



Memorials to the Sioux Indians [Part 3]

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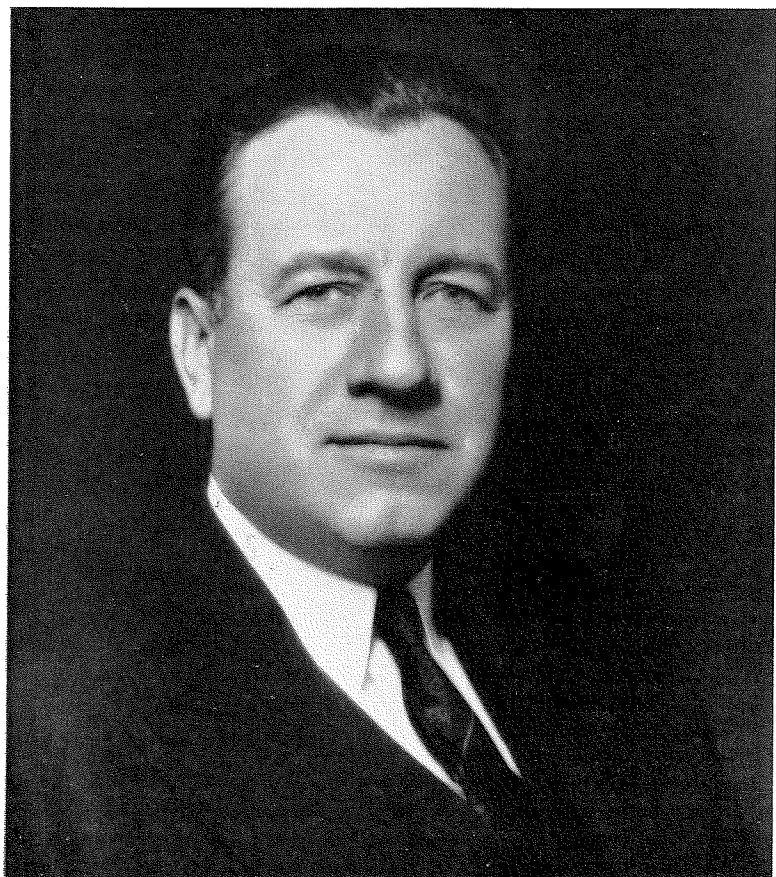


Photo by Blackstone, New York

HARRY B. COFFEE

Congressman Coffee Commends Sioux Memorial Project

DEAR MR. WILSON :

I want to commend you and the Nebraska State Historical Society upon the efforts being made to erect a monument in Northwestern Nebraska to memorialize the Sioux Nation which is so rich in Indian history. I am heartily in accord with the views you have expressed that a number of suitable markers or monuments should be erected in that area to commemorate the historic events and the noted Indian chiefs whose memory enriches the history of that early period.

I am hoping that your long years of research in the Indian history of the Sioux Nation may be preserved to posterity by suitable monuments on some of the following sites:

(a) The site of Spotted Tail Agency on the Big Beaver, about fifteen miles northeast of Chadron where the Brule were located from 1874 to 1877.

(b) The site of Red Cloud Agency on White River just east of Fort Robinson, where the Oglala were located from 1873 to 1877.

(c) The place on Chadron Creek about three miles southwest of Chadron, where in 1876 Red Cloud and his band were captured by troops under General MacKenzie and the famous Pawnee Scouts led by the North Brothers.

(d) The last camp of Crazy Horse on White River, about two miles northeast of Crawford.

(e) The site where the Indian Council met with the Allison Commission, September 20, 1876, to consider the sale of the Black Hills to the United States Government, which meeting took place on the south side of White River about due north of Crow Butte and broke up in disorder.

(f) The site of the Council held three days later, four miles west of Chadron on Chadron Creek, where the Allison Commission again negotiated with the Indian chiefs for the sale of the Black Hills, while camped near by on White River were 20,000 Indians who had gathered to prevent their Chiefs from disposing of the Black Hills. (Had it not been for the courage and presence of mind of Chief Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses, all of the white men might have been killed.)

(g) The place on Antelope Creek twenty-two miles northwest of Harrison where, on the 22d of January, 1879, the remnant of the northern Cheyenne band under Dull Knife were nearly all killed. They had escaped from Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) and were on their way back to their old haunts in Montana and Wyoming.

Many of the older Indians who helped you locate these sites have already gone to their happy hunting grounds. Unless these sites are soon marked their historic significance will be lost to future generations.

History records no great battle having been fought with the Indians in Northwestern Nebraska. However, it was here that the great tragedies occurred during the middle 70's following their final defeat.

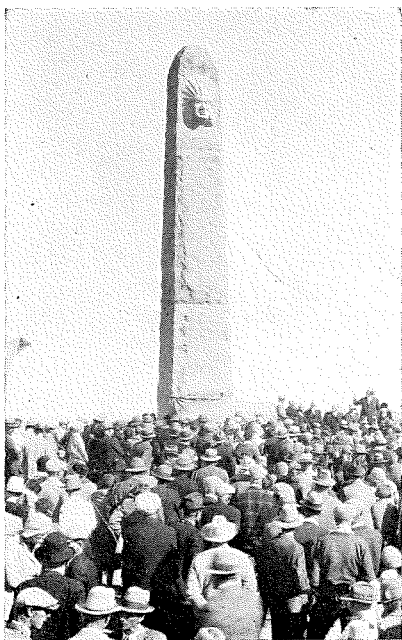
A Sioux memorial in Northwestern Nebraska is worthy of universal support.



Ashton C.
Shallenberger

Ashton C. Shallenberger was both governor and congressman in Nebraska. He was a gifted speaker—one of the most gifted and effective of all Nebraska speakers. He was a lover of Nebraska history and a member of the Nebraska State Historical Society for many years. He told the story of the Massacre Canyon Battle between the Sioux and the Pawnee Nations on the floor of the House of Representatives in favor of his bill appropriating \$10,000 from the federal treasury to mark the site of this memorable battle. It required unanimous consent for consideration of the bill. Congressman Shallenberger went to Congressman La Guardia (now mayor of New York City), one of the greatest objectors, and persuaded him not to object. Shallenberger then told the story of the battle in a way that stirred the soul of every congressman who heard it. That speech on May 7, 1928, secured the passage of the bill.

Senator Howell secured its passage through the Senate with the amount reduced to \$7,500 and the provision that Nebraska should furnish a site for the monument without cost. The full story of the passage of this bill is told in the State Historical Society publications. It is one of the most thrilling stories of the frontier. Congressman Shallenberger achieved what was apparently impossible. He set a high mark for present-day Nebraska congressmen to achieve a worthy memorial for the Sioux Nation in Nebraska.



MASSACRE CANYON MONUMENT



GOVERNOR DWIGHT GRISWOLD

Dwight Griswold

Governor Dwight Griswold properly belongs in the historic landscapes of Panhandle Nebraska. He was mountain-born at Harrison, highest town of Nebraska (4,857 feet), in Sioux County, November 27, 1893. All about him at birth were historic frontier sites — on Hat Creek the Buffalo Bill and Yellow Hand fight; beyond, the last battle ground of Dull Knife's Cheyenne band. East of Harrison were Fort Robinson, Red Cloud Agency, White River Canyon.

Sioux County itself was the last battle ground between the Nebraska homesteader and the cattle ranchers. So Governor Griswold was born in one of the most romantic and historic regions of the West.

When Dwight was a boy of about seven years his father moved to Gordon. Gordon is one of the chief Nebraska trading posts of the Sioux Indian Reservation in South Dakota. To Gordon come every day Sioux Indians and white men from the great cattle and grain plains of the Sioux country, between the Niobrara and the White River, in all their picturesque frontier attire.

South and southeast of Gordon is the great Sandhill cattle empire, the country made famous by Mari Sandoz in "Old Jules." Here are lakes, head-waters of the Snake and the Boardman, the deep canyons of the Niobrara. The cow trails and truck roads run to Gordon.

So Dwight Griswold, prospective governor of Nebraska, grew up in the most inspiring frontier scenes that a boy could possibly have about him.

The later episodes of Dwight Griswold's career: his schooling at Nebraska Wesleyan and the State University; Mexican border war service in 1916; captain of artillery overseas in the World War; later service in the Nebraska Legislature in 1921, 1925, 1927 and 1929; his four famous campaigns for the Nebraska governorship before he finally won in 1940, are all parts of an interesting, picturesque preparation for his present place as governor.

Mountain and Pine Ridge born; Indian and cow-country nurtured; product of the country printing office, the college, the state university, the army, the legislative halls,—and, above all else, child of the far frontier of Nebraska, Governor Griswold finds fitting place, with other Nebraskans, in this Sioux Memorial Issue for the monumenting of the heroic historical sites in the great Pine Ridge and Sandhills Region of Nebraska.

Sioux - Cheyenne Grievances at Pine Ridge Agency

BY JAMES H. COOK*

Indian scouts were much used by the United States Army in all the Indian wars. Not only were they sent ahead of the troops to observe the movements of the enemy, but, in an uninhabited and almost unknown country, to ascertain where water, grass and fuel could be obtained for the command. Few who served as enlisted men had any training in woodcraft, and the success or failure of many an expedition depended upon the service rendered by its scouts. Did they prove incompetent or tricky, a command following hostile Indians would be certain to encounter serious difficulties. . . The services of many whom I have known personally proved extremely valuable, and they were much more loyal than we could have expected.

Woman's Dress was one of the last of the Sioux scouts—an old warrior whom I knew intimately for forty years. At the time of his death at Pine Ridge he had army discharge papers for twenty-one enlistments of six months each. Not only do these papers show that he was a most excellent scout, but they carried marginal notes by army officers of high rank stating that his services had been of the greatest value. General Crook and many other officers had often told him that the Great Father at Washington would always be a good friend to him and his family. . .

* Author of *Fifty Years on the Old Frontier*, from which these excerpts are made.

In May, 1913, this remarkable old scout, with his family, visited me in my home. He complained most bitterly of the way he had been treated by the Great Father. Soldiers whom he had led into battle had killed some of his nearest relatives, and when leading troops after old Dull Knife's band he was shot through the arm. At the time of his visit he was an old man, unfit for any work, and often suffered greatly for want of actual necessities. . .

One of the best-known scouts and interpreters in the land of the Sioux was Baptiste Garnier — Little Bat. Good-natured, even-tempered at all times, he was liked by both officers and men. Though he had no school training, he possessed more than ordinary intelligence and certain qualities which made him distinctive. His honesty and fearlessness never were questioned. His skill as a hunter and his knowledge of the Indian language and of the customs of the Sioux made his services as an army scout most valuable during the Indian troubles of 1876 and later years. He was a modest and unassuming type of rugged frontier manhood. His name and family and the simple life of the western pioneer were the things which he most desired. General Crook, General Hatch and other commanders considered him one of the best big-game hunters in the Rocky Mountain region. When such well known men as William K. Vanderbilt and Dr. Seward Webb wanted to hunt big game in the Rockies they usually secured the services of Little Bat.

During all the years in which we were such close friends I never knew him to have a quarrel with anyone. He was murdered by a barkeeper at Crawford — an unprovoked and cowardly attack. . . Dying, he told his wife that he could not see why a friend should shoot him. There was no hatred in his heart for any man except the Cheyenne who had killed his father. . . At this time only two of Bat's friends remained, and, tho many saw the shooting, Haguewood was acquitted of the charge of murder. To many people about Crawford, Little Bat was "nothing but an Indian." He was killed by a "white" man who was "civilized." Today the simple little marker at his grave in the Fort Robinson cemetery gives only his name, the date of his death, and the one word, "Employee." His services should entitle him to be honored by old army friends and by all other Americans who admire men

who have done good work, and to receive a more fitting monument.

In that most unfortunate encounter known as the Battle of Wounded Knee, Little Bat was present. When the order was given to search the lodges of the Indians for firearms, he was sent to interpret for the soldiers detailed for that duty. He was to inform the women what the soldiers were to do, and to explain to them that they would not be harmed. When Bat had done as ordered, and some of the lodges had been searched, the firing began at the point where the Indians were assembled. In a moment death reigned on all sides. The Hotchkiss guns, trained on the lodges, opened fire, and the Indian women and children who but a few minutes before had been told that they were in no danger, were killed and wounded by the score. . .

Bat had taken no firearms with him when he went to the lodges, for he wanted to impress the Indians with his conviction that they were in no danger. His clothing was pierced with bullets as he tried to get to his own tent where his weapons had been left. When he reached the place he found that the tent had been burned and an Indian who had been killed in it was lying across his gun, the stock of which was half burned away. Bat's saddle was also riddled with bullets. When I met Little Bat soon after the affair he told me that the sights he had witnessed during that killing of women and children would never be effaced from his memory. . .

On numerous occasions my Oglala Sioux friends of the Pine Ridge Reservation, when visiting me in my ranch home, had expressed the desire that I might come to them and be their "white father" or Indian agent. They complained that most of the men sent to them as agents were persons who did not understand Indians and their ways, and had little or no sympathy for them as brother men. I tried to explain that the agents were not always selected for their fitness for the place, or because of their knowledge of the Indians or their unquestioned honesty. When such men were in office, the Indians were very sure to get the worst of it, for there were few Indians in the United States sufficiently educated to check up the business affairs of the agency. A number of the men who have held positions as Indian agents could and did close at least one eye (and sometimes both eyes) when the welfare of the Indian was at stake and when some of

his white brothers, interested in contracts representing large dealings with the red men, desired more feathers for their nests.

In the fall of 1890 — just about the time the Messiah craze started among the Sioux — a number of the old head men of the Oglala came from Pine Ridge Reservation on a hurried visit to my home. They told me that their rations had been cut down until they were suffering and dying for lack of food, and that trouble was sure to come unless something was done about it immediately. . . They said that they wanted to send a delegation of their people to Washington to ask the Great Father if he would not appoint me as the white father at Pine Ridge Agency, for they felt that I was a friend to the Indians and would be honest in my dealings with them. I told them that, should I be appointed at their request, I would devote a few years of my life to an endeavor to help them get started on the white man's road; but that the appointment as Indian agent, coming in any other manner than as the sole desire of the Indians themselves, I would not for any consideration accept. . .

Thereupon a delegation was sent to Washington and petitions for my appointment were signed by a large number of the head men among the Sioux in the presence of the county judge. Again, at close of the Wounded Knee campaign, similar petitions were signed by many of the most prominent citizens of the Black Hills country. These people seemed to feel that with a different sort of man at that agency there would be no repetition of the troubles which had just ended so disastrously for both Indians and whites. . . . Fortunately for me, perhaps, a new policy of handling the agency was adopted, and an army officer was detailed for that post. The salary of an Indian agent was not so great that I could well afford to neglect my own business at that time. Yet, having given my word to the Indians that I would accept the position if, through their efforts, I were given the appointment, I should certainly have done so, no matter what it might cost me financially.

The petition signed by Red Cloud and his sub-chiefs, to which Captain Cook refers, is appended. The grievances set forth in this petition are typical of those suffered by the Indians during this critical period. Similar grievances and complaints arose at other Indian agencies during the years of transition. They furnished a basis for the continuance of Indian wars and hostile expeditions. — *Editor.*

Petition Signed By Red Cloud and Sub-Chiefs

Pine Ridge Agency, March 10, 1891.

Hon. Commissioner Morgan,
Washington, D. C.

DEAR SIR:

I, Red Cloud, Chief of the Ogallalla Sioux at this agency, and my sub-chiefs, write to you as follows: I and my people have been at agencies and on reservations for many years. We have had many agents — ten, I think, to this time. They were all eastern men. They were unacquainted with the Indians. They did not know our nature. They had not seen an Indian before they came here. They could not understand us because they did not know about our life in past years, and knew nothing of our traditions and history. They have never lived with us and so could not sympathize with us. We have had trouble with some of them — most of all, the last one.

There has been trouble the past winter. Many soldiers have been here. Some of our people have been in Washington. They told you we wanted an agent here of our own choosing, and that we wanted a civilian. They told you we had chosen a man to be our agent. You told my people to come home and hold a council and agree on some man whom we all wanted for agent. My people have come home. We have held a council as you told us to do. We have agreed on a man for our agent. All my people — men, women, and children — have agreed on one man. That man is James H. Cook of Harrison, Nebraska. He is the choice of us all. We have known him for seventeen years. He is a Western man. He has been among us when we were wild. He knows our nature, our history, and what we want. He is our friend. He will deal justly with us, and help us to learn the ways of the white men. He will treat us as men. We want him and no one else. We want him because, as I told you, he is a Western man and knows our ways. All our other agents have been Eastern men who knew nothing of us or our past. We could not get along with them, because our ways were different. We want the agent appointed at once. We want James H. Cook appointed now. My people want it. It will settle this trouble, and there will be peace. The sooner the appointment is made, the better. Spring is near. We want this matter settled before long, so we can plow our fields and raise our crops, and not be bothered with this matter. We ask you to give this your attention now, and not keep us waiting long. We are all agreed on this matter, and set our names to this letter.

RED CLOUD
JACK RED CLOUD
BIG ROAD
SPOTTED ELK
YOUNG-MAN-AFRAID
LITTLE WOUND
HE DOG
PLENTY BEAR
FAR LIGHTNING

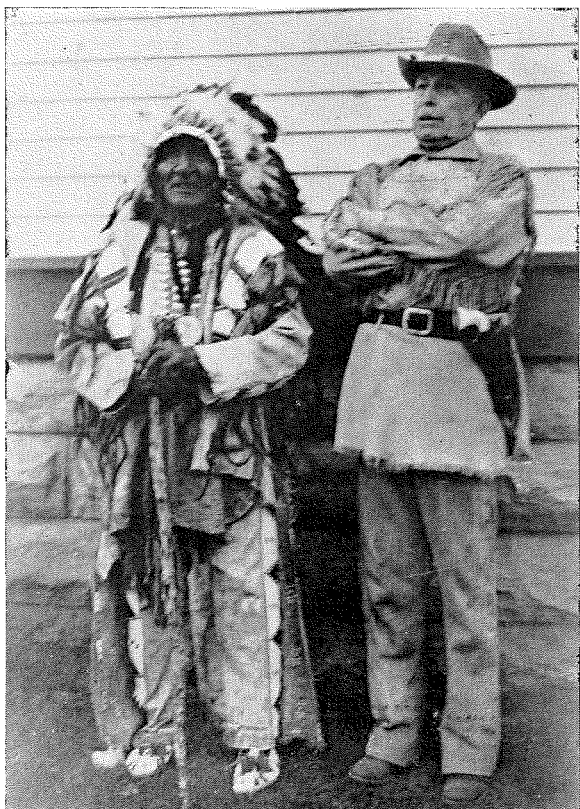
NO WATER
BLACK SHIELD
FAR THUNDER
KNIFE CHIEF
BEAR HEAD
LONE BEAR
LITTLE HAWK
YELLOW BEAR
AMERICAN HORSE

JOSEPH A. MOUSSEAU, Interpreter

Letter From Captain Cook

DEAR PROFESSOR WILSON :

I am heartily in favor of proper monuments being placed at historic points in the land of the aborigines in Northwestern Nebraska. My experience with the Indians extends to a time when



CAPTAIN JAMES H. COOK AND SHORT BULL

many of the tribes were really wild and savage. The Sioux have now been transformed into a far different type of Indians.

Many of them have "taken kindly" to the vices of the whites; so, as I am an old man, I no longer take the same interest in them that I did at one time when changes did not occur so rapidly. But my condition has improved to a point where I am able to write this letter and inform you that I am very much interested in seeing the erection of the monuments on which you have expended so much of your thought. I certainly hope the numerous sites you mention will be suitably marked before all evidence pertaining to them is obliterated by Father Time.

The photograph enclosed was taken at Fort Robinson by an artist unknown to me, at the time (September 4-5, 1934) when cenotaphs were dedicated to Lieutenant Levi Robinson (in whose honor the fort was named) and to Crazy Horse, brave Indian and leading Sioux warrior. Short Bull who stands beside me was a brother of He Dog. Both participated in the fight with General Custer when his command was wiped out.

Captain Cook and the Indians

H. S. ROBINSON, Researchist

James H. Cook, rancher, cattleman, naturalist scout and Indian fighter, knew and understood the Indian perhaps better than any white man of his time. Dr. E. H. Barbour wrote of him as follows:

"In his many military engagements with hostile tribes he acquired none of that animosity so common to those who engage in mortal combat, but instead was moved with compassion and fellow feeling for the tribesmen, and has come to be viewed by them as their fiercest foe yet their firmest friend, and the Indians of several states still counsel with him. His close personal acquaintance with their chiefs and his command of their language has repeatedly brought him into prominence in settling tribal difficulties."¹

In his own book, *Fifty Years On The Old Frontier*, Mr.

¹ *History of Nebraska*, Morton-Watkins, 1913; Vol. III, p. 479.

Cook sets forth his comprehension of the Indians' natural feelings.

"Let us remember that the Indian, from his own point of view, had the same right to live that his forefathers had in the land of their birth. It was only natural for him to look at the invasion and conquest of his country by the whites with the same feeling that we of today should experience at any attempted invasion of this country by a foreign nation. Having been near death at the hands of the Indians and having seen some of my dear friends killed by them, I have never (to the amazement of some persons) regarded the proverbial dead Indian as the only good Indian. I can only say that, had I been born an Indian, I might have made a bad one — from the white man's point of view."²

In another place he says: "It was not the Indian's nature to about-face and try to keep step with those upon whom he looked as coming to drive him and his people from lands which they claimed by birthright. Without money or resources of any kind other than the game of the country, on which to subsist and from which to secure clothing and shelter, and with a comparatively small area of country over which he could evade pursuit by his powerful and relentless enemies, the Indian put up the best fight of which he was capable, and continued it so long as there seemed to him to be the least chance of deferring the rapidly approaching time when he and his people would have to forsake forever the ways in which they had been trained for centuries."

² *Fifty Years on the Old Frontier*, James H. Cook; pp. 245, 219.

Sioux Indian Memorials

By MRS. GUTZON BORGLUM*

The first memorials we know anything about were the piles of stones placed above a dead body to keep off wild animals. Then people placed larger stones to mark the resting places of more important individuals and finally they began to mark the stones with the names and eventually made pictures to mark the exploits of the departed. Later, kings and emperors created huge monuments proclaiming their names and titles and describing their conquests, but all such memorials were prompted by selfishness and pride. Only the Egyptians seem to have attempted any record of their civilization for future generations. Our neighboring memorial on Mount Rushmore is the first monument to a philosophy of government and its founders.

The proposed memorial to the Sioux Indians is of a wholly different character. It is to be erected by one race to another: an attempt to make a comprehensive record, to mark fittingly the place in the world of a people who preceded us on this continent. In asking ourselves why we do this we should inquire, What right has an ancient civilization to be preserved? I believe we shall all agree that some of the reasons are found in a unique development, in the character, ideals and sincerity of its people. The Sioux did not develop these qualities overnight. The character and high-mindedness of some of their leaders furnish in themselves a record of countless generations of development, and this fact should not pass unnoticed. The speech of Spotted Tail when appealing to his people to accept the domination of the whites holds its own in comparison with the literature of any known race. Archaeologists spend much time and money unearthing the meager records of Indian materialistic development. We should not begrudge any sum spent on a memorial to their moral development.

* From address at meeting of Sioux Memorial Association, Chadron, November 21, 1941.

It is one of the travesties of history that we, who came to this continent seeking liberty of the individual and proclaiming his right to be free and to be happy, should have deprived these free-roaming people of their freedom. I know it was such considerations that made my husband (himself a passionate believer in Jefferson's declaration of the right of man to be free and to be happy, and who thought those were the most portentous words ever penned) give his enthusiastic support to the project of fitting recognition to these people whom we had despoiled of their land. The other day I came across a speech he made last year at Rushmore in which he said:

"We are standing on territory once belonging to the Sioux Indians—that great warlike race, like the Romans, who ruled everything from the middle of Wyoming to Chicago. I wish we had treated them better, in a more noble manner. We are standing on their very land, for which we never paid a cent—just stole it from them and lied about it. Well, these are the things we probably will do something about some day.

"They asked me many times if I would not carve an Indian somewhere along with the white men. Their oldest men have come and stood on the head of Washington and, with hands elevated for a full half-hour, have pleaded with the Gods to make the Indian and the white man friendly and happy to live together. One man was so blind we had to lead him up and back. That is goodness; but when power enters and goodness has to be forced on others, on those who are not moral and orderly, then trouble begins. I wonder will men ever be great enough to be friendly by common consent? We will not be so by force. Power does not lead to goodness. There is not enough of that bigness in men to be good when they are powerful. If you have to compel people to be good, then something else takes place and conflict begins and we soon have war."

In trying to condone our treatment of the Sioux we might say that, although their moral sense had developed, they were lacking in certain other elements of civilization. "A nation cannot continue half slave and half free," as Lincoln said. No more can two civilizations exist side by side on terms of equality when they are at different stages of development. Both Americans and

Indians were lacking in tolerance and desire to understand each other. I wish a different solution could have been found — one that did not destroy so much that was fine in the Indian character. There is still time to make amends. They are still with us, I understand, in increasing numbers. The problem must be better solved. I believe these memorials, a tribute of our appreciation of the noble qualities of the Sioux Indians, will be a step in the direction of mutual understanding and regard.

