

What An Eventful Summer!

Dear Benefactor,

Coming home to the Heritage Living Center after breaking my hip and spending six long months at the St John's Rehab Center in Billings, was one of the best days of my life.

When I arrived, my little dog Fergie rushed to meet me at the door. Then a crowd of elders and well wishers surrounded me and made my homecoming very special with a Cheyenne homecoming song, a big feast and traditional hand games.

Late in the afternoon I was tired and went to my apartment for a much needed rest. To top off a perfect day, a couple I had married 50 years ago, Frances and Vonda Limpy, stopped in to ask me if I would bless their renewed wedding vows in our chapel. At that moment I knew that after watching Rachel Ray cook for 6 months, I was back home at last and well enough to be productive again.

On July 27th, my 82nd birthday, an even greater crowd of Cheyenne came to the Center to help the elders celebrate my birthday with a feast and powwow that lasted most of the day. One of the drummers, Pascal Shoulder Blade, sang the traditional birthday song in my honor and we all enjoyed the sunny day with a wonderful barbeque topped off with traditional berry pudding, fry bread and birthday cake. The green lawns of the Heritage Living Center gave way to a picturesque view of the Tongue River Valley for miles in the distance, a beautiful location for the colorful Cheyenne dancers.

In this issue of Signals, we have highlighted the events of the sum-



Father Emmett reaches out to shake one of the many hands greeting him during an outdoor feast and powwow celebrating his 82nd birthday on July 27th. Inset: Herb Bearchum, left, and Chief Bischo Spotted Wolf enjoy the festivities while gourd dancing. Bottom, Colors fly as a young Cheyenne displays her fancy shawl dancing skills.



mer, including the Ashland Powwow with photographs taken by John Warner, an old friend, who will be taking photographs of our special events. John, his wife Sheela and their three children have many Cheyenne friends in Ashland. I hope you enjoy our larger newsletter format. May God bless you all and I will keep you in my prayers.

Your beggar friend,

Father Emmett

Father Emmett Hoffmann



The Mysterious River Beast

by Renee Sansom Flood

The following is a remarkable story preserved in Cheyenne oral tradition for 188 years. Only 14 years after the Lewis and Clark Expedition and before western tribes had seen a steamboat, the Cheyenne recall a “beast” they saw in the Platte River.

The Cheyenne story, compiled from four taped interviews, was made possible by a grant from Father Emmett Hoffmann, who wanted to help preserve the rich cultural history of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. In 1996, Chief Bisco Spotted Wolf, now a resident at the Heritage Living Center, began the tedious, time-consuming task of translating the recordings. The Cheyenne elders remembering the story on tape were James Medicine Bird and Charles Sitting Man Jr., both respected Chiefs of the Northern Cheyenne Council of 44, an ancient Chief’s Society. This is their story:

The Cheyennes were going across the river. While they were crossing – half way across – all of a sudden, the river rose up. They looked and the water came like a wall of water. It was a beast living in the water that was pushing the water up towards them. The beast had a long neck and horns that stuck up out of the water. The men and their horses swam to shore and hid behind some rose bushes.

Those men – if they saw something that was their enemy, they shot it. While they were there, the beast made a thunder noise. A man on a horse charged the beast in the river. He came along the bank and turned his horse away from the beast when he charged. He shot at the beast. When he shot the arrow, it opened its mouth and made a

him. All they could see was a swishing in the water like a tail. Some people thought it was a devil of some kind – not an animal.

Further on the beast came along the shore and showed his back. White people were standing on its back! The beast had scales on his body and smoke came out of the beast’s mouth. Those white

The vessel exhibits the form of a huge serpent, black and scaly . . . the head darted forward, his mouth open, vomiting smoke . . . the illusion complete that a monster of the deep comes . . . lashing the waves with violent exertion.

– Thomas Hart Benton

loud noise. The man tried every way to scare the beast away. Other men came and charged the beast. The beast had a long body. Then the beast went away fast.

Other men saw the beast at different times. A band of Cheyennes on horseback heard a loud thunder noise while they were watering their horses. They said, “When we leave here, we’ll go quite a ways up river. We’ll lay for the beast and when he comes along, we’ll shoot him. So they did. When they shot at the beast, water made waves over the side of the bank. The beast made a loud noise. They thought they got

people could talk to that beast in the river. They told the beast to go closer to the bank. They went across and you could see the waves moving as they went across. A loud noise! CLAP! YA! The water splashed up.

Some of those people on the back of the beast were slaves – 2 captive women and a little girl. These women got away from the beast and took off with the girl. On the way, the child got bit by a snake. They buried her and kept going toward the Black Hills.

The analysis of the Cheyenne oral traditional memory:

In 1819, Congress authorized the "Yellowstone Expedition" led by Col. Henry M. Atkinson to explore the upper Missouri on the first steamboat ever to reach what was then regarded as "wilderness." Major Stephen H. Long designed a unique steamboat at great expense to the government and headed the voyage, accompanied by many eminent scientists of the day, including zoologists and botanists.

Major Long and his comrades were terrified of Indian attack by tribes along the rivers they were to explore. In 1818, Major Long built a steamboat called the "Western Engineer," in the shape of a dragon or sea serpent, with a long neck and hideous head. The Kansas City Star reported the boat was, "deliberately planned to inspire fear and respect in the hearts of unfriendly Indians."

Eyewitness to the launch, Thomas Hart Benton, later a Missouri State Senator, wrote: The vessel exhibits the form of a huge serpent, black and scaly. . . the head darted forward, his mouth open, vomiting smoke . . . the illusion complete that a monster of the deep comes . . . lashing the waves with violent exertion."

After much fanfare, banquets and celebrations, "Long's Serpent" and five accompanying boats left St. Louis July 19, 1819, for the upper Missouri. Along the way, most of the boats either broke down or ran aground and as winter set in, the steamboat had to pull into shore near Council Bluffs. Iowa. Unfortunately, some of the men left the boat to explore the area and met a war party of 140 "Republican Pawnees," who stole their horses and belongings, scaring the scientists half to death. Miles from their

camp, in bad weather without food, water or horses, they barely made it back to camp alive - not a good omen.

The next spring, now 1820, the steamboat set off for the Platte River. Major Long had a cannon hidden behind the black scaled sides of the boat, but instead of terrifying the Cheyenne they encountered along the Platte, one of the tribe's favorite hunting grounds, the loud cannon fire only made the Indians more determined to follow and destroy it. When Long's crew realized they were being attacked from the shore, they fired the cannon and in the commotion, the "slaves" jumped ship and apparently were picked up by the Cheyenne, who fed them and described the death and burial of the child.

The Yellowstone Expedition was considered a failure during its time and cost the government \$236,818.15. (By today's standards - \$117,332,628.86.) Embarrassed by the failure, Major Long didn't realize until years later that he had traveled further up the Missouri and parts west with his "beast" than any other steamboat had before that time.

In 2003, archaeologists found the site of Long's cantonment on the Missouri River. Historians tend to discount Native oral tradition but after reading this detailed Cheyenne account, 188 years after Major Long's Serpent Steamboat set sail, the accuracy of their description, compared to that of Thomas Hart Benton, is far too similar to dismiss. The Cheyenne continue to remember precious American History in oral tradition.

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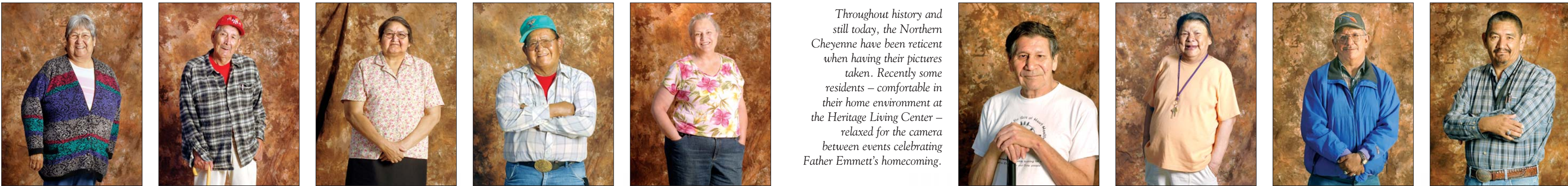
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Interview with Bob Bozell, former associate director and chief archeologist for the Nebraska State Historical Society, 8/15/08



Throughout history and still today, the Northern Cheyenne have been reticent when having their pictures taken. Recently some residents – comfortable in their home environment at the Heritage Living Center – relaxed for the camera between events celebrating Father Emmett’s homecoming.

Twenty-seventh Annual Ashland Powwow a Huge Success!

“Happy Herb” Bearchum, resident elder at the Heritage Living Center and one of three honorary founders (along with Joe Fox Sr. and Lena Gray) of the first outdoor Ashland Powwow 27 years ago, again officiated as Master of Ceremonies this year. Herb described the event as having grown every year but he said, “This one was the best powwow ever!” Hundreds of Indian dancers took part in the festivities and 10 drum groups from several western tribes took part. Herb says the highlight of the powwow was the Memorial Giveaway for the friends and family of the late respected elder Bertha Harris.

In her honor, Bertha’s friends and family participated in a Clown Dance, with 39 clown dancers taking part in this much anticipated event. To entertain and lighten the spirits of the Harris family, men and women dressed up in outfits to poke fun of each other and mimic everything from male/female relationships, ghosts, Indian dance outfits, white people and Indian people. The philosophy of the Clown Dance was to make fun of everyone, thus healing with laughter the feelings of sadness at losing a loved one.

One clown dressed in a dance outfit with pop cans sewn on her dress, clearly making fun of the popular jingle dress outfits of the younger women. The clowns’ funny clothing and crazy antics caused hysterical laughter. The dance healed emotions and grief

melted away. The Northern Cheyenne have always used humor to survive difficult circumstances.

Another highlight of the powwow was the parade led by former Tribal Chairman and Parade Marshal, Llavando “Cowboy” Fisher with over 20 young children of all ages riding bareback, as well as floats and riders dressed in their best Cheyenne finery. Many of the elders were impressed with this return to tradition. Chief Bisco Spotted Wolf remarked, “We should encourage our children to raise horses and take care of them. Kids feel proud of themselves and it raises their self esteem. The younger generation really took an interest this year in the powwow and that’s a good sign for the future.”

The Cheyenne elders at the Heritage Living Center look forward to the annual Ashland powwow, the traditional hand games and horse shoe pitching contests. This year, Heritage Living Center staff and their family members gave up their Labor Day Weekend to set up a food concession stand, where they raised money to be used for the elders’ needs.

The last day of the powwow ended as it had begun, with the raising and lowering of the United States Flag, honoring all veterans of foreign wars. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe has the distinction of having had the most Native veterans per population in World War II than any other Indian tribe in the nation. The powwow honored all United States Veterans, deceased or living and especially the soldier boys and soldier girls fighting for their country in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places around the world.



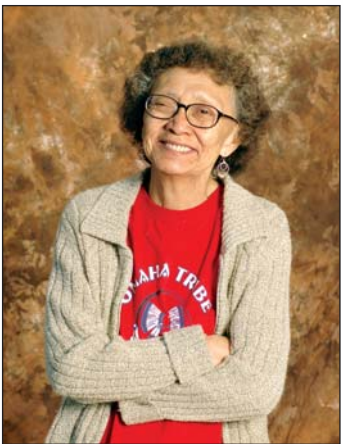
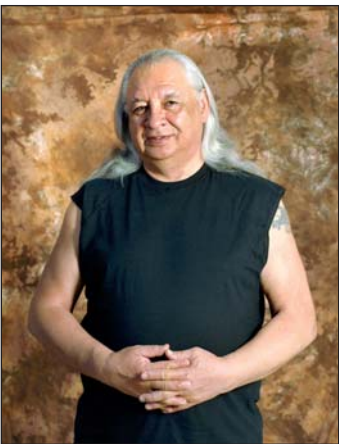
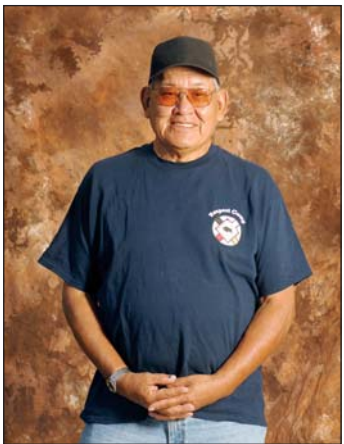
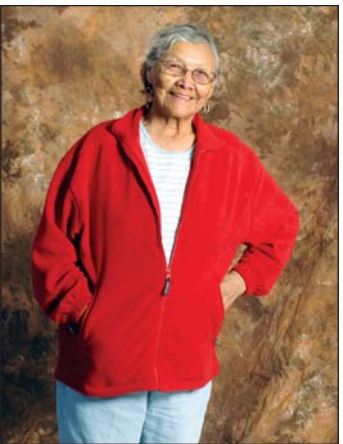
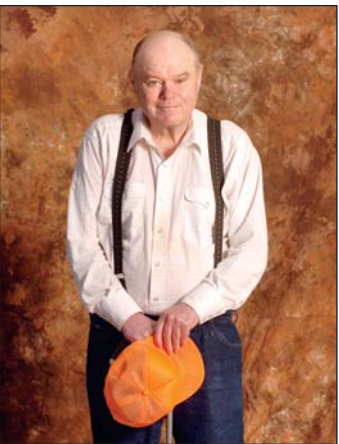
Nate Little Bird



Above, spectators howl at the antics of the clown dancers during the powwow grand entry. Left, Heritage Living Center staff member, Jamie Olson, serves up an Indian taco from the concession stand he and other volunteers set up for the powwow.



Above, Herb Bearchum, Master of Ceremonies during the 27th Annual Ashland Powwow, visits with a family member during a break from the microphone. “Happy Herb” called this year’s powwow “the best powwow ever!”





Celebrating Father Emmett's Return



Above, Father Emmett passes a snack to his dog Fergie as Father Pascal Siler looks on. Above right, Gourd dancers move to the rhythm of the drums during Father Emmett's birthday feast and powwow. Right, A barbecue along with traditional berry pudding, fry bread and cake satisfied appetites of those attending the birthday celebration.

At the Heritage Living Center opening ceremony in 2002, we met Bob Jasper, a donor who had driven from his home in Illinois to share in the festivities. While having dinner with us, Bob told us a personal story that melted our hearts.

During World War II, his good buddy, Butch O'Hare, a fighter pilot in the Pacific, flew one of many dangerous missions. Butch looked at his fuel gauge and realized that someone had forgotten to top off his fuel tank. He knew he wouldn't

have enough fuel to complete his mission. His flight commander ordered him back. But on the return flight to the carrier, O'Hare saw a squadron of Japanese planes heading toward the ship. There were no planes on board ready to defend the carrier.

Single-handedly, Butch dove into the formation of Japanese planes and attacked. He shot until all of his ammunition was gone, then dove directly toward the enemy planes to clip

off a wing or tail or anything that would make the Japanese planes unfit to fly. Butch and his gunner were both injured by enemy fire but they made it back to the carrier alive.



Charitable Gift Annuitant Remembers Act of Heroism

Many fighter planes had cameras on board during the war and Butch's feats of bravery can sometimes be seen on television to this day. Ace pilot Butch O'Hare won the Congressional Medal of Honor during his short career but his plane was shot down not long afterward and the handsome pilot lost his life. O'Hare Airport in Chicago is named after him – a true American Hero.

Bob Jasper is now a 93 year-old Navy veteran, a widower of 15 years who has outlived his 3 children. He gets around pretty well in his wheelchair and he is in good health, despite a few aches and pains from old war wounds that bother him from time to time.

Recently Bob made a \$40,000 Charitable Gift Annuity to Soaring Eagle at an interest rate of 10.5%. He will receive an initial charitable tax deduction of \$26,284 and quarterly income

payments of \$1,050, which total \$4,200 annually. Bob had investigated various

alternatives but our high interest rate of 10.5%, impressed him. Knowing that his Charitable Gift Annuity will continue to assist Soaring Eagle, his favorite charity for Northern Cheyenne elders after he's gone, has given Bob, as he says, "... great personal satisfaction."

If you would like to see what a Soaring Eagle Gift Annuity can do for you, we will provide you with a free, no-obligation proposal showing your personal rate of return based on your age. Just let us know the amount you are considering (\$5,000 minimum) and your date of birth.

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*Edna Seminole greets Fr. Emmett
during his homecoming.*



An antelope pauses in the foothills above the Heritage Living Center.

**Father Emmett's Biography,
Renegade Priest of the
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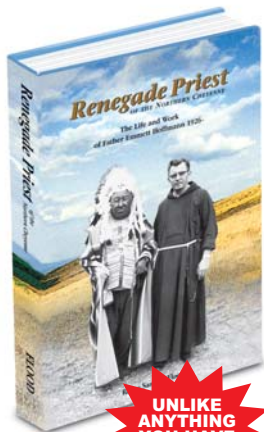
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