

THE DULL KNIFE RAID OF 1878

The booklet on "Dull Knife" by E. A. Brinninstool, Hollywood, California, 1935 is the latest publication on the subject, so far as the writer can learn. He has verified some points heretofore in dispute, particularly the fact that Dull Knife died a natural death. Some earlier writers claimed that he was killed by the soldiers. Scout C. B. Munhall, now deceased, in a talk before the Nebraska State Historical Society, January 13, 1925, claimed that Dull Knife was killed by a bayonet in the hands of a guard in 1869, obviously a mistake. A letter from A. N. Keith, of Midwest, Wyoming, published in our official quarterly, Nebraska History, Vol. VI, No. 4, 1926, gives an account that varies somewhat from the official reports and the stories of other writers.

In the "The Fighting Cheyennes" by George Bird Grinnell a careful, detailed and sympathetic account of the "raid" is given. This could scarcely be excelled by any later publications.

The following official documents are of interest but are quoted in substance by Grinnell, Brinninstool and others.

1. Senate Report No. 708, Forty-sixth Congress, 2nd Session, p. 64. Testimony of the Indian Agent before a Senate Committee.
2. House Executive Documents 1878-79, Vol. 2, p. 49. Report of the Agent of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency. P. 77, Report of General Crook, commander of the Department of the Platte.

The late J. F. Cordeal, of McCook, was regarded by many as one of the best posted men in the state on the early history of the southwest. An "Historical Sketch of Southwestern Nebraska" contributed by him to the Nebraska State Historical Society appears in Vol. XVII of our Publications. The Cheyenne Raid of 1878 is treated briefly on pages 42 and 43. A footnote on pages 43 and 44 by Albert Watkins, editor, supplements Mr. Cordeal's account.

An article on "Kansas Indian Wars" by George W. Brown in the Publications of the Kansas State Historical Society, Vol. 17, pages 134 to 139 contain several incorrect statements. In the same volume, pages 623-691, C. E. Campbell, who was connected with the Cheyenne Agency in Indian Territory when Dull Knife and his band left, has a paper, "Down Among the Red Men." Included in this paper is a first hand account of the Dull Knife Raid and the circumstances leading to it.

Relating to the question what became of this band of Indians we quote from Campbell:

"Under an agreement made in 1881 with the Sioux Nation in Washington, the Indian office permitted the return north of three hundred Cheyennes, and as this number was about eighty more than had made the trip south with Little Chief, the quota was made up from those who had come down four years previously with Little Wolf and Dull Knife and among those eighty were Wild Hog, Old Crow Indian, Blacksmith, Bushy Head and Noisy Walker, the very Indians who had been leaders in the flight of three years previous and who had only escaped death when Dull Knife's following broke out of the barracks at Camp Robinson by having been confined in the guard house at the post."

In a letter to the Beaver City Times-Tribune published April 20, 1922, J. F. Cordeal says of this band:

"I think practically all of them died as a result of exposure, from starvation and in their winter encounter with the troops."