



Dear Friends
and Benefactors,

Since our last newsletter we had a meaningful Christmas holiday season at the Heritage Living Center. Despite a blizzard bringing sub zero temperatures and three foot snowdrifts, the elders stayed warm and enjoyed their traditional Christmas blessings and prayers.

It seems like only yesterday when I first arrived at St. Labre Mission in 1954. I faced the difficult challenge of turning this struggling facility into a school with a strong foundation. We accomplished this without federal or state funds. After I retired from St. Labre in 1994, I was grateful that due to many generous benefactors, we left it financially secure and well endowed. Today, St. Labre continues as an outstanding leader in the field of Indian Education.

In 1997, I found many old 1970s tape recordings in the Cheyenne language. Among the many historical interviews, a tape recording was discovered of an old chiefs' meeting. These were men who had been my mentors when I first came to the reservation. They were lamenting the fate of their elders who were being sent to nursing homes far from the

reservation. These elders couldn't communicate in English and because transportation problems existed for family members, they rarely visited. Soon the elders became depressed, stopped eating and died far from their homelands. While listening to the recordings with Bisco Spotted Wolf, one of the chief's said: "Let's talk to Father Emmett. He will help us!" It seemed they were speaking to me from beyond the grave.

Their words haunted me into action. After much prayer, I rededicated my vow to provide care for Cheyenne elders. With great faith that "Maheo," our Creator God, would bless this new undertaking, I founded a non-profit charity called Soaring Eagle, dedicated to one main focus – the construction of an assisted living home for Cheyenne elders.

The Heritage Living Center, built on a hill overlooking the historic Northern Cheyenne Reservation and the picturesque Tongue River Valley, was dedicated on August 31, 2002. Again,

we didn't accept help from federal or state funds; we chose not to affiliate with any other organization, knowing these choices would make the road ahead more difficult.

Our confidence that God will bless our



Top: 91 year-old Louise Bolson opening her Christmas gifts.

Left: Elders enjoying Christmas dinner with family and friends.

Right: Frank Rowland seated to the left.

Christmas brought abundant joy to those elders who moved into the Heritage Living Center during the past year. You should have seen the laughter and tears as they opened their gifts. A resident expressed his overwhelming gratitude when he told me: "I am 79 years-old and this is the best Christmas I ever had."

benefactors for helping us today and in the future keeps us inspired to carry on. We depend upon your continued generosity to help us provide for the elders' daily needs and to make the mortgage payments each month. I am filled with gratitude for your support in making the old chiefs' vision a reality.



The year 2003 ended with heavy snow and sub-zero weather.

We don't have a long mailing list or an endowment like larger charities. Limited in what we can do; some necessities must wait additional funding, such as the 14 passenger, diesel-powered medical bus with a wheel-chair lift. This remains a top priority. A bus would eliminate the current use of multiple small vehicles to transport elders to clinic visits or to the hospital.

Last year your generous gifts made possible the much needed deep water well for the fire protection that we didn't have when fire swept over the hills right above the Center. When spring

weather allows, the dam and reservoir will be completed. As funds become available, we will also complete the Memorial Park with wide walkways for handicapped elders and the children in the Montessori and Child Day Care. They will enjoy the nature trails, flower and vegetable gardens and the increasing number of birds and animals inhabiting the park. Several large memorial gifts honoring a loved one would complete the park sooner than expected.

Caring for the grateful elders is a constant source of amazement. In another letter I told you about Al, blind and practically homeless when he came to us in critical need of nourishing food to restore his health. When a staff member asked him one day if he wanted a second dessert, Al replied, "Yes, I do! I'm afraid this is just a dream and it might end if I wake up!"

I am always deeply touched when elders come to our little chapel to join me in asking God to bless our benefactors. They know that without your gifts the Heritage Living Center would not exist and their basic daily necessities – food, shelter and medical attention – would be unfulfilled. Thank you again for making this "miracle" possible.

I stand in awe when I reflect on the ways your generosity has saved the lives of elders who were suffering from malnutrition, lack of medical help and a warm, safe home. Your donations have become the gifts of life.

Your beggar friend,

Father Emmett Hoffmann
Father Emmett Hoffmann

Viola E. Campeau, the Cheyenne Nightingale, Passes On

Viola Campeau, the beloved "Cheyenne Nightingale," died on January 20, 2004. For the past two years Viola enjoyed living in the Heritage Living Center where she had many friends. Recently, Viola's friends and relatives were happy to see Viola's life highlighted in Father Emmett's recently published biography, *Renegade Priest of the Northern Cheyenne*.

Viola was born June 17, 1922 in Star Prairie County, Minnesota. After receiving her nursing degree, Viola accepted a Marquette Indian League volunteer placement to St. Labre Mission, where she renewed her yearly commitment until she felt it was truly her home.

On June 23, 1970, Viola affiliated with the Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order. In addition to her job teaching kindergarten, Viola opened a small clinic at St. Labre. No doctor came to the school and Viola averaged 60 patients a day including school students and ranch families. A devout Catholic, she nursed people



suffering from life-threatening burns, car accident injuries and diseases such as hepatitis, tuberculosis, meningitis, typhoid and cholera.

Viola endeared herself to the Northern Cheyenne and to area ranching families when she prayed with them at the death beds of relatives. Her soothing manner helped many to accept the death of their loved ones in tragic accidents or in lingering terminal illnesses. Viola dedicated all of her adult life to the poor and grieving.

Surrounded by her family and by the Northern Cheyenne people she loved, Viola was buried in the St. Labre Cemetery in Ashland on January 24, 2004. In lieu of

flowers, if you wish to make a memorial contribution in Viola's name, please send a contribution to Soaring Eagle for the Heritage Living Center, P.O. Box 879, Billings, Montana 59103.

The Best of the Old-Time Frontier Interpreters

by Renee Sansom Flood

Frank Rowland likes to sit in the spacious front lobby of the Heritage Living Center. He seems engrossed in the morning newspaper, but he is also keeping his ears open to everything going on around him. To coin a cliché, Frank is “as sharp as a tack.” Nothing gets by the last living grandson of famed frontier interpreter Willis Rowland. Perhaps this trait of remarkable awareness was handed down from his forefathers.

William Rowland, the first interpreter to make a name for himself among the Cheyennes, was born in 1830. A courageous, tough, Kentuckian, William married the daughter of a Cheyenne chief and proved himself in battles against the Pawnee fighting alongside his in-laws.

William and his growing family made their home at Fort Laramie where William served as interpreter. Later he moved to Fort Robinson, Nebraska to accept a similar position. After the Sioux War, William rendered his services during the tragic Cheyenne outbreak of 1879. George Bird Grinnell described William as “a fine type of prairie man – resourceful, without fear, and a good companion to travel with . . .” William later became one of the famous “Cheyenne Scouts” at Ft. Keogh under General Nelson Miles.

William had 8 sons and 2 daughters. His third son, Willis Thompson Rowland, (Long Forehead) took up his father’s profession and served as official Cheyenne interpreter for many decades.

An interpreter’s life was constantly fraught with danger as he rode the fence between cultures. If Willis made a mistake during treaty negotiations, his life was on the line. Historian and author Richard G. Hardorff said that Willis interpreted in a “. . . solid, and careful” manner like a “craftsman,” making sure his vocabulary was precise in every “painstaking detail.” Willis became friends and translated for George B. Grinnell, Thomas B. Marquis, George E. Hyde, Walter Camp, and many other writers who chronicled frontier history, including Indian interviews about the 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn.

The only type of man who could have survived the difficult and precarious job of interpreter was a gentle, generous, fair-minded person. Frank remembers his Grandpa Willis as a good person who took in orphans and was kind to everyone, Indians and whites alike. Willis told his grandson: “If you have a visitor, feed him the best that you have. Make room for him to lie down and give him a blanket. If he needs clothing and food, make him comfortable. Never get mad at anybody.” Grandpa Willis lived in a log cabin. The only sign that he had an important job was his Model A Ford.

Many interpreters came with the military and left with the military. Willis never left the Northern Cheyenne. His sons and nephews became interpreters, tribal judges and police

An interpreter’s life was constantly fraught with danger as he rode the fence between cultures.

officers; respected men such as Chuck Rowland. Chuck served as Tribal Chairman for 16 years and led his people against the coal companies in the 1970s, after they illegally obtained coal leases to mine Cheyenne homelands.

Frank Rowland grew up in the shadow of great men. He attended Busby School and then worked in Wyoming on the railroad for years and spent time in Seattle and Anchorage, Alaska. Retired now, Frank and his dog, Simone, enjoy their new home at the Heritage Living Center. Frank is a welcome resident as he keeps everybody laughing. This is perhaps the most important survival trait handed down from the best of the old-time interpreters - men who could use humor to break the ice between cultures. ■

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Soaring Eagle has established societies to give proper recognition for outstanding gifts that have been given for the construction of the Heritage Living Center. Each society shows the level of donors and our gratitude for their generosity.

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Soaring Eagle Societies

Donors who contributed \$100 or more between January 1, 2003 and December 31, 2003 were enrolled in the Dawn of Hope Society. They received a beautiful personalized certificate suitable for framing.

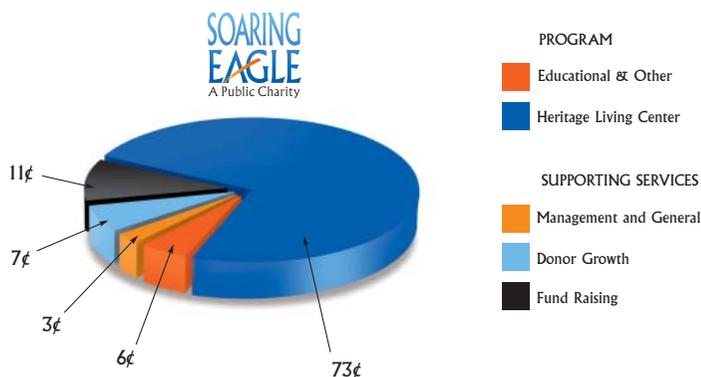
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These one-time or cumulative contributions were received between January 1, 2003 – December 31, 2003. Contributions received after December 31, 2003 will be listed in the next Soaring Eagle Signals newsletter. See our website at www.soaringeagle.org.

Soaring Eagle Fund Raising Operation

Where the dollar was spent for the year ended June 30, 2003



Renegade Priest of the Northern Cheyenne

The Life and Work of Father Emmett Hoffmann 1926 –

“Who the hell are you working for, Father Emmett or me?” President John F. Kennedy’s irate question came during a telephone conversation with U.S. Postmaster General, J. Edward Day, during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Father Emmett was in Day’s Washington office and overheard the loud argument. He felt like crawling out of the room.

This anecdote and many more can be found in *Renegade Priest of the Northern Cheyenne*, Father Emmett’s authorized biography, including 57 historical photographs, now available in hard and soft cover.

The biography tells of young “Buddy” Hoffmann’s childhood on his parents’ Wisconsin dairy farm, where he baptized every farm animal in preparation for the priesthood. He dropped out of school twice and finally entered the seminary where his mischievous ways got him into trouble more than once.

After ordination, Father Emmett dreamed of an exotic post to Nicaragua. Instead, he was disappointed when he found out that his first post was to be St. Labre, a remote Montana mission.

Thus began Father’s culture shock and re-education as he struggled to help the impoverished Northern Cheyenne, a tribe forgotten by the government. When Father first arrived, he found contaminated wells, murderous medical neglect, subhuman living conditions, rampant malnutrition and disease. How could he help these gentle, yet downtrodden people to regain the spirit of their proud ancestors?

His heartwarming story of dedication, success, temptation, failure, and renewal of spirit has been well received by readers across America.

Father Emmett’s humanitarian efforts on behalf of the Northern Cheyenne is unequalled in the history of the Catholic Church in the 20th century American West. But success came at a terrible price. Father Emmett’s remarkable humanity overcame the moral violence leveled against him by religious brethren, but not before it nearly cost him his life.

Renegade Priest of the Northern Cheyenne is a true story of the hardships and triumphs of a dedicated priest, much like that of the beloved humanitarian, Father Flanagan of Boys Town.

Since its November publication, *Renegade Priest* has inspired many letters from friends and benefactors:

“I have given your biography to friends, and I am always astonished to see almost non-readers react with so much enthusiasm.”
–LIESELOTTE L.

“I enjoyed the book tremendously. A truly heartfelt story and well written!!”
–JUNE T.

“Having read your biography, it is indeed an honor to be a part of the building of the Heritage Living Center. The book is good reading.”
–MARY R.

“I have your most gracious & heartwarming book. A lovely record of your past, present and future, as God has surely blessed you, cared for you and led you in the footsteps or Jesus.”
–ED D.

“Have just finished reading about your life. How our Lord lives in your heart and mind. God had the right man for the job!”
–NANCY S.

“The Renegade Priest has touched my heart. Bless you and long may you thrive!”
–BEATRICE V.

“I thank you for allowing Renegade Priest to be published and for it to be

written with such candor. Your work has been extremely valuable to our Indian brothers and sisters. It has been an inspiration to hundreds, or even thousands of us.”
–JAY H.

“I had no idea of what you had to endure to help Native Americans. You have our greatest admiration for your fortitude and charity in the face of so many obstacles.”
–ALICE S.

“I read your book and I could not lay it down! The love you have shown and given to the Cheyenne under the most difficult circumstances and hardships!”
–MATHILDE W.

Beat the high cost of medical treatment with a Soaring Eagle Annuity

Did you know that a Soaring Eagle Annuity can produce as much as 4 times the rate of return on a Certificate of Deposit?* A Soaring Eagle Annuity provides each annuitant with a significant charitable tax deduction and a guaranteed income for life. After the annuitant passes on, the beneficiary family member will receive the annuity payments. Soaring Eagle will eventually benefit from an annuity once the annuitant "passes on to the next camp."

Let me tell you about "Ed," one of our annuitants. He found an additional advantage by purchasing a Soaring Eagle Annuity that will save him thousands of dollars in medical costs.

Let me tell you how he did it. Ed had already invested \$20,000 in an IRA account. When he contracted lymphoma last fall, he had to go to the hospital. Subsequently, Ed began chemotherapy treatments costing \$9,000 every three weeks. Medicare paid 80%, but the total treatment cost would ultimately add up to a whopping \$63,000!

After paying about \$1,100 as his share of a \$22,000 hospital bill, it occurred to Ed that if he had less than \$2,000 in his possession at any given time (he receives \$973 per month in Social Security) he would qualify for Medicaid to cover the full amount of his medical care.

Ed checked with the local Medicaid office and received approval to remove \$20,000 from his IRA to purchase a Soaring Eagle Gift Annuity. This allows him (based on his age) to earn up to the maximum Medicaid income of \$2,000 per year or quarterly annuity payments of up to \$500, while receiving fully covered cancer treatments.

We are so pleased that Soaring Eagle has been able to provide Ed with a way to meet both his financial responsibilities and his significant health care needs. Ed won't have to go broke to stay alive!

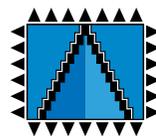
Many of our benefactors are facing similar, serious health care dilemmas. If you wish to consider a Soaring Eagle Gift Annuity, please fill out the provided form and mail it to Mary Jo Fox at Soaring Eagle. Just tell her the annuity amount and the birth dates of the annuitants you are considering, (up to two annuitants are allowed for each annuity.) She will send you a proposal with no obligation. Take a look! See what a Soaring Eagle Gift Annuity can do for you and your family.

By the way, Ed has almost completed his chemotherapy treatments. He says he's feeling tough enough to beat the cancer. We are praying that he is blessed with full remission from the lymphoma. Way to go Ed! We're looking forward to sending you your next quarterly annuity payment in March!

A SOARING EAGLE ANNUITY OUT-PERFORMS A CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT. LET'S COMPARE...*

Soaring Eagle Gift Annuity		Certificate of Deposit
\$20,000	Contract Amount	\$20,000
7.3%	Rate of Return	1.88%
\$915/yr	Tax Free Income	\$0
\$545/yr	Taxable Income	\$376/yr
\$1,460/yr	Gross Annual Income	\$376/yr
\$1,311/yr	Net Income (after taxes)	\$273
\$6,090	Charitable Deduction (Yr. 1)	\$0
\$1,825	Income Tax Savings (Yr. 1)	\$0

*Based on a 70 year-old individual in a 27% Federal tax bracket, making a \$20,000 investment. Soaring Eagle Annuity contracts are irrevocable, resulting in the large contribution deduction. The Certificate of Deposit is a 2-year rate.



Your Gift Lives On

Please use one of the following sample forms of bequest:

A. (Whatever is left after other bequests have been granted) "All the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate, I bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the Laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana."

B. "I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the Laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana, _____% of my estate."

C. "I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the Laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana, the sum of \$_____."

D. "I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the Laws of the State of Montana, located at 745 Indian Trail, P.O. Drawer 879 in Billings, Montana, 59103, the sum of \$_____ for the Wall of Living Memories Fund, to care for Cheyenne elders, the principal of which shall remain in perpetuity."

These are sample forms only. Consult your attorney when preparing any legal document.

DETACH, MOISTEN GLUE STRIP AND SEAL

YES, I'm interested in a Soaring Eagle charitable gift annuity. The better rate of return, tax deduction and eventual charitable contribution to Soaring Eagle sounds like a WIN WIN WIN opportunity.

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Birth date(s) of annuitant _____

Annuity Amount \$ _____

(up to 2 names/birthdates allowed per annuity.)

This is a non-binding proposal. Upon receipt of actual payment for an annuity, a formal contract will be mailed. For more information call Mary Jo at (406) 256-8500.



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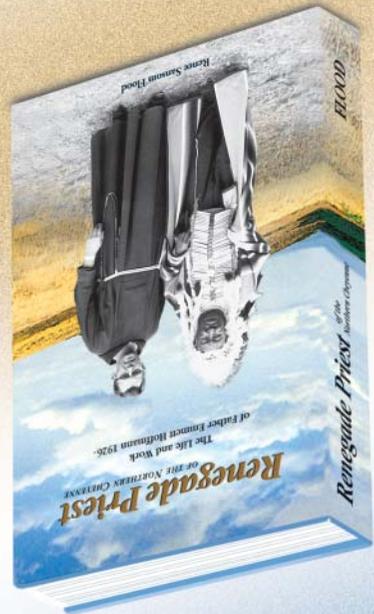
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Renee Sansom Flood is the author and editor of 15 books of historical nonfiction. In 2002, a PBS documentary produced by South Dakota Public Television based on her book, *Lost Bird of Wounded Knee* (Scribner). A New York film company has optioned the book rights for a film based on *Lost Bird*.

Renee received the South Dakota Governor's Award for History and the South Dakota Hall of Fame Writer of the Year Award in 1996. She also received the Karl Mundt Distinguished Writing Award.

A review of *Lost Bird of Wounded Knee* appeared in the *Library Journal*: "Flood's book is highly recommended," and in *Publisher's Weekly*: "Her work is well-documented, powerful and chilling."

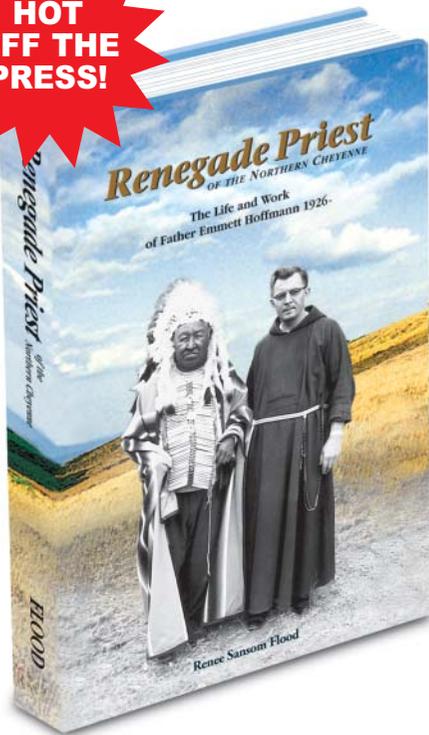
Renee's most recent book, *Renegade Priest of the Northern Cheyenne, The Life and Work of Father Emmett Hoffmann 1926*— is now available in hard and soft cover. The author lives in Montana and lectures nationally on her writing and publishing experiences. She is currently working on two books for children and a book about frontier women in the American West.



Renegade Priest of the Northern Cheyenne

The Life and Work of
Father Emmett Hoffmann 1926–

Father Emmett's remarkable story
of success is unequalled in the history
of the 20th century Catholic Church
in the American West.



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Book purchases are not tax deductible.



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Renegade Priest of the
Northern Cheyenne**

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ON BACK**

Soaring Eagle

Important Days We Want to Remember in Our Prayers

*You are in our prayers each day and we want to remember your loved ones on their special days as well.
Please print the name(s) you want remembered and return in the envelope provided.*

Birthday_____

Date of Birthday_____

Birthday_____

Date of Birthday_____

Deceased_____

Date of Death_____

Deceased_____

Date of Death_____