

WINTER OF 1876 - 1877

at CAMP CANBY

NEBRASKA STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Headquarters 4th Cavalry

Red Cloud Agency, Nebr.

Fred Bruning

1452 So 17

Omaha

Nebr.

In September 1876 I left Omaha Nebr. for Camp Canby headquarters of the 4th Cavalry making preparation for their Winter Campaign against the Indians in Vicinity of Powder River in northern Part of Wyo.

The Post Trader I was working for was Clay Deer. his brother J. W. Deer, had the Indian Trading store at Red Cloud Agency Frank Yates was Indian Agent.

on my arrival at the Camp the first I heard was that one of the best scouts Gen Crook had was California Joe (J. Milner) was shot by Tom Newcomb. Tom escaped and Joe was buried in Military Cemetery Gen Crook came to Ft Robinson with his Regiment, after having made a hard trip from Powder River to the Black Hills his soldiers looked as if they needed new Uniforms for the ragged ones they wore but they were glad to get back and have Regular Rations again

I got well Acquainted with Frank Gerrard he was a Scout under Gen Crook he was raised by the Indians in Montana half Breed. had a Negro Father and a Squaw Mother. he had a Ugly Face but a verry Polite liked to Dance Play Cards and have a good time. I got acquainted with the Officer of the 4th Cavalry Lt. Law-

ton Lt. Mason Lt. Dorst and many others In Including Lt. McKinney

One Sunday evening while Lt Mason & Lt. Dorst were Play-
ing Billards, a Drunken Bull Wacker by the name of Paddy Simons
came into the Room and wanted to go into the store I told him it
was Closed but he Insisted on staying So I and Lt. Dorst got hold
of his arm and led him to the Door and Put him out. Short time lat-
er he came bak with a Six Shooter and wanted to Know who Put him
out and wanted revenge I happened to be near the door.....
and Grab the Gun and twisted it out his hands and the Leiutenant
hit him over the head with a Billard Que and layed him out and
called of the Sargent of the Guard and Put him the Caliboose for
the night

Raid Road fare from Omaha to Sidney was 10¢ a Mile Pd
40 00 to Sidney, and \$10 00 for Stage from there to Red Cloud Agen-
cy.

I will not dispute about the sight Crazy Horse Camped
when he surrender. It might have been Cottin Wood Creek, instead
of White River, for I was not formiliar with the names of all the
Streams at that time 60 years ago

Chief Red Cloud of the Souix Tribe was a Frenly Indian.
did not have much to say Chief Yellow Bird of the Cheyenne Tribe
was the only Cheyenne Chief that I heard of.

Old Friday Cheif of the Arapohoes was a verry Frenly
Indian I often Visit him he could speak our English Languish
verry well he said he got some Schooling in St Louis Mo when a
small boy

Well all the Indians were behaving themselves Verry good
and had no truble with them. they spent their Money freely. when
they had any. they amused themselves evenings by Dancing & Singing.

for I could hear their Tom Toms Pounding soon after Dark. and Keep it up to Early in the Morning. then it would be quiet all day

Indian Boys would take young Ponies. year old or so. and have fun. Raceing them. they thought that was great sport.

it was the first Day of January 1877 when the 4th Cavalry Troops left on their Campaghn. Gen McKinzie in Command and Lt. Lawton in charge of Wagon train. Lt McKinney came to Officers Bar. and was Injoying himself by Drinking Cock Tails and wanted a few Bottle to take along. he was feeling good. didnt Care weath-er he was with the Company or not. he said he had a Presentiment that he would never come back alive. it was about 8. A M Gen McKinzie came back after him. and repermanding for not being with his Company. so he told the General that he would not come back alive the General told him to forget it. and go to his Company at Once. which he did. he was a fine Looking Man. over 6 foot tall but his presentiment came true. for he was Killed in the first Battle they had.

and Fort Reno, on Powder River, was changed to Ft McKinney in 1878. then moved the Fort to Clear Creek. 50 miles north of Powder River There was always something doing at the Camp and Agency. either a Dance or some Intertainment. and Considerable Gambling going on all the time. Most every one was living a free and care free life.

at the Agency was a large Log Cabin Hall and once in a while some Party would give a Public dance. Admission as 5 dol for Men Women free. good many half Breeds Girls would attend. all Dressed up to date. Music was a Fiddell Guitar & Banjo. every

one seems to enjoy themselves always they served a plenty of good things to eat and a gambling room attached. with plenty of money is sight. and it was well patronized I wondered were all the people came from Chief Red Cloud liked a drink of whiskey But never seen any of the Indians drunk

The Cheyenne Indians were camped on White River. just east of the Agency Bill Roland had a large log cabin. in the midst of the teepies, he often entertained. with supper and dances. Indians would come for miles around for he was well known. and a good fellow one night while I was there I had to stay all night in a teepie. on account of a terrible snow storm. I felt at home. for I knew some of the Cheyenne Indians.

Some of them had rings and trinkets taken from soldiers of Gen Custer Massacre on Little Big Horn on June 25/1876 but they would not sell any of it. but later they did. I got a ring inside was engraved--(Jessie from Walter) I had it for sometime. but a girl working for Capt Ferris of the fourth Infantry at Ft Reno wanted it so I gave it to her. her name was Miss Roaton she got married to a sergeant. in B Company 9th Infantry when he was discharged they moved to Egypt in the state of Washington the last I heard from them she still had the ring.

the Indians had a Sun Dance that winter But I did not go. for I don't like to see them torcher themselves. to show how much pain they could endure.

the soldiers would have horse races at Ft Robinson. 4th Cavalry Horse against the 5th Cavalry one. we generally lost

Sundays we would spend going up to the Chalk Bluffs, which was about a mile back of our store

sometimes would try target shooting we all were good

shots. but an Indian came along and we let him in. he beat us all

I road Gen McKinzie Horse to Crow Buttes with several others. and was glad to get back home again. for I had to hold him Back all the time. he wanted to be in the Lead. when I loosened the Rains he wanted to Run or charge

In the spring of 1877. I made a short Visit to Omaha Coming back I met the Cheyenne Indians. at Clark's Bridge on North Platte River they wanted me to go with them. to Okhoma. where the Goverment was takin them. But my Intension was to go up in the Big Horn regions Wyo

Issuing Cattle to the Indians one day they stampeded and ran all over the Reservation. so the Agent let the Indians get them. which they did. a few came through our Camp. with Indians Chasing them. It was quit Exciting for a little while. But finely got them all back to the Slauter House

Clay Deer had 5 Men working for him at the store they were Mr Hyde, Frank Chamberlain Fred Bruning Chas Thieman and a Cook by the name of Dribus we were all Keep busy.

Mr. Sheldon

I will write you again. if this will Interest you. Excuse Pencil.

Let me Know

Yours

Fred Bruning

1452 So 17

Omaha

Nebr