

*'My heart now has become
changed to softer feelings'*

A NORTHERN CHEYENNE WOMAN
AND HER FAMILY REMEMBER
THE LONG JOURNEY HOME

by John H. Monnett



Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming

When the Northern Cheyenne woman Susan Iron Teeth, or Mah-I-ti-wo-nee-ni, passed away in 1928, she left a remarkable contribution to the historical record: a native woman's account of the dangers, misery, and loss endured by the Northern Cheyennes during their long trek from Indian Territory to their homelands on the northern plains in 1877.

In May 1928, a ninety-four-year-old woman passed away almost unnoticed on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation at Lame Deer, Montana. The tribal death record listed her name as Susan Iron Teeth. Few of her generation were left in that year to mourn her passing. But Iron Teeth left behind a unique and important window into Cheyenne history, particularly a woman's perceptions of the Northern Cheyennes' trek from Darlington Agency in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) where they were exiled following the Great Sioux War back to their homelands on the northern plains. The exodus of 1878–79 remains a seminal event in Cheyenne history and is celebrated by commemorative events by Cheyennes today.

Iron Teeth's Cheyenne name was Mah-I-ti-wo-nee-ni. Born in the Black Hills in 1834, about the time the division between Northern and Southern Cheyennes began in earnest, Iron Teeth remembered stories told to her by her grandmother of the time before the tribe migrated to the plains in the late eighteenth century; she lived to see automobiles and airplanes. During her long life, Iron Teeth witnessed disturbing changes in Montana and the northern plains. She remembered comforting refugees from among the southern people who had survived the Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado and fled to northern relatives in the Powder River country in 1864–65. She saw the vast herds of buffalo that blackened the plains during her youth dwindle to near extinction by the time she reached middle age. She adapted to life on the reservation and to the confines of an "American house." In 1926, living alone in her isolated cabin near Lame Deer, she told her still-vivid memories to Dr. Thomas B. Marquis. For years, her story remained obscure in the historical record, and even today is not well known and difficult to access in totality.¹

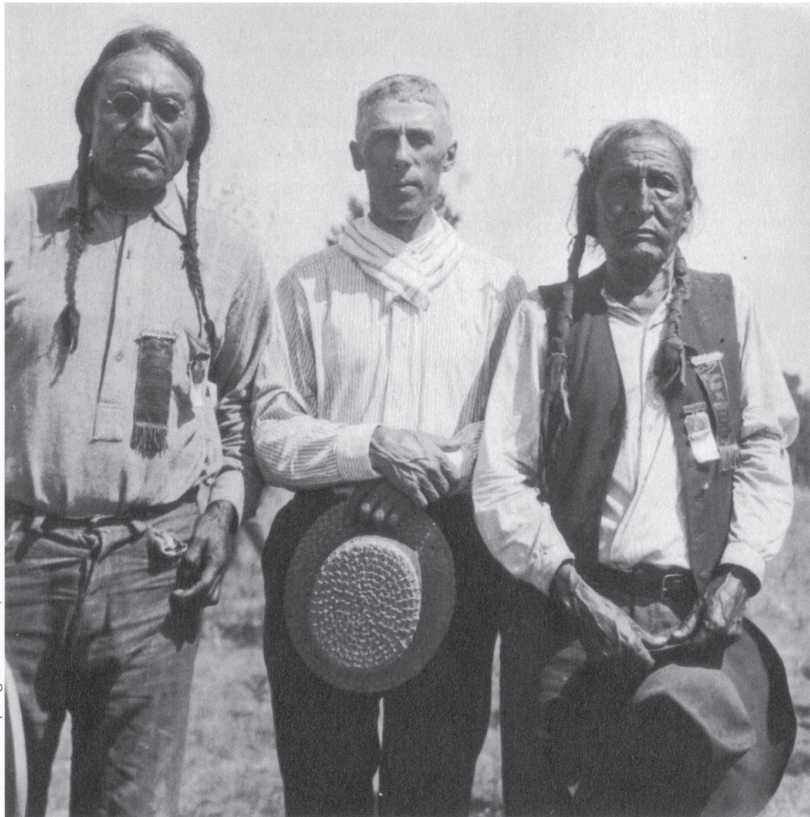
Although born in Missouri in 1869, Marquis considered himself a Montanan, and he lived in the state much of his life. In 1922, he came to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation as agency physician. He held this position for less than a year but remained in nearby Hardin until his death in 1935. Like other whites of his generation who visited or worked on the northern plains reservations, Marquis became intrigued with the story of General George Armstrong Custer and spent his later years interviewing many elderly Lakota and Cheyenne men about the Battle of the Little Bighorn and other events. Although best known for the book that grew out of his work, *Wooden Leg, A Warrior Who Fought Custer* (1931), Marquis also took numerous photographs of individuals with a small camera, images that in some cases provide the only glimpses of the Cheyennes of the nineteenth century, including Iron Teeth.²

As part of his interest in documenting the Indian wars, Marquis interviewed Iron Teeth between October and November 1926 and became enchanted by the stories she told to him of her early life. During the 1860s and '70s, Iron Teeth was a member of Chief Dull Knife's band. She and her husband, Red Pipe, raised five children and prospered until the Great Sioux War. Following Dull Knife's surrender in 1877, she and her children were exiled to the south. The family then joined the long march of Little Wolf's and



The Lame Deer Valley is pictured above in 1901, soon after Iron Teeth moved to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. Seen from the west divide, the town of Lame Deer is visible between the hills.

L. A. Huffman, photographer, MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, 981-040



Dr. Thomas B. Marquis came to the Northern Cheyenne Reservation as an agency physician in 1922. Intrigued with the story of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, he befriended many Cheyennes, seeking to record their recollections. He interviewed Iron Teeth in 1926 at her cabin in the hills above Lame Deer. Here, Marquis poses with Laban Little Wolf (right), nephew of Little Wolf, and Pine (left).

Dull Knife's people home to Montana in 1878–79. This experience most fascinated Marquis. Although filtered through the linguistic prescript of the English language, Iron Teeth's description as transcribed by Marquis provides the only extensive eyewitness account of that defining event in Cheyenne history through the eyes of a native woman and her family.³

There are several reasons why it is important to reexamine Iron Teeth's narrative. For historians who study the Indian wars, Iron Teeth's account provides new insight into the Northern Cheyenne story. Her perspective is significantly different than those in the accounts told by males, in which daring and valor within the plains warriors' code of conduct predominate. Although narratives of women warriors have found their way into print, very few specifically describe how female noncombatants survived the stresses of the war.⁴ Most significantly, however, the challenges of Iron Teeth and her children demonstrate more clearly than any other narrative the stoical and unquestioned commitment of Cheyenne men and women alike, despite personal family ties, to face death while seeking ways for both family and the larger kindred band to live in their homeland, a

dichotomy arguably lost on the United States Indian Bureau and the military at the time. As an investigating board examining possible negligence in the question of why the Cheyennes did not accept a return to Indian Territory following their capture in October 1878 finally admitted—"The statements of the Indians were not brag. . . . [T]hey literally went out to die."⁵ For a modern world, this Cheyenne family history lends insight into the seemingly contradictory roles of preservation and sacrifice.

The Cheyennes call themselves Tsistsistas, "the People." Of Algonquian origin, over the centuries they migrated from the Northeast across Minnesota and the Dakotas. By the first years of the nineteenth century, they had crossed the upper Missouri River and eventually assimilated with the Suhtai, a related group, and lived in close association with the Arapahos. During the early 1800s, the Tsistsistas underwent an ethnogenesis under the guidance of the prophet Sweet Medicine. They transformed themselves from a traditional agrarian economy to one based almost solely on hunting bison and other animals, thus transforming themselves into one of the most famous equestrian

societies on the Great Plains. A small nation, they first fought the Lakotas but eventually made peace and, with them, formed a strong military and trade alliance that in the mid-nineteenth century challenged the Crows, Shoshones, and other tribes for the resources of the grasslands and mountain basins. The Sioux called the Tsistsistas *Shaiyena*, meaning “those who speak a foreign tongue.” Others, including white traders, corrupted the word to Cheyenne, and the name stuck.⁶

During the early to mid-nineteenth century, the Cheyennes tapped the resources and spiritual powers of the Black Hills and spent several months in the vicinity each year.⁷ By the fur trade era of the 1830s, however, significant numbers of Cheyennes of the Hevhaitanio and Oivimana clans, following the example of Yellow Wolf, migrated south to the game-rich Arkansas Valley. Most of them remained on the southern bison ranges and formed the core of the Southern Cheyenne people. For a time during this period, the southerners helped facilitate the trade in horses northward from the area under the control of the Comanches south of the Arkansas River.⁸ Following the Colorado gold rush beginning in 1858, the Southern Cheyennes would be squeezed by the new mining economy around Denver and the expansion of agriculture across the prairies of Kansas.

In 1864, the Colorado territorial militia massacred several hundred Cheyennes and Arapahos at Sand Creek. Eager to end raids in retaliation for Sand Creek, the federal government decided to offer new peace terms to the plains tribes that, unbeknownst to many of the chiefs, would remove their people from traditional lands and make them reservation Indians. Many Southern Cheyennes went to the new reservation in Indian Territory following the Treaties of Medicine Lodge in 1867. Others, however, especially the Dog Soldier warrior society, viewed the reservation mainly as a seasonal supply base and continued raiding north of the Arkansas for the next two and a half years. Following the decisive defeat of the Dog Soldiers by the U.S. Army at the Battle of Summit Springs in Colorado Territory in 1869, the federal government finally succeeded in removing all Southern Cheyennes to the Darlington Agency on the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indian Reservation in Indian Territory.⁹

During the 1850s and 1860s, the Cheyennes who

remained in the north around the Black Hills and Powder River country fared somewhat better than their southern kinsmen despite changing environmental conditions. The mid-1840s saw the end of a long cold, wet period in the region (the so-called Little Ice Age), and in the next two decades drought changed the lives of peoples on the Great Plains as grass dried up and animals sought refuge in riparian zones and east of the hundredth meridian. The Powder River country fared better during this period due to its water-capturing head basins; bison, pronghorn, and other big game animals abounded in the river valleys. By now closely allied with the Lakotas, especially the Bad Face Oglala *tiyospaye* of Man Afraid of His Horse and Red Cloud, the Northern Cheyennes of Little Wolf’s kinship band helped their Lakota allies expel the Crows from the coveted game-rich Powder River and Rosebud country between 1856 and 1858.

In the mid-1860s, gold strikes in Montana Territory led John Bozeman and others to scout a route across Wyoming to Virginia City, and the federal government built a number of forts to protect emigrants on the Bozeman Trail. Little Wolf’s faction of northerners opposed the new forts and, between 1866 and 1868, with the Lakotas, fought the so-called Red Cloud’s War to close the trail. With the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, the government allowed the Northern Cheyennes to “attach themselves” to the newly established Great Sioux Reservation. They did not receive a reservation of their own, but neither were they isolated from the domain of the Southern Cheyennes on the south-central plains, and Cheyennes frequently traveled north and south during this period. In 1876, factions of Northern Cheyennes participated in Custer’s defeat at the Little Bighorn but were finally decimated on the Red Fork of the Powder River in November of that year. The following year, the Indian Bureau exiled Little Wolf’s and Dull Knife’s Northern Cheyennes to Darlington Agency, essentially as punishment for Custer’s defeat.¹⁰

Iron Teeth’s story as told to Thomas Marquis began along the bluffs above the Red Fork of the Powder River in the Bighorn Mountains in Wyoming Territory on November 25, 1876. Early that morning, elements of the Second, Third, and Fifth U.S. Cavalry and Lakota scouts under the command of Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie attacked the Cheyennes’ winter village and routed them from the valley. That evening,



Iron Teeth's ancestors, the Tsistsistas—"the People"—migrated from the Northeast across Minnesota and by the early 1800s had become Great Plains buffalo hunters. The Cheyennes, as they came to be called after the Lakota name *Shaiyena* ("those who speak a foreign tongue"), lived on the northern plains near the Black Hills (above, 1897), where Iron Teeth was born, and the Powder River country, located in what would become Wyoming and Montana. In the 1830s, part of the tribe migrated south to participate in the fur trade and formed the core of the Southern Cheyenne people. Those who remained north became the Northern Cheyenne tribe.

C. D. Walcott, photographer, U.S. Geological Survey

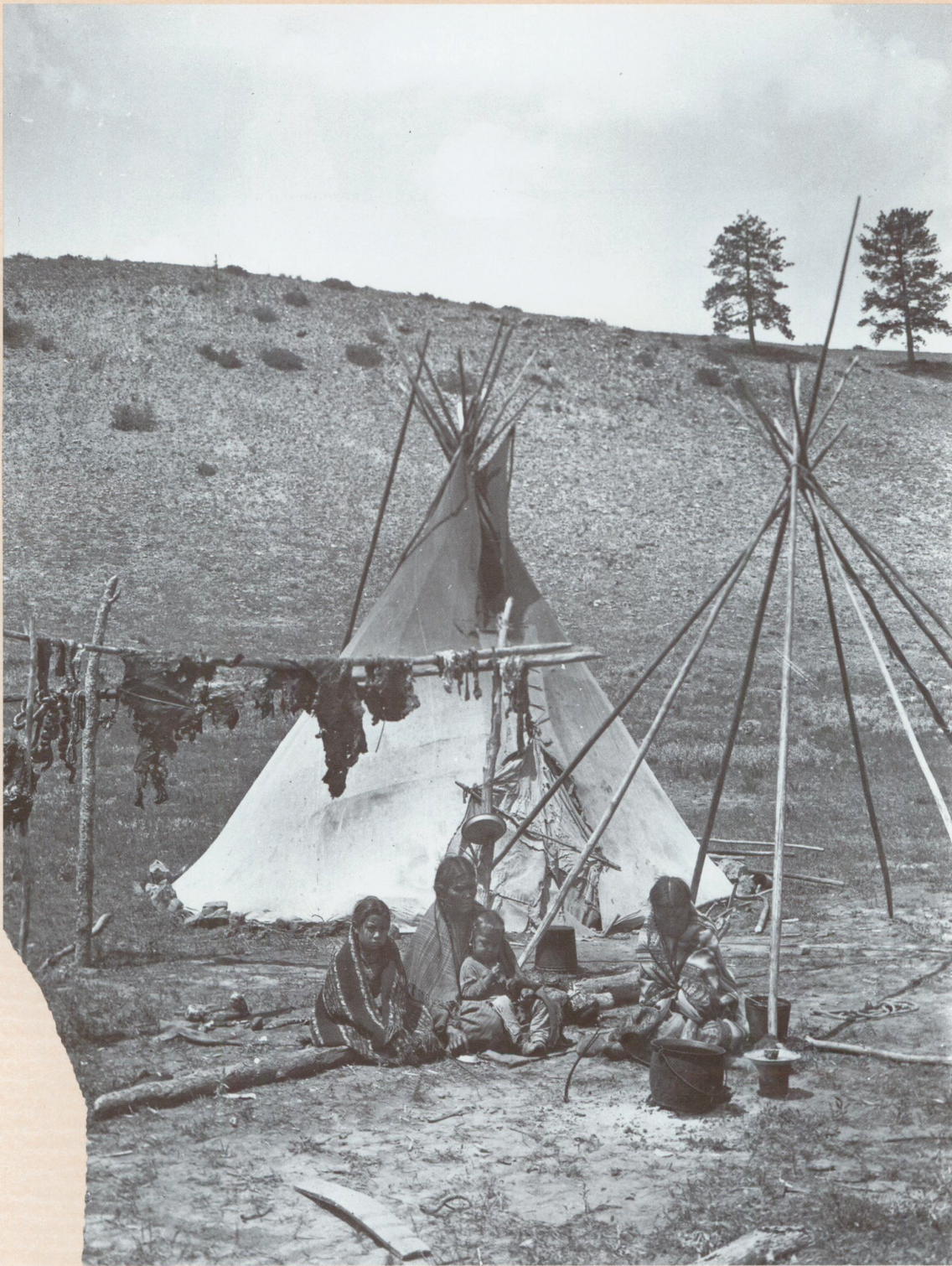
fires set by the army destroyed the winter lodges of a large band under chiefs Little Wolf, now the head, or Sweet Medicine, chief of all Cheyennes; Dull Knife, who was also called Morning Star; and Wild Hog. For the Northern Cheyennes, this disaster marked the beginning of a time of severe hardship and effectively ended the resistance of Dull Knife's immediate band in the Great Sioux War. Among the dead along the Red Fork was Iron Teeth's husband, Red Pipe.¹¹

In 1926, Iron Teeth still remembered the attack on the village: "They killed our men, women, and children," she told Thomas Marquis, "whichever ones might be hit by their bullets. We who could do so ran away. My husband and my two sons helped in fighting off the soldiers and enemy Indians. My husband was walking, leading his horse, and stopping at times to shoot. Suddenly, I saw him fall. I started to go back to him, but my sons made me go on with my three

daughters. The last time I ever saw Red Pipe, he was lying there dead in the snow. From the hilltops we Cheyennes saw our lodges and everything in them burned."¹²

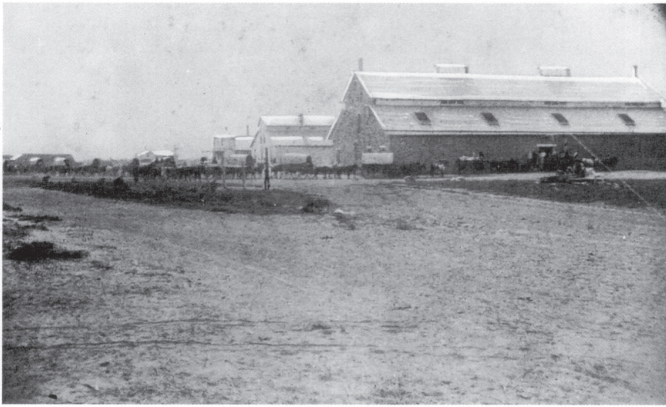
Cheyenne women and children suffered in the days following the battle. Iron Teeth was now a middle-aged widow caring for five children in the midst of a bitter winter. "We wallowed through the mountain snows for several days," Iron Teeth remembered. "Most of us were afoot. We had no lodges, only a few blankets, and there was only a little dry meat food among us. Men died of wounds; women and children froze to death." In a desperate measure, Cheyenne mothers "killed some of their ponies, removed the entrails, and placed their [infants] inside the steaming carcasses to keep them from freezing."¹³

Survivors eventually made their way north into Montana and found refuge for a short time with



L. A. Huffman, photographer, MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, 981-037

Iron Teeth's story as told to Thomas Marquis began in the Bighorn Mountains on November 25, 1876, when the U.S. Cavalry attacked a Cheyenne winter camp, burning their lodges and winter supplies. Among the few possessions Iron Teeth managed to save was a hide scraper her husband had shaped from an elk antler as a wedding gift. A member of the prestigious hide-scraper guild that prepared skins for lodges, she cherished the tool throughout her life. Two Moons's lodge, above, was photographed at Lame Deer Agency in 1896.



Those Northern Cheyennes who survived the brutal winter of 1876–77 surrendered at Camp Robinson, Nebraska, in April. From there they were transferred to Darlington Agency (left, 1878) in Indian Territory to live with the Southern Cheyennes. The northerners soon fell sick from malaria and other infections and suffered severe deprivation when the government provided too little food and clothing for the tribes.

Crazy Horse's Oglala Lakotas. By April 1877, emaciated and hungry, many surrendered at Camp Robinson, Nebraska. Soon the Indian Bureau decided Dull Knife's people, Iron Teeth included, should be sent to live among the Southern Cheyennes. The grueling trip to Fort Reno and the Darlington Agency took seventy days. Once they arrived, malaria and other infections unknown on Montana's high plains began to take a toll. Of the nearly one thousand Northern Cheyennes registered at Darlington Agency, almost two-thirds became ill within two months of their arrival. Medical supplies did not arrive until the middle of winter, beef rations were insufficient to meet the needs of the agency's increased population, and winter clothing was in short supply. Forty-one people perished during the winter of 1877–78. Iron Teeth left Marquis no reminiscences of that winter except that she was sick with dysentery. By the spring of 1878, many of the Northern Cheyennes found their new lives in Indian Territory intolerable.¹⁴

Sometime during the summer of 1878, Little Wolf and Dull Knife asked agent John D. Miles that they be allowed to take their people north to their homelands. They told Miles that in 1877 General George Crook had promised they could return to Montana if they did not like life in Indian Territory (a claim Crook later denied). Miles and the Indian Bureau, however, refused their repeated pleas. So, during the early morning hours of September 10, 1878, a group of roughly three hundred Cheyennes, including the families of Little Wolf and Dull Knife, slipped away from Darlington Agency. Among them were Iron Teeth and her children. Of those who left Darlington Agency that morning, only sixty or seventy were experienced warriors.¹⁵

The fifteen-hundred-mile journey northward during the fall and winter of 1878–79 took the Cheyennes through Kansas, Nebraska, Dakota, and eventually to Montana. The march was equaled in length only by the more widely publicized exodus of Chief Joseph's Nez Perces the previous year, but unlike Joseph's people, whose trek took them through mountain wilderness, the Cheyennes traversed open plains and, in Kansas, partially settled country. They had to cross the Santa Fe, Kansas Pacific, and Union Pacific railroads, which the military quickly used to mount troops against them. Often moving over great distances in the dead of night to stay ahead of pursuing troops, the Cheyennes endured hunger and exhaustion. Iron Teeth, suffering from dysentery, traveled along as best she could with her five children as members of Dull Knife's immediate band. "My two sons joined the band determined to leave there [Indian Territory]," she remembered. "I and my three daughters followed them. . . . [M]y older son [Gathering His Medicine] kept saying we should go on toward the north unless we were killed, that it was better to be killed than to go back and die slowly."¹⁶

To speed travel, Iron Teeth and the other women had taken only what they could carry on their backs. In her small pack, Iron Teeth carried a few items of clothing, some pemmican, and a revolver she later gave to her eldest son. She also carried her most beloved possession, a hide scraper her husband had shaped from an elk antler as a wedding gift. A member of the prestigious hide-scraper guild that prepared skins for lodges in Cheyenne villages, she cherished the tool as a symbol of honor and respect, and it comforted her as she tried to keep her family members together. "Chills and fever kept me sick along the way," Iron

In summer 1878, chiefs Little Wolf and Dull Knife asked to be allowed to take their people home to the northern plains. When refused, they and about three hundred Northern Cheyennes embarked in the fall on a grueling fifteen-hundred-mile journey. Iron Teeth and her five children left with Dull Knife's band. "My two sons joined the band determined to leave there," Iron Teeth remembered. "I and my three daughters followed them. . . . [M]y older son kept saying we should go on toward the north unless we were killed, that it was better to be killed than to go back and die slowly." At right are Little Wolf, standing, and Dull Knife circa 1877.



National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Teeth told Marquis. "We had not any lodges. At night when we could make any kind of camp, my daughters helped me at making willow branch shelters. Day after day, through more than a month, I kept my youngest daughter strapped to my body, in front of me, on my horse. I led another horse carrying the next-youngest daughter. The oldest daughter managed on her own mount. The two sons stayed always behind, to help in watching for soldiers."¹⁷

In Indian Territory and Kansas, troops of the military Department of the Missouri caught up with the Cheyennes. On several occasions, at Turkey Springs in Indian Territory (September 13–14, 1878) and Punished Woman's Fork in Kansas (September

27, 1878), they had to dig in and defend themselves from soldiers and local cattlemen. In northern Kansas, around the new settlement of Oberlin, young Cheyenne warriors scavenging for food and cattle killed a number of homesteaders. Hounded by their pursuers, the followers of Little Wolf and Dull Knife parted ways in October. Little Wolf's group took refuge in the sand hills. They spent the winter unmolested before making a run for the upper Powder River and Rosebud country, where they would request permission to enlist as scouts for the army at Fort Keogh, Montana Territory. Dull Knife's group of about 150, many of whom had relatives and friends among Red Cloud's Oglala Lakotas, decided to continue to the

old Red Cloud Agency near present-day Crawford, Nebraska, not realizing that the Indian Bureau had closed the agency the previous year and moved the Oglalas to the new Pine Ridge Agency. Iron Teeth and her family followed Dull Knife. "I and my family stayed with Morning Star's band," she remembered. "As we got [near] to the old Red Cloud Agency my younger son and the oldest daughter set off with some other Cheyennes to go forward to the agency.

Some of our friends warned us not to do this, that the Pawnees and Arapahos who belonged to the soldiers [as Indian scouts] would kill them along the way. But they were determined to go. It turned out they did what was best. They got through [all the way to Pine Ridge] without any serious trouble."¹⁸

Remaining behind with Dull Knife were Iron Teeth, her two youngest daughters, and her eldest son, the warrior Gathering His Medicine, now respon-



John G. Bourke Diaries, Special Collections and Archives Division, U.S. Military Academy Library, West Point, New York

Little Wolf's and Dull Knife's people together made their way through Indian Territory and Kansas, but in northern Nebraska Little Wolf and his group split off, eventually making their way to Fort Keogh, Montana Territory. For their part, Dull Knife's group was forced to go to the newly designated Fort Robinson. Considered by the U.S. government to be bad examples for other Indians who might want to leave their reservations, Fort Robinson's commander, Captain Henry Wessells, insisted they return to Indian Territory. When the Northern Cheyennes refused, Wessells confined them to a post barracks and attempted to starve them into submission. This 1876 photograph of Fort Robinson was taken looking southwest toward Soldier Creek. The "prison" barracks is out of sight, last in a row of buildings on the left in the far background.

sible for protecting his mother and little sisters. "We had before us many days of hard trail," Iron Teeth reminisced. Near Chadron Creek, Nebraska, on October 23, Dull Knife's people ran into a patrol of Third Cavalry troopers from the newly designated Fort Robinson, commanded by Captain John B. Johnson. Although Dull Knife expressed his desire to take his people to Pine Ridge once he learned the Indian Bureau had closed the old Red Cloud Agency, Johnson and his commanding officer, Major Caleb Carleton, insisted the Indians go to Fort Robinson while the government decided their disposition. On October twenty-fifth, Dull Knife's exhausted people reluctantly agreed. "Morning Star said we should be contented, now that we were on our own land," Iron Teeth said. "He took us to Fort Robinson where we surrendered to the soldiers. They took from us all of our horses and whatever guns they could find among us."¹⁹

For a time, the soldiers at Fort Robinson treated the Northern Cheyennes, now considered refugees, with sympathy and kindness. But Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz was adamant that the Northern Cheyennes be returned to Indian Territory as an example to others. The secretary believed that if the Northern Cheyennes were allowed to stay, it would provide an incentive for other tribes to leave *their* reservations in Indian Territory. On December 17, Captain Henry Wessells, Third Cavalry, assumed temporary command of Fort Robinson. The Indian Bureau charged Wessells with getting the Indians to agree to return south. He held several futile talks with chiefs Dull Knife, Wild Hog, and Old Crow. The chiefs and the people remained resolute. They would rather die than return to Darlington Agency.

But in December, a roll call revealed that Dull Knife's son, Bull Hump, had left the fort, reportedly to join his wife at Pine Ridge. For this violation, Wessells insisted once again that Dull Knife's people immediately return south. Again they said no. So Captain Wessells confined them to a post barracks. After their continued refusals, Wessells attempted to starve Dull Knife's people into submission by cutting off their food and eventually water until they complied.

By that time the Cheyennes had made up their minds. They decided to escape from the barracks and risk death rather than submit to life in Indian Territory. Although they knew many would not make it,

the Cheyennes hoped some would get through to Pine Ridge. On the cold night of January 9, 1879, the Indians prepared their escape. They boarded up the windows of the prison barracks and tore up the floorboards to retrieve the few weapons they earlier had secreted into Fort Robinson by hiding them in the women's clothing, knowing the soldiers would not dare search the women's persons.

As darkness swept over the frozen Nebraska plains, the Northern Cheyennes prepared for what would be a defining moment in their history. There were 125 of them now locked in the barracks at Fort Robinson, Chief Wild Hog having succeeded in removing twenty or so. Forty-four men were of fighting age. According to ethnologist George B. Grinnell, a warrior named Little Shield declared: "Now, dress up in your best clothing. We will all die together." Said another: "It is true that we must die, but we will not die shut up here like dogs; we will die on the prairie; we will die fighting." They painted their faces and put on what light war clothing they still possessed even though there was over a half foot of snow covering the ground and the mercury stood at zero. Wild Hog later remembered: "If they were to die anyway, they [were] determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible."²⁰

The Cheyennes had only a few rifles and about eleven revolvers, reassembled from the small parts that the women and children had worn as jewelry. They piled their larger packs and other bulky belongings under the windows located on all sides of the building. Little Shield sat in a north window while the warrior Tangle Hair stood by at another. They hoped to make a dash for the White River. If they made it away from the fort, they hoped to obtain horses at the Dead Man Ranch, five miles south of Fort Robinson.²¹

Like the other women in the barracks, Iron Teeth prepared to face death. She earlier had spread a wool trade blanket over the floorboards where the few guns and rounds of ammunition were hidden. In the bodice of her dress, she concealed a revolver. In her



Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln



Determined to escape, the Northern Cheyennes prepared to break out of the barracks on the night of January 9, 1879. The illustration at right is an 1879 artist's interpretation of the activity inside the building before the Cheyennes smashed through the boarded-up windows and fled in a hail of soldiers' bullets. Above, the barracks is seen on the right side of an 1897 photograph. It was destroyed by fire in 1898.



Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, February 15, 1879



Northern Cheyenne Travel Route, 1878–1879, FROM INDIAN TERRITORY TO MONTANA

pack was her treasured hide scraper. The “women cut up robes to make extra moccasins,” she remembered years later. “I made extra pairs for myself and my three children. . . . [E]ach woman held her own pack ready at hand. The warriors decided to break out just after the soldiers had gone to bed for the night. I gave to my son the six-shooter I had. . . . He was my oldest child, then twenty-two years of age.” After thanking his mother, Gathering His Medicine took his place at a window with Little Shield, Tangle Hair, and the others.²²

“Taps” sounded at 9:00 P.M. Soon only a couple of lights burned in the soldiers’ quarters and in the trader’s store. Outside the moon cast a bright glow on the crusted snow. At ten o’clock, Little Shield ripped the blankets from the north window, smashed the windowpane, and tore out the boards on the outside. He was the first to fire from the west end of the barracks. Gathering His Medicine, Tangle Hair, and probably two other warriors, Noisy Walker and Blacksmith, followed in quick succession. Tangle Hair was the first to jump out of the building. “My son smashed a window with the gun I had given him,” Iron Teeth remembered. “We all jumped out.”²³

Within moments after the first volley, sleepy-eyed troopers poured out of their barracks. They began shooting randomly at the escaping Cheyennes, often unable, or unwilling, to distinguish between men and women. Some chased the Indians barefoot across the snow southeast of the barracks.

The Indians had tied their blankets around their waists and necks to leave their hands free. When they escaped from the windows of the barracks, they rushed south for the bridge below the post sawmill and the confluence of Soldier Creek and the White River. Their intention was to follow the shelter of the White River bottoms away from the post. Upon reaching the bridge, many stopped for a drink, the first they had in two days. Bullets flew past them. Some Indians cut across the bends of the river several times, breaking through ice and soaking themselves in the freezing water. Soon the Cheyennes began to scatter. Those carrying heavy loads and children on their backs, including Iron Teeth’s family, began to fall behind.²⁴

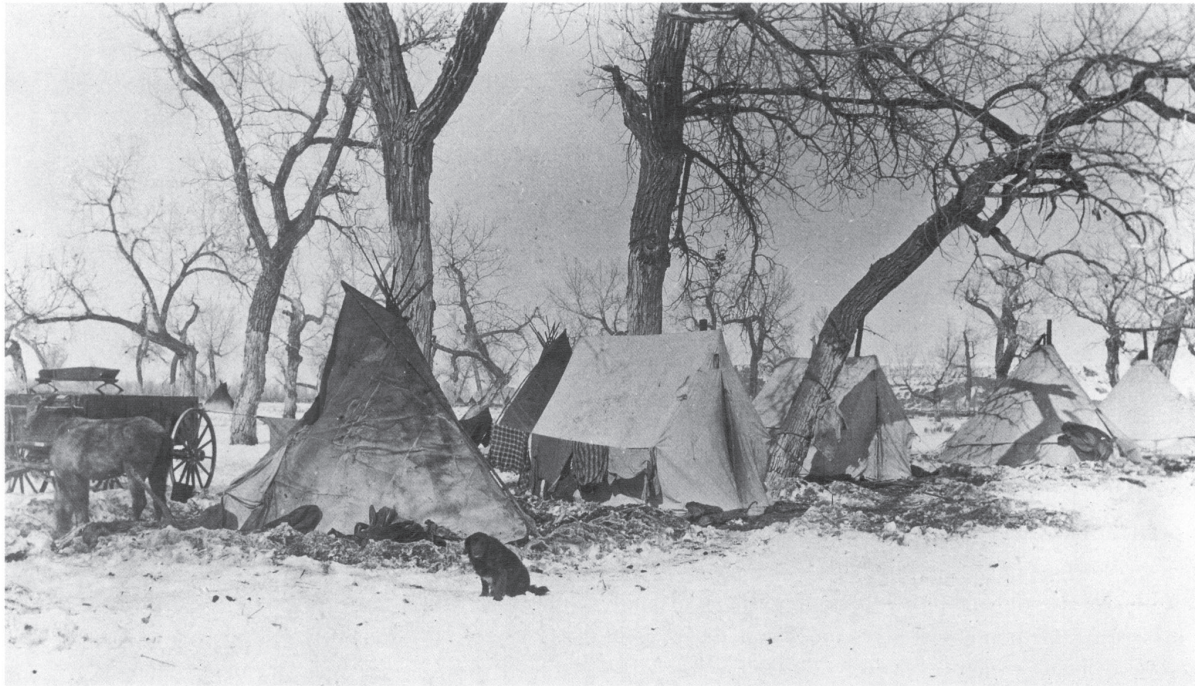
“My son took the younger of [my] two daughters upon his back. The older daughter and I each carried a little pack. The Indians expected the soldiers would

be asleep except for a few of the guards. But bands of them came hurrying to shoot at us. One of them fired a gun almost into my face, but I was not harmed. . . . For a short distance all of the Indians followed one broken trail toward the river, but soon we had to scatter. My son with the little girl on his back ran off in one direction, while the other daughter and I went in another direction. We had not any agreed plan for meeting again,” Iron Teeth said.²⁵

Iron Teeth was fortunate. She escaped into the broken country away from the fort. “I and the daughter with me found a cave and crawled into it. We did not know what had become of [my] son and his little sister. A man named Crooked Nose came into our cave. We could hear lots of shooting. Four of my friends were shot to death the night we broke out.”²⁶ Iron Teeth and those the soldiers did not kill or capture that night made their way to hiding places in the Hat Creek breaks, where Wessells’s troopers hunted them down between January 10 and January 22. Starving and cold, some surrendered when troops caught up to them, while others chose to fight to the death.

Hiding in a hole in the breaks was Gathering His Medicine and his little sister. Sometime on January 11, they heard soldiers approaching very near to them. Gathering His Medicine was convinced the soldiers had discovered them, so he prepared at once to save the life of his sister. “Lie down, and I will cover you with leaves and dirt,” the little girl later remembered her brother telling her. “Then I will climb out and fight the soldiers. They will kill me but they will think I am the only one here, and they will go away after I am dead. When they are gone, you can come out and hunt for our mother.”²⁷

Gathering His Medicine concealed the girl, then jumped up from their hiding place and began shooting at the soldiers. But the young Cheyenne was outgunned, and the soldiers shot him where he stood. The next day, troopers discovered his sister wandering and crying in the bluffs and carried her back to Fort Robinson unharmed. But six days passed before the girl found her mother and told her of the death of Gathering His Medicine. At another place in the hills, Iron Teeth, her second daughter, and Crooked Nose hid in a hole in the rocks. On January 10, Iron Teeth related, “We still heard shots, but not so many. . . . [W]e stayed in the cave seven nights and almost



Christian Barthlemess, photographer, MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, Pac 95-68 A-46

Little Wolf's band arrived at Fort Keogh in April 1879, and many members enlisted as U.S. Army scouts. A Northern Cheyenne camp near the fort is seen here circa 1890.

seven days. More snow kept falling, it was very cold, but we were afraid to build a fire. We nibbled at my small store of dry meat and melted snow for water. Each day we could hear the horses and the voices of soldiers searching for Indians. Finally, [about January 17] a captain found tracks [in the snow] where we had gone out and back into the cave. He called to us. I crept out. He promised to treat us well if we would go with him. He and his soldiers then took us back to Fort Robinson.”²⁸

Iron Teeth suffered from mild frostbite on her toes and fingers. The post surgeon told her to rub snow on them. Afraid to ask about her son and youngest daughter for fear of letting the soldiers know they might still be at large, Iron Teeth searched for her children among the captured survivors. Finally she found her daughter. “I asked her about her brother,” Iron Teeth remembered. At first “it appeared she did not hear me, so I asked again. This time she burst out crying. Then I knew he had been killed. She told me how it had been done.” Iron Teeth began singing her song of mourning.²⁹

After the soldiers’ intensive search, only thirty-two of the original number remained at large, one group

led by a warrior named Little Finger Nail. But on January 22, this party made a stand in a bend of Antelope Creek in northwestern Nebraska, and most, including Little Finger Nail, were killed. Dull Knife and members of his immediate family survived hidden for a time in the bluffs and then successfully made their way to Pine Ridge. Meanwhile, Little Wolf’s group made it to Montana that winter, where the Sweet Medicine chief surrendered on March 25 to Lieutenant William P. “Philo” Clark, Second Cavalry. Clark took them to Fort Keogh. By now, the Indian Bureau and the army had tired of the Northern Cheyenne situation.

Two federal investigations at Fort Robinson and Fort Reno, along with the dramatic events at Fort Robinson, finally convinced the Indian Bureau of the intolerable conditions in Indian Territory. The government gave the Cheyennes permission to stay in the north. Little Wolf’s people remained at Fort Keogh for a time, while Iron Teeth and the few survivors at Fort Robinson went to Pine Ridge with the reluctant blessing of the federal government. By 1900, all Northern Cheyennes who wished to do so had relocated to the newly created Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation along Rosebud Creek and the

Christian Barthlemess, photographer,
MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, Pac 95-68 C-391



The federal government established the small reserve for the Northern Cheyennes on Rosebud Creek in 1882. This land became part of the Tongue River Reservation, which was then enlarged and designated the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation in 1900. The view at left is the reservation's Lame Deer Agency in 1889.

Tongue River. Among the original inhabitants of the reservation was Iron Teeth, who lived out her days in poverty in an isolated log cabin in the hills above Lame Deer until her death in 1928. No record exists of her burial place or what became of her surviving children.

By 1926, Iron Teeth was almost blind but possessed a sharp mind and vivid images of the past. Memories of her family and a people's flight for freedom, rather than the danger of imminent death, predominate in the story that she told to Marquis. Mostly she remembered her husband, killed in the Great Sioux War, and her son who died three years later. Throughout her long life, Iron Teeth kept a few little treasures. Among them, she valued the wedding gift from her husband the most. "This [buffalo] hide-scraper I have is made from the horn of an elk my husband killed just after we were married," she told Marquis. "He cut off the small prongs and polished this main shaft." She had the hide scraper during the withdrawal from the village on the Red Fork of the Powder River and "It was in my little pack when we broke out from the Fort Robinson prison. It has never been lost. Red Pipe was the only husband I ever had," she said. "I am the only wife he ever had. Through more than fifty years I have been his widow. When I die, this gift from my husband will be buried with me."³⁰



L. A. Huffman, photographer,
MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, 981-047

Northern Cheyenne Grass Dance, Lame Deer Valley, 1889-90

Like others of her generation, Iron Teeth lived out her last years impoverished and alienated by the mechanisms of the reservation system and memories of a world that no longer existed. As an old woman, Iron Teeth simply endured. Once, a missionary who took an interest in her gave her a dog to keep her company, but "I killed the dog," she told Marquis, "ate some of the meat, and dried the remainder of it." Occasionally she gathered chokecherries in the spring and dried them in the old way. "I used to smoke tobacco," she remembered. "But several years ago I quit. I decided it was not good for the heart and it also costs too much money."³¹

By the late 1920s, Iron Teeth had little remaining besides her memories. She also had mellowed. "I used to hate all white people," she recalled, "especially their soldiers. But my heart now has become



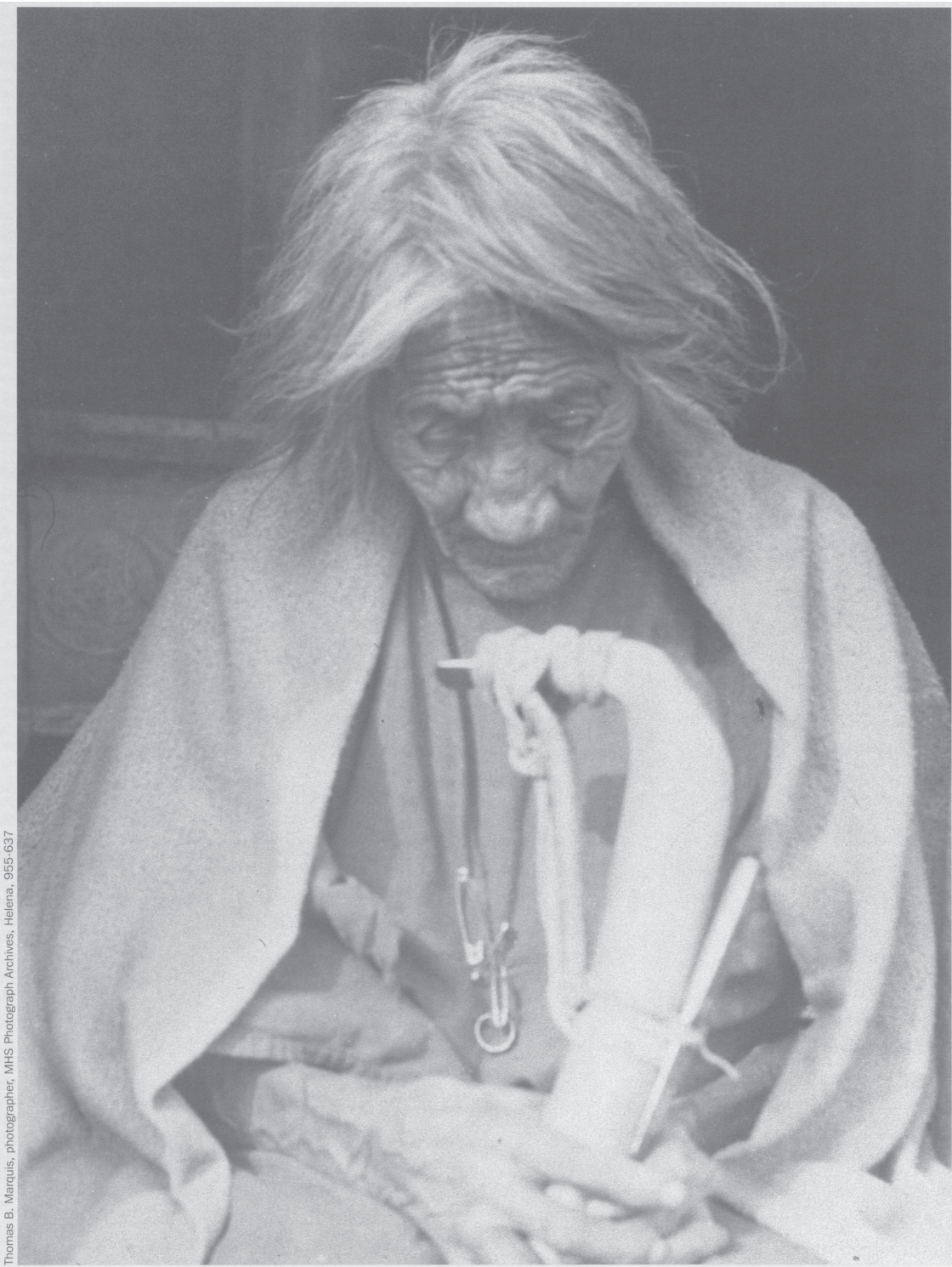
In 1900, Iron Teeth left Pine Ridge to relocate on the newly created Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation. She lived out her days in poverty in an isolated log cabin in the hills above Lame Deer until her death in 1928. The Lame Deer Agency appears in the 1904 photograph above.

L. A. Huffman, photographer, MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, 981-038

changed to softer feelings. Some of the white people are good, maybe as good as Indians.” Iron Teeth fittingly concluded her talks with Marquis on a cold, cloudy November day with memories of her son. “We called him Mon-see-yo-mon—Gathering His Medicine,” she told him. “Lots of times, as I sit here alone on the floor with my blanket wrapped about me, I lean forward and close my eyes and think of him standing up out of the pit and fighting the soldiers, knowing that he would be killed, but doing so that his little sister might get away to safety.” Her last words to Marquis give perspective on how the Cheyenne people today remember their history and their heroes.

Pulling her blanket around her head, one might like to think, with the scent of wood smoke rising from the chimney flue of her dilapidated cabin, she asked Marquis simply, “Don’t you think he was a brave young man?”³²

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Thomas B. Marquis, photographer, MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, 955-637

By 1926, when she was interviewed, Iron Teeth was almost blind but possessed a sharp mind and vivid memories of the past. Her most treasured possession was the hide scraper made for her by her husband. "It was in my little pack when we broke out from the Fort Robinson prison. It has never been lost. Red Pipe was the only husband I ever had," she said. "I am the only wife he ever had. Through more than fifty years I have been his widow. When I die, this gift from my husband will be buried with me." She was photographed with the hide scraper in 1926, above.

extremely influential and popular, to sectionalism, which was neither. Processes, whether in history or science, are more interesting than patterns.

27. Judith Goodstein, "Millikan and the Rise of Physics," in *Millikan's School: A History of the California Institute of Technology* (New York, 1991), 88–108; McWilliams, "Ladder to the Stars," 261.

28. Kevin Starr, "Unto the Stars Themselves: Astronomy and the Pasadena Perspective," in *The Dream Endures: California Enters the 1940s* (Oxford, U.K., 1997), 74–77; Wright, "Pasadena as a Cultural Center," in *The Legacy of George Ellery Hale*, 87–89. See also Gerald D. Nash, "Science in the Wartime West," in *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War* (Bloomington, Ind., 1985), 153–77.

29. Ronald W. Clark, *Einstein: The life and Times* (New York, 1971), 434.

30. Jaffe, "Hubble," 495; John Farrell, *The Day without Yesterday: Lemaitre, Einstein, and the Birth of Modern Cosmology* (New York, 2005), 8–10.

31. Kaku, *Einstein's Cosmos*, 134–38; Brian Greene, *The Fabric of the Cosmos: Space, Time, and the Texture of Reality* (New York, 2004), 230.

32. Canon Georges Lemaitre, "Cosmogonic Hypothesis," in *The Primeval Atom: An Essay on Cosmogony*, trans. Betty H. and Serge A. Korff (New York, 1950), 133. This is a collection of five essays: "The Size of Space" (1929), "Expansion" (1931), "Evolution" (1934), "Cosmogonic Hypothesis" (1945), and "The Primeval Atom" (1945).

33. Romy Wylie, *Caltech's Architecture Heritage, from Spanish Tile to Modern Stone* (Princeton, N.J., 2000); quoted in Jaffe, "Hubble," 500–501; *New York Times*, Feb. 19, 1933, p. 18.

34. John North, *The Norton History of Astronomy and Cosmology* (New York, 1995), 510; Bok, "Shapley," 249.

35. Fred Hoyle, "Recent Developments in Cosmology," in *From Stonehenge to Modern Cosmology* (San Francisco, 1972), 56; Wright, *Explorer of the Universe*, 423.

36. Farrell, *The Day without Yesterday*, 136; Eric J. Chaisson, *Cosmic Evolution: The Rise of Complexity in Nature* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), 101–6.

37. Harlow Shapley, *Beyond the Observatory* (New York, 1967), 15–16.

38. NASA Press Release, "WMAP Reveals Neutrinos, End of Dark Ages, First Second of the Universe," Mar. 7, 2008; *New York Times*, Feb. 12, 2003.

39. David Christian, *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History* (Berkeley, Calif., 2004), 4. See also Fred Spier's *The Structure of Big History* (Amsterdam, 1996). On a historiographical note, the emergence of big history in world history

was coincident with the rise of the New Western History in western history.

40. Related in Chaisson, *Cosmic Evolution*, 2.

41. Christian, *Maps of Time*, 6.

42. Thomas Hornsby Ferril, *Trial by Time* (New York, 1944), xvi.

'My heart now has become changed to softer feelings'

1. George Hyde, *Life of George Bent Written from His Letters* (Norman, Okla., 1968), 60; John H. Monnett, *Tell Them We are Going Home: The Odyssey of the Northern Cheyennes* (Norman, Okla., 2001), 206. Marquis's original notes of the interview are in Marquis, MD; MSC 308, series 3, Indian Diaries, 1919–1934, 5, Oct. 15–20, 25, 29, and Nov. 6, 1926, reels 77–78, National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland. Marquis's Iron Teeth story was eventually published three times (articles which are today not easily obtained by the general public). "Red Ripe's Squaw" appeared in *Century Magazine*, June 1929, 118. Parts of the Iron Teeth interview were printed in two limited-edition publications long after Marquis's death from manuscripts written circa 1934. They are Thomas B. Marquis, *Cheyenne and Sioux: Reminiscences of Four Indians and a White Soldier*, ed. Ronald L. Limbaugh (Stockton, Calif., 1973), 20–23; and Thomas B. Marquis, *The Cheyennes of Montana*, ed. and introduced by Thomas D. Weist (Algonac, Mich., 1978), 52. This volume is significant in that Weist gives us the only biography of Thomas B. Marquis.

2. Thomas B. Marquis, *Wooden Leg, A Warrior Who Fought Custer* (1931; repr., Lincoln, Nebr., 1962, 2003). Marquis's original notes are located in the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland. For a short sketch of Marquis's life and a compendium of his photographs, see Margot Liberty, *A Northern Cheyenne Album: Photographs by Thomas B. Marquis*, with commentary by John Wood-enlegs (Norman, Okla., 2006).

3. Until Marquis's interview with Iron Teeth, interviewers had only transcribed Cheyenne men's recollections of surviving the long march.

4. Among Northern Cheyennes an example is the story of the woman warrior Buffalo Calf Woman, who rescued her brother at Rosebud. For her story, see John H. Monnett, *Massacre at Cheyenne Hole: Lieutenant Austin Henely and the Sappa Creek Controversy* (Boulder, Colo., 1999), 27, 29, 39, 117–19. The most well-known firsthand narrative by a Southern Cheyenne woman was again transcribed by Marquis in Kate Bighead as told to Thomas B. Marquis, "She Watched Custer's Last Battle," in *Custer on the Little Bighorn*, by Thomas B. Marquis (Algonac, Mich., 1986), 35–43.

5. Dept. of the Platte, Proceedings of a Board of Officers, Special Orders no. 8, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Record Group 94, National Archives and Records Administration, p. 210, Washington, D.C.

6. E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Cheyennes: Indians of the Plains* (New York, 1960), 1–11; Language Research Department of the Northern Cheyenne Bilingual Education Program, *English-Cheyenne Dictionary* (Billings, Mont., 2002), 19. For the early migrations of the Cheyennes, see George Bird Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians: History and Society*, vol. 1 (New Haven, Conn., 1923). A more thorough ethnography is John H. Moore, *The Cheyenne Nation* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1987).

7. The Black Hills were revered as a holy place, the site of Nohavose, or Bear Butte, the sacred mountain where Cheyenne hero Sweet Medicine taught his followers the ways of the plains and gave to them Maahotse, the sacred arrows, and received from the Suhtai people Esevone, the sacred hat that ensured prosperity and fertility among the People.

8. See Dan Flores, "Bringing Home All the Pretty Horses: The Horse Trade and the Early American West, 1775–1825" *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, 58 (Summer 2008), 3–21.

9. The best eyewitness accounts of these events by a mixed-blood Southern Cheyenne is Hyde, *Life of George Bent*. For the economic trade roles of Southern Cheyennes during this period, see Elliot West, "Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado," *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, 48 (Summer 1998), 2–15.

10. For the history of the Northern Cheyennes during the 1860s and Red Cloud's War, see John H. Monnett, *Where a Hundred Soldiers Were Killed: The Struggle for the Powder River Country in 1866 and the Making of the Fetterman Myth* (Albuquerque, N.M., 2008). The immediate familial band of Dull Knife, to which Iron Teeth and her family belonged, chose to remain at peace with the whites during Red Cloud's War.

11. This action is recorded in at least two Lakota winter counts. See "Winter Counts of American Horse," ms. 12, book 08746923–0874933; and "Winter Count of Cloud Shield," ms. 2372, box 12, 08746901–08746922, both in National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian, Washington, D.C. The classic account of the Dull Knife battle of Nov. 25, 1876, taken from Indian testimony, is found in George B. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes* (Norman, Okla., 1956), 359–82. Lieutenant Henry H. Bellas, Fourth Cavalry, wrote one of the more interesting accounts from the military perspective some twenty years

after the fight. It can be found in Jerome A. Greene, *Morning Star Dawn: The Powder River Expedition and the Northern Cheyennes* (Norman, Okla., 2003).

12. Marquis, "Red Ripe's Squaw," 118. In this version of Iron Teeth's memoir, she refers to her husband as "Red Ripe." Later renderings of her story (including those by Peter John Powell) give his name as Red Pipe. The original name of Iron Teeth's husband in *Century* may have been a misprint. In Marquis's notes his cursive Ps and Rs are practically indistinguishable. Both Iron Teeth's and Beaver Heart's testimonies of the Dull Knife battle in 1877 are excerpted in Jerome A. Greene, *Lakota and Cheyenne: Indian Views of the Great Sioux War, 1876-1877* (Norman, Okla., 1994), 113-20.

13. Marquis, Notes, Oct. 25, 1926; Marquis, "Red Ripe's Squaw," 118; Homer W. Wheeler, *Buffalo Days: Forty Years in the Old West: The Personal Narrative of a Cattleman, Indian Fighter and Army Officer* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1925), n.145. The winter of 1876-77 was one of the worst on record on the northern plains.

14. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 400; Marquis, *Wooden Leg*, 320.

15. Marquis, *Wooden Leg*, 399. Estimates of numbers of Cheyennes who left Darlington Agency in 1878 range from 284 to 300.

16. *Ibid.* Of the three published versions of Iron Teeth's memoirs, the most complete and faithful to the original diaries is Thomas B. Marquis, *Cheyenne and Sioux*, 20.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Marquis, *Cheyenne and Sioux*, 21.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 420; Senate Committee on the Removal of the Northern Cheyennes, S Rep. 708, 46th Cong., 2d sess., serial 1899, 12.

21. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 421, 426. The exact escape route of the Northern Cheyennes from Fort Robinson has been the subject of some controversy in the past. Some popular accounts have placed the route directly up the barren ridge about two miles from the fort. Cheyenne accounts place the escape corridors along Soldier Creek and the White River and to the hills and bluffs on the west side of the river. In 1987, the University of South Dakota Archaeology Laboratory in conjunction with the Northern Cheyenne Tribe and Chief Dull Knife College conducted archaeological research in both locations. See J. Douglas McDonald, Bill Tallbull, and Ted Risingsun, "The Cheyenne Outbreak Revisited: The Employment of Archaeological Methodology in the Substantiation of Oral History," *Plains Anthropologist*, 34 (Aug. 1989), 265-69. Archaeologists found artifacts along the

water drainage courses but not on the open ridge, thus supporting the Indian claims. *Ibid.*

22. Marquis, *Cheyenne and Sioux*, 22.

23. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 421, 426; Marquis, *Cheyenne and Sioux*, 22.

24. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 421-22.

25. Marquis, Notes, Oct. 25, 1926.

26. *Ibid.*; Marquis, *Cheyenne and Sioux*, 22-23.

27. Marquis, *Cheyenne and Sioux*, 23.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

30. Marquis, Notes, Nov. 6, 1926; Marquis, *Cheyenne and Sioux*, 24-25; Marquis, *The Cheyennes of Montana*, 80.

31. Marquis, Notes, Nov. 6, 1926.

32. *Ibid.*; Marquis, *Cheyenne and Sioux*, 25; Marquis, *The Cheyennes of Montana*, 81.

'Baseball was our life'

1. Leroy "Satchel" Paige was a pitcher on many teams in the Negro Leagues (1924-47). He was particularly renowned for his pitching feats as he barnstormed the country with the Kansas City Monarchs. By the time he was allowed to play in the major leagues, his best days were behind him, but he was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame by the Negro Leagues Committee in 1971.

2. On lack of documentation of sport and the working class, see S. W. Pope, "American Sport History—Toward a New Paradigm," in *The New American Sport History: Recent Approaches and Perspectives*, ed. S. W. Pope (Chicago, 1997), 1-32. Professional baseball came to Butte by 1900, but it only lasted one year. It returned in 1902 with the Pacific Northwest League, followed by a number of different league configurations in most years through 1917. The Butte Mines League, the last professional league to play in Butte until the 1970s, fielded local teams financed by various mining entities in the city.

3. For a thorough treatment of the early history of baseball, see Warren Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps: A History of Early Baseball* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1989), 17-63; Melvin L. Adelman, *A Sporting Time: New York City and the Rise of Modern Athletics, 1820-70* (Urbana, Ill., 1986), 121-44; Melvin L. Adelman, "The Early Years of Baseball, 1845-60," in Pope, *New American Sport History*, 58-87. For the contrast between baseball and cricket, see Norman Berdichevsky, "Two People Divided by a Common Ball Game," *Contemporary Review*, 269 (Sept. 1990), 152-55. For an interesting discussion of an alternative to Spalding's origin myth and its effects, see Stephen Jay Gould, "The Creation Myths of Cooperstown: Or Why the Cardiff

Giants Are an Unbeatable and Appropriately Named Team," *Natural History*, 11 (1995), 14-24.

4. Max Weber, *Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* (repr., Los Angeles, 1996); Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America* (New York, 1977); Richard S. Gruneau, "Modernization or Hegemony: Two Views on Sport and Social Development," in *Not Just a Game: Essays in Canadian Sport Sociology*, ed. Jean Harvey and Hart Cantelon (Ottawa, 1988), 24.

5. See Steven Reiss, "From Pitch to Putt: Sport and Class in Anglo-American Sport," *Journal of Sport History* 21, no. 2 (1994), 164. See also Steven Reiss, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (Urbana, Ill., 1989); and Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What You Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge, Eng., 1983).

6. See S. W. Pope, "Negotiating the Folk Highway of the Nation: Sport, Public Culture and American Identity," *Journal of Social History*, 27 (Dec. 1993), 327-40.

7. See Jerry W. Calvert, *The Gibraltar: Socialism and Labor in Butte, Montana, 1895-1920* (Helena, Mont., 1993); Mary Murphy, *Mining Cultures: Men, Women, and Leisure in Butte, 1914-41* (Urbana, Ill., 1997); Janet L. Finn, *Tracing the Veins: Of Copper, Culture and Community from Butte to Chuquicamata* (Berkeley, Calif., 1998); Michael P. Malone, *The Battle for Butte: Mining and Politics on the Northern Frontier, 1864-1906* (Helena, Mont., 1995). The quoted passage is from Elliot J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1986) 13-14, as cited in Reiss, "Pitch to Putt," 163.

8. James Scott, "'If It Don't End in Bloodshed': The Montana State League, 1900," *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, 47 (Autumn 1997), 62-71; Pat Kearny, *Butte's Copper League* (Butte, Mont., 2003).

9. Quotes in this paragraph and those following are from the transcripts of over fifty interviews conducted by the author between 1993 and the present.

10. Traveling teams like the Kansas City Monarchs and the House of David stopped in Butte for exhibition games. Most often, Butte players assembled an all-star team to play the traveling squads.

11. See John Mihelich, "The Richest Hill on Earth: An Ethnographic Account of Industrial Capitalism, Religion, and Community in Butte, Montana, 1930-1965" (PhD diss., Washington State University, 1999).

12. *Butte (Mont.) Miner*, Aug. 4, 1903.

13. Emil Mihelich, *Around the Horn* (Bloomington, Ind., 2002), 185.