more calmly than the eastern newspapers. In the wake of Sitting Bull's death all four newspapers published additional information about the Lakotas, Sitting Bull and the ghost dance. Even if Sitting Bull was to be blamed for his death, the actual celebration of his death ended quite soon. In fact, Sitting Bull, the arch villain, who was so critically portrayed while he was still alive, now began a slow transformation into a victim or even into a patriot, as *The Omaha Daily Bee* suggested. Interestingly Big Foot rose from relative anonymity

⁷³⁶ *The Omaha Daily Bee*, No. 188, December 23, 1890, p. 1; *The Omaha Daily Bee*, No. 189, December 24, 1890, p. 1; *The Chicago Tribune*, Vol. L, No. CCCLVII, December 23, 1890, p. 1; *The Washington Post*, No. 4,630, December 24, 1890, p. 1; *The New York Times*, Vol. XL, No. 12,269, December 23, 1890, p. 1. More about General Miles' opinions on Big Foot in, chapter 5. During the Minnesota war several hundred whites were killed and approximately 30,000 settlers fled their homes. The Indian casualties were also extensive. More about that war in, for example, Andrist 1969, pp. 27-68.

⁷³⁷ *The Omaha Daily Bee*, No. 188, December 23, 1890, p. 1; *The Omaha Daily Bee*, No. 189, December 24, 1890, p. 1; *The Chicago Tribune*, Vol. L, No. CCCLVII, December 23, 1890, p. 1; *The New York Times*, Vol. XL, No. 12,270, December 24, 1890, p. 6; *The Washington Post*, No. 4,631, December 25, 1890, p. 1. See, chapters 4 and 7.

to become the main enemy. Perhaps the papers were simply repeating General Miles's opinion of Big Foot.⁷³⁸

6.3.3. "The Ghost Dance War"

"Tricked by the Sioux," claimed The Washington Post on December 25. "Making for the Badlands," was the headline in The New York Times. Both papers were certain that Big Foot had escaped in order to join the hostiles in the Badlands: "If these bucks unite with Kicking Bear's band in the latter's stronghold, there will be a bloody fight before the redskins are induced to surrender again." The Washington Post added that several cowboys were going after the Indians, making their business to kill every Indian on sight, even though the army promised to capture all whites found illegally on the Lakota reservations. The Chicago Tribune only briefly commented that Big Foot eluded the soldiers and was heading toward the Badlands. The Omaha Daily Bee, on the other hand, joined the eastern papers in making big news of Big Foot's escape: "Good bye to peace parleying...It is now plainer than ever that a slaughter of reds is at hand."⁷³⁹

The Washington Post, however, tried to explain, why the whites were so afraid of the ghost dance by claiming that "...to most people a ghost dance means a preparation for taking scalps." The article also tried to express the Indian point of view, saying that "Indians, however, are engaging in it simply as a commemoration of the birth of the Christ." These words followed the exciting news that large ghost dances were being held by the Iowa, Kickapoo, Sac and Fox, Oto, Cheyenne, Arapaho and Creek tribes in Indian Territory.⁷⁴⁰

During the next couple of days all four newspapers reported bloody encounters between the Indians led by Kicking Bear and the soldiers. They also reported that the "hostiles" were surrendering in small groups at all Lakota reservations. This was believed to be the result of the delegation that went to the Badlands to talk for

⁷³⁸ See, chapter 5.

⁷³⁹ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,271, December 25, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,631, December 25, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLIX, December 25, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 190, December 25, 1890, p. 1.

⁷⁴⁰ The Washington Post, No. 4,631, December 25, 1890, p. 1.

peace. Those, who surrendered gave up their arms, which were mostly “...of very antiquated pattern.” For the first time the Indians seemed not to be as well armed as the whites generally thought. Even if disarming the Indians was seen as a dangerous job that could easily lead to a fight, it was considered necessary, The Washington Post noted. The Chicago Tribune printed an article about Two Strike, who was said to be playing baseball for the Badlands club. The article made fun of his name, but credited him also for his deeds on the battlefield where he earned his name.⁷⁴¹

At this point one thing that was even more unclear than the contradictory reports of fighting was the fate of Big Foot and his band. There were reports that he had already joined the forces in the Badlands, but there were also reports that he had been captured again. No one seemed to know where he really was; he had evaded all the troops that were sent after him. General Miles considered this very unfortunate, and believed that Big Foot deceived Colonel Sumner, who first captured him. The Chicago Tribune and The Omaha Daily Bee reported that the people in the Badland were starting to move their camp toward Pine Ridge Agency. This was seen as favorable development, although the Indians were still reported to be carrying on raids against ranches.⁷⁴²

Harper’s Weekly published two lengthy articles relating to the Lakotas and to the ghost dance on December 27. The first, an editorial, expressed the wish that Sitting Bull’s death, while tragic, would result in a peaceful end to the trouble. The article was of the opinion that there was not enough evidence to support Miles’s claims that the ghost dance was a plot far exceeding that of Pontiac’s. The paper again emphasized that the spoils system was to be blamed for the trouble, and demanded its dismantling. “Profound dissatisfaction there certainly is, and even suffering from hunger,” believed the paper. It further stated that the trouble

⁷⁴¹ The Washington Post, No. 4,633, December 27, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,272, December 26, 1890, p. 2; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,273, December 27, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 192, December 27, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLX, December 26, 1890, p. 1 and p. 6.

⁷⁴² The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLXII, December 28, 1890, p. 4; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 192, December 27, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,633, December 27, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,272, December 26, 1890, p. 2; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,273, December 27, 1890, p. 1. See also, Kolbensschlag 1990, pp. 61-62. For comparison see, chapters 3, 4 and 5.

was caused by “...the bad faith of the white man...when promises have been faithfully kept, there has been little serious trouble.” Even education toward civilization would succeed better with a “...more humane and honest course.”⁷⁴³

Another article, written by Frederic Remington, appeared on December 27. He speculated on the benefits of employing Indians - Lakotas as well as other tribes - as regular cavalry. He believed that Indians made excellent soldiers, since it suited their lifestyle. They could be organized as troops based on their traditional tribes and bands. Every village would create a force and the officer would be the head of the village. This would create a semi-civilized military class that would eventually become self-supporting. Furthermore, the Indians respected the soldiers and vice versa. Remington believed that trying to make the Indians farmers would fail, and so would the entire government Indian policy, which he called a “...gross case of mismanagement.” Remington understood Indians who took up the ghost dance: “...when he [the Indian] thinks of being a pure and simple farmer it chills his soul, and he welcomes the ghost dance, and would welcome anything else which would take him from his lazy starvation of the agency.” Because of all this mismanagement, thousands of soldiers were now forced to sleep in the snow in this military campaign where they were called to “...shoot down a people who have the entire sympathy of every soldier in the ranks.”⁷⁴⁴

On December 28, The New York Times described the ghost dancers’ Stronghold in the Badlands. It was said to be skillfully fortified and impenetrable. The Indians were holding immense stocks of provisions inside the fort. At the end of this article were corrections to the previous day’s news. Printed in very small letters, the paper declared that there was no foundation for the news of skirmishes between the Indians and the soldiers, nor in the reports of murdered ranchmen. “As the military authorities here are aware, not a shot has been exchanged between the Indians and troops.”⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴³ Harper’s Weekly, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1,1775, p. 1002.

⁷⁴⁴ Harper’s Weekly, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1,1775, p. 1002 and pp. 1004-1006.

⁷⁴⁵ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,274, December 28, 1890, p. 2. Interestingly, the newspapers wrote quite often about the ghost dancers’ Stronghold, even though none of the newspapermen ever saw the actual place. They relied purely on secondhand information. (Kolbensschlag 1990, pp. 45-46)

Senator Henry L. Dawes



Library of Congress

Major General Nelson A. Miles



Nebraska State Historical Society

Brigadier General John R. Brooke



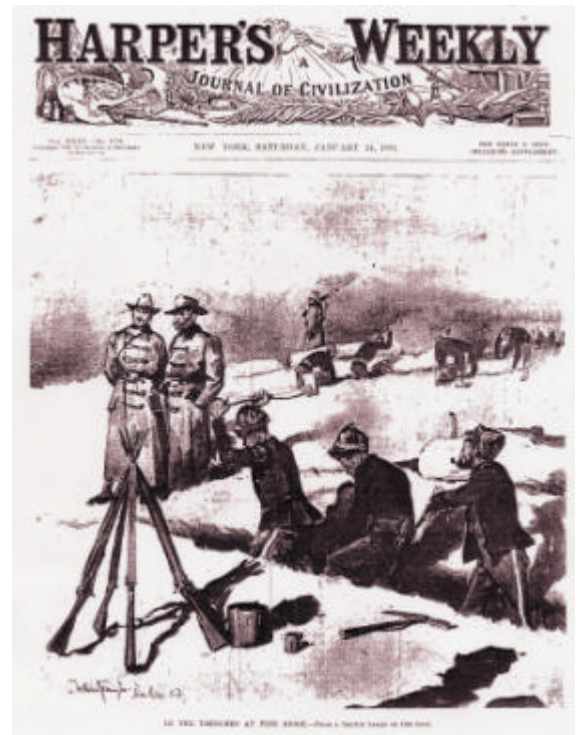
The National Archives

An Indian Scout



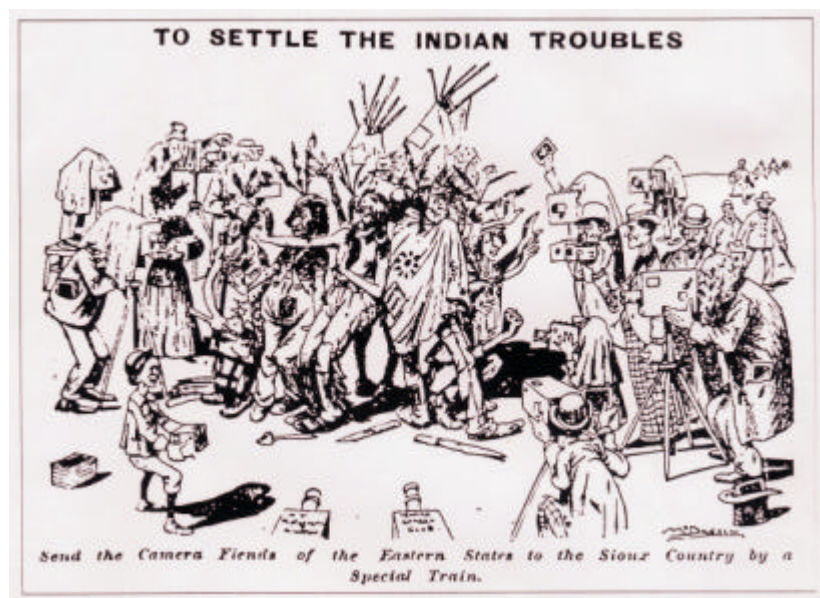
The Harper's Weekly Magazine

Digging The Trenches at Pine Ridge



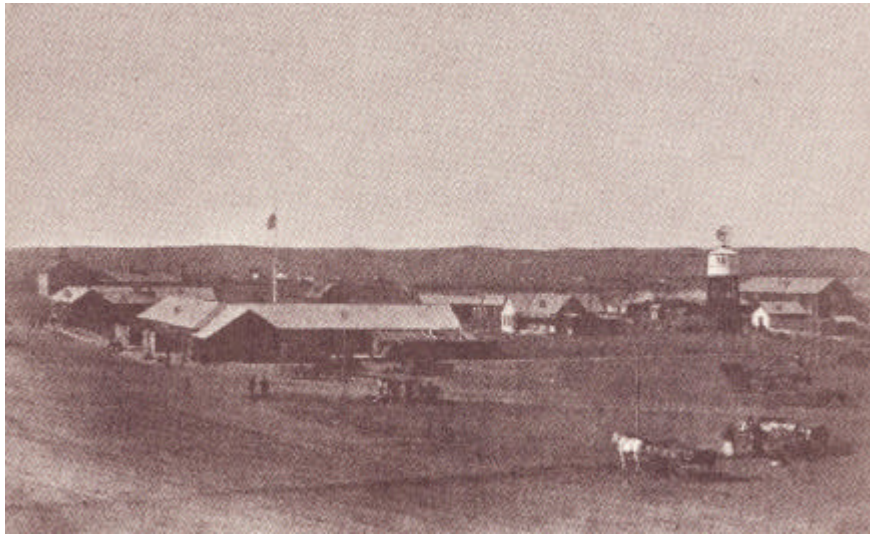
The Harper's Weekly Magazine

"Indian Troubles"



The New York World, November 30, 1890, adapted from Kolbenschlag, George R., Whirlwind Passes. News Correspondents and the Sioux Indian Disturbances of 1890-1891

The Pine Ridge Agency



The National Archives

Agent Daniel F. Royer



Adapted from South Dakota History, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1974

That day both eastern papers tried to present the Indian point of view on the ghost dance. According to *The Washington Post*, dancing was a natural Indian ceremony; the ghost dance was only a way for Indians to express their feelings. The paper also commented on the character of Sitting Bull, who was not originally a chief, but rose to power by his own merits, like Napoleon in Europe. *The New York Times* published an article about Indian life in general and their "...peculiar social system." The article ended by saying that the Indian was much like the white man, with both good and bad characteristics.⁷⁴⁶

The *Chicago Tribune* and *The Omaha Daily Bee* went even further in an attempt to understand the Lakotas. The *Omaha Daily Bee* reported extensively about the promises the government had broken with the Lakotas, the destruction of the buffalo, the failed attempts by the Lakotas to take up farming, and the reduction of the Lakota reservations, concluding that they understandably felt cheated. "...Under these circumstances it is not in human nature not to be discontented and restless, even turbulent or violent...they have been hungry, cold and sick...to the great mass of them should be extended sympathy, help and last, but not least, justice." The *Chicago Tribune* approved of Miles's suggestion that the best way to treat the Lakotas, was to put army officials in charge of the reservations. The paper especially accused Agent McLaughlin for taking personal advantage of his post. He had, according to *The Chicago Tribune*, amassed a huge fortune during his almost fifteen years as agent on Standing Rock Reservation. Sitting Bull officially complained about McLaughlin's methods, which caused the agent to cut off the Indians' rations. This led to ghost dancing and to Sitting Bull's death, claimed the paper. Thus *The Chicago Tribune* blamed Agent McLaughlin for Sitting Bull's death.⁷⁴⁷

Despite these analytical comments, *The Chicago Tribune* and *The Omaha Daily Bee* correspondents continued to warn of a possible war. "A Decisive Fight Imminent," and "News of Bloodshed May Be Expected Within 48 hours," were some of the headlines on December 28. According to *The Omaha Daily Bee*, there

⁷⁴⁶ *The Washington Post*, No. 4,634, December 28, 1890, p. 16; *The New York Times*, Vol. XL, No. 12,274, December 28, 1890, p. 17.

⁷⁴⁷ *The Omaha Daily Bee*, No. 193, 1890, p. 3 and p. 14; *The Chicago Tribune*, Vol. L, No. CCCLXII, December 28, 1890, p. 4. For comparison see, chapters 3,4 and 5.

were in the Badlands more than 800 heavily armed warriors, assisted by 500 able squaws spoiling for a fight. The article also claimed that the ghost dancers, who were continuing their depredations, killed the members of the so-called peace party. The Chicago Tribune also expressed fear that the peace negotiators had lost their lives. Both papers, however, contradicted themselves by noting that the ghost dancers were peacefully moving toward Pine Ridge Agency, and that Big Foot was the only cause for concern. The Omaha Daily Bee also published a picturesque story of Christmas in the field with the United States army.⁷⁴⁸

Big Foot's capture was the major news on December 29. Both eastern papers and The Omaha Daily Bee were convinced that the war was now coming to an end, since Short Bull with a band of 400 ghost dancers was reported to be on his way to Pine Ridge Agency. The Omaha Daily Bee reported that Big Foot came forward carrying a white flag to meet with Major Samuel Whiteside, and after a short parley surrendered peacefully. General Miles was very pleased and expressed his gratitude to the friendly chiefs who persuaded the ghost dancers to move closer. It was now believed that no more lives would be lost. The New York Times quoted Miles, who was very disappointed in the government and the way it treated the Indians. He was certain that civilization was the only way for the Indians, but before that could happen, the government needed to support its dependents. He said that he did not want to bring upon the people of the United States "...the national disgrace of starving our dependents into rebellion and then killing them for rebelling." The Omaha Daily Bee, however, once again contradicted itself by saying that Big Foot's surrender was not made in good faith and could still lead to a battle where the soldiers would "...have the drop on the prisoners."⁷⁴⁹

"Battle with Indians," "Desperate Act of Treachers," "Big Foot's Treachery Precipitates a Battle," "A Bloody Battle," "Redskins All Wiped Out," were a few of the major headlines on December 30. All four newspapers and Harper's Weekly designated much space to accounts of this bloody encounter. Harper's

⁷⁴⁸ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 193, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLXII, December 28, 1890, p. 4.

⁷⁴⁹ The Washington Post, No. 4,635, December 29, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,275, December 29, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 194, December 29, 1890, p. 1.

Weekly articles, however, were published in late January and early February. The tone of these articles varied only slightly from one paper to another. The New York Times described the battle at Wounded Knee objectively saying that the Indians were in very sullen and ugly mood because the women and children had no food and were harassed by troops. The fight occurred when the army tried to disarm the Indians. Then, “Big Foot’s braves turned upon their captors” and “...the Indians were shot down ruthlessly.”⁷⁵⁰

An article in The Washington Post declared that the 7th Cavalry once again displayed its bravery in action: “The troops were taken at a disadvantage by the treacherous foe,” explained the paper. The paper believed that the survivors of the 7th Cavalry would now punish the “hostiles” severely. The article suggested that the Indians probably wanted revenge for Sitting Bull. The article in The Chicago Tribune reported in a similar tone, suggesting that the Indians opened fire on the unsuspecting soldiers who then fired back, killing most of the Indians. The article noted that after the first volley the Indians were killed regardless of their age or sex. Still, the members of the 7th Cavalry “...have once again shown themselves to be heroes in deeds of daring.” Harper’s Weekly accounts of the battle appeared on January 24 and February 7. These articles were similar in nature to those of The Washington Post and The Chicago Tribune. Only the Indians were to be blamed; the soldiers performed excellently at a most critical time, and at Wounded Knee the largest Indian uprising was crushed. This, according to the paper, was accomplished by wise and excellent use of the United States troops.⁷⁵¹

Most notable of the articles on December 30 was the one written by Charles Cressey of the Omaha Daily Bee. Cressey took the field personally with Major

⁷⁵⁰ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,275, December 30, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,636, December 30, 1890, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 195, December 30, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLXIV, December 30, 1890, p. 1; Harper’s Weekly, Vol. XXXV, No. 1,779, January 24, 1891, frontpage and pp. 59-61; Harper’s Weekly, Vol. XXXV, No. 1,781, February 7, 1891, pp. 106-107. For further commentary on newspaper accounts relating to the massacre of Wounded Knee and its aftermath see, Watson 1943, pp. 213-214; Kolbensclag, pp. 63-74. A good selection of photographs relating to the Wounded Knee massacre can be found in, *Eyewitness at Wounded Knee* (ed. Jensen & Ricker & Carter 1991), pp. 102-117 and pp. 130-132.

⁷⁵¹ The Washington Post, No. 4,636, December 30, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLXIV, December 30, 1890, pp. 12; Harper’s Weekly, Vol. XXXV, No. 1,779, January 24, 1891, frontpage and p. 61; Harper’s Weekly, Vol. XXXV, No. 1,781, February 7, 1891, pp. 106-107.

Samuel Whiteside and was present when Big Foot surrendered. By the time of the attempted disarmament, Cressey was standing very close to the Indian men, who were sitting in front of Big Foot's tent. Thus Cressey evidently witnessed at least parts of the battle. His article in *The Omaha Daily Bee* described the events leading to the actual disarmament of Big Foot's people quite accurately. Like the other newspapers, *The Omaha Daily Bee* reported that the Indians opened fire on the soldiers, who were taken totally by surprise. The article continued by saying that the army would not "...entertain nice feelings towards the hostiles now" and expressed the opinion that it was time for the army to act and punish the treacherous Indians, who killed so many of the soldiers of the 7th Cavalry: "The country will not shed many tears, if the treacherous murderers of Captain Wallace and his men are sent to keep company with Sitting Bull." It also referred to the previous day's article that claimed that the Indians had not surrender in good faith.⁷⁵²

None of the newspapers really knew what actually happened, but the events were described accurately until the actual fight. It was generally believed that the Indians fired the first shot that inaugurated the battle. All four newspapers concluded that the Indians were fully responsible, and that the military showed great heroism. At this point, December 30, while the events during the battle were unclear, it seemed obvious to the newspapers that almost the entire Big Foot band was annihilated. The army officers and officials in Washington believed that the Indians wanted revenge for Sitting Bull's death. All the papers reported extensively about the fighting that followed the battle at Wounded Knee, including the attack against Pine Ridge Agency and other skirmishes. Even the so-called friendly Indians were reported to be fleeing from Pine Ridge Agency. A bloody war was expected.⁷⁵³

It seems, in fact, very likely that the other newspapers studied here received the particulars of the fight at least partly through *The Omaha Daily Bee* and its

⁷⁵² *The Omaha Daily Bee*, No. 195, December 30, 1890, p. 1. See also, Watson 1943, pp. 212-215; Kolbenschlager 1990, pp. 63-65.

⁷⁵³ *The New York Times*, Vol. XL, No. 12,275, December 30, 1890, p. 1; *The Washington Post*, No. 4,636, December 30, 1890, p. 1; *The Omaha Daily Bee*, No. 195, December 30, 1890, p. 1 and p. 4; *The Chicago Tribune*, Vol. L, No. CCCLXIV, December 30, 1890, pp. 1-2. See also, Kolbenschlager 1990, pp. 63-74.

correspondent Charles Cressey. After the battle, Cressey and a few other newspaper correspondents who were also present at Wounded Knee got together at a trading store close to the battlefield. There they compared notes and wrote the story of Wounded Knee. By 8 o'clock in the evening their story was delivered to the telegraph office at Rushville, Nebraska. The correspondents at Pine Ridge, however, had for weeks followed a system that allowed one correspondent's story each day to be sent first through the telegram. On December 29, the lucky person who got to wire first was William F. Kelley of the Nebraska State Journal. Cressey and his companions had to wait their turn. The first news of the battle of Wounded Knee reached the major newspapers through Kelley, a man, who was not a professional correspondent, but whom the other correspondents had ridiculed for being a "tenderfoot" thoroughly unfamiliar with Indians. Although Kelley's dispatch was the first to be sent, other newspapers used Cressey's story widely.⁷⁵⁴

The newspapers approached the Wounded Knee affair and its aftermath on the last day of the year 1890 somewhat differently. The Washington Post reported about the second fight between the soldiers and the Indians, where Two Strike was reported to have faced defeat. "More than 30-40 Sioux warriors bite the dust," the paper reported, although it admitted that the information it received was contradictory. Articles in The Omaha Daily Bee and The Chicago Tribune also mentioned several skirmishes between Indians and soldiers. Especially noteworthy was the battle at Drexel Mission, where the 7th Cavalry was reported to have been surrounded and almost wiped out by as many as 1,000-2,000 Lakota warriors. These two papers painted a picture of full-scale warfare waged on the fields surrounding Pine Ridge Agency. Both papers published Cressey's latest account of the events at Wounded Knee in which Cressey basically blamed the Indians for treacherousness and portrayed the 7th Cavalry as heroic victims. The women and children were not killed on purpose, but still the encounter was "The

⁷⁵⁴ See, Watson 1943, pp. 212-214; Kolbenschlager 1990, pp. 62-72. William Kelley actually took part in the fight and reportedly killed at least one Indian. Among the newspaper correspondents he was known as a man who believed and reported everything that he heard. When told that an Indian chief had visited the agency, he wrote in his article that Chief Wounded Knee had been secretly at the Pine Ridge Agency. He did not then realize that Wounded Knee was a creek, not a person. (Kolbenschlager 1990, p. 23) Kelley's account of the battle was later published by the Nebraska Historical Society. See, Kelley 1892, *passim*.

greatest slaughter of redskins of many a year,” Cressey wrote. The Omaha Daily Bee also quoted Miles, who believed that the Wounded Knee battle was a good lesson for the Lakotas. The general was not surprised that it happened to Big Foot, since according to him, the Big Foot people were “...most desperate.”⁷⁵⁵

The New York Times also reported about the fight between Two Strike and the soldiers, but the different approach it took was published on page four. “The Indian Massacre” was the headline, and the article claimed: “It would be an abuse of language to describe as a battle the encounter that took place on Monday...” The event was called an act of desperation and insanity by the Indians, who were driven to fight, because they knew that by giving up their arms “...they were sealing their own doom.” The paper noted that the Indians’ last stand was a heroic attempt that would have been “...besung and bepainted” had it been made, for example, by the French army. The New York Times wanted to find a scapegoat for the battle and accused the Interior Department, and ultimately the president, for allowing the Indians to be starved into revolt. The New York Times article concluded by saying that to “...feed and disarm the Indians is the only way to keep peace.” Harper’s Weekly expressed the same opinion on January 24. The government Indian policy was a disgrace, which had now led to bloodshed and great suffering. This article was very critical of government Indian policy, which was led by “...politicians, who have no knowledge of the Indian situation and no ear for the Indians.” The Indian was not a romantic figure, but a crafty human, who should be treated humanely.⁷⁵⁶ The Washington Post ended the year by reporting that President Benjamin Harrison and Secretary of War Redfield Proctor regretted the bloodshed, since the policy of the government had been to avoid it.⁷⁵⁷

The Omaha Daily Bee, The Washington Post and The Chicago Tribune started the year 1891 with reports of a full-scale war: “All on the Warpath,” “Redskins Want Blood,” “Reds in their Warpaint,” “Will Fight to Death,” “The Roar of the

⁷⁵⁵ The Washington Post, No. 4,637, December 31, 1890, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCLXV, December 31, 1890, pp. 1-2; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 196, December 30, 1890, p. 1. For comparison see, chapters 3, 4 and 5.

⁷⁵⁶ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,276, December 31, 1890, p. 1 and p. 4; Harper’s Weekly, Vol. XXXV, No. 1,779, January 24, 1891, p. 59.

⁷⁵⁷ The Washington Post, No. 4,637, December 31, 1890, p. 1

Cannon,” “Miles’s Flaming Sword,” “3,000 Braves on the Warpath,” were some of the headlines published between January 1 and 5, 1891. The New York Times, however, appeared to take a somewhat calmer approach. Its major headlines were: “Miles at Pine Ridge,” “Hostiles Growing Bolder,” and “Ready for the Indians.” The actual news reporting, however, was very similar in all four newspapers. There were mainly reports of severe fighting between the troops and the “hostiles.” The newspapers detailed the heroic mission of the 9th Cavalry to save the surrounded 7th Cavalry. There were reports of depredations, massacres, burial parties and escaping settlers. According to the newspapers there were thousands of hostile Indians, who planned to kill all the whites they could. Even Red Cloud was reported to be among the “hostiles,” as the Indians were now generally referred to. On January 4, however, The Omaha Daily Bee noted that Red Cloud was not hostile at all, but had been forced to join the “hostile” party. The Chicago Tribune also mentioned that Red Cloud planned to escape from the hostiles’ camp. Despite this, there were generally believed to be only a few friendly Indians left at Pine Ridge Agency. The only chief who remained loyal, according to the papers, was American Horse. “There are no friendlies now,” an article in the Omaha Daily Bee commented on January 1. All the papers took notice of Miles’s arrival at Pine Ridge. This was seen as an indication of serious trouble ahead. The general sentiment is probably best described by the following Omaha Daily Bee headline: “. . .the Bloodiest Battle of Indian History is at Hand.”⁷⁵⁸

Despite all these stories, there were a few articles that tried to shed additional light into the matter at hand. The Chicago Tribune commented on an article written by

⁷⁵⁸ See, The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 197, January 1, 1891, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 198, January 2, 1891, p. 1 and p. 4; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 199, January 3, 1891, p. 1 and p. 4; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 200, January 4, 1891, p. 1 and p. 4; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 201, January 5, 1891, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. I, January 1, 1891, p. 1-2; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. II, January 2, 1891, p. 5; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. III, January 3, 1891, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. IV, January 4, 1891, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. V, January 5, 1891, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,638, January 1, 1891, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,639, January 2, 1891, p. 4 and p. 6; The Washington Post, No. 4,640, January 3, 1891, 1 and p. 4; The Washington Post, No. 4,641, January 4, 1891, p. 1 and p. 4; The Washington Post, No. 4,642, January 5, 1891, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,277, January 1, 1891, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,278, January 2, 1891, p. 5; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,279, January 3, 1891, pp. 45; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,279 (same number as in January 3 issue), January 4, 1891, p. 5; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,280, January 5, 1891, p. 5. More about the January 1891 skirmishes in, chapters 3 and 5. For an account of the 9th Cavalry and its’ role during the ghost dance troubles see, Buecker 1997, *passim*.

General Miles for *The North American Review* in which he tried to explain the reasons for the current trouble. Miles once again expressed his views on the mismanagement of government Indian policy; the Lakotas suffered for the want of food, broken promises, and reduced rations. In this article, the general strongly urged the government to replace the Indian agents with military officers. Despite his sympathetic feelings toward the Indians, Miles believed that they were ready to wage a disastrous war against the U.S. Army. They were, according to him, better armed than ever before. The *Chicago Tribune* article agreed with Miles on many issues, but noted that the Indians never had any rights to the lands they lived on, since they were not using the land for farming. This, according to the paper, was justification enough for taking their lands. Additionally, the paper published an article on January 5, under the headlines: "How the Indians Live. Their Cold Tepees and Peculiar Social Customs." The article portrayed the Indians' poor living conditions in various parts of the United States.⁷⁵⁹

The *Omaha Daily Bee* published an article by Herbert Welsh of the Indian Rights Association, who also wrote very sympathetically about the Indians. He believed that the inexperienced agents who took over control of the Lakota reservations were the major reason for the trouble. On the same page, however, there was also a comment that the only way to civilize the Indians was to kill them. It was not a time to sentimentalize, but to punish, according to *The Omaha Daily Bee*. There were other arguments for and against the Indians, the ghost dance and even the military campaign. The most notable of these, perhaps, was made by General Schofield: "...the dances and the messiah craze in the first place were intended to be harmless, but during the past few days the Indians had come to the conclusion that they were to be disarmed for all time, and not having sufficient provisions, they feared suffering from the want of food and therefore preferred to fight their way out of the situation."⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁹ *The Chicago Tribune*, Vol. LI, No. III, January 3, 1891, p. 4; *The Chicago Tribune*, Vol. LI, No. V, January 5, 1891, p. 5. See also, *The North American Review*, Vol. 152, No. 411, January 1891, pp. 1-10.

⁷⁶⁰ *The Omaha Daily Bee*, No. 199, January 3, 1891, p. 1; *The Omaha Daily Bee*, No. 200, January 4, 1891, pp. 3-4.

The eastern newspapers also supplemented the news reporting with additional articles and editorials. These papers focused more on the army and on the Congress than on the Indians or the ghost dance. The Washington Post praised Miles for his merits as a soldier and approved his views for the future management of the Indian affairs. The New York Times concerned itself with the government and its Indian policy. The paper blamed the Indian agents, Congress and even the president for not being able to resolve the Indian question. The matter, according to The New York Times, was of extreme importance because the citizens of the United States were the real sufferers of these recurring Indian wars. The New York Times continued with even harder criticism on January 6, predicting that the bloodiest Indian war in the history of the United States was at hand, and blaming the current administration for the inevitable bloodshed. Both eastern papers agreed that the best solution was to let the War Department take care of the Indians. To replace the civil agents with army officers, as suggested by Miles, was the first step to be taken in order to permanently solve the Indian question.⁷⁶¹

January 6-7 the actual news reporting continued in its usual warlike fashion, but the focus shifted somewhat to the army's role in the Wounded Knee battle. The papers gave much space to Colonel James Forsythe, who was relieved from command. His actions during the battle were studied, but it was generally agreed that he did all that he could to save his men and even the Indians. To relieve him from duty was considered unjust and unwise. The papers quoted many seasoned army officers and regular soldiers who testified that warfare against Indians was of a special nature. Neither Forsythe nor the 7th Cavalry were to be blamed for the events that took place at Wounded Knee; the Indians alone were responsible. The fact that women and children were killed was attributed to the special character of Indian warfare; nobody could tell the difference between men and women in the battle, they all looked the same and the women participated in the fighting alongside the men. By now it was believed that the reason for relieving Colonel Forsythe from duty was not, in fact, the alleged massacre of women and children,

⁷⁶¹ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,279, January 3, 1891, p. 4; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No.12,281, January 6, 1891, p. 4; The Washington Post, No. 4,639, January 2, 1891, p. 4; The Washington Post, No. 4,640, January 3, 1891, p. 4. More about the struggle between the Interior Department and the War Department over the control of Indian affairs see, chapters 2 and 7.

but his incompetence in distributing his troops. This, according to Miles, caused the soldiers to shoot and kill each other. For the first time, however, the battle at Wounded Knee was called a slaughter and butchery. Some space was also given to a rumor claiming that Miles was killed by the hostile Indians. The Washington Post, however, quickly contradicted this rumor as well as other rumors of fighting between Indians and soldiers.⁷⁶²

On January 6, an article in The Chicago Tribune blamed the Democratic newspapers for exaggerating the situation "...in their eagerness to assail the Republican Administration." The article suggested that these Democratic newspapers together with the "Eastern sentimentalists," referring to the so-called Friends of the Indians, tried to blame the government and the United States army for Sitting Bull's death and the massacre at Wounded Knee. The Chicago Tribune article listed, what it called facts regarding these incidents. According to these facts, neither the army nor the Indian policemen could be blamed; Indian treachery alone was responsible for these tragic events. On January 6 an article in The Omaha Daily Bee also commented on the newspaper reporting. It however, expressed a somewhat different view. The article referred to the "...crazy reports" that were circulating in the eastern cities. According to these reports, the newspapermen were to be blamed for the trouble, which was started by "...smart country correspondents, who can partially read telegraphy." These men then sent their reports, which newspapers "...in their effort of notoriety," eagerly used.⁷⁶³

On January 6, The Washington Post published an article by Secretary of the Interior John Noble, who strongly opposed the idea of letting the War Department take over control of Indian affairs. The secretary noted that the Interior Department was not responsible for the current trouble, and that the stories of the Lakotas' starvation were much exaggerated. The Washington Post followed the

⁷⁶² The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. VI, January 6, 1891, p. 1 and p. 4; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. VII, January 7, 1891, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 202, January 6, 1891, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 203, January 7, 1891, p. 1 and p. 4; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,281, January 6, 1891, p. 5; The Washington Post, No. 4,643, January 6, 1891, p. 1 and p. 4; The Washington Post, No. 4,644, January 7, 1891, p. 1. See also, chapter 3.

⁷⁶³ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. VI, January 6, 1891, p. 4; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 202, January 6, 1891, p. 1. From the beginning of the ghost dance trouble, severe criticism was presented against the newspapermen at Pine Ridge by Government officials and other newspapers alike. (Kolbensschlag 1990, pp. 26-28 and pp. 89-90) See also, chapter 4.

story on January 7 with an article under the headline “Shall the Army Rule.” The paper focused on Secretary Noble, who fiercely defended the Interior Department’s way of managing the Indian affairs. Secretary of War Redfield Proctor equally fiercely opposed him and urged the president to turn Indian affairs over to the War Department. On January 8, the battle of wills was reported to be going on still, but now it seemed evident that the President was ready to approve Miles’s idea of putting army officers in control of the Lakota reservations.⁷⁶⁴

The actual news reporting, however, continued in the usual contradictory fashion. During the following days there were reports that several skirmishes had taken place, and as noted above, it was even reported that the Indians had killed General Miles. Other reports claimed the Indians were planning a major attack against the soldiers and the settlements, that the Indians were surrounded by soldiers, or that the soldiers were surrounded by Indians. Once again, the best way to summarize the situation from January 5 to January 15 is a quote from *The Omaha Daily Deed*: “Terrible rumors get afloat, to be contradicted in a short time” Some details, however, are worth mentioning. The papers claimed that after Wounded Knee there were practically no “friendlies” left at Pine Ridge Agency. Thousands of Indians were reported to be on the warpath. Even Miles was still of the opinion that a great conspiracy of all the Indians was going to result in a major battle. On January 8, however, the report was that surprisingly many Indians were still at the agency. A census conducted among the Indians showed that there were more than 3,500 Indians camped peacefully at Pine Ridge Agency. Despite all the rumors to the contrary, more and more Indians were reported to be arriving daily. Even Red Cloud was on his way to rejoin the friendly camp. On January 9, Miles expressed the opinion that there were no more than 300-400 Indian warriors ready to fight. Other reports had been speaking of from 500-4,000 hostile Indians.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶⁴ The Washington Post, No. 4,643, January 6, 1891, p. 2; The Washington Post, No. 4,644, January 7, 1891, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,645, January 8, 1891, p. 2.

⁷⁶⁵ See, The Washington Post, No. 4,644, January 7, 1891, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,645, January 8, 1891, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,646, January 9, 1891, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. VII, January 7, 1891, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. VIII, January 8, 1891, p. 1, p. 4, p. 6 and p. 9; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. IX, January 9, 1891, p. 5; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 202, January 6, 1891, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 203, January 7, 1891, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 204, January 8, 1891, p. 1-2; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 205, January 9, 1891, p. 2; The New York Times, Vol. XL, 12,283, January 8, 1891, p. 2.

On January 10, the tone in the newspapers changed slightly. Even though there still were reports of fighting and depredations, the general feeling was that the trouble was coming to an end – one way or another. The New York Times and The Washington Post were more of the opinion that the end would come only after a major battle, but The Chicago Tribune believed that the hostilities would end without further bloodshed. Young Man Afraid Of His Horse's influence over the "hostile" people was bearing favorable results, the paper reported. The Omaha Daily Bee also reported that several of the so-called hostile chiefs agreed to turn themselves in. The Indians were reported to be on verge of fighting each other; they were completely divided in the matter whether to surrender or to continue their resistance.⁷⁶⁶

The Omaha Daily Bee, however, complained that the Indians only promised to come to the agency, but never acted according to their promises. Red Cloud, especially, was to be watched. The Chicago Tribune believed that the "hostiles" were slowly making their way to the agency. Despite favorable developments there seemed to be a general apprehension that the eventual disarmament of the Indians could cause serious trouble. They were known to be afraid to give up their arms, and were expected to fight rather than to surrender their weapons. For this reason Miles prepared the agency for the Indians' arrival. The agency was turned into a garrison, reported The Omaha Daily Bee. The delicate situation, according to the newspapers, called for additional troops, and the papers followed the movements of the Nebraska Militia carefully. Indeed, according to The Omaha Daily Bee, the Militia was eager to get their hands on the Indians.⁷⁶⁷

"The Militia men want to wipe out all Indians," declared the Omaha Daily Bee on January 12, but the major news in all four newspapers was that the "hostiles" were

⁷⁶⁶ The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,285, January 10, 1891, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,285 (same number series as in January 10 issue), January 11, 1891, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,647, January 10, 1891, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,648, January 11, 1891, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 206, January 10, 1891, p. 1 and pp. 3-4; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 207, January 11, 1891, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. X, January 10, 1891, p. 1 and p. 6; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. XI, January 11, 1891, p. 1-2. See also, chapter 3.

⁷⁶⁷ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 206, January 10, 1891, p. 1 and pp. 3-4; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 207, January 11, 1891, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. X, January 10, 1891, p. 1 and p. 6; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. XI, January 11, 1891, p. 1-2. More about the Nebraska Militia in, Colby 1892, passim. See also, chapter 5.

not yet at the agency as they promised. Once again The Omaha Daily Bee managed to contradict itself. First it claimed: “They have started, that is all,” implying that the ghost dancers did not even plan to come to the agency; then, on the following page it noted: “hostiles coming closer.” Other papers simply reported that the Indians were moving, although slowly, closer to the agency. Still, the greatest concern was disarmament. The Chicago Tribune and The New York Times also reported the slow progress the Indians were making on their way to the agency, but more importantly they reported about a major skirmish between the army and the Indians. Shots were exchanged and some buildings were burned, reported the eastern papers.⁷⁶⁸

“Reds Finally Show Up,” was The Chicago Tribune headline on January 13. “Sioux Bury Their Guns,” was the Washington Post headline. The major news that day was that the “hostile” Indians were camped close to Pine Ridge Agency. They arrived peacefully, but there was still much tension around. The Chicago Tribune believed that Kicking Bear was trying to call for a large council where he could talk in favor of continuing the war. The Omaha Daily Bee reported that the Indians were much excited over the rumors that they were going to be disarmed, and that some of their leading men would be punished or sent away. All the newspapers described the great Indian gathering around Pine Ridge Agency. The Chicago Tribune described the women and children, who were greatly suffering from cold and lack of food. The army continued to watch the Indians closely, but Miles was reportedly convinced that all the trouble was over. The newspapers also noted the ongoing investigation into the Wounded Knee affair. The general opinion was that neither Colonel Forsyth, the 7th Cavalry, nor Agent Royer, were to be blamed.⁷⁶⁹

January 14 and 15, the newspapermen were busy describing the scene at Pine Ridge Agency. Indians and soldiers were coming and going, food was being issued, small groups were discussing matters, but no official negotiations were

⁷⁶⁸ The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 208, January 12, 1891, p. 1-2; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. XII, January 12, 1891, p. 1-2 and p. 9; The New York Times, Vol. 12,286, January 12, 1891, p. 5; The Washington Post, No. 4,649, January 12, 1891, p. 1.

⁷⁶⁹ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. XIII, January 13, 1891, p. 1; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 209, January 13, 1891, p. 1 and p. 4; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,287, January 13, 1891, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,650, January 13, 1891, p. 1.

started. Miles wanted to give the Indians a few days to “...recover their nerves.” Everything seemed to be peaceful, but the Indians were reported to be greatly scared, which still caused tensions. The Washington Post, in fact, reported somewhat differently; hundreds of “hostiles” escaped toward the Badlands, according to a headline, but the actual article was similar to those in the other three newspapers. Despite The Washington Post’s headline it agreed with the other papers in asserting that the major problem was to restore confidence. General Miles’s promises to treat the Indians justly, to feed them, and to let them keep their weapons for a while, quickly put an end to all hostile intentions. So, by January 14, the newspapers were able to report that all hostilities were over. General Miles triumphed and the Indians surrendered. Finally on January 15, 1891, The Chicago Tribune was able to declare in its headline: “Peace at Pine Ridge.”⁷⁷⁰

6.4. The Press – Its Role in the Ghost Dance Trouble

By mid-January 1891 the biggest “newspaper Indian war” was over. Undoubtedly the newspaper reporting played an important role during the whole duration of the trouble, and indeed played a role in creating the trouble. Immediately following the arrival of troops at Pine Ridge and Rosebud, after Sitting Bull’s death, and especially after the Wounded Knee massacre, the newspapers gave the impression of a full-scale war raging mainly on Pine Ridge Reservation. The papers were filled with descriptions of battle scenes, great heroism and Indian treachery. This was especially true of The Omaha Daily Bee. Even before the Wounded Knee affair, The Omaha Daily Bee created an impression of serious trouble brewing on Pine Ridge Reservation and even predicted that Big Foot’s surrender would lead to a massacre of Indians. This only a few days before it actually happened.

⁷⁷⁰ The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. XIV, January 14, 1891, p. 1; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. LI, No. XV, January 15, 1891, p. 2; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 210, January 14, 1891, p. 1 and p. 3; The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 211, January 15, 1891, p. 1 and p. 4; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,288, January 14, 1891, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,289, January 15, 1891, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,651, January 14, 1891, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,652, January 15, 1891, p. 1. More about news reporting between January 1-15, 1891 in, for example, Kolbenschlager 1990, pp. 77-86.

Still, it has to be noted that the Omaha Daily Bee correspondent, Charles Cressey, on location at Pine Ridge, was most likely reporting quite accurately about what he saw and heard around Pine Ridge Agency. He noted on several occasions that it was very difficult to tell what was really going on, since so many contradictory rumors were circulating. Obviously the Omaha Daily Bee correspondent decided to report almost everything, regardless of the origins or contradictory nature of the stories he learned. This, according to **George R. Kolbenschlag**, was true in the case of many of the correspondents at Pine Ridge. He maintains that the correspondents there were in a difficult position, since the officials did not give them enough information. In order to please their editors, they had to rely on what information – mainly rumors – they could gather. **Kolbenschlag** also believes that the newspaper editors were as responsible for the sensational nature of the news reporting as were the actual correspondents.⁷⁷¹

Despite the exaggeration and resort to “bad journalism,” Charles Cressey of The Omaha Daily Bee was able to give a vivid picture of life at the agency, and indeed, of the Wounded Knee battle. At times The Omaha Daily Bee seemed to echo the general frontier attitude of hatred toward Indians. This was true however, mostly in its additional, or editorial, commentary. Despite his sensational style, The Omaha Daily Bee correspondent was, in fact, quite sympathetic toward the Lakotas, especially before the Wounded Knee affair.

After Sitting Bull’s death, the eastern newspapers, The Washington Post and The New York Times, clearly shifted from blaming the Indians to sympathizing with them. This was even truer after Wounded Knee. The papers did write about Indian treachery, skirmishes and depredations, much like the Omaha Daily Bee, but these papers were the first to look critically at the army’s conduct during the troubles. These eastern papers, together with The Chicago Tribune, also characterized the Wounded Knee affair a “massacre” and a “slaughter.” They called for investigations into the matter, and they started to discuss the party politics that allegedly controlled the government’s Indian policy.

⁷⁷¹ Kolbenschlag 1990, pp. 16-18, pp. 72-73 and pp. 87-94. See also, Watson 1943, pp. 212-215 and pp. 218-219.

Interestingly, by January 1891, criticism of newspapermen was growing and party politics was becoming a major issue. According to newspaper historian **Elmo Scott Watson**, both political parties blamed the other for the mismanagement of Indian affairs. **Watson** believes that during the early part of January the newspaper reporting also became divided into two camps; there were papers that attributed the Wounded Knee battle to Indian treachery and denied charges that the troops deliberately killed women and children, and there were papers that called the Wounded Knee affair a slaughter and massacre. These papers blamed the army and Miles's personal aspirations for the massacre.⁷⁷² This division reflected the confusion that shadowed the Wounded Knee affair. In order to clarify the general confusion, the army and the government later conducted several investigations into the matter.⁷⁷³

To what extent the development of these two opposed positions can be attributed to the general political play in the East, or to the influence the Eastern Friends of the Indians had on the newspapers, is difficult to estimate. At some level **Watson's** analysis of the division within the newspapers does work. His analysis, however, presents some problems, since all four newspapers studied here contained arguments for and against the army, arguments for and against the government's Indian policy, as well as contained arguments for and against the Indians. Typically, the newspapers were contradictory in these issues also. For this reason it is very difficult to see any clear policy in the news reporting of anyone of the newspapers studied here. Thus no clear division into two different camps can be established as **Watson** suggests. Still, his analysis does work on a general level; throughout the trouble, and especially after Wounded Knee, the Eastern papers were more interested in the general management of Indian affairs than The Omaha Daily Bee or The Chicago Tribune. In fact, after Wounded Knee, the Omaha Daily Bee did not concern itself with the politics in the East at all.⁷⁷⁴

This, however, does not mean that the eastern newspapers were more accurate, or that they were more informative about the Lakotas or the ghost dance. It means

⁷⁷² See, Watson 1943, pp. 206-207 and pp. 216-217; Kolbensschlag 1990, pp. 72-74.

⁷⁷³ See, chapter 5.

⁷⁷⁴ See, Watson 1943, pp. 212-217.

that they provided readers with commentary and additional information written by their own reporters or “experts.” Such articles, not the news reporting, reflected the political play in the East. The Eastern papers simply were more involved in policy making than their Western counterparts. The Omaha Daily Bee also provided additional information and commentary, but it often reflected the sentiments in the West, or the actual – or rumored - events at the scene of the trouble. Neither of the eastern papers sent their own correspondents to the Lakota reservations. For the actual news reporting they had to rely on the stories of, among others, Charles Cressey of the Omaha Daily Bee. For this reason the news reporting was ultimately quite similar in all the newspapers studied here.

It is also noteworthy that the Eastern papers and the Chicago Tribune relied extensively on the expertise of General Nelson A. Miles and Agent James McLaughlin. To a certain extent this is understandable, since both men were in such positions that their information and opinions were considered not only interesting, but also reliable. Their opinions became thus widely known; both men were even quoted in the United States Congress.⁷⁷⁵ In fact, it is justifiable to say that these two men used the papers to further their own political agendas. Through Miles and McLaughlin, newspaper readers learned about thousands of fully armed Lakota warriors who were going to follow their leaders, especially Sitting Bull, on the warpath. It is worth noting that the newspapers eagerly took up the allegations made against Sitting Bull, and published estimations that gave the numbers of Lakotas in arms up to 15,000-27,000.⁷⁷⁶ The newspapers became even in this sense involved in the political play surrounding the Lakota ghost dance.

In the early phase of the ghost dance reporting the eastern newspapers, The Washington Post and The New York Times, were much more alarmed than the papers closer to the Lakota reservations. Their headlines were more alarming, and the tone in their articles was more negative and more suspicious toward the ghost dancers than in the articles published in The Omaha Daily Bee or The Chicago Tribune. Even if the articles were taken directly from, for example, The Omaha Daily Bee, the headlines were altered to give a more alarming impression. As

⁷⁷⁵ See, chapter 7.

⁷⁷⁶ See, chapters 3, 4 and 5.

noted above, Sitting Bull's death and the Wounded Knee massacre somewhat changed this pattern in the sense that the Eastern papers turned the "ghost dance war" into an issue of politics. The Omaha Daily Bee assumed a more hostile tone toward the Lakotas after Wounded Knee, but this could perhaps in part be explained by the fact that Cressey was present in the battle, and his excitement then followed him into his reports.⁷⁷⁷

The four newspapers studied here covered the Lakota ghost dance troubles very extensively. Harper's Weekly, given its weekly format, was not able to produce as many articles, but used its own correspondent, Frederic Remington, whenever possible. Even if the Eastern newspapers were somewhat more alarmist in the beginning, it was obvious that by the spring of 1890, all four newspapers considered the ghost dance as a dangerous and barbaric movement that needed to be stopped. Despite this, however, before the fall of 1890 the newspapers were relatively moderate in their comments regarding the ghost dance; they were concerned, not alarmed. Newspaper editors sought additional information from many sources: Indian agents, the commissioner of Indian affairs, army officers, and sometimes even from the Indians.

When the army was finally sent to the scene, the news reporting assumed characteristics toward the Indians that can best be described using the word the newspapers themselves so frequently used to describe the Indians – hostile. In part, the local settlers and traders, who saw their opportunity to gain profits from the army's presence and from an eventual war, brought about this hostility. **Watson** and **Kolbenschlag** both believe that many inexperienced correspondents were told stories that they, without hesitation, believed and filed with their editors as quickly as they could. During the ghost dance troubles, especially before the professional correspondents arrived on the scene, there were many "space writers," who wrote whatever they thought would sell. This was the real reason for the beginning of ghost dance newspaper sensationalism. **Kolbenschlag** also

⁷⁷⁷ See, Smith 1975, pp. 131-132; Kolbenschlag 1990, p. 72.

claims that the sensationalism was partly due to the writing style of the day and the popular perceptions of the “Wild West.”⁷⁷⁸

One paper that adopted a popularist tone, was Harper’s Weekly. Many of its articles portrayed life in the West in a rather romantic fashion. The magazine remained true to the style it had used since reporting the Indian wars of 1860s and 1870s. After the Wounded Knee affair, Harper’s Weekly joined the other newspapers studied here in blaming the Indians for the trouble. Before Wounded Knee, however, it was very sympathetic toward the Lakotas; the wrongs done toward them, and their suffering, were mentioned in almost every article. Although some of the articles were written in a romantic style, severe criticism toward the Indian policy was present in the articles written by Remington as well as in the editorials. Harper’s Weekly certainly saw the ghost dance trouble as a political issue resulting from bad government Indian policy.

The Lakota ghost dance became a closely watched trouble, a “war” of confusion, contradictions, exaggeration and distortion, indeed a showcase of sensational journalism. Despite this, however, I have to agree with **Kolbenschlag**, who has noted that all generalizations about the character or performance of the correspondents are difficult and even unnecessary to make. The reporters were a mixed lot and they reported for many purposes and from varied premises. Furthermore, there is no way to determine the extent to which the editors pressured correspondents to write sensational stories, and there is no way of knowing how extensively the editors rewrote their correspondents’ stories. Harper’s Weekly perhaps, was able to maintain its style and policy almost throughout the trouble, but since it published only few articles on the subject, it cannot be put in the same category as the other newspapers.

During the nearly four months of close coverage of the Lakota ghost dance, the four newspapers studied here went through many phases, from sympathizing with the Indians to extreme war sensationalism. Thus, any attempt to generalize their reporting is very difficult, and for the most part, unfair. Many scholars, who have

⁷⁷⁸ Watson 1943, pp. 206-212; Kolbenschlag 1990, p. 16, p. 58 and pp. 87-90. See also, Jones 1972, p. 659.

used the newspapers as additional material for their studies have selected a few articles, for example, after major incidents, such as the death of Sitting Bull or the Wounded Knee massacre, to create their generalizations of “bad journalism.”⁷⁷⁹ After these major incidents the reporting tended to assume - naturally - more alarming and sensational characteristics. If the newspapers are followed day-by-day from January 1890 to January 1891, the fact is that there were many attempts to report objectively from various viewpoints about the ghost dance, and about the Lakotas and their living conditions. There were many articles that were very sympathetic toward the Lakotas, but they were overshadowed by more alarming headlines and reports. For this reason, scholars also have largely neglected these less-obvious reports and given a generally negative interpretation of the ghost dance newspaper reporting.

Finally, even though there were many mistakes, exaggerations and contradictions, it has to be said that to some extent the newspapers, the correspondents and the editors alike, fell victim to the extremely difficult conditions on the Lakota reservations during the Lakota ghost dance “war.”

⁷⁷⁹ See, Kolbenschlag 1990, p. 16, pp. 47-48 and pp. 87-90. As examples of studies of the Lakota ghost dance that have randomly used newspapers see, Boyd 1891, *passim*.; Johnson W. 1891, *passim*.; Utley 1963, *passim*.; Smith 1975, *passim*.; Utter 1991, p. 15; Utley 1993, *passim*.; Coleman W. 2000, *passim*.

7. THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE GHOST DANCE

7.1. Weapons for the Settlers or Food for the Lakotas?

The United States Congress did not notice the ghost dance until December 3, 1890. Instead of focusing on the ritual itself, or on the ghost dancers, Congress was concerned with the white settlers living close to the Lakota reservations, who were thought to be in life-threatening danger. Thus, the United States Congress approached the problems resulting from the ghost dance solely from the perspective of the settlers.⁷⁸⁰

During 1889 and 1890, Congress discussed and decided to approve additional appropriations to several Indian tribes suffering from famine and disease. Funds were provided for the Arapaho, Yankton Sioux, Arikara and Mandan Indians among others, who were reported to be suffering because of the failure of their crops.⁷⁸¹ In discussions about the Lakotas, however, there was no mention of any major problems amo during that period. On the contrary, for example, on January 15, 1889, O. S. Gifford, the representative from Dakota Territory, claimed that Indians there had suffered no hardships during the time they had been under the territorial administration.⁷⁸²

During discussions on January 16, 1889, Congress painted a picture of the flourishing civilization in the Dakota Territory. The country was at peace, the Indians were educated, and Sitting Bull and savagery had given way to

⁷⁸⁰ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, p. 45. See, Colby 1892, pp. 144-146. The Congress was on recess from October to December 1890.

⁷⁸¹ About the issuing of rations see, for example, Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 3, January 21, 1890, p. 658; Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 12, June 4, 1890, p. 5961; Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 21, September 3, 1890, pp. 11633-11634; Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 13, June 2, 1890, p. 6739; Cong. Rec., 51st Cong. 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 21, September 30, 1890, pp. 11633-11634; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess, House Executive Document, No. 139, Vol. 33, Serial 2863, pp. 1-3. See also, The Washington Post, No. 4,479, July 23, 1890, p. 7; The New York Times, Vol. XL, No. 12,272, December 26, 1890, p. 3.

⁷⁸² Cong. Rec., 50th Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 20, Part 2, January 15, 1889, p. 909. North – and South Dakota became States in the fall of 1889 (See, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents 1789-1897. A Compilation* ed. Richardson, James D., 1898, Vol. IX, Washington D. C. 1898, pp. 20-21) For additional information about the early stages of South-Dakota's statehood see, Lamar, Howard R., *Perspectives on Statehood: South Dakota's First Quarter Century, 1889-1914*, South Dakota History, Vol. 19, No. 6, 1989, pp. 10-13.

civilization.⁷⁸³ President Benjamin Harrison continued in a similar tone a year and a half later in his annual message to the Senate in December 1890. He noted that the allotment of Indian lands had been carried out successfully.⁷⁸⁴

This, however, was not the case among the Lakotas. Thomas J. Morgan, the commissioner of Indian affairs wrote on May 8, 1890 and again in his annual report in 1891 that the allotment of lands on the Lakota reservations was, in fact, only beginning. Among several other tribes it was already completed.⁷⁸⁵ Two years after the passage of *The General Allotment Act (The Dawes Act)*, no actual allotments were yet made among the full-blood Lakotas on Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne River or Standing Rock Reservations.⁷⁸⁶ The allotment of Lakota lands occurred in the 1890s, following the ghost dance troubles.⁷⁸⁷ In his message, President Harrison noted that the Lakotas had not received all the appropriations due them. He strongly believed that this mistake needed to be corrected. This was the first high-level comment heard in Congress during the year 1890 sympathizing with the Lakotas. The president made no comments regarding the real problems, famine and disease.⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸³ Cong. Rec., 50th Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 20, Part 2, January 16, 1889, p. 849.

⁷⁸⁴ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 22, Part 1, December 1, 1890, p. 5. See also, Second Annual Message to the Senate, December 1, 1890 in, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents 1789-1897* (ed. Richardson 1898), pp. 107-129.

⁷⁸⁵ CIA to Senator Henry L. Dawes, May 8, 1890, NARA, RG 46, SCIAP, Box 57; ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, no. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, passim.

⁷⁸⁶ CIA to Dawes, May 8, 1890, NARA, RG 46, SCIAP, Box 57; ARCIA 1889, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 26, 1889, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 27, 1889, Report of Agent L. F. Spencer, August 23, 1889, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1889, p. 130, p. 134, pp. 151-152, p. 155, pp. 157 and p. 166; ARCIA 1890, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1890, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 25, 1890, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August, 28, 1890, Report of Agent, J. George Wright, August 26, 1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2841, pp. 36-37, p. 42, p. 46, pp. 48-49, p. 50 and p. 58. See also, for example, Textor 1896, p. 154; Paulson 1971, pp. 132-153; Smedman 1997, p. 171; Smedman 2001, pp. 313-346.

⁷⁸⁷ Henriksson, 1984, p. 210; Henriksson 1988, pp. 183-184. See also, Paulson 1971, pp. 132-153; Smedman 2001, pp. 313-346. The allotment of Indian lands continued in the twentieth century and, in fact, during the years 1900-1921 eight times more Indian land was allotted than during the years 1887-1900. (Henriksson 1988, p. 178 refers to, Lawrence C. Kelly, "*The New Frontier: The Twentieth Century West. Indians in the 20th Century West*," Cassette Curriculum, Everett/Edwards, Inc. Florida, 1979, a cassette recording)

⁷⁸⁸ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 22, Part 1, December 1, 1890, p. 5. See, Second Annual Message to the Senate December 1, 1890 in, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents 1789-1897* (ed. Richardson 1898), p. 117.

When viewed against this background, it is not that surprising that Congress sided with the white settlers when discussing the ghost dance. In fact, it seems that even before the ghost dance appeared, the Lakotas were portrayed in congressional debates somewhat more negatively than many other Indian tribes. The Lakotas' problems were not discussed at all, while other tribes all over the United States were receiving some relief. The Lakotas were mentioned in debates mainly when the issue was related to lands. This was the case, for example, when President Harrison tried to explain the motivations and justifications for the breaking up of the Great Sioux Reservation in a message to Congress in February 1890.⁷⁸⁹

When Congress started to discuss the problems caused by the ghost dance, its focus remained on protecting the white population, not on solving the problems of the Indians. On December 3, 1890, a proposition was made in Congress, that 1,000 guns and enough ammunition should be sent from federal warehouses to the states of Nebraska, South Dakota and North Dakota, so that the white population could protect themselves from Indian attacks. Secretary of War Redfield Proctor's letter that was introduced to the House of Representatives backed this proposal. The secretary pointed out that the proposed guns would help the people feel more secure.⁷⁹⁰

The congressmen believed that civilian fear of the ghost dance rose when nearly the entire garrisons from Fort Robinson and Fort Niobrara were sent to the Lakota reservations. The surrounding country was thus left unprotected and many settlers living close to the Lakota reservations left or planned to leave their homes. This exodus occurred despite the fact that the governors of the above-mentioned states had already distributed weapons to the settlers.⁷⁹¹

⁷⁸⁹ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 4, February 11, 1890, pp. 1149-1150 and p. 1164. See also, Special Message to the Senate and the House of Representatives, February 10, 1890 in, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (ed. Richardson 1898), pp. 61-62. About the partitioning of the Great Sioux Reservation see, chapter 2.

⁷⁹⁰ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, p. 45; Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 5, 1890, pp. 128-129, Letter of the Secretary of War Redfield Proctor, December 2, 1890, read in the House of Representatives on December 5, 1890.

⁷⁹¹ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, p. 45; Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 5, 1890, p. 129, Letter of the Secretary of War Redfield Proctor, December 2, 1890, read in the House of Representatives on December 5, 1890. As an example of the settler's sentiments see, Petition of Citizens of Chadron, Nebraska, November 26, 1890, NARA, SCIAP, RG 46, Box 117 and NARA HCIAP, RG 233, Box 106;

The weapons delivery proposal for the above-mentioned states was approved by the Senate on December 6, 1890, but only after the House suggested that weapons should be provided for the states of Montana and Wyoming as well.⁷⁹² Congress took a firm hand on the situation by sending up to 5,000 weapons and sufficient ammunition to the settlers. This, of course, could be viewed as a continuation of the policy that had already caused the army to occupy the Lakota reservations. The idea of delivering weapons to civilians, however, caused some discussion in Congress before the decision was finally made. Senator Daniel W. Voorhees of Indiana wanted to turn the Congress' attention to current Indian policy, focusing on the situation of the Lakota people.⁷⁹³

7.2. Attention Turns toward the Lakotas

Senator Voorhees opened the debate with an appeal to the Congressmen's Christianity. He claimed that the state of Indian affairs in general was so terrible that it was a crime before the eyes of God and man. The senator expressed amazement that Congress would decide to deliver weapons to settlers instead of feeding the starving Indians. He added, referring to his discussion with General Miles, that the Lakotas had been suffering for want of food for two years. This explained their desperation and determination to die with their guns in their hands rather than from starvation. Voorhees believed that the Indians were dancing "...the dance of death by starvation and the dance of desperation."⁷⁹⁴

Joint Resolution by the House of Representatives of the State of South Dakota (S 4894), NARA, SCIAP, RG 46, Box 117. See, chapters 4 and 5. See also, Colby 1892, pp. 146-148; Kelley 1892, pp. 31-32.

⁷⁹² Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 22, Part 1, December 4, 1890, p. 88; Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 22, Part 1, December 5, 1890, p. 129; Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 22, Part 1 December 6, 1890, p. 166. See, Henriksson 1988, p. 60.

⁷⁹³ Daniel W. Voorhees was a long term Senator and a Democrat. He was born in 1827 in Ohio, but was elected to the Senate as a representative of Indiana, where his family lived most of his life. More about Senator Voorhees in, *Speeches of Daniel W. Voorhees of Indiana. Embracing His Most Prominent Forensic, Political, Occasional and Literary Addresses*, (ed. Voorhees, Charles C.), Cincinnati, Ohio 1875, (introduction), pp. VII-XII; *Forty Years of Oratory; Daniel Voorhees Lectures, Addresses and Speeches*, (ed. His three sons and his daughter Voorhees, Cecilia), Indianapolis, Indiana 1897, Vol. I-II, pp. 1-7.

⁷⁹⁴ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, pp. 45-46. Parts of the Congressional debate is reproduced in, Johnson W. 1891, pp. 519-536; Coleman W. 2000, pp. 130-145 and pp. 150-153. See, chapter 5.

The remarkable point in Voorhees's speech was his demand for Congress to focus on the Lakotas' standard of living. According to the senator, this was the real problem, not the actual dancing. He wanted to put things in correct perspective and blamed the government's official Indian policy for the Lakotas' famine. Thus the government was responsible for the unrest that threatened not only the lives of the Indians, but also the lives of soldiers and civilians. According to Voorhees, no one had done anything to solve the problem. He believed that giving food to the Indians might have solved the entire ghost dance problem. However, he believed that things had developed so far that even this solution might come too late.⁷⁹⁵ About this, Voorhees was probably right. Issuing additional food to the Lakotas sooner during the summer and early fall, might have solved many problems. The crop failures in the summer of 1890, along with the reduction in rations, gave the ghost dance the new impetus it needed. Probably not even food would have entirely solved the problem in December 1890.⁷⁹⁶

Senator Voorhees's allegations and accusations encountered strong opposition in Congress. Most ardent was Senator Henry L. Dawes, the chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, who was considered the prominent expert on Indian affairs in the United States Congress. Dawes started by defending the basic approaches of the government's Indian policy. He tried to explain the problems that were related to it. According to him, there was no single solution to the Indian problem. That was why there had been so many changes in official Indian policy during previous decades. The latest idea that had been pursued was to try to make the Indians work like white men. This policy of forcing the Indians to work or starve was, according to Dawes, justifiable since it had been explained to the Indians and was based on law. The amount of the rations provided to the Indians would be gradually cut down each year, in order to make them realize the necessity of working for their livelihood. It is of interest to note that the amount of the rations the Lakotas were to receive was based on earlier treaties, especially the

⁷⁹⁵ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, p. 46. See, chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5.

⁷⁹⁶ See, chapter 3.

Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. Cutting down the rations without the Lakotas' consent was therefore actually a violation of those treaties.⁷⁹⁷

Dawes argued that reducing the Lakotas' annual appropriations was justifiable because their numbers had dwindled since 1868, when the treaty of Fort Laramie was signed. He did not take into account that this population loss was due to famine and epidemics. The senator added that nothing illegal was done toward the Lakotas during the previous year when the Sioux Commission induced the Lakotas to give away a great portion of their lands.⁷⁹⁸ According to Dawes, this action was also properly explained to the Indians and their leading men approved it when they visited Washington.⁷⁹⁹

In this case, however, the question could be asked as to, whether these leading men were in the position in Lakota society to make such a decision. Perhaps once again the whites saw the idea of leadership totally differently than did the Lakotas - as they had done many times in the past. In fact, approval of the leaders meant little, because The Agreement of 1889 could become law only if the different tribes of the Sioux Nation approved it according to the terms set forth in the 12th article of the 1868 Treaty. That meant that three-fourths of the adult males had to sign it; it did not matter whether the chiefs signed it or not. At the time of the chiefs' visit to Washington sufficient number of signatures had already been gathered. Legally the consent the chiefs gave in Washington meant nothing.⁸⁰⁰

Technically, Dawes was correct. The number of adult Lakotas who had signed was adequate, but whether the commission had worked morally or not, is doubtful. The actions and promises of the Sioux Commission caused much

⁷⁹⁷ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, p. 46; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 36, Vol. 25, Serial 2855, pp. 1-6; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No 37, Vol. 25, Serial 2855, pp. 1-4. See also, Dawes, Henry L., Past and Present Indian Policy, Address Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Missionary Association, Hartford, Connecticut, 1892, LC, HLDP, Box 43, Speeches 1890-1900. More about the annuities and the treaties they were based on in, chapter 2.

⁷⁹⁸ About the proceedings of the negotiations with the Sioux Commission of 1889 and the Lakotas see, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document, No 17, Vol. I, Serial 2610, passim. For additional commentary about the Commission see, for example, Greene 1970, pp. 41-72; Prucha 1986, Vol. II, pp. 638-640; Hoover 1989, pp. 57-94. See also, chapter 2.

⁷⁹⁹ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, pp. 46-47.

⁸⁰⁰ See, U. S. Statutes at Large, 25 Stat., Act of March 2, 1889, Sec. 28, p. 899; Treaty of Fort Laramie 1868, Article 12, AIUSD Vol. IV, pp. 2517-2525. See also, Colby 1892, pp. 176-177.

discussion in Congress. A petition presented in December 1890 to the House of Representatives stated that the government should fulfill the promises the Sioux Commission made, even though it made them without full authorization. Without those promises, the Lakotas might have refused to give up the land. The Lakotas expected to receive compensation for the lands they lost. Instead of getting an increase in their yearly annuities, as they anticipated, the annuities were reduced. Although the Sioux Commission did not recommend the cut in rations, the Indians could not be convinced that the reduction was not a result of the negotiations. This, according to Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs R. V. Belt was causing much trouble among the Lakotas.⁸⁰¹

Even though the Sioux Commission suggested that the annual appropriations for the Lakotas should have been maintained at their current level in order to avoid discontent, those appropriations were first reduced to \$950,000 and then to \$850,000 for the year 1890. This was \$150,000 less than the Lakotas had received for the years 1888 and 1889. Additionally, the decision to reduce these appropriations was made as late as in August 19, 1890, when the situation among the Lakotas was very critical. The supplies for that year were already exhausted. Congress also denied the amount of \$150,000 promised to the Lakotas by the Sioux Commission for educational purposes, even though both the commissioner of Indian affairs and the acting commissioner of Indian Affairs asked Congress to appropriate the necessary funds. The commissioners also urged Congress to

⁸⁰¹ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 8, 1890, p. 192; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 36, Vol. 25, Serial 2855, pp. 1-6; ACIA to Noble, December 4, 1890 in, 52nd Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, pp. 17-20; The Memorial of the Religious Society of Friends, In Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware NARA, RG 46, SCIAP, Box 117 and NARA RG 233, HCIAP, Box 106. For commentary on the tactics used by the Commission see, for example, *The Sioux Nation and The United States. A Brief History of the Treaties of 1868, 1876, and 1889, Between that Nation and the United States*, National Indian Defense Association, Washington D.C. 1891, pp. 21-27; Colby 1892, pp. 176-177; Greene 1970, pp. 45-63; *Sister to the Sioux* (ed. Graber 1985), pp.136-137; Utley 1993, pp. 268-280. About the Lakota conceptions of the promises made by the Sioux Commission see, Statement of Chief American Horse at a meeting on Pine Ridge on November 27, 1890 in, ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Nelson A. Miles, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. I, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 136. Also in, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 36, Vol. 25, Serial 2855, p. 6. See also, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., United States Congress House of Representatives, House Committee on Indian Affairs. Council Held with a Delegation of Sioux Indians, April 15, 1890, Unpublished Hearing, IUL, Microfiche, Card 1, pp. 19; 51st Cong., 1st Sess, House Committee On Indian Affairs, Minutes of Proceedings, January 7, 1890, p. 1.

follow the suggestion made by the Sioux Commission to compensate the Lakotas for ponies they lost in 1876 and 1877.⁸⁰²

The discussion in Congress soon shifted back to the possible famine among the Lakotas. Dawes admitted that Voorhees was correct when he said that crop failures had caused hardships for people, whites and Indians alike, in the midwestern states. He obviously could not deny the fact, since newspapers like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* reported the failure of crops and other problems the farmers faced in those areas.⁸⁰³ When talking about the Lakotas, however, Dawes emphasized that only those who already followed their “fanatical chiefs” to the warpath were suffering for lack of food. He assured the congressmen that nearly 25% of all Sioux were self-sufficient. He obviously tried to prove that the Indian policy had been successful for the Lakotas as well.⁸⁰⁴ The comments made by Dawes prove to be quite incorrect, when the Lakotas’ farming and their degree of self-sufficiency are more closely examined.

In 1889, before the Great Sioux Reservation was divided, the total area of the reservation was 12,845,521 acres. Of that, the Indians cultivated 17,681 acres. That was only 0,08% of the total area of the reservation.⁸⁰⁵ In addition, the area of

⁸⁰² See, CIA to B. V. Perkins, April 15, 1890, NARA, RG 233, HCIAP, Box 67, Papers Relating to the Sioux Indians; CIA to Noble, April 23, 1890, NARA, RG 233, HCIAP, Box 67, Papers Relating to Sioux Indians; CIA to Dawes, December 9, 1890, NARA, RG 46, SCIAP, Box 55, Folder 5; ACIA to Noble, December 1, 1890, NARA, RG 46, SCIAP, Box 55, Folder 5; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 36, Vol. 25, Serial 2855, pp. 1-6; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No 37, Vol. 25, Serial 2855, pp. 1-4; ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 133-134; ACIA to Noble, December 4, 1890 in, 52nd Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, pp. 17-20. The cut in the money appropriated for Lakota annual rations had been dramatic. For the year 1884 the annual appropriation was \$1,325 000 and by 1888 it had already been cut down to \$1,000 000. (52nd Cong., 2nd sess., Senate Executive Document, No 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, p. 21) For the suggestions made by the Sioux Commission see, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document, No 51, Vol. IV, Serial 2682, pp. 23-31.

⁸⁰³ See, for example, *The Washington Post*, No. 4,477, July 21, 1890, p. 6, *The Washington Post*, No. 4,431, August 18, 1890, p. 5, *The Washington Post*, No. 4,511, August 24, 1890, p. 1 and *The New York Times*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,132, July 16, 1890, p. 1, *The New York Times*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,143, July 29, 1890, p. 2, *The New York Times*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,150, August 5, 1890, p. 1. See, Lamar 1989, pp. 10-11. More about the newspapers in, chapter 6

⁸⁰⁴ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, pp. 46-47.

⁸⁰⁵ Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs J. D. C. Atkins, September 28, 1886, AIUSD, Vol. I, p. 405; ARCIA 1890, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1890, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 25, 1890, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August, 28, 1890, Report of Agent, J. George Wright, August 26, 1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol.

single farms was very small, averaging 2-4 acres, and the farms produced very little. The Lakotas engaged in farming were mostly half bloods, “squawmen,” or in some cases, belonged to the people considered “progressives.” The full-blood Lakotas, however, were seldom involved in farming activities. In 1889, as many as 79% of all the people living on the Lakota reservations were fully dependent on food supplied for them by the United States government. In actuality the number of Lakotas, especially full-blood Lakotas, fully dependent on government rations was probably much higher due to the 1889 and 1890 crop failures.⁸⁰⁶

We have to take into account the fact that a large portion of the land still in the Lakotas’ possession was totally unfit for farming. Many whites understood this. Elaine Goodale Eastman, who worked as a teacher among the Lakotas, described the situation in the summer of 1890 with these words: “In the persistent hot winds the pitiful little gardens of the Indians curled up and died.”⁸⁰⁷ As stated earlier in this study, the former agent at Pine Ridge Agency, Valentine T. McGilliguddy, doubted whether even white men would be able to make their living by farming in the same area.⁸⁰⁸ J. D. C. Atkins the commissioner of Indian affairs claimed in 1886 that on many reservations the soil was bad, the rains did not come regularly, the climate was harsh and the growing season was so short that even a first-class white farmer would have problems making his living from the land. By the end of the 1880s all Lakota agents in office concurred with that opinion.⁸⁰⁹

II, Serial 2841, passim. See also, Smedman 1997, pp. 190-191. In a recent study historian **Rainer Smedman** estimates that the total area cultivated by the Lakotas was only 13,304 acres, which was only 0,06% of the total area of the Great Sioux Reservation. (Smedman 2001, p. 219)

⁸⁰⁶ Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs J. D. C. Atkins, September 28, 1886, AIUSD, Vol. I, p. 393; ARCIA 1889, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 26, 1889, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 27, 1889, Report of Agent L. F. Spencer, August 23, 1889, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1889, p. 130, p. 134, pp. 151-152, p. 155, pp. 157 and p. 166; ARCIA 1890, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1890, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 25, 1890, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August, 28, 1890, Report of Agent, J. George Wright, August 26, 1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2841, pp. 37-61; CIA to Dawes, May 8, 1890, NARA, SCIA, RG 46, Box 57. See, Hyde 1956, pp. 169, 171; Smedman 1997, pp. 190-191.

⁸⁰⁷ Goodale Eastman 1945, p. 29; *Sister to the Sioux* (ed. Graber 1985), p. 137.

⁸⁰⁸ Hyde 1956, p. 71

⁸⁰⁹ Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs J. D. C. Atkins, September 28, 1886, AIUSD Vol. I, p. 393; ARCIA 1889, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 26, 1889, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 27, 1889, Report of Agent L. F. Spencer, August 23, 1889, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1889, p. 130, p. 134, pp. 151-152, p. 155, pp. 157 and p. 166; ARCIA 1890, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1890, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 25, 1890, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August, 28, 1890, Report of Agent, J. George Wright, August 26, 1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan also noted in his annual report for 1891, in trying to find reasons for the troubles of 1890, that the Lakotas had been forced to take up farming too quickly on land totally unsuitable for farming. The commissioner added that the Lakotas' discontent was understandable when the land did not produce enough food, and the government reduced their rations. Commissioner Morgan stated that it was natural for humans in such a situation to feel dissatisfied and even resort to violence.⁸¹⁰

Bishop William H. Hare, who lived among the Dakotas and was well acquainted with the Lakotas also, thought that the situation was made even worse in 1889 because of the prolonged negotiations with the Sioux Commission. During the negotiations the Indians' small farms dried up, because the Indians were forced to stay at the agencies for the councils. He pointed out that the crop failures of 1890 were so complete that no matter how carefully the rations were used, they could not last more than two thirds of the time for which they were planned. This, according to Bishop Hare, led in both years to terrible famines followed by epidemics. His thoughts are substantiated by American Horse. He claimed in a speech on April 15, 1890, before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and later at a meeting in November 1890 on Pine Ridge Reservation, that the negotiations caused much trouble in farming and were the reason for much suffering among the Lakota people. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morgan also mentioned that the negotiations were one of the major reasons for the Lakotas' destitute situation.⁸¹¹ When reviewed in this light, Dawes's claims about Lakota self-

Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2841, p. 37, pp. 42-46, pp. 48-53, pp. 58-60; ARCIA 1890, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1890, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 25, 1890, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 28, 1890, Report of Agent J. George Wright, August 26, 1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2841, pp. 37-61.

⁸¹⁰ ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp 132-135. See also, The Memorial of the Representatives of the Religious Society of Friends, In Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware, NARA, SCIAP, RG 46, 117 and NARA, HCIAP, RG 233, Box 106.

⁸¹¹ Bishop W. H. Hare to Noble, January 7, 1891, G. D. Doc. 2440-1891 as quoted in, Mooney, p. 85; Chief American Horse at a meeting on Pine Ridge on November 27, 1890 in, ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Nelson A. Miles, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. I, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 136. Also published in, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 36, Vol. 25, Serial 2855, pp. 1-6; Morgan to Perkins, April 15, 1890, NARA, HCIAP, RG 233, Box 67, Papers Relating to the Sioux Indians.

sufficiency appear to be groundless. In fact, Dawes himself noted earlier in 1890 that the negotiations of 1889 were the reason for the failure of crops among the Lakotas, and that the reduction of rations had left the Lakotas in "...a state of irritation and complaint."⁸¹²

Senator Dawes, however, was not the only congressman who held this opinion. Senator Gilbert A. Pierce of North Dakota also took part in the discussion. He claimed that he had seen Indians in his hometown who were "...sleeker and better fed..." than even Senator Voorhees. According to Pierce, the idea that Indians were starving was not at all correct. Moreover, the idea that the Indians were taking the warpath because they were starving was totally incorrect. The senator thought that the problems arose from the Indians' nature; an Indian was always unsatisfied. Pierce was certain that the fact that the Indians were living altogether too well on their reservations was behind all the problems. "The devil always finds mischief for idle hands to do," Pierce noted. Furthermore, he described, how the poor settlers were fleeing the savage Indians who "...for pure mischief...are marching through the country and holding a war dance." The so-called friendly Indians, such as the Arikaras and Mandans, according to Pierce, were also taking part in these war dances, in which all the Indians were armed with modern Winchester rifles.⁸¹³

These accusations made by Pierce seem incredible when compared to other accounts of the behavior of the ghost dancers. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morgan, for example, noted in his report that during the troubles the Indians did not try to get close to or to destroy white settlements. Not a single white man was killed outside the reservations, and even on the reservations only two white men were killed outside of real battle. He also pointed out that only very little of the

See also, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., United States Congress House of Representatives, House Committee on Indian Affairs. Council Held with a Delegation of Sioux Indians, April 15, 1890, IUL, Unpublished Hearing, Microfiche, Card 1, pp. 1-9. For Bishop Hare's views on the ghost dance see, Hare to Noble, January 1, 1891, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 7/10-11.

⁸¹² 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 36, Vol. 25, Serial 2855, p. 5. See also, CIA to Dawes, May 8, 1890, NARA, SCIAP, RG 46, Box 57.

⁸¹³ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, p. 48. See, chapters 5 and 6.

settlers' property inside the Lakota reservations was destroyed.⁸¹⁴ Historian **George E. Hyde** noted that it seems obvious that the ghost dancers were not trying to break out of their reservations at any stage of the trouble, even though they might have had the chance to do so.⁸¹⁵

Although Pierce sided with Dawes, it can be assumed that his motives were rather different. Pierce belonged to that portion of the white population, as Voorhees directly pointed out, living close to the Lakotas he and his people "...long for the lands belonging to Indians and will get them as soon as possible." According to Voorhees, Pierce represented those people for whom "...the only good Indian is a dead Indian," and who did not take into consideration that Indian wars always caused suffering and casualties among the white men also.⁸¹⁶ Even Dawes pointed out that the white population in the Dakotas, who wanted to drive the Lakotas away from their lands, caused much of the trouble.⁸¹⁷

As a senator from North Dakota, Pierce was very well aware of the sentiments of the people of the state that he represented. In a telegram to Secretary of War Redfield Proctor on November 18, 1890, Senator Pierce strongly demanded protection for the people of North Dakota. He demanded more troops, claiming that "...a handful of troops is as nothing."⁸¹⁸ It has to be taken into account that Pierce was at the time also preparing for the next elections and was campaigning to retain his seat in the Senate. Calling for strong action against the Lakotas might have secured his popularity among the North Dakota voters. His election campaign, however, was not successful.⁸¹⁹

⁸¹⁴ ARCIA 1891, Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, AIUSD Vol. I, p. 569. The ghost dancers destroyed altogether \$98,383.46 worth of property during the troubles. This property, however, belonged to the so-called friendly Indians, not to white settlers. (52nd Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No 93, Vol. 8, Serial 3062, pp. 1-3. See also, Paul 1994, pp. 212-223)

⁸¹⁵ Hyde 1956, pp. 308-309. See also, Colby 1892, passim.; Kelley 1892, passim.

⁸¹⁶ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, p. 48.

⁸¹⁷ Henry L. Dawes to Electa Dawes, December 2, 1890, LC, HLDP, Box 15, Folder - August-December 1890. Many contemporaries, including some of the Lakota agents, echoed the idea that certain element of the white population wanted to profit from the situation. (See, for example, Johnson W. 1891, pp. 468-471; Eastman 1916, p. 103) See also, chapter 4.

⁸¹⁸ Senator Gilbert A. Pierce to Proctor (telegram), November 18, 1890, NARS, RG 94. AIWKSC, M 983, Roll. 1, Vol. 1, p. 109.

⁸¹⁹ See, for example, The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, No. CCCIL, October 28, 1890, p. 2; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L., No. CCCIIL, October 30, 1890, p. 2, The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L., No. CCCXIV, November 10, 1890, p. 2; The New York Times, January 12, 1891, Vol. XI, No. 12,286,

Although Dawes and Pierce expressed similar feelings toward the ghost dance, it strains credibility to believe that Dawes would have used the taking of Lakota lands to his personal advantage. This idea, however, may have driven Pierce. Voorhees also believed in Dawes's sincerity, but believed that Dawes did not possess sufficient possibilities, power or an ability to solve the difficult Indian question.⁸²⁰

On December 4, 1890, Voorhees presented an article from *The Cincinnati Enquirer* to support his own arguments. The paper published an interview with Governor Charles Foster of Ohio, who had been the official chairman of the Sioux Commission that negotiated the partitioning of the Great Sioux Reservation in 1889. Thus he knew quite well the situation on the Lakota reservations. In the article, Governor Foster criticized the government for having a poorly administered Indian policy and for corruption. He also strongly criticized the actions of the Sioux Commission. He was very angry that the Lakotas' rations were reduced despite the commission's promises to keep them at the same level as the previous year. Voorhees ended his commentary on the article with the words: "The Sioux are starving."⁸²¹

Voorhees did not receive much support from other senators. In the House of Representatives, however, William S. Holman, the representative from Indiana, supported his ideas.⁸²² Holman said that he had spent some time among the Sioux

p. 1; *The New York Times*, January 18, 1891, Vol. XI, No. 12,291, p. 1. See also, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 84, Vol. 6, Serial 2901, p. 6.

⁸²⁰ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 4, 1890, p. 68. About Senator Henry L. Dawes' ideas relating to the Indian question see, for example, Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Board of Indian Commissioners 1883 in, Prucha 1973, pp. 27-30 and a speech by Henry L. Dawes at the Lake Mohonk Conference 1887 in, Prucha 1973, pp. 101-110; Henry L. Dawes, Past and Present Indian Policy, Address Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Missionary Association, Hartford, Connecticut, 1892, LC, HLDP, Box 43, Speeches 1890-1900; *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of the Friends of the Indian 1890* (ed. Barrows, Isabel C.), New York, N.Y. 1890, passim.; *Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of the Friends of the Indian 1891* (ed. Barrows 1891), pp. 8-12 and pp. 78-85.

⁸²¹ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 4, 1890, p. 68, an interview with Governor Charles Foster in *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, read in the Senate on December 4, 1890. Governor Foster was quoted by other newspapers also. See, chapter 6.

⁸²² William S. Holman was a long-term politician and a Democrat from Indiana. He served in the United States Congress from 1859 to 1897. More about William S. Holman in, Introduction to William S. Holman Papers, IULL, Bibliographical Folder.

Indians and was fully convinced that they did not take the warpath on "...willful purpose." He believed that if these Indians had been treated justly, they would have caused no trouble. Congressman Holman noted that the nature of the Indian in general was such that he felt very strongly whether the treatment he received was just or unjust. The Lakotas had enough of unjust treatment, Holman declared. He went on to criticize official Indian policy and the taking away of Indian lands that was a direct consequence of that policy. He also emphasized that the widespread rumors of an uprising were "...manifestly sensational" and were "...calculated to create alarm among persons who know nothing of the condition of these tribes." He believed that there were individuals who sought personal gain from the situation in which unjust treatment and famine caused trouble among the Lakotas. He also urged Congress to determine what happened to the money appropriated for the Lakotas, and why they were starving.⁸²³

At this point, the discussion turned to the question of whether the Congress had acted according to the law in matters relating to the Lakota people in general. Senator Henry M. Teller of Colorado believed that if nothing illegal was done to the Lakotas, they should not be given any more attention than other people, Indian or white, who suffered from the failure of crops.⁸²⁴ According to **Markku Henriksson**, Congress in general was unconcerned, for example, if a law had to be enforced into effect with the use of military power. The important thing was that Congress acted according to the law.⁸²⁵ Teller, however, as well as Pierce belonged to the group of Westerners who throughout the 1880s attempted to get as much Indian land as possible for themselves and their constituents.⁸²⁶

⁸²³ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 5, 1890, p. 129. It is quite interesting that both Senator Voorhees and Representative Holman were so strongly in favor of the Lakotas. Holman was appointed to investigate matters on the Lakota reservations, especially on Pine Ridge a few years earlier, but other than that, neither his nor Senator Voorhees' correspondence or published speeches seem to indicate that they had taken any special interest in the Indian affairs previously during their long political careers. See, for example, *Speeches of Daniel W. Voorhees of Indiana, Embracing His Most Prominent Forensic, Political, Occasional and Literary Addresses*, (ed. Voorhees, Charles S. 1875), pp. 1585; *Forty Years of Oratory; Daniel Voorhees Lectures, Addresses and Speeches*, (ed. His three sons and daughter Voorhees, Cecilia 1897), Vol. III, pp. 1-728; *Personal correspondence of William S. Holman in, William S. Holman Papers*, IULL, Folders 1885-1891. More about the Holman Committee in, Olson 1965, pp. 300-308; Hyde 1956, p. 103.

⁸²⁴ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 4, 1890, pp. 68-69.

⁸²⁵ Henriksson 1988, p. 267.

⁸²⁶ Senator Henry M. Teller had demanded earlier that all Indian lands be opened to white settlers so that the Indians could be civilized by living in the midst of white settlements. He had also been

Several senators expressed their astonishment over Governor Foster's claim that the Lakotas had already been suffering from lack of food in 1889 and nothing had been done to help them. They regretted that they had not been informed of the situation. According to some senators, the people who were responsible for the administration of Indian affairs acted poorly in a situation where human beings were starving, but no one had brought the matter to the attention of Congress. One senator voiced amazement over the whole situation; he believed that enough money was appropriated to feed the Lakotas as well as other Indian tribes. According to him, the amount of approximately \$900,000 that was issued for that purpose for the year 1889 would have been sufficient, if the money had been used as intended.⁸²⁷

Whether or not Congress was really so poorly informed about the situation, is debatable. According to General John M. Schofield, for example, all the members of Congress were fully aware of the situation on the Lakota reservations. In addition, during the year 1890 several councils were held with delegations of Lakota chiefs who appeared before the congressional committees on Indian affairs in Washington. The chiefs fully explained their situation and literally begged Congress to help them.⁸²⁸ As noted earlier Commissioners Morgan and Belt informed members of Congress about the situation among the Lakotas several times. Morgan wrote in April 1890 that a sad feeling was growing among the Lakotas, and that might eventually lead to trouble. "Men will take desperate

involved in western cattle companies, and acted as an attorney for a Western railway company. This background could be seen also in his work as secretary of the interior from 1882-1885. Indian education was seen by Teller as a chance to get rid of the whole Indian problem. (Henriksson 1988, p. 114, p. 121 and p. 170) About the actions of Henry M. Teller and other Westerners in the 1880s see, Phillips, George H., *The Indian Ring in Dakota Territory. 1870-1890*, South Dakota History, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1972, pp. 345-376; Hoxie 1977, p. 162; Hoxie 1984, pp. 36-37.

⁸²⁷ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 4, 1890, p. 70. See also, Henry L. Dawes, Draft of a Paper for The Boston Journal, January 1891, LC, HLDP, Box 29, Folder - January 1891.

⁸²⁸ Schofield to Proctor, December 20, 1890, NARS, RG 94, AIWKSC, M 983, Roll 1, Vol. 1, pp. 585-586; House Committee on Indian Affairs, Minutes of Proceedings, January 7, 1890, p. 1; 51st Cong., 1st Sess., United States Congress House of Representatives, House Committee on Indian Affairs. Council Held with a Delegation of Sioux Indians, April 15, 1890, IUL, Unpublished Hearing, Microfiche, Card 1, pp. 1-9.

remedies sooner than suffer from hunger...” the commissioner wrote to the chairman of the House Committee on Indian Affairs on April 15, 1890.⁸²⁹

Dawes, however, continued his defense of government Indian policy by arguing that the Lakotas received all the annual rations called for in the agreements. He was certain that only those who tried to return to barbarism and turned their backs on civilization were starving. According to Dawes, everything was fine for those who remained good and progressive Indians. Dawes believed that, all in all, Indians had been treated perfectly well and justly for the past 10-15 years. The condition of things “... is now such that cheating the Indian in the dark and by devices and by tricks has passed away,” Dawes said. Regarding Governor Foster’s remarks, Dawes said that the last time the governor was on the Lakota reservations was in 1889, so his knowledge of the current situation was not up to date. Dawes, however, finally admitted that he was not completely sure whether all the rations did reach the Lakotas, although he believed that they did.⁸³⁰

To support his claims, Dawes presented a letter written by Special Census Agent A. T. Lea, who was conducting the census among the Lakotas. In this letter, the agent maintained that not a single Indian on Pine Ridge Reservation complained to him about the lack of food. On the contrary, the Indians told him that they had more than enough food. Agent Lea blamed the “Big Chiefs,” who had lost their influence, for the whole trouble. He claimed that no one living on Pine Ridge Reservation really suffered. “Those who are most gluttonous in their natures, eat up their rations often a day or two before issue day, but they never go hungry,” he concluded.⁸³¹

⁸²⁹ CIA to Perkins, April 15, 1890, NARA, HCIAP, RG 233, Box 67, Papers Relating to Sioux Indians.

⁸³⁰ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, p. 47; Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 4, 1890, p. 69.

⁸³¹ A. T. Lea to CIA, November 28, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 3/38-39; Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 8, 1890, p. 197, Report by Special Census Agent A. T. Lea November 28, 1890, read in the Senate on December 8, 1890. See also, ACIA to Noble, December 4, 1890 in, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, pp. 15-16. Later in January 1891, Senator Dawes still emphasized that the cut of rations was justifiable, since it was based on the census count taken by Agent Lea. (Henry L. Dawes, Draft of a Paper for the Boston Journal, January 1891, LC, HLDP, Box 29, Folder - January 1891) More about Special Agent Lea in, chapter 4.

Once again Dawes found a supporter in Pierce, who said that a Lakota man told him that the ghost dancers had so much meat in storage that they could not move it, because they did not have enough wagons to do so. The fact probably was, as Voorhees pointed out, that it was not meat sent for the Lakotas by the government, but meat the ghost dancers obtained by stealing cattle during past months. Thus Dawes's argument could not deny the assertion that the Lakotas had been starving for two years. Voorhees wanted to introduce the opinions of General Miles. He wondered how anyone could doubt the reports of such a high-ranking and well-respected officer. Especially when his reports were based on information delivered by those on location: the soldiers, inspectors, Indian agents and Indians themselves. Voorhees doubted agent Lea's reports, since no one, not even Dawes, could tell him who Lea really was and who had appointed him. Voorhees questioned his credibility and believed that since no one seemed to know anything about him, he might have been appointed to "fix things."⁸³²

Without a doubt Agent Lea's information can be questioned, and on further scrutiny may be considered false. Substantiating this, however, is difficult. Perhaps the Lakotas whose homes Lea visited, really gave the answers he described in his letter. Whether those answers of sufficient food and ration amounts were his own interpretations, or whether they could be categorized as natural hospitality toward a visitor, cannot be determined here. In any case, with the help of this letter Dawes tried to demonstrate that the government had done nothing wrong to the Lakotas.⁸³³

The comments made by Dawes do, in fact, reflect his belief in the policy he pursued for a long time. He evidently felt that the ghost dance was only a way to resist the policy of Indian civilization. It was an obstacle to the policy he had himself been creating and in which he strongly believed. Thus the ghost dance meant that the Lakotas were falling back on "the ladders of civilization," where

⁸³² Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 8, 1890, pp. 197-201. See also, Henry L. Dawes, Draft of a Paper for The Boston Journal, January 1891, LC, HLDP, Box 29, Folder - January 1891. More about General Miles' comments in, chapters 5 and 6. Despite Senator Voorhees' comments, it is worth noting that A. T. Lea was a Special Agent for The Bureau of Indian affairs. See Appendix 2, figure 1.

⁸³³ For a critical comment about Agent Lea's reports see, Johnson W. 1891, p. 468.

they had been moving upwards, when they were forced to abandon their nomadic lifestyle and take up farming.⁸³⁴

Remarkably, Dawes's comments, while clarifying his own views, tried to dispute the arguments of Governor Foster and General Miles. It is especially noteworthy that he questioned the credibility of Miles, who, in the end, was the commander of the army sent to the Lakota reservations. In a way, Dawes was correct in his arguments about those whom he thought were taking part in the ghost dance, but he was wrong about those who were starving.

The Congressional debate continued to criticize government Indian policy, the responsible officials, and also the Indians. In Congress, opinions about the Indians were diverse. Some senators and representatives showed clear hostility toward Indians, claiming, for example, that they used every opportunity to get white man's scalps. Others emphasized the government's responsibility to support those whose means of living they had destroyed. All in all, Congress seemed to agree on only one thing: there was a severe threat of war. All necessary means were to be taken to avoid an open conflict. They were clearly convinced that the Lakotas possessed the ability to go on the warpath, and believed that the number of armed Lakotas was as high as 6,000 men. Congress believed that these men were armed with modern Winchester rifles. They based their belief mostly on information they received from the Indian agents, alarmed citizens, some army officers, and most likely also from the newspapers.⁸³⁵

Not only did the congressmen think that the Indians were well armed, but the Indians also knew the terrain, where the war would eventually be fought,

⁸³⁴ More about Dawes' ideas on the ghost dance and Indian policy in, Henry L. Dawes, Draft of a Paper for The Boston Journal, January 1891, LC, HLDP, Box 29, Folder - January 1891; Henry L. Dawes, Past and Present Indian Policy, Address Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Missionary Association, Hartford, Connecticut, 1892, LC, HLDP, Box 43, Speeches 1890-1900. See also, *Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of the Friends of the Indian 1891* (ed. Barrows 1891), pp. 80-85. More about ideas regarding Indian civilization in, chapter 2.

⁸³⁵ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, p. 47; Cong. Rec., 51st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 8, 1890, p. 198. For the discussion about weapons in Lakota possession see, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Miscellaneous Document, No 28, Vol 3, Serial 2821, p. 1; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, pp. 3-14; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 9, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, pp. 2-51. For comparison see, chapters 3, 5 and 6.

extremely well. The figure of 6,000 men seems remarkable, since Dawes said on December 8 that the Lakotas had no more than 5,225 adult males. This figure was most likely based on the information received from the acting commissioner of Indian affairs. The actual number as reported by Belt was 5,245 male Lakotas, which included those who lived on Crow Creek and Lower Brulé reservations.⁸³⁶ At the same time, Congress wanted to find out how this dangerous situation had developed. A commission was appointed to investigate the matter, as well as the possibility of corruption in the administration of Indian affairs. More important, as one senator suggested, was to first throw water on the flames rather than investigate the cause of the fire.⁸³⁷

Senator Dawes tried to lift the blame for the troubles off the shoulders of government Indian policy and thus off his own shoulders as well. He assured Congress that the Indians' best interest was his primary concern. Dawes eventually agreed to give the Lakotas additional rations in order to quell the unrest. He still emphasized that it should be only a provisional arrangement. After the troubles were subdued, Congress should continue to hold to official Indian policy. He did not change his views of the guidelines of Indian policy or of the Indians in general. These views were at least in part incorrect: he blamed Red Cloud and Sitting Bull for all the troubles among the Indians.⁸³⁸

Dawes also blamed the public press. He condemned the newspapers saying that "...the condition of things is being very much perverted and the public misled by an army of newspaper men." He continued saying that there seemed to be more

⁸³⁶ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, p. 47; Cong. Rec., 51st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 8, 1890, p. 198; ACIA to Noble, December 5, 1890 in, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, pp. 22-23; Noble to Dawes, December 5, 1890 in, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, pp. 20-21. For additional information about the actual number of Lakotas in 1890 see, ARCIA 1890, Report of Agent James McLaughlin, August 26, 1890, Report of Agent Charles E. McChesney, August 25, 1890, Report of Agent Hugh D. Gallagher, August 28, 1890, Report of Agent J. George Wright, August 26, 1890, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2841, pp. 37-61 and pp. 450-451. See also, chapter 3, table 1.

⁸³⁷ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 4, 1890, pp. 70-74.

⁸³⁸ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, pp. 46-47; Henry L. Dawes, Draft of a Paper for The Boston Journal, January 1891, LC, HLDP, Box 29, Folder - January 1891.

newspapermen on the Lakota reservations than military men.⁸³⁹ Privately he implied in a letter to his wife that too much had been made out of the whole trouble and that there was no need to keep so large number of troops on the Lakota reservations. Despite all the reports and rumors, he did not believe that an outbreak was going to occur.⁸⁴⁰

7.3. Sitting Bull and Red Cloud as Scapegoats

During the December 1890 congressional debate Dawes again pointed out on several occasions that only those Indians who followed their “fanatical leaders,” Red Cloud of the Oglalas and Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapas, to the warpath were suffering from lack of food. According to Dawes, Sitting Bull especially was the driving force of the whole ghost dance hysteria. Dawes might have been correct when he claimed that Sitting Bull tried to take advantage of the situation by using the ghost dance to distance himself from the whites, but accusing him of trying to foment a war, to take revenge on the whites, and holding him responsible for the ghost dance troubles was far too strong.⁸⁴¹

At this point it is necessary to try to find out on what Dawes based his opinions. His speeches clearly show how he felt about Sitting Bull. For Dawes, Sitting Bull was the personification of Indian resistance toward the civilization policy. He accused Sitting Bull of organizing Lakota resistance against the planned reduction of the Great Sioux Reservation in 1882 when Sitting Bull’s presence during the negotiations helped the Lakotas to prevent the partitioning of their reservation.⁸⁴² Dawes also delighted in the fact that Sitting Bull fell ill and could not be present during the final moments of the 1889 negotiations when the Sioux Commission was trying to induce the Lakotas to sign the Agreement of 1889. Whether Sitting

⁸³⁹ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 4, 1890, p. 69. Henry L. Dawes to Electa Dawes, December 2, 1890, LC, HLDP, Box 15, Folder - August-December 1890. The role of the press is studied in, chapter 6.

⁸⁴⁰ Henry L. Dawes to Electa Dawes, December 3, 1890, LC, HLDP, Box 15, Folder - August-December 1890.

⁸⁴¹ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 4, 1890, pp. 69-70. See also, Henry L. Dawes, Draft of a Paper to The Boston Journal, January 1891, LC, HLDP, Box 29, Folder - January 1891. More about Sitting Bull in, chapters 3-6.

⁸⁴² More about the negotiations of 1882 in, for example, Greene 1970, pp. 42-43; Hoover 1989, pp. 60-65.

Bull really was ill at that time or whether he was not informed of the signing date, as Sitting Bull himself claimed, is a totally different question and will not be pursued here.⁸⁴³

Dawes claimed that Sitting Bull controlled his people with fear and terror and lived on his reservation "...in luxury and ease." According to the senator, it was this fear the ordinary Indians felt toward Sitting Bull that might have prevented the Lakotas from signing the Agreement of 1889. Dawes's feelings toward Sitting Bull became public when he pronounced that Sitting Bull was the most "...pious hypocrite in this country..." He also called Sitting Bull a murderer, responsible for the deaths of Colonel George A. Custer and his men at Little Big Horn in 1876.⁸⁴⁴

In the speech Dawes referred to his correspondence with Agent McLaughlin at Standing Rock Reservation. This explains in part the hostility he expressed toward Sitting Bull. McLaughlin frequently expressed his own very negative feelings toward Sitting Bull.⁸⁴⁵

It will be recalled that in June 1890 McLaughlin had requested that Sitting Bull and several other non-progressive chiefs who were fermenting trouble be arrested. At that point, however, the troubles were not related to the ghost dance, which had yet to establish a foothold on Standing Rock Reservation. It was more about rumors that some non-progressive Lakotas were planning an uprising because they were dissatisfied with the partitioning of the Great Sioux Reservation. Although Agent McLaughlin declared those rumors unfounded, he nonetheless emphasized that Sitting Bull was extremely dangerous.⁸⁴⁶

⁸⁴³ For further information about this particular event during the negotiations of 1889 and about Sitting Bull's role in it see, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document, No 17, Vol. I, Serial 2610, pp. 194-213.

⁸⁴⁴ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 4, 1890, pp. 69-70; Henry L. Dawes, Draft of a Paper to The Boston Journal, January 1891, LC, HLDP, Box 29, Folder - January 1891.

⁸⁴⁵ See, McLaughlin 1989, p. 180 and p. 182. See also, chapter 4.

⁸⁴⁶ McLaughlin to Morgan, June 18, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 8. See also, McLaughlin 1989, pp. 196-197 and chapter 4.

Later, after the ghost dance came to Standing Rock, McLaughlin wrote a letter to the commissioner of Indian affairs on October 17, 1890. In the letter McLaughlin blamed Sitting Bull for all the trouble and said that there would be no sign of the ghost dance on Standing Rock without him. According to the agent, Sitting Bull was the high priest and apostle of this new religion. McLaughlin once again reiterated his enmity toward Sitting Bull. He said that Sitting Bull was "...man of low-cunning, devoid of a single manly principle in his nature, or an honorable trait of character...a coward and lacks moral courage."⁸⁴⁷ In his letter to, among others, Herbert Welsh of the Indian Rights Association on January 12, 1891, when the ghost dance troubles were almost over and Sitting Bull already dead, McLaughlin continued to make similar accusations. He blamed Sitting Bull for open rebellion and for misleading the Indians.⁸⁴⁸ It is remarkable that McLaughlin focused so much attention on Sitting Bull's actions if he really considered him to be a "man of low-cunning." It is also remarkable that a man who presumably had so little ability could have so much influence among the Lakotas. In the end McLaughlin had to admit that Sitting Bull was "...by far the most influential man of his nation for many years."⁸⁴⁹

For this study, however, it is not important whether Sitting Bull was a bad leader or a person of "low-cunning." The important point is how officials in Washington viewed him. Although McLaughlin's motives were personal and reflected his rivalry with Sitting Bull on Standing Rock Reservation, it is little wonder that Dawes's opinions became what they were. There is no reason to believe that the correspondence between McLaughlin and Dawes could have been of any other tone. It seems certain that Sitting Bull, as well as Red Cloud, became victims of their own reputation when their role in the ghost dance was discussed in Congress. In addition, when Sitting Bull's actions are studied it has to be taken into account

⁸⁴⁷ McLaughlin to Morgan, October 17, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, pp. 31-43. Published also in, ARCIA 1891, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan, October 1, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. II, Serial 2934, pp. 125-126.

⁸⁴⁸ See, for example, McLaughlin to Herbert Welsh, January 12, 1891, MHS, JMLP, M230, Roll 22, pp. 47-64; McLaughlin to Mary Collins, December 26, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 22, pp. 27-30; McLaughlin to Mrs. Winfield Jennings, January 4, 1891, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 22, p. 33; McLaughlin 1891, Internet <http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/wpages/wpags680/sbarrest.html>, November 25, 1997.

⁸⁴⁹ McLaughlin 1989, p. 180. More about McLaughlin and Sitting Bull in, chapters 3 and 4.

that Dawes as well as other whites probably confused the Lakota Sitting Bull with the person and actions of an Arapaho ghost dance apostle who had the same English name.⁸⁵⁰

Red Cloud's role in the troubles was even smaller than Sitting Bull's, as noted in chapter 3. Thus it seems amazing that he was also blamed. Of course, he was one of the prominent leaders of 1860s and 1870s, but by 1890 he was an old man, dedicated to finding a balance between different groups rather than to be an active leader.⁸⁵¹ During the final stages of the troubles, he even sought help from the U.S. Army when the ghost dancers threatened his life.⁸⁵²

Red Cloud responded strongly to the accusations made against him. A letter in which he tried to defend himself was read in the House of Representatives on December 19, 1890. In this letter Red Cloud wondered, how the whites could even think that the Lakotas would be able to make war, since they were practically surrounded by white settlements and railroads. Furthermore, he emphasized that famine had taken the strength of the people. According to Red Cloud, on Pine Ridge Reservation alone 217 persons had died of starvation in the previous two years.⁸⁵³

According to Red Cloud, some Brulés who had been left without a leader after Spotted Tail's death in 1881 were causing the trouble. He believed that those Brulés were forced to wander in order to find food. This frightened the whites and caused a general feeling of unrest. Since they had no real leader, they did what they pleased. Red Cloud, however, noted that although these Brulés destroyed some property belonging to Indians, they had not destroyed any property belonging to whites outside the reservation. Red Cloud claimed that he never

⁸⁵⁰ About the Arapaho ghost dance and Sitting Bull (Hänä'chä-thi'ak) the Arapaho see, Mooney 1991, pp. 894-902. The name Sitting Bull also appeared several times in the newspapers that are studied in chapter 6. However, it is clear that the newspapers were confusing these two men who had the same name. The papers even reported that Sitting Bull (the Lakota) was seen in Oklahoma exiting the Indians there. See, chapter 6.

⁸⁵¹ See, Johnson W. 1891, pp. 461-468; Eastman 1916, pp. 100-101; Hyde 1956, p. 254; Uteley 1963, p. 104; Olson 1965, pp. 324-328. See also, chapter 3.

⁸⁵² Olson 1965, p. 330; Hyde 1956, p. 308; Twiss 1978, p. 37. See, chapter 3.

⁸⁵³ Red Cloud to T. A. Bland, December 10, 1890, read in the House of Representatives on December 19, 1890 in, Cong. Rec., 51st Cong. 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 19, 1890, pp. 702-703. See also, chapters 3 and 4.

urged anyone to participate in a ghost dance ceremony and never even witnessed a ceremony himself. He asked the congressmen to take into account that he got along well with his previous agent, Hugh D. Gallagher, and with the white people who lived close to the reservation. According to Red Cloud, those white people also helped his people during hard times. He blamed the famine and his people's destitute condition for causing the trouble. He regretted that their annual rations were cut off, and this portion of the treaty obligations was left unfulfilled. Finally, he wanted to remind the whites that he was friend of the white man and for this reason he had agreed to turn to Catholicism a few years earlier.⁸⁵⁴

The letter caused a remarkable comment in the House of Representatives when a congressman asked: "What is the name of this Indian? Is he dead or alive?" This comment sheds light on the actual situation in the United States Congress. Knowledge of Indian affairs appeared to be minimal among the congressmen in general, since the letter was written by one of the period's most famous Indians. Additional comments in the House mainly questioned the letters' authenticity and reliability. Also, doubts about Red Cloud's position as a leader were expressed. The House took also notice of the fact that not only Indians were suffering in the United States. According to some congressmen, there was no need to waste Congress' time in discussing Indians. They thought that it was more important to take care of the suffering white farmers. In the House of Representatives some attention, however, was given to the fact that the Lakotas were starving. For example, Congressmen W. S. Holman and B. W. Perkins, the chairman of the House Committee on Indian Affairs, believed that the Lakotas' living standards were miserable and the Congress should offer some assistance.⁸⁵⁵

7.4. Congressional Inaction

All in all, the December 1890 congressional debate painted a picture of a Congress out of touch with the Indian situation. It had to rely for information on the expertise of a few senators and congressmen. This expertise was often colored

⁸⁵⁴ Red Cloud to Bland, December 10, 1890, read in the House of Representatives on December 19, 1890 in, *Cong. Rec.*, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 19, 1890, pp. 702-703.

⁸⁵⁵ *Cong. Rec.*, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 19, 1890, pp. 703-704.

by personal motives and was based on uncertain, sometimes even false or questionable information. There were strong differences of opinion regarding the ghost dance and the Lakotas in both the Senate and the House. Congress, however, seemed to be unanimous on two issues. The congressmen were convinced that the danger of war was imminent. The decision to send arms and ammunition to protect the white population reflects this belief. Congress was also unanimous in considering the ghost dance a dangerous movement that had to be stopped.

For some senators and congressmen the ghost dance meant a return to barbarism and a break in the Lakotas' process aiming at assimilation and civilization. For these men, led by Dawes, the ghost dance did not necessarily represent a military threat. It meant a failure, or at least a setback, of the policy and the ideology they espoused. The ghost dance needed to be stopped. Some senators and representatives probably saw the ghost dance as a chance to get their hands, or the hands of the groups they represented, on the last Lakota lands. The fact was, however, that most Indian wars had ended in the opening of Indian lands for the whites. A war might have done the trick here, too. This, in fact, reflects the old political division between the Westerners and the Eastern humanitarians, who in their own way sought to help the Indians. This division was not new, and the Lakota ghost dance quickly became incorporated into this political play.

It is, however, too strong an argument to maintain that Congress deliberately sought a conflict with the Lakotas, although that might have been the intention of some congressmen. The use of military force was as an option that could benefit both above-mentioned groups in Congress. According to army officials, a peaceful solution, if possible, was the army's primary objective. However, hard measures would not be avoided, if need be. That ideology becomes clear, for example, in letters from Secretary of War Proctor and General Schofield that were both read in the Senate on December 6, 1890.⁸⁵⁶

⁸⁵⁶ The Secretary of War Redfield Proctor to the Senate, December 6, 1890 and Major General J. M. Schofield to the Senate, December 3, 1890, read in the Senate on December 6, 1890 in, *Cong. Rec.*, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 6, 1890, p. 167. See also, 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Executive Document, No. 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2818, pp. 2-3. More about the army in, chapter 5.

Whatever motivated individual senators and congressmen, it can be concluded that Congress' attitude toward the Lakota ghost dance in general was negative, suspicious, uncertain and in some respects fearful. It appears that Congress did not really understand the movement it had to deal with. There seemed to be, as Voorhees pointed out, a certain "...desire to hide and cover..." things. At least there was a need to defend the government's Indian policy.⁸⁵⁷ The ghost dance was seen only as a threat, which in December 1890 it in some respects really was. Its development into a threat might have been avoided had it been considered as a religious movement. This was emphasized by Elaine Goodale Eastman, who wrote in her memoirs "...no one with imagination could fail to see in the rite a genuine religious ceremony, a faith which, illusory as it was, deserved to be treated with respect."⁸⁵⁸ Congress did not, however, discuss the ghost dance as a religious movement at any stage, nor did Congress discuss the essence or the true origin of the ghost dance. Although more than 30 Indian tribes were connected with the ghost dance in some way or another, Congress was only interested in the Lakota version of the ghost dance and the potential trouble it might bring. This was the case, even though trouble and unrest was characteristic to other tribes connected with the ghost dance as well.⁸⁵⁹

It is also worth noting that the two congressmen most sympathetic toward the Lakotas were Senator Voorhees and Representative Holman, neither of whom had previously been specifically interested or involved in Indian affairs. Perhaps these men had nothing to lose or nothing to gain, since they were outsiders in the administration of Indian affairs. That may in part explain why these two men from Indiana spoke their mind about the ghost dance, the Lakotas and the general

⁸⁵⁷ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 8, 1890, p. 200.

⁸⁵⁸ *Sister to the Sioux* (ed. Graber, Kay), p. 148. See also, The Memorial of the Representatives of the Religious Society of Friends, In Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware, NARA, SCIAP, RG 46, Box 117 and NARA, HCIAP, RG 233, Box 106.

⁸⁵⁹ See, for example, The Washington Post, No. 4,432, June 6, 1890, p. 1; The Washington Post, No. 4,434, June 8, 1890, p. 2; The Washington Post, No. 4,435, June 9, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,098, June 6, 1890, p. 1; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,100, June 9, 1890, p. 2; The Chicago Tribune, Vol. L, June 7, 1890, p. 2; The New York Times, Vol. XXXIX, No. 12,157, August 14, 1890, p. 1. See also, chapter 6.

treatment of Indians. As noted earlier, Voorhees simply thought that it was a crime before God and man not to help the suffering Indians.⁸⁶⁰

There was extensive debate in Congress about the famine among the Lakotas and its role in the troubles. In this issue, however, Congress seemed to slip onto sidetracks when the discussion turned to the issue of whether there was famine among the Lakotas, or whether the United States government and the Congress had done anything illegal toward the Lakotas. Had something illegal occurred, the blame would fall, in part, on the United States and the congressmen themselves. Speakers in both the Senate and the House failed to present any suggestions that might have solved the Lakotas' problems. For Congress, the issue seemed merely a technical problem, not one that involved real human lives. This attitude is characterized in a debate between two congressmen on December 19, 1890. Congressman B. McMillin asked: "Are they [the Lakotas] any worse off than they were yesterday?" To this question the other congressman, Perkins, answered: "No worse off than on yesterday and as badly off as they will be to-morrow." "Well, then this can go over until to-morrow," replied Congressman McMillin, referring thus to the urgency, or the lack thereof, of discussing the problems of the Lakotas. This brief discussion is quite revealing since, as noted earlier, Congressman Perkins was the Chairman of the House Committee on Indian affairs.⁸⁶¹ It seems obvious that to many senators and congressmen the ghost dance, as well as matters relating to Indians in general, were distant and immaterial.

When the fighting between the ghost dancers and the United States army began on December 15, 1890, Congress made no immediate comments. Even though the fighting took the lives of several Indians, including Sitting Bull's and several of the Indian police, Congress remained silent. In the days that followed the incident on Standing Rock Reservation, Congress focused on a street fight in which one man was killed. It also turned its attention to the issue of sending further appropriations for several Indian tribes, although the Lakotas were not among them. On December 22, however, the House asked for information regarding the circumstances of Sitting Bull's arrest and the conduct of the Indian police force.

⁸⁶⁰ See, Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 3, 1890, pp. 45-46.

⁸⁶¹ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 19, 1890, p. 701.

When accusations started to circulate in the press that Sitting Bull had been unjustifiably murdered and his body barbarously mutilated, the House asked the secretary of the interior to submit all documents relating to the arrest. The affair had to be thoroughly investigated as a "...matter of national honor." Interestingly when the investigation was concluded Medals of Honor were awarded to 37 of the Indian policemen at the suggestion of Agent McLaughlin and General Ruger.⁸⁶²

Congress maintained a similar silence following the December 29 massacre at Wounded Knee. No comments were made regarding the incident until January 6, 1891, when a vague statement was made that the massacre and Sitting Bull's death both needed further investigation.⁸⁶³ Army officers conducted the first investigation in January 1891, and during the following months and years the circumstances surrounding the Lakota ghost dance and Wounded Knee affair were repeatedly investigated.⁸⁶⁴

In conclusion it has to be noted that Congress was not very well informed about the situation on the Lakota reservations, nor was it well informed about the ghost dance. Some of the senators had more knowledge than others and the situation was not made any better by the fact that the Congress had been in recess from October until December. During the months that the Lakota ghost dance was becoming more and more troublesome, there were no congressional debates over the issue. Not until December, when the situation was already complicated, were the senators and congressmen able to discuss the matter. In fact, Congress, instead of taking a leading role in the ghost dance "trouble," merely reacted, or tried to

⁸⁶² Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 17, 1890, pp. 558-589; Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, December 17, 1890, p. 600 and p. 611; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Miscellaneous Document, No. 80, Vol. 1, Serial 2869, p. 1; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Report No. 3375, Vol. 1, Serial 2885, p. 1; 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document (correspondence attached), No. 84, Vol. 6, Serial 2901, pp. 1-12. See also, Ruger to McLaughlin, December 17, 1890, MHS, JMLP, M230, Roll 20, p. 501; McLaughlin to Senator Gilbert Pierce, MHS, JMLP, M 230, Roll 20, pp. 496-500; McLaughlin to Pierce, March 3, 1891, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 2, pp. 9/66-69. See also, chapter 4 and 5. About the press and Sitting Bull's arrest see, chapter 6.

⁸⁶³ Cong. Rec., 51st Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 21, Part 14, January 6, 1890, p. 964; 51st Cong., 2nd Sess., House Report No. 3375, Vol. 1, Serial 2885, p. 1.

⁸⁶⁴ More about the army investigation relating to the Wounded Knee massacre in, chapter 5. As examples of the investigations conducted among the Lakotas see, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Executive Document No., 58, Vol. 5, Serial 2900, pp. 11251; 75th Cong., 3rd Sess., House Committee on Indian Affairs, Sioux Indians, Wounded Knee Massacre, Published Hearing, March 7 and May 12, 1938, IULAL, Microfiche Group 3, Card 4-5.

react, to events that were beyond its control. Congress was an onlooker rather than an active participant in matters relating to the Lakota ghost dance.

8. TOWARD A MULTIDIMENSIONAL INTERPRETATION

The examination of the Lakota ghost dance necessarily begins with an understanding of the relationships between Lakotas and whites in the late 1880s. By then the Indians, including the Lakotas, were living on reservations where the U.S. government expected them to abandon their traditional way of life, to learn how to support themselves by farming, to become educated and adopt Christian teachings; in short, to become civilized. The Indians were thought to have only two roads open to them; one led to civilization, the other to extinction. The Indians', in this case the Lakotas', basic concern at that time was simply to survive on their reservations. The Lakotas adopted two main strategies for survival; some tried to hold on to the traditional way of life as much as they could, while others sought to co-operate with the whites and adapt to their culture.

It is apparent that Lakotas and white Americans viewed the ghost dance completely differently; their perspectives were shaped by their respective cultural and social values. While for many Lakotas the ghost dance represented spiritual renewal and a chance for social and economic betterment, many white Americans saw it as an obstacle to the government's Indian policy and a setback for the Lakotas on road to civilization. The ghost dance brought to a head the conflict between two different agenda: the government's agenda to keep the Indians under control on reservations where they were expected to become civilized, and the Indians' agenda to survive and retain their own way of life to as great an extent as possible. This basic conflict of interests has to be the starting point for any analysis of the ideas, ideologies and events surrounding the Lakota ghost dance.

So, when the Lakota Indians initially learned about the ghost dance, their responses to it have to be understood through their historical, political and cultural circumstances. At the time, the late 1880s, they were a conquered people, who had lost their lands and their way of life. When the U.S. government forbade their religious ceremonies, they were forced to abandon the last threads of their identity. Religion was as natural a part of Lakota life as hunting and fighting. With so much of their past way of life lost, the rumors of the ghost dance and its promise of a new life understandably affected these people deeply. The rumor was

so compelling that the Lakotas sent representatives all the way to Nevada to learn about this new religion. When the Lakotas finally inaugurated the ghost dance in the spring of 1890 it was greeted with enthusiasm.

The ghost dance filled a religious void in Lakota society resulting from years of oppression by the white men. There is evidence to show that, contradictory to what is generally believed, the ghost dance appealed to non-progressive and progressive Lakotas alike. That the so-called progressive Lakotas did not turn to the ghost dance as a unified body reflects their political, not their religious, beliefs. As has been demonstrated in Chapter 3, many of the Christian Lakotas found in the ghost dance a powerful means to combine their traditional beliefs with Christianity.

Still, it is important to realize that the ghost dance caused immense tensions within the Lakota people, although it was only the latest in a series of events that caused friction among the Lakotas. The fact that it appeared at a time of extreme hardship caused tensions to mount, leading to several conflicts between the so-called progressive and non-progressive, or, more properly, the ghost dancing and non-ghost dancing, Lakotas. In the spring of 1890 the ghost dance attracted enthusiastic crowds of Lakotas, but during the summer the enthusiasm faded. Had not the summer brought with it another failure of crops, another cut in rations, and resulting hunger and misery, the ghost dance might have died out altogether, as most of the Lakota agents anticipated.

For the Lakota agents the ghost dance was not a major problem during the spring and summer of 1890. They were more concerned about dissatisfaction resulting from the previous year's land commission. The reduction of the Great Sioux Reservation caused great anxiety among the Lakotas. This, the agents believed, was then used by the so-called non-progressive Indians to spark general restlessness. Adding to this, hunger and diseases were the agents' major concerns. Despite these problems, none of the agents, Hugh D. Gallagher, J. George Wright, Charles E. McChesney or James McLaughlin, anticipated any trouble in the near future. All that was necessary was to arrest some of the most dissatisfied Indian leaders, including Sitting Bull.

As they learned about the ghost dances, the agents' initial responses were calm. The rumor of the Messiah caused excitement, but none of the agents expected anything serious to result from the Messiah's teachings. Some arrests were again suggested, but nothing further. No trouble was expected. In fact, the agents promptly arrested some ringleaders, which in part caused the ghost dance excitement to subside during the summer. The first encounter between the ghost dancers and the agents occurred in August on Pine Ridge, where the ghost dancers were prepared to defend their new religion with arms. The encounter, however, ended without bloodshed, and Agent Gallagher and Special Agent Elisha. B. Reynolds were allowed to witness a ghost dance ceremony.

Both agents were alarmed by what they saw. They, for the first time, suggested that the ghost dance should be stopped, not because they expected it to lead to an uprising or a revolt, but simply because it excited the Indians, had a "demoralizing" effect upon them and interfered with the reservation's daily routines. The agents at Rosebud and Cheyenne River Reservations concurred.

The role of the United States Army, no longer actively needed for Indian campaigns, was restricted to overseeing the Lakotas on their reservations. There was some restlessness among various Indian tribes throughout 1889-1890, but the Lakotas caused no major concern for the military. Neither did the rumors of the Indian Messiah. Only on June 15, 1890, did the army learn in detail about the ghost dance from Porcupine, the Cheyenne who traveled with the Lakota delegation to meet the Messiah. Porcupine's story did not cause any major concern among the military officers. The destitution among the Lakotas, however, did concern some of the army officers in the late summer of 1890. Interestingly, it was the military that conducted the first actual investigation into the origins of the ghost dance and the Messiah's identity, but this did not occur until November-December 1890.

Neither did the press consider the Lakotas, nor Indians in general, an important problem during the early part of 1890. Their main interest regarding the Lakotas was in the opening of the Great Sioux Reservation, which was portrayed as a

milestone event in which barbarism gave way to civilization. Other than that, everything was reported to be peaceful among the Lakotas. Agent James McLaughlin was even quoted as saying that relations between himself and Sitting Bull were "...most amicable."⁸⁶⁵ The newspapers also reported on the Lakotas' poor living conditions.

In April 1890, approximately at the time when the Lakota delegates returned from their journey to meet the Messiah, the newspapers printed reports about the gatherings and councils the Lakotas were holding. In these initial reports the councils were called "pow-wow's" or war dances. In April, the first stories regarding the Messiah and the ghost dance were also printed. During the summer The New York Times, The Washington Post and Harper's Weekly did not take interest in the Lakota ghost dance, although the ghost dance was reported to be the cause of excitement among other Indian tribes. The Omaha Daily Bee and The Chicago Tribune followed the situation among the Lakotas more carefully, but they did not expect any trouble from the ghost dance. On the contrary, the Lakotas were reported to be totally peaceful. The Omaha Daily Bee even reported that the Lakota ghost dance was only a form of religious excitement, and was surprisingly close to Christianity in its teachings.

During the spring and summer of 1890 none of the papers studied here considered the Lakota ghost dance as a dangerous phenomenon, albeit that in the beginning it was also referred to as a kind of war dance. The ghost dance in general was believed to excite the Indians and had the potential eventually to cause trouble, but the Lakotas were not in any way singled out as troublemakers.

Nor were the Lakotas a focal point of Congressional debates during the first half of the year 1890. The matters discussed that related to Indian affairs concerned mostly issuing additional rations for several tribes suffering from lack of food. Interestingly, the situation among the Lakotas was portrayed as one in which the Indians were gradually progressing on the road toward civilization. No hardships were reported among the Lakotas during the Congressional year 1889-1890, and

⁸⁶⁵ See, The Omaha Daily Bee, Vol. XIX, No. 194, January 1, 1890, p. 1. See also, chapter 6.

Congress was mainly interested in the successful partitioning of the Great Sioux Reservation, and the subsequent progress in allotting the remaining Lakota lands to individual Indians.

The most remarkable Congressional action affecting the Lakotas in the summer of 1890 was the decision to reduce the Lakotas' rations. This was due in part to the report made by Special Census Agent A. T. Lea, in part to the government's continuing Indian policy, which sought to gradually reduce the Indians' rations so they would eventually be forced to take up farming and become self-supporting. By cutting the Lakotas' rations Congress continued this policy despite all the reports submitted by Indian agents, the commissioner of Indian affairs, the military, the Sioux Commission, the press and the Lakotas themselves, all of which indicated that the Lakotas could not support themselves by farming and were greatly suffering from lack of subsistence and diseases. By stubbornly clinging to this policy, Congress, probably unknowingly, played a critical role in creating future problems with the Lakotas, and started a chain of events leading first to the renewal of the ghost dances among the Lakotas in the fall of 1890 and then eventually to the Wounded Knee massacre.

By the fall of 1890 none of the white voices studied here, despite some alarmed newspaper articles, regarded the ghost dance among the Lakota Indians as a potentially dangerous phenomenon. In fact, despite suggestions by scholars like **Mooney** to the contrary, during the summer of 1890 Lakota ghost dancing had come to an almost complete halt. There probably were councils and gatherings where the matter was discussed, but no major ceremonies were organized before August-September 1890.

By fall, however, after the miserable summer, the ghost dance ceremonies were resumed, and the whites, especially the press, took notice of the dancing Indians. In October 1890 the press characterized these dances as warlike manifestations, or even war dances. On several occasions, the press quoted "reliable sources" or "old frontiersmen," who maintained that the Indians danced in this particular manner, in circles, only when preparing to take the warpath. This, of course, is not true of Indian dances in general, but these accounts surely spread general alarm. Other

newspaper accounts portrayed the Lakota ghost dance ceremony in fact quite accurately, calling it a religious ceremony. These articles were, however, overshadowed by more alarming reports, some of which included accusations that the ghost dancers promised to beat out children's brains and drink the white man's blood; even worse, they claimed that during the ceremony the Lakota ghost dancers resorted to cannibalism.

These reports understandably alerted eastern decision-makers, like Senator Henry L. Dawes, who were concerned about the Lakotas' progress in civilization. Rituals like this surely meant that the Lakotas were slipping backwards toward savagery; ghost dancing had to be stopped. The Indian agents agreed. They, however, did not consider the ceremony as either dangerous or warlike. In fact, Agents Gallagher and Reynolds deemed it, although a heathenish practice, still a religious ceremony. The main issue for the agents was that the ghost-dancing Indians were beyond control, and were returning to barbarism. The new agents, however, who took control in October 1890 never saw the actual ceremony, but quickly took the position that it was dangerous and needed to be stopped. This was especially true of Agents Daniel F. Royer and James A. Cooper on Pine Ridge Reservation.

When ghost dancing intensified in the fall of 1890 the Lakota agents reacted by trying to stop the ceremonies. The ghost dancers responded by continuing the dances against the agents' orders. This in turn caused minor incidents between the ghost dancers and the agents, who often used the Indian policemen or the non-ghost-dancing Lakotas as their spokesmen. By October 1890 these incidents, although more related to the internal division within the Lakota people than to the problems between whites and Indians, caused alarm and a public outcry in the press. The old Lakota agents did not deem the ghost dance a warlike manifestation, but the press certainly did. This occurred when the government appointed new agents to take charge of Pine Ridge, Cheyenne River and Rosebud Reservations. These new agents were equally as excited about the ghost-dancing Lakotas as were the local settlers and the press. The agents failed to understand the religious aspect of the ghost dance; they understood the ghost dance only in relation to the excitement it caused, and believed that it was directed against the white population in general and the agents personally. Agents Daniel F. Royer,

Elisha B. Reynolds and Perain P. Palmer concluded that they could not *control* their reservations without military assistance. It is also noteworthy that it was not only Agent Royer who called for troops; his colleagues at Rosebud and Cheyenne River, albeit in a milder manner, also called for military intervention. Their alarmed reports, assisted by the press, in turn alarmed the decision-makers in the East, and finally the U.S. military was ordered to take control of the restless Lakotas in November 1890.

Even before ordered to take the field, the U.S. military conducted an investigation into the situation on the Lakota reservations. According to these investigations, there was growing dissatisfaction among the Lakotas. This dissatisfaction was mainly caused by the failure of crops, reduction of rations, delay in ration issuance, loss of land, hunger and disease. These reports further stated that the ghost dance was only a symptom of this ill feeling, but that it would not lead to any trouble; the army understood the situation clearly, or at least better than the new agents did. Despite this, the president ordered the military to assume control of the Lakota reservations.

The army's task was to overwhelm the Indians by a show of force, to separate the "hostiles" from the "friendlies," i.e., the ghost dancers from the non-ghost dancers, to protect the settlers, and to suppress any attempts of outbreak. Still, General Schofield, the commander of the U.S. Army, emphasized that all measures should be taken to avoid trouble. He further stated that no attempts to disarm the Indians were to be made, since it was not only dangerous and could lead to a fight, but it was also against the government's Indian policy. While the army officers expected a relatively easy task in dealing with the Lakotas, they also understood that the military's appearance could frighten the Indians and cause a general panic. This was exactly what happened on November 20. The panic-stricken Indians fled. Brigadier General John R. Brooke, commanding the troops in the field, decided to wait and see what the Indians would do. He set out to use negotiation instead of force in dealing with the ghost-dancing Lakotas.

In fact, General Brooke as well as other officers in the field were of the opinion that the ghost dancers did not present any real threat to the army or the settlers.

Major General Nelson A. Miles, in command of the entire military operation, was of different opinion. He estimated that the ghost dancers could number as many as 30,000 people, of whom 6,000 would be fully armed warriors. At least once, he even estimated that the Indians might have up to 15,000 warriors in arms. He also complained that he did not have enough troops under his command, and that the troops he had were poorly equipped. Despite this, he favored rapid military action. General Schofield, however, sided with General Brooke and other officers who favored a more patient approach; the army was not going to take the first military step. Still, the army did prepare for a long and difficult winter campaign. It is worth noting that from the beginning Miles did not concur with his fellow officers about the manner in which the campaign was to be carried out, but he agreed with them that the Lakotas were facing serious problems, and that the government needed to take necessary measures to help them. In this matter the military officers clearly sympathized with the Lakotas.

On several occasions in November and December 1890, General Miles noted that the ghost dance was going to lead to the greatest Indian war ever. In this, he completely contradicted the opinions of his fellow officers. He even contradicted himself; only a month earlier he said that the Indians could not leave their reservations, since they were surrounded by railroads and white settlements. Especially interesting is his trip to Washington in late November. During the trip he gave interviews to the press where he predicted that the country was going to be “overrun by hungry, wild, mad horde of savages.”⁸⁶⁶ His opinions were widely quoted. It appears that Miles had his reasons for these remarks. His goals were political: he wanted Congress to appropriate more funds for the military, to gain more control for the military over Indian affairs, and to further his own political ambitions.

It was no secret that Miles was of the opinion that the military did not have enough control over Indian affairs. According to Miles, only the army knew how to deal with the Indians. For this reason, he repeatedly called for more funds and

⁸⁶⁶ ARSOW 1891, Report of Major General Commanding the Army, September 24, 1891, 52nd Cong., 1st Sess., House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Vol. II, p. 144. See also, chapter 5.

power for the military. This, of course, was only one symptom of the old rivalry between the War and Interior Departments over control of Indian affairs. The ghost dance gave Miles an excuse to call for more control for the army and to request the removal of the civil agents in charge of the Lakota reservations. His trip to Washington helped him to gain enough support for these requests; the army was put in full control and the agents were ordered to obey military authorities. Thus, by predicting that a major Indian uprising was ahead, Miles won a temporary victory for the military in this old feud.

It is not clear, however, how much General Miles hoped to gain personally from the military campaign against the Lakota ghost dancers. There is no direct evidence that Miles tried to use the ghost dance for a personal political gain, but some of his actions do indicate that he saw some political advantages resulting from a successful military campaign. If Miles did have political ambitions as, for example, **Wooster** suggests, some of his actions and comments are easier to understand and explain. By November-December the press, reflecting the settlers' views, accused the army of not doing enough to settle the turmoil caused by the ghost dance. Even Agents Royer and Cooper on Pine Ridge were disappointed to the army's decision to wait and see. This kind of negative public opinion was not what Miles wanted. In order to gain more control for the military, and in order to have a successful military campaign, there had to be an adversary worth fighting against. Several thousand Lakota warriors on the warpath was exactly what Miles needed in order to accomplish his political goals. Perhaps, as **Utley** noted, Miles feared that the political gains of a minor, unsuccessful, campaign would have remained marginal. By releasing several alarmist reports, the press played nicely into Miles's hands.

While calling for military action, Miles accused certain "false prophets" for distorting the originally peaceful ghost dance doctrine into a doctrine of war. Miles quickly singled out Sitting Bull as the main leader of the entire ghost dance trouble. The press adopted this view and, as we have seen, Sitting Bull was considered the major foe by some of the congressmen also. The only solution they could think of in dealing with Sitting Bull was to arrest him. The question was, how and who would arrest him?

In fact, matters on Standing Rock Reservation were even more directly related to the factional division within the Lakota people than on other reservations. This power struggle had initially three dimensions: Agent McLaughlin vs. Sitting Bull, Sitting Bull vs. progressive leaders like Gall and John Grass, and Sitting Bull vs. the Indian police force. This power struggle and clash of personalities was the main reason for Sitting Bull's death. When the military took control by late November, it added a fourth dimension to the power struggle: McLaughlin vs. the military, represented by General Miles.

For both, McLaughlin and Miles, Sitting Bull was the personification of Lakota resistance, and must therefore be removed from the reservation. For McLaughlin, however, arresting Sitting Bull was a personal matter. He wanted to be in complete control on Standing Rock Reservation, and Sitting Bull stood in his way. McLaughlin also considered it an embarrassment to have the military in control of his reservation. In fact, he had for some time urged Sitting Bull's arrest. He even regretted that Sitting Bull never committed any "...overt act..." that would give an excuse to arrest him.⁸⁶⁷ The ghost dance finally gave him the excuse. As a leader of this "heathenish" ceremony, Sitting Bull was not obeying the agent's orders, and could therefore be arrested. It would, however, be far too strong an argument to maintain that McLaughlin wanted Sitting Bull dead, but it is fair to say that he cleverly used the reservation's internal divisions to set up his arrest, which eventually led to Sitting Bull's death. McLaughlin also manipulated the army, and used the press to further the general impression that Sitting Bull was behind all the trouble. By this maneuvering he not only got control of the Indians on his reservation but also won a temporary victory over General Miles.

McLaughlin defended the decision to arrest Sitting Bull by claiming that he was going to leave for Pine Ridge where he could join the other ghost dancers. All Indian accounts, supported by a few accounts from white observers, claim that Sitting Bull did not at the time of the attempted arrest have any particular plans to leave. Indeed, Sitting Bull did want to go to Pine Ridge; he was invited by the

⁸⁶⁷ McLaughlin to CIA, October 17, 1890, NARS, RG 75, SC 188, M 4728, Reel 1, p. 1/36. See also, chapter 4.

ghost dancers to come there, and he even asked for permission to go! Sitting Bull's camp was almost 60 miles from Standing Rock Agency, so he could have gone whenever he pleased. Many of the ghost dancers, in fact, traveled between the reservations without any trouble. Sitting Bull, however, did not leave; perhaps he did not want to give the agent any reason for making an arrest by leaving without permission. It is worth noting that he, according to McLaughlin, planned to leave on December 15. Quite a coincidence, if it is taken into account that the military was preparing to arrest him in the near future, and if it is taken into account that McLaughlin did not want to see that happen. Sitting Bull's alleged plan to leave at that particular time seems to have suited McLaughlin's plans almost too well to be only a coincidence.

This discussion relating to Agent McLaughlin's motives has gone to and fro and will probably not stop here. Scholars, while debating his motives, do mainly credit him for his ability to prevent ghost dancing from spreading beyond Sitting Bull's immediate following. The Indians on Standing Rock Reservation were, however, so divided into rival factions that there was little the agent could do to accomplish this task. The Indians generally followed their leaders, and this was the case with the ghost dance also. People following Sitting Bull's adversaries were not going to leave their leaders in any great numbers in order to join Sitting Bull's ghost dancers. With all of the above in mind, I have to agree with anthropologist **DeMallie**, who has noted: "For all intents and purposes, Sitting Bull's death was unrelated to the ghost dance."⁸⁶⁸ Sitting Bull's death, however, initiated a chain of events that directly led to Wounded Knee.

It is important to realize that the contemporary white estimates of the numbers of ghost dancers varied greatly. This examination has to start with the agents. Agent Royer claimed on November 12 that more than 50%, approximately 2,500, of the Pine Ridge Lakotas were ghost dancers. A few days later he gave a more detailed account and estimated the ghost dancers at 1,300 people. On Cheyenne River, the agent listed the followers of Big Foot and Hump as ghost dancers, numbering approximately 400-500 people. On Rosebud, the agent listed Two Strike and

⁸⁶⁸ DeMallie 1982, p. 57.

Crow Dog as the main leaders, but never gave any estimates of the ghost dancers' number. Agent Wright, however, said in December that 1,800 Indians from Rosebud left for Pine Ridge in order to join the ghost dancers there. However, some 700 non-ghost dancers had joined them en route, which would leave us with the approximate number of 1,100 actual ghost dancers on Rosebud Reservation. On Standing Rock, Agent McLaughlin said that only 10% of the Indians were ghost dancers. These numbers are strikingly close to the estimates presented in this study (See chapter 3, table 1). The estimates made in this study suggest that only 28%, that is, 4,200 of the 15,329 Lakotas were ghost dancers, and when all other circumstances are taken into account even that number is most likely an exaggeration.

It is, therefore, important to note that the white "voices" selected for this study, estimated the Lakota ghost dancers numbering from 6,000 to almost 30,000. The highest estimates were presented in the press, but it is noteworthy that some newspapers, when presenting those figures, quoted General Miles! As mentioned above, Miles did, in fact, present quite extraordinary numbers relating to the Lakota ghost dancers. Furthermore, the Lakotas would, according to Miles, get reinforcements of 4,000 men from other Indian tribes. The press took up General Miles's estimates, and why not? Understandably, he was considered to be a reliable source. His views were taken up also during the Congressional debate in December 1890. Senator Dawes, for example, concurred with Miles stating that almost 6,000 Lakota men were on the warpath. This is remarkable, since only a few days earlier Dawes himself noted that there were only 5,225 Lakota males, including young boys and old men.

The general estimates of the numbers of the Lakota ghost dancers by white contemporaries were thus extremely exaggerated. Interestingly, the agents, so often blamed for their excited requests for help, seem to have given the most reliable estimates of the Lakota ghost dancers' numbers. It is especially noteworthy that people like Dawes and Miles, who surely knew the actual numbers of Lakotas, presented such exaggerated views. Moreover, Miles at least, most likely knew that not all of the Lakotas were ghost dancers. These estimates published in the newspapers, understandably caused a general alarm. In this sense

they quite nicely served General Miles's purposes of gaining more control for the military.

Before we go further, it is necessary to ask one important question. Since the actual number of ghost dancers was much smaller than the whites generally believed, was military intervention necessary? From the white point of view, the answer has to be yes. The way in which the ghost dance was presented in November by the press, the agents and later by General Miles, left the white public with only one impression; the ghost dance meant impending war. Scholars, like **Mooney**, who have followed the official records presenting the ghost dancers' numbers equally high, generally agreed. When the number of the ghost dancers, however, was only 28% or less of the Lakota population, it seems that sending the military was an overreaction. This is especially true when, as stated above, the ghost dancers never planned an outbreak.

Another example of a misunderstanding that has been used by contemporary whites and scholars alike to promote the idea of the ghost dancers' warlike intentions are the ghost shirts. These dance shirts or dresses were introduced among the Lakotas around August-September 1890. **Mooney**, for example, suggests that they were worn as early as June 1890, but that is highly unlikely. No eyewitness reports mention these shirts at that time. In fact, only after Kicking Bear's return from a visit to the Arapaho Indians, who already used these shirts, did they become popular among the Lakotas. The idea was adopted by the Lakotas most likely through the Arapahos, but the true origin can possibly be traced all the way to Wovoka and the Mormons, whom the Lakota delegates saw wearing some kind of special clothing. Then, as Black Elk explained, these shirts were seen in visions, which made it natural for the Lakotas to start making and using them. So, the ghost shirt was not unique to the Lakota ghost dance alone, it was an important part of the ceremony among many Indian tribes. The Lakota ghost shirts, however, were thought to be bulletproof, a characteristic not reported among any other tribe.

This idea, however, was strongly based in Lakota tradition. Shields as well as special shirts were thought to be bulletproof; indeed, a human being could be

bulletproof. The important thing here is to realize that it was the power manifested in the item - shield or shirt - that made it bulletproof, not the material of which it was made. A shirt could be equally bulletproof as a shield. The ghost dance shirts, which the Lakotas called *ógle wakhá*, that is, sacred or holy shirts, were thus not an innovation for the Lakotas. The shirts are simply further evidence of the ever-developing Lakota ghost dance ceremony.

Interestingly, white contemporaries did not express much interest in these shirts, or in their bulletproof nature. The Lakota agents mentioned them only a few times, referring to them as some kind of sacred shirts. The military officers and the press mentioned them only randomly. In fact, they were considered more a joke than something to be dealt with in a serious manner. General John Brooke's comment when learning about the unlucky incident when a ghost dancer was wounded in the thigh while trying to show the shirt's power is quite revealing. He said: "Probably the shirt was not long enough."⁸⁶⁹ Thus, it seems that the bulletproof nature of these shirts has been more important to historians than to contemporary white participants.

Scholars following **Mooney** have asserted that these shirts were from the beginning considered bulletproof by the ghost dancers. This, they maintain, is evidence enough of the Lakota ghost dancers' warlike intentions. To quote **Mooney**, the ghost shirts were "...auxiliaries of war." In this, scholars have again failed to see the connection between these sacred shirts and Lakota traditions. Also, the fact that the Lakotas did not decorate their ghost shirts with objects that derived from the white man's culture has been interpreted as an expression of their hostility toward the whites. This assertion, I have to dismiss as a far-fetched idea. The shirts were, in fact, made of cloth received from the white man. That the Lakota ghost dancers did not decorate themselves with white man's items probably reflects their dislike of the whites and their expectation of living in a world where no whites would exist, but it does not give the ghost shirt, or the ghost dance, a warlike meaning. Also, if the doctrine prevented the Lakotas from using objects from the white culture, how could they then carry guns during the

⁸⁶⁹ See, The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 165, November 30, 1890, p. 1. See also, chapters 5 and 6.

ceremony as suggested by some scholars? These two ideas clearly contradict each other, and the latter idea is, in fact, discredited by this study.

Furthermore, if there was nothing warlike going on among the Lakotas during the summer of 1890, why would the Lakotas at that time have started to make these bulletproof shirts in the first place? Why would they have needed them? Only if we assume that the Lakota ghost dancers had warlike intentions from the beginning, would it be reasonable to maintain that the ghost shirts were “auxiliaries of war.” This study, however, argues that no such plan of an uprising existed, and therefore these allegations made by scholars have to be dismissed as unbelievable.

In fact, it is quite certain that the ghost shirts did not assume their bulletproof nature before late November 1890, *after* the military had arrived on the Lakota reservations. On October 9, Kicking Bear mentioned in a speech that the white man’s powder would not harm the Indians, and on October 31, Short Bull told that he would make his men wear sacred shirts and sing, after which the soldiers would fall into the ground (See appendices 12 and 13). Neither of the speeches directly mentions a bulletproof shirt, but perhaps the idea was already there. When the Lakotas were forced to face the military might of the United States, they needed something to keep them united; there was a *social call* for these shirts. With the bulletproof shirt there was no longer any reason to be afraid of the army. These shirts, together with the promise that all dead Indians would come alive again in the near future, helped the ghost dancers to deal with the situation.

In that sense the bulletproof ghost shirts surely made the ghost dancers believe more strongly in their strength, and also made them more boisterous and defiant toward the authorities. But, again, that happened only after the military invasion of the Lakota reservations. There is absolutely no evidence that would suggest that these shirts were introduced before August-September 1890, that they would have been considered bulletproof before the military’s arrival, or that they were made in preparation for war. This view is substantiated by contemporary accounts, and also by the lack of interest the “voices” representing the white viewpoints studied here, showed toward these shirts. Although the ghost shirts are only one example

of the misunderstandings relating to the Lakota ghost dance, I consider this a good example of how a simple misinterpretation has contributed to creating the generalizations of the Lakota ghost dance as a warlike manifestation.

However, public opinion, especially the press, had since October condemned the ghost dance as a war dance and predicted that there would soon be a major Indian uprising. After the military's arrival on the Lakota reservations the newspapers assumed an even more sensational tone. The army, according to the papers, was there to fight the Indians allegedly already on the warpath. Since the press coverage of the ghost dance from late November until the end of December is extensively dealt with in Chapter 6, only a brief summary of the main characteristics will be represented here.

Historians generally agree that newspaper reporting of the Lakota ghost dance "trouble" was alarmist and sensational.⁸⁷⁰ This study fully concurs with that view; the reporting was for the most part contradictory, confusing and even false. The papers copied each other, published stories with no foundation, and resorted to bad journalism. This study has, however, brought to light additional information concerning the nature of the newspaper reporting. Namely, there were surprisingly many articles in all four newspapers and Harper's Weekly that fully sympathized with the Lakotas. This fact has escaped most historians, who by randomly selecting a few newspaper articles have created their generalizations of the news reporting. These generalizations may be unfair, since all the papers selected for this study included articles both positive and negative toward the Lakotas. To determine, for example, whether the Eastern papers were more negative toward the Indians than the Western papers or vice versa, is a difficult task. On some occasions, the Eastern papers were more alarmist and sensational, while at other times the Western papers took a more alarmist tone. This is partly due to the fact that the same material was used in slightly different forms by all of the newspapers studied here. Any generalizations are therefore difficult and probably meaningless.

⁸⁷⁰ See, for example, Watson 1942, *passim*; Kolbensschlag 1991, *passim*.; Utley 1963, *passim*.; Smith 1975, *passim*.

Despite this, the papers' role is extremely important, since they affected the general public, increased the settlers' feeling of alarm, and affected the opinions of the decision-makers in Washington. They were also used by certain elements of people on the frontier, who, by feeding sensational reports to the inexperienced correspondents, hoped to gain personal profit from a war with the Lakotas. The papers were also used by men like General Miles and Agent McLaughlin to further their personal agendas, and the papers directly affected the developments on the Lakota reservations. Since some of the Lakota mixed bloods could read English, the ghost dancers were able to follow the sensation they caused through the newspapers. This had threefold consequences: 1) the Indians were able to read about troop movements, which, 2) led to a deterioration of relationships between General Brooke and the newspapermen resulting in the above-mentioned complaints about the army's inaction, and 3) some of the Indians were disappointed in the way they were portrayed in the press. This led to a growing sense of injustice and discontent. Indians, like Little Wound and Red Cloud, complained that they were not able to present their views at all. Thus, the newspaper reporting during November–December 1890 contributed significantly to the growing excitement and confusion on the Lakota reservations as well as among the white population.

The general confusion and misunderstandings surrounding the Lakota ghost dance were clearly present during the December 1890 Congressional debate. Congress, instead of trying to solve the Lakotas' problems, approached the Lakota ghost dance as a threat, not necessarily a threat in a military sense, but a threat to the government's Indian policy. Congress was unanimous in believing that ghost dancing had to be stopped, but the congressmen came to this conclusion for various reasons. They were not unanimous about what the Lakota ghost dance really represented. In fact, the congressmen can be divided into four groups each of which represent different approaches to the Lakota ghost dance. The first group consisted of congressmen who believed that ghost dancing had to be stopped, because it meant a set-back in the Lakotas' progress toward civilization. For these people, represented in Congress by Senator Henry L. Dawes, the ghost dance was evidence of the failure of government Indian policy. The second group comprised the humanitarian congressmen, represented by Senator Daniel W. Voorhees and

Representative William S. Holman, who simply believed that the Lakotas' problems stemmed from mismanagement of government Indian policy and the resulting suffering among the Lakotas. Congressmen who suggested that ghost dancing must be stopped because it meant an impending war formed the third group. Senator Gilbert A. Pierce was the advocate of this ideology. He represented some Western interest groups that hoped to benefit from a war between the Lakotas and the United States. They believed that the ghost dance had to be stopped by using force, which eventually might result in opening more Lakota lands to white settlement. Furthermore, military presence would be a boost to the local economy. The fourth group consisted of the majority of congressmen, who had no real interest toward the Lakotas or the ghost dance, but wanted to leave the matter to the military.

Because of all these different approaches to the ghost dance, the Congressional debate became a debate over political issues. Congress focused more on the legal aspects of the government's Indian policy than on solving problems among the Lakotas. When talking about the Lakotas and the ghost dance, Congress relied on rumors, on information received through newspapers, and on the expertise of some biased fellow congressmen. This was especially true during the discussion regarding the numbers of Lakota ghost dancers and their alleged intentions to take the warpath under the leadership of Sitting Bull and Red Cloud.

In the question of whether the Lakotas were suffering from lack of food, Congress also relied on biased information. Only after several days' discussion did Congress order an increase in Lakota rations. This matter was extremely important in the wider context of the ghost dance trouble. Had the rations been increased earlier, much of the trouble might have been averted. There is no doubt that the congressmen knew the Lakotas were starving, there certainly was enough information, but still Congress made this also an issue of politics instead of a humanitarian issue. Congress' approach to the Lakota ghost dance was in this sense quite hypocritical. Ultimately, Congress played a surprisingly small role during the ghost dance period. In fact, it has to be said that the Congress did not *act* in matters relating to the Lakota ghost dance, it merely *reacted*.

By the end of December 1890 the ghost dance trouble seemed to come to a peaceful end. The ghost dancers on Pine Ridge were gradually yielding to the peace efforts launched by General Brooke. In growing numbers they were returning to Pine Ridge Agency. Even the newspapers, despite some alarming reports to the contrary, were predicting a peaceful solution. The army officers, especially General Brooke, were very optimistic. Then, following Sitting Bull's death, Big Foot and his followers left Cheyenne River Reservation in order to go to Pine Ridge. Big Foot's action led to an increasing confusion on Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations.

General Miles immediately deemed Big Foot's action a hostile demonstration. For him Big Foot was, after Sitting Bull's death, the main troublemaker and enemy. Miles's opinions are noteworthy, since he again totally contradicted his fellow officers, particularly Lieutenant Colonel E. V. Sumner, who was personally in contact with Big Foot, and was convinced that Big Foot had no hostile intentions. Indian accounts also maintain that Big Foot simply left out of fear of the troops. He sought protection from Red Cloud and other powerful leaders at Pine Ridge. Whatever his reasons were, he was blamed both by Miles and the public press. Miles ordered troops to go after him, to capture and disarm him and, if necessary, to destroy his followers. The press went so far as to predict a "...slaughter of reds..."⁸⁷¹

This leads us to the massacre at Wounded Knee Creek on December 29, 1890. It is not necessary to go into the details of the Wounded Knee battle here, but some particulars are worth noting. The beginning of the fight has been under close scrutiny by contemporaries and historians alike. Contemporaries, the army, the press and even Agent Royer, claimed that the Indians opened fire on the soldiers in a deliberate effort of resistance. The Indian accounts, however, deny this unanimously. In fact, the accounts given by half-blood army scouts, who understood both English and Lakota, are most valuable in answering the questions relating to the beginning of the fight. There is no doubt that an Indian fired the first shot during, or immediately following, a medicine man's dance around the

⁸⁷¹ See, The Omaha Daily Bee, No. 190, December 25, 1890, p. 1. See also, chapter 6.

circle where the Indian men were sitting. Many contemporary white accounts state that the medicine man harangued the Indians and finally threw dirt in the air as a signal to open fire on the soldiers. Historians have taken this as a standard interpretation of the battle's beginning.⁸⁷²

When the medicine man's performance is put into the context of Lakota religious practices, it becomes evident that he was performing a ritual, a prayer, of which the throwing of dust was a part. Phillip Wells, a half-blood army scout, verifies this. He said that the medicine man was only praying, but while he was performing, other events took place leading to a gunshot and the subsequent fight. Undoubtedly the situation was tense, and the fact that the Indians could not understand the commanding officers' intentions and vice versa, contributed significantly to the dramatic beginning of the battle. It is, however, quite obvious that the Indians did not plan any resistance, but they did not expect to be disarmed either. They, in fact, had their families preparing for a peaceful march to Pine Ridge Agency.

It is worth noting that while General Miles ordered the Indians' disarmament, he contradicted the orders given by his superiors; Major General John M. Schofield, commanding the U.S. Army, noted repeatedly that disarmament could lead to trouble and was to be avoided. Had the Indians been allowed to keep their arms, there most likely would not have been a Wounded Knee massacre.

Still, accusations that the army planned revenge for the 1876 Little Big Horn battle, where the Lakotas annihilated the 7th Cavalry, are without any historical evidence. Perhaps such ideas were presented in the heat of the moment, but historical facts do not credit any previous plans to kill the Indians in revenge. There are, however, newspaper accounts as well as some individual statements that describe the general atmosphere on Pine Ridge prior to the Wounded Knee affair as such that a decisive battle was expected. Furthermore, reading between the lines, one might speculate on the possibility that some individuals in the army, perhaps even in the Congress, and certainly among the white people living close

⁸⁷² See, for example, Mooney 1991, 868-869; Johnson W. 1891, pp. 435-457; Johnson D. 1956, pp. 48-49; Utley 1963, pp. 208-213, Washburn & Utley 1977, p. 299.

to the Lakota reservations were hoping to inflict such a blow to the Lakotas that it would end their resistance for good. The Wounded Knee massacre did actually accomplish that task. They are, however, only random references to the matter and they cannot be used as historical evidence, so the idea will not be pursued further here. Therefore, it has to be concluded that the beginning of the Wounded Knee battle was caused by many tragic misunderstandings, but it seems evident that neither the Indians nor the army planned a wholesale act of war. The interpretations regarding the beginning of the Wounded Knee fight are only examples of the many misunderstandings that have prevailed concerning the Lakota ghost dance.

After the Wounded Knee fight Congress and the U.S. Army were forced to face growing criticism relating to the killing of women and children at Wounded Knee. The press, for example, quickly turned its praise of the army into accusations of brutal massacre. In order to reply to the growing criticism, the Wounded Knee matter was to be investigated thoroughly. Thus the Lakota “ghost dance war” became a political issue. This was reflected also in the newspaper reporting, which assumed some partisan characteristics in January 1891. The investigations, however, did not lead to any serious condemnation of the army’s conduct during the Wounded Knee battle.

Following the Wounded Knee battle all peaceful developments on Pine Ridge ceased. The Indians were frightened, angered and desperate. The army had to prepare for a possible war, but also to start negotiations all over again. The press described the situation as a full-scale war. The situation was extremely chaotic for a few days, but gradually, after some skirmishing between the Indians and the soldiers, things started to calm down leading to an end of the trouble by mid-January 1891.

With all of the above in mind, it has become evident that the basic misunderstanding of the Lakota ghost dance occurred on a collective level; the whites and the Lakotas simply could not, or did not want to, understand each other. Since Lakotas and whites viewed the ghost dance from their respective cultural backgrounds, conflict between them seems inevitable. From the basic

misunderstanding stemmed new misunderstandings and problems on both individual and collective levels. Further complications stemmed from various individual interests among whites and Indians alike. Contemporary whites failed to understand the Lakota ghost dance as a religious phenomenon. From the very beginning whites associated it with war dances and assumed the dancing implied an impending uprising. This study, however, clearly demonstrates that the Lakota ghost dance was no more hostile toward the whites than was the ghost dance among other North American Indian tribes. The Lakotas did indeed introduce changes in both the doctrine and the ceremony of Wovoka's ghost dance, but these changes were based on Lakota traditions and reflected their own religious beliefs.

This study shows that the Lakota ghost dance cannot be viewed as a phenomenon isolated from the rest of Lakota culture. When the Lakota ghost dance is studied outside the context of Lakota culture, the result is inevitably biased and insufficient. This is the second basic misunderstanding regarding the Lakota ghost dance, the failure of *scholars* to understand the nature of the Lakota ghost dance. Most of the material historians have used consists of documents conveying the white man's viewpoint. Despite this, the same material has also been used to explain the little that has been considered necessary of the Indians' point of view. For this reason, historical accounts of the Lakota ghost dance, with few exceptions, are biased and mainly fail to understand the Lakota ghost dance as what it really was – a *religious ceremony*.⁸⁷³ **Mooney** tried to approach the Lakota ghost dance as a religious ceremony, but since the Indians were reluctant to give him any information, he had to rely on other sources. He also did not have the benefit of historical hindsight. However, scholars following **Mooney** have often failed to see the ghost dance in the context of Lakota culture and have promoted the belief that the Lakota ghost dance was a political or military movement that sought to further the Indians' cause by resorting to violence. In order to understand the Lakota ghost dance from the Lakotas' point of view, it is vital to understand the Lakota way of thought. Historians' unwillingness, or inability, to

⁸⁷³ One of the best attempts to understand the Lakota ghost dance as a religious movement is **Raymond J. DeMallie's** brief article "The Lakota Ghost Dance of 1890: An Ethnohistorical Account."

put the ghost dance in this context has so far left us with inadequate interpretations of the Lakota ghost dance.⁸⁷⁴

As **DeMallie** has noted: “To dismiss the ghost dance as only a reaction to land loss and hunger does not do it justice, to dismiss it as merely a desperate attempt to revitalize a dead or dying culture is equally unsatisfactory...the ghost dance has to be seen as part of the integral, ongoing whole of Lakota culture and its suppression as part of the historical process of religious persecution led by Indian agents and missionaries against the Lakotas...”⁸⁷⁵ This is what this study seeks to accomplish, an understanding of the Lakota ghost dance in the context of the history and culture of Lakotas and white Americans alike. The method chosen for this study shows how differently these peoples actually viewed the Lakota ghost dance, and helps us to understand the differing viewpoints within each.

The fact that contemporary whites condemned the ghost dance ceremony among the Lakotas as warlike is in part explained by circumstances surrounding the ghost dance. Natural suspicions toward Indians, historical circumstances, and personal ambitions all clearly contributed to the general alarm the Lakotas’ ceremony caused. This is to some extent also understandable; it was not more than 16 years since the Lakotas had wiped out Lieutenant Colonel Custer’s entire column at the Little Big Horn River. The Lakotas were still feared and considered as dangerous and wild Indians. There is no doubt that the Lakota ghost dance ceremony, with its trances and excitement, was “wild,” and for those who only heard rumors or read newspaper descriptions of it, it must have seemed even wilder than it actually was.

For some white contemporaries, the Lakota ghost dance meant a collision with their own religious interests, for some it was an issue of political and economic interests, and for others the ghost dance was simply in conflict with their personal moral beliefs. Despite such differences, all white voices studied here concurred in one thing; the ghost dance had to be stopped. The Lakota ghost dance affected a

⁸⁷⁴ This category includes such works as Hyde 1956, Utley 1963, Johnson D. 1956, Smith 1975, Washburn & Utley 1977, to name a few. In fact, most of the scholarly works used in this study fail to see the ghost dance in the context of the Lakota culture.

⁸⁷⁵ DeMallie 1982, p. 54.

variety of white people representing different interests and interest groups in American society. For this reason, the Lakota ghost dance, although an Indian creation, has to be seen as an integral part of the cultural, political, economic, religious, racial, and ideological fabric of white America as well.

This method proves especially valuable in studying the relationships between these various groups, how they acted and reacted to events during the ghost dance period, and how they affected one another by setting events in motion that had multiple *culmination points*, including the arrival of the military on the Lakota reservations, Sitting Bull's death, and the Wounded Knee massacre. By studying these different "voices" it is possible not only to identify these culmination points, but also to understand *how* and *why* they came about.

This study demonstrates how the different groups developed their respective views about the Lakota ghost dance. It has, for example, never before been explained how the Lakota agents' views of the ghost dance developed and changed during the period from April 1890 to January 1891. The facts surrounding, for example, Agent Daniel F. Royer's or Agent James McLaughlin's actions are well documented, but their, and especially the other agents', actual views of the ghost dance have not been thoroughly studied. More importantly, the ways in which their views affected those of the army, the press or the Congress, and vice versa, have not been explored previously. It is, in fact, this interaction and these linkages between the different groups that ultimately constitute "The Great Story" of the Lakota ghost dance. Therefore, this study presents the ghost dance as a *whole*, as a phenomenon in which many interests collided and many misunderstandings prevailed on both collective and individual levels. The method used shows the linkages and interactions *among* five groups of people, and has also been used to explore the critical points, relationships and interactions *within* those groups. Revealing the connections among these voices is, in fact, one of the major contributions of this method.

The voices presented here represent different viewpoints on the Lakota ghost dance, but none of them alone provides a satisfactory interpretation of what the Lakota ghost dance was about. Together these voices help us to understand not

only the events, but also the ideologies behind the actions of each group. This study allows us to look at the collective viewpoints of these groups, and also to consider the viewpoints of some individuals within the groups. Thus, the method chosen for this study clearly demonstrates how an approach that takes multiple perspectives into consideration can further our understanding of the past. This methodology provides us with a fuller understanding of the Lakota ghost dance than has been achieved before. It is, however, not yet the fullest account possible; for example, the voices of different missionary groups, and the Indian Rights Association, would provide further information. These, however, are beyond the scope of this study, but would be a logical starting point in taking this analysis a step further.

I am convinced that this method helps us to achieve more comprehensive interpretations of the past. In this study, the Lakota ghost dance serves as an example, but this method could easily be used in many other studies of the history of the American West, where it would prove especially valuable in examining cultural, religious, ethnic and racial conflicts. In fact, many of the problems among the Lakotas today are direct results of these controversies that trace back to the nineteenth century. The questions relating to Indian lands, education and poverty, for example, are still part of the daily life on the Lakota reservations. In this sense, this study might prove useful in trying to understand some of the reasons behind the present problems between the Lakota Indians and the United States.

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A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS DURING THE LAKOTA GHOST DANCE PERIOD

Summer 1889	<p>The first news of the ghost dance and the Messiah reach the Lakota reservations</p> <p>The Sioux Land Commission, the negotiations for the reduction of the Great Sioux Reservation</p> <p>Hunger and other hardships among the Lakotas</p>
Fall-Winter 1889-1890	<p>The Lakota delegation is sent to meet with the Messiah</p> <p>The opening of the Great Sioux Reservation and the passing of <i>The Sioux Act of 1889</i></p>
April-May 1890	<p>The delegation returns, inauguration of ghost dance among the Lakotas</p> <p>Newspapers take notice of the Lakota ghost dance</p> <p>A settler in South Dakota warns the commissioner of Indian affairs about the potential problems caused by the ghost dance</p> <p>The agents arrest some ghost dance leaders</p>
June-July 1890	<p>The ghost dance is discontinued</p> <p>Hardships among the Lakotas</p> <p>Congress decides to cut the Lakotas' rations</p> <p>The Lakota agents suggest that non-progressive leaders like Sitting Bull should be arrested; the ghost dance is no major concern to the agents</p> <p>The army learns about the ghost dance through Porcupine, a Cheyenne Indian</p>
August-September 1890	<p>Hardships among the Lakotas continue</p> <p>The ghost dance is resumed</p> <p>Alarmed newspaper reports cause concern among settlers</p> <p>First incidents between the ghost dancers and their agents</p> <p>Ghost dances on Pine Ridge, Rosebud and Cheyenne River Reservations</p>
October 1890	<p>Kicking Bear introduces the ghost dance on Standing Rock</p> <p>Agent James McLaughlin urges Sitting Bull's arrest and tries to stop a ghost dance in his camp</p>

Several ghost dance camps are established on various Lakota reservations

Newspapers publish excited articles

The new agents take charge of Pine Ridge, Rosebud and Cheyenne River Reservations

The agents become alarmed and call for assistance. Agent James McLaughlin believes he can control the Indians on Standing Rock without assistance

Minor incidents between the ghost dancers and the agents

Short Bull preaches to the ghost dancers on October 31

November 1890

More alarmed newspaper articles are published

November 13, President Benjamin Harrison orders the military to assume control of Lakota reservations

The agents, especially Daniel F. Royer, send very alarmed telegrams to their superiors

The military arrives at Pine Ridge and Rosebud on November 20, 1890

Newspaper reporters arrive in late November and “war correspondence” begins

Panic among the Indians follows the military’s arrival, ghost dancers on Pine Ridge move to the Stronghold in the Badlands

The army tries to separate the progressive Indians from the non-progressive, i.e., ghost dancers from the non-ghost dancers

Lakotas from Rosebud travel to Pine Ridge in order to join the ghost dancers there

The bulletproof ghost shirts are introduced

Sitting Bull’s arrest is planned by General Nelson A. Miles and William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill)

General Nelson A. Miles travels to Washington, gaining support for his military campaign

Ghost dance causes a sensation in the press

Negotiations between the ghost dancers and the army officers on the Lakota reservations are begun

December 1890

Newspaper sensationalism grows to even larger proportions

Father John Jutz visits ghost dancers’ camp, negotiations continue

William F. Cody’s mission to arrest Sitting Bull is stopped by Agent James McLaughlin

Agent James McLaughlin launches his own plan for Sitting Bull's arrest

Peaceful developments on Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River, Little Wound, Big Road and Hump give up the ghost dance

Disagreements among the ghost dancers in the Stronghold

Congressional debate on the Lakota ghost dance begins

Sitting Bull is killed

Big Foot escapes the soldiers and starts a journey toward Pine Ridge

The army pursues Big Foot

Peaceful developments on Pine Ridge cease when the Indians learn about Sitting Bull's fate

Newspapers continue to spread general alarm

Big Foot is captured on December 28, and escorted to Wounded Knee Creek

The Wounded Knee massacre on December 29, 1890

General Miles personally takes command of the troops in the field

January 1891

Fighting follows the Wounded Knee massacre

Debate about Wounded Knee begins in the press

Congress orders investigation to the Wounded Knee affair

Army investigation to the Wounded Knee affair is begun

Negotiations between the ghost dancers and the army officers

January 15, 1890, the ghost dancers surrender; the end of the ghost dance among the Lakotas

Appendix A

Phonetic Key to the Lakota Language

There are several systems of writing Lakota. In this study the orthography developed by the University of Colorado Lakota Project, is used. This method of writing Lakota is also used, for example, by the American Indian Studies Research Institute, Indiana University when teaching the Lakota language. This orthography has proven to be especially useful in expressing the pronunciation of the Lakota language. The following brief phonetic key is based on Taylor, Allan R. & Rood, David S., *Elementary and Intermediate Lakota*, Colorado Lakota Project and Walker, James R., *Lakota Society* (ed. DeMallie, Raymond J.), University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska 1992, Appendix II.

The phonetic symbols with special significance used in this study are the following:

- č is pronounced, *ch*
- ğ is pronounced as Spanish, *pagar*
- ñ is pronounced as German, *ach*
- ž is pronounced as English, *pleasure*
- š is pronounced *sh*

Glottal stops are indicated by a backward superscript hook, like in čik^ʔála.

Nazalization is indicated by a “hook” under the letter, like in wakhâ.

Accent marks indicate stress, like in náği.

Appendix B

List of Abbreviations

AAG	Assistant Adjutant General
ACIA	Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs
AG	Adjutant General
AIUSD	American Indian and the United States. A Documentary History, Volume I-IV, ed. Washburn, Wilcomb E.
AIWKSC	Reports and Correspondence Relating to the Army Investigations of the Battle at Wounded Knee and to the Sioux Campaign of 1890-1891
ARCIA	Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian affairs
ARSOW	Annual Report of The Secretary of War
ATMIU	Archives of Traditional Music, Indiana University
CIA	Commissioner of Indian Affairs
DAID	Documents of American Indian Diplomacy. Treaties, Agreements and Conventions 1775-1979, Volume 1-2, ed. Deloria, Vine Jr. & DeMallie, Raymond J.
DUSIP	Documents of the United States Indian Policy, ed. Prucha, Francis Paul
ESRMC	Eli S. Ricker Manuscript Collection
HCIAP	House Committee on Indian Affairs Papers
HLDP	Henry L. Dawes Papers
IUL	Indiana University Library
IULAL	Indiana University Law Library
IULL	Indiana University Lilly Library
JMLP	James McLaughlin Papers

LC	Library of Congress
LSASPR	Letters Sent by the Agents or Superintendents at the Pine Ridge Agency 1875-1914
MHS	Minnesota Historical Society
NAMFP	Nelson A. Miles Family Papers
NARS	National Archives Records and Administration Services
NSHS	Nebraska State Historical Society
SC 188	Special Case No. 188 – The Ghost Dance, 1890-1898
SCIAP	Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Papers
WMCC	Walter Mason Camp Manuscript Collection

Appendix 1, Map 1

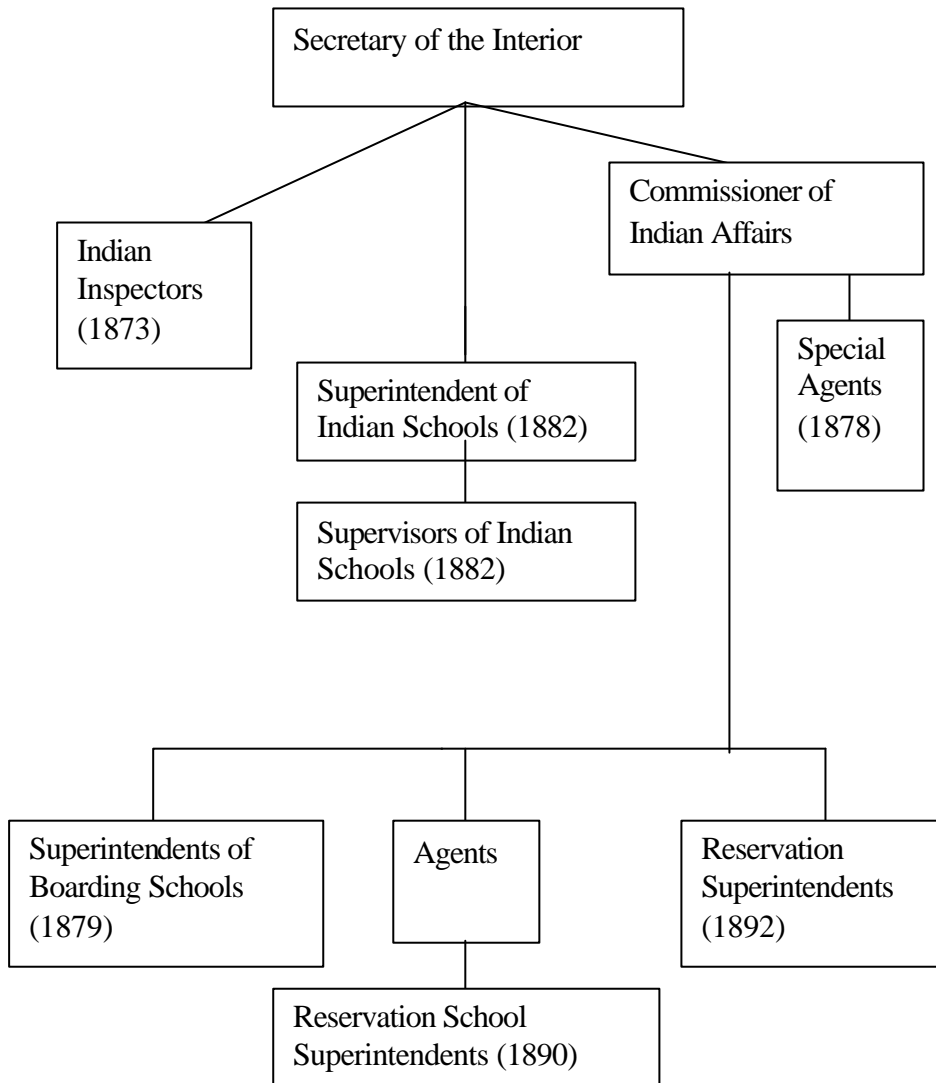
THE AREA COVERED BY THE GHOST DANCE



Source: Mooney, James, *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890*, (The 14th Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1892-1893, Washington D. C. 1893), University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska 1991.

Appendix 2, Figure 1

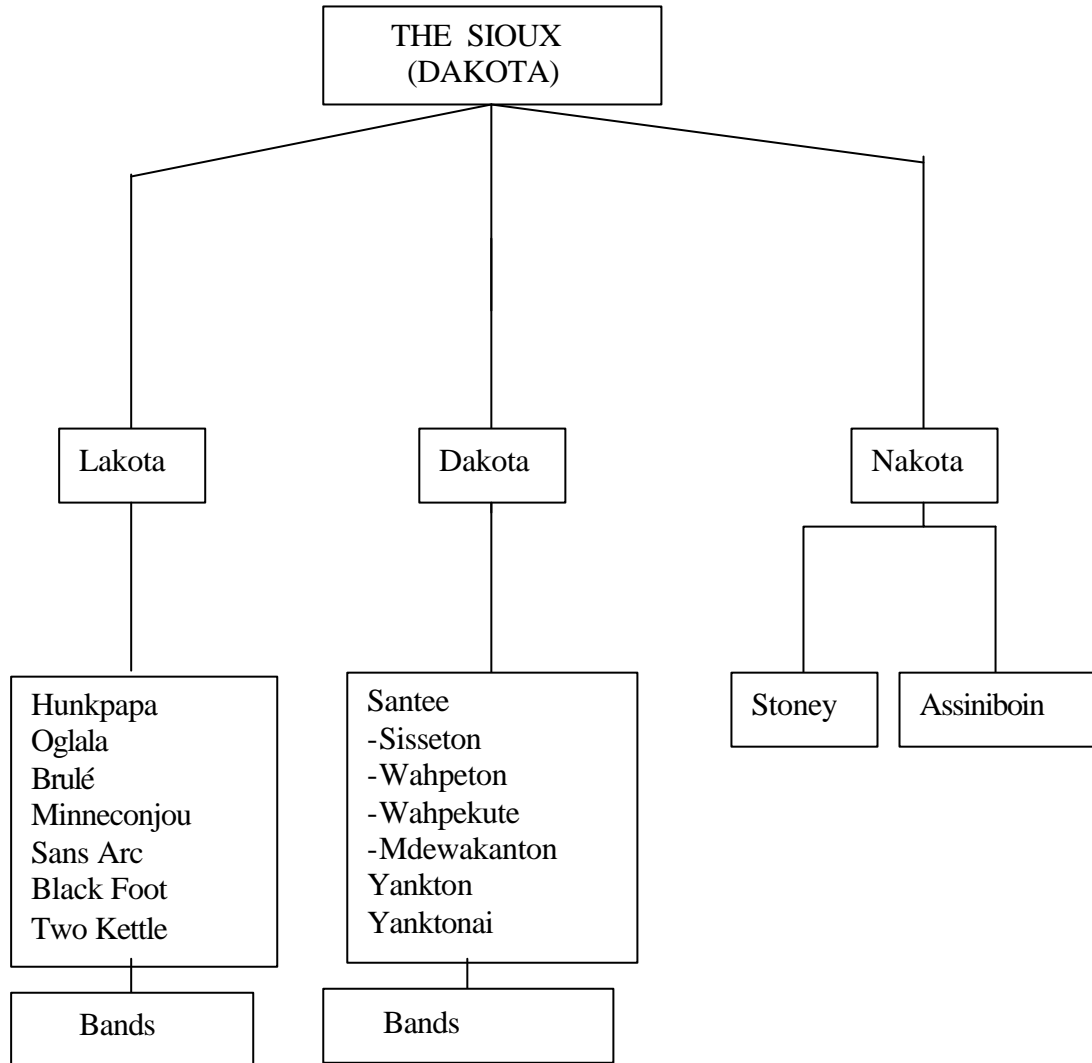
THE STRUCTURE OF THE INDIAN OFFICE 1873-1892



Source: Stuart, Paul, *The Indian Office, Growth and Development of an American Institution, 1865-1900*, Studies in American History and Culture, No. 12, Ann Arbor, Michigan 1979.

Appendix 3, Figure 2

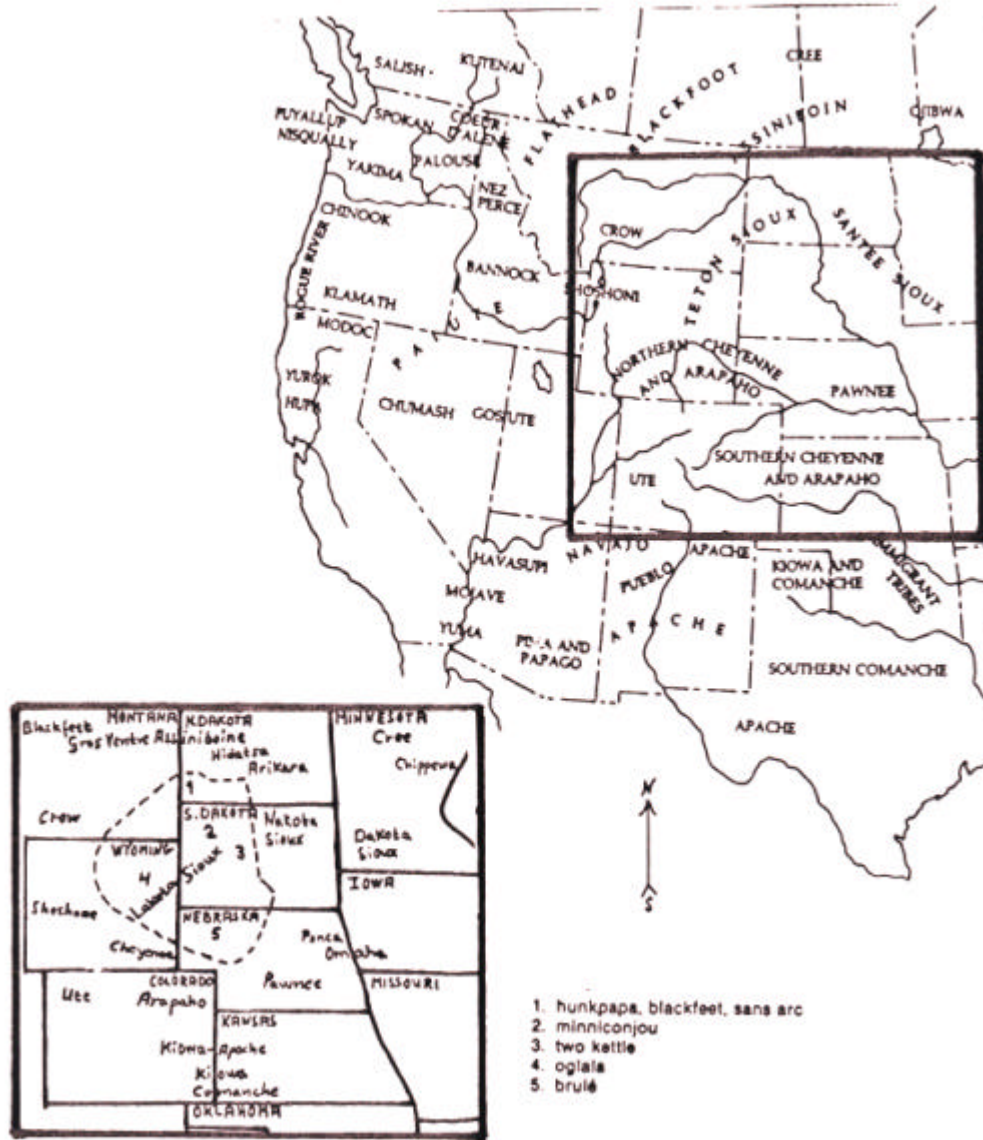
DIVISIONS OF THE SIOUX



Source: DeMallie, Raymond J., The Sioux, Manuscript for The Handbook of North American Indians, Plains Indian Volume (Manuscript in the author's possession).

Appendix 4, Map 2

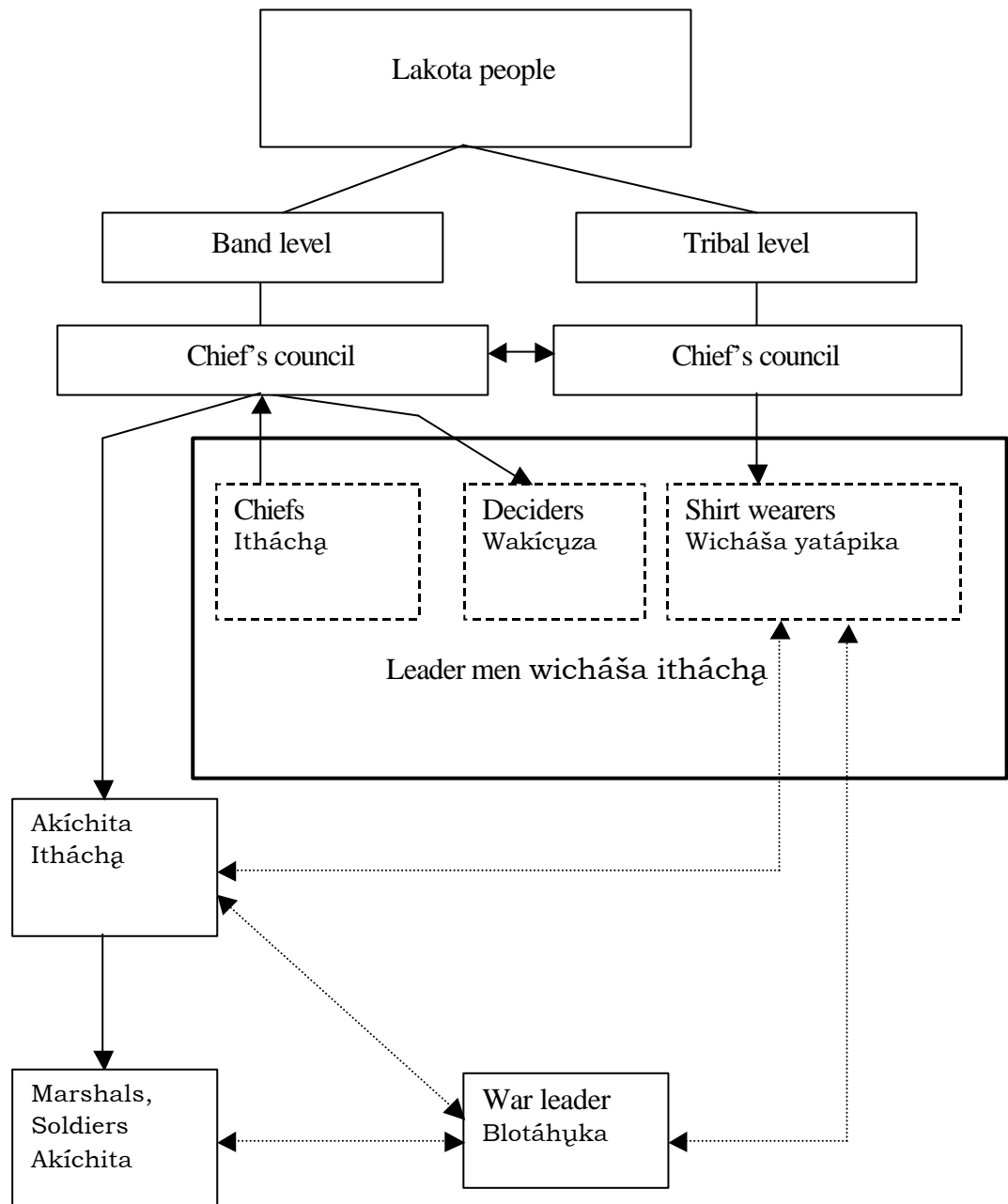
THE LAKOTA COUNTRY AROUND 1850



Source: Utley, Robert M., *The Indian Frontier of the American West 1846-1890*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, New Mexico 1984; Eriksson, Tommy, *Rainbow föll i gryningen. En Indiandokumentär*, Örkelsjunga 1987.

Appendix 5, Figure 3

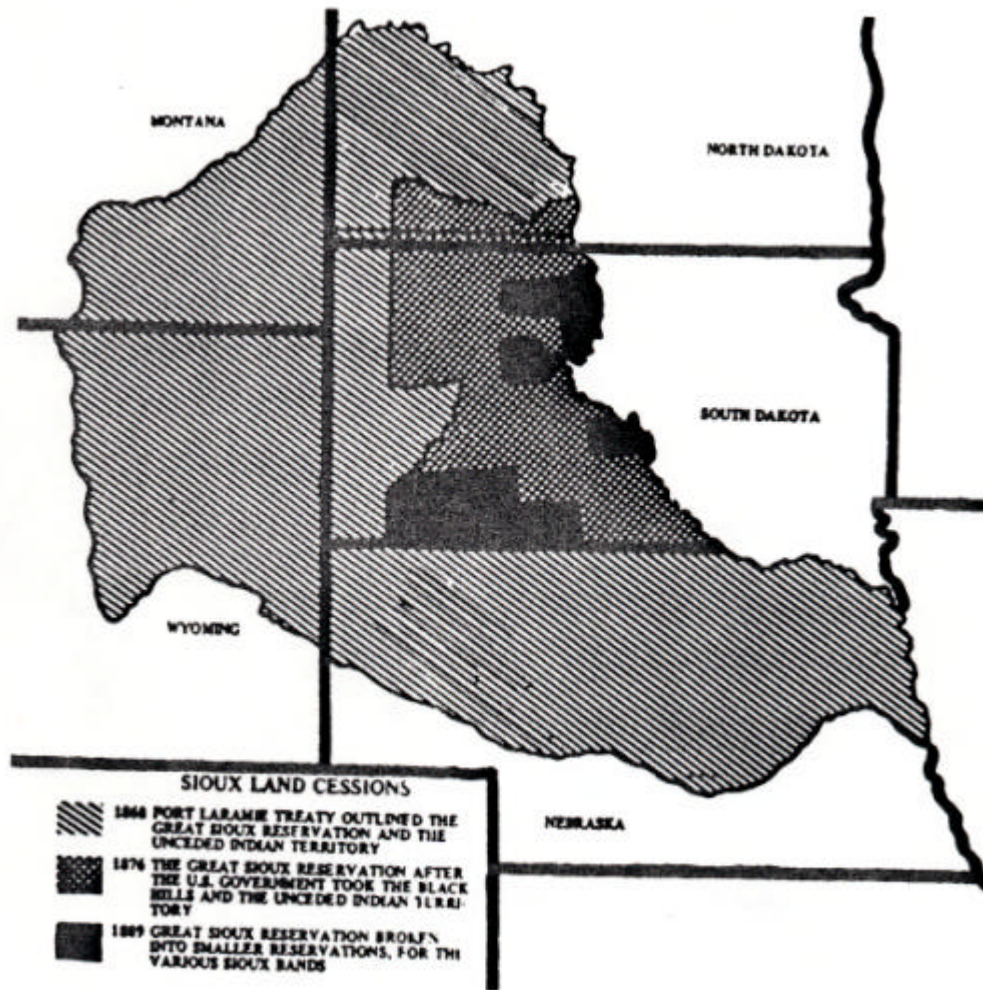
POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AMONG THE LAKOTAS



Source: DeMallie, Raymond J., *The Sioux*, Manuscript for the Handbook of North American Indian, Plains Indian Volume; Pennington, Robert, *An Analysis of the Political Structure of the Teton-Dakota Indian Tribe of the North America*, North Dakota History, July/1953

Appendix 6, Map 3

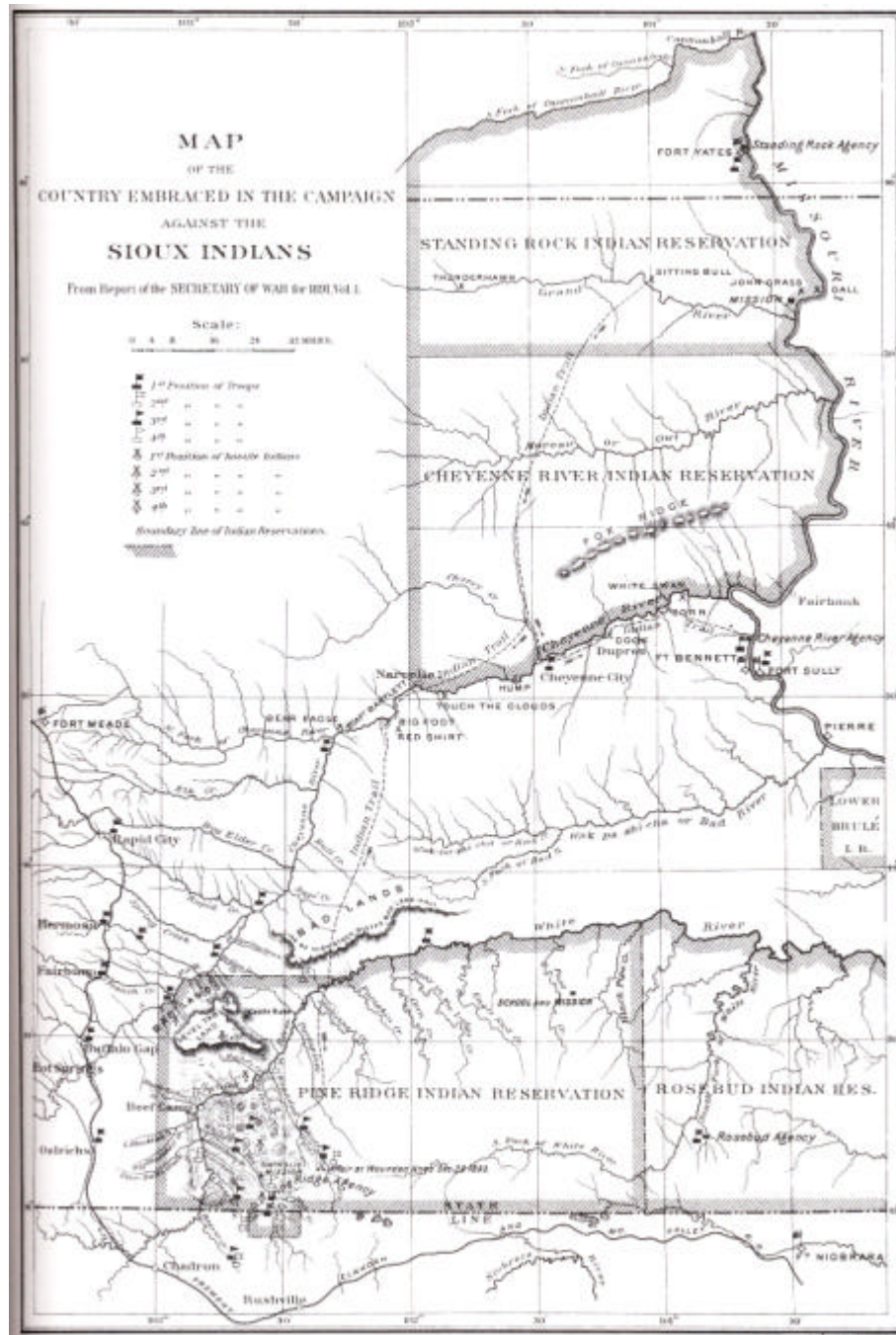
REDUCTION OF THE SIOUX RESERVATIONS 1868-1889



Source: Ortiz, Roxanne D., *The Great Sioux Nation. Sitting in Judgment on America.* American Indian Treaty Council Information Center/Moon Books 1977.

Appendix 7, Map 4

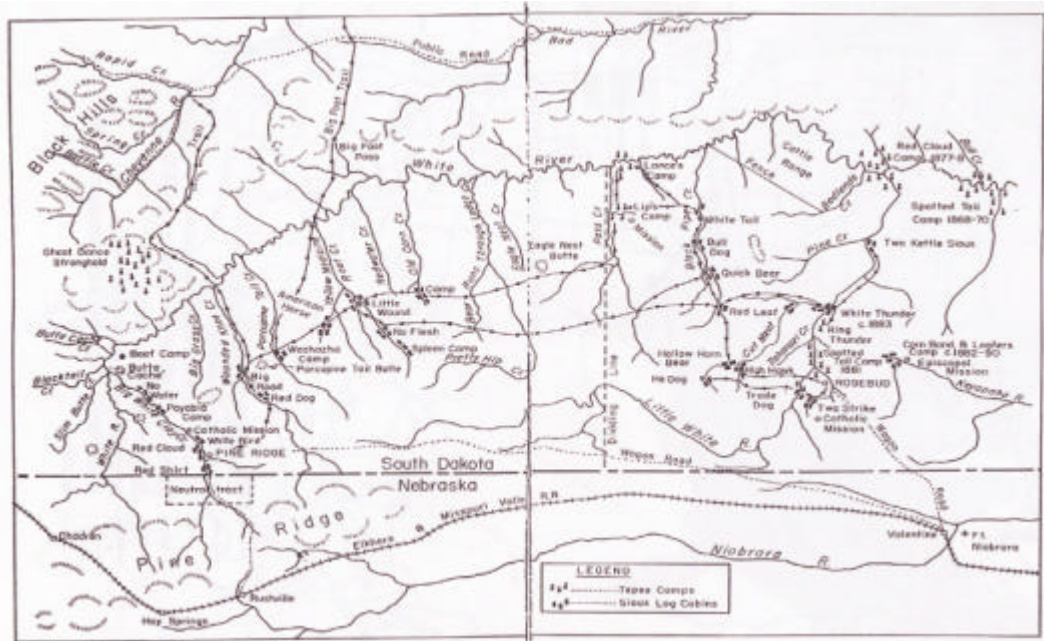
THE LAKOTA RESERVATIONS IN 1890



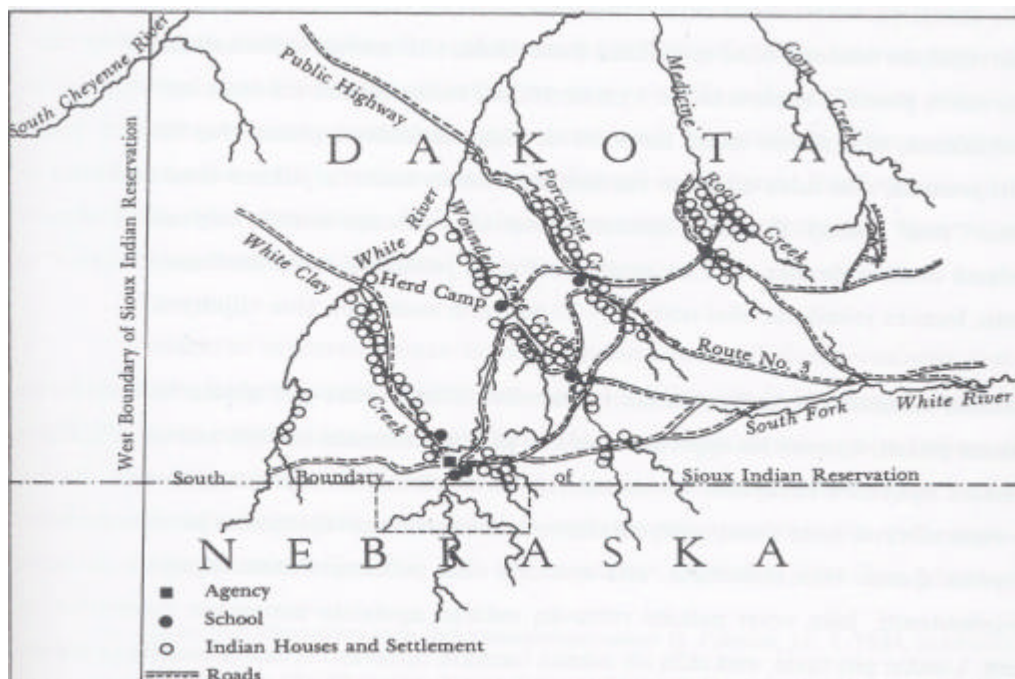
Source: Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 52nd Congress, 1st Session, House Executive Document, Vol. II, No. 1, Part 2, Vol. 1, Serial 2921, Government Printing Office, Washington D. C. 1892.

Appendix 8, Map 5

THE DISTRICT STRUCTURE ON PINE RIDGE RESERVATION



Map 6: INDIAN COMMUNITIES ON PINE RIDGE RESERVATION



Source: ARCIA 1884, Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 48th Congress, 2nd Session, House Executive Document, No. 1, Vol. 12, Serial 2287, Government Printing Office, Washington D. C. 1885; Hyde, George E., A Sioux Chronicle, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma 1956.

Appendix 9

THE MESSIAH LETTERS

Arapaho Version

What you get home you make dance, and will give (you) the same. When you dance four days and (in night) one day, dance daytime, five days and then fifth, will wash five for every body. He likes you (flok) you give him good many things, he heart been satting feel good. After you get home, will give good cloud, and give you chance to feel good. And he give you good spirit. And he give you (al) good paint.

You folks want you to come in three [months] here, any tribs from there. There will (be) good bit snow this year. Sometimes rain's, in fall, this year some rain, never give you any thing like that. grandfather said when he die never (no) cry. No hurt anybody. No fight, good behave always, it will give you satisfaction, this young man, he is a good Father and mother, don't tell no white man. Jueses was on ground, he just like cloud. Every body is alive again, I don't know when they will (be) here, may be this fall or spring.

Everybody never get sick, be young again, -(if young fellow no sick any more) work for white men never trouble with him until you leave, when it shake the earth don't be afraid no harm any body.

You make dance for six (weeks) night, and put your foot [food?] in dance to eat for every body and wash in the water. That is all to tell, I am in to you. And you will received a good words from him some time, Don't tell lie.

Cheyenne Version

When you get home you have to make dance. You must dance four nights and one day time. You will take bath in the morning, before you go to yours homes, for every body, and give you all the same as this. Jackson Wilson likes you all, he is glad to get good many things. His heart satting fully of gladness, after you get home, I will give you a good cloud and give you chance to make you feel good. I give you a good spirit, and give you all good paint, I want you people to come here again, want them in three months any tribs of you from there. There will be a good deal snow this year. Some time rains, in fall this year some rain, never give you any thing like that, grandfather, said, when they were die never cry, no hurt any body, do any harm for it, not to fight. Be a good behave always. It will give a satisfaction in your life. This young man is good father and mother. Do not tell the white people about this, Juses is on the ground, he just like cloud. Every body is alive again. I don't know when he will be here, maybe be in this fall or spring. When it happen it may be this. There will be no sickness and return to young again. Do not refuse to work for white man or do not make any trouble with them until you leave them. When the earth shakes do not be afraid it will not hurt you. I want you to make dance for six weeks. Eat and wash good clean yourselves. [the rest of the letter has been erased]

Free Rendering

When you get home you must make a dance to continue five days. Dance four successive nights, and the last night keep up the dance until the morning of the fifth day, when all must bathe in the river and then disperse to their homes. You must all do in the same way.

I, Jack Wilson, love you all, and my heart is full of gladness for the gifts you have brought me. When you get home I shall give you a good cloud [rain?] which will make you feel good. I give you a good spirit and give you all good paint. I want you to again in three months, some form each tribe there [the Indian Territory]

There will be a good deal of snow this year and some rain. In the fall there will be such a rain as I have never given you before.

Grandfather [a universal title of reverence among Indians, and here meaning the messiah] says, when your friends die you must not cry. You must not hurt anybody or harm to anyone. You must not fight. Do right always. It will give you satisfaction in life. This young man has a good mother and father [Possibly this refers to Casper Edson, the young Arapaho who wrote down this message of Wovoka for the delegation].

Do not tell the white people about this. Jesus is now upon the earth. He appears like a cloud. The dead are all alive again. I do not know when they will be here; maybe this fall or in the spring. When the time comes there will be no more sickness and everyone will be young again.

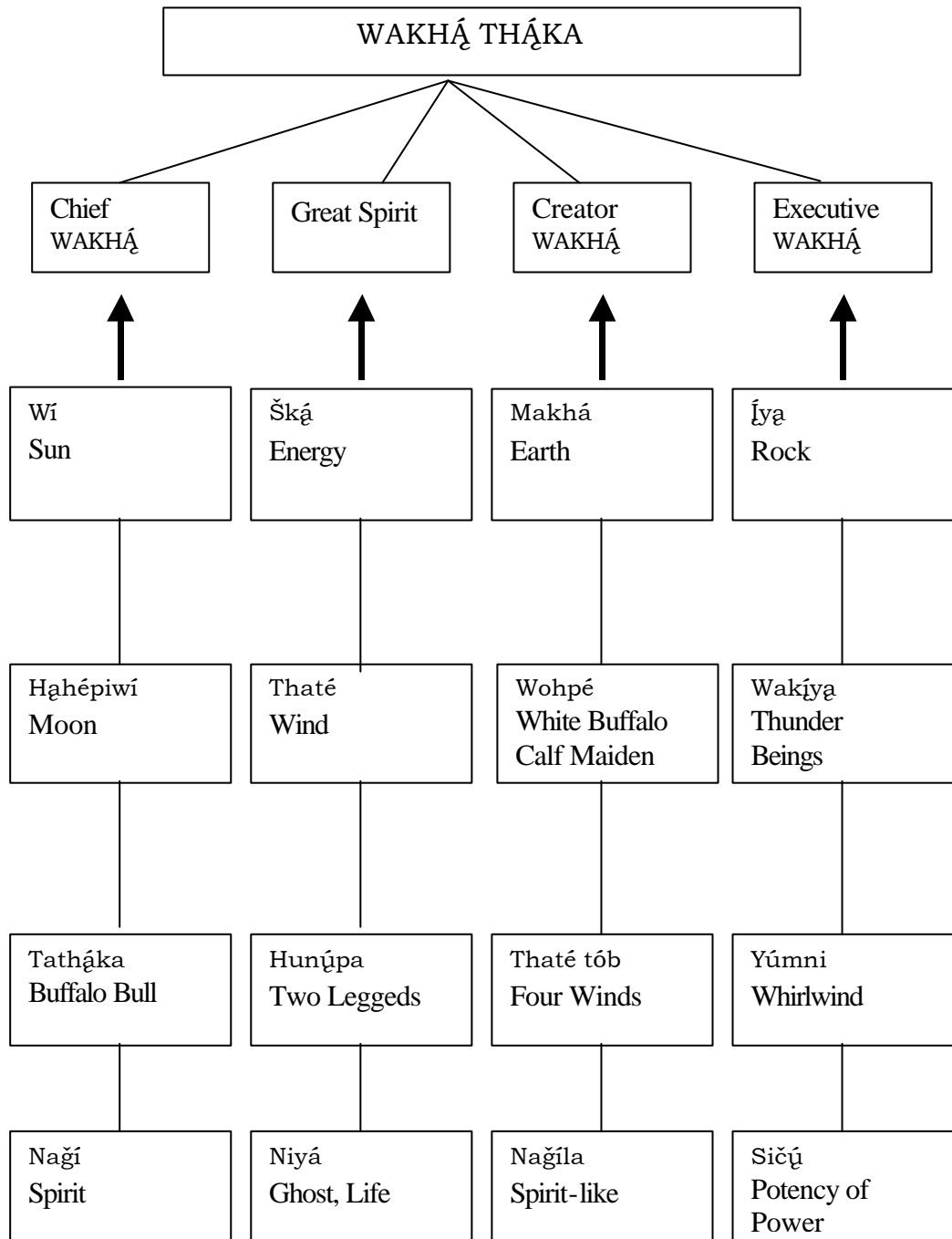
Do not refuse to work for the whites and do not make any trouble with them until you leave them. When the earth shakes [at the coming of the new world] do not be afraid. It will not hurt you.

I want you to dance every six weeks. Make a feast at the dance and have food that everybody may eat. Then bathe in the water. That is all. You will receive good words again from me some time. Do not tell lies.

Source: Mooney, James, *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890*, (The 14th Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1892-1893, Washington D. C. 1893), University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska 1991.

Appendix 10, Figure 4

THE LAKOTA CONCEPT OF WAKHĀ THĀKA



Source: DeMallie, Raymond J., & Lavenda, Robert H., *Wakan: Plains Siouan Concepts of Power* reprinted from: *The Anthropology of Power. Ethnographic Studies from Asia, Oceania, and the New World* (ed. Adams, Richard & Fogelson, Raymond D.) New York, N.Y. 1977.

Appendix 11

KICKING BEAR'S SPEECH, OCTOBER 9, 1890

My brother, I bring you the promise of a day in which there will be no white man to lay his hand on the bridle of the Indian's horse; when the red men of the prairie will rule the world and not be turned from the hunting grounds by any man. I bring you word from your fathers the ghosts, that they are now marching to join you, led by the Messiah who came once to live on earth with white men, but was cast and out and killed by them. I have seen the wonders of the spirit-land, and have talked with the ghosts [wanáǵi]. I traveled far and am sent back with a message to tell you to make ready for the coming of the Messiah and return of the ghosts in the spring.

In my tepee on the Cheyenne reservation I rose after the corn-planting sixteen moons ago, and prepared for my journey [description of the journey omitted] On the evening of the fourth day, when we were weak and faint from our journey, we looked for a camping-place, and were met by a man dressed like an Indian, but whose hair was long and glistening like the yellow money of the white man. His face was very beautiful to see, and where he spoke my heart was glad and I forgot hunger and the toil I had gone through. And he said: "How, my children. You have done well to make this long journey to come to me. Leave your horses and follow me." And our hearts sang in our breasts and we were glad. He led the way up a great ladder of small clouds, and we followed him up through an opening in the sky (...) He whom we followed took us to the Great Spirit and his wife, and we lay prostrate on the ground, but I saw that they were dressed as Indians. Then from an opening in the sky we were shown all the countries of the earth and the camping-grounds of our fathers since the beginning; all were there, the tepees, and the ghosts of our fathers, and great herds of buffalo, and a country that smiled because it was rich and the white man was not there. Then he whom we had followed showed us his hands and feet, and there were wounds in them which had been made by the whites when he went to them and they crucified him. And he told us that he was going to come again on earth, and this time he would remain and live with the Indians, who were his chosen people... And the Great Spirit spoke to us saying:

"Take this message to my red children and tell it to them as I say it. I have neglected the Indians for many moons, but I will make them my people now if they obey me in this message. The earth is getting old, and I will make it new for my chosen people, the Indians, who are to inhabit it, and among them will be all those of their ancestors who have died, their fathers, mothers, brothers, cousins and wives – all those who hear my voice and my words through the tongue of my children. I will cover the earth with new soil to a depth of five times the height of a man, and under this new soil will be buried the whites, and all the holes and the rotten places will be filled up. The new lands will be covered with sweet-grass and running water and trees, and herds of buffalo and ponies will stray over it, that my red children may eat and drink, hunt and rejoice. And the sea to the west I will fill up so that no ships may pass over it, and the other seas I will make impassable. And while I am making the new earth the Indians who have heard this message and who dance and pray and believe will be taken up in the air and suspended there, while the wave of the new earth is passing; then set down among the ghosts of their ancestors, relatives and friends. Those of my children who doubt will be left in undesirable places, where they will be lost and wander around until they believe and learn the songs and the dance of the ghosts. And while my children are dancing and making ready to join the ghosts, they shall have no fear of the white man, for I will take from the whites the secret of making gunpowder, and the powder they now have on hand will not burn when it is directed against the red people, my children, who know the songs and the dances of the ghosts; but that powder which my children, the red men, have, will burn and kill when directed against the whites and used by those who believe. And if a red man die at the hands of the whites while he is dancing, his spirit will only go to the end of the earth and there join the ghosts of his fathers and return to his friends next spring. Go then, my children, and tell these things to all the people and make all ready for the coming of the ghosts." (...) Then we were shown the dances and taught the songs that I am bringing to you my brothers, and we were led down the ladder of clouds by him who had taken us up...

Source: McLaughlin, James, *My Friend The Indian*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln Nebraska (orig. 1910), pp. 185-189.

Appendix 12

SHORT BULL'S SPEECH, OCTOBER 31, 1890

My friends and relations: I will soon start this ting in running order. I have told you that this would come to pass in two seasons, but since the whites are interfering so much, I will advance the time from what my father above told me to do, so the time will be shorter. Therefore you must not be afraid of everything. Some of my relations have no ears, so I will have them blown away.

Now there will be a tree sprout up, and there all the members of our religion and the tribe must gather together. That will be the place where we will see our dead relations. But before this time we must dance the balance of this moon, at the end of which time the earth will shiver very hard. Whenever this thing occurs, I will start the wind to blow. We are the ones who will then see our fathers, mothers, and everybody. We, the tribe of Indians, are the ones who are living a sacred life. God, our father himself, has told and commanded and shown me to do these things.

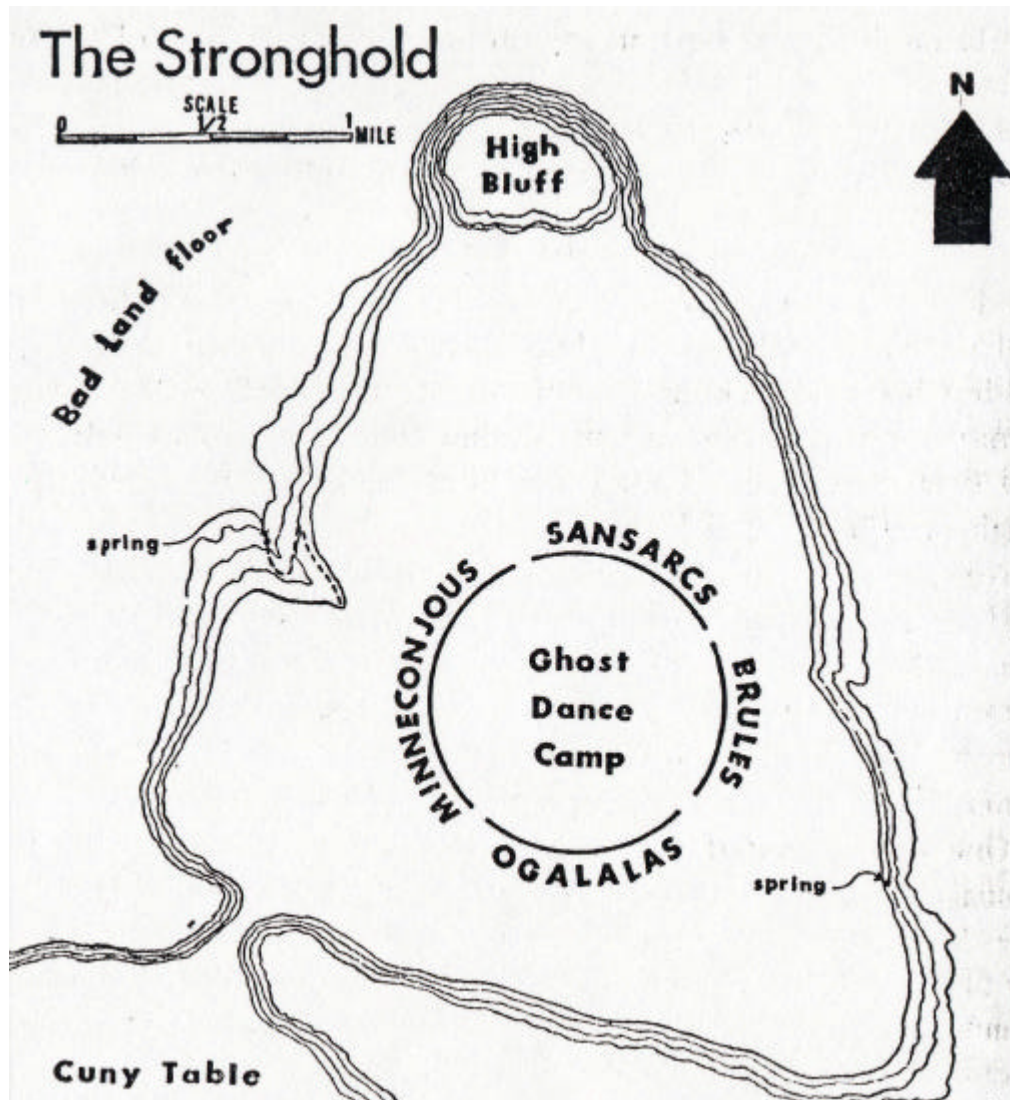
Our father in heaven has placed a mark at each point of the four winds. First, a clay pipe, which is at the setting of the sun and represents the Sioux tribe. Second, there is a holy arrow lying in the north, which represents the Cheyenne tribe. Third, at the raising of the sun there lies hail, representing the Arapaho tribe. Fourth, there lies a pipe and a nice feather at the south, which represents the crow tribe. My father has shown me these things, therefore we must continue this dance. If the soldiers surround you four deep, three of you, on whom I have put holy shirts, will sing a song, which I have taught, around them, when some of them will drop dead. Then the rest will start to run, but their horses will sink into the earth. The riders will jump from their horses, but they will sink into the earth also. Then you can do as you desire with them. Now, you must know this, that all the soldiers and that race will be dead. There will be only five thousand of them left living on the earth. My friends and relations, this is straight and true.

Now, we must gather at Pass creek where the tree is sprouting. There we will go among our dead relations. You must not take any earthly things with you. Then the men must take off all their clothing and the women must do the same. No one shall be ashamed of exposing their persons. My father above has told us to do this, and we must do as he says. You must not be afraid of anything. The guns are the only things we are afraid of, but they belong to our father in heaven. He will see that they do no harm. Whatever white men may tell you, do not listen to them, my relations. That is all. I will now raise my hand up to my father and close what he has said to you through me.

Source: Mooney, James, *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890*, pp. 788-789.

Appendix 13, Map 7

THE STRONGHOLD



Source: Miller, David Humphreys, Ghost Dance, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska 1985.

Appendix 14, Map 8

THE FIELD OF WOUNDED KNEE



Source: The Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 52nd Congress, 1st Session, House Executive Document, No. 1, Part 5, Vol. 2, Serial 2934, Government Printing Office, Washington D. C. 1892.

Wanáǵi Wačhípi kǵ - Lakotojen henkitanssi vuonna 1890

1. Tausta ja tutkimustavoite

Vuosien 1889-1890 aikana Pohjois-Amerikan intiaanien keskuudessa sai laajaa kannatusta henkitanssina tunnettu uskonnollinen liike. Henkitanssi sai kannattajia yli kolmenkymmenen intiaanikansan parista, yhteensä kymmeniätuhansia intiaaneja. Henkitanssi oli pohjimmiltaan rauhanomainen uskonto. Sen perustaja Paiute-intiaani, Wovoka, kehotti kaikkia intiaaneja elämään sovussa toistensa kanssa, hän kielsi sotimisen, valehtelun ja mm. alkoholinkäytön. Wovokan uskonnon perusajatuksena oli, että lähitulevaisuudessa kaikki intiaanit eläisivät paratiisinomaisessa maailmassa, missä valkoinen mies ei häiritsisi heidän elämäänsä. Tämä uusi paratiisi olisi saavutettavissa tiettyjen uskonnollisten seremonioiden avulla. Tärkein seremonia oli yksinkertainen, ympyrässä suoritettu tanssi. Tuhannet intiaanit eri puolilla Yhdysvaltoja tanssivat Wovokan ohjeiden mukaan.

Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee sioux-intiaanien suurimman ryhmän, lakotojen henkitanssia. Heidän harjoittamanaan henkitanssi muuttui, ja monien väärinkäsitysten jälkeen Yhdysvaltain armeija lähetettiin kukistamaan lakotojen oletettua kapinaa. Tämä johti joulukuussa 1890 kuuluisaan ja traagiseen Wounded Kneen verilöylyyn, missä Yhdysvaltain armeija surmasi noin 250 lakotaa, joista suurin osa oli naisia ja lapsia.

Tässä tutkimuksessa lakotojen henkitanssi astetaan laajaan, kulttuuriseen, poliittiseen, uskonnolliseen ja yhteiskunnalliseen viitekehykseen. Yhdysvaltalaiset tutkijat Robert F. Berkhofer Jr. sekä Patricia N. Limerick ovat tutkimuksissaan tuoneet uusia ulottuvuuksia Yhdysvaltain Lännen tutkimukseen. Heidän mukaansa Yhdysvaltain Lännen tutkimuksessa on erityisen rakentavaa käyttää ns. monitasoista ja moniäänistä tutkimusmetodia. Tavoitteena on tarkastella Länttä alueena, missä erilaiset kulttuuriset, poliittiset, taloudelliset, rodulliset ym. intressit kohtasivat toisensa. Sallimalla erilaisten menneisyyden äänten kertoa

tarinansa voidaan yksittäinenkin menneisyyden tapahtuma nähdä osana laajempaa kokonaisuutta. Tässä tutkimuksessa lakotojen henkitanssia tarkastellaan useasta eri näkökulmasta: 1) lakotojen, 2) intiaanasiamiesten, 3) armeijan, 4) lehdistön sekä, 5) Yhdysvaltain kongressin näkökulmista. Tavoitteena on ymmärtää, mistä monet väärinkäsitykset johtuivat. Tämä on mahdollista vain lähestymällä lakotojen henkitanssia useasta eri näkökulmasta siten, että kukin menneisyyden ääni asetetaan omaan kulttuuriseen ym. perspektiiviinsä. Tavoitteena on ymmärtää lakotojen henkitanssi osana laajempaa Amerikkalaista, niin intiaanien kuin valkoistenkin, kulttuurista ja henkistä ympäristöä.

Tutkimuksen peruslähdeaineistoa ovat erilaiset Yhdysvaltain hallituksen dokumentit, mutta suuren osan aineistosta muodostaa myös armeijan ja intiaanasiamiesten kirjeenvaihto. Lehdistön näkökulmaksi on valittu The New York Times, The Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune sekä The Omaha Daily Bee sanomalehdet. Harper's Weekly Magazine edustaa valtakunnallisia kausijulkaisuja. Lakotojen näkökulma koostuu erilaisista antropologien kokoamista haastatteluista sekä laajasta lakotojen yhteiskuntaa käsittelevästä kirjallisuudesta. Tämä siksi, että lakotojen henkitanssi nähdään tässä tutkimuksessa osana lakotojen historiaa ja perinteistä yhteiskuntrakennettä. Tässä ovat antropologian ja ns. etnohistorian metodit olleet erittäin tärkeässä asemassa. Mikäli lakotojen henkitanssia tarkastellaan ilman perustavaa käsitystä heidän kulttuuristaan, tulos on väistämättä epätäydellinen, jopa virheellinen.

2. Kulttuurien välinen konflikti ja henkitanssi

Tässä luvussa esitellään Yhdysvaltain intiaanipolitiikan suuntaviivoja aina 1800-luvun alusta vuoteen 1890. Tällä tavoin Lakotojen henkitanssi asetetaan valkoisen amerikkalaisen yhteiskunnan poliittiseen, taloudelliseen, uskonnolliseen, moraaliseen sekä ideologiseen kontekstiin. Lakotojen henkitanssi on nähtävä osana koko yhdysvaltalaisista järjestelmää, sekä osana siihen liittyvää intiaanipolitiikkaa. Luvun toisessa osassa tarkastellaan lakotojen yhteiskunnan rakennetta, heidän uskonnollista maailmaansa sekä historiaansa 1800-luvun alkupuolelta 1880-luvun lopulle. Lakotojen henkitanssin ymmärtämiseksi tällainen läpileikkaus on välttämätön.

Luvun kolmas osa käsittelee itse henkitanssia, sen oppia, sekä sen profeettaa, Wovokaa. Samalla henkitanssia tarkastellaan osana laajempaa ns. elvytysliikkeenä tunnettua ilmiötä. Vastaavanlaisia uskonnollisia liikkeitä on syntynyt eri puolilla maailmaa alkuperäisväestön jouduttua kosketuksiin eurooppalaisperäisen kolonialismin kanssa. Usein, kun alkuperäisväestön sotilaallinen vastarinta oli murrettu, heidän kulttuurinsa ja yhteiskuntansa lähes tuhottu, lohtua haettiin henkitanssin kaltaisista liikkeistä. Ideana oli yleensä luoda uusi maailma, jossa alkuperäisväestö voisi elää onnellisena ilman valkoisen miehen vaikutusta. Henkitanssi on erinomainen esimerkki tällaisista, myös nativistisina liikkeinä tunnetuista, elvytysliikkeistä.

3. Wanági Wačhípi kj

Lakotojen näkökulman saavuttamiseksi henkitanssi asetetaan tässä luvussa laajaan kulttuuriseen kontekstiin. Luvussa käsitellään lakotojen uskonnollista maailmaa sekä traditiota varsin seikkaperäisesti. Tällä tavoin henkitanssi asettuu osaksi lakotojen historiaa ja traditiota, se ei ole irrallinen ilmiö, jollaisena useimmat tutkijat ovat sen nähneet. Henkitanssi oli lakotoille osittain juuri siksi niin houkutteleva, että sen oppi sisälsi piirteitä, jotka yhdistivät sen suoraan Lakotojen perinteisiin.

Lakotat liittivät lisäksi itse seremoniaan paljon sellaisia aspekteja, jotka tekivät siitä tutun ja helposti omaksuttavan. Se oli ulkoiselta olemukseltaan monessa suhteessa samankaltainen kuin lakotojen tärkein perinteinen uskonnollinen seremonia – aurinkotanssi. Toisaalta henkitanssi sisälsi paljon kristinuskosta otettuja piirteitä. Tällä tavoin se houkutteli paitsi niitä Lakotoja, jotka kaipasivat perinteistä elämäntapaa, myös niitä, jotka elivät kahden uskonnollisen maailman, kristinuskon ja lakotojen tradition, välimaastossa. Heille henkitanssi oli keino yhdistää nämä kaksi varsin erilaista uskonnollista maailmaa. On otettava myös huomioon se, että lakotojen perinteiset uskomukset ja seremoniat oli Yhdysvaltain hallituksen toimesta kielletty jo 1880-luvun alussa. Näin henkitanssi ikäänkuin korvasi uskonnollisen tyhjiön; se mahdollisti jokapäiväisen uskonnon

harjoittamisen käytännössä. Piirre, joka oli erittäin keskeinen perinteisessä lakotayhteisössä.

Lakotojen ensimmäinen innostus henkitanssia kohtaan alkoi keväällä 1890, mutta kesän tullen innostus hiipui. Kesä kuitenkin toi tullessaan epäonnistuneen sadon ja nälänhädän. Tämän jälkeen toivoa haettiin uusin voimin henkitanssista. Syksyn tullen yhä suuremmat joukot osallistuivat henkitansseihin, kuitenkin siten, että heidän lukumääränsä ei koskaan ollut suurempi kuin n. 4,500 henkilöä, mikä on noin 28% lakotojen kokonaisväkimäärästä. Eräs tämän tutkimuksen merkittävimpiä tuloksia onkin se, että se osoittaa henkitanssijoiden määrän olleen paljon perinteisiä käsityksiä pienempi. Samalla tämä tutkimus, asettamalla henkitanssin lakotojen kulttuuriseen kontekstiin, osoittaa, että lakotojen henkitanssilla ja henkitanssijoilla ei missään vaiheessa ollut aikomusta nousta kapinaan valkoisia vastaan toisin kuin perinteinen tutkimustraditio antaa ymmärtää. Henkitanssi oli lakotoille puhtaasti uskonnollinen seremonia. Se, että sen yhteydessä lopulta tapahtui verenvuodatusta johtui muista ulkopuolisista väärinkäsityksistä sekä lakotojen kansakunnan sisäisistä ristiriidoista.

Luvussa edetään kronologisesti aina kevästä 1890 syksyn kautta Wounded Kneen verilöylyyn sekä viimeisten henkitanssijoiden antautumiseen tammikuussa 1891. Tapahtumia tarkastellaan lakotojen näkökulmasta, mikä tuo uuden näkökulman sellaisiin dramaattisiin tapahtumiin kuin Sitting Bullin¹ kuolema ja Wounded Kneen verilöyly. Tutkimus tuo myös uutta ulottuvuutta tiettyihin henkitanssiin liittyviin seremonihin sekä esim. henkipaitojen merkitykseen. Koska suurin osa historian tutkijoista ei ole kyennyt ymmärtämään lakotojen henkitanssia heidän kulttuurinsa valossa, tämä luku luo uudenlaisen kuvan paitsi itse henkitanssista myös siihen liittyvästä tapahtumaketjusta. Lakotojen käsityksiä siitä, miksi asiat etenivät niinkuin ne etenivät, ei ole tähän saakka kyetty, tai haluttu, hyväksyä legitimiinä tulkintana henkitanssin historiasta.

¹ Käytän tässä lyhennelmässä lakotajohtajista yleisesti käytettyjä englanninkielisiä nimiä koska kaikista ei ole käytössä vakiintunutta suomennosta.

4. Intiaanasiamiehet ja lakotojen henkitanssi

Lakotojen intiaanasiamiehet Hugh D. Gallagher, Charles E. McChesney, James McLaughlin, sekä J. George Wright kuulivat lakotojen järjestämistä seremonioista keväällä 1890. Heidän reaktionsa olivat kuitenkin varsin maltilliset. He tosin totesivat, että tämä intiaanien uusi uskonto oli saatava loppumaan, koska se oli pakanallinen rituaali, palautti intiaanit takaisin villeyden asteelle sekä härtsi reservaatin päivittäisiä rutiineja. He eivät kuitenkaan uskoneet, että se aiheuttaisi suuria ongelmia. Asiamiehet olivat enemmän huolissaan nälänhädästä ja siitä aiheutuvasta yleisestä levottomuudesta. Henkitanssi ei aiheuttanut heille suurempia ongelmia; he pidättivät lyhyesti muutamia lakotajohtajia, minkä jälkeen henkitanssieremoniat keskeytyivät lähes koko kesän ajaksi.

Vielä syksylläkin, kun henkitanssit alkoivat uudelleen kiihtyvällä tempolla, asiamiehet olivat hyvin rauhallisin mielin; he korostivat yhä, että mitään sodan vaaraa ei ollut. Silti he jälleen tuomitsivat seremoniat pakanallisina ja moraalittomina. Lokakuussa 1890, osana Yhdysvaltain hallituksen politiikkaa, lakotojen intiaanasiamiehet vaihtuivat. Pine Ridgen uusi asiamies, Daniel F. Royer, oli täysin tietämätön intiaanien tavoista. Miltei välittömästi hän pyysi avukseen sotilaita. Hänen mukaansa henkitanssijat olivat järjestyksen ulkopuolella ja uhkasivat sekä hänen että kaikkien valkoisten henkeä. Cheyenne Riverin reservaatin uusi asiamies Perain P. Palmer sekä Rosebudin reservaatin asiamies Elisha B. Reynolds yhtyivät hänen vaatimuksiinsa. Standing Rockin reservaatin asiamies ei vaihtunut; kokenut James McLaughlin jatkoi tehtävässään. Hän ei missään vaiheessa halunnut avukseen sotilaita, sillä hän halusi kontrolloida itse omaa reservaattiaan.

Armeijan saapumisen jäleen marraskuussa 1890, intiaanasiamiesten rooli jäi Pine Ridgessä, Cheyenne Riverissä sekä Rosebudissa varsin vähäiseksi. Armeija otti reservaatit valvontaansa lähes täysin. Asiamiehet pääosin tyytyivät avustamaan armeijaa. Uusien asiamiesten rooli henkitanssin yhteydessä jäikin lähinnä siihen, että heidän taitamattomuutensa ja suoranainen pelkonsa johti armeijan saapumiseen lakota reservaatteihin. James McLaughlinin rooli sen sijaan muuttui jopa näkyvämmäksi.

Standing Rockissa oli jo vuosia käyty katkeraa valtataistelua Sitting Bullin ja asiamies James McLaughlinin välillä. Lisäksi Sitting Bullin ja ns. edistyksellisten päälliköiden John Grassin ja Gallin suhteet olivat hyvin tulehtuneet. James McLaughlin oli jo pitkään halunnut vangita Sitting Bullin, mutta hänellä ei ollut varsinaista syytä tehdä sitä. Kun Sitting Bull asettui henkitanssijoiden johtoon Standing Rockissa, McLaughlin sai tekosyyn hänen vangitsemisekseen. Käyttäen taitavasti hyväkseen reservaatin sisäisiä ristiriitoja sekä manipuloimalla armeijan paikallista komentavaa upseeria, McLaughlin sai hoitaa Sitting Bullin pidätyksen haluamallaan tavalla. Sitting Bull ja useita muita intiaaneja sai surmansa seuranneessa kahakassa. Sitting Bullin kuolema johti lisääntyvän sekasortoon kaikissa reservaateissa. Tämä tutkimus on osoittanut, että Sitting Bullin kuolema oli pikemminkin seurausta reservaatin sisäisestä valtataistelusta kuin henkitanssista.

Tutkimus osoittaa myös, että uudet asiamiehet olivat osaltaan vastuussa armeijan saapumisesta lakotojen reservaatteihin, ja siten vastuussa myös seuranneesta verenvuodatuksista. Kuitenkin, usein esitetty väite siitä, että mikäli entiset asiamiehet olisivat saaneet pitää asemansa verenvuodatus olisi vältetty, on hieman liian yksinkertainen. Sen osoittaa jo kokeneen James McLaughlinin toiminta, ensimmäinen verenvuodatus tapahtui nimenomaan hänen reservaatissaan. Uudet asiamiehet toimivat eittämättä hätiköiden kutsuessaan armeijan apuun. Kenties kokeneemmat asiamiehet olisivat odottaneet ennenkuin kutsuivat armeijan hätiin. Toisaalta hekin olivat jo tuominneet henkitanssin pakanallisena seremoniana, mikä jo sinällään oli omiaan huolestuttamaan viranomaisia. Joka tapauksessa asiamiesten toiminta oli omiaan lisäämään henkitanssia ja lakotoja kohtaan tunnettua epäluuloa sekä yleistä paniikkia.

5. Yhdysvaltain armeija ja henkitanssi-kampanja

Vuonna 1890 Yhdysvaltain armeijan tehtävänä oli lähinnä vartioida reservaateissaan asuvia intiaaneja, suuret intiaanisodat olivat jo takanapäin. Lakotojenkin reservaattien ympärillä oli linnakkeita, joiden tehtävä oli ylläpitää "rauhanomaista rinnakkaineloa" intiaanien ja valkoisten uudisasukkaiden välillä.

Henkitanssi tuli armeijan tietoon kesäkuussa 1890. Mitään suurempaa levottomuutta henkitanssi ei armeijan keskuudessa aiheuttanut. Syksyllä kuitenkin lakotojen oletettu yleinen levottomuus johti armeijan lakotojen keskuudessa suorittamiin tutkimuksiin. Tutkimusten tulos oli, että lakotat olivat tyytymättömiä johtuen nälänhädästä, vuotuiskorvausten mukaisten ruoka-annosten vähentämisestä sekä reservaatin maa-alueen supistamisesta. Henkitanssin katsottiin olevan vain eräänlainen seuraus kaikesta tyytymättömyydestä. Silti mitään uhkaavaa armeijan raportit eivät henkitanssissa nähneet.

Marraskuun 13. 1890, Yhdysvaltain armeija kuitenkin määrättiin ottamaan haltuunsa lakotojen reservaatit. Armeijan tehtäväksi määriteltiin kapinan kukistaminen ja alueen uudisasukkaiden suojeleminen. Tämä tuli kuitenkin suorittaa siten, että verenvuodatus pyrittäisiin välttämään kaikin mahdollisin keinoin. Siksi esimerkiksi intiaanien aseistariisuntaa haluttiin välttää. Priikaatikenraali John R. Brooke, joka johti lakotojen reservaatteihin lähetettyjä joukkoja, ilmoitti nopeasti, että lakotat eivät olleet tehneet mitään kapinaan viittaavaa, eikä heillä ollut sellaisia aikomuksia tulevaisuudessakaan. Sen sijaan he olivat kärsineet paljon vääryyttä, mikä tuli korjata mahdollisimman nopeasti. Muut kentällä olevat upseerit olivat samaa mieltä. Joukkojen ylin komentaja Kenraalimajuri Nelson A. Miles yhtyi myös näkemykseen, että lakotojen kärsimät vääryydet tuli korjata, mutta samalla hän korosti, että henkitanssi saattaisi johtaa kaikkien aikojen suurimpaan intiaanisotaan.

Tämän luvun merkittävimmäksi osaksi muodostuikin Kenraali Milesin ristiriitainen toiminta. Hän esitti useaan eri otteeseen täysin vastakkaisia mielipiteitä kuin muut upseerit. Vaikuttaakin siltä, että hänen vaikuttimensa olivat lähinnä poliittisia kolmella eri tasolla: hän halusi lisää rahoitusta ja voimavaroja armeijalle, hänen pyrkimyksensä oli saada armeijalle lisää valtaa intiaanisasioissa, lisäksi hänellä oli henkilökohtaisia poliittisia ambitiesiioita. Kaikkien näiden tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi hän tarvitsi suurempaa intiaanisotaa, kuin mitä hänen upseerinsa antoivat olettaa. Pieni ja epäonnistunut kampanja ei olisi tuonut toivottua lopputulosta. Esittelemällä mm. lehdistössä liioiteltuja kuvauksia lakotojen aikomuksista astua sotapolulle, hän onnistui saamaan kannatusta ainakin kahdelle ensimmäiselle tavoitteelleen. Armeija sai laajat

valtuudet lakotojen suhteen, intiaanasiamiehet jopa määrättiin alistumaan armeijan käskyvaltaan.

Sitting Bullin kuoleman jälkeen joulukuun 15, 1890, armeijan tehtävänä oli saada henkitanssijat luopumaan ja saapumaan intiaanasemille. Pine Ridgen reservaatissa Kenraali Brooken johtama neuvotelutaktiikka oli jo tuottamassa toivottuja tuloksia, kun Cheyenne Riverin reservaatissa päällikkö Big Foot seuraajineen karkasi armeijan valvonnasta ja aloitti matkan kohti Pine Ridgeä. Kenraali Miles komensi armeijan joukot etsimään, vangitsemaan, riisumaan aseista ja tarvittaessa tuhoamaan Big Foot seuraajineen. Hän uskoi Big Footin olevan vihamielinen ja sotapolulla. Big Footia lähellä olleen Everstiluutnantti Edvin V. Sumnerin mielipide oli täysin vastainen; hän uskoi, että Big Foot halusi rauhaa, ja itse asiassa pakeni peloissaan sotilaita.

Joulukuun 29, päivänä Big Foot seuralaisineen oli jo antautunut armeijan yksiköille, kun aseista riisumisen yhteydessä erään intiaanin ase laukesi ja seurauksena oli yleinen sekasorto, joka tunnetaan Wounded Kneen verilöylynä. Tässä yhteydessä merkityksellinen asia on kuitenkin Kenraali Milesin käsky riisua intiaanit aseista. Armeijan komentaja Kenraali John M. Schofield totesi monesti, että aseistariisuminen oli liian vaarallinen yritys, sillä se johtaisi vain epäluuloon ja todennäköisesti taisteluun. Lisäksi se oli Yhdysvaltain virallisen intiaanipolitiikan vastainen toimenpide. Tästä huolimatta aseistariisumista yritettiin tuhoisin seurauksin joulukuun 29. päivänä 1890.

Wounded Kneen jälkeen yhdysvaltain armeija joutui muutamaan kahakkaan kiihtyneiden intiaanien kanssa, mutta pieniä miestappioita lukuunottamatta armeija selvisi kahakoista varsin hyvin. Kenraali Miles saapui Pine Ridgeen joulukuun 30 ja otti ohjat käsiinsä. Armeijan taktiikkana oli neuvotella ja samalla kiristää verkkoa henkitanssijoiden ympärillä. Taktiikka olikin varsin tuloksekas. Kahden viikon kahakoinnin ja neuvottelujen jälkeen henkitanssijat antautuivat 15. tammikuuta 1891.

Armeijan kannalta Wounded Kneen verilöyly oli kuitenkin suurempi ongelma kuin intiaanien kanssa kahakointi. Yleinen mielipide oli kääntymässä armeijaa

vastaan, kun selvisi, että naisia ja lapsia oli tarpeettomasti surmattu. Kongressi esitti tutkimuksen suorittamista, ja Kenraali Miles syytti operaatiota johtanutta upseeria taitamattomuudesta sekä tehtävien laiminlyönnistä. Tutkimukset kuitenkin vapauttivat hänet sekä koko armeijan syyllisyydestä. Tämä tutkimus kuitenkin nostaa esiin kysymyksen siitä, mitä olisi tapahtunut ellei Kenraali Miles olisi käskenyt riisua intiaaneja aseista?

Tässä luvussa armeijan näkökulma on esitetty johtavien upseerien valossa. Kokonaisuutena on todettava, että armeija ymmärsi lakotojen tilanteen varsin hyvin. Upseerit suhtautuivat intiaaneihin hyvin myötämielisesti, mutta samalla heidän kuitenkin oli suoritettava heille annettu tehtävä eli suojella valkoisia uudisasukkaita. Tämä ristiriita näkyy selvästi etenkin Kenraali Milesin toiminnassa. Kun lisäksi otetaan huomioon hänen poliittiset motiivinsa, armeijan rooli henkitanssin yhteydessä asettuu aivan uuteen valoon. Henkilökohtaiset ristiriidat sekä moninaiset mielipiteet johtivat siihen, että armeija oli tilanteessa, jossa sen tehtävä oli hyvin sekava. Parhaiten tilannetta kuvaa Kenraali John M. Schofieldin kommentti, missä hän totesi, että armeijan olisi ollut helpompi toimia jos intiaanit tosiaan olisivat olleet sotapolulla. Henkitanssin yhteydessä armeija oli tilanteessa, jossa yleinen mielipide vaati toimimaan lakotojen henkitanssijoita vastaan, mutta käytännössä armeijalla ei ollut todellista vihollista. Verenvuodatus, joka seurasi armeijan saapumista lakotojen reservaateihin oli seurausta tästä yleisestä, sekasortoisesta tilanteesta.

6. Lehdistö ja "henkitanssisota"

Lehdistön rooli henkitanssin yhteydessä oli erittäin merkittävä, sillä lehdistö vaikutti yleiseen mielipiteeseen, mikä johti lähes paniikkien uudisasukkaiden keskuudessa, se vaikutti päätöksentekijöiden mielipiteeseen, sekä suoraan tilanteeseen reservaateissa. Lehdistön mielipide lakotojen henkitanssia kohtaan oli aluksi suhteellisen neutraali, tosin henkitanssi liitettiin jollakin lailla sotaan. Intiaanien tanssien annettiin ymmärtää merkitsevän välitöntä sodan uhkaa. Kuitenkin aluksi henkitanssiin viitattiin myös uskonnollisena seremoniana.

Syksyllä lehdistön asenne koveni, henkitanssia pidettiin pakanallisena rituaalina ja sodan airuena. Kun armeija marssi lakotojen reservaatteihin, lehdistö oli täydllä höyryllä mukana julistamassa suurinta intiaanisotaa alkaneeksi. Tästä eteenpäin lehdistön rooli voidaan tiivistää sanoin, sekava, ristiriitainen, sensaationhakuinen, harhaanjohtava sekä alarmistinen. Kaikki lehdet, joita tässä tutkimuksessa on tutkittu sopivat noiden sanojen piiriin. Pieniä eroavaisuuksia toki oli, mutta koska lehdet suuressa määrin kopioivat toisiaan, ja reportterit paikan päällä kuulivat samat huhut ja tarinat, heidän kirjoituksensa pääosin seurailivat toisiaan. Idän lehdet, The New York Times ja The Washington Post, käyttivät laajasti The Omaha Daily Been materiaalia muuttaen hieman ulkoasua ja otsikoita. Käytännössä on siis mahdotonta sanoa, olivatko esimerkiksi lännen lehdet sensaationhakuisempia kuin idän lehdet. Kaikki lehdet kävivät läpi suurinpiirtein samat vaiheet äärimmäisestä sensationalismista lakotoja kohtaan tunnettuun myötätuntoon.

Samalla kun tämä tutkimus tukee muiden historiantutkijoiden näkemystä sensationalistisesta journalismista, niin se tuo esiin uudenlaisen piirteen henkitanssiraportoinnista. Historiantutkijat nimittäin ovat yleensä valinneet vain muutamia lehtiä luodessaan kuvaa henkitanssiraportoinnista. He ovat valinneet sattumanvaraisesti lehtiä esim Siting Bullin kuoleman tai Wounded Kneen verilöylyn jälkeen, jolloin sensaationhakuisuus oli suurimmillaan. Kun lehtiä käydään läpi systemaattisesti, käy selvästi ilmi, että sensationalismin lisäksi lehdissä oli runsaasti objektiivistakin aineistoa. Myös lakotoja ja henkitanssia kohtaan esitettiin myötämielisiä ja analyttisiä artikkeleita. Vaikka sensationalismi saavuttikin suurempia otsikoita ja oli määrällisesti laajempaa, on selvää, että se ei ole täysin tyydyttävä kuvaus lehdistön raportoinnista.

Kun vielä otetaan huomioon, että esimerkiksi sellaiset henkilöt kuin Kenraali Miles ja intiaanasiamies McLaughlin käyttivät lehdistöä hyväkseen edistääkseen omia tarkoitusperiään, on selvää, että lehdistön merkitys henkitanssilevottomuuksien yhteydessä oli todella huomattava. Raportointi oli niin laajaa, että on täysin oikeutettua sanoa lakotojen henkitanssin tapahtumien olleen ensimmäinen amerikkalainen mediasota. Itse asiassa sotaa käytiin enemmän lehtien sivuilla kuin lakotojen reservateissa.

7. Kongressi ja lakotojen henkitanssi

Yhdysvaltain kongressi ei ollut erityisen kiinnostunut intiaaneista vuoden 1890 alkupuolella. Joillekin kansoille määrättiin lisävastuksia koska he kärsivät nälänhädästä ja kulkutaudeista. Lakotojen sen sijaan uskottiin tulevan toimeen mainiosti. Kongressi oli lähinnä kiinnostunut Suuren Sioux Reservaatin avaamisesta uudisasutukselle vuoden 1889 sitoumuksen mukaisesti. Lakotojen nälänhätä ei juurikaan kiinnostanut. Päivastoin, lakotojen uskottiin saavan enemmän vuotuiskorvauksia kuin heille uusimman väestönlaskennan mukaan kuului. Osittain siksi, ja osittain osana hallituksen intiaanipolitiikkaa, lakotojen vuotuiskorvauksia pienennettiin kesällä 1890. Tällä toimenpiteellä Yhdysvaltain kongressi, todennäköisesti tietämättään, kylvi yhden merkittävimmistä tyytymättömyyden siemenistä.

Suurimman osan syksyä, kun henkitanssi sai jalansijaa lakotojen keskuudessa, kongressi ei ollut koolla lainkaan. Kun se sitten joulukuussa 1890 kokoontui, lähestyi se henkitanssia uudisasukkaiden näkökulmasta. Lakotojen ongelmiin ei puututtu lainkaan. Kuitenkin senaattori Daniel W. Voorhees ja edustaja William S. Holman esittivät, että lakotat kärsivät nälkää ja olivat sen vuoksi levottomia. Heidän mielipiteensä ei saanut kongressissa kovinkaan paljon vastakaikua.

Itse asiassa kongressin, senaattorien ja edustajien, suhtautuminen lakotoihin ja henkitanssiin voidaan jakaa neljään kategoriaan: 1) humanitaarinen lähestymistapa, jota edustivat mm. Voorhees ja Holman. He uskoivat, että ongelmat lakotojen keskuudessa johtuivat hallituksen intiaanipolitiikan virheistä, 2) näkökulma, jonka mukaan henkitanssi tuli lakkauttaa, koska se palautti lakotat takaisin villeyden ja barbarian tilaan. Senaattori Henry L. Dawes oli tämän suuntauksen tärkein puolestapuhuja. Tämän ajatuksen kannattajille henkitanssi merkitsi sen intiaanipolitiikan epäonnistumista, jota he itse olivat olleet luomassa. Siksi henkitanssia ei voinut sallia, 3) tämän ryhmän muodostavat senaattorit ja edustajat, jotka lähinnä omien ja edustamiensa ryhmien intressejä silmällä pitäen halusivat henkitanssit lopetettaviksi, vaikkapa armeijan avulla. Heidän ajatuksenaan oli mahdollisen sodan johdosta saatava henkilökohtainen

taloudellinen ja poliittinen hyöty, enemmistönä olivat kuitenkin 4) senaattorit ja edustajat, joille lakotat ja intiaaniasiat yleensäkin eivät olleet merkittäviä.

Kongressin keskustelu henkitanssista ja lakotoista luisuikin näin ollen poliittiseksi debatiksi. Tärkeämmäksi muodostui se, oliko kongressi toiminut lakotoja kohtaan lain mukaisesti, kuin itse ongelmien ratkaisu. Kongressin toiminta olikin monessa suhteessa varsin tekopyhää; monet senaattorit ja edustajat esittivät hämmästyneitä kannanottoja esittäen, että he eivät tienneet mitään mahdollisesta nälänhädästä tai muista ongelmista lakotojen keskuudessa. Kuitenkin tietoa aiheesta oli tarjolla niin monesta lähteestä, että heidän väitteensä eivät ole uskottavia. Itse henkitanssiin liittyvissä asioissa onkin todettava, että kongressi oli lähinnä seuraajan roolissa, se vain reagoi tapahtumiin sen sijaan, että olisi aktiivisesti pyrkinyt ratkaisemaan ongelmia.

8. Kohti monitasoista tulkintaa lakotojen henkitanssista

Tässä työssä lakotojen henkitanssi on esitelty monesta eri näkökulmasta. Nämä näkökulmat ovat olleet usein keskenään ristiriitaisia ja toisistaan poikkeavia, mikään niistä ei sellaisenaan kuitenkaan kerro koko totuutta. Vasta kun eri näkökulmat astetaan laajempaan kontekstiin, alkaa tarina saada uusia ulottuvuuksia, jotka kenties ovat lähempänä ikuisesti saavuttamotonta totuutta. Juuri se on tämän moniäänisen ja monitasoisen metodin rikkaus. Historian tutkimuksessa totuuden saavuttaminen on lähes mahdotonta, mutta kun asioita yritetään ymmärtää eri toimijoiden lähtökohdista, niin kokonaisuus tulee paremmin ymmärrettäväksi.

Lakotojen henkitanssin yhteydessä väärinkäsitykset ja ristiriidat johuivat kahden kulttuurin, lakotojen ja valkoisten, kykenemättömyydestä ymmärtää toisiaan. Tältä väärinkäsitysten perustalta erilaiset henkilökohtaiset ja kollektiiviset erimielisyydet sekä näkökulmien ristiriidat johtivat tapahtumaketjuun, josta tuli Yhdysvaltain intiaanisotien loppunäytös. Tämä ristiriita on säilynyt myös historian tutkimuksessa, mikä on johtanut vääränlaiseen tulkintaan lakotojen henkitanssista sekä henkitanssijoiden tarkoituseristä.

Tämä tutkimus osoittaa selkeästi, että lakotojen henkitanssia ei voi tulkita irrallisena ilmiönä, vaan se on osa, niin lakotojen kuin Yhdysvaltain valkoisenkin väestön, poliittista, kulttuurista, uskonnollista ja henkistä traditiota. Vain osana tätä laajempaa kokonaisuutta voidaan henkitanssin historiaa ymmärtää paremmin. Tämä tutkimus on luonut laaja-alaisemman kuvan henkitanssista kuin mikään aikaisemmista tutkimuksista sekä osoittanut tämän lähestymistavan rikkauden tutkittaessa eri kulttuurien, uskontojen ja rotujen välisiä ristiriitoja.

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