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Article Summary: Colonel Ranald S Mackenzie's men encircled the villages of Red Cloud and Red Leaf under cover of darkness one night in 1876. They confiscated horses and weapons and drove the Indians into Camp Robinson and eventually onto reservations in Dakota Territory and western Nebraska. This dismounting and disarming campaign helped bring the Sioux War to a close the following year.

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Names: George Crook, Philip H Sheridan, William T Sherman, Nelson Miles, Ranald S Mackenzie, Ulysses S Grant, Wesley Merritt, Red Cloud, Red Leaf, Frank North

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Photographs / Images: Brigadier General George Crook, commander of the Department of the Platte; Colonel Ranald S Mackenzie; Red Cloud Agency in 1876; Major Frank North, commander of the Pawnee Scouts; Red Leaf; Pawnee Scouts Blue Hawk and Coming Around with the Herd in a mixture of military and native garb; Swift Bear (Brulé); George Crook and Spotted Tail with a group of Sioux Indians at the Red Cloud Agency, October 24, 1876

The Surrounding of RED CLOUD AND RED LEAF, 1876 A Preemptive Maneuver of the Great Sioux War

By Jerome A. Greene

In the late summer of 1876, army campaigning in the wake of Custer's defeat closed with the solitary and small victory over a mixed Lakota and Northern Cheyenne camp at Slim Buttes, Dakota Territory, affording a modicum of solace to the weary soldiers of Brig. Gen. George Crook's command. Many of these men had been in the field since early in the year, and had shared in the repeated losses endured by the troops since the Powder River battle the preceding March.¹ As the troops headed south through the Black Hills to close out their campaign, Crook was called away for an urgent meeting at Fort Laramie with Lt. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, commander of the Military Division of the Missouri, in which the soldiers had been operating. Sheridan wanted to advise Crook of a new course of action against the Indians, one endorsed by Comdg. Gen. William T. Sherman.

Sheridan's plan was twofold. First, he would notify the followers of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse that their further free movement through the Yellowstone-Powder River hinterland would not be tolerated, directing that a contingent of troops be stationed permanently in their midst through the winter of 1876-77. To that end, Col. Nelson A. Miles and troops of the Fifth and Twenty-second infantry regiments occupied a point at the confluence of Tongue River and the



Brig. Gen. George Crook, commander of the Department of the Platte. Courtesy of Paul Hedren

Yellowstone and began building a cantonment from which they would monitor the activities of the Sioux and Cheyennes. Miles did more than monitor the area; his active campaigning through the winter and spring was a major reason that the Great Sioux War ended in the summer of 1877.²

Part two of Sheridan's plan called for the military takeover of the Sioux agencies in Dakota Territory and western Nebraska. With congressional approval in late July 1876, the Interior Department yielded its civilian administration of the affected agencies to the military authorities. Averse to further wide-scale army cam-

paigning to curb the tribesmen, and to prevent additional agency Indians from arbitrarily leaving the reservation to augment their kin yet afield, Sheridan directed that troops in Dakota and Nebraska enter the agencies and disarm and dismount all warriors.

On September 21 at Fort Laramie—twelve days after the Slim Buttes encounter—Crook, joined by Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie, who with the Fourth Cavalry had been summoned from Texas and the Indian Territory in the wake of the Little Bighorn disaster, learned the specifics of Sheridan's disarming and dismounting policy as it affected the agency Indians. Troops of the reconstituted Seventh Cavalry would begin the



Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie. NSHS-RG2411-3361

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program at the agencies along the Missouri River, and Mackenzie would undertake to do the same at the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies in Nebraska. Furthermore, warriors coming into the agencies after traveling with the so-called "hostiles" through the summer were to be disarmed and dismounted immediately. With hopes for instilling the rudiments of husbandry among the Indians, all ponies taken in the operation were to be sold, with the proceeds used to purchase cattle for them. In conjunction with this procedure, Sheridan believed that a focused, tightly managed fall campaign occurring simultaneously with Colonel Miles's occupation of the Yellowstone region would finally promote disintegration of the Sioux-Cheyenne coalition and yield large-scale surrenders at the agencies. Crook would organize such a movement, which would include the major involvement of Mackenzie and his command.

As the Sheridan-Crook meeting proceeded at Fort Laramie, civilian authorities labored elsewhere to complement the military movements by stripping the Indians of the gold-rich Black Hills and the hunting lands to the west and northwest given them by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. In August Congress passed legislation, which President Ulysses S. Grant signed, withholding funds for feeding the agency people until they gave up the tracts and permitted roads through the reservation to the Black Hills. Grant appointed a commission to solicit the Indians' approval. The Sioux commissioners had been at the Red Cloud Agency, near Camp Robinson, when Crook and his entourage passed through the post en route to meet Sheridan. In Crook's absence, Col. Wesley Merritt headed the troops of the Big Horn and Yellowstone Expedition on a leisurely course through the Black Hills, a movement designed to ease the rigors of the campaign for the men, but also to gain intelligence of the presence of Indians in the vicinity and of their passage to the agencies. Between early September and late October 1876,

the specter of starving families at all the agencies had pressured the Sioux to sign the agreement.³

Implementation of Sheridan's edict respecting the Sioux agencies got underway after the Sioux land commissioners had garnered their needed signatures and departed. Of the six agencies scattered about the Great Sioux Reservation, the ones of most concern in terms of numbers of warriors returning from the field were Red Cloud, Spotted Tail, Standing Rock, and Cheyenne River. The military takeover began in earnest at the latter two stations in August and September, when units of the Eleventh, Fourteenth, and Twentieth infantry regiments arrived there. Indian unrest at Standing Rock and Cheyenne River prompted Sheridan to direct the companies of the Seventh Cavalry, then returning from the Sioux campaign, to bolster the troops at those agencies. In October, on Sheridan's orders, Gen. Alfred Terry readied soldiers from Custer's old outfit and detachments of the Seventeenth and Twentieth infantry regiments to move out and dismount and disarm the Lakotas at the two northernmost Missouri River agencies.

On October 20, with Terry accompanying, Col. Samuel D. Sturgis and Maj. Marcus A. Reno led contingents of these troops south from Fort Abraham Lincoln along either side of the Missouri. Two days later Reno's men reached Standing Rock, where Terry threatened the Sioux with ration cuts if they refused to comply with the dismounting and disarmament procedure. In a day's time, the troops confiscated arms, ammunition, and more than 1,200 ponies from Hunkpapa, Blackfeet Sioux, and Yanktonai camps on either side of the stream.

While Reno consolidated control at Standing Rock, Sturgis moved on to the Cheyenne River Agency, his force supported by additional infantry from Fort Sully. The Sioux there remained intractable for a time, but threats to withhold their provisions caused them finally to relent and to surrender arms and nearly 1,000 mounts. Driven overland to St. Paul, Minnesota, fewer than

one-fourth of the animals taken from the northern agencies actually reached that destination to be sold by public auction; many died from disease and exposure, while others drowned crossing the Missouri River, were stolen or bartered away en route, or became otherwise lost.⁴

While enforcement of Sheridan's dictum proceeded in the northern area of the Great Sioux Reservation, similar measures got underway at the southernmost agencies. Attention shortly centered on the Oglala camp of Red Cloud and the Wazaza Brulé camp of Red Leaf. Both leaders were determined to spurn what they regarded as further government interference into their tribal affairs. Red Cloud, then fifty-four years old, was venerated among the Oglalas for his early resistance to the army during the Bozeman Trail War of 1866–68. Thereafter recognized by federal authorities as chief of the Sioux, he had remained on the reservation ever since, drawing on wily diplomatic skills and obstructionist tactics to better his people's standing with the government and its agents, as well as with the other Lakota bands. Red Leaf was the brother of Conquering Bear, the Brulé leader killed in the Grattan fight near Fort Laramie in 1854. A peace advocate, Red Leaf had nonetheless rejected the government's overtures in 1866 and had cast his lot with Red Cloud in the Bozeman Trail War.⁵

Now in 1876, however, following the meetings with the Sioux Commission, anger and divisiveness had arisen among the Indians at Red Cloud Agency, causing concern for Colonel Mackenzie at Camp Robinson. Finally, in early October the camps under Red Cloud, Red Leaf, and Oglalas Little Wound and Blue Horse, in protest of the removal schemes, abruptly broke away from the agency, the former two moving to Chadron Creek, some thirty miles northeast. Crook believed that the people in these camps not only remained in close communication with the Indians in the Powder River country and might therefore encourage them in their ways, but that their own defiance effectively flew

Red Cloud and Red Leaf



Red Cloud Agency in 1876. NSHS-RG2095-80

in the face of the philosophy of strictly controlling the agency tribesmen. He soon settled on a course of military action to deal with the recalcitrants. Accordingly, Mackenzie sent word directing their return or their rations would be stopped and they would be forced back to the agency. In compliance, Little Wound and Blue Horse moved their people to Crow Butte, near the agency. Red Cloud, however, through a spokesman, notified Mackenzie that henceforth any rations should be sent out to their camps on Chadron Creek. After ration day passed and the Red Cloud and Red Leaf people still refused to budge, Mackenzie dispatched another message that again strongly forecasted his intention to use force to gain their compliance.⁶

Fearing that the Red Cloud and Red Leaf groups might indeed flee north, Crook initially relied on Merritt's troops, then marching south toward Camp Robinson from the Black Hills, to counter the Indians' movement. Crook had planned to await the proper time to advance a contingent of soldiers to quickly surround the two camps and prevent their escape, then force them back to Red Cloud Agency. But the realization that the Sioux could bolt at any time prompted the general to order an immediate advance on Sunday night, October 22.⁷

Anticipating possible action, a week earlier orders had gone to Maj. Frank North to start his Pawnee scouts north



Maj. Frank North, commander of the Pawnee Scouts. NSHS-RG2320-3

from Sidney Barracks. Their march proceeded in stages; the scouts forded the North Platte River near present Bridgeport and pushed on to the Niobrara River, about 100 miles north of Sidney, where they went into camp and awaited further instructions. As the Pawnees ate dinner on October 22, couriers arrived with urgent orders directing them to march for Camp Robinson. En route, an officer from Mackenzie arrived, whereupon North, his brother Luther, and forty-two of the Indians pressed forward on an all-night ride to overtake the

colonel headed for the Chadron camps. Lt. Sylvanus E. Cushing with the remaining fifty-eight scouts and wagons kept on to Camp Robinson, reaching the post at 3 A.M. on October 23.⁸

In their forced march of some seventy miles through the night of October 22–23, the Norths and their Pawnees diverged from the road and rode diagonally northeast, eventually overtaking Mackenzie and momentarily startling his rear guard, which believed they were under attack. Mackenzie's force, which had departed Camp Robinson at 9 P.M., skirting Red Cloud Agency so as not to draw attention, consisted of six companies (B, D, E, F, I, and M) of his Fourth Cavalry Regiment plus two companies (H and L) of the Fifth Cavalry, detached from Merritt's force since July, the whole divided into two equal battalions commanded, respectively, by Maj. George A. Gordon, Fifth Cavalry, and Capt. Clarence Mauck of the Fourth. The troops carried no baggage and only one day's rations.⁹ An officer of the Fourth Cavalry described the advance:

The night was pitch-dark and very cold. The country was intersected by a series of ravines and washouts; but the most positive orders having been issued by Mackenzie . . . for the whole column to keep closed up, at all hazards, the trot and gallop were continued throughout the night. Occasionally a troop would be brought down to a walk, at the bottom of some gully or dry creek, and then, on emerging, would be compelled to go at a gallop to overtake the preceding troops, which had already disappeared in the

blackness ahead. The only sounds to be heard were the thunder of the column as it tore along over the frozen ground; the rattle of the harness of the horses (the men's sabres being thrust between their knees and saddles) and the muttered exclamation of some trooper as his steed stumbled or fell in the darkness.¹⁰

The action that followed significantly exemplified Sheridan's disarm and dismount policy toward the Sioux, which contributed eventually in ending the warfare.

The two camps stood on Chadron Creek, approximately three miles southwest of the present community of Chadron, beginning about one mile from the confluence of the creek with White River. Red Leaf's camp, which also included another Brulé headman, Swift Bear, stood near a bluff on the west side, in a bend of the creek about three miles above, or south, of Red Cloud's camp. That night the inhabitants of the Red Leaf village had gone to the Red Cloud camp to enjoy a game of handball, after which they had walked back to their own lodges. Some, apparently suspecting imminent military action, moved their families from the village during the night.¹¹

Meanwhile, riding ahead in the darkness for about twenty miles, Mackenzie's command reached a fork in the trail, the two branches leading to the respective villages. The first battalion, under Major Gordon, veered right in the direction of Red Leaf's camp, while Mackenzie and the balance of the troopers swung off to the left toward Red Cloud's lodges. Each battalion was accompanied by one North brother and twenty-four Pawnees.¹²

The night was cloud-covered with gusting winds. Riding well in advance of Mackenzie's column, Frank North and his scouts had gone several miles when they heard a rooster crow. It was near 3 A.M. on October 23, and North took the news to the colonel. After a discussion in which it was clear to all that the village was close by, Mackenzie's advance resumed as the troops followed the sound. Their officers cautioned them against talking loudly or lighting matches



Red Leaf (right). Detail from a group photograph taken at Red Cloud Agency about 1874. NSHS-RG2063:28-3



Pawnee Scouts served with the U.S. Army in various campaigns from 1864 through 1877. Here scouts Blue Hawk (seated) and Coming Around with the Herd wear a mixture of military and native garb. NSHS-RG2246-3

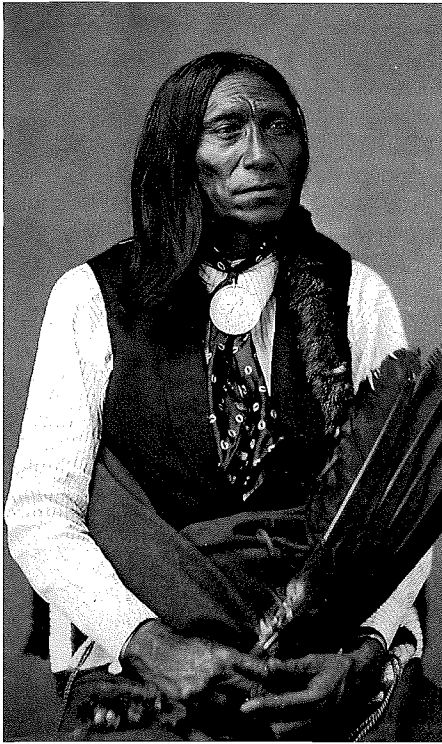
for fear they would be discovered. Presently, they came to the edge of a cutbank leading to Chadron Creek; beyond, stretched along the east side

of the stream they discerned a darkened cluster comprising about forty tipis of Red Cloud's people. Through some confusion, however, Mackenzie's troops found Major Gordon's men already there, mistakenly having been led to that point by a man whom the colonel had earlier engaged to keep track of the camps. Mackenzie sent Gordon off toward the other village, and for the next two hours readied his own battalion for a dawn attack, taking measures to invest the camp completely so no one could escape, much in the manner of a conventional army strike.

At around 5 A.M. Mackenzie directed an interpreter to go to the cutbank and call out in Lakota that the village was surrounded. For a time there was no response beyond the barking of dogs, but soon some women and children appeared and took cover in the nearby brush. Then, on command, the Pawnees raced through the camp from the north, capturing the Oglala ponies and corralling them in the rear, whereupon Mauck's soldiers, approaching from the northwest, dismounted and filed into the village. The action was a total surprise. The only noise, remembered the Sioux, was "the clattering of the horses and the commands from the soldiers." Red Cloud's warriors were quickly disarmed and placed under guard.¹³ Mackenzie directed the women to select ponies from the captured herd on which to mount their baggage and to break camp preparatory to moving out. When the women initially demurred, the colonel warned them that he would burn the lodges if they did not comply, and some tipis were torched before the women realized that the threat was real.¹⁴

Meantime, at the Red Leaf-Swift Bear camp—which was bigger than Red Cloud's—events unfolded in similar fashion. Arriving at the village at dawn following his miscue, Major Gordon ordered that no guns be fired unless initiated by the Indians. Apparently, none were fired.¹⁵ Reportedly, from a hill west of the camp a solitary Indian boy watched the soldiers approach up

Red Cloud and Red Leaf



Swift Bear, a Brulé, helped insure the peaceful disarmament of Red Leaf's village after it was surrounded by Mackenzie's troops. NSHS-RG1227:10-7

Chadron Creek and shouted a warning to his people. But Gordon's troopers surrounded the tipis and the Pawnees dashed through, yelling war whoops and driving the ponies before them. None of the Red Leaf people came out until the ponies had been secured by the scouts. Eventually, they appeared and talked at length to Major Gordon, who explained that they now must return to Camp Robinson. During the conference, Gordon learned that Red Leaf was not present, having gone to spend the night with friends closer to the agency. His subordinate, Swift Bear, helped arrest a villager who had aimed a gun at the major, then the tribesmen delivered up their arms. As in the case of Red Cloud's camp, the women selected the stock to carry themselves, the children and elderly, and associated dunnage. Gordon then started them off, soon meeting Mackenzie's troops. By

8 A.M., all was secured and Mackenzie penciled a brief report to Crook. His operation resulted in the confiscation of arms from more than 150 warriors, plus the capture of more than 700 ponies.¹⁶

The men and women rode separately in the formation, and, on gaining Ash Creek, the latter went into camp near Crow Butte under guard, while the men proceeded on foot to Camp Robinson with the remaining troops and the captured ponies, gaining the post at around 2 A.M. on October 24. Hoping to stem alarm elsewhere among the tribesmen, Mackenzie had sent word of the capture to the agency camps of chiefs Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses and Little Wound.¹⁷ Nonetheless, these people, having otherwise anticipated or learned of the troops' action and fearful for their own situation, began streaming into Camp Robinson and the agency ahead of the returning troops. Perhaps not altogether coincidentally Colonel Merritt's army, which had been toiling through the Black Hills for more than a month, entered the post almost simultaneously. A witness recorded the scene late on October 23:

As far as the eye with a good field glass could discern the bright light tipped ridges of prairie, the moving Sioux could be seen winding their way in towards the agency from every point of the compass, most of them disarmed and dispirited; and the balance having heard . . . of the grand success of the army the night before, badly frightened, came pouring in for dear life . . . ; and in this deeply interesting spectacle, most conspicuous of all, were the long lines of our troops, Crook's old command from Custer City taking the advance, while the 13 companies of cavalry from here seemed divided into two columns almost surrounding the . . . bands of Sioux that had been disarmed. . . . The vast hordes of squaws, children, ponies and dogs, that were being driven in towards this common centre, the Agency, could not half reach there that night.¹⁸

Once arrived at Camp Robinson, the Red Cloud and Red Leaf people erected their tipis and soldiers searched their baggage for ammunition. Then the tipis were dismantled and moved over to the agency to be finally raised once more.

As reward for their service, Mackenzie gave each of the Pawnee scouts a pony from the captured camps, an action that directly affronted the Sioux.¹⁹

Following the capture of the two villages, Crook wired the news to Sheridan, terming the event "the first gleam of daylight we have had in this business."²⁰ He did not disarm or dismount the other Indians at the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies, despite Sheridan's injunction, because he believed they had been loyal to the government. Moreover, he hoped to enlist those Sioux warriors as scouts for his forthcoming campaign. Crook tried to make Sheridan see that his recruitment of scouts would provide "the entering wedge by which the tribal organization is broken up," but to little avail.²¹ "There must be no halfway work in this matter," said Sheridan. "All Indians out there must be on our side without question, or else on the side of the hostiles."²²

A major result of the army's action was Red Cloud's demotion from his supreme chief's status. At a grand council and ceremony on October 24, Crook designated the Brulé leader, Spotted Tail, as chief of all the Sioux at both Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies and the true friend of the whites. "The line of the hostile and peaceably disposed is now plainly drawn and we shall have our enemies in the front only in the future."²³

That same day Crook proclaimed the end of the Big Horn and Yellowstone Expedition, then resumed preparations for his new campaign.²⁴ On rumor that the agency tribesmen planned to stampede the ponies captured from the Red Cloud and Red Leaf camps, Crook at once detailed Major North to conduct the herd to Fort Laramie, where sufficient corral facilities awaited. North and fifty of his Pawnees, sleepless since before leaving the Niobrara at dusk on October 22, started after 5 P.M. with 722 ponies on an all-night trek. After midnight, the scouts surprised a wagon train and its cavalry escort en route to Camp Robinson with winter clothing for Crook's men. "Almost everyone . . .

rushed behind the wagons for protection from the bullets expected to be flying about our heads in a few seconds," wrote a newsman accompanying the train. After stopping to eat and to warm themselves, North and his Pawnees pushed on and reached Fort Laramie at 8 P.M. on October 25.²⁵

On Crook's authority, North selected a pony for himself and one for his brother. From those that remained, he chose some 350 more to serve as extra saddle horses for the other scouts and guides in the upcoming operation. The remaining animals were sold at auction at Fort Laramie, Cheyenne Depot, and Sidney Barracks, Nebraska. Luther North and Cushing with the other Pawnees reached Fort Laramie on October 28.²⁶

Having thus challenged and intimidated the agency Indians, Crook proceeded with arrangements for his next expedition, expected to target Sioux located in the areas of the Rosebud and Powder rivers in Montana. Those people, who Crook believed comprised the major elements of Sitting Bull's and Crazy Horse's bands, were reported to be hunting buffalo below the Yellowstone.²⁷ He had earlier indicated his views: "Our next objective point is Crazy Horse. He should be followed up and struck as soon as possible. There should be no stopping for this or that thing, [as] the Indians cannot stand a continuous campaign. . . . The best time . . . is in the winter."²⁸ Crook planned to advance north into that region from Fort Fetterman, and he asked Sheridan for authorization to supply his command from provisions on hand at the Tongue River Cantonment.

Crook's campaign got underway from Camp Robinson on November 1, and headed initially to Fort Laramie, then moved to Fort Fetterman (near present Douglas, Wyoming), from which it struck north toward Montana's Tongue River country to find the Lakotas. But circumstances would intervene and Crook would not again combat the Sioux. Instead, part of his command, composed of 1,100 officers and men



Crook proclaimed Spotted Tail as chief of all the Sioux at the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies at this October 24, 1876, gathering. The two men stand at center, in front of the window. NSHS-RG2095-61

under Colonel Mackenzie, would engage the Northern Cheyennes under Dull Knife and Little Wolf in one of the Sioux War's biggest and most climactic encounters on November 25, 1876, one that ended large-scale Cheyenne participation in the conflict and that went a long way toward terminating the warfare altogether in the spring and summer of 1877.

Notes

This paper is excerpted and adapted from a monograph in preparation tentatively entitled, "Morning Star Dawn: The Powder River Expedition and the Northern Cheyennes, 1876."

¹ Overviews of the Great Sioux War of 1876–77 are in Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866–1891* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1973), 236–48; and Jerome A. Greene, ed., comp., *Battles and Skirmishes of the Great Sioux War, 1876–1877: The Military View* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), xiii–xvii. Book-length treatments appear in John S. Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876* (Fort Collins, Colo.: The Old Army Press, 1976), and Charles Robinson III, *A Good Year to Die: The Story of the Great Sioux War* (New York: Random House, 1995). The campaign culminating in the Slim Buttes action is chronicled in Jerome A. Greene, *Slim Buttes, 1876: An Episode of the Great Sioux War* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982).

² See Jerome A. Greene, *Yellowstone Command: Colonel Nelson A. Miles and the Great Sioux War,*

1876–1877 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

³ For specifics of the 1876 agreement, see "Report of the Commission Appointed to Obtain Certain Concessions from the Sioux," in *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1876* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1876), 334–47; George Manypenny, *Our Indian Wards* (Cincinnati: Robert Clark and Co., 1880), 324–25; and Gray, *Centennial Campaign*, 260–64. The 1876 Sioux Agreement appears in "Report of the Commission," 349–57, as well as in Charles J. Kappler, comp., *Indian Affairs. Laws and Treaties*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1904), 1:168–72.

⁴ Sheridan to Sherman, Oct. 26, 1876, containing telegram, Terry to Sheridan, Oct. 25, 1876, Sioux War Papers, National Archives Microfilm Publication M666, Roll 279 (hereafter cited as Sioux War Papers); Richmond Clow, "General Philip Sheridan's Legacy: The Sioux Pony Campaign," *Nebraska History* 62 (Winter 1976):464–67; Gray, *Centennial Campaign*, 266. For Sheridan's order respecting the dismounting and disarming of the tribesmen, see Paul A. Hutton, *Phil Sheridan and His Army* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 322–23. A graphic personal account of the action at Standing Rock Agency is in Theodore Goldin, "A Winter Raid," undated, unpublished ms, Philip G. Cole Collection, Gilcrease Institute, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

⁵ The standard treatments of Red Cloud are in George E. Hyde, *Red Cloud's Folk: A History of the Oglala Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1937); and James C. Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965). A new addition to the literature is

Red Cloud and Red Leaf

Robert W. Larson, *Red Cloud, Warrior-Statesman of the Lakota Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997). For Red Leaf's background, see the indexed references in these books, and also Catherine Price, *The Oglala People, 1841-1879: A Political History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 39-40, 60, 70-71, 136-37, 204-4.

⁶ Crook to Sheridan, Oct. 30, 1876, Sioux War Papers, Roll 279; *New York Tribune*, Oct. 25, 1876; William Garnett, "The Surround of Red Cloud and Red Leaf," (interview by Eli S. Ricker, Jan. 10, 1907), *Nebraska History* 15 (Oct.-Dec. 1934): 288-89, reprinted in R. Eli Paul, ed., *The Nebraska Indian Wars Reader, 1865-1977* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 157-60. There are Lakota statements that suggest the army had issued another warning to Red Cloud as late as the evening of October 21. See "Council at Sites of Surround," *Nebraska History* 15 (Oct.-Dec. 1934), 281.

⁷ Crook to Sheridan, Oct. 30, 1876, Sioux War Papers, Roll 279; *New York Tribune*, Oct. 25, 1876; Thomas R. Buecker, *Fort Robinson and the American West, 1874-1899* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1999), 88.

⁸ Robert Bruce, ed., *The Fighting Norths and Pawnee Scouts: Narratives and Reminiscences of Military Service on the Old Frontier* (New York: Robert Bruce, 1932), 45.

⁹ Homer W. Wheeler, *Buffalo Days* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1923), 116; Henry H. Bellas, "The Crook-Mackenzie Campaign and the Dull Knife Battle, November 25, 1876," in Greene, *Battles and Skirmishes of the Great Sioux War*, 170.

¹⁰ Greene, *Battles and Skirmishes of the Great Sioux War*, 170.

¹¹ "Council at Sites of Surround," 285-86. The Red Leaf camp was near the 1930s site of the Chadron reservoir. Ibid., 280-81, 285. The two camps were located in Sec. 36, Twp. 33N, Rg. 49W. See "Detail Map of the Pine Ridge Country in the Middle Seventies," *Nebraska History* 22 (Jan.-Feb. 1941): between 16-17.

¹² Garnett, "Surround of Red Cloud and Red Leaf," 288. George Bird Grinnell, *Two Great Scouts and Their Pawnee Battalion* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973, rpt. of 1927 ed.), 253. In 1932 the site of Red Leaf's camp was on a farm belonging to M. A. Gaffena along Chadron Creek. *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, Oct. 2, 1932. This article contains contemporary photographs of the site.

¹³ George Bird Grinnell stated that during the capture of Red Cloud's camp "a Sioux boy showed great courage in trying to run off a bunch of ponies, but left them after a few shots had been fired at him." *The Fighting Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), 361.

¹⁴ Ibid., 254-55; Wheeler, *Buffalo Days*, 116-17; Bellas, "Mackenzie-Crook Campaign," 170-72; Garnett, "Surround of Red Cloud and Red Leaf," 290, which mentions the confusion regarding

Gordon's command. The quote is from Red Cloud's daughter, Susie Kills Above, in "Council at Sites of Surround," 279.

¹⁵ Lieutenant Wheeler of Company L, Fifth Cavalry, remembered that one shot was fired accidentally, and "I was very much afraid that the shot might make trouble." Wheeler, *Buffalo Days*, 117. 2d Lt. Henry H. Bellas, Fourth Cavalry, speaking of both camps, later stated that there occurred "a rapid fusillade," followed by "a rush and a shout from the troops." "Crook-Mackenzie Campaign," 172.

¹⁶ Crook reported that only seventy or eighty guns were taken. *New York Herald*, Nov. 4, 1876. George E. Hyde, citing no particular authority, stated that only fifty guns were delivered up by the Red Cloud and Red Leaf camps. *Red Cloud's Folk*, 285n.3. Mackenzie's initial report is in Mackenzie to Capt. Azor Nickerson, Oct. 22 (sic), 1876, Entry 3731, Letters Received, Department of the Platte, Record Group 393, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) (hereafter RG393, Entry 3731). Crook's telegram announcing the action is in Sheridan to Sherman, Oct. 24, 1876, Sioux War Papers, Roll 279.

¹⁷ Mackenzie's emissaries for this work were Red Dog and Big Crow. Mackenzie to Nickerson, Oct. 22 (sic), 1876, RG393, Entry 3731. Lieutenant Bellas recalled that, rather than walking to the agency, the men rode, "2 being mounted on each pony," and that on reaching Camp Robinson, "the outfit, including Red Cloud and Red Leaf themselves, [were] safely secured in one of the warehouses of the post." "Crook-Mackenzie Campaign," 172.

¹⁸ *Omaha Herald*, Nov. 3, 1876.

¹⁹ Beyond the sources cited, this account of the surrounding of Red Cloud and Red Leaf is based on Grinnell, *Two Great Scouts*, 255; excerpt from Frank North's diary in Bruce, *The Fighting Norths*, 45; Luther North, *Man of the Plains*, ed. Donald F. Danker (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), 201-4; Garnett, "Surround of Red Cloud and Red Leaf," 290-91; "Military Reports on the Red Cloud-Red Leaf Surround," *Nebraska History* 15 (Oct.-Dec. 1934):293; "Council at the Sites of Surround," 283-84; Hyde, *Red Cloud's Folk*, 284-85; Hyde, *Spotted Tail's Folk: A History of the Brulé Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 233-34, both of which have the events occurring a day later; Larson, *Red Cloud*, 207-8; Buecker, *Fort Robinson*, 88-89.

Reference to the approximate time of the returning Fourth cavalymen with the Sioux men is in Sherry L. Smith, *Sagebrush Soldier: Private William Earl Smith's View of the Sioux War of 1876* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 25. En route back to Camp Robinson, Red Cloud reportedly gathered his men and told them not to resist, but to "take this in good humor." Recollection of Susie Kills Above in "Council at Sites of Surround," 280.

²⁰ Sheridan to Sherman, Oct. 24, 1876, containing Crook to Sheridan, Oct. 23, 1876, Sioux War Papers, Roll 279.

²¹ Crook to Sheridan, Oct. 30, 1876, Sioux War Papers, Roll 279. See Maj. Julius W. Mason to Assistant Adjutant General, Division of the Missouri, Nov. 16, 1876, which attests to the quiet and obedient nature of the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Indians following the actions of October 23. Mason wrote, "I apprehend no trouble in keeping them in a proper state of subjugation." Sioux War Papers, Roll 279.

²² Sheridan to Crook, Oct. 25, 1876. Sheridan wired Sherman that Crook's "neglect to disarm and dismount other bands at that [Red Cloud] agency is disapproved, and all . . . [Crook's] theories . . . seem to be given as a plea for not having performed what he promised and what was expected of him." First endorsement, Nov. 6, 1876, of Crook to Sheridan, Oct. 30, 1876, Sioux War Papers, Roll 279.

²³ Crook to Sheridan, Oct. 30, 1876, Sioux War Papers, Roll 279; *New York Tribune*, Oct. 25, 1876; *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 4, 1876; *Omaha Herald*, Nov. 3, 1876; *Army and Navy Journal*, Oct. 28, 1876; Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, 233; Larson, *Red Cloud*, 208-9. Quote is in Crook to Sheridan, Oct. 24, 1876, in "Military Reports," 293-94.

²⁴ *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 4, 1876.

²⁵ Bruce, *The Fighting Norths*, 46-47, citing *New York Herald*, Nov. 4, 1876; excerpts from Frank North's diary in ibid, 47; Grinnell, *Two Great Scouts*, 255-56. Minor variances appear in Luther North, *Man of the Plains*, 204.

²⁶ Grinnell, *Two Great Scouts*, 257; Paul L. Hedren, *Fort Laramie in 1876: A Chronicle of a Frontier Post at War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 195; Bruce, *Fighting Norths and Pawnee Scouts*, 47-48; Buecker, *Fort Robinson*, 89. Mackenzie also desired to use some of the captured stock to mount as scouts, several Sioux prisoners who had been captured at Slim Buttes in September 1876. Mackenzie to Crook, Oct. 28, 1876, RG393, Entry 3731. Four hundred and five of the animals were auctioned at Fort Laramie on November 2 for an average five dollars each. John G. Bourke, "Diary of John Gregory Bourke," 14 (Nov. 2- Dec. 4, 1876), microfilm at U.S. Military Academy Library, West Point, New York, entry for Nov. 2, 1876. Despite initial stipulations to the contrary, proceeds from the sales were never used to purchase cattle for the Red Cloud Agency tribesmen, and the monies became unaccountable. Some redress was awarded descendants in 1944. Clow, "Sioux Pony Campaign," 466, 474.

²⁷ Crook to Sheridan, Jan. 8, 1877, Sioux War Papers, Roll 280.

²⁸ *Army and Navy Journal*, Oct. 21, 1876.