

he Northern Chevennes signed the Treaty of 1868,

which set aside land between the

Black Hills (in present day South Dakota) to the Big Horn range in Wyoming for the Sioux, Cheyenne and smaller tribes. In addition to promises of food, trading supplies, tools and clothes, the government assured the Indians that if they signed the treaty, their lands would be protected. No one, including the U.S. military, would be allowed to trespass or to build forts within the boundaries of their reserve. In return, the Indians gave up vast tracks of western land and agreed to live in peace. Many noted military officials were present at the signing, including the "boy general" of Civil War fame, George Armstrong Custer.

Some time afterward. government officials came to the Northern Chevenne camps to leave copies of the treaty stipulations with principal chiefs. At least one interpreter tried to translate the treaty provisions.

Dan Seminole, Northern Chevenne, heard the following oral traditional story from his elders. This is a neverbefore-published Chevenne interpreter's eyewitness account of how the government made the Northern Cheyennes accept treaty

I'd rather die than be treated like that again! by RENEE SANSOM FLOOD

provisions they could not read. Dan Seminole tape recorded the story in the Cheyenne language on March 19, 1973, for future generations:

When the treaty came back to us - brought by the U.S. Government men - the meeting was held at the mouth of Muddy Creek where the Cheyennes were camped.

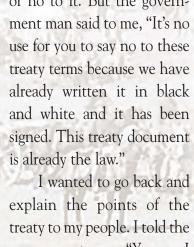
Early in the morning, a white man gave me a copy of the treaty and told me to go and translate what it said to my people. I gathered my relatives and brought food for this meeting. Many people came to listen.

> When they gave me the copy, I wanted a chance to take it to the Chevennes and read it to them and go over it with them before we said yes or no to it. But the governis already the law."

government man, "You say I have to accept what you give

(continued inside)

Custer's Expedition heading for the Black Hills



us because it's already printed up on paper – that I can't check on what it says?"

"It's too late now to go back and check it!" the man told me. I told him, "I'll tell you now that the treaty promises on this paper are probably not true. I want to check it. All the tribes that were there, those who signed the treaty – will back me up on this. I'll call them in and make soldiers out of them!"

"You have to say yes!" he said. "You have to accept this treaty as it is written right here on this paper!"

Then I told him: "There are very few of us on this earth. But The One Above in heaven will beat us all. He is over all the great powers of nature that bring the lightning. Your soldiers can't overcome lightning. You are not greater than that. Maybe your soldiers will run into our soldiers and you might try to get the best of our men. But "Maheo," The One Above, is stronger than you and your soldiers. You have stores that sell bullets and barbed wire. You have to go to the stores to get your food. But I say this: You might lose your soldiers before you ever get the food prepared."

The white man said to me: "When you run up against your enemies, you lose, but later on, you will gain. This is the way the treaty is written. This is going to be your life from now on. The government will help you but nobody else will help you. We give you this land and you must stay here on this land. You can't go off anywhere without permission.

If you start trouble among the Cheyennes, we will stop the trouble. We don't want any more trouble with you Cheyennes. Nobody will come on your land or bother you if you stay quiet. I'm going to let all the troops know that from now on, they won't have any problem with the Northern Cheyennes.

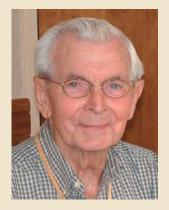
A Note From Father Emmett

Dear Friends,

Ahh...spring in Montana. Never a dull moment. This Spring didn't come in on little cat feet, it came in with a pounce! I told you about the snowstorms in May. Now we're facing potential Tongue River floods. Good thing we're up on the hill above Ashland! We're so

grateful for the much needed moisture and pray that it will discourage forest fires later this summer.

The elders are getting outside, enjoying the newly completed Eagle Ridge Park with flowing streams (intentional, not flooding), bridges, waterfalls and meandering concrete pathways. No more trudging around the parking lot as we used to do for a breath of fresh air! I'm thrilled to report that Eagle Ridge is complete, thanks to the memorials and special gifts we've received for this project. And the Memorial Wall is



finished at last. It features all of the plaques in honor of donors and loved ones who made the park possible. I want to take this opportunity to invite you to visit us at the Heritage Living Center. We'd love to share with you all you've helped provide for our Native elders, from the nutritious, tasty meals, to the comfortable apartments and professional staff, to

the special chapel where we offer prayers for you each day. It's all here because you shared.

May God bless you throughout the summer as you enjoy its goodness. We ask Him to bless you in a special way for the generosity you've shown the Northern Cheyenne elders.

Your grateful beggar friend,

Father Emmett Hoffmann

Tather Cumett Hoffmann

The United States troops will see to it! The U.S. Government is going to rule over all the Indians on every reservation. Later on, you are going to get money from the government. You are going to be the owners of this land here. There will be an agency built on your land. According to the treaty provisions, you are going to have a better life when the

government takes care of you with money. The way you are now, you have no money. Wagons will come and dump off clothes and food for you to pick up."

About that time, an old lady who was standing by, grabbed the treaty papers and she was angry

about it. All the Cheyennes got angry - worked up.

The white man started shooting a pistol around. The old lady told him, "You can shoot all the bullets you want to!" Some Cheyennes understood the treaty and some didn't. The man shooting the gun threatened us. He took our attention off the treaty. Because of that, some ended up not understanding what the treaty meant. But I kept on reading anyway. Half of my people didn't like what I said. The man kept shooting his gun. The people were telling each other, "We are really going to be poor if we don't do something about this right now!"

Then many soldiers came and disarmed the Cheyennes. They took all our guns and ammunition from us.

I had to accept the treaty. I had to say yes to it then because yes meant we would live. If I got mad and said, "No! We don't accept this treaty because we don't know what you have written on this paper," then they would have slaughtered us. That was the right decision at that moment – to say yes – otherwise we all would have been killed. Our women and children were with us and we were disarmed.

After the government man got through preaching to us, he left. The Cheyennes had no choice. They had to accept copies of that treaty as it was written, with no chance to know if all the government promises were in it. We were hungry so we ate the food they dumped out on the ground.

After that, we all went back to our camps.

Each family built a fire and they used those papers to start their fires! They didn't feel good about the treaty, but it felt good to burn up those papers.

If they asked the Cheyennes to another meeting, the people were not going to go. I would rather die than be treated like that again! Later they tried to get me to go to another meeting, but I refused. I

"You have to say yes!" he said. "You have to accept this treaty as it is written right here on this paper!"

told them, "We will keep our buckskin clothes like we always wear."

The people took those clothes the government dumped out there – and they put them away. My grandmother had them in an old lady suitcase packed away. She died in January 1934. She lived with us until she died. That is all I have to say.

* * *

Note: U.S. government treaty promises lasted only 6 years. In 1874, George Armstrong Custer ignored the Treaty of 1868 and formed The Black Hills Expedition. Army generals approved as he hired 10 companies of 7th Cavalry and 2 companies of infantry. Escorted by the large military escort, teamsters, a photographer, geologists, a botanist, surveyors, engineers, miners and newspaper correspondents joined the expedition. With a total of 1,000 men and 110 wagons, Custer entered the Black Hills with a decorative 16-piece band riding white horses.

Perhaps he thought the Indians would not dare to attack him with such a large force of soldiers. In fact, every move he made was noted by the Cheyennes, including the type of boots he wore and how well he rode his mount. They had seen him before when he smoked the peace pipe with them during the Ft. Laramie Treaty negotiations.

Custer's men discovered gold during the expedition, which soon resulted in a gold rush across Indian lands by miners, freighters, tradesmen, prostitutes and common criminals. Angered by broken government promises, the Northern Cheyennes joined the Lakota to punish the invaders. Two years after Custer led his ill-fated expedition into the Black Hills, he and the 7th Cavalry were wiped out at the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

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Ms Mary Papadopetros

Please call Mary Jo at 406-256-8500 for Annuity details today! ERBERT BEAR CHUM was born to loving parents, Anne Red Cherries and Frank Bear Chum Sr. in Lame Deer, Montana on November 9, 1934. Herb was an active child in a happy family until he and his dad were shocked to learn that Herb's mother had tuberculosis.

Anne knew she might die if she didn't enter a TB sanitarium. It must have been heart-wrenching to leave her husband and 6-year-old son. But Anne

took courage and left her family to face the lonely years without them. Tuberculosis was a disease brought by the white man and Herb blamed them for taking his mother away.

His dad was often away from home building houses,

so Herb went to live with his Grandma Nancy (Howling Wolf) Dives Backwards, a well known medicine woman. The Northern Cheyennes called her, "Contrary Nancy." Grandma Nancy couldn't cure tuberculosis but she successfully cured many other illnesses.

Herb looks back now and realizes what an honor it was to help Grandma Nancy when she tended sick relatives and friends. The old woman spent many days and nights sitting with sick people, praying for their recovery. Herb recalls two different people who came to his grandma with hearing problems. Both times he knew he was watching something unforgettable:

Grandma asked me to carry her medicine bag, so I tagged along. She took each person to a badger's den. That was part of the curing ceremony. I looked on from a distance when she asked in prayer for the badger's help in curing deafness. Two different times I was an eye-witness to her curing ability. Both those people got their hearing back.

Times were hard for the Cheyennes in the first half of the 20th century. Jobs were scarce and there was never enough food. People lived in old tents and shacks lined with cardboard during winter temperatures of 40 degrees below zero. Medicine men and women like Grandma Nancy saved many lives and were a great comfort to the Cheyennes.

Curing people was physically and mentally draining and Grandma Nancy was growing older. Back in the old days after she had cured someone, she was given a gift of a horse or a blanket and the family put on a special feed for her. But over the years, people became so poor they had nothing to give her but river or well water.

Grandma Nancy was also an advisor at the Sundance and ceremonial people came to visit her.

"When you're an orphan, you want to pay back kindnesses that others have shown you."

-Herb Bear Chum, 2005 • by Renee Sansom Flood

In those days kids were seen and not heard. Herb sat and listened to the old folks. Whistling Elk, a famed "contrary," stopped in on a regular basis and all the medicine men and women got together and talked about medicine and how to keep their religion strong.

But the time came when Grandma Nancy was getting too old to take full-time care of an energetic boy. Herb's mother had died of TB in 1945 and his elderly father passed on as well. Before his mom died she came back to the reservation. Herb rode his little tricycle to the hospital to see her every day. The last time he saw her, she had called relatives to her bedside. "Last night, my family came after me," she told them. "They were standing around my bed." Herb remembers that she was relieved and happy because she knew she was going to pass on to be with her people. TB had taken her from Herb and from her beloved husband and now she was going home. Anne Bear Chum had suffered enough.

Now an orphan, Herb felt lost and alone. One winter's day, he was walking home to his grandma's house in the freezing winter wind:

"I was just trying to survive. A sleigh came by with kids in the back. It was Sarah and Charlie Yellow Fox. I was ragged, cold and hungry and I remember looking down at my torn pants. I had on moccasins but my feet were so cold. They took me home with them on the sleigh. I sent word to Grandma and she said it was okay for me to stay with the Yellow Fox family.

Sarah Yellow Fox was a wonderful, beautiful woman. She took care of 10 to 15 homeless children. People called us, "The Bar None Boys." We were taught to work cattle, train horses, put up hay, mend fences and farm. We cut trees and I got to drive the tractor. I enjoyed it! We all got fed and she gave us clothes when we needed them. We lived in a log cabin with a wood floor. There were two bunk houses and a round house. With 5 children of her own, plus all the homeless kids, it was a lot of work to wash clothes and take care of us, but Sarah had a big heart for everyone. She was always laughing and happy."

Herb went to Lame Deer School when he was 7-years-old, but he didn't speak English very well. When the teacher called his name, he answered, "present" because he thought he was going to get a

present! Herb finished 8th grade in Lame Deer where he played basketball. He averaged 17 points a game that year. Then he continued his education at St. Labre School. Indian where he broke the 1953 state Track and Field Record in the 100-yard dash before graduating in 1954.

Herb and Marie enjoy a handgame

Herb was an all-round athlete like his Grandpa "Fast Calf." The older man was a long distance runner and nobody could beat him. The Cheyennes enjoyed going to the 4th of July Fair in Forsyth, Montana. The Indian sporting events included team and wagon races, horse and foot races.

One year at the festivities, word got around that a famed "Colored/Indian runner" from Oklahoma had come to Montana to compete against his

grandpa. "The day before the race," Herb remembers, "My grandpa asked someone to go and get this colored Indian racer. Grandpa thought the man couldn't speak Cheyenne because he used sign language to communicate. The runner was sitting inside a tent on a tarp with the family when grandpa turned to grandma and said in Cheyenne, "Give him some more food! Feed him so he won't run as well!" The man looked up and replied in Cheyenne, "I've had enough." Then he got up and went out. He knew what they had said! My grandpa beat that guy in the race, anyway."

When the Korean War started, Herb signed up. At the same time, he had earned a scholarship to pay for his expenses at Bacone College in Oklahoma. Grandma Nancy didn't want him to go to war, so she asked him not to sign up. But it was too late. Grandma Nancy wouldn't take no for an answer. She went to St. Labre Mission to see Father Marion Roessler. Father went to the draft board and Herb received a deferment to A-3 status.

> Herb went to college for a time Bacone Oklahoma, where his track team took Nationals in relay. He then transferred to Carroll College in Helena and looked for part time work. roommate going to Gonzaga University," Herb recalls. "He was the custodian at a

bank and recommended me to take his place. I got the job and reported for work but when I got there, the head custodian told me that the bank board chairman's son was going to take my job. I went back to the Monsignor and told him what had happened, but there was nothing he could do. I packed my bag and left." A wealthy young man had taken the job that Herb needed to stay in college.

Part II of Herb Bear Chum's story will continue in the next edition of "Signals".

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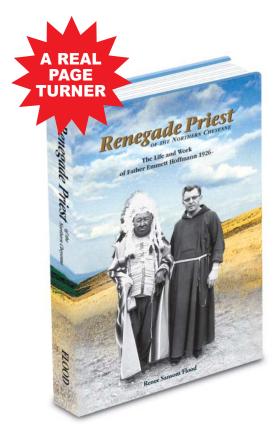
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