



February has brought us many days and nights of below-zero temperatures and significant snow. Much colder than December and January. Now, our weather forecasters are predicting that February will be the second coldest on record. To find a colder February, we would have to go back to the Depression years in the 1930's.

We know that much of the country where our friends and donors live suffered through some of the harshest winter weather in history as well. The elders and I watch the news each night as the cold arctic air parks over half the nation. The news reports said that it was colder in Chicago than in Antarctica, the Arctic and Iceland! Our friends in Minnesota have set a snowfall record and winter isn't over! It even snowed in Tucson and Las Vegas! We are glad the country is making it through these frigid days. Let's be optimistic – spring is just

HLC resident, Richard Foote, helps fellow resident, Joanne Elliott, attend Fr. Emmett's memorial service after her scooter's battery died on the way to the service. Meanwhile Mike follows with Joanne's cane.

around the corner!

February 1st was a cold day here when we remembered our beloved Father Emmett Hoffmann. Elders joined us outside at Father Emmett's grave for a memorial service and placed a wreath containing the Cheyenne colors of black, red, yellow and white. One resident, Joanne Elliott, was watching us from a distance standing in the cold. Her red scooter's battery had died, and it was too dangerous for her to walk out to the grave in the cold. I nudged Richard Foote and he said, "I can push her in my walker. Let's go get her." So, we asked that the memorial pause for a moment while we brought Joanne into the



group. For many elders it was simply too cold and dangerous for them to be outside. I'm sure Father would have approved of us protecting them from the harsh cold.

A memorial service followed in our chapel with Father Larry Webber and Father Gebre Boyine leading a celebration of Father Emmett's life with a memorial Mass. The elders reflected on his love for them and the home provided through hard work and establishing friendships with many benefactors across the country.

Heritage Living Center is now in its 17th year of providing assisted-living care to Northern Cheyenne elders and Native American seniors. God bless you and other donors for joining together to keep the "Miracle on the Hill Above Ashland Alive."

Seventeen years is a long time to keep the doors open. However, along with those years of loving care for our elders also comes wear and tear on the facility. Last year, I pleaded for your help to make repairs to our roof, painting and routine maintenance. I'm pleased to report that enough funds came in to replace the worn

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Celebrating HLC's nonagenarians:
(from left) Grace, Edna, and Minnie.

I frequently receive notes from our friends telling me they pray for the elders and the work we do. During your prayer time and when you send a gift, please pause and ask for God's blessing on your donation. It will be a blessing to you and to us.

Early this winter, we held a ceremony to honor three residents who are in their 90s. It was a great day as many prayers thanked God for these nonagenarians in our lives. A drum group played and sang honor songs with everyone standing for our honorees. Organizer, Susie Tall Whiteman Cain, and I presented blankets and plaques commemorating this special day to three wise women, Grace Morin (Chippewa-Cree), Edna Seminole (Northern Cheyenne) and Minnie Hurst (Crow).

In this newsletter, we have photos from our Thanksgiving and Christmas food basket program which help shut-in seniors and families, and a story about a lesser known, yet major historical battle between the US Army and Northern Cheyenne in 1878 called Punished Woman's Fork in Kansas. Our resident and ageless fancy dancer, Clinton Bird Hat, was invited to travel with and be part of the remembrance of this event in Cheyenne history.

We look forward to each day and the blessings your generosity makes possible for our forty elder residents. Thank you and we ask God to bless you during the New Year.

With a grateful heart,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. P. Shuff", is written over a light-colored background.

roof areas – four in all – with a new waterproof membrane that will last 20 years or more. Another project we were able to work on was the painting of the Center's exterior. The elder's home is a large building and had never been repainted until a couple of years ago. We decided to tackle the painting in phases and I can tell you we're about halfway done. We are making steady progress and will have a fresh, protective coat of paint on the whole exterior of the elders' home in the next two years.

Other projects in the works include upgrading the security for the residents living at HLC. In today's world, we can never be too safe. With your help, we will update our security cameras and add increased entrance safety with new electronic locks. In our small town, you wouldn't think that would be necessary, but I'm afraid it is

necessary to keep the elders safe.

You will also recall the project for the replacement of our road and parking lot, both of which are in dire straits. The driveway up the hill has disintegrated into a washboard of jarring cracks and dips. The engineers discovered soil and infrastructure issues that we must address right away. It became a project more detailed than we could complete in our short autumn timeframe. We bit the bullet, so to speak, and decided it would be wiser to wait for warmer weather and do the work correctly than try to rush such a critical project. My dad used to say, "Son, there's always enough time to do it over, but never enough time to do it right." Our best estimate is that we are \$100,000 short of the funds needed to build a sound road and safe parking area for our residents, staff and visitors.

Please keep us in your prayers.

CLINTON BIRD HAT LITTLE WOLF AND THE NC TRAIL

BY JOHN WARNER



Editor's Note: Today's Northern Cheyenne people are intimately intertwined with the history, hardships and battles of their ancestors who escaped Indian Territory in Oklahoma in the late 1800's. The Cheyenne are modern and ancient at the same time. This interesting story is written as a split narrative weaving significant history of the Northern Cheyenne with the present-day role that history serves in the life of Heritage Living Center elder, Clinton Bird Hat. The passages printed in italics

are a telling of the history and significance of the Battle of Punished Woman's Fork.

Clinton Bird Hat drives his truck down the hill from the Heritage Living Center, turns onto Highway 212 eastbound toward Rapid City, South Dakota and begins another journey along the Powwow Highway. He is heading to Scott City, Kansas, to participate in ceremonies marking the 140th anniversary of the Battle of Punished Woman's Fork. The battleground, chosen by Chief Little Wolf on September 27, 1878, on

Clinton Bird Hat holds an eagle staff in his apartment surrounded by hundreds of Native American artifacts that chronicle his life and times.

terrain now known as Battle Canyon, remains relatively unchanged from how it appeared on the date of the battle. It is a spectacular piece of land with panoramic vistas that, according to Clinton, evoke powerful emotions in any Northern Cheyenne when seen not only for the first time but every time, thereafter.

The battle took place nearly three weeks after 353 Cheyennes snuck away from the Darlington Agency in Oklahoma to return to their homeland in Montana. Confined in conditions that were killing his people, Little Wolf told agent John D. Miles directly, "Listen now to what I say to you. I am going to leave here; I am going north to my own country." And so they did, on September 9, 1878, quietly leaving their lodges behind with campfires burning in the night as cover for their departure. Approximately 580 Cheyennes stayed behind at the agency, and this separation is why there are both Northern and Southern Cheyenne tribes today.

So began the Northern Cheyenne Exodus of 1878-79, a riveting and astonishing true story of desperation, grit and determination to outrun, outfight and elude the American Army, which the Northern Cheyenne did for several months. It started well for the Cheyenne.

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Clinton first saw the Punished Woman's battlefield five years ago when 120 Northern Cheyenne accepted an invitation to a symposium – a grand opening of sorts – hosted by Scott County and Kansas leaders, an event decades in the making. Until then, very few Northern Cheyenne had seen or even knew of the site, or of its place in their history. The Kansas community eagerly welcomed the arrival of the sons and daughters of ancestors who had fought the US Army at Punished Woman's Fork. The Kansas contingent knew they had something compelling and spellbinding, yet largely unknown – something they dearly wanted the Northern Cheyenne to see and absorb alongside them. They knew that without celebrating together, the impact of this event would not be properly conveyed.

Four days after leaving the Darlington Agency the Cheyenne braced for their first fight with the pursuing Army at a place called Turkey Springs, in Indian Territory, Oklahoma. A contingent of 353 Indians moving rapidly north is not easy to conceal, and by now they must have felt anxious knowing an interception by the Army was overdue. They were, after all, Indians on the loose from captivity. Little Wolf's scouts spotted the approaching Army and the chief made a strategic decision to reverse course and engage the US Cavalry and Infantry. He determined that



Northern Cheyennes Wade Red Hat, left, and Clinton Bird Hat signal their approval to others below them from a cliff overlooking Battle Canyon and the Punished Woman's Fork battleground. (photo courtesy the *Scott County (Kansas) Record*.)

the terrain he'd just passed through was advantageous to the Cheyenne fighting tactics. As a result, at the Battle of Turkey Springs in Oklahoma, the Cheyenne soundly whipped the command of Captain Joseph Rendlebrock, who'd ridden hard out of Fort Reno in Indian Territory to round up the fugitives. During the battle, the Cheyenne kept the high ground and cut off a water supply from the Army until the commander called it quits. Little Wolf punctuated the victory by intimidating the Army during its retreat. He wanted the word out; chasing after him would have consequences. The embarrassed brass at Army HQ in Washington believed at the time that only a commander's incompetence in the

field could result in losing a fight with Indians. As a result, Captain Rendlebrock was court-martialed and dismissed from service after the Battle of Turkey Springs.

In 2018, when Clinton arrived at Punished Woman's Fork for the second time he was anxious to renew the friendships he'd made with the Kansas community five years earlier. Being a tribal spiritual leader, he was also better prepared this time to do what he does - offer prayers and blessings across the battlefield landscape. Clinton was featured in the local newspaper and photographed blessing important sites, including a cave where Cheyenne women and children were hidden while the warriors engaged the Army. "When I

come back here I see that friendship has evolved from the bitterness that once led to these battles.” Conrad Fisher, then vice-president of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, echoed Clinton’s sentiments. “When we come here we feel the connection to the people who were once here. We feel the energy that’s here. It’s not as though it was 140 years ago. We feel that instant connection and we experience what they felt during that time,” said Fisher. “If the exodus hadn’t happened, I wouldn’t be here. It happened. It’s unfortunate that people lost their lives. But we’re thankful that we have property in Montana and they sacrificed their lives to give us a home in our northern homeland.”

Eighteen days later and hundreds of miles further north, another US Army unit caught up with the Cheyenne again at Battle Canyon, where the Punished Woman’s Fork battle went down. It is perhaps Little Wolf’s finest hour as a military strategist. Believed to be around 58 years old at the time of the fight on September 27, 1878, Little Wolf again selected the battleground where the Cheyenne would engage the enemy. The US 4th Cavalry command of Colonel William H. Lewis with 236 men and 15 scouts was drawn into a small box canyon where the Cheyennes waited in ambush. But a premature shot fired by a young warrior gave their position away and likely avoided a “mini Little Bighorn” catastrophe for the cavalry. In the following hours of fierce fighting, Little Wolf was

constantly on the move, directing his men to fighting positions, and determining when his warriors would converge on the troops. The cavalry regrouped from the initial surprise and the fighting continued for several hours. When the time was right, Little Wolf directed the Cheyenne through a small pass and they escaped the battlefield. The cavalry did not pursue, in part because the lone casualty of the fight for the cavalry was their commander, Colonel Lewis, who lay dead.

Clinton is a fixture at important



Bird Hat keeps his Fancy Dancing muscles toned with weights and resistance equipment sitting nearby calling for his attention.

events and powwows throughout the region. Not only is he a proud Vietnam veteran and Cheyenne spiritual leader, he is also a celebrated “fancy dancer” in the arbor. “Fancy dancing” is the fastest-paced style of Native dancing, with non-stop spinning and gyrating. Sweat pours off the fancy dancers in the summer. By middle age, most men trade in their fancy dance outfits for less physical styles like gourd dancing, where dancers softly step in rhythm to the drum beat and shake ceremonial rattles as they pray. Clinton will have none of that. Despite losing a kneecap in Vietnam and believing at the time his dancing days were through, Clinton slowly regained his mobility, and never lost his love of dancing. In his apartment at Heritage Living Center, Clinton grabs exercise equipment next to his chair while watching the news and does some arm curls. He steps into a bicycle resistance pedal machine to strengthen his legs. And when he goes out on the circuit, he often wins against dancers young enough to be his children and grandchildren. “I use the old tricks, experience, outfox ‘em,” he says with a grin. He dances “for all the people, not just Cheyenne, not just Native Americans.” He is an ambassador for the big picture, believing that all of mankind on Earth is spiritually connected.

There were no known Cheyenne casualties at Punished Woman’s Fork but the fight was nevertheless costly to the Cheyenne. The Army discovered their pony herd and killed 85 head,



while destroying whatever food supplies and provisions the Cheyenne had. To survive, as the Cheyenne moved further north they needed to raid settlements to recover horses and took cattle for food. During these raids, settlers were killed, and for that the Cheyenne briefly lost the sympathy they were receiving from the eastern press during their flight from Oklahoma. Chief Dull

As he moves through his bedroom, artifact after artifact has a story for Clinton to tell you about.

Knife, also known as Morning Star to this day, became worried about their future, and not long thereafter the group of 350 divided into two smaller groups. Little Wolf and his group of 150 were determined to continue the journey to their ancestral homeland on the Tongue River in Montana. Dull Knife (given the nickname after others watched indignantly as he struggled to skin a deer with an overly dull knife) continued north until he surrendered and was taken to Fort Robinson, Nebraska. The ensuing Fort Robinson Outbreak in January of 1879 resulted in the loss of 61 Cheyenne as they attempted a desperate escape in the middle of a freezing winter night, and

has become a defining moment in Cheyenne history. So tragic and brutal was the escape from Fort Robinson, it has placed into relative obscurity the previous five months of the exodus from Oklahoma. This is what makes discovering Punished Woman's Fork so compelling; it represents "the rest of the story."

Little Wolf's band wintered in secret in the Sand Hills of Nebraska before surrendering in late February 1879 to Lt. Philo Clark at Fort Keogh near the Black Hills. Clark greatly respected Little Wolf and became his greatest ally, arguing that the government should give the Cheyenne a tract of land in the north. Clark's advocacy was well-timed. Tired of chasing Indians, Clark's superiors endorsed his report and in 1882

THANK YOU FOR OUR TOUGH NEW ROOF!

We now have a new roof covering over 7,100 square feet of our four flat roof sections. Your generous donations allowed us to complete the project just before winter. Note the snow on the roof in the lower right corner.

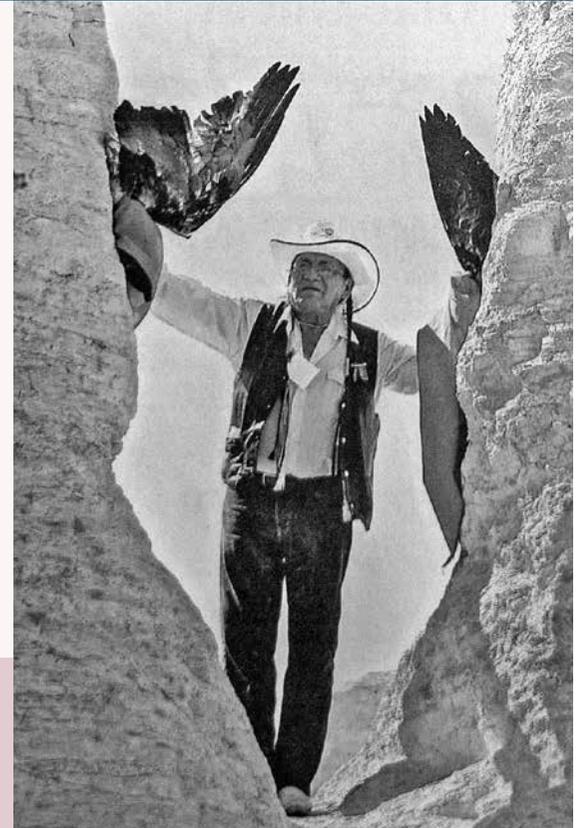


Congress approved a small reservation along Rosebud Creek and the Tongue River, known today as the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation.

Entering Clinton's apartment at Heritage Living Center is like walking into a collectibles store. There is so much important "stuff" your eyes can't find a place to land on at first. The inventory of Native American artifacts decorates the walls and rests on furniture in his two-room apartment. Eagle feathers and American flags dominate the room. Clinton will describe one piece after another, educating his guest on the significance of the piece and where it came from. The items weren't collected on purpose, they accumulated, and are a chronology of Clinton's own life and personal history.

The summer of 2018 was as tough as they come for Clinton, who turns 70 on Christmas day this year. In the span of three months he lost his wife, a son, and his youngest sister. But he is resilient, and understands he is not the only person who's had a hard stretch. He keeps his perspective by praying for others. "We all have a hard time with something going on. Everyone has something going on that's hard, right now. You have to understand that's how life is - hard things happen to us and always will. The best way to help each other through these things is with prayers. It's up to the Creator. That's how I see it."

Clinton offers prayers at a cave where Northern Cheyenne women and children were sheltered during the Punished Woman's Fork fight. (photo courtesy the Scott County (Kansas) Record.)



DETACH, MOISTEN GLUE STRIP AND SEAL

MEMORIES FROM THE 2018 HOLIDAYS



GIVING FROM YOUR IRA – AN INCREASINGLY POPULAR WAY TO GIVE

Elders and guests enjoying each other's company in our lobby.



If you're like most Americans, you have filed your taxes or are preparing to do so for the 2018 tax year. Also, if you're like most Americans, you've discovered some changes in the tax rules, most notably a significant increase in the standard deduction for single and married tax filers. That one change will move most tax payers from the "itemizer" category to the "standard deduction" category.

No longer will deductible expenses like property and

state income taxes, charitable deductions, medical and mortgage interest be as beneficial as they once were. If your itemizable expenses are great enough to exceed the standard deduction, then great! Utilize all the tax advantage you are entitled to deduct. If not, we should use the new standard deduction to reduce our fair share of the taxes paid to our country.

With the new, higher standard deduction, the advantage of itemizing charitable gifts to

reduce the tax owed is lessened. To counter that loss, consider making a charitable contribution from your Individual Retirement Account, or IRA. And please consider making that contribution to Soaring Eagle.

Since 2006, Congress has enacted various provisions, sometimes at the last minute, to incentivize donors who were 70½ years old to make charitable donations from their IRAs.

The expectation was that Uncle Sam would patiently wait until a tax-payer reached 70½ and would then begin collecting taxes on those funds as they were withdrawn from the IRA in the form of a required minimum distribution or greater amount.

The tax law now allows donors to make qualified charitable distributions from their IRAs up to \$100,000 each year to charities, thereby meeting their required minimum distribution requirements, and very importantly, without paying any taxes on those distributed funds. The gift must be made

directly to the charity, rather than to the donor first and then from donor to the charity (if the gift is made incorrectly then it becomes disqualified and there is no tax advantage.)

For tax-payers who have lost the advantage of itemizing charitable deductions, the Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA is a new, tax-wise way to give. If you have any questions about this giving plan, or want to learn more about giving from retirement plans, request our booklet “Giving Through Retirement Plans” or contact your financial advisor.

Please note that you do not need to wait until year end to make an IRA gift. Many donors start the New Year by making such gifts or have begun making monthly and / or quarterly charitable contributions from their IRA accounts.

Bunching Deductions A Strategy Worth Considering

Some donors have found themselves on the fence when it comes deciding whether to itemize or take the new, higher standard deduction. Their itemized expenses are nearly equal to the standard amount.

If only they had a few more itemizable expenses, then it would make sense to itemize and reduce their tax bill.

If this sounds like you, consider bunching some of your itemizable expenses every other year. Here’s how it works.

In one year, the tax-payer utilizes the standard deduction and pays what he or she owes in taxes. Then in the next year, they prepay any itemizable expenses, including charitable donations, for two years, thereby bunching up those qualifying expenses to exceed the standard deduction and reduce their taxes with higher itemized deductions. One year take the standard deduction and the next year take the itemized deduction.

Check with your tax advisor to see if bunching expenses makes sense in your situation. It will take some planning and budgeting to be able to prepay your charitable donations and other qualifying expenses. You might even let Soaring Eagle and your other charities know that

this is your plan.

If you have any questions about how planning your giving can benefit you and the mission of Soaring Eagle, please write or call us at Soaring Eagle, PO Box 879, Billings, MT 59103, (406) 256-8500.

The information in this newsletter is presented to Soaring Eagle’s donors and friends to provide general information and encourage charitable giving. Soaring Eagle is a public charity incorporated in the state of Montana and does not engage in rendering legal, tax, financial, or any other professional advice. Consult your own professional advisors as it pertains to your individual situation. Consult an attorney if your plans require the creation of or revision of a will, trust or other legal document. Tax deductions vary based on numerous factors including personal financial circumstances, tax codes, and applicable federal discount rates, which can change each month. Charitable gift annuities may not be available in all states.



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66	5.2	79	7.1
67	5.3	80	7.3
68	5.3	81	7.5
69	5.4	82	7.7
70	5.6	83	7.9
71	5.7	84	8.1
72	5.8	85	8.3
73	5.9	86	8.5
74	6.1	87	8.7
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77	6.6	90+	9.5

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Please contact us for information.

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YOUR WILL KEEPS ON GIVING

Please use one of the following sample forms of bequest when preparing your Will:

- Giving a Specific Amount – "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 \$_____."
- Giving a Specific Property - "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, (identify specific property, example: 500 shares of XYZ stock)."
- Giving a Percentage – "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."
- Giving the Residue - "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."
- Giving a Contingent Bequest – "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 my bequest to (name of intended recipient) should he/she not be living or be able to accept my bequest."

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

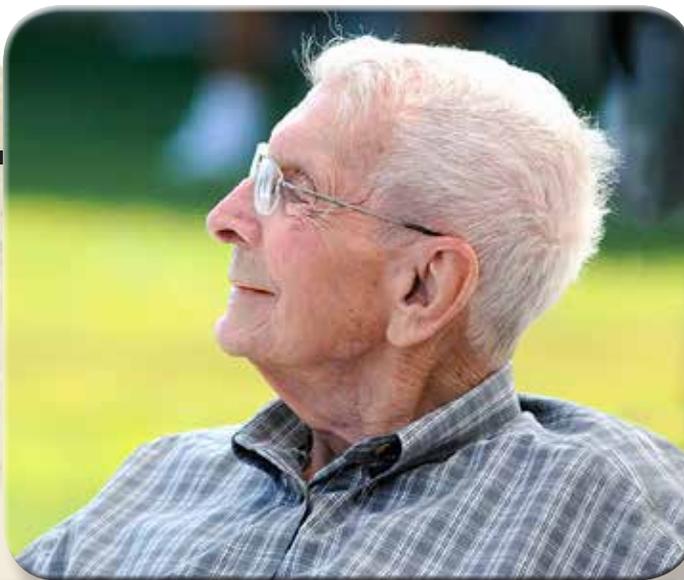
To learn more about giving to Soaring Eagle through your will, request our free booklet "Giving Through Your Will" by writing or calling: Soaring Eagle, PO Box 879, Billings, MT 59103 (406) 256-8500.

I can't stand ice. When I was a boy on our Wisconsin dairy farm, I loved running and sliding on the ice but my feelings have certainly changed since the old days. Yesterday, it was 25 degrees below zero and as I write this letter, I'm looking through a frost covered window. Winter has barely started and we're already experiencing the coldest stretch of weather since 1983.

In my childhood years, I always enjoyed cutting blocks of ice on the Rib River, a country stream near our home. We used long ice saws to cut the blocks into 2 foot squares, 36 inches thick. This chore brought all the neighbors together. It was hard work to load the blocks on the bob sled and haul them home.

We packed 24 inches of sawdust around the outside walls of our ice house to insulate the ice, so it wouldn't melt in the summer heat. Daddy put a layer of sawdust between each row of ice, and stacked them 6 tiers high. When we finished, we had well over a hundred blocks of ice covered with a deep layer of saw dust.

Today, Cheyenne elders at the Heritage Living Center tell many stories of ice storms and hardships during the Depression when meat was scarce. The reservation was



Reminisce with Father Emmett

Winter – 10 years ago . . .

too small to provide enough wild meat for hundreds of malnourished families. By early spring the ice broke up on the river and the Cheyenne grew desperate for meat. They walked the river looking for stranded animals on the ice.

Magpies and crows had plenty of competition from starving Cheyenne who sometimes had to eat half rotten meat. I cringe when I remember coming upon an elderly couple eating a cow covered with flies that had been dead for days. A rancher had dumped the carcass in front of their tent and they thanked God for the meat, even after I'd warned them of food poisoning.

Today, as I think back to those

hard times when the Cheyenne risked their lives to find food, I silently renew my commitment to provide the elders with 3 nutritious meals a day at the Heritage Living Center.

I have seen the Cheyenne suffering with my own eyes and I don't ever want to see the people I love go hungry again, especially now in their senior years when they need to stay warm, well-nourished and healthy.

During these frigid winter months, I worry about the elder's nutritional needs. When they return to the Center after a hospital stay, it's critical for them to eat well in order to heal. I keep an eye out for each one. Sometimes I feel more like an old mother hen than a beggar priest, but I must ask for your help to feed the Cheyenne elders who are only alive today because you care.

The Cheyenne are a devoutly religious people. They join me in asking God's blessing for you and your family each day. During their prayers they often cry. I am always moved by their humble and loving relationship with "the One Above," whom they call "Maheo," Creator God.

Your beggar friend,
Father Emmett Hoffmann

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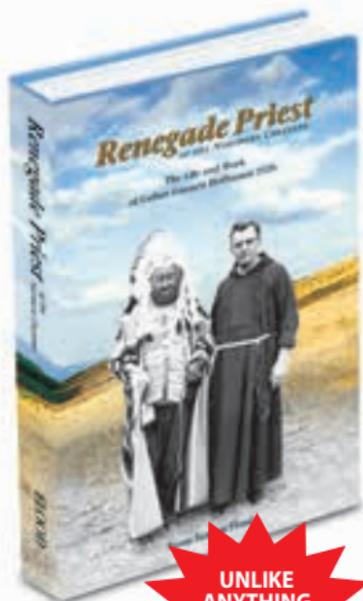
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Annuity Amount \$ _____ *Minimum annuity amount \$5,000 (up to 2 names/birth dates allowed per annuity.)*

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

Please send to me the following:

Giving Securities Giving Through Retirement Plans Giving Through Your Will Guide to Effective Giving after Tax Reform



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