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“General Miles Put Us Here”: Northern Cheyenne Military Alliance and Sovereign Territorial Rights

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Abstract

Today, the Northern Cheyenne Reservation stretches west from the Tongue River over more than 400,000 acres of pine forests, gurgling streams, natural springs, and lush grasslands in southeastern Montana. During the 1870's the Cheyenne people nearly lost control of this land, however, because the federal government was trying to forcibly remove them from their homeland and confine them to an agency in Oklahoma. In both popular and scholarly histories of the establishment of the reservation, Dull Knife and Little Wolf have been exalted as heroes who led their people back to their Tongue River Valley homeland. As anyone who has listened to or read this history knows, these Cheyenne acted with great bravery and overcame brutal obstacles to return from Oklahoma to their northern homeland. Even so, this is only half the story of the Northern Cheyenne fight to remain in southeastern Montana. As Dull Knife and Little Wolf made their arduous journey to escape from the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho agency, other Northern Cheyenne still living in the Tongue River Valley were struggling to remain there. The unpublicized sacrifices of these families ensured that the men, women, and children following Dull Knife and Little Wolf and other Cheyenne refugees had a secure place to call home once they returned. Each group of Northern Cheyenne fought to maintain their presence in their homeland while drawing on different culturally informed strategies to achieve success.

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“General Miles Put Us Here:”

Northern Cheyenne Military Alliance and Sovereign Territorial Rights

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Today, the Northern Cheyenne reservation stretches west from the Tongue River over more than 400,000 acres of pine forests, gurgling streams, natural springs, and lush grasslands in southeastern Montana. During the 1870s, the Cheyenne people nearly lost control of this land, however, because the United States federal government was trying to forcibly remove them from their homeland and confine them to an agency in Oklahoma. In both popular and scholarly histories of the establishment of the reservation, Dull Knife and Little Wolf have been exalted as heroes who led their people back to their Tongue River Valley homeland. As anyone who has listened to or read this history knows, these Cheyenne acted with great bravery and overcame brutal obstacles to return from Oklahoma to their northern homeland. Even so, this is only half of the story of the Northern Cheyenne fight to remain in southeastern Montana. As Dull Knife and Little Wolf made their arduous journey to escape from the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho agency, other Northern Cheyenne still living in the Tongue River Valley were struggling to remain there. The unpublicized sacrifices of these families ensured that the men, women, and children following Dull Knife and Little Wolf and other Cheyenne refugees had a secure place to call home once they returned. Each group of Northern Cheyenne fought to maintain their presence in their homeland while drawing on different culturally informed strategies to achieve success.

This story of these Northern Cheyenne families begins after the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876. After the battle, military officials worked ceaselessly to bring Cheyenne, Lakota, and Arapaho camps into agencies on the northern plains. These military maneuvers led to an encounter that both the military officials involved and then later historians would portray as a Cheyenne surrender. From a Cheyenne perspective, however, the actions associated with this encounter closely resembled those that Plains nations often took to negotiate the creation of military alliances among themselves. These alliances were sealed by gift exchanges, frequently instigated by captives, and often reinforced by adoptions or marriages. Once established, the two former enemies fought alongside each other and shared previously disputed territories.¹ To instigate peace, General Nelson A. Miles, commanding officer at Fort Keogh, encouraged Two Moons and a small group of Cheyenne to come to Fort Keogh to negotiate terms using gifts presented by a Cheyenne woman captured by the soldiers days earlier. Bolstered by this approach, the group agreed to talk and the two groups successfully established peace. More surprisingly, most of the young men soon enlisted as scouts with Miles, even though they had been fighting against the U.S. military only a few months before. This negotiation has been represented in the literature as a military surrender. Miles even described it as such in his correspondence. Nevertheless, this is not a simple narrative of a people forced to adapt and assimilate after their resistance was quashed. This response reflected specifically Cheyenne perceptions of the situation resulting in actions that held different meaning for the Cheyenne people participating than they did for the Euro-Americans.

Two Moons and his people certainly realized the gravity that their response to Miles would hold in shaping their future, and they looked at their own strategies for obtaining peace, while reshaping their expectations to confront the restrictive demands of the colonizing nation-

state that Miles represented. They employed creativity in negotiating for peace with General Miles, establishing a newly forged relationship that was relatively intuitive to them because it was similar to past Plains military negotiations leading to alliances but that also creatively accommodated the pressures of the United States military presence in their territory. The Cheyenne weighed the benefits of a certain level of accommodation knowing it would relieve some of the immediate military pressure and allow them to remain in their homeland a little while longer. By incorporating Cheyenne styles of alliance building into their negotiations, however, Two Moons' people also bought some time to reassess their strategy to maintain their distinctness as a people and to set the stage for future negotiations.

It is easy to polarize the indigenous response to the encroachment of the nation-state into resistance or assimilation. As Frederick Hoxie points out, the role of Indigenous people in the narrative of American history has been to “resist, adapt, negotiate, endure, and persist.” Such narratives obscure Native people’s diverse and creative responses to the continuously evolving relationship between themselves, settlers, government officials, other tribes, and political and economic power holders in Washington and around the world whose actions and decisions affected their daily lives. These narratives also assume that a settler society in the United States is the inevitable outcome of the encounter between Euro-Americans and Native peoples. Recent scholars have thoroughly undermined this premise, arguing Native nations often dominated political encounters with Europeans and Americans when they first settled in a particular landscape.²

Nevertheless, the narrative that through their resistance, Native people became victimized survivors of state-based colonial violence has been politically and socially powerful. Northern Cheyenne people and their allies have utilized this rhetoric in public forums to gain recognition

of the unjust impositions of the colonial actions of settler states. For example, making eastern Euro-American sympathizers aware of Dull Knife and Little Wolf's plight at the time they were struggling to return home benefited their people and gave them the support of powerful men and women—philanthropists and politicians who swayed public opinion and impacted federal policy.³ Today Northern Cheyenne people certainly use the names and narratives of Dull Knife and Little Wolf much more often than Two Moons, by naming buildings after them, relating their histories in public forums about current challenges, and using them as roll models for young people. Although such a discourse can effectively elicit sympathy sometimes provoking lasting reform, it also has the danger of painting the Cheyenne people as so fragmented, economically deprived, and culturally stagnant that they are not capable of strategically mobilizing the language of the state. The Northern Cheyenne become little more than victims of state violence whose resistance convinces non-Native supporters to fight for their cause. As Scott Richard Lyons points out, narratives can colonize as well.⁴ Although this narrative powerfully justifies Cheyenne resistance to the violence perpetrated on them by the nation-state, it also implies that the United States granted them the reservation; ultimately this story represents the Northern Cheyenne as a defeated people who passively received their land.

At the same time, these narratives are characterized by violence. Blackhawk notes that it is difficult to interpret these histories outside of the violent disruptions instigated by European and American intrusion.⁵ Violence is a useful analytical tool for interpreting Northern Cheyenne strategies, but the result is certainly more complex than sorting groups into the victors and the victimized. The Northern Cheyenne responded to the violence of the threat of removal, the intrusion into their territory, and the destruction of their game and resources with both violence and diplomacy. They both participated in the violence and worked to mitigate it. Arguing that

this Native nation never surrendered to General Nelson Miles—but instead built an alliance with him—demonstrates that the United States failed to gain a clear victory. Instead, the Northern Cheyenne creatively forged their own path.

Such creative responses to violence often undermined the goals of the state. Settler colonies are grounded on the erasure of Indigenous societies both physically and culturally. Colonial powers used divide-and-conquer strategies, like enlisting Native peoples as scouts, as a part of this agenda. Without question, the U.S. military enlisted Native scouts to help subdue Native nations, erase their claims to the landscape, and confine the people to small patches of land. Often without these scouts, the military would have failed, and as a result, scouts and their families were rewarded for this aid.⁶ Needless to say, their participation does not imply that Native scouts agreed with the colonial agenda of their officers. Native people were well practiced at reading European and Euro-American divisions to gain opportunities to exercise initiative in the interaction and to manipulate the situation to their advantage.⁷ Because the army depended on them so heavily, scouts were in a unique position to gain such opportunities. Of course, by 1877, Cheyenne people had less power to manipulate Euro-Americans but were not left entirely without strategies. Therefore, as Hoxie argues, “the complex mixture of resistance and adaptation is a permanent feature of indigenous life within settler colonial states.”⁸ Although the military campaigns against them had placed them under immense pressure, they did not succumb to despair.

The Cheyenne responded to the colonial process of American settlement by participating in what Marshall Sahlins calls a culturally informed process of interpretation and adaptation.⁹ They drew on an age old strategy to construct an alliance with an enemy, but this enemy did not play by the same rules, so they had to adapt to the new game. Scott Richard Lyons’s metaphor

of the x-mark is useful to understanding the drive behind becoming scouts for these Cheyenne men. He argues that, “The x-mark is a contaminated and coerced sign of consent made under conditions that are not of one’s making.”¹⁰ He recognizes that such an act represents both power and the loss of power at the same moment. This was certainly true of becoming a scout in the U.S. military. These men were stuck between a rock and a hard place, and yet they could still find a path for themselves. Lyons points out that in the x-mark, there still exists “the prospect of slippage, indeterminacy, unforeseen consequences, or unintended results.”¹¹ The Cheyenne had had plenty of experience with x-marks by that point in time; perhaps they went into this agreement hoping to take advantage of this indeterminacy.

The history of Two Moons and his people reveals that they interpreted the language of the state in an attempt to predict its actions, then used this knowledge to determine their own best course of action based on Cheyenne cultural expectations, and finally manipulated the structures of the colonial machine to adapt to the immediate dangers posed by U.S. military actions. Often adaptation becomes a necessary component of resistance, particularly if Native people shape the process and are able to set some of the terms of their participation. Becoming scouts certainly was a form of adaptation, but this sacrifice resulted in strengthening the Northern Cheyenne’s ability to resist removal from their northern homeland, to welcome home Dull Knife and Little Wolf once they had escaped removal, and to convince the United States to establish a permanent land base recognized as legitimate by the state. By establishing what the Northern Cheyenne viewed as an alliance through Plains style diplomacy, this group placed itself in the position to assert some autonomy in their relationships with other Native nations and even with the United States.

Negotiating for Peace and Establishing an Alliance

One of the most compelling indications that the Northern Cheyenne viewed their relationship with General Nelson A. Miles as a military alliance was the way in which it was established. By April of 1877, both Miles, who was stationed at Fort Keogh, and General George R. Crook at Red Cloud Agency were still struggling to contain the Cheyenne and Lakota who had left the agencies around the time of the Battle of Little Big Horn. Neither Crook nor Miles could win a decisive military victory over these camps.¹² Both generals decided to turn to Plains style diplomacy, but both had to depend on Native go-betweens to accomplish negotiations. Miles had much more at stake in his attempt to gain control over Plains people away from their agencies because he desired promotion to establish a successful military career.¹³ He was competing against a well-established general to impress his superiors. Moreover, the Cheyenne and Lakota knew Red Cloud agency; they went there to receive rations and had relatives living near the fort. Most likely, this group already had suspicions about Fort Keogh because a group of Crow scouts working for Miles had killed a party of Lakota leaders on their way to the fort, carrying a white flag.¹⁴ Not surprisingly, the Lakota go-betweens Crook sent managed to convince most of these warriors and families to come to the Red Cloud agency.¹⁵ Because he took advice from a Cheyenne woman who agreed to act as a go-between, Miles was also able to employ Plains Indian diplomacy to encourage a group of Cheyenne to come to Fort Keogh. This action had a lasting effect impact on both the Northern Cheyenne people and on Miles's career.

Sweet Woman, the Cheyenne woman Miles turned to, educated him in the ways of Plains Indian diplomacy, showing him how to negotiate peace using a captive woman as a conduit and offering gifts to demonstrate his goodwill. Sweet Woman, as the captive woman, instigated and

led this diplomatic endeavor.¹⁶ Ms. ST, a descendant of members of the Cheyenne camp who negotiated with Miles, related the following story of this encounter.¹⁷

Miles was not able to bring the Lakota and Cheyenne to Fort Keogh because he could not manage to get close to them. There was a Cheyenne woman living at Fort Keogh named Sweet Woman who was a good friend of General Miles.¹⁸ In fact, Miles' men had captured this woman. Miles asked Sweet Woman for help, wanting to know how he could get close to these bands. She told him to bring them gifts of blankets, sugar, coffee, bacon, beans, and tobacco. Sweet Woman agreed to travel to their camp with an interpreter, who would listen to what they had to say. The interpreter and his men piled their horses high with gifts, and then Sweet Woman and these men rode to meet Two Moons and his followers [paraphrased].¹⁹

Miles was playing by the rules of Plains diplomacy—whether he realized it or not, he was about to create a military alliance with these Cheyenne that would demand obligations from both parties.

A small group of Cheyenne, Two Moons among them, decided that they would listen to Miles' offer for peace. When this group arrived at Fort Keogh, Miles met with the headmen in his cabin. He told them that if they gave up their arms and their horses and placed themselves under his care, he would treat them well. John Stands in Timber related that Miles told the Cheyenne headmen that he wanted peace and that he would let them choose a place for their own reservation if they came to the fort.²⁰ Ms. ST described the Northern Cheyenne response, stating they had accepted his gifts, so they shook hands and agreed to move to the fort.²¹ She explicitly connects the gifts with the agreement to come to the fort, demonstrating that, as for

many Native people, in this situation gift giving was central to establishing peace. Two Moons told Miles that he would go back to his people and return to the fort with them, but Miles was afraid that they would change their minds when they reached their camp, so he asked for volunteers from the party to remain. When no one else came forward, White Bull agreed to stay.²² Miles immediately asked him to become a scout and he agreed. Only one day after the band had arrived, White Bull was sworn in and given a uniform. Once the other Cheyenne saw that White Bull was being treated well, other men offered to stay as well, including Little Chief, and two Lakota men, Hump and Horse Road.²³

Two Moons traveled back to the Cheyenne camp, relayed Miles' terms, and returned to Fort Keogh with the families who wished to join him. When they arrived, they surrendered their firearms and their horses. In the eyes of the United States government, they became prisoners of war. The letters and documents produced by both local and federal officials used the terms "surrender" and "prisoners" to describe this encounter, but the officials who composed these documents recognized that such terms were not apt descriptors. The Select Committee's Report on the Removal of the Northern Cheyenne stated that Miles spoke of the Cheyenne as "prisoners of war;" however, it noted that "this was only a nominal capture, and the Indians were treated as prisoners of war because the army could not hold or provide for them in any other character."²⁴ Basically, the army had no category for the Cheyenne, so they could only fund them under the category of "prisoner." In fact, the strongest evidence that they were not considered prisoners at the fort is that the men were almost immediately issued guns and horses in their capacity as U. S. military scouts. They had their own camp and could come and go as they pleased. The women set up their own tipis or used army tents and cooked for their families, instead of depending on the fort's cook or barracks.

By 1877, Miles' brief experience on campaigns against Native people had been extensive. After getting noticed by his superiors in the Civil War, Miles was transferred west. In 1874, he made a name for himself in the Red River War (also known as the Kiowa-Comanche War). Shortly after the Cheyenne and Lakota victory at the Battle of Little Big Horn, Miles was sent to the area to establish a fort. He built Fort Keogh where the Yellowstone and the Tongue Rivers meet and commenced to carry out his mission to contain all Plains peoples that remained beyond the control of the agencies. An ambitious man, many of Miles' actions during the Wars on the Plains can be understood as part of his efforts to gain the attention of Washington and to attain a generalship.²⁵ Miles had already unsuccessfully attempted to impress his superiors by trying to bring Crazy Horse to Fort Keogh. The Crow scouts who undertook this mission had less incentive to pursue diplomacy as enemies of the Lakota and the endeavor ended in violence.²⁶ Encouraging a small group of Cheyenne to come to his fort granted Miles only limited success because he failed to demonstrate that he could outstrip Crook, who used Lakota scouts to convince Crazy Horse and most of the other Cheyenne and Lakota to travel to the Red Cloud agency.²⁷ Regardless, Miles had now formed a large contingent of Cheyenne scouts to serve on his campaigns, realizing that these men would give him the same advantage on the Northern Plains that Crook drew from the Lakota scouts he enlisted.

General Miles may not have realized how much these Cheyenne men would propel his career forward at the time. One of the U. S. soldiers who fought with the Cheyenne scouts recalled his experience,

My first real scouting was done with a party of them [Northern Cheyenne],
Little Chief, Brave Wolf, Black Wolf, White Bear and White Bull Hump and

they were of the 7th cavalry. The army had an idea that they had only surrendered a short while before and could not be trusted.²⁸

It became apparent rather quickly, however, that the Cheyenne scouts could be trusted. They were quite successful at bringing in groups the army could not subdue. In fact, the Cheyenne scouts that served at Fort Keogh accomplished some of the most famous U.S. military victories of the day, elevating Miles's status as an accomplished officer. First they fought Lame Deer and his band of Minneconjoux Lakota, ultimately forcing their surrender so Miles could confine them to Fort Keogh. Later, when Chief Joseph's band of Nez Pierce had continued to elude the army, the Northern Cheyenne scouts picked up their trail and gave the U.S. the advantage it needed to contain them.²⁹ These scouts also helped to remove Sitting Bull and his band from Canada. Considering the central role of the Cheyenne scouts to these campaigns, General Miles recognized that enlisting these men enhanced both the military's and his own reputation in the eyes of the federal government.³⁰ The scouts brought him success that would win him favor in Washington, leading eventually to his promotion to a general.

From a Cheyenne perspective, however, fighting for the United States was a more conflicted endeavor. Because they were quite familiar with Native scouts both on the battlefield and at their agencies, these scouts surely understood the grave impact this choice made on their personal lives and the future of their people. By becoming scouts, they sacrificed the freedom that came from remaining away from the agencies, they aided an enemy that had stolen their land and ravaged their communities, and they eventually would have to fight against their Native allies. Thomas Dunlay and David Smitt both attempt to answer the question that naturally emerges from this history—were these men betraying their own people?³¹ They argue that scouting offered opportunities to strike a blow at a traditional enemy or a steady income for men

confined to reservations with no way to feed their starving families. Smitt argues that it gave men a legitimate vehicle for demonstrating their military prowess and gaining honors.³² Scouts' families also received benefits such as access to army rations or supplies from the fort's commissary. This was certainly true for the Northern Cheyenne living at Fort Keogh. Those who came to the fort to negotiate with General Miles had not yet successfully been confined to an agency, so they were not motivated by the chance to escape the oppressive suffocation of reservation life or to supplement the insufficient rations distributed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Nevertheless, they were under extreme pressure of a different nature. They had spent the good part of a year attempting to outmaneuver the cavalry, dodging its bullets with families in tow. This was not the only threat posed to the Cheyenne at this time, however, because the U.S. already had plans to remove them from their homeland and to confine them in Oklahoma.

The U.S. military disapproved of the transfer of the Bureau of Indian Affairs from the War Department to the Interior Department and believed that this led to the mismanagement of relations with Native people.³³ During the later part of the 19th century, some military leaders strongly condemned removal as a way to contain and control Native populations because it often lead to bloodshed and the army took the brunt of the blame. They viewed Native service in the military as a way to protect people threatened with removal. According to Cheyenne oral histories concerning Two Moons's original negotiations at Fort Keogh, Miles offered this group a permanent home in the north. Considering the common perception among military officers, Miles might have been attempting to undermine the Bureau of Indian Affairs' power to remove them. He was certainly opposed to the removal, telling the Senate Committee investigating it, "I at the time regarded the order sending these Indians down to Indian Territory as unfortunate and the movement unwise."³⁴ He goes on to describe the act as a "banishment," calling it "unjust

and cruel.”³⁵ These Cheyenne men certainly had gained enough familiarity with the United States to know that enlisting as scouts could strengthen their ability to remain in their homeland.

The scouts may have also believed that they would be in a position to help their Cheyenne and Lakota relatives remaining away from the agencies. They knew from experience that both Crook and Miles had attempted to negotiate with groups who had left their agencies through Native scouts. In fact, in only a couple short years, these Cheyenne scouts would be integral to bringing Little Wolf’s people to Fort Keogh without bloodshed. Lieutenant William P. Clark, saddled with the orders to kill or capture Little Wolf’s party of Cheyenne, relied heavily on Northern Cheyenne scouts and an interpreter to council him and to negotiate peace with Little Wolf without firing a weapon.³⁶ Certainly for Little Wolf’s men, who had suffered from removal to Oklahoma and fought their way back north several years after Two Moons people settled at Fort Keogh, enlisting at the fort as scouts provided security against future removals.

Smitt argues, however, that despite the benefits scouts gained for themselves and their communities, the majority of those who enlisted did so as prisoners of war and had no other choice. He states that Natives who had surrendered to the military, like Two Moons’ people, and those confined to reservations, “were powerless, deprived of their freedom and homelands, and utterly dependant on the federal government for their most elementary needs.”³⁷ This assessment accurately reflects the experience of many Native scouts, but not that of the Northern Cheyenne. Smitt points to George Bird Grinnell’s comment that a scout once told him, “My friend, I was a prisoner of war for four years, and all the time was fighting for the man that captured me,” as evidence that Native people had little choice but to scout for the U.S. as conquered people.³⁸ Grinnell includes this quote in *The Fighting Cheyennes* as a part of a

discussion about the freedom Cheyenne scouts enjoyed and the satisfaction they felt from their service.³⁹ Of course, both scholars use the quote to illustrate their own perspectives within very different contexts, but I suggest that this anonymous scout was speaking to Grinnell ironically. Miles himself had stated to the federal government that the scouts were prisoners of war in name alone. These Cheyenne scouts had heard the narratives of their relatives who had been imprisoned at the Cheyenne and Arapaho agency in Oklahoma and at Fort Robinson who had chosen to flee for their lives rather than to endure confinement. It is doubtful that these Cheyenne scouts and their families at Fort Keogh viewed themselves as prisoners of war. Their circumstances in comparison to their relatives in Oklahoma provided no evidence for such an assumption. Perhaps this scout was using irony to point out that even though federal officials had labeled them prisoners of war, the Northern Cheyenne actually had a different relationship with General Miles and other local officials because prisoners do not fight for their captors. Only enemies who had negotiated a peace and built an alliance fought side by side on the Plains. If this statement was actually meant to be ironic, it adds weight to the idea that these Cheyenne believed they had forged an alliance with General Miles, but by the time Grinnell conducted this interview, they also recognized that Euro-Americans had a different perspective on the relationship.

Still today, Northern Cheyenne people continue to assert that their people never surrendered, even when discussing Two Moons or Little Wolf. Instead they discuss the relationship the Northern Cheyenne formed with Miles and other officials as one between equals. Fighting against their former allies, especially the Lakota, was a decision not made lightly, but this new military alliance demanded it. In an interview during the summer of 2005, Ms. ST described the power of the alliance the Cheyenne scouts built with General Miles for their

people. She stated that his dedication to the Northern Cheyenne efforts to remain in their homeland began at the Lane Deer Battle when White Bull saved the general's life. Some Lakota were surrendering and had laid their guns on the ground, but one, possibly Lane Deer himself, had left his cocked. White Bull had warned Miles by pointing this out with his eyes. When the warrior went for his gun, Miles was ready and ducked away, dodging the bullet. Miles then thanked all the scouts for their help. He told them he would give them whatever they asked for out of gratitude. The scouts of the other Plains nations who fought said they wanted all the captured horses, so he gave them all away to these scouts. When Miles asked White Bull what he wanted, he said, "Promise me you will let us live on this land and not make us leave." Ms. ST related that because Miles gave his word, he fought hard to secure land for the Northern Cheyenne.⁴⁰ This story lends validity to the assertion that the people never surrendered. It also emphasizes that Cheyenne people took an active role in remaining on and securing their homeland. Drawing on their own understandings of state power wielded by the U.S., these Cheyenne men and their families manipulated the structures of the colonial machine to meet the needs of their community using the opportunities that emerged.

Ms. DG, a Cheyenne elder, noted that the Northern Cheyenne who scouted for Miles made a great sacrifice, stating that they gave up the old ways and started living like white people; they stopped moving across the Plains and stayed in one place. She notes that they also fought for the U.S. military at times against their own friends. She points to these sacrifices as the way the Northern Cheyenne eventually obtained their own reservation in Montana.⁴¹ Ms. DG spoke of these Cheyenne scouts who gave up so much with high esteem. She did not characterize their actions as assimilationist, or as selling out to the government; she instead spoke of these sacrifices with respect and recognition of their ultimate power.

Miles's gifts and promises and the enlistment of these Cheyenne as scouts demonstrate that the Cheyenne could have thought of this relationship as an alliance that entailed certain obligations. Moreover, Northern Cheyenne scouts at Fort Keogh spoke of this relationship in such terms. At the Senate Hearing on Removal of the Northern Cheyenne in 1880, Little Chief explicitly connected scouting for Miles with rights to not only horses and guns, but land. He stated that Miles had told him to comply with removal to Oklahoma, but if his people did not like it there, they could return. He continues,

There would not be much trouble in doing that, because, he (Miles) said, the government knew of the valuable services we had rendered helping him in the Nez Perce campaign; also in capturing the Lamé Deer Sioux village.... When we surrendered to General Miles we gave up all our horses and arms; afterward he gave us back some horses to scout for him—also some arms to scout with.⁴²

Little Chief made it clear to the committee that the scouts expected to be able to keep the horses and guns after removal because they were given to them for their service. The relationship also demanded access to land. Years later, Northern Cheyenne leaders continued to reference their service in conversations about land. In a council with government officials held in 1890 about the Cheyenne reservation, Howling Wolf brought up the forging of the original alliance with General Miles, speaking of Sweet Woman to invoke the legitimacy of the alliance. He began by declaring that the soldiers and the Cheyenne had been friends for a long time, pointing to the beginning of their friendship as the negotiation initiated by Miles and facilitated by Sweet Woman. At the same meeting, Howling Wolf stated, "He [Miles] didn't abuse her [Sweet Woman] but took good care of her."⁴³ Brave Wolf also pointed to General Miles for proof of their rights to their homeland. He said, "You ask us about our land. I will tell you the truth.

General Miles is our friend. I feel as if he was our brother. My people have always helped him. General Miles put us here.”⁴⁴ White Bull added, “You are talking about General Miles. He promised we should live here until we are all old men.”⁴⁵ For the Northern Cheyenne, the relationship they had established with Miles first through Sweet Woman and then later as scouts gave them rights to the land. Surely the Cheyenne felt certain that these rights were established through Plains style diplomacy and then underscored as the two groups fought side by side, as Brave Wolf said, “as if he was our brother.” Among Plains nations, a military alliance often also implied joint rights to territory. Because of their alliance, the Cheyenne argued that the U.S., represented by Miles, had an obligation to secure the people a permanent home in Montana.

Homesteading to Secure the Claim to This Land

Furthermore, the alliance was not simply constructed as a Cheyenne institution through a unidirectional culturally informed process of interpretation. Although General Miles most likely did not view his agreement with the scouts as an alliance among equals, he recognized the unique nature of it as well, acknowledging that the Cheyenne had never truly been prisoners of war. Although what he had forged with these Cheyenne did not fit a neat category within U.S. diplomacy, Miles realized it did entail obligations on his part, and he ultimately attempted to live up to them by helping to secure a permanent place for the Northern Cheyenne in the Tongue River Valley. Of course, he interpreted his commitment through a culturally informed process as well, one that promoted assimilation for Native peoples. Between 1880 and 1882, General Miles sought to keep the Northern Cheyenne on their land by encouraging them to move away from the fort and begin homesteading. In 1875 Congress passed the American Indian Homestead Act, stating that Natives could apply for homesteads provided that they had already or would at some

point abandon their tribal relations.⁴⁶ Just like the Homestead Act of 1862, which allowed other Americans to take land, the Indian Homestead Act allowed each Native person to claim one hundred and sixty acres. Ms. ST stated that when the people first arrived at Fort Keogh, they were placed in barracks, but the military was worried about them at the fort. They then began camping near the fort, but Miles did not like this either. So he worked hard to find them their own land. Miles wanted them to be living away from the fort, so he encouraged them to move south into the Tongue River Valley and take homesteads.⁴⁷ Both Ms. ST and Ms. DG argued that Miles was instrumental in supporting the Northern Cheyenne settlement in Montana and establishing U.S. government recognition of this settlement. Because he encouraged the people to settle on the land in a way non-Natives recognized as legitimate, General Miles proved beneficial to the Northern Cheyenne's efforts to remain in the Tongue River Valley.

This might make Miles look like he was exceptionally heroic, but it falls in line with the military's opinion of the failures of the Indian office. Miles kept his promise to the Northern Cheyenne who scouted, using his own cultural interpretation of the relationship. He believed their best option was to assimilate to Western lifestyles through military life, ranching, and farming. Miles stated that he believed that Native people would benefit from owning land in severalty, but he also argued that Plains people like the Cheyenne should own cattle first and that farming would come gradually. He told the Senate Committee that, "The savage is usually first a hunter, then a herdsman, or shepherd; next he cultivates the ground. You cannot expect them at first to be satisfied with one hundred and sixty acres of land and nothing else, when they have been accustomed to roam over a whole Territory."⁴⁸ Clearly his views on Native people were racist and demeaning. In fact, Miles was parroting a common belief among military men that scouting would be the first step for Native people in the process of assimilation.⁴⁹ In

implementing these ideals among the Northern Cheyenne, however, he provided the people with some valuable leverage when negotiating with representatives of the federal government. Scouting and homesteading were two of the very limited list of options the Northern Cheyenne had in 1877. Nevertheless, these Cheyenne continued to analyze these choices in a culturally informed process designed to strategically use their service and their personal relationships as a way to meet their own goals while adapting to the U.S. colonial presence.

Although the process of taking up homesteads along the Tongue River was essential in establishing a permanent Cheyenne presence in the area at that time, the majority of historical sources fail to mention this. Most sources explain the slow trickle of Northern Cheyenne returning to the Tongue River region in Montana as the result of Little Wolf's banishment. Because he had killed another Cheyenne man in the winter of 1880 while at Fort Keogh, Little Wolf banished himself from the community as Cheyenne law required of murders.⁵⁰ He moved with his family to a spot on Muddy Creek just a few miles from where the town of Lame Deer is located today.⁵¹ Little Wolf stopped here because he reached the home of William Rowland and his family.⁵² Rowland had married a Cheyenne woman and had lived with the Cheyenne for most of his life.⁵³ By 1880, he was living in a small cabin along Muddy Creek. Ms. DG pointed out that the Rowland's were really the first to live in the area of the present day reservation.⁵⁴ In his banishment, Little Wolf had turned to other members of his community. Eventually those who followed him as a chief left Fort Keogh and joined him in the same area. General Miles was not concerned with bringing these families back because he no longer had to provide space and food for them at the already crowded fort.⁵⁵

During the same period, Miles encouraged Northern Cheyenne families to move into the country along Tongue River and select places to live. In the council held in 1890, Howling Wolf remembered that after Miles' scouts apprehended Sitting Bull,

Miles must have written to Washington to ask about this country. After awhile General Miles heard from Washington that, now he and the Cheyennes were friends, he could put them wherever they wanted to go. After awhile General Miles sent for two head men and told them that he wanted us to go up on the Rosebud and settle down there, that it belonged to us.⁵⁶

Certainly this is speculative and filtered through a Cheyenne perspective.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the statement clearly demonstrates that the Northern Cheyenne felt that Miles was fighting for their right to remain in the Tongue River valley and viewed his actions as a legitimization of their right to the territory. The Northern Cheyenne families at Fort Keogh did receive permission from Washington to establish homesteads in the area.⁵⁸ Soon they began to look around Lame Deer and Muddy Creek to find good places to live. By 1883 many other Cheyenne had left Fort Keogh to join their friends and family in the wooded valleys along the Rosebud and Tongue Rivers. John Stands in Timber described this land: "You can't find country like this anywhere else no matter how far you go. There was plenty of wood, and good water, and range, and many kinds of game. It was the place they had in mind all the time."⁵⁹

The Northern Cheyenne skillfully interpreted the assimilationist goals of U.S. Indian policy behind scouting and homesteading and adapted. At the same time, they responded to these pressures creatively, by manipulating the relationship with General Miles to ensure they could shape the form these adaptations took. They sought land in their favorite territory and wanted to gain official support for settlement there. Furthermore, their cultural perspective of

negotiation and alliance informed the actions and rhetoric they used to manipulate U.S. officials, including Miles. By using terms like “friend” and “brother” when referring to Miles and emphasizing that these relationships gave them rights to territory, they secured Miles’s aid in remaining on their land.

Asserting Rights to Territory Through the Military Alliance with Miles

Although many Northern Cheyenne families settled in the Rosebud and Tongue River Valleys during the 1880s, leading to the establishment of an executive order reservation in 1884, by the 1890s, the Cheyenne were threatened with removal once again. James McLaughlin, who had been the agent at Standing Rock during the Wounded Knee massacre, was appointed as the Inspector who would investigate the situation at the Tongue River reservation and determine whether it was advisable to move the Cheyenne onto the Crow Reservation.⁶⁰ He arrived at the agency on August 13, 1898 and promptly called together a council to discuss the matter with the Cheyenne themselves. He determined from speaking with them and with the Crow that neither wanted to live on the same reservation and reported that, “although the Crows and Northern Cheyennes are neighbors, there is not the most cordial feeling between them.”⁶¹ McLaughlin only spent a few sentences of his report discussing the enmity between the two nations. He was more concerned with the rights that the Cheyenne insisted that they had to the land. He stated, “The Northern Cheyenne Indians are very much attached to the country they now occupy, many of them having been born and reached manhood within its borders; besides they have had the assurance of government officials from time to time that they would be permitted to remain there undisturbed.”⁶² Their connection to the land seemed to impress McLaughlin and he apparently

took what they told him in council quite seriously. Furthermore, he did not simply dismiss the promises they obtained from government officials to remain in the area of the Tongue River.

McLaughlin told Congress that several Cheyenne had either originals or copies of letters from government officials that they had kept as evidence of the government's reliability. He cites two of these letters in full, one from General Nelson A. Miles and the other from T. J. Morgan, Commissioner of Indian Affairs. In his letter, dated 1889, Miles recounted the many important services the Northern Cheyenne provided for the government, beginning with their trip to negotiate at his fort, stating that it paved the way for the end of the War on the Plains. Miles continued the letter by describing in detail their service as scouts against Lame Deer and Chief Joseph. He then argued, "They were told that if they remained at peace and did what they were directed to do, the Government would treat them fairly and justly. They have fulfilled their part of the compact, and it would be but justice for the Government to allow them to remain where it has placed them."⁶³

For Miles, the Northern Cheyenne claim to the territory around the Tongue River Valley existed regardless of the reservation. He stated in his letter, "they have an undoubted right, legally and morally, to remain where they are now located."⁶⁴ He declared in his letter that this was because they had surrendered their tribal relations to take up homesteads. Yet, in this letter, Miles did not justify the Northern Cheyenne presence in the Tongue River Valley in terms of their progress towards civilization made on their homesteads. In fact, he never described the houses they had built, fields they had plowed, or cattle they had raised—actions Euro-Americans would have viewed as assimilation. He was arguing from an even stronger position, the promise or compact the Cheyenne had with the government.

Archival documents created by representatives of the United States used the term “surrender” to describe the moments when Plains people came into the agencies. The Northern Cheyenne perspective mattered little to federal officials in Washington; they had surrendered and as prisoners of war had no rights to the territory. Local officials, on the other hand, approached these issues from a more pragmatic perspective. Men like Miles and McLaughlin, worked and lived with Native peoples, not only depending on them for their livelihood but sometimes for their very lives. Certainly these relationships rarely were powerful enough to override the prejudices they carried against Native people and certainly each individual responded differently to their encounters. Yet, by the 1880s, some local officials had adopted the attitude that working with Native peoples to resolve concerns more effectively achieved their assimilationist goals than being heavy handed.

Furthermore, the term “surrender” often obscures the actuality that the Northern Cheyenne who came in to Fort Keogh did not believe they had surrendered in the Euro-American sense of the term and that Miles did not consider these men, women, and children to be prisoners of war. The two parties had made an agreement, which surely looked to the Northern Cheyenne like the alliances they had made with other Plains peoples in the past. Miles himself called the agreement a “compact” and implied that this compact substantiated Northern Cheyenne rights to the territory. Although he does not come all the way out and say that they were promised this land in the compact, his letter reflected the kind of outcomes that Plains peoples would have expected when creating alliances in the past.

Miles underscored the importance of the social relationship he developed with the Northern Cheyenne, by relating the events of what he called “surrender,” stating it was in good faith and then describing Northern Cheyenne military service at Fort Keogh.⁶⁵ Clearly Miles

understood the Northern Cheyenne military service as pivotal to their rights to the Tongue River Valley. In his letter, he used the term “compact”—and mentioned justice and morality—clearly supporting the Northern Cheyenne’s right to settle in the Tongue River Valley, to hunt, and to prosper on their own. Furthermore, he made a promise to the scouts when they saved his life at the battle against Lame Deer to allow them to remain on their land. Regardless of whether Miles understood his relationship with the Northern Cheyenne to be an alliance, he felt responsible to them because of the social bonds they shared. It is easy to see why Cheyenne people held onto this letter as proof. They had fought along side him and had accepted him as a friend. Looking back, one might suspect Miles of envisioning himself in a romantic colonial fantasy of the Native who willingly complies with invasion and embraces assimilation. Perhaps he did, but I believe that from a Cheyenne perspective, the letter instead reflects a strategic use of Plains political discourse and creative alliance building. They had convinced Miles that of the validity of their compact, including a guarantee of rights to the land around Tongue River.

In their two councils with McLaughlin, the first held August 17, 1898 and the second held, October 6, 1898, the Northern Cheyenne present referred to their agreement with Miles regularly.⁶⁶ Two Moons’s statement to McLaughlin is worth quoting in its entirety:

My friend, we are glad to see you and have you with us. You were a long time with our friends, the Sioux, and we have heard of you and that you are a good friend of the Indians. We don’t want you to try and get land for us any place away from here. This is our country, and we want to remain here, and have our children continue to live here after we old men are gone. General Miles promised us that we would never be sent away from here, and I hope that you will now make us strong on this reservation.⁶⁷

Two Moons opened with a warm greeting that not only welcomed McLaughlin but also reminded him of the Cheyenne expectations of him. He had worked to do good things for the Lakota Sioux, who were the Cheyenne's friends, allies, and relatives, and so they expected him to do good things for them as well. Two Moons was clear that they did not want to move and emphasized, "this is our country," stating that they wanted to remain there for future generations. He sealed his argument by reminding McLaughlin and all gathered there that Miles had promised that they never would have to leave.

The Northern Cheyenne surely felt that the Tongue River country was their country for many reasons: they had been living in the area for generations, they had close ties with the Lakota with whom they shared the territory, and they fought hard and won to keep enemies out of that country, including the United States Army whom they defeated only miles from the Tongue River at the Battle of Little Big Horn. Yet the speakers did not mention their military victories as evidence of their rights to the territory; instead they referred to their historical presence in the area and the alliance they had established. Medicine Bear stated, "Leave us here that we may live and die in a country in which we were born and grew up."⁶⁸ He emphasized that the Cheyenne relationship with this land had stretched for generations, their parents lived there and gave birth to them there, and they should continue in that country, the life cycle should continue there. Both American Horse and Hairy Hand reminded the inspector that the country had been promised to them by government officials and they wanted to remain in it.⁶⁹

White Elk made the connection between the Northern Cheyenne ownership of the land and their alliance with General Miles explicit when he stated, "We first made peace with the whites on Tongue River, and we want to make our permanent home here."⁷⁰ White Elk's understanding of the connection between making peace in a specific landscape and the right to

access that landscape did not mirror those of the United States. In the second council, Bobtail Horse and Little Chief reiterated this argument. Bobtail Horse also stated that the Northern Cheyenne made peace with the whites in that region and then reminded all gathered of their military service and how they fought other tribes who were at war with the United States government while living in that country.⁷¹ Little Chief also stated that General Miles put them on the land and they fought against their own friends, the Sioux, on this very land.⁷² These speakers underscored the relationship they had with General Miles and illustrated how it gave them rights to this territory. When viewed from a Cheyenne perspective, it is clear that the relationship the Northern Cheyenne scouts forged with General Miles was an alliance, not surrender, and as such guaranteed rights to access the landscape that the two parties protected together.

Gain and Loss

Based on the information he gathered while on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, McLaughlin recommended another executive order to expand the reservation east to the Tongue River. This expansion would more than double the size of the reservation, but it would not encompass the homesteads of the Cheyenne who had settled on the eastern banks of the river. Families outside the reservation boundary had held onto these lands since before 1884 and surely felt that they had every right to that land. In 1898 McLaughlin set out to make an agreement with all the Northern Cheyenne living on the east side of Tongue River to move onto the reservation if it was expanded.⁷³ Forty-six Northern Cheyenne men signed their names on the contract that declared that they would abandon their homesteads and move west in exchange for twenty-five dollars to cover their losses. At the same time, McLaughlin negotiated forty-one

agreements with American settlers to receive just compensation for the homesteads within the proposed boundaries of the reservation that they would have to abandon. He divided these agreements into four types: bona fide settlers, or those who had valid titles to their land; equitable rights, or those who had final receiver's receipts but doubtful rights; legal owners, or those who came into their land in a legal way other than homesteading; and squatters, or those who occupied the land illegally. According to McLaughlin's calculations of the values of these parcels of land, the government would owe the fifteen settlers \$91,310, the five equitable rights settlers \$12,770, the eight legal land owners \$34,670, and the eleven illegal settlers \$11,625.⁷⁴ The United States government planned to pay eleven illegal squatters over eleven thousand dollars for improvements made on land they did not own, yet they gave forty-six Cheyenne families a total of \$1,150 to cover the homes they built on land that had always been theirs.⁷⁵

The land the American homesteaders would vacate was meant to serve as an inducement for the forty-six Cheyenne families living on the east side of Tongue River to move west.⁷⁶ Clearly the Northern Cheyenne did not find this inducement very compelling. McLaughlin admitted himself that "They were reluctant to leave the east side of Tongue River, but to show their good will and desire to meet the wishes of the Government in having these matters amicably adjusted they all consented."⁷⁷ McLaughlin's statement, however, obscured the negative response he received from the Northern Cheyenne settled on the east side of Tongue River. They did consent but not as amicably as McLaughlin wanted to portray. In a council meeting with him, American Horse, Little Chief, and George Standing Elk all stated that they wanted the reservation to be larger than the one that had been proposed, declaring that it should extend beyond the divide east of the Tongue River.⁷⁸ After Bobtail Horse pointed to Tongue River as the location where they made peace with the whites, he continued, "We fought all

Indian tribes in this country who were at war with the government when we were soldiers of the government, and we would wish a larger reservation than you propose.”⁷⁹ He reminded the government that in making peace on Tongue River and taking up an alliance with the United States in its war, they had a right to the territory, not just because it had always been theirs, but because they were in alliance with the people who claimed it as their own land now. He directly connected fighting with the United States to Cheyenne rights to the territory, justifying a larger reservation.

On March 19, 1900, President William McKinley signed the executive order that expanded the Northern Cheyenne Reservation to its current eastern boundary, the Tongue River. This executive order recognized Northern Cheyenne rights to this territory, securing their presence in the Tongue River Valley and ending the discussion over removal to the Crow Reservation. McLaughlin had worked hard to establish reservation boundaries that would suite both the Northern Cheyenne and the United States government. Nevertheless, the outcome of the expansion of the reservation remains ambiguous for the Northern Cheyenne people. On the one hand, the reservation gained 204,000 acres, so that with the 1900 executive order, it contained a total of 460,000 acres.⁸⁰ On the other hand, the Northern Cheyenne lost recognition of ownership of land on the east side of the Tongue River that they had claimed for generations and had begun homesteading to secure that claim. Furthermore, the Cheyenne who had built homesteads on the east bank lost their land, houses, barns, and any other work they had put into their claims, receiving essentially no compensation for their loss.

Conclusion

The Northern Cheyenne who came to settle in southeastern Montana had fought to return to and remain in the Tongue River Valley. After years of struggle, the people finally won the security of permanent reservation boundaries with the 1900 executive order. These reservation boundaries were physical evidence that the federal government recognized that the Cheyenne had a sovereign relationship with this territory, but these boundaries certainly did not encompass or define that relationship. The Cheyenne knew that they had a right to this land for many reasons. First, they had been camping in the area for generations. Then, when the military sought to remove them in the 1870s, they fought and won decisive battles on this land, particularly the Battle of Little Big Horn and the Rosebud Battle. Finally and most importantly, they did not surrender to the United States government at the end of the fighting; instead they created an alliance with General Nelson Miles. As officials in the federal government threatened to revoke the reservation and to remove the Cheyenne from their land, the people invoked their relationship with General Miles to assert their right to remain. Ultimately, Miles was true to his word. He fought for the people who had fought for him. In the end, the Northern Cheyenne won federal recognition of the rights to the land that already was theirs.

Cheyenne people certainly were and are aware of the sacrifices Two Moons's people made by becoming scouts, but they must have believed they also had much to gain. Political influence for the Cheyenne at the time required seeking a powerful advocate. Certainly Miles' support was not guaranteed, but this group took a calculated risk, choosing what they believed was their best option from a set of choices that all required adaptation to colonial force. Nevertheless, the Northern Cheyenne based this choice on a culturally informed interpretation. Forging an alliance with Miles established a relationship that came with certain responsibilities, not the least of which was sharing territory and defending each other's interests. Many

Cheyenne believe he also championed their cause for personal reasons, namely his promise to White Bull. By joining the United States military under Nelson Miles, these Northern Cheyenne men positioned themselves to make strategic demands of the state designed to help their community overcome political marginalization by the very same state.

Although Miles supported the alliance because he believe it would aid the state efforts to assimilate Native people, this alliance and even Cheyenne homesteads were creative adaptations meant to preserve the community and maintain their presence in their homeland. Nevertheless, this strategy was not always successful. The discourse of alliance that had worked so well with Miles could not prevent the removal of Cheyenne families from the east bank of the Tongue River. Although it moved McLaughlin, like it had moved Miles, he simply did not have the power that Miles did. He was able to prevent wholesale removal and did extend the reservation boundary, but was not able to attain all the land the Cheyenne had claimed. It seems that the Northern Cheyenne had enough experience with the policies and actions of settler colonialism to know that gaining advocacy required a certain amount of adaptation. Furthermore, these strategies had varying levels of success depending on who was in office and the sentiment of the time. So the Cheyenne people adapted but they made their choices strategically, sacrificing, but not so much that their autonomy as a culturally distinct people would be lost.

1 For more about the alliances Plains peoples established with each other, see Patricia Albers, "Changing Patterns of Ethnicity in the Northeastern Plains." in *History, Power, and Identity*, ed. Jonathan Hill (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996). Also see Patricia Albers, "Symbiosis, Merger, and War: Contrasting Forms of Intertribal Relationship Among Historic Plains Indians." in *Political Economy of North American Indians*, ed. John Moore (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993). Many authors have explored military alliance building and the peace-making process as it was enacted between American Indians and Europeans and Euro-Americans, across North America. This scholarship often demonstrates that Native people were able to retain a high level of political control through these negotiations for some time. See Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: The Power Relations of Spanish and Indian Nations in the Early Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of

North Carolina Press, 2007); Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth Century North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University of Cambridge Press, 1991); Robert A. Williams, *Linking Arms Together: American Indian Treaty Visions of Law and Peace, 1600-1800* (New York: Routledge, 1999)

² As Richard White demonstrates, Native people were often able to play rival European powers off each other to their own benefit. Richard White, *The Middle Ground : Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, Cambridge Studies in North American Indian History (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empire in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2000); Pekka Hamalainen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

³ In 1881, only two years after the massacre of Dull Knife's people at Fort Robinson, Helen Jackson Hunt published *A Century of Dishonor* soundly criticizing the treatment of the Northern Cheyenne during removal and arguing against the practice, as well as detailing the atrocities committed on other Native peoples in the United States up to that point in time. Helen Hunt Jackson, *A Century of Dishonor: The Classic Expose of the Plight of the Native Americans* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1881), 92-102.

⁴ Scott Richard Lyons, *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 22.

⁵ Ned Blackhawk, "The Displacement of Violence: Ute Diplomacy and the Making of New Mexico's Eighteenth-Century Northern Borderlands," *Ethnohistory* 54, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 730.

⁶ David D. Smits, "'Fighting Fire with Fire': The Frontier Army's Use of Indian Scouts and Allies in the Trans-Mississippi Campaigns, 1860-1890," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 22, no. 1 (1998).

⁷ Gary B. Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early North America*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson, 2006), 218-41. See also Blackhawk, *Violence.*; DuVal, *The Native Ground.*; Hamalainen, *Comanche Empire.*; and White, *Middle Ground.*

⁸ Frederick E. Hoxie, "Retrieving the Red Continent: Settler Colonialism and the History of American Indians in the U.S.," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31, no. 6 (2008): 1160.

⁹ Marshall Sahlins, "Preface," *Ethnohistory* 52, no. 1 (2005): 5.

¹⁰ Lyons, *X-Marks*, 2-3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹² Christina Gish Berndt, "Kinship as Strategic Political Action: The Northern Cheyenne Response to the Imposition of the Nation-State" (PhD Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2008). and Jeffery Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U. S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (The University of Cambridge Press, 2004).

¹³ Ostler, *U. S. Colonialism.*

¹⁴ Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers: Indian Scouts and Auxiliaries with the United States Army, 1860-90* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 203. According to Dunlay, the Crow scouts were unaware that they had attacked a truce party and were both shamed and frightened when they found out.

¹⁵ See Berndt, "Kinship", 138-43, 60-63. for more on this.

¹⁶ For more on Sweet Woman, see *Ibid.*, 130-39.

¹⁷ Ms. ST, interview by the author, Lame Deer, Northern Cheyenne Reservation, 28 July 2005.

¹⁸ This woman is mentioned in several accounts but sometimes by slightly different names. John Stands in Timber calls her "Sweet Woman" when he refers to her in John Stands in Timber and Margot Liberty, *Cheyenne Memories* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967). Peter Powell calls her "Sweet Taste Woman" and acknowledges that she was also called "Wool Woman" when he discusses this history in Peter J. Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain: A History of Northern Cheyenne Chiefs and Warrior Societies 1830-1879* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1981). Grinnell calls this woman "Old Wool Woman" in E. Adamson Hoebel and Karl N. Llewellyn, *The Cheyenne Way: Conflict and Case Law in Primitive Jurisprudence* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941).

¹⁹ Ms. ST did not mention his name, but this man is prominent in the literature where he is known as John Broughier. Broughier had one Euro-American and one Lakota parent. His name is spelled differently in different accounts: George Bird Grinnell uses "Bruyere" in George Bird Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972). John Stands In Timber uses "Broughier" in Stands in Timber and Liberty, *Memories*. Peter Powell uses "Bruguier" in Powell, *Sacred Mountain*. Thomas Marquis and Peter Powell claim he was also called White and Stands In Timber claims he was called Big Leggings. It is possible that the Lakota called him White and the Cheyenne called him Big Leggings or that he had different nicknames among different groups. See Thomas Marquis, *Wooden Leg: A Warrior Who Fought Custer* (Midwest Company, 1931; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967).

²⁰ Stands in Timber and Liberty, *Memories*, 224. Although I have found no evidence for this statement in Miles's papers, all Northern Cheyenne accounts, including the minutes of a council meeting held in 1890 recorded by government officials, note that Miles promised the Northern Cheyenne a reservation of their own in the north.

²¹ Ms. ST, interview by the author, Lame Deer, Northern Cheyenne Reservation, 28 July 2005.

²² White Bull was also known as Ice.

²³ For other accounts of Miles's first meeting with Two Moons, see Powell, *Sacred Mountain*, 1123-25.; George Bird Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyenne* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), 385.; Thomas Marquis, *Wooden Leg: A Warrior Who Fought Custer* (Midwest Company, 1931; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967) 298; Stands in Timber and Liberty, *Memories*, 224-25.; and Verne Dusenberry, "The Northern Cheyenne, All They Have Asked is to Live in Montana," *Montana: the Magazine of Western History* 15 (Winter 1955):26.

²⁴ S. J. Kirkwood, "Testimony Take by a Select Committee of the Senate Concerning the Removal of the Northern Cheyennes," (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880), 14.

²⁵ Ostler, *U. S. Colonialism*, 67.

²⁶ Smits, "Fighting Fire," 95. and Jeffrey V. Pearson, "Nelson A. Miles, Crazy Horse, and the Battle of Wolf Mountains," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 51(2001): 57. Dunlay describes this incident as well. Dunlay, *Blue Soldiers*, 203.

²⁷ Ostler, *U. S. Colonialism*, 67.

²⁸ General Hugh L. Scott, Notes on sign language and miscellaneous ethnographic notes on Plains Indians, 1934, Cheyenne folder 1, MS 2932, National Anthropology Archives, Suitland, MD. David S. Smits notes that both soldiers and officers, including those in the upper echelons like Brigadier General Phillip Sheridan, often assumed that Native scouts could not be trusted to remain loyal to the United States, but Smits entirely discredits this claim. Smits, "Fighting Fire," 79-82. See also Dunlay, *Blue Soldiers*, 65-66.

²⁹ Miles received the credit for these scouts' successes, Smits, "Fighting Fire," 94, 96.

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- ³⁰ Ibid.: 86. Nelson A. Miles, *Personal Recollections and Observations of General Nelson A. Miles* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 277. and ———, *Serving the Republic* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1911), 218.
- ³¹ Smits, "Fighting Fire." and Dunlay, *Blue Soldiers*.
- ³² Smits, "Fighting Fire," 99.
- ³³ Dunlay, *Blue Soldiers*, 188. and Smits, "Fighting Fire," 79.
- ³⁴ Kirkwood, "Testimony Take by a Select Committee of the Senate Concerning the Removal of the Northern Cheyennes," 204.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 206.
- ³⁶ Smits credits Miles' Cheyenne scouts for bringing Little Wolf in to Fort Keogh, Smits, "Fighting Fire," 108. For a detailed explanation of the role of Cheyenne scouts in this negotiation, see Powell, *Sacred Mountain*, 1256-61.
- ³⁷ Smits, "Fighting Fire," 111.
- ³⁸ Ibid.: 109.
- ³⁹ Grinnell, *Fighting Cheyenne*, 428.
- ⁴⁰ Ms. ST, interview by the author, Lame Deer, Northern Cheyenne Reservation, 21 August 2005. Both George Bird Grinnell and Peter Powell relate this story as well. See Ibid., 387-95. and Powell, *Sacred Mountain*, 1129-34. During an interview with Eli Ricker, S. E. Server, a soldier present at this battle, also mentions this event. Eli Ricker, *Voices of the American West: The Settler and Soldier Interviews of Eli S. Ricker, 1903-1919*, ed. Richard E. Jensen (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 144-145.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Kirkwood, "Testimony Take by a Select Committee of the Senate Concerning the Removal of the Northern Cheyennes," 46.
- ⁴³ Letters Received (LR) BIA, file 19493, 1890, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Notice the language of friendship, just as above when Ms. ST used the word "friend" to describe the relationship between Sweet Woman and General Miles. In the Lakota language the word *kola* is sometimes translated as friend and sometimes translated as ally. It is probable that for Cheyenne people, who were intermarried with the Lakota and often were bilingual, the meaning of friend was closely connected with the idea of ally. In a discussion with the author about the relationship between the Cheyenne and Lakota, Ms. DG declared that people used the terms "friend" and "ally" to mean the same thing. To say that Miles was their friend was to indicate once again that they had formed an alliance with him.
- ⁴⁴ Letters Received (LR) BIA, file 19493, 1890, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, vol.1, chap.131, sect. 15-16 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904).
- ⁴⁷ Ms. ST, interview by the author, Lame Deer, Northern Cheyenne Reservation, 21 August 2005.
- ⁴⁸ Kirkwood, "Testimony Take by a Select Committee of the Senate Concerning the Removal of the Northern Cheyennes," 207.
- ⁴⁹ Dunlay, *Blue Soldiers*, 1, 188. and Smits, "Fighting Fire," 78.
- ⁵⁰ Mr. BC, interview by the author, Lame Deer, Northern Cheyenne Reservation, 17 August 2005. For a description of Cheyenne law regarding murder, see Hoebel and Llewellyn, *Cheyenne Way*, 165-68.
- ⁵¹ Dusenberry, "Montana," 30.
- ⁵² Stands in Timber and Liberty, *Memories*, 239.; Ms. DG, interview by the author, Lame Deer, Northern Cheyenne Reservation, 16 August 2006.
- ⁵³ George Bird Grinnell, "Mountain Sheep," *Journal of Mammalogy* 9, no. 1 (Feb, 1928): 4

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- ⁵⁴ Ms. DG, interview by the author, Lame Deer, Northern Cheyenne Reservation, 16 August 2006.
- ⁵⁵ Dusenberry, "Montana," 30.
- ⁵⁶ LR BIA, file 19493, 1890, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- ⁵⁷ If Miles showed these Cheyenne men such a letter, I have not found it. This certainly does not mean one never existed. My research abilities aside, the Northern Cheyenne tribal offices burned in the 1980s and many important primary documents were lost.
- ⁵⁸ E. P. Ewers to General Nelson A. Miles, 29 October 1890, Elmo Scott Watson Papers, Newberry Library, Chicago.
- ⁵⁹ Stands in Timber and Liberty, *Memories*, 240. For a more detailed description of the process of homesteading, see Berndt, "Kinship", 239-69. and Orlen J. Svingen, *The Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, 1877-1900* (Denver: University of Colorado Press, 1993).
- ⁶⁰ For detailed descriptions of McLaughlin's role in the massacre see James Mooney, *The Ghost Dance Religion and Wounded Knee* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), 843-86. and Ostler, *U. S. Colonialism*, 78.
- ⁶¹ James McLaughlin, "Letter from the Secretary of the Interior Transmitting a Report Relating to the Proposed Removal of the Northern Cheyenne Indians," 5th Cong., 3rd Sess., H. Doc. 153,1890.
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ Ibid. 4.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid. 4.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid. 4.
- ⁶⁶ William Rowland and James Rowland sat as interpreters for both councils. They were fluent in Cheyenne as well as English and had been acting as interpreters for many years. They were well trusted by both sides.
- ⁶⁷ James McLaughlin, "Letter from the Secretary of the Interior Transmitting a Report Relating to the Proposed Removal of the Northern Cheyenne Indians," 5th Cong., 3rd Sess., H. Doc. 153,1890, 86.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid. 87.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid. 87.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid. 87.
- ⁷¹ Ibid. 89.
- ⁷² Ibid. 88.
- ⁷³ Ibid. 11.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid. 15-16
- ⁷⁵ Ibid. 11.
- ⁷⁶ Svingen, *Reservation*, 139.
- ⁷⁷ James McLaughlin, "Letter from the Secretary of the Interior Transmitting a Report Relating to the Proposed Removal of the Northern Cheyenne Indians," 5th Cong., 3rd Sess., H. Doc. 153,1890, 11.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid. 89.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid. 89.
- ⁸⁰ Svingen, *Reservation*, 145.