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Mountain in his memory| Frank Bird Linderman, his role in acquiring the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation for the Montana Chippewa and Cree, and the importance of that experience in the development of his literary career

Celeste River

*The University of Montana*

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A MOUNTAIN IN HIS MEMORY
FRANK BIRD LINDERMANN, HIS ROLE IN ACQUIRING
THE ROCKY BOY INDIAN RESERVATION FOR THE MONTANA
CHIPPEWA AND CREE, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THAT
EXPERIENCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS LITERARY CAREER

by

Celeste River
B. A., University of Montana, 1984

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Interdisciplinary Studies
University of Montana

1990

Approved by

Chairman, Board of Examiners

Dean, Graduate School

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Celeste River
In March 1885, when he was 16 years old, Frank Linderman came from the Midwest to the Flathead Valley of Montana Territory to fulfill his boyhood dream of living the free life of a trapper and hunter in the wilderness. Later that year he met a band of Chippewa and Cree Indians who were fugitives from the Riel Rebellion, which had begun in March 1885 in Canada. A lasting friendship developed between Linderman and these displaced native people.

Years of concern for the fate of the Chippewa and Cree founded Linderman's resolve to preserve what he knew of the "old West" in printers' ink. Many Montanans have heard of Linderman but few have read the literature he left for future generations, and most are unaware of his pivotal function in acquiring the Rocky Boy Reservation in 1916. Linderman's role in the establishment of the Rocky Boy Reservation has been largely unexplored by historians. His name has been briefly mentioned in histories of the Montana Chippewa and Cree, and of the reservation, but the truth is that Linderman was the spearhead of the movement to acquire land, justice, and opportunity for the homeless Indians.

The following materials were examined for this research: the Linderman correspondence files from the Museum of the Plains Indian; the Linderman Collection at the University of Montana archives; files pertaining to Linderman in the H. G. Merriam Collection at the University of Montana archives; all of Linderman's published works and some unpublished; histories of the Chippewa and Cree, the decimation of the bison in North America, the Rocky Boy Reservation, and early 20th-century American Indian policy; and a private collection of personal letters from Linderman to Chick Rossiter of Sheridan, Montana. River also interviewed various scholars and resource people including Linderman's granddaughter.

River concluded that the role Linderman played in the fate of the Chippewa and Cree in Montana was important for two reasons: first, without his efforts the Rocky Boy Reservation would probably not exist today; second, through those efforts there arose in him the desire to write for posterity his experience of the dignity and wisdom of his native friends. Accounts of Linderman's life and intrepid spirit can inspire the youth of today; his descriptive writings can teach all of us about the wildland heritage of Montana.
A MOUNTAIN IN HIS MEMORY
to my mother and father

who encouraged me to appreciate
the native people and traditions
and the nature
of this sacred land
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the Linderman family, the Rossiter family, Dale Johnson and Marianne Farr at the University of Montana Mansfield Library, and Dave Walter at the Montana Historical Society, for their assistance in this research. Thanks also to Peter Nabokov, who first informed me of the historical importance of this topic; and to Bob Murie at the Rocky Boy Reservation, and Jay Eagleman, a descendant of Little Bear, who made it seem more real and significant.

To the members of my graduate committee, my sincere appreciation for their guidance and words of encouragement: Professor Charles E. Hood, Dean of the Journalism School, committee chairman; Professor Joseph Epes Brown, Religious Studies; and Professor Richmond Lee Clow, Native American Studies. Professor Warren Brier, Journalism, was always interested. Thanks to Professor Bill Farr, History, who contributed to the challenge at my thesis defense; and to Professors Duane Hampton, History, and Bill Bevis, English, for their time and talk, and their interest in the topic.

In the beginning, the keen wit and editorial eye of Nancy Leifer helped give form to the story I wanted to tell, from the thousands of facts and impressions I had gathered. Family and friends have helped make it possible to continue and finish the project. My son Abe inspires me because he represents the people of the future, who might learn to live in full awareness with the spirit of the earth and sky.
PREFACE

This is a story about the creation of the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation for the Montana Chippewa and Cree, in the Bear Paw Mountains of Montana. It is also a story about the early development of a western writer, one of Montana's first, Frank Bird Linderman.

Historical studies of the Montana Chippewa and Cree and the Rocky Boy Reservation have only mentioned Linderman, the landless Indians' constant advocate. One anthropologist noted that he was "closely associated with Rocky Boy . . . during the years 1908-1916, and was his white confidant and advisor during this period."\(^1\) Another acknowledged that Linderman was "the leading figure among the few Montanans who befriended [the landless Indians, and] . . . was largely responsible for ultimately getting them reservation lands."\(^2\)

But Linderman's deep concern for the fate of the Chippewa and Cree, his dedication to preserving the wisdom, traditions and ceremony of his old "full-blood" friends, and his pivotal role in acquiring Rocky Boy's reservation, have not been adequately examined. Historical studies are incomplete without this part, which is the crux of the story.

In *Montana Adventure*, Linderman's memoirs, published posthumously in 1968, editor Harold G. Merriam commented on the importance of Linderman's role in the fate of the home-
less and starving Chippewa and Cree of Montana:

In the sphere of action, Frank, along with others, did much to aid the homeless Crees and Chippewas, . . . His account in his recollections is inadequate, for it barely suggests the amount of time, energy, and money he spent on the project. The true importance of his role will not be known until the hundreds of letters and papers of his . . . have been studied; accounts heretofore have not assigned to Linderman due credit. It is safe to say that without his efforts the reservation would have been established years later, if at all.

Through persistent strength of character Linderman realized an almost impossible achievement—the establishment of an Indian reservation in Montana in 1916—during the homestead rush, in an era when American Indian policy called for the dissolution of reservation lands and tribal life.

Who were the Chippewa and Cree? Where did they come from? How did they end up in Montana? Why did Linderman become their loyal spokesman, and what did he do for them? In previous studies, important dates and facts have been confused. For instance, there are discrepancies concerning the years when the two leaders, Rocky Boy and Little Bear, and their bands of Chippewa and Cree, finally moved to the proposed reservation at Fort Assiniboine.

During the 30 years they were forced to roam, homeless, throughout Montana, reports of their whereabouts were often confused. There were several key leaders and numerous bands of the two distinct tribal groups, yet the people had intermingled and intermarried for generations, and there were many half-breed Métis (French-Cree) among them as well.
Also, until now it has been unrecognized that Chief Panetoo, a Chippewa who claimed to be Rocky Boy's brother, was also known as Full-of-Dew, and that Full-of-Dew was War Eagle, the old storyteller in Linderman's first two books, *Indian Why Stories* and *Indian Old-Man Stories*. The friendship between Linderman and Full-of-Dew spanned many years, and deeply influenced Linderman's determination to persevere until the Chippewa and Cree had a home for their ceremonies. In their friendship is found the heart of that process.

This creation story unfolds on two levels: public and political events that affected the Chippewa and Cree in Montana during the years 1908-1916, as recorded in letters, editorials, and newspaper accounts, are related in Chapters 1, 3, and 5; inner realms of the story--the backgrounds of the people involved, the spirit and intentions that motivated their actions--are explored in Chapters 2, 4, and 6.

Primary sources consulted for this research are found in the Linderman archival collections at the Museum of the Plains Indian in Browning, Montana, in the K. Ross Toole Archives at the University of Montana, and in the Linderman family estate files; colorful anecdotes come from a private collection of personal letters written by Linderman to his friend Chick Rossiter, loaned to this author by the Rossiter family of Sheridan, Montana.

Misspelled words, which appear frequently in letters written by the Chippewa and Cree and Charley Russell, are
not explained with [sic] except in a few places, to avoid
distracting the reader from the characters that come through
in the writing. For the same reason, all towns mentioned
are located in Montana unless otherwise stated.

To stay with the terminology of Linderman's times I
use the words "Indian" and "medicine-man" instead of "Native
American" and "shaman." I also adhere to Linderman's use of
the term "full-blood," when referring to his old warrior
friends. Fort Assiniboine is spelled variously in letters,
but in the main text I use today's preferred spelling.

The use of extended direct quotations is deliberate.
A thousand threads of information, gleaned from hundreds of
letters and Linderman's manuscripts, are woven together to
tell this creation story through the words and feelings of
Frank Linderman himself, and in the flavor of his times.

This is an enduring story of a native people, and a
pioneer who stood by them, as they struggled to survive the
winds of change. The characters are no longer living, the
circumstances occurred nearly one hundred years ago--but the
situation continues and can be heard in news reports from
around the world today. Like ageless tribesmen facing the
center pole in the sun lodge, the human spirit continues to
cry out for strength, enlightenment and justice.

As Professor Hood so aptly said, during one of our
many conferences about this research:

"This is a story that needs to be told."
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It was a noble, wise and, generally, serene face; the face of a man who lived by the truth and hated every kind of crookedness; a man to depend on in trouble; a man who was kind, who was loyal, who could laugh and rage with equal heartiness, and was as faithful a friend and as comprehending a recorder as the American Indian ever had.

Montana should name a mountain for him, on whose slopes, once a year, in memory of him, the white man and the Indian might meet, to smoke the pipe of reconciliation.

Hermann Hagedorn
"Frank Linderman As I Knew Him"
FRANK BIRD LINDERMAN
1869-1938
A MOUNTAIN IN HIS MEMORY
INTRODUCTION

On March 20, 1885, Frank Linderman arrived in the Flathead Lake area of Montana Territory. He was just sixteen years old, and he did not know if the Indians in the area, the Flatheads and Kootenais, were hostile or friendly. It was cold and rainy during the first nights he spent alone in his makeshift cabin. But, armed with his adventurous spirit and his father's old percussion-lock Kentucky rifle, he began to live his boyhood dream of the "free life," as a hunter and trapper in the mountains of the West.

While young Linderman was establishing himself in the wilderness of the Flathead Valley, fugitives from the Riel Rebellion in Saskatchewan, Canada, were moving through the mountains of Canada toward Montana Territory. These refugees, members of the Chippewa/Cree band of Big Bear, were now under the leadership of his son Imasees, who was later known as Little Bear. They were looking for asylum in a land their ancestors had roaming for generations, following the cyclic migrations of the buffalo. In the years to come they became known as the "landless Indians."

During the 1870s Big Bear, a powerful Cree leader, had refused to treat with the white man's governments. When he finally did sign a treaty with the Canadian government, in 1882, he still would not let the government corral his
people on a reservation. Desperate young men of Big Bear's band joined the uprising of the Riel Rebellion, which had begun on March 18, only two days before Linderman's arrival in the Flathead Valley. The rebellion, which lasted four months, was the result of prolonged deprivation suffered by the native people in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

By late 1885 some of the landless tribesmen were camped in the Flathead Valley, and Linderman soon became friends with them. Full of fight, pride and dignity, they were trying to hold onto the freedoms of their natural life. Unlike the Flathead and Kootenai, and other native tribes, including other bands of Chippewa and Cree, these people from the band of Big Bear had not accepted the religion of the "black robes" and missionaries. They had continued to follow their traditional practices and spiritual beliefs.

But materially, they were destitute. After the final annihilation of the bison by 1885, the devastating winters of the late 1880s, and the institution of state and federal game laws that prevented Indians from hunting, they were overcome with despondency and starvation by the turn of the century. They were an embarrassment and a bother to the white communities of Montana, whose residents were increasingly antagonistic toward them. By 1906 leaders of the homeless Chippewa and Cree turned to their friend Co-skee-see-co-cot (The Man Who Looks Through Glass), for help.

They knew they could trust Linderman. They knew the
big trees spoke to him. He was a white man with a single tongue, who could hear the Great Stillness "far out on the dark lake, where the waves reach far but touch nothing."\(^1\) It was natural for them to turn to their friend from the wilderness, whose life path had led him into the center of Montana politics, in Helena.

As a legislator, assistant secretary of state, and member of several prestigious organizations, Linderman was a man of influence. What he did for the "landless Indians" before 1908 is still a matter to be discovered, perhaps through legislative journals. But newspaper accounts tell of his endeavors after 1908, and his correspondence concerning the landless Indians begins in 1911. In an unpublished manuscript, "The Rocky Boy Renegades," written in 1937, he recounted:

Having hunted and trapped with these people immediately following their trouble across the line I interested myself, and a few others, in their behalf, begging food and clothing for them for years, as the files of old newspapers will show. We planned to secure a reservation for the Crees and Chippewas . . .\(^2\)

The bond of brotherhood between Linderman and the Chippewa and Cree ran deep. For many years he devoted vigilant attention to the needs of these hungry, wandering people, before they were finally allowed to call a high, rocky, windswept place in the Bear Paw Mountains "home." They continued to seek his advice, and he continued to help them, until his death in 1938.
Linderman, who was fearless in defending principles and issues he felt were important in life, was respected for his stalwart character by all who knew him. With this inner strength and tenacity he spearheaded the campaign to acquire land for the Chippewa and Cree—taking an outspoken stand against powerful land speculators and politicians, who were the Indians' most formidable opponents—and succeeded in the establishment of the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation in 1916.

The greater part of this story takes place between 1912-1916. Those years marked a turning point, not only in the lives of the landless Indians, but in the life of Frank Linderman as well—the beginning of his literary career. His first book, *Indian Why Stories*, was published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1915, and for the rest of his life he continued to pursue the art of writing.

Through his prolific correspondence and his literary works Linderman preserved a record of the life and characters he had known in the waning days of the old West. He was one of Montana's most well-known regional authors, but few people today have explored the treasure of valuable writings he left for the future.

The story of Frank Bird Linderman, and his relationship with the Chippewa and Cree, is one of Montana's best kept secrets. It is, indeed, a story that needs to be told.
Sketch of Montana relevant to this story: borders, rivers, towns, and reservations.
CHAPTER 1

PAPER PROMISES
1908--1913

Politics and the Homestead Rush

Little Bear spoke with fierce pride. "God was taking care of us all right until the white man came and took the responsibility off His hands." The stout old warrior was standing in the lobby of the Placer Hotel in Helena, in a business suit, talking "face-to-face" with the "head man" from Washington, Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane.

Frank Linderman, who had arranged the meeting, said he had to step on Little Bear's moccasined feet, and signal the interpreter many times, trying to subdue the translation of the Cree leader's hostility toward white men. In answering Little Bear's challenge Secretary Lane said:

God ordained that man must work to live and nobody gets the land who does not use it. The white man took the Indian land to raise wheat and corn and oats and cattle. The land produces nothing. It is the man who produces things.¹

To this the sombre chief replied, "That's what we're after." His people needed land, and the opportunity to use it.

On that hot August day in 1913 four strong personalities came together: the braided Cree chief, Little Bear; Frank Linderman, for many years a firm friend of Montana's
homeless Chippewa and Cree; William Bole, owner and editor of the Great Falls Tribune; and Secretary Lane, who had come to Montana to inspect the Sun River Reclamation Project, and investigate the problems of the landless Indians. The three white men had three things in common: each was involved in politics; each was seasoned in the newspaper game; and each, in his own way, desired justice for the Indian people.

They were in agreement that the Chippewa and Cree needed land so they could become self-supporting. During the past two decades attempts had been made to find land for various bands of the displaced Indians, but local resistance and biased news coverage had blocked those efforts.

While most Montanans wanted something done for the impoverished people, no community wanted them at their back door. They were disparaged as renegades, vagabonds, and wanderers. A 1909 report to the Indian Office described some of them as "'professional beggars,' who are extremely obnoxious to any community in which they are located."^2

Secretary Lane told Little Bear, when their meeting was drawing to a close, "You have a good friend here in Mr. Linderman, and you have another good friend in Mr. Bole." And, although irritated by the chief's belligerent attitude, he concluded, "I want to make a third friend. I want to help you and to give you a chance, but you also must help yourself when the chance comes."^3

This was an important moment in the fate of the
Left to right: Little Bear, unknown, William Bole, Secretary of the Interior, Franklin K. Lane, Jim Denny, unknown, Pat Raspberry, Frank Linderman.

August 1913 in Helena, in front of Placer Hotel
Little Bear and Rocky Boy bands of Cree and Chippewa—when Linderman, Lane, and Bole formed a triumvirate of purpose. Their intention was to secure a permanent home for the landless Indians, a people who had survived by living in small roving groups, destitute and scattered throughout Montana, for many years. To realize their goal Linderman knew he would have to work with the powers of the press, politics, and the changing winds of public opinion.

By 1906, while Linderman was Montana's assistant secretary of state, many of the Chippewa and Cree had come together and set up camp near Helena. In his memoirs, *Montana Adventure*, Linderman described their impoverished condition, his concern for them, and his relationship with the Cree chief, Little Bear:

Often hunted from the alleys by police, desperately hungry, clothed in filthy rags, I could scarcely recognize these old friends of other days, when there were few fences and plenty of game. I begged clothes for them, carried ads in the city newspapers soliciting cast-off garments, even begging funds with which to buy them food until people hid away when they saw me coming. Every morning the chief, Little-bear, and an interpreter would be standing by my office door, waiting to ask me some difficult question or to offer some dispute for settlement.

Some of the old tribesmen had known Linderman twenty years before, in the Flathead wilderness. They trusted him and often came to him for advice and assistance. He recalled:

They were always hungry as wolves, and many a needed dollar was thus lost to my family. The community looked upon these Indians as renegades. In a sense they were just that, since they had no home, no reservation, no place where they might make a liv-
ing. . . . The history of the band, garbled to suit
unfriendly white men, began to spread, making my
task of bettering its condition more difficult. 4

Those who opposed Linderman's efforts to aid the
Chippewa and Cree accused him of being overly enamored with
the Indian. But Linderman was a man who saw into the heart
of things. He was aware of the Indians' faults, but he had
known them years before and could see beyond their present
circumstances. He was willing to learn from the higher
thoughts of the Indian mind—to know the inner being. He
believed it was important to look for and acknowledge the
finer qualities of the first, the "real," American:

By now the reader may believe that I see the old
Indian in too warm a light. I do not. I know his
shortcomings well enough. He is not a saint. In­
stead, he has more than once qualified as a nearly
perfect devil. Ever since our advent in North Amer­
ica, the red man's misdeeds have had willing her­
alds. Few have spoken of his finer qualities. And
yet it is only the discovered good in man that
builds humanity. 5

Linderman was an adopted brother of the Chippewa, and an
honored guest in the Sun Dance lodge of the Cree. His
close, brotherly connections with the displaced Indians
caused and strengthened his resolve to help them.

He belonged to other brotherhoods as well, in the
white world--associations and clubs with prestigious members
who were willing to lend support to his cause. He needed
help--no one could solve the Indians' problems alone. He
organized an alliance of influential men to help him combat
the pernicious forces that were keeping the landless Indians
in a destitute condition—the forces of prejudice and greed.

The homestead rush had barely begun when, in 1908, Congress appropriated $30,000 to establish the Rocky Boy Chippewa Indians on a permanent reservation somewhere in the state. During 1908-1909 government officials withdrew from settlement a great tract of land in Valley County, located in northeastern Montana, with plans to move Chief Rocky Boy and his band of landless Chippewa Indians out there.

Rocky Boy claimed he was "American born," and was asserting his people's right to assistance from the U.S. government, based on the fact that most of them claimed the United States as their place of birth. But in those days it was argued that Little Bear and the Cree did not deserve any aid, because they were "undesirable Canadian refugees." Public opinion generally had the two groups confused and considered them the same people.

Like all previous attempts to find a home for the landless Indians, the Valley County scheme fell through. By the time the small, separated, Chippewa bands were gathered together in Helena in the fall of 1908, officials realized they would not survive the winter if moved then, in their weakened condition, to the windswept plains of eastern Montana. Many of the Chippewa camped near Helena through the winter, and by the spring of 1909 they had again scattered to find work.

Intense lobbying by the Great Northern Railroad and
land speculators, and local resistance from voters in Valley County, finally put an end to the government plan in November 1909. The 1,400,000 acres in Valley County, that had become known as the "Rocky Boy Indians Lands [sic]," were opened to settlement in March 1910.

Between 1909-1916 a flood of homesteaders pouring out of railroad cars that originated in the East caused the greatest barrier to finding a home for the landless Indians --increased land values. Because of the land boom it became increasingly urgent to find a solution that would satisfy the needs of the homeless Indians--any large tracts of good land that remained in Montana would soon be gone.

Hundreds of thousands of settlers came to Montana during the homestead era. In Montana: A History of Two Centuries, authors Michael Malone and Richard Roeder described what was happening in 1910:

The rush surged upward dramatically in 1910. The Great Falls land offices, which served north-central Montana, processed between a thousand and fifteen hundred homestead filings monthly during that turbulent year. In the first quarter of 1910, the Great Northern moved over a thousand emigrant cars into northern Montana. On one spring evening that railroad debarked 250 homesteaders at Havre alone.

While on a business trip to eastern Montana in 1910 Linderman wrote to his friend, Chick Rossiter, describing the chaos in a hotel full of homesteaders at Glendive:

This damn influx of dry-land-farmers is getting on my nerves. Last night (at or near 3 a.m.) I got back here and the hotel office was chock full of men, women and children snoring in huddled bunches.
in chairs—not a bed in town... I hastened outside for air and walked till daylight. At 2 PM today I stole a room and it was torn upside down without either sheets or pillow slips, slops unemptied and rotten. I'll sleep tonight although there's another bed in that damned room. Good God, you can't possibly realize the situation and having ridden the range when even the rattlesnake's bellies were blistered in the past I'm dead sure that some of these nesting ducks will be rustling for ... water ... in the future.

Perhaps Rocky Boy was disappointed when he didn't get the land in Valley County. His people needed and wanted a home; they had been trying for years to find a place to settle. With no treaty rights, and no land, they were lost in a foreign world that was closing in around them. But, they may have purposely avoided removal to Valley County, knowing it was not the best place to try to establish a permanent home.

The Indian leaders, and their friend and advisor Frank Linderman, were experienced in their relationship with nature and the requirements for survival in the wilderness. They knew the land in northeastern Montana did not have an adequate supply of those resources that are essential to survival and a good life: wood, water, and grass.

An inveterate storyteller, Linderman wrote the following "dry-land" story in a letter to Rossiter; June 1910, which shows how hard it could be to make a living on the plains of Montana:

Charley Bair told me a good Dry-land-farm story. A fellow walked into a saloon near Billings, threw a dollar on the bar with great spirit and waving his arm said "Every cuss come up an' git a drink on me,
whoop!" They did, and in a few minutes the fellow slam'd down another dollar and cried "Whoop!--every cuss come up an' have another." While drinking the last, a man who had taken advantage of the offer noticed that the liberal one looked rather seedy and asked "What is the cause of all this sunshine?" "Whoop" replied the liberal one, "I've got a new boy up to my place an' he weighs three pounds." "That aint very big, is it partner," asked the curious duck. "It aint, aint it--well, I'd have ye understand I'm a dry-land farmer an' damned glad to git my seed back."

During the next decade the homesteaders who had claimed the "Rocky Boy Indians Lands" in Valley County found themselves struggling to survive the years of drought that parched the land in Montana from 1917 to 1923, and ruined many of the "dry-land" farmers.

Caught up in the frenzy of the homestead rush, local citizens, homesteaders from the East, and immigrant European settlers chose to reject the material needs of the original American, whose ancestor spirits permeated the land they now sought to own. Hunger for land and lust for profits were devouring any hope of finding the landless Indians a home.

The Power of the Press

When the destitute Chippewa and Cree were gathered together near Helena, in the fall of 1908, Linderman realized they would need more help than one man could provide, to make it through the approaching season of ice and wind. Winter was near and the hungry wolf--starvation--would soon be circling the Indian camps.

Linderman was pragmatic in his desire to help his
old Indian friends. While his intentions were based on humanitarian ideals, he had to work through the political process of the day to secure land and assistance for the destitute Chippewa and Cree. He knew he would need the power of the press behind him, to influence that process.

Negative public opinion toward the landless Indians was reflected and shaped by the negative press they received in Montana newspapers. Anthropologist Verne Dusenberry wrote about this in 1954, in the opening of his article titled "The Rocky Boy Indians, Montana's Displaced Persons":

... the Indian "trouble" did not end with the dramatic battles that have become part of our regional heritage. That such trouble lingered on for the next forty years or more, being especially significant from 1885 until 1917, is reflected in the press of that period; for as one reads the newspapers of that day he is aware of an impatience and a vituperation seldom found even in the chronicles of the West. And that hatred, totally disregarding all sense of human values, was directed against two small bands of Indians [the Chippewa and Cree]. . . . people did not want to see Indians at their doorsteps--especially Indians who were nomads without a treaty or without a home.10

The Anaconda Standard headlined the homeless people as "These Dirty Crees" in the issue of January 10, 1896. On August 1, 1901, a correspondent for the Montana Daily Record of Helena said it would be impossible to prevent an epidemic of small pox along Montana's northern border "unless these people . . . who are continually wandering around like gypsies are removed."11 Numerous denigrating portrayals of the homeless Chippewa and Cree can be found in old issues of Montana newspapers. The Cut Bank Pioneer Press and the
**Havre Plaindealer** were the most negative through the years. A counterbalance was needed.

Linderman effected that balance. He knew the newspaper game and could reach the public through his newspaper connections, and the printed word. When Harry Stanford, an old friend from Kalispell, wrote to ask for his help in opposing a land scheme Senate bill in 1916, Linderman wrote back, "When you're ready for a newspaper yell, let me know. I can borrow some printer's ink most any time."\(^{12}\)

He had been a newspaperman for several years in Sheridan, Montana, but had left the business when he moved to Helena. Still, reporting the news—the conditions of people, things and events—was in his blood, and throughout his lifetime he remained an honorary member of the Montana Press Association. He read his poem "The Press Gang" at their annual meeting on October 2, 1908, in Helena.

In his poem, a fellow named Billy had left behind "all the rush and the riot of giving the people the news" for a quiet, steady job. Eventually Billy succumbed to the "lure of the newspaper game" and described his excitement as he returned to the news room, the "home of the story":

I tossed off my coat in a hurry,
I shoved my hat back on my head,
Amid all that nerve racking flurry
I felt as though raised from the dead.
My typewriter acted unruly
My fingers felt clumsy and lame,
But I knew I was back again truly
To the field of the newspaper game.
You can swear you will leave it behind you,
   You can flee to wherever you will,
But the newspaper fever will find you
   The newspaper fervor will thrill;
It makes or more likely it breaks you,
   You die and leave scarcely a name,
But not until death comes and takes you
   Are you free of the newspaper game.

Let the bookkeeper foot up his columns,
   I'd rather fill columns with news,
Let the lawyer pore over his volumes,
   Let the minister preach to his pews,
I'm back to the home of the story
   T'ell with great riches or fame,
I'm right in the midst of my glory
   I'm back in the newspaper game.13

Linderman's alter-ego, "Uncle Billy," a character of wisdom and aphorisms, may have been the newspaperman who was "back in the game." It was most likely at the Press Association meeting, in the fall of 1908, that Linderman engaged Bole in a plan to use the press to inform the public of the real needs and essential dignity of the homeless Indians.

Bole, editor and part-owner of the Great Falls Tribune, was a staunch Democrat and a social activist. A dynamic newspaperman, he was savvy to the workings of politics and adept at negotiating private deals to settle public problems. Bole greased the political skids on the road to acquiring land for the homeless Indians.14

Ultimate success of the plan to acquire a reservation for the Little Bear and Rocky Boy Indians would depend upon skilled communicators. That meant: intermediaries who could relate with both the Indian and the politician; a systematic letter-writing campaign to lobby politicians and
government officials; vigilant attention to the news of the day, coupled with timely response in print; and practical knowledge of the power of the press. Bole was in the perfect position to augment Linderman's efforts.

Public Appeals

After they joined forces, when Montana newspapers printed negative news and editorials concerning the landless Indians, Bole and Linderman made sure counteractive articles were published to express more charitable viewpoints and re-educate the public. The Tribune also carried editorials intended to awaken the public conscience.

In January 1909 Linderman and Bole teamed up with a small group of influential friends, to help get the landless Indians through another long Montana winter. On January 8 the Great Falls Tribune carried an editorial appeal to the charitable people of Montana:

While The Tribune would not say a word to discourage the splendid charity of the people of Montana that hears and answers the call across the sea for help for the poor Italian victims of the earthquake catastrophe, and hopes that it will continue, we cannot help being impressed by a call on the same altruistic instincts that comes from nearer home—in fact from the city of Helena.

The Tribune had a "special correspondent" in Helena. This was probably Linderman, who was the Indians' closest confidant and advisor in Helena. The editorial continued:

Our special correspondent there sends us an account of a visit of Chief Rocky Boy, of the Chippewa tribe of Indians, to Judge Hunt on behalf of about 600 souls who follow him as chief and who appear to be
in a starving condition. The dispatch says that the chief was roused to this action by the cries of the starving children of his tribe.

Every winter Chief Rocky Boy and his band experienced starvation, which the editors said was "a shame and disgrace to our government and to our civilization." Regardless of the legal status of Rocky Boy's "claim against the government," the Tribune said there was no doubt about the claim he and his starving children had "on the humane instincts of the people of Montana." The editorial ended with a vivid plea to the benevolence of the citizens of Montana:

The people of this state are not accustomed to the cries of starving babies, white, black, red or yellow. They want no such sounds in the midst of their prosperity, and will not stand for it, while their pockets are full and their houses warm, and larders well stored. 15

"C.M. Russell Starts Fund"—a story about a campaign to raise emergency funds for the starving Indians—was printed in the Tribune on January 10. Russell was quoted:

It doesn't look very good for the people of Montana if they will sit still and see a lot of women and children starve to death in this kind of weather. Lots of people seem to think that Indians are not human beings at all and have no feelings. These kind of people would be the first to yell for help if their grub pile was running short and they didn't have enough clothes to keep out the cold, and yet because Rocky Boy and his bunch are Indians, they are perfectly willing to let them die of hunger and cold without lifting a hand. I know that the majority of the people of the state are not that way, however, and if they are called upon they will be glad to help the Indians out. 16

Russell, who by this time was famous as Montana's cowboy artist, was another member of the group Linderman recruited
Letter from Charley Russell to Frank Linderman
from "Paper Talk": Charlie Russell's American West

When Linderman sent Russell a copy of the Cree alphabet, Russell wrote the above letter to thank him, made to look like Cree alphabet writing. The letter says:

I have seen much travling talk of the yellow iron hunter an it is good he touches the little butons on his medison box [typewriter] that tells what his heart feels tis easy for the father of all has made him so but I the picture man can talk only with my tongue The Great Father has many children no two alike The big sage bird walks like the young brave but his flit is low an short his cousin the duck walks like a fat women of many winters but is he lame on the water or in the clouds the buffalo has two hornes an 16 toes the white gote counts the same can the bull walk the snow ledges where storms live My fingers count the same as yores but the sun has made our medison differnt

The Picture Man Has Spoken

21
in his campaign to help the homeless Indians. The first people to sign their names on Russell's subscription list were Bole, "employees of the Tribune," and two of Russell's old friends in Great Falls, Sid Willis and Bill Rance.

The generosity of Montana citizens helped the Indians make it through the winter of 1908-1909. In the summer of 1909 they worked throughout the state, and in the fall there was more talk of moving them to Valley County. Then, in late November 1909, after the Valley County plan fell through, many of the landless Chippewa were shipped in boxcars from Helena to the Blackfeet Agency at Browning. A story in the Cut Bank Pioneer Press of November 19 is a good example of the negative press that agitated against the landless Indians:

Rockefeller -- no, Rocky Boy -- and his band of Crees -- no, Chippewas -- arrived in town Sunday. Nobody was glad to see them, even the weather gave them a cold reception. It was quite a sight on Tuesday to see them driving through town with rats hitched to the wagons in place of horses. Some of them have already seen what the inside of the jail looks like. . . .

Rocky Boy remained on the Blackfeet Reservation during the next four winters. Little Bear and his Cree followers camped near Helena during the winter of 1909-1910, but during the summer of 1910 they too went to the Blackfeet Reservation. Conditions were bad there.

For generations the Blackfeet and Cree had been enemies; now the Blackfeet resented the presence of Cree and Chippewa on their reservation. Besides that antagonism, the
land allotted to the Chippewa was not agricultural land; the people could not support themselves on it. And, something underhanded was happening with regard to distribution of rations--the people were starving.

Full-of-dew, a Chippewa leader whose Indian name was Panetoo, and who claimed to be a brother of Rocky Boy, returned to Helena in the fall of 1910, with a following of about 150 of the Chippewa who had been at Browning. Little Bear and his people also left the Blackfeet Reservation, and camped during the winter of 1910-1911 near Havre.18

In the historical records it is unclear where the Chippewa and Cree were located during many of these years. They had to move around to survive. It seems that Little Bear was near Helena during the winters of 1911-1912 and 1912-1913. Rocky Boy was at Browning. Other small groups of Cree and Chippewa were scattered throughout the state, living near the larger towns or on existent reservations.

The $30,000 that had been appropriated for the Rocky Boy Chippewa Indians in 1908 was wasting away, "providing rations" that often never reached the bellies they were intended to fill. Each winter brought on a new season of sorrow in the camps of the Chippewa and Cree, who had only flimsy, ragged tents for shelter. The federal government did not provide any clothing to help them weather the cold winter winds. During these years Linderman made public appeals for donations of clothing for the destitute Indians.
He also gave talks. His business, as state agent for an insurance company, and as a Masonic representative, required that he travel throughout Montana on a regular basis. He took every opportunity, using his storytelling and public speaking abilities, to educate the public about the problems and humanity of the American Indians.

At his talks people often responded with donations. He wrote to his friend Chick Rossiter, from Sheridan, who was a fellow Mason:

. . . I have just had to have a couple of "store teeth" put in and I feel that they have resolved themselves into a battle ship. It's lucky that the thing was pulled off today instead of yesterday for I delivered a lecture to the blue lodges here the other night and if there'd been this range of foot hills to spit over I would have had a hell of a time with my tongue.

I talked on the "Indian" and when I finished they began passing the hat and gave me a load of silver to send to the Indians as coming from them. So I guess I made a hit. I was surprised at the deep attention and the good feeling shown.19

Unable to make a living for themselves, many of the Chippewa and Cree, who had been resourceful and self-supporting in the past, had by this time become dependent upon the charity of compassionate Montana citizens.

No Earthly Reason

Eventually a new possibility and hope presented itself. Word got around in December 1911 that the army was planning to abandon the Fort Assiniboine Military Reservation, 20-30 miles south of Havre. In early 1912 the public
lands were withdrawn from settlement until March 1913.

Built in 1879 on the northwest side of the Bear Paw Mountains, Fort Assiniboine had soon become the major military post in Montana. In the late 1800s the fort played an important role in the lives of many of the homeless Indians who camped in the area, cut firewood for the fort, and were generally supported by the military.

The Bear Paw Mountains and surrounding plains had been a favorite hunting ground of the Chippewa and Cree for generations. Now, in an ironic turn of events, this site seemed to offer the only solution to the problem of where to locate the landless Indians.

In December 1912 Fred Baker, a special agent who conducted an investigation for the Indian Service, wrote to inform Linderman of his recommendation that some of the Assiniboine lands be set aside for Rocky Boy's Chippewa and other "non-reservation" Indians in Montana:

You will recall that you met me on the Blackfeet Reservation on last Fourth of July at which time I told you that I had been designated by the Department of the Interior to select and locate Rocky Boy's Band of Chippewas and other non-reservation Indians in the state of Montana. I worked on that case for over two months and submitted a final report on the case on or about the tenth day of October, 1912, in which I recommended that certain lands embraced in the Fort Assiniboine Abandoned Military Reservation near the city of Havre, Montana, be set aside for Rocky Boy's Band and other homeless Indians in Montana.

Baker's 1912 report initiated the government's inclusion of the Cree, the "other homeless Indians," in attempts to
find land for the Chippewa, the "American born" Indians. Baker, who acknowledged Linderman as "the best friend these Indians have ever had," urged him to use every power available to secure land for them at Fort Assiniboine:

Mr. Linderman, I am absolutely convinced that my solution is the only one . . . The Fort Assiniboine Military reservation is, in my judgment, the only piece of land left in the entire state of Montana which is suitable for these Indians.

I strongly recommend to you who have been the best friend these Indians have ever had to use your influence and that of your friends to get the above law passed. It is simply ridiculous how the Indian Office and the Department of the Interior have dilly dallied on this case. For five years they have been trying to find a solution and every effort has ended in failure . . . . The President, Himself, ought to be appealed to in order that this shameless delay may be stopped.20

Linderman followed Baker's advice and a stronger editorial and letter writing campaign was begun, to help the homeless and destitute Chippewa and Cree.

On January 2, 1913, a bill was introduced in the Senate "to establish a reservation" at the abandoned Fort Assiniboine Military Reservation, "for the Rocky Boy's Band of Chippewa Indians, and certain other Indians" in Montana. A few days later Rocky Boy sent a telegram to Linderman saying that the Chippewa at the Blackfeet Reservation were "out of grub and hungry." He wished Linderman would "exert" himself on their behalf.21

Linderman was exerting himself. In December he had written to Senator Henry L. Myers, a Democrat from Hamilton, Montana, requesting that he check up on what was being done
for the Indians. Myers answered Linderman on January 9. He sent a copy of the bill that had been introduced in the Senate on January 2, and reported that rations were being issued to the Indians on a daily basis:

... At this time I cannot say what the chances may be for this bill becoming a law. At the Indian Bureau I learn that it is the intention of the government to locate these Indians on lands of their own as soon as they can be provided for. It has not been determined as yet just where to place them. In the meantime, I am informed that the Department has issued orders to feed them and care for them, and that rations are being issued to them daily for this purpose.

I thank you for calling my attention to the matter, and assure you that it will receive my careful consideration to the end that proper legislation may be enacted to their benefit and to the benefit of the white settlers with whom they may be brought in contact.

Myers' belief that rations were being issued to the Indians every day did not correspond with the reality the Indians were experiencing.

Rocky Boy sent a letter to Linderman January 16, again asking for his help, because the Chippewa still had not received promised rations at the Blackfeet Reservation:

... I wish in the name of humanity, you would urge government to sent beef and other vituals to these starving Chippewas here. It was 24th of last month since we received rations from this agency and we don't know when we are to get other rations and that was the only rations we ever got since the winter has come...

Through the years, Linderman had the Indians report to him what they received for rations. In this letter, Rocky Boy listed the rations each person had received in December:
I have butchered two dead horses, that were thrown away at Browning dump. I know that they died of some kind of disease but I had to take them. These are the following rations what a person gets for the month, twenty-five lbs of flour and eight ounce of B. powder and a lb of coffee and 4-1/2 of lbs of sugar, 4 lb of beans and 10 lbs of bacon and a bar of laundry soap. This is all I got for this winter.

You might be doing some good for me out there, but we don't know any thing here. Answer soon.

Isolated, and without the support they were supposed to be receiving, Rocky Boy sometimes wondered if even Linderman was unable to help his people.

Meanwhile, citizens of Havre, near Fort Assiniboine, immediately opposed the bill that had been introduced in the Senate. The Havre Plaindealer ran an editorial complaint against the proposed bill, on January 11. The opposition felt there was no reason on earth why Havre should have to suffer the material burden of having the Indians nearby:

Rocky Boy and his band of trifling, lazy, renegade Chippewa Indians. . . . Located near Havre, they would inevitably become a charge upon the bounty and charity of local people. There is no earthly reason [emphasis mine] why these people should be sluffed off by the government on Havre.

On January 18 the Tribune reported that the citizens of Havre had sent a memorial of resolutions to the state legislature, protesting the possible location of Rocky Boy and his band of Indians at Fort Assiniboine. They requested that the legislature send their resolutions to Congress.

On Sunday, January 19, the Tribune carried an editorial, "Rocky Boy and His People." It started out tongue-in-cheek, seemingly in agreement with the Havre viewpoint, but
evolved into a call for justice for the Indians:

... when it is urged as a reason why these Indians should not be located near Havre that they are given to stealing, we think they do these Indians a great injustice. Great Falls has had some experience of that band of Indians. So has Helena. They starved a good deal in winter time. They searched the offal barrels back of the hotels and eating houses for food. We do not know of a single instance where they were ever convicted of stealing anything. There is in fact no company of white men in Havre or Great Falls or any other city in the state, who would, if reduced to the state of hunger these Indians were in, have shown the same respect for private property these poor Indians did.

The editors went on to defend the homeless Indians' cause:

These Indians have no powerful friends, they have no money, they have no property. They have nothing to commend themselves to the favor of any white man but a claim that has justice and equity back of it. We hope they will get a reserve of land assigned to them. We hope it will be good land, the best the government has to give, and with this land we hope they will get houses and stock and tools and food and everything they need to give them a start on the road to independence and self-support. And when they do get this they will get nothing more than long delayed justice.

The editorial ended by saying the memorial to Congress needed "radical amendment in order to express the truth."

By this time the land boom was in high tide. In 1913, during the month of March alone, 1,600 claims were entered at Havre. In addition to public lands being opened to the flood of homesteaders, large parts of existing Indian reservations were being sold off to local farmers and ranchers. The government's Indian policy involved transfer of trust allotments to fee allotments, and the reservation Indians, unable to pay the taxes, began to lose their land.
With each year that passed it was becoming more difficult to find any large tract of land that could be set aside for the Chippewa and Cree. Fort Assiniboine was the last hope. But land speculators, who were interested in profits, could see "no earthly reason" why they should share the good earth with the landless Indians.

**Every Reason Under Heaven**

Newspaper articles and editorials were important—they could help shift public opinion. But most important to the success of the plan to help the landless Indians were the letter writing campaigns of Linderman, Bole and others, including Russell, former U. S. Senator Paris Gibson, who was the founder of Great Falls, and his son, Theo Gibson.

These men were frequently in touch with Linderman and the Indians during the years it took to acquire the Rocky Boy's Reservation. They wrote consistently to Montana politicians and government officials, to keep the problems of the landless Indians in the forefront of their awareness, and often sent Linderman copies of their letters to keep him informed of their efforts.

Paris Gibson wrote to Linderman on January 11, 1913, the same day the *Plaindealer* claimed there was "no earthly reason" why the Indians should be given land at Fort Assiniboine. The elder Gibson believed there was "every reason under Heaven" why the government should help them:
Your letter of the ninth is received.
I am very glad that Senator Clapp has introduced a bill setting aside four townships in the Fort Assinniboine reservation for Rocky Boy's band of Indians. I will write to Senator Myers to-day and urge him to work for the passage of the bill at this session. I will also write to Senator Dixon and give my reasons why he should not oppose this bill. I may possibly succeed in taking the sting out of his opposition. Keep watch of the bill. Should it pass the Senate at this session and go to the House, let me know it and I will do what I can to help it along there. There is every reason under Heaven [emphasis mine] why the government should render assistance to these poor starving Indians.27

Gibson's statement to Linderman was echoed in the call for justice of the Great Falls Tribune editorial, "Rocky Boy and His People," printed January 19, 1913:

... It may be that there are a few renegade [sic] Cree Indians in the band, but Rocky Boy and the bulk of his band are of Chippewa blood. They are American Indians. They are entitled to the protection and care of the United States government. There is no kind of doubt on this point. The Indian department at Washington has admitted it... The government owes them a debt. It is a debt of honor. The fact that the Havre folk, or the Great Falls folk, or any other people in the state do not like to have them around makes no difference with their claim to good treatment by the government.28

More support came from Charley Russell, who wrote to Senator Myers on January 11. Russell thought the U.S. government should give the Indians, the "real Americans," as fair a chance to survive as foreigners were getting:

A friend of mine Frank Linderman has been trying to get a bill passed for a strip of land for the Chippaway and Cree Indians. These people have been on the verge of starvation for years and I think it no more than square for Uncle Sam, who has opened the west to all foreigners, to give these real Americans enough to live on.

I know the red men as well or better than most whitemen and have found them for honesty to average
with their white brothers. These people will work; most all the Indians on reservations in Montana today, barring the old and feeble, are self-supporting.

I understand that Senator Dixon is fighting the Indian bill. Mr. Dixon has the earmarks of a man that was never hungry in his life. I would like to lead the Senator to the Chippaway camp right now with the thermometer ranging from 10 to 30 degrees below zero, and show him what real starvation meant. And if he has anything under his hide like a heart he would change his talk.

Now Senator Myers if you can do anything for these people I wish you would. 29

When Russell sent Linderman a copy of his letter to Myers he enclosed one of his colorful, personalized letters, for which he is now famous. In it he condemned the "land-hogs" and the self-righteousness of the Havre opposition:

Friend Frank

... it shure looks bad for the Inguns but you sertainely did your share for them

I wrote to Senator Myers an in his answer he said he felt the same as we do an would do all he could for them

I see where one of the Senators said that Rocky Boys band would demoralize the people of Haver. I know som about that camp an unless its changed a hole lot it would be like a dove fouling a buzzards nest not that an Injun resembles a dove any but if all the white men I know my self among em would drop dead to night I don think there would be a jam at the Golden Gate

Frank its hard work this letter writing for me so I am sending a sketch to show how I feel about the Indians question of corse I appoligise to the hole hog family Iv eat to much sow belly not to take my hat off to a pig but the land hog dont come in the same class the hungryest canibal in Africa would back away from a round stake cut off of him he wouldent make skunk bate

I guess thatl be about all 30

The "land hogs" could not empathize with the empty bellies of the families of Chippewa and Cree.
Little Bear

circa turn of the century

"A Modern Curio Peddler, Little Bear, Chief of the Crees"
A Tribune editorial titled "Cruel Treatment of Indians," printed February 8, 1913, opened with reference to a recent report President Taft had sent to Congress, about the cruel treatment of the Indians in a remote part of Peru. A U.S. consul in Peru had said he doubted whether the native people would ever be justly treated in the future, as long as white men considered them an inferior race who had no rights that white men were bound to respect—especially when such rights would interfere with the white man's economic prosperity. The editorial then came home to Montana:

And turning our attention for a moment from the distant tropical jungles of Peru to the below zero, wind-swept plains of Montana these cold days, do you know President Taft that a band of Indians of the Chippewa tribe are starving to death and freezing to death because they have nothing to eat except the paper promises of the Indian affairs department, nothing to wrap about their cold bodies but telegrams from Washington weeks old saying that the department will INVESTIGATE, nothing to hope . . .

Following the suggestion Baker had made in his letter to Linderman in December, the editors addressed the president of the United States:

For the love of humanity and honor of the republic, Mr. President, get after your Indian affairs commissioner and jab a pin into his anatomy somewhere that will make him jump quick and look after this poor half-frozen band. The Tribune is informed through a newspaper man of reliable character that Chief Rocky Boy has recently sold the last two horses his band possesses to get means to go to Helena and solicit aid for his starving tribe who have been living on the dead carrion they find on the plains occasionally where a cow or steer had died from disease or cold, . . .

The "newspaper man of reliable character," the Tribune's
informant, was probably Linderman, in Helena. In conclusion the editorial called for fulfillment of the "paper promises" made to the Rocky Boy Indians:

They have been investigated and located and re-located a dozen times if we have been correctly informed. In the present instance they need some food in their bellies and some clothes and blankets on their backs and they need these things P.D.Q. So hurry up the grub . . . We have pity for the poor Indians of Peru tortured and ill-treated to get rubber for the white man's automobile tires, but we are more interested in the poor Indian of Montana who follows Rocky Boy and who is fed on paper promises [emphasis mine] during the February cold of the Montana plains.

Only a few days later, on February 13, the bill proposing a reservation for the Rocky Boy Indians, which had passed the Senate, died in the House of Representatives. In March Woodrow Wilson became president of the United States, and Franklin Lane, secretary of the interior. The period of withdrawal from settlement of the Fort Assiniboine lands was extended for another two years, until March 1915.

On March 13, 1913, the Great Falls Leader printed an interview with Linderman in which he openly denounced the "jealous boomers who look forward to the complete settling of the West." He said, "Land boomers have their eyes on it [the abandoned military reservation] and the politicians will listen to them." The Havre Plaindealer responded on March 15, mocking Linderman's concern for the Indian people:

Frank Linderman who has gained his knowledge of the noble redman from a too faithful reading of Leather-stocking Tales in which Pathfinder and Deerslayer, Indian heroes, had been exalted for their fidelity to principle and to whom faculties of reasoning
almost superhuman were given by the author, has become interested in Chief Rocky Boy and his tribe of human scavengers and has determined to find for them a haven upon the Assinniboine military reservation. 32

The homeless Cree and Chippewa were often referred to, disparagingly, as "Linderman's tribe." In his memoirs Linderman recalled an editorial in the Plaindealer that accused him of "hiding under a mantle of Charity" in all his work for the "renegade" Indians. Implying that he wanted to be an Indian agent on the proposed reservation, the editors said he had no concern for the rights of white settlers.33

Three more years passed before the Chippewa and Cree were given a home. Paper promises could not feed starving people, and they would not have survived without the help of the coalition of white men who sought to bring just treatment and compassion into their lives. Despite the hardships they suffered, the Indians trusted Linderman. He was the link between their world and those in the white world who could help them. 34

Chapter 2 explores the deep friendship between Linderman and the Chippewa and Cree. It may have been fate that brought them together in 1885, but it was their fortune to be friends forever.
CHAPTER 2

FRIENDS FOREVER

Frank Bird Linderman

Even as a boy, growing up in Ohio, Frank Linderman was fascinated by the animals and birds of the forest. He loved to watch and learn from them. Much of his time was spent roaming the woods and rivers near his home in Lorain, and sailing on Lake Erie.

He also loved to hunt and trap. He was an independent lad who would tramp through the woods alone with his sawed-off shotgun over his shoulder, hunting squirrels. As an older man, reflecting on his childhood, he remembered that he would "sneak out the old shot gun" and go by himself on a long four-mile journey up the river to an island.

Sometimes he and a friend would "paint up with mud" and explore the river banks. Linderman recalled some of the mystery and magic of that time, in a letter written in 1916:

Yes indeed we "were kids together" and didn't we know that toads made warts in those days and we're not sure that devil's-darning-needles did sew up little boy's lips and sometimes their ears. Gee! of course we did--and that a snake's tail never dies until the sun goes down--and that a turtle never would let go of your finger until it thundered... Every turtle knew when I was out of school and the sun had no attraction for him after that. Every bird and snake on the old Black river [sic] told their children about me and I'm ashamed now, but I
did learn all there was to know about them and their habits. I still know all about them and love them. I think I did then but a boy is a born savage and "what makes the wheels go 'round" is the burning question with him.¹

In January 1909, when writing to his friend Chick Rossiter, in Sheridan, Montana, about the recent Governor's ball in Helena, he compared the men at the ball, dressed up in their finery, with the bullfrogs in Ohio:

"... When I was a kid, we used to catch a bull frog for turtle bait and by sticking a straw, --well along about the place where the tails on a dress coat do the most good, we'd blow him up chock full of wind and, after hooking the fish-hook into him, toss him out to float on the river's surface, a bait for the turtle. By God--if Doc didn't remind me of those "wind-blown" frogs, I hope to die.²"

"Doc" was O. M. Lanstrum, head of the Republican party in Montana, and one of Linderman's good friends in Helena.

While learning to relate with the birds and animals in the forests of Ohio, young Linderman secretly longed to be a hunter and trapper in the wilderness of the Northwest Territory. He could not remember when he first began to feel his "boyhood ache" to go west. He said it came to him early and never left, and added, "I feared that the West of my dreams would fade before I could reach it!³"

Linderman was born September 25, 1869, to James Bird and Mary Brannan Linderman. When his parents, who had one other son, Percy, reluctantly agreed that Frank could leave home to go out West, in early 1885, James assured Mary that their boy would soon return and would then be glad to be home. In his memoirs, Montana Adventure, written 50
years later, Frank contemplated his youthful intention:

I had found a large map of the western states and territories, and that night, for the hundredth time, I spread it upon the floor in my own room to pore over it as I always had, flat on my belly. Long before this I had decided where I wished to go, but now that my dream was coming true I needed to be sure I had made no mistake in my choosing. I had to have unspoiled wilderness, because I secretly intended to become a trapper. I remember that I felt glad when the Flathead Lake country in northwestern Montana Territory seemed yet to be farthest removed from contaminating civilization. I'd go as straight as I could to Flathead Lake... .

Two friends went with him. They arrived in the Flathead Valley on March 20, 1885. His friends braved the first few nights with him. Then, deciding it was too rough in the wilderness, they left him to go back to "the States." He described his first home in the wilderness:

During their short stay in the Flathead country we had hastily built a tiny log cabin, packing the logs on our backs, . . . The cabin had no windows or floor, and its door was the green hide of a white-tail deer that I had killed nearby. Its uncovered pole roof leaked for hours after the rain outside had ceased to fall, and there was neither chinking nor daubing between its logs. There was no fireplace, and its only furniture was an old percussion-lock Kentucky rifle that had belonged to my father in Ohio, and the axe. But the thing I most marvel at now is that we had no blankets, no covering at night except our light overcoats. 4

Most of their baggage had been lost enroute, coming through Missoula. Linderman wrote, "When my partners left me I felt mighty blue." In fact, he said he felt "as lonely as a hole in a hillside." 5

There were few white men in the Flathead area in those days, and the 16-year-old boy didn't know anything
about the native people. It wasn't long, though, before he met his first Indian, who was a "renowned Flathead warrior" named Red-horn:

My Indian visitor instinctively knew that I was a rank pilgrim. His smile said as plainly as words that he thought me a babe in the woods. However, he was exceedingly polite, and tried to treat me as he would a grown man. This made a deep impression on me. From that day I frequently fibbed about my age.  

Linderman learned to survive in his new environment which was at that time "the wildest portion" of Montana, among the Flathead and Kootenai Indians. He soon mastered the universal sign-language of the natives, and thus began his life-long study of the cultural traditions and lore of Montana tribesmen. For seven years, until 1892, he lived as a hunter and trapper, a cowboy, and a guide in the mountains and around the lakes of the Flathead and Swan valleys.  

In late 1885 he met a band of Chippewa and Cree Indians, not long after they crossed the border coming through the mountains from Canada--fugitives from the Riel Rebellion. Some of them were still wounded from the fighting, and all were suffering from hunger. He contributed to their survival by furnishing them with deer and elk meat.  

In 1918 Linderman wrote of his Chippewa and Cree friends:

In 1885 the Riel Rebellion was added to the history of the Northwest and after some desperate fighting the Crees and Chippewas were beaten by the Canadian troops. These Indians came across the line into Montana and some thirty lodges of them camped near me in the Flathead. They were pictures in the extreme and full of fight.

... The chiefs--there were two of them--and an
old Medicine-man, whose name was Full-of-Dew, became fast friends of mine and from them all, especially the latter, I learned much of the "long ago."

I had had trouble with the Kootenais ... so I sought to strengthen the friendship between the new arrivals and myself. This friendship has lasted unbroken since 1885. In fact I am a Chippewa by adoption and as the Crees and Chippewas claim kinship and have always been allies, I feel myself to be as much a Cree as a Chippewa.9

Linderman maintained his youthful friendship with the old full-blood tribesmen throughout his life. His boyhood interest in Indian arrowheads first led him to question tribal elders and listen to their stories as they sat around campfires in the Flathead wilderness. Later, he was the spearhead of the movement to find the Chippewa and Cree a place to settle. Whether listening, or in action, Linderman's attitude toward the native peoples' spiritual and human rights was avant-garde in his time.

His relationships with the Chippewa and Cree led him into a western experience that took 30 years to unfold--the creation of the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation. Who were these people, the Chippewa and Cree, and how did they come to be in the Flathead Valley in 1885?

The Montana Chippewa and Cree

Linguistically the Chippewa and Cree are closely related, both tribes descending from the linguistic family of Algonquian-speaking peoples. Ancestors of the Chippewa (also spelled Ojibwa) comprised one of the largest tribal groups in North America, north of Mexico. Their main area
of habitation was in the region of the upper Great Lakes.

The Cree lived to the north of the Chippewa (Ojibwa) in the vast region between the Great Lakes and Hudson Bay. They were forest hunters and trappers. Culturally the Cree and Chippewa were similar, and tribal bands had intermarried and intermingled for generations.

By the early 1800s certain bands of Chippewa and Cree had migrated westward and become nomadic dwellers of the Canadian and Montana plains, between the Saskatchewan and Missouri rivers. They followed the cyclic migrations of the bison across what became the international border that divided the United States and Canada. This unmarked line meant nothing to the tribal hunters, whose ancestors had moved through the forests and across the open plains for ages before the white man came along and divided the land.

The bison herds were the economic base of plains tribal cultures, providing their main supply of food and the materials for most of their ceremonial artifacts, clothing, household goods, and shelter. The Indians came to depend on their connections with fur traders for ammunition, whiskey, and other trade items, but nothing from the white man could ever replace the way of life that was destroyed with the extinction of the bison.

The plains tribes' almost total dependence upon the bison, the North American species of buffalo, was detailed in a 1969 report by anthropologist John C. Ewers:
It is important to an understanding of the Indian history of this area to recognize that the plains of eastern Montana provided the last refuge of the great northern buffalo herd in North America during the years 1879-1884. As the buffalo range contracted in Canada and the United States, numerous tribes of Indians, and sizeable parties of Métis, many of whom had been accustomed to hunt buffalo outside . . . [the area], converged upon this last stronghold of the buffalo, and they, together with white hunters participated in the final extermination of the buffalo as a wild species.

The importance of the buffalo to the native economy also is proven by the fact that when the buffalo were exterminated in the mid-1880s, many Indians . . . [in the area] died of starvation. The extermination came too rapidly, and government rations were insufficient to prevent this starvation. . . . Indians found the other resources of the area inadequate to sustain life. Indians could not have continued to live in this area after the buffalo were gone without continued and very considerable assistance from whites.10

By the time the northern half of the northern herd of buffalo had disappeared from the Canadian plains, in the late 1870s, many of the Plains Cree had signed treaties and moved onto reserves in Canada. They were being forced to turn from hunting to agriculture for subsistence, and were dependent on government rations. The Canada government tried to deter those Indians who had not yet signed treaties from crossing the border into Montana Territory, where the southern half of the herd was still plentiful and they could hunt to survive. Instead, they were drawn farther north into Canada, enticed by meagre provisions and annuities that were doled out only at northern agencies.11

But some of the Cree, unwilling to give up their ancestral way of life, followed the buffalo to the final
hunting ground, in U.S. Territory along the Missouri and the Milk River. This country was part of the huge Indian reservation that encompassed most of northern Montana Territory. Many tribal groups lived in this vast land until, in 1888, the demands of the cattlemen forced them onto several much smaller areas: the Blackfeet, Fort Peck and Fort Belknap Reservations.12

Big Bear was a Cree leader who had refused to accept a treaty with the Canadian government. He and his followers crossed the border into Montana Territory to hunt the bison, setting up camps around the Milk River, the Missouri, and the Little Rockies during the winters of 1879-1882. In The Buffalo Hunters, writer Mari Sandoz described the intensity of those years, as thousands of white men competed with the Indians to hunt the last of the great herd:

By the spring of 1882 there were over five thousand hunters and skinners on the northern range. Thousands of buffaloes were killed around the far fringes of their migration, down in Wyoming, and westward into the foothills of the mountains. But mostly the hunters concentrated on the great central body of the herd. They blocked the buffaloes from the waterways in their annual spring march toward Canada. They set up a cordon of camps stretched from the big bend of the Missouri as far west as the Idaho line, completely blocking all passage north from the great pasturages of the Milk River, the Musselshell, Yellowstone and the Marias. Hunters from Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado and farther south came shooting, driving the frantic buffaloes into the muzzles of thousands of repeating rifles cutting them off from escape to Canada, where the hunters could not follow. With the rifles and wide expanses of fire and new-burnt prairie, very few escaped.13
Saskatchewan and Alberta: Cree landmarks
from *Big Bear: The End of Freedom* by Hugh A. Dempsey
In the spring of 1882 United States authorities organized the Milk River Expedition, to chase the Canadian Indians and half-breeds Métis out of the Montana plains. In his historical account, Big Bear: The End of Freedom, Hugh Dempsey described the expedition:

Although the winter was a bitter one, there was plenty of buffalo and lots of whiskey. . . . By now, the Canadian Indians tended to be a painfully visible part of the Montana landscape, as most of the American tribes had been forced back to their reservations. A few bands were scattered around the prairie hills, but they were insignificant when compared to Big Bear's huge village or to the several hundred Canadian half-breeds camped in log cabins farther east on Milk River.

The foreign invaders had become a political embarrassment to the authorities, so in the spring of 1882, the military mounted the Milk River Expedition to drive the Canadian Indians and half-breeds back across the line. A combination of cavalry and infantry groups, equipped with cannon and Gatling guns under the command of Major Klein, planned to make a sweep of the Milk River and then strike Big Bear's camp in the Little Rockies. One man predicted that when they were finished, "considerable expense will be spared the Canadian government as they will have several Indians less to feed."

The half-breeds, with their semipermanent log cabins, were the easiest to find, and so on 15 March, the first settlement was attacked near Medicine Lodge. There was no resistance, and the next two days were spent burning 150 cabins along the river, while the half-breeds fled north . . .

Big Bear's band avoided attack by quickly moving from their campsite in the Little Rockies to Beaver Creek.

Finally, in April 1882, they returned to Fort Walsh in Saskatchewan, and in December Chief Big Bear agreed to treat with the Canadian government.

Four thousand Indians were camped in the vicinity of Fort Walsh during the winter of 1882-1883. The people
were dressed in rags and living in old tepees made of hides that were rotting, or in flimsy cloth shelters. They were fed rations but they were kept in line through deprivation, as can be seen in the following Fort Walsh journal entry of November 11, 1882:

The Indians look very bad. I know they are not getting enough flour but I like to punish them a little. I will have to increase their rations, but not much. 15

Big Bear's people were "deliberately being starved," to force him into submission.16 But even after accepting the treaty and annuities, Big Bear would not settle on a reserve. His group of over 500 followers moved to the area near Frog Lake Agency in Alberta for the winter of 1884-1885 to be near rations, but still had no reserve of their own.

When the Riel Rebellion started on March 18, 1885, at Batoche, Saskatchewan, the news caused Big Bear's son, Imasees, and the young war leader, Wandering Spirit, to instigate an uprising at Frog Lake on April 2. Depressed by constant hunger and the confinement of reservation life, they were angry—angry at the Canadian government for its poor treatment of them, and angry at Big Bear because of the delaying tactics he had been using for years while trying to avoid government control.

The young men, intoxicated by alcohol, vented their frustration on the small community of white people at Frog Lake Agency. Big Bear opposed the erupting violence but the
young men would not listen to him. Within a few minutes
nine white men were killed, including subagent Thomas Quinn,
farm instructor Delaney, and two Catholic priests—Father
Fafard and Father Marchand.  

In June, after the "Battle of Frenchman's Butte" and
a number of skirmishes in Saskatchewan, Big Bear's band, in
retreat, began to split up while on the move. On July 4 Big
Bear was discovered, with two companions, and was arrested
near Carlton, Saskatchewan. He was tried before Judge Hugh
Richardson in Regina, in the fall of 1885, and was sentenced
to three years in prison, despite his efforts to avoid vio­
ience at Frog Lake. He was released after two years, but he
was old and very sick and on January 17, 1888, he died.

Six men who had taken part in the Frog Lake Massacre
were hanged; others were sentenced to years in prison. But
Little Poplar, Lucky Man, and Big Bear's son Imasees, with a
band of about 100 people, escaped through the mountains into
Montana Territory.

Big Bear, who had tried to hold out for the freedom
of his people to follow their old ways, was 60 when the Riel
Rebellion broke out in the spring of 1885. His son Imasees,
who became known as Little Bear in Montana, was 34. Thirty
more years would pass before Little Bear and his wandering
band of Cree and Chippewa would finally find a home.
Co-skee-see-co-cot

While the Riel Rebellion was taking place north of the border, young Frank Linderman was learning to survive in the wilderness of Montana Territory. When some of the fugitive Cree and Chippewa camped in the Flathead Valley, they became friends. They called him Sings Like a Bird, and later, Co-skee-see-co-cot, The Man Who Looks Through Glass.

In his memoirs Linderman recalled a conversation he had with Full-of-Dew, a Chippewa medicine-man, that illustrates their respect for one another:

Full-of-Dew was a silent man, always anxious to learn, a profound mystic. Once on a day in winter I met him. "Are you hungry?" I asked, because he shivered.

"Yes," he answered.

"Come, and we will eat," I said, turning my horse toward my camp.

"No," he said, firmly. "My woman is sick. I have promised Manitou that I will not eat for four days and four nights."

"Who is Manitou?" I asked, as always when opportunity offered.

He looked about, his eyes settling for a moment on the far mountains white with snow. "The mountains, the lowlands, the rivers, the birds, my fire, the people, the big trees," he said slowly. Then he added, "I believe that the big trees speak to you, Co-skee-see-co-cot, but not to many other white men."19

As a young man, learning to communicate with the Indian people through sign language and the telling of stories, Linderman found that he agreed with much of their philosophy toward "the great out-of-doors."20

He learned from the myths and legends told by the old tribal historians, among them Full-of-Dew and Muskegon, a
Cree. Years later some of these legends were included in his first book, *Indian Why Stories*, published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1915. This book played a subtle but significant role, in 1916, in the final actions taken to secure a reservation for the landless Indians in Montana.

Of those wilderness days in the Flathead and Swan valleys, and his love for the spirit of the land there, Linderman reminisced in 1914:

... I know every inch of that whole country on both sides of the ranges like a book. I have camped in every place along the shore of the lake when whitemen were not wanted there ... and Manitou was king. Both that country and I were young.  

Statehood came to Montana in 1889. Linderman recalled that his partner at the time, an old trapper named Alvin Lee, was not happy about it when they heard the news:

... I shall never forget his displeasure and chagrin when he learned that Montana had ceased to be a Territory and had become a State in the Union. "Now she's gone to hell for keeps," he sighed. And I believed him.  

In the early 1890s Linderman pulled himself out of the wilderness he loved. A new love had come into his life.

In those days there was a town called Demersville on the Flathead River, north of Flathead Lake. In his memoirs Linderman wrote that in its heyday Demersville had been "a boom town with wild and woolly ways." In 1891, when the railroad reached the new town of Kalispell a few miles away, Demersville "gave up the ghost," but it was in Demersville that he met Miss Minnie Jane Johns.
She had come from Wisconsin to visit her brother, Sam Johns, another Flathead Valley pioneer. When Linderman realized he was in love with her he tried to leave the "free life" of his boyhood dreams:

\[... I found it difficult to quit the old life of a trapper, and yet I knew that I must if I expected to marry her. More than once I made brave attempts to settle down, working in the store of G. H. Adams in Demersville, where my lady was postmistress, and in the town of Kalispell. Sometimes I hung on for several weeks, or until some old partner showed up. Then away I would go again into the mountains for a time. \ldots \]^{23}

He knew the only way he could "quit the old life" was to leave the country. He had a talk with Miss Johns, and they made plans. She would return to her family home in New Richmond, Wisconsin, until he had settled somewhere. Then she would return to Montana and they would marry.

Linderman left the next day for Missoula. As he rode down the river from Demersville toward Flathead Lake he reflected on the past:

\[... Steaming down the Flathead River, I felt the first pangs of homesickness I had ever known. What a wonderful country this had been! What sights I had seen! Months are as years to a boy, and I was yet but a boy. It seemed to me that I had been in this wilderness for a lifetime, that I belonged here, that I could never leave the forests, the sight of big game, the grand rivers and mountains, for civilization.\]

Just below Selish [sic] the steamboat passed several lodges of Crees. How well I remember my first meeting with these Indians. I had seen them soon after their battle with Canadian troops at Duck Creek [sic] in 1885. Some of them were wounded, and all had seemed to me to be upstanding men. \ldots

He thought of his friendships with the Indians. He wondered
what lay ahead, in the future:

Since our first meeting we had been warm friends. Many a day I had hunted with the Crees and Chippewas of the band. Now I saw Muskegon, a particular friend, standing beside his lodge. I waved my hat. He answered with his hand, although I am sure that he did not recognize me, dressed up as I was. I had gathered many Cree legends from Muskegon, and hoped to get others. I had many friends among the Blackfeet and Flatheads, and even a few Kootenias called me "friend." Now I was leaving it all... And where was I going? What was I to do, who had neither a trade nor profession and very little schooling?^24

Sometime ago he had met several influential white men, on a hunting trip he had guided into the mountains in Swan Lake country. He recalled Territorial Governor Sam Hauser's surprise when, one night while they were telling stories around the campfire, he had corrected the governor's quotation of Shakespeare. Realizing their young guide was a literate man, the governor declared, "Boy, don't spend too much time running wild. What you have already done has been good for you, but... You don't belong in the wilds." The men on the hunting trip told Linderman, "When you come out of the wilderness look us up."^25

By the time the State of Montana had steamed out of the river onto Flathead Lake, whose shore line was yet wild, unsettled forest, I had reviewed my associations with these men whom I now intended to find.^26

Linderman was an affable, sociable person, a good listener, and a great storyteller. His strong character attracted friendships with many men of influence throughout his life—people who would play important roles in his
varied careers, in the unfolding of events in his public life, and in the later development of his literary career. In this move from the wilderness to "civilization" his connections led him into the world of mining.

In Missoula he found Sterne Blake, one of the four men who had been on the hunting trip. Blake, who was an owner of the Curlew Mine at Victor, employed Linderman as watchman. Linderman began to help the assayer at the mine and soon, when the company had to cut expenses, he took over the jobs of assayer and bookkeeper, teaching himself by experience and through books. He and Minnie were finally married in Missoula on April 18, 1893.

When the Curlew closed down they moved to Butte, in 1894, where he worked as a chemist at the Butte and Boston smelter for several years. One day, as he walked out of town to look at a new smelter that was being built, which did not impress him, he saw in the distance a vision from another world. He wrote in his memoirs, Montana Adventure:

... just across the valley near the foothills I saw four Indian lodges, looking white against the brown background. The sight of them thrilled me more than anything I had lately seen. The day was fine. The mountaintops laid shadows upon the four lodges that seemed to belong to another world altogether. I walked to the camp, not guessing what Indians were there. Imagine my delight when I was greeted by my old friend, Muskegon, the Cree, who had told me so many tribal folk tales in the Flathead.

As they renewed their bonds of friendship Linderman noticed a deep change in Muskegon. He marked this meeting as a
fateful and foretelling event:

Times were growing hard for the Crees, he told me. Game in the open country was scarce. They had been gathering buffalo bones and selling polished buffalo horns in towns. They were now working their way back to the Flathead country, where there were yet many deer and elk in the forest. Muskegon looked dejected. His clothes, ragged portions of white men's apparel, seemed to have lowered both his morale and personal appearance. He was a changed man. Yellow-face, another Cree friend who was in this camp, was more cheerful. However, he was a much younger man, and still wore legging and breechclout. We visited for hours. They could not understand why I, a hunter, came to be in Butte. And by the same token, I was at a loss to explain their presence so near to the big mining camp. I did not then suspect that the wandering band of Crees and Chippewas, numbering about three hundred men, women, and children, to which these four lodges belonged, would someday become a charge of mine. However, when I went to work the next morning I saw that the four lodges were gone. Several years were to pass before I again saw a Cree.

He was concerned for his old friends, saddened by the condition they were in at the time. Little did he realize how bad things would become in the future, or how intimately involved he would be in the outcome of their fate.

In the summer of 1898 the Lindermans moved to Brandon, near Sheridan, Montana. They had two daughters by then—Wilda and Verne—and a third child was on the way. Linderman built a log cabin beside Mill Creek, and not long after the roof was finished Norma was born.

He had moved to Brandon to work as assayer at the old Toledo mine, but it wasn't long before the Toledo shut down, and Linderman was without a job. Still, they were glad to be in the country, away from the pollution in Butte,
in a place where there was green grass growing. They wanted to stay in Brandon. He acquired the Toledo's assay equipment, and set up a small office in Sheridan. He also prospected his own mine—the Wildaverne.

The Press Gang

At the turn of the century unusual circumstances led Linderman to purchase the Sheridan newspaper. After realizing that the quartz in his mine "was as barren of value as a cuckoo clock is of real birdsong," he had decided he would have to abandon the mine and go back to Butte to find work. There were now five Lindermans to feed—and he was broke.

It was snowing on March 3, 1899, when he went down to H. D. Rossiter's store in Sheridan to borrow money so he could get to Butte. Upon hearing his story one of the men who was hanging out at the store mentioned that the newspaper might be for sale. He handed Linderman a five-dollar bill and told him to go offer it as down payment on the business. Linderman's account of this chance event reveals something of his adventurous spirit:

Perhaps it was only the dare that led me to the front door with the five-dollar bill in my hand. I had never in my life been inside a newspaper plant, large or small. I did not even know the newspaper man, had never seen him. The absurdity of the situation suddenly halted me in the middle of the snowy street. Not a soul was in sight; and yet I knew that the men in the store were watching me, probably chuckling over the joke they'd played. But perhaps it was not a joke, after all. I had nothing to lose. . . .

Within ten minutes he had bought The Sheridan Paper for
$150.00, handing over the borrowed five-dollar bill as down payment. At the time, he didn't know there was a $500.00 mortgage attached to the agreement. The former owner was ready to go out for a drink to celebrate the transaction, but Linderman stopped him:

"Wait," I countered, a little worried now. "You'll have to help me for a few days, show me a lot of things. I know less about this publishing business than a billy goat knows about side whiskers."

"Ain't you a printer?" he asked, evidently shocked.

"No, not yet. But if you will show me a little about it, I will be."

"Well, I'll be damned!" The fellow leaned back against the typecases, looking me up and down. "Hell, man, you can't learn the printer's trade in a few days. What are you going to do with this paper?" he asked suspiciously.

"Publish it," I declared, walking to the imposing-stone to have my first look at forms in chases.

He burst out laughing. "You've got a gall as big as a church," he said. "Anyhow, let's get that drink while I've got this five-dollar bill."

When they returned to the print shop the fellow gave Linderman his first lesson. Three days later they got his first issue out, on time, but after the former owner left town Linderman knew he would need help:

... I had learned to set type, even to "make up," after a fashion. Fortunately for me, there was then no job press in the office, so that I believed I could stagger along. Nevertheless, I sent to Butte for a friend who was a printerman, and a good one. He had worked on many a newspaper, and was smart and bright as a weasel. He came, with his family, and became chief of the newspaper, which I supported with my assaying, since the thing did not pay its own way.

We at once changed the paper's name to The Sheridan Chinook. . . .
The Sheridan Chinook newspaper and Linderman's assay office, Sheridan, Montana, circa 1900 and 1903
(note change in Linderman's apron in the two pictures)
During the next few years, as a journalist with the newspaper, Linderman's writing skills developed. He wrote poems, had a local news column called "At the Corner," and published aphorisms under the pen name of "Uncle Billy," his alter-ego. Uncle Billy was a Montana prospector whose western wit and wisdom are typical of the keen observations Linderman drew in his later writings. For instance, Uncle Billy made the following statements:

1) When ye tell yer secrets, ye give yer confidant the same quality that makes a buzz-saw respected -- the edge.

2) I can't say that all politicians are liars for there's some I haint met yet.

3) Do ye think it's love of climbin' that makes a jack rabbit run uphill when a coyote is after him? No, sir! It's because his Maker gin him jes enough sense to know he kin climb faster than his enemies, an it's this here ability to know an take advantages that makes winners.

4) Mental reservation is dope a liar puts on self-inflicted wounds.

5) We hail the stockbroker as a brother in high society and shun the faro-dealer, while as far as I kin see, the only difference between 'em is that one looks his patrons in the eye as he rakes their bets into his till, and the other wires "Ye lose" to some poor duffer who has put up his pile a thousand miles away. One allows the public to watch him and his game, and the other takes no chances with desperate players.

6) The only difference between a bank and a pawn shop is the wall-decorations.

7) Trouble is a maverick and as soon's ye slap yer brand on it, the property's yourn.

Some of Uncle Billy's aphorisms reflect wisdom Linderman had
gained while living in the wilderness and among his Indian friends. For example, he said:

8) Contrast is the teacher of appreciation for by it we recognize the beautiful, more beautiful, most beautiful, in the scenes which smiling nature is ever ready to set before those who love her.

9) A heathen is a party who don't believe in your god.

Linderman often put his ideas into rhyme and lyrical verse, as in the following short poem written in 1906 in a letter to his friend Chick Rossiter, who lived in Sheridan:

Life's jest a courtship of fortune;
Jest a claim on the bar of chance
Where pay's as scarse in the gravel
As the boost of a circumstance.

Not only did Linderman's newspaper experience mark the beginning of his literary career but, in the future, he called upon his knowledge of the "newspaper game" in his campaign to help the landless Indians of Montana.

In retrospect Linderman felt the circumstance of the purchase of the newspaper was fortuitous:

Admitting the egotism that an expressed belief in fatalism seems to imply, and without professing faith in any particular thing, excepting a good rifle (which of course means oneself) I declare that I have, more than once, been turned from my intention and even from my avowed determination, by circumstances that were not of my own making. Grope as I have for a more satisfying term for this influence that has so often arbitrarily decided my affairs, I can find none better than "fate."

By experience Linderman came to believe that fate plays a role in the unfolding of events in a person's life, and certainly in his life of varied careers this can be seen.
In 1899, while living in Sheridan, Linderman became a Mason. He was not a churchgoing man, but he found that the ritual, pageantry, and ideals of Masonry augmented his appreciation for the ceremony, dignity, and spiritual beliefs of his old Indian friends. In an undated letter to Rossiter, written sometime around 1912, Linderman said:

If a man could grab and hang to some set belief—regarding all nature—he would be happier and less prone to moods. Here is where the Indian makes us look small indeed. Sometime you must become a 32d degree mason—it is the only place where men are taught the truth. It is according to my ideas. It is according to the Ancient sports who, in their own time, were alone. It is according to what the Indian thought . . .

In later years Masonic brothers extended material and political support to his appeals for the destitute Indians, and brought him in contact with people who were important in his political and literary careers. He advanced to the honorary 33rd degree of the Scottish Rite, and was a member of the Algeria Shrine Temple in Helena.

The years Linderman spent in Sheridan gave him an understanding of the gold-seekers, those who came to Montana Territory to take the treasures from the land at the expense of the "real" American. He adopted the Masonic heritage of the Vigilantes who, in the 1860s, had taken drastic measures to end the lawless chaos of the gold-rush days at Bannack and Virginia City. In Linderman's future he would pursue justice in his own way—justice for the native American.

Linderman's newspaper career, and his Republican and
Masonic affiliations, led him into the political arena. He was elected in 1902 to the eighth legislature, and again in 1904 to the ninth, as a Republican from Madison County. His life was moving into a position of purpose—he was gaining knowledge and influence from which he would be able to take an effective stand for his Indian friends.

In his memoirs he wrote of his first term in office, and the group of lawmakers gathered in Helena in 1903:

"Ours, the eighth legislative assembly, was the first to sit in the new capitol. So young and uninformed were its members at the beginning of the session that they found it necessary to employ an instructor in parliamentary law before they could even pass their own salary bill. But at last they worked well, and, in spite of the bitter struggles over Butte's corporation differences, formed an association, of which I was elected secretary "for forty years."

This group, the Eighth Legislative Assembly Association, met every year or two for a banquet, until sometime in the early 1920s. Linderman, as secretary, called the meetings and often presided over them.

Linderman's first twenty years in Montana provided a training ground of experience and knowledge that prepared the way for his role in assisting the Chippewa and Cree Indians, and opened the door to his literary career. When the Lindermans moved to Helena in 1905 his integrity and sphere of influence extended further into the public realm.

Linderman was the assistant to Montana's secretary of state, Abe Yoder, from 1905-1907. When Yoder was away from Montana for extended periods of time, because of ill
Linderman served as acting secretary of state. During these years some of his Chippewa and Cree friends from long ago were camped on the outskirts of Helena. He described their impoverished situation:

The Crees and Chippewas had been camped near Helena for more than a year now [since winter of 1905-1906]. Of course I had become their arbiter. Their condition was pitiable indeed. Living upon offal garnered from the stingy slaughterhouses on the city's outskirts and whatever else they could find in Helena's garbage cans, they were in a state of health that was deplorable. Instead of the old-fashioned lodges (tepees) these Indians were hovering in tattered tents and shelters made with old gunny sacks and bits of rotten canvas. Wood, mostly green willow brush, was difficult to obtain, so that comfortable campfires were luxuries. To save fuel and yet contrive to warm their miserable shelters, they converted old iron wash tubs, salyaged from garbage dumps, into heating stoves.

Linderman found that biased journalism and negative public opinion, aimed at the "Canadian renegades" for many years, made it difficult to help the landless Chippewa and Cree.

In 1907 Linderman opened an assay office at 38 South Main Street (now Last Chance Gulch). He was an organizer of the Montana Mining Association, serving as secretary in its first years, 1908-1909. He was also an honorary member of the Montana Press Association, and a member of the prestigious Montana Club of Helena.

From 1910-1917 he was state representative for the Germania Life Insurance Company. His travels throughout Montana for this job, and as a Masonic representative, gave Linderman the opportunity to talk with many Montanans about
the desperate plight of the homeless Chippewa and Cree.

The greater events of the first 35 years of Linderman's life reveal his intrepid and adventurous nature. Chick Rossiter, the son of H. D. Rossiter in Sheridan, and Linderman's friend for 40 years, said he thought Linderman "did not know the emotion of fear" when facing what he felt to be an injustice. That bold characteristic would persist throughout his lifetime, leading him to pursue just treatment toward the displaced Chippewa and Cree, in spite of strong opposition from powerful factions in the state.

Leaders of the Landless Indians

The scattered band of landless Indians in Montana was a significant remnant of the once most powerful Cree and Chippewa tribes. While some chiefs had rejected the old ways and accepted the white man's religion, Big Bear's band held to the spiritual beliefs of their ancestors.

Big Bear himself was considered a great mystic. By adhering to their traditional beliefs his people signified the last pure expression of the ancient ways on the plains. But, in holding out for their rights they had become lost in the wasteland where the great forces of change--the gun and the horse--had merged.

The thunder-stick, coming from the traders of the east, and the medicine-dog, riding up from the southwest, met on the northern plains of Montana in a clash of power that silenced forever the hooves of the great bison herds.
By the turn of the century the native peoples of the plains were left in a destitute and dependent situation.

The Chippewa and Cree survived in Montana without state or federal aid in the 1890s. They hunted game in the forests, gathered hundreds of thousands of scattered buffalo bones from the plains, which were sold to make fertilizer, and in towns they sold polished buffalo horns, beadwork, and hand-crafted leather goods. But when the bones and horns had all been gathered, and game laws prevented the native people from securing fresh meat and hides, the landless Indians had no way to support themselves.

When seasonal work was available they scattered around the state to look for jobs. During the winters some lived on the reservations of other tribal groups, but many gathered in small bands on the outskirts of Montana towns such as Havre, Malta, Choteau, Augusta, Anaconda, Helena, Butte, Missoula, Great Falls, and Billings. The homeless Indians found it necessary to depend on the refuse of white civilization in order to survive.

In late 1887 a group of about 200 had tried to settle on the Flathead Reservation; then an attempt was made by some to settle on the Blackfeet Reservation. Anthropologist John Ewers noted that "during the summer of 1890 a portion of the 'British Cree,' under Chief Wild Boy, a son of Big Bear, made another effort to find a home on the Flathead Reservation west of the Rockies." Chief Wild Boy
was Little Bear.  

These attempts to settle on established reservations failed. Tribal groups in Montana did not want to give up part of their lands to half-breeds and Indians from Canada. Their lands were limited, with no room to grow, and they had to take care of their own people.

Appeals for appropriations to keep the landless Indians from starving were denied by Congress. But in 1896, under political pressure from voters in the state, the federal government appropriated $5,000 to deport the refugee Cree back to Canada. In a state-wide round-up nearly 550 Indians were sent across the line—300 people were shipped by rail in boxcars, when the money ran out 250 more were forced to walk overland. Linderman wrote of this deportation attempt:

United States soldiers rounded them up—Chippewas and Crees alike, and escorting them across the line, permitted them to go free upon Canadian soil. But the Indians headed straight back for Montana, actually beating the soldiers home. This feat caused old-timers to chuckle: "Let them stay," they said. And they did stay even though they had now to scratch desperately for a living.

Canadian officials had said the Cree would be granted amnesty, but as soon as they crossed the border Chief Little Bear was arrested. This caused others in the band to distrust the Canadians. Many turned around and crossed back over to the United States as soon as they could get away.

The Canadians tried to convict Little Bear, but they
were unable to find a witness who could, or would, identify him as a participant in the Frog Lake Massacre and the Riel Rebellion. After he was released from custody he remained in Canada for several years, but finally returned to Montana to be with his people.

According to Dempsey, Little Bear was born in 1851 in the Little Hills near Jackfish Lake, Saskatchewan. Linderman described him as "a born fighting man":

... His face was like a Roman senator's, and yet lurking in his eyes there was an easily awakened expression of keen humor. He laughed readily, but was decidedly moody, his mouth suggesting a pouter. [He], and many others of the band, had counted coup in battle, and always wore an eagle's feather as a mark of distinction. Perhaps they were the first men to face a hostile Gatling gun in action, and before it they gave an excellent account of themselves as fighters, as the Canadian history of the Northwest will show. . . .

Little Bear told Linderman a story that reveals the humane yet warlike character of the chief. Linderman recalled:

At another time in a more detailed story of the fighting across the line he described his own position in thick brush. "The year was young," he said, "the nights cool, and the middle of the days hot. A creek ran along near my hiding-place. The soldiers were just across it in the bushes, like myself. I saw a red coat. It was moving carefully toward the water in the creek. At last a soldier stuck his head out of the bushes right across from me. He was thirsty. He looked at the water. Then he looked all about, up and down the stream, and even up into some trees. I might have killed him, but I didn't. He was very thirsty. I let him creep to the creek, and drink all the water he wanted; then I shot him." 42

Through many long years of suffering and degradation, Chief Little Bear relentlessly fought for a solution to the problems of his homeless people. But public opinion
was against him. White settlers had the vote, and this was what counted among the politicians. Little Bear and his "renegade Cree" were considered beggars from Canada who had no right to American soil.

On January 14, 1902, a new leader emerged among the landless Indians. An American-born Chippewa chief made his existence known to federal officials by sending a letter to President Theodore Roosevelt:

Dear Sir—, I am the Chief of a band of Chippewa Indians that for years have been wandering through different parts of the United States without home or reservation. We now feel that if possible to secure it, we would like some home or reservation on which to live and have the privilege of sending our children to school.

I am known as an honest Indian and have credentials to show that my people have always been self supporting [sic].

Can you arrange to send me the necessary transportation for myself and an interpreter, from this point to Washington, D.C. and give me a hearing when I arrive there. I believe the request of my people is a just one and if given the opportunity to present the matter to your Excellency, you will agree with me and we feel that you will use your influence toward the betterment of our condition.

My entire tribe is composed of about one hundred and thirty souls, Men women and children, all of whom are self supporting [sic].

If given the opportunity we believe we can improve our present condition.43

Attorney John W. James of Anaconda wrote and sent the letter for Rocky Boy. On February 11, 1902, the Anaconda Standard printed the first known reference to Chief Rocky Boy.44

Ewers estimated that Rocky Boy was born in 1852 or 1853. Linderman wrote that he was "a fine specimen of the old Indians although he is not so warlike as Little Bear,"
Eighth Legislative Assembly, 1903
State Capitol, Helena, Montana
and described him as "fine of feature, without the least visible animosity towards the white race, and gentle as a woman." He said the true translation of Rocky Boy's name was Child of Stone, or Stone Child.  

More is known on the background of Little Bear and the Cree, than of the Chippewa with Rocky Boy, but the bands of Rocky Boy and Little Bear were closely connected through intermarriages. Several versions of the connection between Rocky Boy and Little Bear are explained by Dusenberry in "The Rocky Boy Indians, Montana's Displaced Persons":

Many authorities maintain that Rocky Boy's wife was a sister of Big Bear, Little Bear's father. No less a personage than the late Senator William T. Cowan, who knew Little Bear and Rocky Boy intimately, makes this relationship appear in his unpublished manuscript concerning the establishment of the Rocky Boy reserve. Four Souls, son of Little Bear, says that the two women, the wives of Big Bear and Rocky Boy, were distant cousins, and that his father brought the Cree into the Chippewa group under Rocky Boy because he thought there would be greater chance for them to secure land.  

Because of the prevailing negative perception of Little Bear and the "British Cree," it became expedient to promote the cause of Rocky Boy and the Chippewa, in the search for a home for the landless Indians. Little Bear surrendered some of his secular leadership as public attention was shifted to the plight of the "Rocky Boy renegades."

Ewers, in an attempt to trace the background of the Chippewa chief, turned to an article by Frank Linderman, "The Rocky Boy Renegades," published by the Office of Indian
Nearly one hundred years ago, a large band of Chippewas (Ojibwas) migrated from the region of Red Lake, Minnesota, to the northwestern plains. Here their hereditary enemies, the Sioux, who greatly outnumbered them, gave them repeated battle, finally driving them northward across the Canadian line where they settled down with their kinsmen, the Crees. The Chippewa name for the Crees is "Kin-nisto-no," meaning "three of us." Strengthened now, these Chippewas and their friends the Crees, each year hunted buffalo on the northern plains in what is now Montana, frequently warring with the Blackfeet and particularly the Pecunnies whose domain embraced the northern buffalo range.

In the spring of 1885 Canadian troops fought several battles with the Chippewas and Crees who had been incited to revolt by mixed-bloods.

The rebellion crushed, many of the Chippewas, under Stone-Child, whom belittling white men dubbed "Rocky Boy," returned to Montana, bringing with them a band of Crees led by Little Bear, the young son of Big Bear, the Cree chief. . . because of their battles and their flight across the Canadian line into Montana these Chippewas and Crees under their two chiefs soon became known as "The Rocky Boy Renegades," having neither a country nor a home.

In another reference to the origins of the Chippewa, Ewers quoted a letter dated July 19, 1911, sent by the U.S. Department of the Interior solicitor for the Turtle Mountain Chippewa of North Dakota, to the commissioner of Indian affairs:

For the purpose of identification and completion of the rolls of my kinsmen, kindly give me access to the Roll of Chief Rock [sic] Boy's Band of Chippewa Indians, comprised of a great number of the Turtle Mountain and Pembina Bands of Chippewa Indians, of North Dakota and their descendants, who have wandered away from their old home with the Tribe, at different times since about 1870, and scattered; seeking a livelihood in the West and Northwest country, and now located under the leadership of Chief Rock Boy, upon the Blackfoot Reservation.
Ewers summarized the available information relating to Rocky Boy’s band and their relationship with the Cree:

On the Saskatchewan plains it would appear that these Chippewa nomads became allied with and intermarried with the Prairie Cree, especially those of Big Bear’s Band. As a minority Indian group they attracted little attention. Just when Rocky Boy became recognized as a leader among them we do not know. Linderman seems to suggest that it might not have been until the time of the Riel Rebellion or the movement of Indian refugees from that rebellion southward into Montana. There Rocky Boy’s people were not distinguished from the "British Cree" until he made himself known in his letter to President Roosevelt of January 14, 1902.49

For practical purposes, in order to get the United States government to recognize and assist the landless Indians, attention was drawn to Rocky Boy, the "American born" chief. While retiring somewhat from the public eye, Little Bear continued to be an important spiritual leader for the displaced people, and was acutally more forceful and persistent than Rocky Boy in dealing with white officials.

Still, it was not until ten years later; in 1912, that the Indian Office let go of the distinction between the Rocky Boy band and other "non-reservation Indians."50 At last, they were able to join forces in seeking a home.

Panetoo

The most significant relationship Linderman had among the Chippewa and Cree people was his friendship with Full-of-Dew, who Linderman described as "a silent man, always anxious to learn, a profound mystic." Full-of-Dew told Linderman, "I believe that the big trees speak to you,
Co-skee-see-co-cot, but not to many other white men."\(^{51}\)

Full-of-dew's Chippewa name was Panetoo. In later years he was known as a chief among the Chippewa. He was at Browning for awhile, with Rocky Boy. The Rocky Boy Indians had been sent to the Blackfeet Reservation in November 1909. Little Bear moved there with his people in the summer of 1910. But, by December 1910, both Panetoo and Little Bear left the Blackfeet Reservation.

A special news dispatch from Helena, published in the *Anaconda Standard* in December 1910, explained the reasons why Panetoo and Little Bear left the reservation:

> Claiming that the people of Helena are more generous to them than is the government, about 150 members of Rocky Boy's band of Chippewa Indians left the Blackfeet Indian reservation in Northwestern Montana and are now encamped near Helena. Rocky Boy and about 50 of his most devoted followers remained on the reservation, preferring to take their chances of starvation rather than to depend on the charity of outsiders. The insurgent band is under the leadership of Panetoo [Panetoo], who claims to be a brother of Rocky Boy.

> When the majority of the Chippewas pulled out, their old-time companions in misery, Little Bear's band of Cree, who had been encamped near them, also pulled out and are now wintering near Havre.\(^{52}\)

The Indians claimed the government had not kept its promises to them. Promised land had not been given, promised rations had not been received. Panetoo returned to the Helena area to be near people who were sympathetic to the Indians.

Full-of-dew (Chief Panetoo) frequently came to Linderman's office in Helena for advice or assistance. In their weakened condition, due to hunger and starvation, the
Indians continued to suffer and die from diseases, including tuberculosis, measles and small pox. One day Full-of-Dew asked Linderman, "What is sickness?" He wanted to understand this invisible thing that could make a person lay down on his blanket and never get up again.

Linderman took him to the laboratory of a chemist in Helena, who showed Full-of-dew what could be seen under a microscope—germs, mites, things that could not be seen with the naked eye. Linderman described his friend's reaction:

During all this exposition, that must have been a terrible revelation to him, Full-of-dew uttered no word. Looking at his highly intelligent face, I saw not only deep bewilderment there, but awe, as he, in his turn, looked down through the shining tube at the strangely formed, many-legged mites in the light below. Returning to my office with me, he sat for a long time smoking, taking deep draughts from his stone pipe. I did not disturb his thoughts. Finally, he put his pipe away and stood up. "Ho!" he said abruptly, and went out, his moccasins making not the slightest sound in the hall. I wondered if I had offended him.  

Full-of-dew went back to the camp, called all the people together, told them what he had seen and made everyone clean up around the camp.

Another time, Full-of-dew came to Linderman's office and proceeded to strip himself of his beautiful beaded vest and leggings. He gave them to his friend in reciprocation, because his hungry people had killed and eaten a horse Linderman had given them.

In the winter of 1911-1912 the Indians with Full-of-dew were camped in the Prickly Pear valley near Helena. Two
army officers came to see Linderman, saying they had orders to move the Indians back to Browning. But Chief Panetoo said he would not go. The soldiers had to follow orders, so they asked Linderman to help them get the chief to move. In his memoirs Linderman wrote about his visit to the camp, and what happened to Full-of-dew:

... We drove out to the camp; and what a sight was there! Pinched by hunger, and driven inside by the bitter cold, men, women, and children were huddled in every miserable shelter. Full-of-dew's tent was quite neat, however. He received us there like the prince that he was. He listened, as all old Indians will, until I had finished speaking. Then he said, simply, "I will go wherever these soldiers take me, if you tell me that you wish me to go. But if I go to Browning I shall die there within ten days."

Linderman tried to assure his friend that things would be better for his people at the reservation, that they would be better taken care of there:

"No, no," I assured him. "You will be fed at Browning. There will be no sickness there. These soldiers will take care of you and your people, so that you will all be warm; and they will take you on the train, too," I added, to make him happier.

He smiled. "No, Co-skee-see-co-cot," he said, with finality, "I will not ride on a train. someday one of those things will fall over and kill many people. I will ride my horse to Browning. (A distance of at least 300 miles.)"

In fact, Full-of-dew did not live much longer. He died in the spring of 1912. Linderman never saw him again.

In the Linderman correspondence files there is a letter from Mr. Panetoo, sent from Browning, dated March 15, 1912, in which he reported the rations they had received, and asked Linderman to keep him informed of news from the
government. Full-of-dew also said he had sent a letter to Little Bear telling him to come there. In another letter dated April 19 he noted that some of the people were sick. He asked Linderman to send medicine to the camp.56

Then on May 17 Little Bear sent Linderman a letter from Browning telling him how Full-of-dew had died:

I was so glad to get your letter and as you asked me about panetoo what kind of sicknes he had he two kind of sicknes he had the measeles and he had the small pox and he is dead now he died on the 15 of this month so that is all for that and now about some other things I want you to work hard for me to try and get that land over at fort assiniboine so I expect for you to do that for me.57

Linderman was shaken by the news of Chief Panetoo's death. The depth of their relationship inspired him to increase his efforts to help the landless Indians find a home, a place where they could be creative. The above letter is also indicative of the expectations the Indians had concerning Linderman's ability to help them.

It was during the winter of 1911-1912 that Fort Assiniboine Military Reservation had been abandoned. While Full-of-dew was with Rocky Boy on the Blackfeet Reservation in the spring of 1912, he urged that they try to get the Fort Assiniboine land, in the Bear Paw Mountains. He brought Rocky Boy and Linderman together, through his last wishes, as Linderman related in his memoirs:

... The following summer I visited the reservation of the Blackfeet at Browning, and there saw Full-of-dew's brother, Rocky-boy, who, in a formal meeting with thirty old warriors present, gave me my old
friend's dying message. "Tell Co-skee-see-co-cot that it is my wish that he take my brother (Rocky-boy) into his heart, as he took me." This was all. There was no rebuke, no sting in the message for me, and yet I felt I had sent him to his death. Perhaps he is better off in the Shadow-hills. I know that he was miserable here. 58

The death of Full-of-dew, and his last message to Linderman, amplified Linderman's resolve to help the landless Indians find their way home. It would have to be a place with an abundance of the essentials—wood, water, and grass—a place where the ceremonies of the people could survive. This was the hope of Full-of-dew, his last dream.

Linderman found a way to honor his friend Full-of-dew, Chief Panetoo, who was a fine storyteller and tribal historian. He personified him in the character of War Eagle, the old storyteller in Indian Why Stories: Sparks from War Eagle's Lodge-fire, Linderman's first book, which was published in 1915. As fate would have it, and as we shall see, in 1916 Indian Why Stories became a significant key to unlocking what had been a closed door to a hopeful future for Full-of-dew's people, the Chippewa and Cree.

Another leader of the homeless Indians was Linderman himself. In a letter sent in January 1913, Rocky Boy sought Linderman's advice on a problem. In closing he said, "You are Chief. Let me know." Theo Gibson referred to Linderman as "the Big Chief" in a letter dated October 12, 1912:

Had a nice visit from your friend Little Bear and Young Boy yesterday . . . They are en route to Helena to visit the Big Chief Linderman and have him tell them where they are at. As a result of a pow-

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wow we had in the office, Raban and father and I called on [Congressman] Charlie Pray who is here over night and consulted with him as to the future disposition of Little Bear and his people. . . . If any of us can be of any assistance to you in the matter let me know.

Like the Indians, the white men who were working to find a home for the Chippewa and Cree respected Linderman's judgment and looked to him, as to a chief, for leadership.

Experience in the political arena enabled Linderman to make his way through the intricate system that was controlling the fate of the homeless Indians. The Montana press and his creative writing were effective vehicles for his voice of purpose. But it was his deep understanding of the Indian mind and spirit that strengthened his commitment and actually got the Montana Chippewa and Cree on the land.

Chapter 3 examines the historical record of the process involved in acquiring the Rocky Boy Reservation, during the opening years of the Wilson administration, from 1913-1915, as revealed through Linderman's correspondence.
CHAPTER 3

ON THE LAND
1913--1915

Changing of the Guard

During the Progressive Era, from 1900 until World War I, three presidents were in office: Republicans Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) and William Howard Taft (1909-1913), and Democrat Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921). Wilson, the 28th president of the United States, was inaugurated on March 4, 1913. On March 5 he appointed Franklin Knight Lane as the secretary of the interior.

Lane was the perfect choice for Wilson, who believed Indian affairs should be administered by westerners. He was a lawyer, former newspaper owner and editor, and a California Democrat. Lane's attitudes toward land use and the rights of American Indians were considered progressive in those days. He advocated the full utilization of land and natural resources and was committed to making Indian lands as productive as possible. He considered it his duty to help make native, tribal people "self-sufficient" in the world of white civilization.¹

Lane was an experienced reporter who informed himself through first-hand investigation when considering
projects, issues, and circumstances. As the secretary of the interior he made personal inspection trips of national parks, reclamation projects and Indian reservations. He was on one of those trips when he came to Montana in August 1913 and met with Linderman, Bole, and Little Bear in the lobby of the Placer Hotel in Helena.

In January 1913 a proposal to create a reservation at Fort Assiniboine for the landless Chippewa and Cree had been introduced in the Senate, but it died in the House of Representatives in February. The period of withdrawal that had protected the Fort Assiniboine lands from settlement for one year was scheduled to expire on March 5, 1913, but the secretary of the interior initiated a presidential order that extended it for another two years, until March 1915.

The progressives were searching for ways to help the American Indian achieve greater prosperity and independence. They wanted to end the federal government's guardianship over those Indians who were judged "competent," by breaking up tribal lands and governments and forcing the Indians to assimilate into the fringes of civilization. As part of this plan they also tried to help the "incompetent" Indians "achieve competency." The Montana Chippewa and Cree, who were without treaty rights and unable to support themselves or receive government assistance, needed help.

When Lane visited Montana in August he told the landless Indians they had three good friends--Linderman,
Bole, and himself. This statement gave Linderman and Bole a sense of support from within the federal bureaucracy. Here was someone with decision-making power who understood the situation in Montana through first-hand experience of the people and the place. After meeting Lane it was easier to communicate with him, through letters and telegrams, in a more humane and spirited way.

In future years Linderman relied on Lane's support when writing to politicians and government officials. For instance, in 1916 he wrote to Senator Henry Myers: "I know you will find Secretary Lane in favor of anything that will do permanent good [for the Chippewa and Cree]."\(^5\)

The problem of where to locate the landless Indians was still unresolved when Lane left Montana. In late August 1913 Little Bear moved his camp from Helena to Great Falls. Another winter was coming on when Bole sent a telegram to the Department of the Interior in October, requesting that the Indians be permitted to "squat on lands soon." During the winter of 1913-1914 Rocky Boy and 125 of his followers set up a camp at Fort Assiniboine\(^6\), but Little Bear's band wintered outside Great Falls. From both places the cry for rations continued as in years past.

On November 14, in a letter to Linderman, Bole said he would be leaving for Washington, D. C., in two weeks. He wanted to meet with Linderman beforehand, so they could go over the details of a bill they planned to have presented in
the December session of Congress. Bole also reported what he had done for the Indians at Great Falls to help them prepare for the winter:

Little Bear and his men are prepared to spend the winter here. They have plenty to eat and they are making no complaint so far. I have sent them over 30 sacks of Flour, 400 Lbs. of Rice, 300 Lbs. of Sugar, 200 Lbs. of Beans, and various other trimmings. I also got the County Commissioners to very reluctantly buy them $25.00 worth of groceries. I think we can take care of them here, if they remain, through private charity, but of course, it is a nuisance. I have a visit from them about three times a day a good deal of the time, and each time they wish something done. I got an order from the Superintendent of the railroad to his section men to furnish the Indians with old ties for fuel. I also got their horses out of the pound and altogether I am quite busy, and would like the burden put on the shoulders of Uncle Sam. I think that this may be brought about on on my trip to Washington.

Linderman probably advised Little Bear to leave Helena and go to Great Falls in order to have someone else—a Democrat with strong political clout—involved in the experience of dealing with the survival needs of the destitute Indians. Also, by this time the charitable resources of the citizens in Helena may have been taxed to the limit, making it necessary to draw on a different community for assistance.

The Great Falls Tribune reported that a committee of three prominent men from Havre—Mayor D. S. MacKenzie, C. F. Morris and L. K. Devlin—left for Washington on November 30 "to protest against the permanent location of Rocky Boy and his band of Nomadic Indians" at Fort Assiniboine. Bole was there at the same time, arguing in favor of placing the Indians on the abandoned military reserve.
Hunting group at Swan Lake, October 1913

The Havre delegation thought the Chippewa and Cree should be placed on the Blackfeet Reservation. In a letter to Linderman, Bole said he knew the arguments against that proposal— they could not hope to obtain a "solid body of land" there, and "the Blackfeet hate the Chippewa-Crees." He concluded:

Our best bet is for the south half of Assiniboine. Besides, that is what the Indians themselves want. They know what is best for them."

While in Washington Bole negotiated with the Havre delegation, and got them to concede that the Chippewa and Cree could settle at the southern end of the reserve, as far from Havre as possible. This was only a political solution, one that would isolate the destitute Indians on high, rocky, untillable land. Still, Bole felt it was the only way to get the Havre opposition to ease off, and it would at least secure some of the Assiniboine land for the Indians.

In mid-December Linderman decided that he, too, should go to Washington, to speak directly with Secretary Lane and intercede on behalf of his Indian friends. When writing his memoirs Linderman recalled that visit with Lane, but first he acknowledged those who helped him in the long journey toward securing land for the Chippewa and Cree:

Franklin Lane was then Secretary of the Interior, may his name live forever. . . . Within two hours after my arrival [in Washington, D.C.], Saturday afternoon, the Secretary had told me that he would see me at ten o'clock Monday morning. Former United States Senator Paris Gibson, of Great Falls, Theodore, his son, and Mr. Boles [sic] of the Great
Falls Tribune, all staunch Democrats, prominent in their party, had helped me greatly, especially Mr. Boles, who made a trip to Washington in behalf of my tribe. Few others had given me the least bit of aid in my efforts to secure a home for the helpless Crees and Chippewas. Some who called themselves my friends even dealt me crooked cards while pretending to play fairly. But now I found myself in Washington with an opportunity to tell my tale to the only man who could give us a reservation. I could scarcely wait for Monday morning.

His visit with Secretary Lane left him feeling optimistic:

Promptly at ten o'clock Monday morning I was shown into Mr. Lane's private office, where he greeted me in a most friendly manner. On his desk I saw a copy of the Havre Plain Dealer, the issue containing the nasty editorial I have mentioned [in which Linderman was accused of "hiding under a mantle of Charity" in his work for the "renegade Indians"]. Pointing to the newspaper that was spread out as though it had recently been read, I said, "Mr. Secretary, I see that you are a subscriber to the Havre Plain Dealer."

Mr. Lane laughed merrily, then brushed the newspaper into his waste basket. "Please sit down, Mr. Linderman. I want to hear your story, all of it," he said briskly.

In an hour Mr. Lane arose. "Thank you," he said, offering his hand. "We'll get this reservation, or know why. You may go home to Montana feeling that I am behind you in this affair. I'll keep you informed as to progress here."

But, as he continued this story in his memoirs, Linderman recalled that it was not such an easy accomplishment:

At least two more years dragged by before we finally got two fractional townships at the southern end of the old Fort Assinniboine Military Reservation for a Cree-Chippewa home. It was mostly high and dry, and confined to narrow limits; and yet these Indians are now expected to raise bananas where white men would have difficulty in raising a wall tent.

During Linderman's visit to Washington he also met with the commissioner of Indian affairs, Cato Sells, who was
appointed June 2, 1913, and whose superior was Secretary Lane. Sells was a banker and progressive Democratic party official from Texas who had no previous experience with the Indians' problems, but he took his responsibility seriously and tried to protect and improve their lives.

Before U.S. involvement in World War I, from 1913 through 1917, there was a steady increase in appropriations for Indian health programs. Although his intentions were admirable, during Sells' administration of Indian affairs America's aboriginal people suffered greatly and many lost their lands. "Civilized" ignorance continued to deny them the right to practice their cultural traditions, and they were not allowed to perform the spiritual ceremonies of their elders—renewing ceremonies that gave meaning to the cosmos, and established order in their world view.

Sells was determined to speed up the "individualizing of the Indians," which meant breaking up their world view, releasing them and their land from government supervision, and reducing government expenditures. In this mode of thinking, leasing and the sale of allotments was encouraged, and the wide range of Indian lands diminished.

At the same time Sells had a real, albeit self-righteous, concern for the welfare of "incompetent" Indians who could not yet manage their own affairs or support themselves in the dominant white world, people such as the non-treaty Chippewa and Cree of Montana. After their personal
meeting Linderman was able to recall Sells' expressed sentiments and promises whenever he wrote to the commissioner on behalf of the homeless Indians.

**Dead and Down Timber**

It was bleak and cold in the Indian camp at Fort Assiniboine during the winter of 1913-1914. In the fall of 1913 Linderman had written several times to an Army officer at Fort Missoula, asking him to investigate the possibility of issuing rations to the Chippewa and Cree at Great Falls and Havre:

I have just returned from Great Falls where there are 120 Indians struggling for existence. The people of Great Falls have been feeding them, and naturally they are getting tired of the game. There are a lot more Indians at Havre [Fort Assiniboine]. Can you not send rations to Great Falls instead of Fort Harrison, and won't you make an effort to help us out?13

The officer, 1st Lt. Carl von dem Bussche, wrote to the secretary of the interior, offering his assistance and requesting further instructions.

Instead, the Office of Indian Affairs instructed the superintendent at the Blackfeet Reservation, Major A. E. McFatridge, to check into the situation. McFatridge was the distributing agent for Rocky Boy's Chippewa Indians, who were supposed to be at the Blackfeet Reservation. Sells directed McFatridge to "remove all those [Cree camped near Great Falls] who are now in destitute circumstances, or who are likely to become so, to the Blackfeet Reservation."14
Sells believed the impoverished Cree would be cared for at the Blackfeet Reservation, but Little Bear refused to budge from Great Falls. In a telegram to the commissioner of Indian affairs, January 12, 1914, Bole told Sells why the Indians should be allowed to remain in their present locations for the winter:

Visited Major McFetridge [sic] Indian Agent at Browning yesterday and would respectfully urge on you the propriety of authorizing him to ship rations to Chippewa Cree bands at Great Falls and Fort Assiniboine. They are comfortably settled for the winter in camps at these places and only need food supplies of the necessities such as flour bacon rice etc. It would cost a good large sum to transport them to Browning. To get there overland would involve great hardship in midwinter. There are no available buildings there and they would have to camp in tents in the snow and cold. The Blackfeet Indians do not want them there and are unfriendly. Agent McFetridge agrees with me in all above. Hope you will wire him authority to ship goods.

Many of the Cree and Chippewa were situated for the winter in the two camps—-at Great Falls, and on the land at Fort Assiniboine. The only major concern at this time was to have enough rations shipped to both places so the people would be able to survive the winter. On January 26 Bole telegraphed Sells that rations had not yet arrived:

Have letter from Rocky Boy at Havre. They are eating dogs and very hungry. Little Bear band at Great Falls also need grub. Can't you authorize agent at Browning to ship rations to Havre and Great Falls at once pending decision as to whether they must go to Browning. This will save suffering. Please wire me. It is urgent at Havre. I have been giving Great Falls band some food.

There is nothing in the Linderman correspondence files that indicates a direct accusation toward McFatridge, but in
December 1914 two agents from the Indian Office who investigated his activities reported, "If he [McFatridge] is fitted for any position in the Indian Service it is that of deputy special liquor officer."  

It seems McFatridge was dishonest in his dealings with the Chippewa and Cree Indians. He was removed from his position as superintendent at the Blackfeet Reservation in 1915. The "juggling of federal funds, intended to be used for the purchase of food," caused great suffering among the Indians. Linderman and Bole were constantly vigilant to the needs of the deprived Indians that resulted from this sort of dishonest activity.  

In the spring and early summer of 1914 Bole and Linderman both wrote many letters to Commissioner Sells and Secretary Lane, expressing frustration and disappointment because rations at Great Falls had been cut off completely, with no notice. Government officials in Washington believed the Indians were competent to take care of themselves, at least in the summer months, but this wasn't true for the Chippewa and Cree. On May 23 Bole and Linderman each wrote letters to both Lane and Sells.  

In Linderman's letter to Sells he explained the unjust situation of Little Bear's band camped near Great Falls, and the reasons why they should not be sent to the Blackfeet Reservation:  

When I was in Washington, I understood you to
say that rations would be given these people until land could be secured for them and that you yourself "would be behind the measure" that would secure them a reservation. All this I told the Indians and now I find that I have made a mistatement regarding the rations at least. Fully 75% of the people in this camp are old men, women and children who cannot work even if given an opportunity. The other 25% must have good horses to avail themselves of the opportunity of the work that Mr. McFatridge [the Indian agent at Browning] mentions; they have no such horses and are not welcome on the Blackfeet Reservation by either Agent McFatridge or the Blackfeet and their experiences under the Major [McFatridge] and among the Blackfeet have been painful.\textsuperscript{18}

Bole, in his letter to Lane, expressed concern that Congress might not act on the needs of the Chippewa and Cree during the present session:

I have this day written Indian commissioner Sells a letter regarding the stoppage of rations for the Rocky Boy and Little Bear Bands of Indians, urging him to continue these rations at least in part, until such time as provision can be made for an allotment of land for them thru a special bill in Congress, and the purchase of a tribal herd of cattle. I have also urged him to get that special bill in Congress soon, as I feel that in the closing days of the session, it may get held up and nothing be done until another year.

Bole expressed compassion for the people of the Rocky Boy and Little Bear bands, and explained the reasons why they could not find work:

I do not like to trouble you with this matter any further, especially in view of your former kindness to myself and Mr. Linderman in regard to it, but I have the cause of these Indians very much at heart, and if you knew as I do, their history in the last 15 years, and how often they have suffered and how much, from hope deferred which maketh the heart sick, I am sure you would feel like doing anything you could to assist them at this time.

They ought to have that permanent provision made for them, and they should have at least some assistance in the way of rations until that bill is
passed. Some, it is true, can work, and are working, but the majority of them are either physically unable to earn any money or are prevented from earning any by reason of the Trade Union regulations and the prejudice against the Indians that exists where they are.

Please urge Mr. Sells to do his best under the circumstances, and I will remember you in my prayers.  

Secretary Lane's response to Bole came in the form of two letters. An official reply, written June 2 by someone at the Indian Office, was accompanied by a brief note from Lane. The official letter explained, in impersonal bureaucratic rhetoric, the Indian Office's ration policy:

I appreciate the need of providing for the issuance of supplies to such of these Indians as are unable to care for themselves until homes may be procured for them, and they may be placed in a position of self-support. The gratuitous issuance of supplies to Indians or other persons when remunerative employment is available is demoralizing and degrading in its influence, and has a tendency to pauperize them and make them permanently dependent. For this reason the Indian Office has directed the discontinuance of the issuance of rations to all able bodied Indians who are able to procure remunerative employment.

... I do not consider it advisable to direct a general distribution of rations to all members of the Rocky Boy and Little Bear bands of Indians during summer months, for I am quite sure that many of them are capable of taking care of themselves, and I do not wish to train them to be dependent upon the Government.

Lane's personal reply to Bole was much more succinct. He believed in clear, uncomplicated communications--direct and to the point--unlike most bureaucratic reports and letters. He asked for specific information on the Indians who were in need of assistance, and said he would do everything in his power to help them:
Upon receipt of your letter of May 23rd I sent it over to the Indian Office and received a reply for my signature, which I inclose. But this is too much like a Bureau letter to satisfy me. This is the direct information I think we should have. How many of these people are there who cannot get work? Who are they and where are they? Is it a fact that white men will not employ able bodied Indians? If so, tell me definitely just what you think we ought to do. I am willing to go just as far as the law will allow.

Bole wrote to Linderman on June 9. He reported his progress in getting the necessary information from the Indians for Secretary Lane, and said he thought all the Indians camped at Great Falls would qualify for rations:

I enclose you copies of letters received by me. I have no answer as yet to my letter to Agent McFatridge at Browning.

I went over yesterday to the camp and heard that you and Gibson had been there that day, but I did not see you, and so I am mailing this to Helena.

I got the promise of $50.00 worth of grub for these Indians from the County Commissioner, and they are to make a list of all the persons in their tribe who are unable to work or to get work, which I guess will comprise all of them, and the full description of each individual person, and the reason why he cannot work. I will forward these to Secretary Lane and the Indian Commissioner, and I feel pretty sure that we will get the rations restored.

Bole felt vexed by the inefficiency and procrastination of the government, but was already working out a strategy for their next round:

You will see that they have practically given up in the Indian Commissioner's office, the Ft. Assiniboine Reservation, and we will have to start that all over again, probably not before the December session of Congress, as it is too late now to make a new start in this Congress. It is disgusting after the way Commissioner Sells talked to you and me about what he was going to do.

I think we will have to rely on Lane and the
President next time, and when this campaign for Congress comes up in next November, I will have to rely on you to get the Republican candidates and Progressive candidates for Congress pledged to help us, and I will attend to the Democratic end.22

Bole was a Democrat, Linderman, a Republican. Between them they felt they could lobby all the Montana politicians.

Every autumn Linderman tried to prepare for the coming winter—the time of greatest suffering in the camps and lodges of the Chippewa and Cree. He made public appeals for donations of clothing, and tried to arrange for rations and firewood for the displaced people. In September 1914 the Indian Office sent an ambiguous reply to yet another inquiry from Linderman concerning the status of any plans to establish a permanent abode for the homeless Indians:

The question of the purchase of land for these Indians or of locating them on the public domain, is still under consideration and you will be advised of the action taken in regard thereto at the earliest practicable moment.23

Linderman and Bole were both disgusted with the Indian Office. It appears they made plans of their own. Bole, in a letter to Linderman dated October 13, 1914, mentioned a matter they had "talked of," which hints at a private plan to move Little Bear's band to Fort Assiniboine, as soon as promised rations arrived in Great Falls:

I received the following telegram from the Assistant Commissioner [Edgar] Meritt:

Your telegram of the 7th received. Arrangements will be made to make provision for "Rocky Boy" Indians from funds and supplies available, providing superintendent and office are notified of their location.
This fixes the matter up as we talked of and as soon as the Indians receive their next ration, which will be between the 18th and 20th of this month, at Great Falls, they will start for the Reservation. "Little Bear" says this is good news.  

Linderman shed light on how and why the decision was made, to move the bands of Chippewa and Cree to the camp at Fort Assiniboine, in a letter he wrote to Commissioner Sells dated February 21, 1916:

> It was I who sent the Indians to Assinaboines [sic] because I believed the Department really desired it but did not care to say so. I think your letters and telegrams will show this.

There were 257 Chippewa and Cree at the camp near Box Elder during the winter of 1914-1915. Little Bear sent a letter to Linderman November 9, written by an Indian interpreter, in which he listed the rations they had received and predicted it would be a hard winter. He said there was no way to make money, they were not allowed to sell any wood, and could not even cut timber to build houses. He asked Linderman for help:

> . . . I would be very glad for you to see about this grub for me. I am depending on you to get this for me. I know if you want to you will get everything right for me. You are the only one that the agent will lesson to . . .

On November 23 Linderman wrote to Secretary Lane, asking him to send permission so the Indians could cut firewood, and timber for cabins, to protect their families from the cold:

> The custodian of the reservation will not permit the Indians to cut any timber within the confines of the reservation, and it is necessary that they have firewood and timber enough to make shelter for
themselves. I have taken the matter up with the Chief of the Field division, as well as with the Chief of the Forest Service in this city, and find that nothing can be done by either of them.

Will you please telegraph to the custodian in charge of the Fort Assinniboine military reservation and instruct him to allow the Indians to cut timber for their own use exclusively?

The weather is getting cold, and I hope you will do this kindness, and let me know, if you will, when it is done.27

Linderman's letter to Secretary Lane was answered by the General Land Office of the Department of the interior, which had been given charge of the Fort Assiniboine Military Reservation on November 20, 1911.

The General Land Office letter explained the status of the land at Fort Assiniboine, and the restrictions on the Indians' use of the land. The letter said there was a bill before Congress that proposed "to have the reservation surveyed and classified into agricultural, timber, coal and mineral lands." Timber use on those lands would be subject to rules and regulations provided by the secretary of the interior. Because of this pending legislation President Wilson had withdrawn the Fort Assiniboine lands from settlement or sale until March 15, 1915. As it stood, the law would not allow the Indians to cut any live, "merchantable" timber to sell or to use for building:

In view thereof it is not seen how permission can be granted Indians to cut and remove any timber from the reservation. The custodian has, however, been directed to permit the cutting by the Indians of dead and down timber for firewood for their own use until further ordered.28
LITTLE BEAR .Raycast.CREE CHIEF
Government procedures proved frustrating to Linderman in his attempts to help the Indians. The Chippewa and Cree still could not build solid structures to protect their families from the winter cold—they were living in flimsy cloth tents and makeshift shelters. But, at least they could gather firewood—dead and down timber—for warmth.

**Never Give Up**

In January 1915 Linderman shipped 17 boxes of clothing to the camp near Box Elder. Then, on February 16, Paris Gibson sent a dramatic telegram to Senator Myers:

> Indians under Rocky Boy and Little Bear at Assiniboine starving. Last installment of food from Blackfeet agency received January eighth. Government should feed them according to agreement or send troops to kill them and thus end their misery. Kindly have department wire agent at Browning to send food immediately.

This shocking demand, to send troops to "end their misery," was intended to shake up the consciousness of the laggards in Washington whose procrastination was causing a slow and painful death of the people.

Congress had recently passed legislation (38 Stat. L., 807) that authorized the Interior Department to survey the lands at Fort Assiniboine and open the same to settlement. But the act of February 11, 1915, did not provide any land for the Chippea and Cree. Secretary Lane said he would have President Wilson veto the bill unless Congress agreed to amend it in favor of the homeless Indians, but this could not happen until the next session, which would not convene
until December, 1915.

In a letter to Gibson's son, Theo, written February 25, 1915, Linderman revealed his growing cynicism toward government promises, but also indicated his confidence in obtaining a home for the Indians:

I have your letter enclosing the "Myers letter" but I have a whole cord of those letters and they do not mean a dog-gone thing. I have heard thousands of expressions from those doves before, and without Myers or anybody else' help, who is in the Senate or House, we got the grub. I am also sure that we are going to get the reservation. In fact I think we have already got it, and it is a God's certainty Myers and Walsh did not help on that.

He expressed his thanks to the Gibsons for their help with the Indians' problems, and his own disgust at the lack of understanding from Montana's politicians in Washington:

If your father were in the Senate things would be different, but all I ever got out of any of our representatives has been letters.
I am returning the letter and wish you would give your father my kindest regards and thank him for his interest.

P.S. The paragraph wherein the senator is so glad that his attention is called to the "poor suffering creatures" gives me a pain under the plate on my cartridge belt. He has known all about them for years, for I told him myself a hundred times.30

Linderman's postscript gives an idea of the attitudes of people he had to deal with, and foreshadows an involved series of letters he would write to Senator Myers in 1916.

1915 was a year of adjustment for the Chippewa and Cree at Fort Assiniboine. The move to the abandoned military reservation had occurred in stages. First, Rocky Boy and his followers set up their makeshift dwellings in the
fall of 1913. Little Bear's band moved there from Great Falls in the fall of 1914. All the people lived together in a central camp about 14 miles east of Box Elder.

It was to their advantage that they were already living on the land at Fort Assiniboine, during this interim period, but it was hard for them to put their hearts into being there. They were vulnerable, unsure whether the land would truly be theirs to work and improve. Legally, it had not yet been given to them and Congress might decide against them. In this state of uncertainty they turned to Linderman with their problems, and listened to what he had to say. When Rocky Boy or Little Bear received letters from him, the people gathered around to hear the translation of the news and advice he sent their way.

In the spring of 1915 they were expected to plant a garden to help support themselves, but by May 7, when Rocky Boy responded to a letter from Linderman, their seeds and equipment had not arrived. Since they were looking at where to plant their crops, Rocky Boy was realizing they would need tillable soil in the land granted for a reservation. His interpreter/scribe wrote this letter to Linderman:

I received your letter yesterday. I now can see that you are doing all you can to help me and also my people, but I just made a little mistake about my wanting the two townships of both south end of the Reservation. I do wish that you would try and mend my error, the two townships I should have tell you are the townships of both south west end of this reservation, for both of those south west end are very good piece of land, which we can till, at the
same time, if we get stock.

I often heard you say, that you shall never give up, until we get some land from government. So, never give up.

The southeast end township is all mountains and hardly any water. But the township I am in at present is one of the best land you can find in Hill County. The township I am told am in is the [ink blot] township from south west [ink blot] of this Reservation, so I wish you would do you at best, to get these two townships.

I am sick again, the same sickness I had. I am indeed satisfied, what we got. further more I will thank you if we get stock. the seeds and implements hasnent arrive yet. I am your's friend Rocky Boy

Rocky Boy was counting on Linderman's promise to never give up until they got land from the government, and reminded him of it. Linderman answered Rocky Boy May 13, urging him to be satisfied with whatever land they were given:

Friend Rocky Boy:

I received your letter. I am doing all I can for you. We will have to take the townships that the government will give us and be satisfied. I do not think we will ever get any more land. I do think we will get two townships in the south end. If we get it you must be satisfied.

I am sorry you are sick.

Your friend, Frank Linderman

He knew the Indians needed more land than the two high, rocky townships proposed for them by the agreement with the Havre delegation, but he realized that for the time being they simply needed a start—a place to call home.

They were successful in growing a large garden that year, but had to plant it on land that was below the site of their proposed reservation, which was too high and rocky for cultivation. The political solution to the problem of the landless Indians—to get rid of them by isolating them on
the two townships farthest from Havre—was not a practical solution. It did not look to the future, nor to the real, material needs of these people—these fellow human beings.

For years Linderman maintained that the Chippewa and Cree would willingly work hard to improve their lives, if given the opportunity. But starving them, through lack of rations, before they could plant and grow and provide their own food, made their bodies weak from hunger and sick from sadness. By granting them only grazing land with no tillable soil, and no place to find work, they would be forced to remain dependent on rationed out charity, which was at best a meager survival.

In July 1915 Linderman wrote to Lane, encouraging him to continue the process of getting land for the Indians:

It has been some time since I troubled you with a communication relative to the Crees and Chippewas and I think that you have done the best you could. I am quite sure that you are going to succeed in giving at least two townships on the Fort Assinaboine Reservation to these people, who are now camped there. I understand that there is a petition going forward to Washington from a bunch of "chronic homesteaders," with a view to ousting the Indians, but I trust you will stand your ground and not let such a petition influence you. . . . Personally, I want to thank you for your efforts in this case and wish you success.  

Finally, in the fall of 1915, the Indians were given permission to cut timber for their own use. By this time they had come under the jurisdiction of Superintendent Jewell D. Martin at the nearby Fort Belknap Reservation. Martin had written to the Indian Office in September, saying
there were no houses at the camp at Fort Assiniboine, "not even a cabin, NOT EVEN A BOARD."

While Martin waited for an answer the Indians asked Bole for help. This time Bole was able to get the needed permission from the secretary of the interior, allowing the Indians to cut live timber for their own use, but not to sell. By the end of November they had built 25 cabins and were working on 10 others. Martin was thankful the Chippewa and Cree had been allowed to help themselves. In a letter to Commissioner Sells, he said "many of them nearly froze to death last winter in their tents."34

The first session of the Sixty-fourth Congress opened on December 6, 1915. Soon thereafter, Secretary Lane sent a letter to Congressman John M. Stephens, chairman of the House Committee on Indian Affairs, concerning the land that should be set aside for the Rocky Boy Indians:

The needs of this nomadic and practically destitute band of Indians have been constantly before the Indian Office in various forms for the past ten years. . . .

Some of these Indians are now encamped along Box Elder Creek within the proposed reservation for their benefit, and in the absence of serious objection they have been permitted to remain there, pending a final decision as to their permanent location. They are said to be enthusiastic over the prospect of locating them permanently on this land, as shown by the following extract from a letter written by Little Bear, one of their chiefs, on June 14, 1915.

I and my people are anxious to have a home; to settle down and become self-supporting. Other tribes have their own land and homes; we are homeless wanderers. We are anxious to learn to farm, and if given land that can
be farmed and which will be our own, we will soon be self-supporting.

Lane explained why the proposed two townships of rocky, mountainous land were inadequate for survival:

Careful investigation discloses the fact that the land in the two southern townships of this reserve is practically worthless as a source from which to obtain a livelihood, either by agriculture or stock raising. These townships are rough, broken, and mountainous, and contain only two sections (1280 acres) of land that could be cultivated from an agricultural standpoint. The altitude is high, the winters long and severe, the growing season extremely short, and it will be a physical impossibility for this band of Indians to support themselves on the two southern townships alone. However, in order that the Indians may have timber available for fuel and building purposes and to conserve the limited water supply so necessary for domestic and stock uses, these two townships have been included within the proposed reserve.

Lane further explained the need for a sufficient amount of land, affirming his commitment to attain not just a political answer, but a real solution, for the Chippewa and Cree:

By reason of soil and climatic conditions, the short growing season, early frosts, etc., the Superintendent states that not less than 160 acres, including 40 acres of agricultural (tillable) land should be provided for each Indian, in order to afford them proper opportunity for self-support. On this basis, the proposed reserve of 72,800 acres will furnish land for 455 Indians, which it is believed will be sufficient.

The secretary discussed the financial burden of appropriations that had been granted annually through the years, to support the "Rocky Boy's Band and other other indigent and homeless Indians in the State of Montana." He noted the importance of establishing a permanent reservation for the Chippewa and Cree:
Under present conditions, Congress is appropriating $10,000.00 annually for the support of this band, most of which is expended for subsistence supplies issued gratuitously, with no immediate prospect of the government being relieved of this burden. All who have had to do with this band agree that the only solution of the difficulty is the setting aside of a permanent reservation for them; repeated investigation has demonstrated that the only available land for such purpose is on the Assiniboine Reserve; . . . 35

Lane concluded that it would be absolutely necessary for the Indians to have at least the four townships of land he had proposed. If they were expected to support themselves on the land, it was only rational to grant them sufficient agricultural land to fulfill that expectation.

Lane recommended that Stephens' committee give a favorable report on the proposed bill. This communication from the secretary of the interior to the chairman of the House Committee on Indian Affairs illustrates the complicated details Linderman had to pursue, as the question of Rocky Boy's reservation was brought forward in Congress.

Meanwhile, Little Bear had sent Linderman a letter on December 6, asking him to again help the Indians get old clothing for the winter. On December 15, 1915, Linderman sent the following letter to the Indian camp:

Friend Little Bear:
I have sent to you and Rocky Boy many clothes. They will leave Helena today and will be addressed to both of you. You will find enough clothes to go around, I think.
I wish you a Merry Christmas.
I have to go to California, where my family is.
Good luck to you.
Your friend, Frank Linderman

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Linderman sent 23 sacks of clothing in that shipment, then went to California for the holidays.

**Indian Why Stories**

Linderman wrote very few letters in 1915 that were directly concerned with the problems of the Chippewa and Cree. The issue was on hold until the opening of the next congressional session, and Boile helped the Indians with special problems, such as their request to be able to cut live timber to build shelters.

Instead, his focus that year was centered on the publication of his first book, *Indian Why Stories*. The story of that accomplishment is found in his correspondence with his publisher, Charles Scribner's Sons, and other key figures including George Bird Grinnell and Charley Russell.

For years Linderman had been helping the Chippewa and Cree and trying to find them a home, a place where they could resurrect their sense of worth in the world. As he persevered in his efforts the history and fate of his Indian friends must have frequently come to mind. The imagery of *Indian Why Stories* was Linderman's way of communicating to the dominant society the value of the original American.

He had an abiding respect for the traditional beliefs and rituals of the old full-blood Indians he knew. He sought to help preserve their wisdom, and educate those in the white culture who were ignorant of the dignity of the
Indian. Others were using published writings to transmit their knowledge of the Indian world and, a great storyteller himself, Linderman finally decided to try his hand at it.

In January 1911 he had hosted a dinner at the Montana Club for popular midwestern author and lecturer Opie Read, who was visiting in Helena on a lecture tour. This was the first real author Linderman had met, and while they visited he told Read of his desire to write. On January 7 he wrote his friend Chick Rossiter, in Sheridan, about his meeting with Read:

By the way---Opie Read is one of the most pleasing characters it has ever been my luck to meet. I'm dead stuck on the old dog. Perhaps it's because he told me that my verse was far the best "Western verse" he had ever seen. He spent half a day and the best part of a night with me and his stories are rich.37

Both Read and Linderman were excellent raconteurs and if they exchanged stories, it's certain that some of Linderman's were the Indian legends he loved. Read's response to his literary ability was a great encouragement to Linderman.

He corresponded between 1912-1922 with noted ethnologist, author, and editor George Bird Grinnell. Grinnell, whose early writings were published by Scribner's, helped Linderman connect with that publishing house, and encouraged him in his writing and his work for the Chippewa and Cree.

Of course he knew of the popularity of the stories of James Willard Schultz, published in *The Great Falls Tribune* and *Forest and Stream*, the national magazine edited
by Grinnell. But Linderman's correspondence is surprisingly lacking in mention of Schultz. He did not have much respect for whites who lived with Indians and then wrote about them with a voice of authority while making mistakes in the information that was being transmitted as fact. Perhaps in his estimation Schultz' writing fit into that category.

Linderman was a perfectionist when it came to recording Indian lore and his stories of the old West. He took great care to accurately portray the people and preserve authentic details in his renditions of their life. He had been collecting Indian legends from old friends who were tribal historians for more than twenty years before the publication of Indian Why Stories, which is a compilation of Chippewa, Cree, and Blackfeet stories.38

In early 1914 Linderman sent a manuscript of "Indian Folk-Tales" to Scribner's, and received the following rejection from the publishing house, in a letter dated June 22:

We have carefully examined the Indian Folk-Tales which you were good enough to send us recently, but regret to report that for various business reasons we are unable to make you, in behalf of the author, an offer of publication. While we appreciate its interest, we have hardly been able to persuade ourselves that in our hands the proposed volume could be issued to its best advantage.39

It looks as though Linderman sent the manuscript himself, as an agent for an anonymous author.

In July 1914 he and Read met again, by chance, in Forsyth where Read was giving a lecture. As the two men talked, long into the night, Read encouraged Linderman to
pursue publication of his manuscript:

"Be sure to print the Indian lore. Frank, I am never fooled. You are a real poet every inch of you . . . above all, print your book on Indian lore even if you have to pay for it because it will do well."\(^4^0\)

Undaunted by rejection, Linderman decided to have his manuscript published locally if he could not sell it to an eastern publishing house. Charley Russell's wife, Nancy, wrote to him January 14, 1915: "Chas. and I both think you are wise to get your book out at home where people understand. Most publishers are such fools."\(^4^1\)

In February 1915 Linderman's friend, Dr. O. M. Lanstrum, who was a fellow Mason and head of the Republican party in Montana, was in New York. He acted as Linderman's agent and went directly to Scribner's with the manuscript. Scribner's showed some interest in the book in a letter to Lanstrum dated March 1, 1915, but wanted to see more of the stories:

According to our recollection of our conversation with you, it is our understanding that Mr. Linderman intends to finish his book irrespective of any publisher's attitude, and if this is the case we shall be very glad to see the other stories, although we should not care to have him complete the book under the impression that there was a certain prospect of our publishing it. This is a question we could hardly decide until we see the entire manuscript.\(^4^2\)

There was a question as to the parallel themes of several of the Blackfeet legends with those written by Grinnell in his "Blackfeet Indian Stories." Scribner's also verified their understanding, from their conversation with Lanstrum,
WAR EAGLE is a fine old Indian chief who tells the young people, across his lodge-fire in the long evenings, stories that are likely to have much of the wide popularity of Uncle Remus's tale of Br'er Rabbit and Br'er Fox. They are stories out of the wonderful Indian world of myths: of Old-man, the queer minor god whom the great Manitou trusted with the arrangement of the world; of "Why the Kingfisher Always Wears a War-Bonnet"; of "The Moon and the Great Snake"; and of a great number of other things. No reader will wonder that his audience sat absorbed till old War Eagle said: "I hear the owls, and it is time for all young men who will some day be great warriors to go to bed. Ho!" Mr. Frank B. Linderman, whose Indian name is Co-skee-see-co-cot, is one of the greatest authorities on all Indian folk-lore, as on other Indian matters, but he shows himself in the telling of these tales also a writer with the enviable traits of the born story-teller.

Eight illustrations in color by Charles M. Russell. Square 5vo. $2.00 net

Published by Charles Scribner's Sons

Scribner's ad for Indian Why Stories autumn 1915
that in the event of publication, illustrations by Charles M. Russell would be furnished free of cost.

On June 9 Scribner's wrote another letter to Lanstrum, and submitted a proposal for Linderman in which they agreed to publish the book at their expense and pay him a ten per cent royalty. They said it would be "a handsome book, though of moderate size and cost." They would print Russell's eight illustrations, sent to them by Linderman, in color; they would adopt "an open and attractive page and some symbolic or appropriate ornamentation of title-page, cover, etc." They discussed the title of the book, gave some ideas, and asked for suggestions from Linderman.43

Linderman answered on June 14, 1915. He had ideas for the title of the book:

I have not decided upon a name but am inclined toward one of the following:
"Sparks from War Eagle's Lodge Fire"
and if this title were used the cover design might show the "sparks" emanating from a blaze in a helter-skelter manner.

Another title I have considered is:
"Old Indian Why Stories" or "Indian Why Stories" and "Old Indian Tales and Trails."

It may be that one could combine the best two of these titles, as follows:
"Indian Why Stories--Sparks from War Eagle's Lodge Fire."

I like the latter part of this hyphenated title very much but shall not insist on any title that may hinder the sale of the books, in your opinion.

Linderman insisted they use Russell as the artist for any extra symbols or ornamentation in the book:

May I suggest that no other artist than Chas. M. Russell be allowed to draw any of the designs or "weapons" to be used in the book. From an expert
point of view, these illustrations done by any one else would look like a twenty-two caliber cartridge along side of a forty-five.

... If you are going to pay your artist for these "tail pieces" and other small drawings aside from the cover design, will you pay Chas. M. Russell one-half of what he charges me for these extra drawings. Let me say that he is very close to me and the bill will not be exorbitant, and your half will be as reasonable as it would be if done by a man who did not know the game...

Will you tell me what your artist would charge you for these extra pieces and allow me to pay C. M. Russell that amount, I making up the difference necessary to pay him. He is the only man in the world who can do the work and do it as it should be done.44

Linderman wrote Scribner's again on June 16, expressing his determination that they should use only illustrations from Russell in the book:

I spoke to Dr. Lanstrum and told him that I had suggested that you pay half of what Mr. Russell would charge me for those drawings, and the doctor assured me that you would agree to no such thing, because you did not know me, and I suppose he is right. However, I am going to have those things done and pay for them, and then I shall tell you what it is, and you will certainly reimburse me then to the amount you would have had to pay an eastern artist. Anyhow, I am going to take that chance.45

In another letter, written June 29, he again insisted on the quality of Russell's work for his book, and commented on what it would cost him, out of his ten per cent royalty, to pay Russell for the illustrations. He did not want Scribner's to weaken the statement of the book by mixing any other artist's material with Russell's authentic work:

... Let me say that any time Mr. Russell draws or paints a picture it costs a lot of money, and his is positively the only work that is true to western life. Fortunately, we are inseparable friends, or these pictures could not be furnished you as they

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are in this case. It will take a pile of royalty, such as set forth in the contract, to pay me for the pictures you are using, to say nothing of those that are to come... I would ask that no picture of Russell's be wasted, for in the west they will go further toward making the book a success than anything I can do.  

Correspondence continued throughout the summer, with an exchange of galley proofs, illustrations, and format ideas. Finally, on September 22 Scribner's wrote saying they would be publishing the book Indian Why Stories on Saturday, September 25 (which happened to be Linderman's birthday).  

Linderman dedicated the book: "To my friend Charles M. Russell, the Cowboy Artist, George Bird Grinnell, the Indian's Friend, and to all others who have known and loved old Montana." Grinnell wrote to Linderman November 26, after receiving a copy of the book. He praised the work, but warned Linderman that he would not receive financial rewards from his writing:  

The book is a splendid one, a great tribute to your powers of description and of narration. Most of the stories, of course, are familiar to me in one form or other, yet all of them are somewhat different from the tales I have heard. The volume is a good piece of work, well done, and I heartily congratulate you on it. It will never bring you any particular financial return, but to have made such a book and to see it appear so handsomely is a great satisfaction.  

Mr. Russell's pictures are extremely effective, and the sketches with which a lot of the half titles are ornamented are wonderfully truthful. You and he may justly pat each other on the back for the two sides of the book.  

I should suppose that an elaborate volume like this would have a large sale at the holiday time, but, as I repeat, your reward for the work on the book will come not in the shape of money but of satisfaction.
Charley Russell was known as "The Cowboy Artist" as early as 1903. By 1915 he was an artist "in demand." His illustrations graced the publication of Indian Why Stories and gave the book greater validity and importance in its day than it might otherwise have received. On February 9, 1916, Linderman wrote to Grinnell:

I guess the edition of my book is completely exhausted, and there are many requests for a copy reaching me right along. It is a source of satisfaction to know that it sold better than we expected, anyhow.49

The combination of Linderman's words and Russell's pictures, in the beautiful volume of Indian Why Stories: Sparks from War Eagle's Lodge-fire, did much to help the Chippewa and Cree. With the publication and success of the book, Linderman devised a new strategy. In January 1916, in letters to politicians and bureaucrats, he began to suggest that if something of permanent good was not accomplished during the present session of Congress, he would go to eastern magazines with illustrated articles and expose the desperate suffering of the homeless Indians in Montana.50 These suggestions were effective, as we shall see in Chapter 5, "Creation of the Reservation."

Lindeman decided to rely on the convincing power of the written word, and the stories of the Indians themselves, to activate decision-makers in Washington. Sparks from War Eagle's lodge-fire could ignite the initiative of his fight for the Chippewa and Cree. Linderman's deep respect for the
homeless Indians' spiritual beliefs underlay his resolve to help them meet their worldly needs. He worked toward this goal through his actions during his lifetime, and into the future through his writings.

Many people were involved over the years in aiding the Chippewa and Cree in Montana. But Linderman, among them, was closest to the heart and spirit of the Indian mind. He had listened to the Great Stillness, and sat many times before the sacred fire in War Eagle's lodge. Chapter 4 takes us into the Chippewa storyteller's lodge and the sundance lodge of the Cree, then explores Linderman's belief that the native--the first--Americans should be allowed to live their traditions and express their spiritual truth.
CHAPTER 4

WAR EAGLE'S LODGE

A Constantly Offered Prayer

Near the centre of the camp was the big painted lodge of War Eagle, the medicine-man, and inside had gathered his grandchildren, to whom he was telling the stories of the creation and of the strange doings of Napa, the creator. Being a friend of the old historian, I entered unhindered, and with the children listened until the hour grew late, and on the lodge-wall the dying fire made warning shadows dance.¹

I had been a collector of stone arrow-points at home in Ohio and after reading "Atlantis" I became convinced that if the Indian ever used these it was hundreds of years ago. I think that this idea was largely responsible for my trying to learn of the folklore of the Indian. I soon satisfied myself that the stone arrow-point belonged to some other race than the Indian but in arriving at this decision I ran across many stories which I thought worth saving.

I was careful in securing these stories and tried many individuals among the older Indians I knew but found them to be as careful as myself in handling them. They differed somewhat at times but in the main were alike. In the work of gathering the legends I became interested in the Indian's religion and found much worth knowing.²

These words of Frank Linderman begin to capture the depth of his lifelong commitment to the traditional Indian's way of life. By his own relationship with nature Linderman was attuned to the natural world of the Indian people, and many facets of the Plains Indians' religions reflected his beliefs and personal experience.
Linderman's sensitivity to the spirit of the land inspired in him an enduring respect for the dignity of the Indians' heritage, which in later years he preserved for the future through his meticulous writing. When he arrived in the Flathead Valley, in 1885, his desire to communicate with the native people was so strong that he soon mastered the subtle art of the Indian sign language.

Gestural sign language is actually three-dimensional thought writing in the air. The use of sign language is a cultivated art that allows the thinker to communicate whole ideas, in contrast to the incomplete thoughts of individual, isolated words. Thus, with care and caution, Linderman was able to gradually realize a profound understanding of the integrity of the native mind and spirit.

As he listened to the telling of stories, through both sight and sound, Linderman absorbed much of the world view and philosophy of the Chippewa and Cree he knew, who were close to their spiritual roots. He wrote of the people he had met in 1885, in the Flathead Valley:

I soon learned that they were wholly unspoiled by contact with the whiteman. They clung to their old customs and traditions more closely than did the Flatheads or Kootenais because the latter had been associated with the "blackrobes" and other missionaries for many years.

His continued leadership in the campaign to obtain a home for the landless Chippewa and Cree was, for Linderman, much more than an act of conscience. He felt a spiritual
bond with these people who had continued to practice their own religion. They had not turned to the "medicine" of the black robes and missionaries, but had kept to the beliefs and traditions of the lodge fire.

During his years of friendship with the Indians of Montana Linderman sat in the presence of many elders and tribal historians. Several Chippewa and Cree names stand out in his later writings. In his memoirs he wrote about Muskegon, a Cree, and Full-of-dew, a Chippewa—men he had known in the early days in the Flathead Valley. By 1892, when he left the free life of his trapping days behind him, he had collected many stories from Muskegon.

Full-of-dew was the model of War Eagle, Linderman's storyteller in Indian Why Stories: Sparks from War Eagle's Lodge-fire. Linderman described War Eagle, and the interior of his lodge, in the opening pages of Indian Why Stories:

What a splendid lodge it was, and how grand War Eagle looked leaning against his back-rest in the firelight! From the tripod that supported the back-rest were suspended his weapons and his medicine-bundle, each showing the wonderful skill of the maker. The quiver that held the arrows was combined with a case for the bow, and colored quills of the porcupine had been deftly used to make it a thing of beauty. All about the lodge hung the strangely painted linings, and the firelight added richness to both color and design. War Eagle's hair was white, for he had known many snows; but his eyes were keen and bright as a boy's, as he gazed in pride at his grandchildren across the lodge-fire. He was wise, and had been in many battles, for his was a warlike tribe. He knew all about the world and the people in it. He was deeply religious, and every Indian child loved him for his goodness and brave deeds.5

When Linderman sent Charley Russell's 13 illustrations for
Indian Why Stories to Charles Scribner's Sons, in July 1915, he wrote that he thought the cover design was "a beauty" (see page 142). He pictured the scene:

Cover design shows War Eagle himself seated in his lodge. He is making the sign "A Very Long Time Ago" with his hands. He is seated on a painted robe; behind him and to his right is a painted parflesche of buffalo hide. On his left is a back rest supported by a tripod, as mentioned in the story. On the top of the back rest is the skin of an otter, which is the biggest "medicine" an Indian knows. In front of him and to his left is his pipe, so often mentioned in the story. On the lodge wall behind him the painted linings may be seen. . . . Before his right knee and on the ground is his pipe case. The animals, drawn in Indian style, represent the otter, the beaver and the badger. Below the picture are three of the duck-people, followed by a magpie.

The sparks from War Eagle's lodge-fire represent thoughts of truth and wisdom that emanate from the storyteller's abode, the center of knowledge and learning in the Indian camp.

Fire is sacred because it is the power of the sun, and the sun is nature's first manifestation of the source of life. Modern science has shown that the continuing flow of energy from the sun is the primary force that initiates and moves all life forms on earth. The sun generates lightning, rain, winds, ocean temperature differences, and the movement of magnetic fields in the atmosphere of our planet. Aboriginal man acknowledged the power of the sun in the vast sky, in each returning day, and in the sacred fire.

In the foreword to his second book of Chippewa and Cree legends, Indian Old-man Stories: More Sparks From War

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Eagle's Lodge-fire, published in 1920, Linderman described the sacred fire that he saw at a pipe ceremony held in 1916 in the lodge of Chief Big Rock (see page 123):

... I was in the lodge of Big Rock, a medicine-man of the band of Chippewas (by adoption I am his brother), when I took part in a "medicine-smoke." Charles Russell, the cowboy artist, has made a drawing of the setting within the lodge, ...

... An imaginary trail led straight across the lodge from west to east. It was not occupied nor littered. It was the open way for the spirits of all departed beings, and was spoken of as the "Buffalo's trail." A painted lodge is a constantly offered prayer [emphasis mine], and as it must face the East, the imaginary trail is also the way of the sun... The first fire in the imaginary trail was the Sacred fire--the Holy fire, and was but four glowing coals that had been taken from the regular lodge-fire and deposited in a square within a square of the perfectly cleaned earth. Each spear of grass and foreign thing was carefully removed before the coals were deposited, and only sweet-grass or sweet-sage was burned upon the coals. In the smoke of the incense given off by the fuel, the pipe-bowls, stems, and even the hands of the company were cleansed at the beginning of the ceremony...

A painted lodge is a constantly offered prayer. As smoke from the central fire in a lodge rises up through the smoke hole into the sky, it carries with it prayers that have been offered from the Below to the Above, from the manifested world to the source of all life, the realm of spirit.

Big Rock was a Chippewa medicine-man who lived on the Blackfeet Reservation near Chief Mountain. Linderman referred to both Full-of-dew and Big Rock as medicine-men. Today the term "medicine-man" has generally been replaced by the word "shaman," to denote a spiritual leader, man or woman, who has manifested unusual powers and mystic wisdom.
In 1916, in preparation for Linderman's writing of *Indian Old-man Stories*, he and Big Rock met in Great Falls for four days of "medicine talk," in a tepee behind the home of Theo Gibson. Charley Russell provided the lodge and the artifacts with which it was furnished. A story in the *Great Falls Leader* reported the meeting between Big Rock and "Frank B. Linderman, of Helena, the friend of the red man," who had known Big Rock for 30 years:

... The origin and the ancient customs, superstitions, traditions and religion of the Chippewas were discussed and explained by Big Rock in great detail, and all was set down. During the four days no one was admitted into the lodge until sunset.

The Chippewa tribe was at one time the most powerful of any tribe in North America, and conquered the Sioux, Fox, Sacs and many other tribes, roaming over the entire northwest. The Chippewas have never accepted the religion of the white man and are devout in the observance of their own. History tells little of them for the reason that they have never mixed with the white man and never adopted his customs.⁸

In reporting the "medicine talk" between Linderman and Big Rock the news article opened with a visualization of the voice of Manitou:

Manitou, the God of the red man, and protector of his children on earth, speaks in the sighing of the summer wind across the prairie, as well as in the thunder that rolls across the mountain tops, and his voice is the voice of the giver of all good.⁹

Linderman learned of Manitou from both Big Rock and Full-of-dew. When he asked "Who is Manitou?" Full-of-dew had answered, "The mountains, the lowlands, the rivers, the birds, my fire, the people, the big trees." Then he added, "I believe that the big trees speak to you, Co-skee-see-co-
Linderman’s inner sense of hearing, attuned in nature, allowed him to perceive the voice of Manitou.

In the preface to Indian Why Stories Linderman distinguished between the Manitou and Old-man, the Creator. When speaking of Manitou there was only reverence, but when Old-man was in the picture there was usually great hilarity:

Old-man, or Napa, as he is called by the tribes of Blackfeet, is the strangest character in Indian folk-lore. Sometimes he appears as a god or creator, and again as a fool, a thief, or a clown. But to the Indian, Napa [or Napi] is not the Deity; he occupies a somewhat subordinate position, possessing many attributes which have sometimes caused him to be confounded with Manitou, himself. In all of this there is a curious echo of the teachings of the ancient Aryans, whose belief it was that this earth was not the direct handiwork of the Almighty, but of a mere member of a hierarchy of subordinate gods. The Indian possesses the highest veneration for the Great God, who has become familiar to the readers of Indian literature as Manitou. No idle tales are told of Him, nor would any Indian mention Him irreverently. But with Napa it is entirely different; he appears entitled to no reverence; he is a strange mixture of the fallible human and the powerful under-god. He made many mistakes; was seldom to be trusted; and his works and pranks run from the sublime to the ridiculous... In the foreword to Indian Old-man Stories Linderman further explained the distinction between the terms Manitou and Old-man, and the place of the sun in the order of things:

It is a mistake to declare that the sun is the god of the Indian, or that Old-man and the sun are one and the same character. Nothing can be farther from the truth. The god is Manitou, and He is All—Everything—Nature; while the sun is reverenced by all tribes that I know only as the greatest manifestation of the deity, whose name is seldom mentioned. Old-man, or Napa, created the world and its inhabitants. His mistakes and weaknesses are freely discussed, and the laugh accompanies tales of his
doings; but mention Manitou and silence falls upon the merrymakers. Reverential awe replaces gaiety, and you will feel that you are guilty of intended sacrilege.

Many years ago I was in the lodge of Full-of-dew, who is War Eagle in this book and in "Indian Why Stories." He was telling tales of Old-man, and while all the company laughed, I remained silent. "Why does not my brother laugh with us?" asked the old warrior. I had feared to laugh at the stories lest the Indian believe that I was not serious in my desire to learn of this strange, mythical character, and I told him that. "We always laugh when we speak of Old-man," he said. "You should laugh aloud with us when we speak of him. He expects it and always laughs with us from the past."

Again, in *Morning Light*, a novel about a young free trapper who traveled up the Missouri River in 1822 and fell in love with a Cree woman, Linderman transmitted wisdom from his Indian friends. Lige Mounts, the trapper, asked his new love Bluebird about the colors and beautiful design on a pair of leggings she had made for her father, Red Robe:

"Where did you learn this design, Bluebird?" I asked her. . . .

"Look, Lone Wolf," she says, "and you will find it and others as beautiful. They are everywhere—in the forests, on the plains, on the ice when the frost has worked its magic under the moon, and even in the white snow-flakes that fall and drifting deep, make life a battle."

"But the colors?" I says. "How did you learn to use them so skillfully?" . . .

"Paok Mah-he-can, if you do not look for much you will see but little. The colors are upon the plains and in the forests. It is there that we learn to use them. Napa has painted the bird-people and the animal-people. Carefully has he made the colors to blend. And we have but to copy his work to do well. Some of the least things are the most beautiful. Upon the backs and wings of moths and butterflies are wonderful designs where colors blend. And so cunningly has he made them that we cannot follow the wearer always. They beautify and yet hide him from sight. Only the sharp eye can see. Only the trained ear hears the sounds that
attend the beautiful of the forests and plains. Manitou would have the beauty wrought by His servant Napa admired. It was intended to command our admiration. There is beauty for every sense: the eye, the ear, the tongue, and the body itself. Is it not wrong to close the eye to beauty and the nose to the perfumes which the flowers give to the winds?" 

Lige said he knew the Cree were "honest in their beliefs, and that they respected the beliefs of others." He asked Bluebird to tell him of Manitou:

"We do not speak His name often," she began softly. "The sun, the earth, and everything that lives is Manitou, even the ants and the tiny things that live under the leaves that lie on the ground beneath the forest trees. . . . Greater and more wonderful than the moon and stars is the sun, but All is Manitou. The Sun, the father, makes the grass and the flowers to grow upon Earth, the mother, of all things. And through the great Sun we thank Manitou with the Sundance each year. Always when medicine-men or warriors smoke they pray. To smoke is to pray, for the thoughts of the smoker are softened and are kind. And kind thoughts are prayers, for they are good."

These people, who had kept close to the religious beliefs of their grandfathers, were pure: in their traditions. Because Linderman wrote carefully about conversations he had with tribal elders, and the stories they told him, we can learn from those old ones about their way of life in the world.

The Chippewa and Cree who followed Big Bear became a "landless" and "homeless" people because their leader would not transgress his religion. He did not want the white man's religion and way of life forced upon his people. Big Bear did not believe the earth could be owned. How could the Canadian government buy the land from the owners of the Hudson's Bay Company? Who had ever sold it to them?
"medicine smoke" in the lodge of Big Rock
drawn by Charles M. Russell

Indian Old-man Stories: More Sparks from War Eagle's Lodge-fire, p. xv
To understand Linderman's friends, the Chippewa and Cree, one must have respect for their relationship to the inner world that surrounded them—the realm of Spirit—which is the energy and flow of life. To these people who lived in the natural world the Bear was a most powerful symbol.

Big Bear was their chief just one generation before the leadership of Little Bear and Rocky Boy. Big Bear was the son of Black Powder (Mukati), who was a Chippewa (also spelled Ojibwa) leader to a mixed band of Chippewa and Cree who lived in the area around Jackfish Lake and the Saskatchewan River, in Saskatchewan, Canada, in the early to mid-1800s. In Big Bear: The End of Freedom, Dempsey wrote of these people:

... The Ojibwa spoke a language that was similar to that of their allies, though Cree became the lingua franca of the region. Generally stockier and more heavyset than the Cree, the Ojibwa were good fighters, but were better known for their mysticism and healing powers. When Black Powder died in 1865 his son Big Bear became the okimaw (the leader or chief) of the band.

Big Bear (whose Cree name was Mistihai'muskwa) was born at Jackfish Lake in 1825. Dempsey understood how Big Bear's Chippewa ancestry influenced the character of this important Plains Cree chief:

Having an Ojibwa (Chippewa) father also made him different from the Cree boys in camp. The two tribes were closely allied, yet the Ojibwa were recognized for certain differences. Most important
of these was their relationship with the supernatural. The Ojibwa were the ones who most often went away to seek visions. They were the ones who made powerful medicines, which could strike down an enemy or help a friend. They made the hunting amulets so prized by the Cree hunters and could foretell the success or failure of a war party. Of course, the Cree had medicine men, too, but their reputations paled in comparison to the power of the Ojibwa.16

When Big Bear was young he had a powerful vision that came to him in the form of a bear, "a son of the Great Parent Bear." The bear spirit offered to be his "protector." his medicine power:

... The bear was considered to be the greatest of all animal spirits, because the Cree believed it was much like man himself. When the creature stood upright, it was called "the bear that walks like a man"; and when its carcass was skinned, it looked disturbingly like a human body. To the Cree, it was neokoteonshin, "four-legged person."

When Big Bear returned to his camp, he fashioned the war medicine according to the bear spirit's directions. He wrapped it in cloth to form a bundle, called the holy men together to sanctify it...

"You got your power from the Manito and now give it to the people," the holy man said, speaking directly to the bundle... [he] passed his hands through the smoke of the incense to purify them, then carefully untied the thongs and folded back the cloth to reveal its contents. There, with all its fearful implications, was a bear's paw, its savage claws still attached. It had been tanned and fastened to a square of scarlet flannel, so that it could be worn around the owner's neck whenever he went to war or participated in ceremonies.

This, Big Bear told them, was okimaw-okusisaw-ochichi, "chief's son's hand," or, more simply, "bear's hand."17

Throughout his adult life Big Bear was guardian of this powerful medicine bundle that contained a fearsome bear's paw. When his descendants finally found a home for their ceremonies it was in the Bear Paw Mountains. This may
seem coincidental but in the flow of the Great Mystery there is an unseen order at work in the world.

While some chiefs accepted cultural change and took on the white man's religion, the people in Big Bear's band held fast to their old spiritual beliefs. Their okimaw was a seeker of visions, owner of the powerful bear bundle, and keeper of a sacred medicine pipe. Dempsey wrote of Big Bear's power:

An important element in Big Bear's leadership was his mysticism. Not only did his war medicine give him an aura of power, but his association with the bear spirit made him respected and feared. An active ceremonialist, he sponsored the Thirst Dance and other religious activities of the tribe. Although these may have enhanced his position as chief, he did them for reasons of personal conviction, rather than political gain. Like his father before him, his feelings for the supernatural were deeply rooted in his Ojibwa heritage.

Little Bear, Big Bear's second son, was born in the Little Hills near Jackfish Lake, in Saskatchewan, in 1851. He was named Imasees, which has been variously translated as Wild Child, Bad Child, or Mean Boy. His second name was Apistakoos, or Little Bear. Little Bear continued in the ways of his father, Big Bear, and grandfather, Black Powder. Throughout his life he sponsored the Thirst Dance (the Sun Dance) and claimed the right of his people to practice their religion and have a home for their ceremonies.

Linderman never met Big Bear, but he knew Little Bear and several other Cree and Chippewa spiritual leaders who taught him about the medicine power of the bear. He
wrote about the bear in *Indian Why Stories*:

The Indian believes that to each of His creations God gave some peculiar power, and that the possessors of these special favors are . . . keepers of special attributes; such as wisdom, cunning, speed, and the knowledge of healing wounds. These wonderful gifts, he knew, were bestowed as favors by a common God, and therefore he revered these powers, and, without jealousy, paid tribute thereto.

The bear was great in war, because before the horse came, he would sometimes charge the camps and kill or wound many people. Although many arrows were sent into his huge carcass, he seldom died. Hence the Indian was sure that the bear could heal his wounds. That the bear possessed a great knowledge of roots and berries, the Indian knew, for he often saw him digging the one and stripping the others from the bushes. . . .

If about to go to war, the Indian did not ask his God for aid—oh, no. He realized that God made his enemy, too; and that if He desired that enemy's destruction, it would be accomplished without man's aid. So the Indian sang his song to the bear, prayed to the bear, and thus invoked aid from a brute, and not his God, when he sought to destroy his fellows.

Whenever the Indian addressed the Great God, his prayer was for life, and life alone.

In a passage from *Morning Light* Linderman conveyed a sense of the awesome strength of the bear. One night during a fierce winter storm everyone in the Cree camp was on edge. They were surrounded in the darkness by a party of Blackfeet warriors who would attack them at daybreak. Black Bear was conjuring the fierce protective power of the bear, and Lige Mounts could hear on the wind the eerie sounds of drums and chanted prayers, coming from the lodge of the medicine-man:

... The wind shook the branches of the big trees over the river till they rattled like a passel of dry bones, and my fingers fairly stuck to my rifle-barrel, it was so bitter cold... . . . a drum in Black Bear's lodge commenced beating. To-tum, to-tum, to-tum, wilder'n a wolf,
but solemn and deep as a mountain lake, the drumming beats rose and fell with the wind. "Bear, where are you? Hi-yah! Bear, listen. Ho-yah! Bear, great Medicine-man of the Crees; Bear, mighty, great Medicine-man of the Crees! Hi-yah! Ho-yah! Hi-yah!"

It was Black Bear's voice, chanting in a high-pitched key, the song of the Bear.

Suddenly the drum stopped. I could hear the limbs on the trees across the river rattle. Then the old medicine-man begun to pray to the Bear:

"Lend us your strength, O Wah-ki-oose! Give our warriors power to slay those who made war upon our fathers! Hear me! Hear me! Hear me and be with us!"

His voice shook with earnestness. The men, crowded together and waiting for the fight, seemed to be held closer by the grip of the prayer. My muscles tightened more. I wanted the row to commence. But the wind shrieked, and like it was jeering at Black Bear's earnestness, the owl's voice come again from over the icy water.

Morning Light, the story of "Lige Mounts: Free Trapper" was first published in 1922. Through the adventures of Lige Mounts, Linderman showed that some of the "Canadian" Cree had camped and lived along the Missouri River in the early 1800s. Also, he used the vehicle of this story as a channel to transmit more of the wisdom he had learned from Little Bear and the Chippewa and Cree.

During the years they knew each other Chief Little Bear gave Linderman several gifts--a black stone pipe, a wolf war headdress he had worn in battle, and an otter skin collar that had first belonged to Black Powder, and was worn by Big Bear in the Riel Rebellion. Little Bear told Linderman that when Big Bear was wearing the collar he "had heard bullets and arrows whistle" near him, but that "no man who wore the collar in battle was ever wounded." The power of the collar was strong--it could heal the sick. Little Bear
gave the collar to Linderman at the Cree Sun Dance in 1912.

The landless Indians considered Linderman a leader among them, because they could trust him to fight for them. Linderman wrote that when Little Bear gave him the black stone pipe he had said, "I give you this because you are the only white man I have ever known who does not lie."^22

Sun Dance

In the early summer of 1912, not long after the death of Full-of-dew, Linderman was invited by the Piegan\(^{23}\) to attend a big dance and tribal ceremonial on the Blackfeet Reservation. The Bloods and other tribes including Chippewa and Cree joined the Piegan, bringing together a village of more than 300 lodges camped at Fort Browning.

In his later writings Linderman described this fateful gathering in several different versions, showing that in his memory it was vitally important to the unfolding of future events. In his memoirs, Montana Adventure, he told about his arrival at the camp in the middle of the night:

... On my way to the Indian village I stopped in Great Falls, where I invited my old friend Charley Russell, the cowboy artist, Theodore Gibson, Charley Elliot, and Percy Raban, to go with me to the powwow. Our train was late. It was midnight before we reached the ancient buffalo-skin lodge that the tribe had set up for my use in the very center of the great circle of lodges that formed the village. Serenaders began at once to entertain us, the huge drums of the Piegan being used to accompany the singers. Two o'clock came before our little lodge was vacated by the host of visitors who had been coming and going ever since our arrival. ... I was unrolling my blanket when Russell held up his hand
in the light of the tiny fire we had kindled for light. "Listen!" he said, standing up, with a hand on a lodgepole. An Indian drum was beating...

They learned that the sound was coming from the Cree Sun Dance lodge, which was far across the huge camp. Russell went to the lodge door to look out, and mused wistfully, "I sure would like to see them in the firelight." Linderman thought he might be able to take Russell and the other men into the dance, so they decided to find the lodge:

A hurried walk of nearly two miles brought us to an immense brush lodge with bright spears of firelight darting through the already wilted leaves on the young saplings that thatched its top and wall. Red sparks from the fire within were going straight up, clinging to life that the still, early summer night seemed not to wish to foster. The drums, several of them, beating in unison, sounded savagely forbidding. Nevertheless, I lifted the canvas door and entered, followed by the others.

The drums ceased, heads turned, angry eyes glared. In a jiffy Little-bear, the Cree chief, clad only in a breechclout, sprang toward us, speaking rapidly in Cree. But he stopped as suddenly as he had started, a broad, happy smile lighting his powerful face.

Here Linderman portrayed Little Bear's gesture of the giving of the otter skin collar, which in Linderman's words was a "rare gift":

"How! How!" he greeted; then, turning to his people, "My brother has come to us. My heart sings," he said, going on with a long speech of welcome. Finishing, he strode majestically to the center pole of the sun lodge where two or three pieces of finery, "medicine," were hanging, lifted down an adorned otter skin, and handed it to me. "This," he said, "was my grandfathers'. It is big medicine. Brother, I now give it to you forever."

I accepted the rare gift from his hands, held it up in the firelight, and then said, "Brother, my heart is made glad by this gift. I will keep it as long as I live. But that it may be with you and
your people until the end of this dance I ask you to keep it for me until day after tomorrow, and to then bring it to my lodge."

Little-bear gladly, and with reverence, replaced the precious otter skin on the lodge's center pole; and then instantly the drums began again, and the dancing in the firelight, making Charley Russell very happy. 24

In another version of this important event, told in *Recollections of Charley Russell*, Linderman described the collar more fully. He said Little Bear led them to the center pole and welcomed them. Then, Linderman wrote:

... Reaching up, he took from the pole an old otter skin bedecked with eagle feathers, hawk bells, and medicine and handed it to me. "This belonged to my grandfather, my father, and me, all chiefs of the Crees. I give it to you now. Hold it fast. It is big medicine." 25

The Chippewa (Ojibwa) were known for their great mystical and healing abilities and the powerful "medicine" pieces they made, for war or the hunt. Now this revered talisman, the sacred otter skin collar, which had belonged to Little Bear's grandfather Black Powder nearly 100 years before, was ritually passed into the hands and keeping of Linderman.

White scholars and museum curators often think these power objects are nothing more than feathers, skin and bone, and descendants of the native people think they have been desecrated by passing into the wrong hands. But Little Bear and Linderman understood each other, and the significance of Little Bear's gesture. By accepting this rare gift, an object of great power, Linderman was accepting the premise behind the gift, which was that he would fight for Little
Bear's people to have a home.

The men Linderman took to the Sun Dance were part of the coalition that helped support the Chippewa and Cree, and helped in the efforts to secure a reservation for them. The opportunity they had, being at the gathering and attending the Sun Dance, enriched their connection with the Indian people and strengthened their commitment to help them.

Linderman told about receiving the gift of the sacred otter skin collar, but he did not mention the fact that Little Bear had asked for his help in preparing for this large gathering of people. In a letter to Linderman, written for Little Bear by an interpreter on June 11, we learn more about the giving that was going on:

... another thing I wish you to do. That on the 4th July try to fix it so that myself & people shall be fed. There's going to be multitudes of people here then. There's lots of people that cannot labor for themselves. Those that are cripple & old people & all women & children... I want Uncle Sam to pick out some good land where we shall make our homes & settle down—

This is what I want that on the 4th while they enjoy themselves I would like them also to have something to eat... thats what I wish & pray for you to help me on this think to dear frind I conclude with kind regards to you hoping & praying you shall grant my humble request I wish to God we would get to each other to have a talk I would like it.

These were not idle requests, and Linderman's attendance at the great gathering at the Blackfeet Reservation was not an idle pastime. These men--Little Bear and Linderman--were already serious in their intent to get land for the homeless Indians of Montana.
There is a third story Linderman told about the 1912 gathering at Fort Browning. It was his first visit with the Chippewa and Cree since Full-of-dew's death in May of that year. At a formal meeting held during the gathering, in the presence of 30 old warriors, Linderman received his friend's last message to him: "Tell Co-skee-see-co-cot that it is my wish that he take my brother (Rocky-boy) into his heart, as he took me."²⁷

At that time an important agreement was made, a joining that included not only Linderman and Rocky Boy, but the spirit of Full-of-dew himself. Linderman's acceptance of the last hope of his old friend was sincere. He felt he had sent Full-of-dew to his death, by encouraging him to return to the Blackfeet Reservation. The only way he could make up for that responsibility was to help fulfill his friend's dying wish.

The giving of the otter skin collar at the Cree Sun Dance, and Linderman's acceptance of Full-of-dew's final request in the presence of the large group of aged warriors, were gestures that forged a deep spiritual commitment and bonding of intention between Linderman and the Chippewa and Cree leaders during the summer of 1912.
Frank Linderman in front of Indian lodge after returning from a hunting trip, 1910, Helena

Loose painted for Linderman by Mrs. Running Rabbit and Mrs. Billie Bray.

photo: Frank Bird Linderman Estate Files

Copy provided by the Montana Historical Society, Helena.
Religious Freedom

Linderman believed the Chippewa and Cree should be allowed to honor their traditions and practice their religious beliefs. He was touched by an epitaph written on a board that had been placed at the head of a grave at Half Moon, near Demersville, in 1890:

**Borne Winnipeg, 1780, one Chippeway woman, by the name of the Wolf Woman. Have request that she would not be baptize fore her children was not baptize and they was in Hell she would go and be with them, age 110.**

Fore love will flourish in a chilling woe
they unfold adversitys rough winds that blow
but cause its root to take a deeper hold
while the scalding showers of a hopeless grief
give a brighter glow on to each radiant leaf.

In its simplicity this woman's wish to be with her children in Hell shows the cruel effect of the white man trying to change by force the spiritual beliefs of the old Indians.

Linderman was an advocate of Indian rights. He believed the Chippewa and Cree should be allowed to continue the Sun Dance and other traditional practices that benefited their sense of well-being in the world. For many years the native people in the United States were denied the freedom to practice their religious ceremonies and beliefs.

Several letters, written in 1916 and 1917, show Linderman's informed views on this matter, and the unyielding policy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which at that time was called the Office of Indian Affairs. In early June 1916 Little Bear sent a letter to Theo Gibson in which he...
said he wanted permission for his people to take time off from their work to have the Sun Dance:

... I want to have ten days of our time for the Sun Dance. Because we have not been dancing but working hard. During the Sun Dance I worshiping to God for the old age, goodness and kindness. And I'm not making the Sun Dance for the fun but you know its my way of worshiping. God has put us in this world to do penence at least once a year. And please let Mr. Bole and Linderman know of my asking permission to have the Sun Dance. You had told me not to say any more to the agents and thats why I am writing to you. And in God's name I send my regards to you, Linderman and Mr. Bole.\textsuperscript{29}

Gibson sent the letter to Linderman, who then wrote to the commissioner of Indian affairs, Cato Sells, on June 10, 1916. He defended a number of the Indians' traditions, and said he thought it was "wicked" to prohibit the Sun Dance:

The Indians have been very much afraid because of an order coming through some agent to cut their hair. They are very much worried over that order. Long hair is a part of their idea of obeying Manitou. This move would be the height of foolishness, and I beg of you to not allow the enforcement of any such order. In my opinion it is wicked, and not in keeping with good judgment to prohibit the sun-dance, which occurs but once a year. There is no harm in the sun-dance whatever. It is a very serious effort on the part of the Indian to serve his God. During the sun-dance there is nothing war-like enacted and any man who claims otherwise does not know the truth. If the sun-dance is allowed as practiced at the present time, you will find the Indian far more satisfied in mind.

He went on to argue the reasons why the Indian people should be allowed to live in their traditional lodges:

Another thing the Department has done that is not in keeping with its own ideas, i.e., to promote sanitary conditions and aid in keeping the health of the Indian good. I refer to the houses and tents of the white man in which most of these people are living today. The white man's tent is the most
damnable institution ever devised by human mind, while the teepee or lodge is the most sanitary, well ventilated house that any man has ever known. This can be easily proven and is well known to plainsmen. When an Indian occupies the white man's house he promptly shuts the door and windows, builds a hot fire and hermetically seals every crack. To open a door in such a dwelling is to receive a blow in the face sufficient to knock a common man down. Yet the house is advised and the teepee condemned. Any man can work at any calling after sleeping in a lodge, as well as he can perform that work after sleeping in a house, and I believe better.

Linderman said if the above issues were considered there would be "more health and happiness" among the Chippewa and Cree. He asserted that his word was informed and truthful:

You will find upon inquiry that I am as well informed on the customs and ways of the Indians as any man in the United States, and will never make a statement to you nor to any one in authority that is not true.30

On the same day, June 10, 1916, Linderman wrote to Chief Little Bear, with some good advice:

Friend--

Gibson gave me that letter. I have written to Washington. I am glad you have planted crops. I do not think they will make you cut your hair. I shall do all I can to stop them.

As soon as I can get time I will come and see you.

I told you not to tell the white man about the sun-dance but I think you have told it. If you give the sun-dance be quiet about it.

Your Friend, Frank Linderman 31

By the time Commissioner Sells answered Linderman's letter, on July 7, the Sun Dance had probably already been held. Sells' response parroted the government's official policies toward the traditional life of the native people:

... it appears that [Superintendent Rastall at Fort Belknap] has issued no order that the Indians
must cut their long hair, but that he is merely making every effort to persuade the younger men of the tribe to cut their hair and give up the old non-progressive Indian customs, which is entirely in accord with the policy of the Service, although no arbitrary or coercive measures have been adopted. Mr. Rastall states that he recently met you at Harlem to talk over with you rather fully his plans for the industrial advancement of these Indians.

I note what you say about the sun-dance and regret that I cannot consistently permit it as to do so in one case would establish a precedent for similar action on other reservations, which will result in the practical reversal of the long established attitude of this Service toward the old-time Indian customs, which, in general, experience has demonstrated to be harmful to their industrial welfare and progress. I realize, of course, there are some exceptions to this rule and while the sun-dance itself may not be immoral, yet I understand that it embodies other demoralizing old-time customs decidedly harmful to the Indians.

In his statements of policy, Sells acknowledged that the civilization of the white man was "as yet" imperfect and had its own vices, some "more harmful and immoral" than the old-time Indian customs:

Although the Indians may feel that it works a hardship on them to give up the sun-dance, yet the compensating advantages which accrue to the race in general from the abolition of the old-time harmful and immoral customs and the taking on of the ways of civilized life, should be sufficient to induce them to acquiesce in a policy which experience has demonstrated best contributes to their welfare. I am not unmindful of the fact that the civilization of the white man is as yet imperfect and has its attendant vices, some of them more harmful and immoral no doubt than any of the old-time Indian customs.

However, the policy and aim of this Service has in view the development by the Indians of those traits of character which will cause them to appropriate the advantages and benefits of modern civilization and at the same time remain free from its vices, so far as practicable. Of course, I realized that this ideal has not yet been reached, and that in many cases, unfortunately, the Indians have acquired more of the vices of civilization than its
benefits. In spite of this fact (which is not by any means representative of general conditions), I am not discouraged, but, on the other hand, optimistic, as to the final success of our efforts, with the sympathetic cooperation of the whites, especially those unselfish and philanthropic ones like yourself, who have an intimate knowledge of the Indians, their history, etc., even though we cannot always agree on specific details of Indian policy.

Sells continued with a discussion of the benefits of the modern house and of having "a fixed place of abode":

... I appreciate the force of what you say about the advantages of the teepee as compared with the modern house, ... However, it does not seem to me that the remedy is to abolish the house in favor of the teepee, but rather to teach the Indians to utilize their houses properly by providing sufficient light and ventilation, as a fixed place of abode is one of the distinguishing characteristics of a high state of civilization.

Linderman wrote to Sells on July 13, thanking him for his letter of the seventh, in which Sells had addressed other matters concerning the welfare of the Indians besides those quoted above. He closed his letter to the commissioner by saying: "It is hard for me to believe that a white man is trying to help an Indian but I have come to the conclusion that you are one of the few."33

Another brief exchange of letters in 1917 further illustrates the differences of opinion about government interference in the tribal peoples' traditional practices. Linderman wrote to Sells on June 16, concerning the right of the Indians to give the Sun Dance at the new reservation:

A committee of representative members of these Indians has visited me, and have said they were afraid they would not be allowed to hold their sun dance, which they hold is necessary for their wel-
fare. This has disturbed them greatly. I assure you, Mr. Sells, that there is nothing in the sun dance as practiced by these people, that is in any way objectionable to even an orthodox white man. The sun dance is universally misunderstood, and where there is no self torture connected with the ceremony it should not be prohibited. This is the Indian's way of offering solemn prayer to Manitou, and there is no hilarity whatever connected with the rite.

Linderman put himself on the line by promising Sells that the Indians would not practice self-torture if allowed to perform the Sun Dance. He clearly stated his belief that the government did not have the right to deny the Indian religious freedom:

I guarantee that not one element of brutality nor self torture will be indulged in, if you will allow these people to proceed with their sun dance, which consumes but four days of time. They have completed their work and will do much better in every way if you will consent to this request.

I will esteem it a personal favor if you will telegraph me that they may hold their sun dance under the circumstances I have named above. By so doing you will make them respect you and you will be held in the greatest esteem by them as long as you live.

I have always maintained that the government has no right to interfere with the Indians' religious ceremonies where they do not include barbarous acts, and I feel sure that soon I shall be able to prove it to the public.

Will you not wire me giving permission for these Indians to hold this ceremony for four days, and greatly oblige, Your friend, Frank Linderman

In his answer to Linderman, written July 3, Sells said he did not feel justified in "receding from the position" he had taken regarding the Sun Dance. However, he did not want to be "unduly severe in the restriction of popular customs." He was considering the practicality of allowing
the Indians to have a fair in the fall. He regretted that he was "not in a position to comply with the request" made by Linderman.35

Linderman's request that Sells telegraph permission, rather than answering by mail, implies that the dance would be held soon. He said the Indians had completed the work of planting their crops, and that the ceremony would take four days. In the Linderman correspondence there is no telegram from Sells during this time, and the response from Sells was not written until July 3. The letters, it would seem, were a formality that was taken to follow the rules. By putting off his response until after the summer solstice and the Fourth of July, Sells avoided saying "No" to the Sun Dance. As had happened the year before, the ceremony had probably already taken place by the time his letter was received.

Linderman was inspired by the traditional native peoples' spiritual life and treasured their beliefs. In the introduction to Recollections of Charley Russell Harold G. Merriam wrote of Linderman's sensitivity toward the Indians:

Linderman knew Plains Indians as friends whom he admired. He also, being curious about their inner life as well as the outer, before white contamination, treasured their legends and beliefs and their relationship to all that is in heaven and on earth.36

Merriam said Russell admired the Indian's "reverence for nature and beliefs in spiritual forces" and "knew their outward life," but he did not see into the Indian's inner life as deeply as Linderman did.37
Inside War Eagle's Lodge
cover for Indian Why Stories

INDIAN WHY STORIES
SPARKS FROM WAR EAGLE'S LODGE-FIRE

FRANK B. LINDERMANN
Illustrated by
Charles M. Russell

War Eagle is beginning a story in sign language:
"A very long time ago . . ."
The welcome Linderman and Russell received at the Sun Dance, Linderman's acceptance of the last wish of Full-of-dew, and the rare gift of the otter skin collar, evidence a significant connection, perhaps unrecognized at the time, that led to the eventual publication of Indian Why Stories, and Linderman's use of that book as leverage in acquiring lands for the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation.

Sparks of Fire

Linderman's interest in collecting the legends and stories of his old Indian friends grew out of his fascination for stone arrow-points, which people still find today, and treasure. His interest in arrowheads pointed the way toward his becoming the spearhead of the movement to find a home for the landless Indians.

Throughout his life in Montana Linderman questioned tribal elders, trying to trace the origin of these mystical pieces of stone. He was a creative listener, and as they told him their stories he tried to transcend the separation between himself and the tribal historians. He had respect for them and wanted to understand the way they thought:

Old Indians have always impressed me. In their presence, especially when they are telling me of old customs, or speaking solemnly of their religious beliefs, I feel nearly as they do, I am quite certain. I have tried to break down that something which separates me from them by thinking as old Indians think, perhaps with only imagined success. And yet I believe that I understand many points of their philosophy of life that I cannot yet express in words. . . . I am grateful for the privilege of having known many of the old warriors themselves;
While exploring the native folklore Linderman said he came across many stories he thought were "worth saving." Through the legends he became interested in the Indians' religions, in which he said he found much "worth knowing." And yet, humble in his understanding, he acknowledged how little he knew:

I admire the Indian. I mean the old Indian; not the young, moving-picture Indian but the real unspoiled man of the wilds. He is the only human I have ever known who knows no jealousy. He will ever extol the prowess of the competitor who beats him at any game or trial of skill. The successful man is not envied but is pointed to with pride by his fellows. I have tried to know him for over 33 years and while he has called me brother and friend I feel that I have learned but little of this man of mystery--the Indian.

Whether he knew a little, or a lot, he knew enough. He knew enough to take what he had learned of the Great Spirit and offer it to the Creator of All, for the benefit of those through which the information had been given to him. His offering was made in the form of the distinguished book, Indian Why Stories, a significant publication in its day.

Linderman stood by his promise to "never give up" until his friends, the Chippewa and Cree, had a home. After the momentous gathering and Sun Dance at the Blackfeet Reservation in 1912, propitious events which had begun to coalesce gradually fell into place for the homeless Indians.

The abandoned Fort Assiniboine lands in the Bear Paw Montains had been withdrawn from settlement in March 1912.
Full-of-dew had returned to the Blackfeet Reservation in the spring of 1912, with the idea that the Chippewa and Cree should try to get land at Assiniboine. He died on May 15. In a letter to Linderman on May 17, Little Bear said, "I want you to work hard for me to try and get that land over at Fort Assiniboine so I expect for you to do that for me." Linderman attended the large gathering and Sun Dance at the Blackfeet Reservation in early July 1912. Prayers offered at the ceremonies that summer were probably directed toward securing a home for the Chippewa and Cree, a center point for the continuation of their religious life.

In early March 1913 Franklin Lane was appointed secretary of the interior. In August he came to Montana to investigate firsthand the situation of the landless Indians. Rocky Boy and the Chippewa moved onto the land at Fort Assiniboine in the fall of 1913, and in the fall of 1914 Little Bear and the Cree joined them at their central camp. Linderman's first book, Indian Why Stories, was published in September 1915. The creation of the reservation was finally established by federal law in 1916.

Indian Why Stories: Sparks from War Eagle's Lodge-fire gave a classic and far-reaching voice to Linderman's friend, Full-of-dew, Chief Panetoo. It was an important book, beautifully bound, colorfully illustrated by Russell. Even the cover was in color. The artists' imagery, in the book title and the cover picture, drew the reader into War.
Eagle's lodge before the cover was ever opened.

In fulfilling his promise to "never give up" Linderman called upon a source of power that essentially came from his long-ago friend, Full-of-dew. He took the success of *Indian Why Stories* and translated it into a motivating force that helped bring about the creation of the reservation for the Chippewa and Cree.

Through his own words we know Linderman's threat to send fully illustrated articles for publication in eastern magazines caused politicians and bureaucrats to finally act on the Indians' need for adequate lands. In a letter dated March 17, 1916, George Bird Grinnell told Linderman of a similar ploy that helped the Blackfeet:

> I have understood that the Blackfeet Indians have done very well this winter, because they have had rations supplied them, and it is said that rations were supplied them because Mrs. Rinehart scared the Interior Department by the threat of an article in the Saturday Evening Post. This, however, is not to be mentioned, I believe.41

Linderman answered Grinnell on March 24, with an air of confidence that politicians were finally coming around to helping the Chippew and Cree. He said:

> You say that Miss Rinehart threatened the officials in Washington, in promising to publish articles dealing with the Blackfeet. Well, I did the same thing, and I must say it did more good than two or three years of begging.42

Linderman had more leverage after the publication of *Indian Why Stories*. His sphere of influence was no longer confined to the state of Montana, but had extended itself out to the
American public. His voice of authority had gained power.

The capstone of Linderman's successful campaign to find the landless Indians a home was the publication of his book, *Indian Why Stories*, and the subtle teaching force of the storyteller that was born in him. The strength of that force can be felt in the letters he wrote in early 1916.

Through meticulous correspondence with politicians and government officials he tried to turn uninformed pre-judice into well-formed decisions based on practical wisdom. He tried to open minds and hearts, to transform sympathy and pity into empathy and compassionate action.

Linderman was moved by the spiritual dimensions and ageless wisdom of the tribal elders he knew, embodied in the characterization of War Eagle. The inspiration that finally moved the politicians to act on the Indians' need was lit by sparks from War Eagle's lodge-fire. In Chapter 5 we see how closely Linderman followed and affected the levels of change that brought about the creation of Rocky Boy's Reservation.
CHAPTER 5

CREATION OF THE RESERVATION
1916

A Humane Solution

While the opening days of 1916 found the U.S. Congress occupied with growing concerns of possible global war, the landless and destitute families of the Rocky Boy and Little Bear bands had a hope for peace. They hoped to plant their center pole, the axis mundi of their world, in the heart of Montana, on the western slopes of the Bear Paw Mountains. Their friend, Frank Linderman, planned to use everything in his power to help them realize that hope.

Leaving the cold Montana climate in December 1915, for a few weeks of California sun, gave Linderman time to clear his mind. Yet, even so far from home, the pressing needs of the Chippewa and Cree reached out to him, and by mid-January he was back on the job—vigilant against the injustice that seemed to plague them.

On January 17, 1916, he wrote to 1st Lt. Carl von dem Bussche, a fellow Mason who was stationed at Fort Missoula, asking him to investigate the status of orders to distribute rations to the Indians at Fort Assiniboine:

I have been in California, and while there I got a letter from my friends, the Injuns. I understand
that they received seven sacks of flour for 200 people. I know they have not got enough to eat and do not think they have had anything lately, and I was obliged to beg and send them clothes just before I left for California. I do not know whether you can do anything or not, but I know you won't despise me for calling this to your attention.

Von dem Bussche had been stationed at Fort Harrison, near Helena, several years before. Because the Army at Fort Harrison had served as distributing agent for the Indians camped near Helena, he was familiar with the homeless Indians and their needs. Linderman thought he might be able to help the Chippewa and Cree:

I am going to heaven when I die, and I would like to have you with me, and by helping these people I am dead sure that you are getting closer to the pearly gates than you would by doing anything else. If there is any way by which you can find out what is being done I wish you would do it. I expect to have to go to that camp very shortly and it is going to be a hard job, I assure you. I honestly wish this government would shoot these people, or else feed them as government wards.

On January 25 Linderman wrote to Senator Henry L. Myers asking what he thought might be accomplished in the present session of Congress to help the landless Indians. Nothing permanent had come of promises made in the past:

My dear Senator:-

I am sure you are acquainted with the condition of things in the Indian camp at Fort Assinaboine, but I cannot remain entirely silent when these people are suffering.

It has been some time since I addressed a letter to you or to the Department [of the Interior], because I believed that I had done everything within my power [to help the Chippewa and Cree].

Mr. Lane promised me many things, as did Mr. Cato Sells, but nothing of permanent good has come through these promises. At times these Indians are given insufficient rations and at other times none
Linderman's compassion for the Indians was often overwhelmed by frustration—the material needs of the people were too great and too many for one man, virtually alone, to bear. His letter to Myers expressed some of that frustration:

I am constantly called upon for help, and constantly obliged to beg or give relief from my own pocket. There are so many Indians that I am unable to help them sufficiently, and it has come to be the talk of this state. I have spoken to many people, and at times have addressed fair sized audiences, and something must be done that will be of permanent benefit. I have tried everything I can think of, including an expensive trip to Washington, during which I interviewed everybody that should be interested. Promises will not fill bellies, and each winter sees added suffering among these people, and each year brings about more weakened conditions among them, physically.

Linderman had tried everything he could think of to help the Chippewa and Cree, but the plight of the destitute Indians so appalled his sensibilities that he was determined to try one more time to help them.

Like his Indian friends, Linderman was a survivor—an inventive man who had known the creative experience of life lived in nature. With the publication of his book of Indian legends he recognized an opportunity, and seized the moment. He thought he had done all within his power to help the landless Indians, but Indian Why Stories gave new strength to his cause. Now he had leverage, and he applied it in his appeal to Myers:

If we cannot get relief this session I am going to offer for publication in magazines illustrated articles, and try to arouse the people outside of
Montana, and I have every reason to believe that since Chas. Scribners Sons have accepted and published a work of mine, that such articles would be accepted, especially if they were offered, as they will be, without pay.

The successful publication of Indian Why Stories, seemingly a small and unrelated event, brought a subtle force into play in the political drama of the creation of Rocky Boy's Reservation--the threat of public censure. Linderman was direct in closing his letter to Myers:

Mr. Bole of Great Falls, who has interested himself in the Indians referred to, recently told me that you had introduced a bill looking toward the permanent assistance of these people, and my reason for writing you this letter is to find out what you think is going to be done and when the same will be accomplished.

I would appreciate a letter from you, telling me what in your opinion the future holds in the way of relief for the Little Bear and Rocky Boy Indians.²

President Wilson did not believe the federal government should be held responsible for the progress of Indian affairs. During his administration political and financial concerns of white westerners took precedence over the needs of America's indigenous people. When Linderman mentioned Bole's name he was reminding Myers, a Democrat from Ravalli County, that other "white western" interests should be considered besides those of the Democrats in the Havre opposition. Bole was an influential Democrat in Montana, and as editor of the Great Falls Tribune his voice traveled far.

Myers believed "the solution of the Indian problem lies in throwing Indian Reservations open to allotment and settlement."³ Led by that philosophy, he was unsympathetic
to the needs of the Chippewa and Cree. It was he who had introduced the Senate bill in 1915 to survey and open to settlement the lands at Fort Assiniboine Military Reservation, ignoring the need for land for the homeless Indians.

On January 18, 1916, Myers had introduced Senate bill 3646, to amend the Act of February 11, 1915. The amendment proposed to set aside just two fractional townships—28 north, ranges 15 and 16 east—as a reservation for Rocky Boy's Band of Chippewas and other homeless Indians in the state of Montana. The amendment also authorized the secretary of the interior to allot the lands within the reservation, and granted a large portion of the land to the city of Havre for a reservoir and a permanent park or camping ground along both sides of Beaver Creek.  

Linderman received a copy of S. 3646 on January 26. As usual, he was on guard to protect the Chippewa and Cree from the decisions of ignorant lawmakers. After reading the bill he immediately wrote to Myers, chairman of the Senate Committee on the Public Lands. He wanted to "set forth a few facts" for Myer's "consideration," concerning the lay of the land at Fort Assiniboine:

I am fairly well acquainted with that portion of the country, but to be certain about the statements I wanted to make, I went up to the Surveyor General's office and got what information I could from there. Then I interviewed the member of the Field Division who went over all the ground in the Fort Assiniboine Military Reservation and made a map and field notes of all of it.

The average elevation of 28,16 [township 28
north, range 16 east] is from 4000 to 7000 feet. On the two fractional townships to be set aside for Rocky Boy there are altitudes as follows: 6074, 7040, 6300 and 6000. In both those townships there is scarcely any tillable land, and the question is going to be raised thousands of times in the future, "Why don't these people raise bananas?" [emphasis mine] No white man could take 160 acres of that land and make a living, and this is a statement of fact.

Myers' amendment provided 30,900 acres of land for the homeless Indians. Linderman asked Myers to include at least one more township in his amendment, one with tillable soil that would be more suitable for farming:

Could you not cut the permanent camping ground for picnicking white people down a little bit and include T. 29 N. R. 15 E [township 29 north, range 15 east]? If this could be done I think these people could make a living, if given a start, and while I shall be glad of anything in the way of help, the man who sees far enough ahead to allow these people to have land that will permit a living to be wrested from it, will do us all great good.

Linderman objected to the allotment plan. Division of the land into individual parcels would further isolate the people, and they would not be able to support themselves on the small allotments each would receive:

The land set forth in the bill, if allotted as proposed, would in most cases be of too rough a nature to allow an Indian to make a living. In fact, I do not think the land should be allotted to individuals, but held as a tribal tract. You will find, Senator, that when the final action is taken there will be 800 on that little piece of land. I am quite sure that scattered throughout Montana, without homes, are that many people who rightfully belong to that tribe and will ultimately come in. One township more would make it possible for all to live there, and if there were but 600, as is sometimes claimed as a total to be attended to, this extra township would prove an abundance.

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Frank Linderman and Charley Russell  
Missouri River boat trip  
September/October, circa 1914-1916  
Back to front: James Linderman, Frank Linderman, Charley Russell, Dr. Nash
Forward in his thinking, Linderman could not imagine how a public park would bring pleasure to anyone if it were located within sight of starvation and hopeless human misery:

It seems to me that we should consider the future a little in the setting aside of this land, because continued help will be necessary unless land is given that can be cultivated. One township more would not ruin Havre's camping ground, and when one considers parks set aside for pleasure, bordering on land whereon people are starving, he is apt to lose his appetite for parks in general.

I would be glad to have you write to me, and I know you will find Secretary Lane in favor of anything that will do permanent good."

Secretary Lane believed the best way to fight for a thing "is to show its advantages, and the need for it."

Linderman pursued that tactic. In his persistent correspondence with politicians and bureaucrats in Washington, he directed his energies toward explaining the advantages of a humane solution to the problems of the landless Indians.

His main concern was to increase the amount of land to include an adequate amount of agricultural land and good water, as well as timber and grazing land, so they could become self-supporting. He insisted they were a people who would willingly work to improve their situation, if given the opportunity. In his letters during the next few months he also dealt with the rations issue again, and lobbied against a proposal to drop the next yearly appropriation from $10,000 to $5,000.

In arguing for the $10,000 appropriation and the need for tillable land Linderman clarified his position:
You mention the appropriation of $10,000, and tell of the proposed giving of the two southern townships of Fort Assinaboine Military Reservation. Allow me to say that I consider myself the father of both these movements [to get financial assistance and land for the Chippewa and Cree] and I know all about the matter up to date.

Here, Linderman acknowledged that he was the spearhead of the campaign to aid the homeless Indians. But his plan, in contrast to the prevailing Indian policy of the government, was humane and informed. His plan would provide good forest and farm land and enough supplies—rations, seeds, and farm equipment—to enable the Chippewa and Cree to heal from their hunger. Through compassionate assistance they could eventually become self-sufficient, renewed in the knowledge of their personal dignity.

Linderman also wrote to Little Bear and Rocky Boy on January 26, after receiving the copy of S. 3646:

Little Bear
My friend:-
I think the land will be given you pretty soon now. They are going to give us thirty-one thousand acres. I am trying to make them give us more but am afraid I cannot do it. I heard that you were out of grub and I wrote to Washington. I am told now that you have grub and I hope it is true. I am going to try to come up to see you next month but I may not get there. I hope you are well.

Your friend, Frank B. Linderman

Rocky Boy
My friend:-
I have been away. My wife was sick. I heard that you were out of grub and I got your letter. It was sent to me in California. I wrote to Washington right away. They tell me now that you have plenty of grub and I hope that is true.
I think the land will be given you very soon now, because it is almost settled. I am trying to make them give us more than 31,000 (thirty-one
thousand) acres but I do not know whether I can do it or not. I heard you were sick and I am sorry.

Your friend, Frank B. Linderman

Letters were read to the old chiefs by interpreters so Linderman was careful, when writing, to be exact in his choice of words. One can sense his concern and respect for the old Indians when reading the letters he wrote to them.

In Myers' response to Linderman's letter of January 25, in which Linderman had insisted something permanent must be done to end the yearly suffering of the Indians, the senator quoted from a telegram sent by Jewell D. Martin, the superintendent at Fort Belknap Agency, to the commissioner of Indian affairs. Martin had been assigned to take care of the homeless Indians at Fort Assiniboine.

In his telegram to Commissioner Sells the superintendent had explained why rations had been reduced, and revealed his negative opinion of the Indians when he said "the confirmed beggars solicit alms." Myers believed everything necessary was being done to help the Chippewa and Cree. In conclusion he told Linderman, "I trust you will feel free to write me about the matter at any time." 9

Educating the Politician

Linderman accepted Myers' invitation to write to him about the Indians. During the next three months he wrote eleven letters to Myers, and Myers sent twelve letters and a telegram to Linderman. Most of them crossed in the mail.

In a letter to Myers written on February 5 Linderman
debunked statements Superintendent Martin had made in his telegram to Commissioner Sells:

My dear Senator:-

I have your letter of January 31st and am glad that you have taken the interest that you have in the matter of the Rocky Boy Indians. You say that you hope that I will write you freely about the matter, and I thank you.

Before going into the condition of these people and the land which your bill proposes to set aside for them, let me quote from the telegram of the "Superintendent" to the Commissioner.

The rations were stretched during autumn when vegetables were plenty and work being obtained. Issued every two weeks regulation allowances nevertheless. The confirmed beggars solicit alms and have carried advertisement Great Falls paper [sic].

The fore part of the quotation admits that the Indians were practically allowed to starve, and the latter part shows that the man is biased and mean as a bob-cat.

The advertisement referred to was carried by Senator Gibson and his son Theodore of Great Falls. At the same time there was an advertisement in both the Helena papers which I carried, and the Indians had nothing to do with it. Had it not been for these advertisements and our joint efforts, how in God's name would these people have had any clothing? I have never known the Government to give them a rag, and I have to beg for clothes every year.

To delay permanent help for these people is the worst of policies, as I have often pointed out. The country is settling, and the Indians are growing less useful because of lack of a camping ground or an opportunity to support themselves.

While Linderman said it was urgent that the Indians be given land soon, he made it clear that the quantity and quality of the land was of utmost importance. He again told Myers that only if Township 29 north, range 15 east, was included in Senate bill 3646 would the Indians have some farming land,
and not otherwise. He continued:

... This superintendent referred to in your letter was interviewed the other day by a newspaper man, and he said that it had been found necessary to move these Indians on to Township No. 29 last spring, in order that they might find a patch of ground that could be plowed and farmed.

In the article that appeared in the Record he is quoted as having said that there was no farming land on the two townships that had been proposed as a reservation for them.

Now Senator, one township more or less in this "camping ground for Havre's citizens" is not going to make a vast difference, and if the situation was generally known I believe public sentiment would be very much in favor of giving this extra township to these Indians. If we give them nothing but stony hills how can we expect results that will satisfy the white man?

Linderman was labeled a "sentimental white" by those who opposed giving land to the homeless Indians. In the next section of this letter he tried to appear less interested in the people than in the practical needs and advantages of finding them an adequate home. Given the context of the situation, and the opinions of others who were lobbying the politicians, he used this ploy to counter any doubts Senator Myers might have about the seriousness of the situation:

It has long been recognized that something would have to be done and this is the only possible solution, and I have made a study of the thing for a long time. These people are nothing to me, but we can afford to buy hay to feed starving deer and elk (and I am mighty glad that we are big enough to do that), but we refuse to give anything like a home to these people, whom we have robbed.

Linderman knew Myers would only pay attention to his advice if it was shown to be both practical and widely supported by Myers' constituency. He said he could send the senator a
petition with thousands of names of people who would be in favor of his practical suggestions:

... I travel over this state and I know the sentiment of the people regarding these Indians, and aside from a few people in Havre there is absolutely no opposition.

The action suggested herein, if carried out, would relieve a good many Montana citizens of a great burden. I mention Senator Gibson, Wm. F. Bole, Chas. M. Russell, Percy Raban, and myself, who are all known to you I am sure, and if any one of that list of names objects to what I have recommended, I am willing to forever remain silent. These men know more about the conditions than others do, because they are eternally giving aid and fighting the battles of these Indians.

Again, he asserted that this was the most practical and immediate solution to dealing with the problems of the landless Indians:

The Fort Assinaboine Military Reservation belongs to the government. It is the only bit of land that can be given to these Indians without a lot of red tape and expense and trouble, and one township taken from Havre's extended camping ground and given to the Indians will not harm the white man, and it will help the others.

Will you let me know whether this bill can be so amended as to include this Township, and just what you think will be the outcome. I want to try a last whirl at this game, and try hard.

After writing the above letter Linderman received Myers' response to his letter of January 26, wherein he had explained the inadequacy of the proposed amount of land in Myers' bill, S. 3646. Myers wrote that he would try to do what he believed was "right." He said "I want to be fair to these Indians but at the same time I want to be right." The biased rhetoric in Myers' letter reveals his ignorance of the Indian people Linderman knew so well:
I appreciate your humane interest in these unfortunate creatures and assure you that I am glad to cooperate in any and all reasonable ways for their care and betterment. I realize that you know them better from personal observation than I but from all that I can learn I am of the opinion that these Indians will never work or till the land or support themselves. From all accounts they are vagabonds and wanderers and not disposed to do anything for themselves. Furthermore, they are Canadian Indians, who have thrust themselves upon us. We owe them nothing whatever. Whatever we may do for them will be purely a matter of humanity and charity.

Congress has been appropriating about $10,000 a year for their support and I am confident that Congress will have to continue that and expect Congress to continue it just as long as there are any of them. I think that may be calculated upon as an annual gratuity.

Therefore, in my opinion, the only thing that is necessary is to get them a home— a place where they may be corralled, so as to keep them from wandering around over the country aimlessly and bothering people. It seems to me that two townships of land is enough for that. In my opinion it is the only use to which it will ever be put no matter how fertile it might be nor how mild the climate might be.

Linderman was probably angered when he read Myers' letter. It was true—the landless Indians were poor, they were homeless, and they were destitute. But he knew their worth as human beings—he recognized their inner spirit. He approached this latest challenge on February 8, answering Myers with straight-forward facts concerning the history of the Chippewa and Cree:

Dear Senator:-

In your letter of February 1st you impress me as having arrived at a conclusion regarding the Rocky Boy Indians. You appear to believe that they are "vagabonds and wanderers" and I believe you have gathered a good deal of information from sources that are not altogether reliable.

I am not going to go into the subject at length,
although I might. I will say, however, that of all the Indians I have known the best workers are the Creees and Chippewas, as every one will tell you who has had anything to do with Indians, in that line. Out of 600 to 800 of these people scattered through Montana, there [are] practically few that have ever been helped at all. The vast majority make their living and have always made their living. I have managed to secure jobs for some of these people and I have never known them not to give satisfaction.

He explained to Myers that this band of Chippewa had lived in Wisconsin 60 years before; they had come to the plains to hunt buffalo, and intermingled with the Cree; while the main body of the Cree lived across the Canadian line, the Plains Cree also lived and hunted in Montana in the "old days." Linderman claimed the Chippewa nation had been "the greatest of all Indian nations," and since they had "always been friendly to the white people" the federal government should protect them. As further evidence of their right to just treatment by the American government he added:

But admitting for the sake of argument that they were all Canadian Indians in 1885, is it not true that 95% of those living today were born in the state of Montana? I know that this is true.

The question of whether the landless Indians had originated in Canada or the United States was one of the most frequent arguments used by those who opposed giving them land.

There was confusion because some of the people were Cree, some were Chippewa. Linderman and others who sought to help them tried to keep attention focused on Rocky Boy and the Chippewa Indians, since it could be said that they had originated in an area (Wisconsin and Minnesota) that was
now part of the United States. The Cree, on the other hand, had come from north of the whiteman's boundary line. Still, he said, by 1916 most of the homeless Indians had lived in Montana for 30 years or, if younger, had been born there.

In response to Myers' derogatory comments about the $10,000 "annual gratuity" Linderman wrote:

And regarding the $10,000, could you ascertain the exact proportion of the $10,000 that is expended in actual supplies, and the amount paid some agent, or farmer, out of this amount? In other words, could you find out how much has ever been expended on the square, to these people. I know of at least one instance where beef did not arrive in sufficient quantities to check up with the amount that was supposed to have started from a certain point. I am told by Theodore Gibson that there was at least one other such case. Take it altogether, it seems to me that the rations issued these people is a huge joke up to the present time.

Linderman said he would feel differently about Myers' views if the senator had ever tried to help the Indians, and had experienced for himself the prejudice that held them in poverty:

All the clothes they ever got have been through Senator Gibson or myself, as far as I know. When people are obliged to beg and to prowl in alleys, to feed from garbage cans therein, because no one will give them employment, and because all are turned against them on account of their personal appearance and physical condition, it is easy for the onlooker to cry "vagabond."

If you had tried as often as I have done to secure employment, and heard what the white men have to say, I would feel differently. [sic] If you knew that the man who is loudest in his expressions regarding the Indian always knows the least about him, you might look upon the whole question in a different light. . . .

If Myers' intended to give the Indians only "some hill tops
to live on," Linderman said the $10,000 annual appropriation would have to be raised in the future, since they would have no way to support themselves. "For my part," he wrote, "I think it would be much more humane to order some regular soldiers to shoot them down, than to allow them to suffer along as we have done." He concluded by coming back around to the practical and humane suggestions he was advocating:

I know this letter is getting long, and I know that you think I am too great an admirer of the red man, but I do know him, and these Crees and Chippewas are about the best of the lot, regardless of what Mr. Rhoads, Dr. McKenzie and Mr. Devlin [the "Havre delegation"] may say... I suppose that these letters and my efforts will do no good, but believe me, Senator, I have been on this job for some years, and some way I hope to land. I know that my suggestions are humane and that if carried out great good would come.  

The next day, February 9, Myers answered Linderman's letter of the fifth. He disagreed with some of the statements Linderman had made. He did not believe the homeless Indians had any legal rights to American soil, but he said he wished to be charitable in dealing with them:

... I thoroughly appreciate your deep and humane interest in the poor creatures of whom you write. I agree with very nearly all that you say. There is one thing you say to which I can not agree. You refer to these people as people "whom we have robbed." I dissent from that. We have not robbed them of anything and we owe them nothing but humanity. Legally and equitably, we owe them nothing. They are Canadians who have thrust themselves upon our charity. Nevertheless, I favor dealing charitably with them.

Myers had not yet received Linderman's letter of February 8, in which he had explained a brief history of the Chippewa,
Rocky Boy's band. But, wishing to deal "charitably" with the Indians, he went on to say:

... I will carefully and conscientiously consider the matter of giving the Indians one more township and if I should conclude that it is desirable and justifiable to do so, I will try to have the bill amended to that effect. I am inclined to think well of your suggestion. I am rather inclined now to think that it might be all right to give them one more township. You need not go to the trouble of getting up any petitions. I will try to do what is right on your individual recommendation alone, just as much as if it were backed up by a thousand petitioners. With kind regards and assurance of my warm esteem, Yours most cordially, . . .

Myers mentioned the petition Linderman had suggested, but he ignored the possible threat of magazine publicity as though the idea had not affected him.

The same day Myers was writing the above letter, February 9, Linderman went to his typewriter and shot off a pointed message to the senator from Montana:

My dear Senator:

You will recall having written me [January 31] that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs had telegraphed the Superintendent to at once furnish meat and food to the Rocky Boy Indians, and that the Superintendent wired back that it was done. That was long ago, and today I hear from the camp that they have not had a bit of meat yet, and that they have two pounds of flour each for two week rations.

I am enclosing you a letter from Rocky Boy, written by some educated breed. You see how well they take care of these people and how near they come to keeping their word.

Will you look into this at once for me, or shall I go ahead and see what I can do through the magazines? Mr. Bole has written you, and Senator Gibson also.

Here, Linderman again called upon the convincing power of the press, through his subtle suggestion of public exposure
and censure. He reminded Myers that Bole and the Gibsons, prominent Democrats in Montana, were in agreement with his views, and that they all communicated with each other.

On February 9 Linderman also answered the letter he had just received from Rocky Boy:

Friend Rocky Boy:-
I got your letter today. You say that you have no meat and little food. I have written to Washington many times this month and am writing again today. I am saying many things and think they will listen. I want you to tell me right away as soon as you get beef and how much beef you get.

I am trying to get more land. I do not know whether I can or not but we will get some land this spring sure. I will do all I can.

Your friend, Frank Linderman

Linderman, Bole, and the Gibsons continued to be the most faithful allies of the isolated Indians. Bole wrote to Linderman on February 8 concerning Myers' Senate bill, and told him of a bill introduced in the House by Congressman Tom Stout of Montana. Stout's bill also limited the proposed land for the Indians to the two southern townships, with no provision for agricultural land.

Bole figured the Havre bunch had instigated this bill in hopes of displacing a bill that had been introduced by the Interior Department through the chairman of the House Committee of Indian Affairs, John M. Stephens. Stephens' bill proposed to give the Chippewa and Cree over 71,000 acres of land, more than twice the amount proposed by Myers or Stout in their bills.
ROCKY BOY

CHIPPEWA CHIEF
Three Townships

On February 12 Myers responded to Linderman's letter of the eighth, in which Linderman had clearly presented a brief history of Rocky Boy's band, and had declared himself to be the "father" of the movement to provide adequate land and supplies to the homeless Indians. Myers wrote that his understanding of the issues was changing:

Your very kind and highly esteemed favor of the Eighth is at hand and noted with much care and interest. I admit that you are much better informed about the Rocky Boy Band of Indians than I, and that from your information and acquaintance, you are much better able to speak of them than I. I admit that I think you are a very warm admirer of the Redman, rather more than I. I am a friend of the Indian and am an admirer of some but not all. Nevertheless, I regard very highly the noble emotions of humanity which you manifest in your interest in these poor creatures, the Rocky Boy Band. I may have been largely misinformed about them. I give great credence to what you say. Your correspondence has somewhat changed my opinion of these Indians and my ideas of what should be done for them.

... I shall very carefully and conscientiously consider the propriety of giving them at least one more township in the perfecting of my bill, for I want not only to be just but generous with these poor creatures. I am indebted to you for your views and much information.

Linderman's persistence was transforming Myers' point of view. The senator was beginning to perceive the practical wisdom of Linderman's suggestions.

Myers received Linderman's terse letter about rations on February 14. On the fifteenth he telegraphed Linderman with an assurance that he had taken immediate steps to get rations to the Indians at Fort Assiniboine:

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Your letter relative to Rocky Boy Indians received. Have called at Indian Bureau and Commissioner Sells has this day wired the Superintendent to furnish Indians food at once.18

This was the fastest response Linderman had ever received to his demands for rations for the Indians. Myers also wrote a letter to Linderman that day, claiming that the threat of unfavorable publicity was not a factor in his decision to help the Indians:

I assure you that I am just as much interested in procuring humane treatment for these poor creatures as anybody can be. I deeply sympathize with them and honor you for your interest in them and assure you that I share it. I want to do everything in my power to keep them from starving.

I note what you say in your letter, as well as a previous letter about writing for publication in magazines on this subject and I beg to say, Mr. Linderman, that all that I do here is done from a conscientious sense of duty and a desire to do what is right. That is my only guide. I never do or refrain from doing anything to avoid unfavorable publicity or comment in public prints. That has no weight with me. Your representations and appeals for justice, however, have great weight with me. These are the things which I consider, not fear of being written up.

I thank you for having called my attention to the situation of which you write. It is very deplorable and I hope that by this time relief has been extended. If there is anything more I can do I will be glad to do it.19

Linderman answered Myers on February 19 with assurances that he did not intend to "attack" the senator in any magazine articles he would write. He wanted justice for the Indians:

Dear Senator:-

Your letter of February 15th conveys to me the idea that you imagine that any articles I might offer would be an attack upon yourself. You are entirely mistaken. I would simply endeavor to create enough sentiment so that justice might be done the Indians. That would be all. I think it
could be done this way and I am sure I know just how to do it. However, I have no desire to do this. I have troubles enough as it is. But if you will include the township mentioned, in this reservation to be set aside for these Indians, you will satisfy more people than you imagine. It will allow them to make their own living to a greater extent than you think....

... We are all anxious that this be cleaned up in some manner and we will do anything we can to push it along.

I thank you for your kindness and I am grateful to you for accepting my statements in the spirit in which they are offered.

On February 21 Linderman received a letter from the commissioner of Indian affairs, written February 16, concerning the recent plea for rations. Sells enclosed a copy of the letter Secretary Lane had sent to Congressman Stephens, chairman of the House Committee of Indian Affairs, in December 1915 (see Chapter 3). Linderman had not known of this letter, in which Lane had said four townships of land were necessary for well-being and support of the homeless Indians. Sells agreed with Lane's opinion:

No doubt you are also aware of the fact that an effort is being made to have the four townships in the Assiniboine Reserve set apart as a permanent reservation for this band of Indians, and in view of your interest in their welfare, I also attach hereto a copy of a letter written by the Secretary of the Interior on December 16, 1915, justifying the proposed legislation. As stated therein this action is absolutely necessary in justice to the Indians themselves, and the white citizens of that locality who have been troubled by them to some extent.

Myers had written Linderman on February 1 that Secretary Lane had insisted the Indians be given some land, and that Lane had agreed to two townships. He explained it this way:
At the time that my bill for the opening and settlement of the Fort Assinniboine Reservation (which never was an Indian reservation but was a military reservation) passed both branches of Congress [in February 1915] and was ready for the approval or disapproval of the President, Secretary Lane informed me that unless I would promise to have it so amended at the next session of Congress as to set aside a part of it for a home for the Rocky Boy Indians, he would have the President veto the bill. I immediately communicated by wire with the people of Havre who had always been opposed to having these Indians on any part of that reservation and put the situation up to them. They agreed to concede that the Indians be later located on the two south townships of the reservation. I communicated this to Secretary Lane and it was acceptable to him. At that time it was the agreement that at this session of Congress I should introduce a bill to set aside the two south townships for the Rocky Boy Indians. That was the agreement, as I recollect, between our delegation in Congress and Secretary Lane and upon that agreement President Wilson approved the bill for the opening of the reservation.

On February 9 Myers had again claimed there was an agreement with Secretary Lane to give the Indians only two townships:

My clear recollection is that there was a tacit agreement at the last session of congress that at this session these Indians were to be given the two south townships of the Assiniboine Reservation and I am going in accordance with that agreement. The agreement was between our delegation in congress, Secretary Lane and the Havre Commercial Club.

Linderman wrote to Commissioner Sells immediately, on February 21, thanking him for his letter and the copy of Lane's recommendations to Stephens. Linderman's letter to Sells reveals the clarity of his thinking in pursuing a strategy that would pierce the complexities of this long-standing issue. He informed Sells of the content of his correspondence with Myers, and acknowledged Lane's support:

You may recall the fact that I talked to you
personally about these Indians two years ago last December. In fact, I made a trip to Washington to see you and Secretary Lane regarding these Indians.

Senator Myers and myself have been in correspondence for some time, and I have been endeavoring to get the Senator to agree to amend Senate Bill 3646 so as to include T. 29 N., R. 15 E., which would give practically three townships of the Fort Assinaboine Reservation to these people.

I notice that the recommendations of Mr. Lane are along the lines which he promised me he would make, and I shall never forget that he has done his best.

In his letter to Stephens, Lane had said at least four townships would be needed to allow the Indians to become self-supporting. This was more than twice the amount of land proposed in Myers' bill.

Linderman wanted to make it clear to Sells that three townships of land would be barely enough to allow the Indians to support themselves, but would certainly be better than the two townships of stony ground proposed by Myers. He assured Sells that most Montanans wanted the landless Indians to have a fair chance for survival:

I want you to understand that when I suggested to Senator Myers that we would be satisfied with the three townships, I mean that we will take what we can get.

Thorough investigation and examination of the two proposed townships prove that they are worthless as agricultural land, as you know, and as Senator Myers knows. I agree with you that they should be included in whatever land is given them, because of the timber and water.

Senate Bill 3646 gives thousands of acres to the citizens of Havre as "permanent camping ground," and it is true that the citizens of Havre have demanded this of our representatives in Congress, but it is likewise true that the people of the state generally desire to see these Indians given a home and land enough so that they will be enabled to support themselves.
Linderman again claimed the Chippewa and Cree would work if given the opportunity to improve their situation. Then he established his credentials as an authority on Indians:

Claims have been repeatedly made that these people would not work if they had opportunity. Let me say that of all the Indians I have known, these people are the best workers, and I have found this fact conceded generally upon reservations where any member of this band is living and engaged in any kind of work.

I know the Indian intimately. I know his shortcomings and I know where he is great. I have always tried to help the Indians and every one in this state knows where I stand and that I have no selfish or personal interests to further. That I have been close to them and know them, is evidenced by the fact that Chas. Scribners Sons of New York recently published a book written by me entitled "Indian Why Stories." Before publishing they carefully investigated me as an authority on Indians, and invoked such critics as George Bird Grinnell and others almost as well known. I mention this to show you that you are not lending an ear to one who is speaking on the subject without knowledge.

He was almost hopeful of getting the four townships of land recommended by Lane and Sells, and wanted Sells to know the Indians would make the best of whatever they got:

I note in Mr. Lane's recommendation that he would give four townships, and if that were possible the Indians would be in a splendid position to take care of themselves. I think they would do almost anything I demanded, and I am going to try to make them help themselves, if they get anything with which to work.

Linderman let Sells know everything that had transpired in his correspondence with Myers, including his suggestions of a petition and magazine articles:

I want you to know that my statement to Senator Myers regarding the additional township was made in desperation and in fear that only the two fractional townships would be given. The senator has acknowled...
ledged that I am right in my argument, and has practically admitted that the bill should be amended so as to include the township I mention.

I asked him if petitions signed by people in the state would convince him, and I asked if thoroughly illustrated articles dealing with the condition of these Indians would create sufficient public sentiment to bring about the giving of sufficient land to allow them to live. Unless something is done soon I am going to take that course and if I do that, I know that the articles will be used by the best of periodicals, because of the reputation "Indian Why Stories" has made.

He recalled Sells' promise to help get something done for the Indians. He also reminded him that ration supplies were still inconsistent, and that private citizens were having to help feed the hungry people:

You yourself told me during my conversation with you [in December 1913], that you would be behind this thing yourself, and that I might go home expecting to see this thing accomplished, but up to now nothing has been done.

The rations that these people get is a joke. Sometimes they get part rations, sometimes full rations, and at other times no rations....

A few of us old timers and friends of the Indians are called upon eternally to go down in our pockets and feed these people. All this winter I have cared for three or four families of Crees, as have Senator Gibson of Great Falls and Mr. Bole of the same place.

Linderman informed Sells that he was not alone in his concern for the needs of the Chippewa and Cree—influential Montana citizens were involved in the efforts to aid the homeless Indians. He was not afraid to stand up for what he believed was right, and said it was he who had decided the Indians should move onto the land at Fort Assiniboine:

It was I who sent the Indians to Assinaboine, because I believed the Department really desired it but did not care to say so. I think your letters
and telegrams will show this.

This letter is long, but it may contain some information that will help, and I trust some bill will be passed soon that will give these people enough land to farm, and level enough to whip a dog on.

The Chippewa and Cree were being treated like whipped dogs by the government. Linderman wielded bold precision in getting to the heart of the matter: bureaucratic inaction was causing the Chippewa and Cree to suffer, but the moving force of public opinion could cause the government to act.

Why Don't You Shoot Them

After writing the above letter to Sells, Linderman also wrote to Myers on February 21. Lane's recommendation to Stephens for four townships of land, and Myers' claims of an agreement with Lane for only two, suggest that Myers had been less than straightforward in his communications with Linderman. Linderman let Myers know he was aware of the discrepancy, or deception:

In reply to a letter from Mr. Cato Sells, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, I today wrote him a letter in which I told him of your letters and my replies to you. My reasons for so doing are that having advocated the giving of but one extra township to the Rocky Boy Indians, the Secretary of the Interior Mr. Lane, and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Mr. Sells, whom I have interviewed personally on this question, might think that I was desirous of seeing as little land as possible given these Indians, while in reality, if I had my way I would give them the whole reservation.

Mr. Sells enclosed a copy of a letter written to Hon. John H. Stephens, Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, and in that letter Mr. Lane did recommend all those things that he promised me he would when I saw him in Washington two years ago last December.
I thank you for your kindness in bearing with me on this subject so patiently, and also for the kind answers to my numerous letters.25

Myers answered this letter from Linderman immediately, on February 25:

Your esteemed favor of the Twenty-first is at hand and noted and I am glad to hear from you, as always.

I am glad to know that you wrote Mr. Sells and glad to be informed of the nature of your correspondence with him. I am glad to have all of the light to be had in the premises. I shall give very careful consideration to all phases of this matter and especial weight to your views and when the matter may come up in Committee shall try to see that justice be done. 26

By the end of February Linderman was confident that something positive would be accomplished soon. Myers had written him on February 24, in answer to Linderman's letter of the nineteenth, assuring Linderman that he was personally committed to getting legislation passed that would help the Indians, before the end of the session:

I have no objection to the condition of the Rocky Boy Indians being made the subject of magazine publicity if you think it will do any good. I want just as earnestly as any one to see justice done to those unfortunate creatures.

... this will be a long session. I look for it to continue through all of next summer and I very earnestly want to see something done for those Indians before the end of this session and intend to see that it is done, if possible. It will not be overlooked. I shall very earnestly and conscientiously consider in committee and discuss with the Secretary of the Interior the matter of amending my bill so as to include another township... I want to do justice to these Indians and shall approach the matter in a fair-minded spirit.27

Myers told Linderman he would keep him posted from time to time about the status and progress of the bills.
Linderman was in Dillon, Montana, on February 29 when he received an urgent telegram from Commissioner Sells, asking him to come to Washington, D.C.:

Objection has been raised to giving Rocky Boy Indians necessary land on proposed reservation, your presence here would aid materially in securing desired result. Can you come at once. Wire.28

Linderman could not make the trip to Washington. Instead, he wrote a detailed letter to Sells on March 1 (see Appendix II), similar to the letter he had sent Myers on February 8. He told Sells: "I am conversant with the facts in the case and will set them forth as I know them."

He proceeded to relate historical information about the Rocky Boy Indians, and practical reasons why they should be given "a square deal at Fort Assiniboine." In describing the poverty of the Chippewa and Cree he said, "I could tell you stories that are true that would make you ashamed of your American Citizenship." Then he took aim from his place of power and threatened publication in national magazines:

If this Government cannot and will not find a country for these people, then why in Heaven's name will they not send a squad of regular soldiers to the camps and shoot them. If, during this session of Congress nothing is done of permanent good, I am going to use the eastern magazines for the publication of articles dealing with the subject, and they will be thoroughly illustrated. I know that Mr. Lane and yourself have been fair, and when I found out that through Mr. Lane's efforts the President had threatened to veto the bill opening Fort Assiniboine Military Reservation, unless some of the land were given to these Indians, I felt indebted to him, and shall always remember him as a man with a heart."29
It was Paris Gibson who first suggested, in January 1914, that the government should send troops to shoot the destitute Indians and put them out of their misery. In 1916 Linderman evoked this image of massacre and genocide several times, to impress upon officials the seriousness of the situation and the suffering of the landless Chippewa and Cree.

Why didn't Linderman go to Washington when Sells wired that he was needed? He told Sells he had a summons to appear before the state Supreme Court on March 13. He told Theo Gibson he could not afford the trip. He wrote Myers that the time spent on the trip would cut into his business a good deal. For whatever reasons, he did not go, but his persistent correspondence faithfully represented his views and the needs of the Montana Chippewa and Cree.

He also wrote to Myers on March 1. There is no copy of this letter in his correspondence files, but if consistent with the strategy he had been using it would have been similar to the above letter to Sells. He probably reminded Myers of his earlier promise to go public with illustrated stories of the suffering of the destitute Rocky Boy Indians.

Myers' answer, written March 6, shows he had come to a definite decision. He said he would amend his bill to give the Indians more land:

Your esteemed favor of the First, from Dillon, is at hand and noted with interest. I have concluded that I am quite willing to have an amendment put on my bill giving one more township of land to the Rocky Boy Indians. That would give them three townships, one of agricultural land....
I hope this is satisfactory to you and it may save you the necessity of coming on here, but I would be glad to have you come if you see fit.

Linderman was relieved to know Myers' decision. He wrote a friendly response to Myers on March 13, suggesting that if needed he would come to Washington:

I have your letter this morning and I am delighted with it, because of the fact that you say that you will amend your bill so as to include Township 29 N., R. 15 East. I feel very grateful to you and I am sure that in this you are doing a most charitable thing and one that will be appreciated by ninety-five per cent of the people in Montana.

... if you amend the bill as you promise I shall feel satisfied and grateful.

If there is any possibility of the bill being killed, so far as the giving of this land is concerned, and my presence there would do any good, of course I would come, but I prefer to stay away.

Again thanking you for your kindness and wishing you good health and fortune, I am . . .

The politicians would not want Linderman in Washington. He was such a forthright and outspoken person, they would not want the negative publicity he might stir up.

The tone in Myers' letters had changed dramatically during the two months Linderman had been lobbying him. He wrote Linderman again on March 18, concerning his new-found commitment to give the Indians more land:

... I am pleased to know that my offer is satisfactory to you. I shall have my bill amended so as to include the third township. It is my bill and I can do as I please in that respect. I have informed Secretary Lane that I am willing to do that. It may be some weeks before the Senate Committee on Public Lands can find time to do anything with the bill but it will be reached in time.

While I would be pleased to see you down here, I am pleased that my action saves you the expense and trouble of a trip at this time. Should anything turn up which may endanger the program, I shall be

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pleased to let you know so you can come down and help.\(^\text{32}\)

Linderman saw through the polite words of the politicians. He was a man who could quickly size up a situation or another man. In 1907, in a letter to Chick Rossiter, he had said, "Look for sign. Sign is the thing to go by, and be governed by it, but don't let admiration lie to you."\(^\text{33}\)

A letter written to George Bird Grinnell on March 24, 1916, reveals his perception of the politicians' "admiration":

Mr. Sells telegraphed me to come at once to Washington, but I could not go at that time, so I sent his telegram and a long letter to our representatives in Congress, and they promised immediately to amend the bill as I demanded, saying that it would be unnecessary for me to come to Washington, "although of course they would be glad to see me," which is a dog-gone lie.

He had grown cynical of the "paper promises" of politicians. He told Grinnell:

... As you know, I have been busy on this question for years, but I have landed, and practically alone. I may be double-crossed at the end but I do not believe they dare do it. ... I am afraid I will not get but three townships, but that is so much better than nothing I am satisfied. Every politician in this state has been against me, but I am sure I have won.\(^\text{34}\)

I Have Done My Best

Being quite certain of success, Linderman wrote to Rocky Boy and Little Bear at their central camp near Box Elder, to inform them of the latest developments:

I have been having a hard time with the people in Washington, but I think I have got some more land for you. I am quite sure we will have 54,000 acres of land, which is a good deal for us I think. They
started to give us only the two townships that are very rough, but they have promised me now that they will give us the other one also. I have done my best and I will talk to you about it when I see you. I am glad your grub is coming regularly. I had a big fight over that too. I wish you all luck. 39

He never saw Rocky Boy again. He and Theo Gibson had tried to get from Box Elder to the Indian camp in late March, but there was no road to the camp and a big storm kept them out.

On April 24 Myers' amended bill, S. 3646, passed the Senate, but the good news came just a little too late for the old chief. Rocky Boy died April 18 at the Indian camp at Fort Assiniboine. In a letter to Harry Stanford, an old friend from Kalispell, Linderman wrote of Rocky Boy's death:

Say, I have landed that reservation for the Injins and all alone, too. Had six years of hell but she passed the "House O' Lords" three days ago and Rocky Boy could not wait to learn the great news. Poor old Devil, he's camped on a showery cloud over the shadow-hills. There's lots of meat and sunshine and the old fellow is telling them that the buffalo are all gone—but they think he's lying, I suppose. 36

There was a sense of relief that the bill had passed the Senate, but it still had to be approved in the House of Representatives. In a letter to Tom Stout, a member of the House Committee on the Public Lands, he urged quick passage of the bill:

After a long struggle the Bill giving Rocky Boy three fractional townships on the Fort Assinaboine Reservation has passed the Senate and is now in the House of Representatives. Practically all the rest of the reservation is going to the city of Havre, and the southern end being by far the poorest of the whole reservation, it would seem to be an easy task to give it to the Indians.

Will you promise me to push that Bill along and
get it passed Congress [sic] in time for these people to plant their gardens, and thus be enabled to have something to eat when winter comes.

Tom, you know the years I have spent on this, and only recently Mr. Sells telegraphed me to come to Washington at once, but I could not spare the money, nor the time necessary.

Ninety-five per cent of the people in this state are in favor of giving these people this land, and as I have said a thousand times, the longer we put it off the harder the task will be. . . . I wish you would make an extra effort to have the Bill speedily passed. 37

On May 2 Myers' amended bill, S. 3646, was referred to the House Committee on the Public Lands, but when Linderman wrote to Sells on July 13 it had still not passed the House. The Indians managed to plant crops that summer, but Congress had cut their financial assistance for 1917, from $10,000 to $5,000. Linderman informed Sells of the reality of trying to support the Indians on $5,000:

I am very thankful for your letter of July 7th, and I note that the appropriation was cut down to $5,000. I also note that it will be very hard to space out this meagre amount among the several hundred people that will have to be fed. They have put in nearly two hundred acres of crop, many buying a portion of their own seeds and some, their own farming implements. I note that you appreciate the thoroughness of their work and commend them as laborers. You will remember that I have always claimed that this particular band of Indians would work and you will see that statement proven if opportunity is given. They have had a talk with me recently and they tell me that they must now leave the reservation or starve. According to your own statement, that must be true but I do not see how we are to help it with so small an appropriation. . . .

Linderman was going to "stay in the fight" until the Indians had a reservation, which would then make it easier for them to help themselves:
To Frank R. Linderman
with my best wishes
Carl Link

Goose Bay, Sept. 2, 1937

drawing of Frank Linderman by Carl Link
Goose Bay, September 2, 1937
I have written our representatives in Congress and asked them to push the bill creating this reservation but, as you say, the bill has not yet been passed. Last winter I begged all the clothes these Indians had and I suppose I will have to do it again this year. There has got to be an end to this some time and if we get the reservation I think we can fight the rest of the battle easier and I mean to stay in the fight until this is settled.

On July 27 the bill came up for debate in the House. Congressman William Stafford of Milwaukee objected to it. He said that in providing only three townships of land, the amendment sought to deprive the Indians of a portion of the land the secretary of the interior had stated was needed "for the benefit of the Indians."

Congressman James R. Mann, from Chicago, objected that the bill gave too much land to the Indians: "If we follow the recommendations of the Indian Office about giving Indians lands there will not be anything left for white people to live upon." He said, "Give them this amount of land and let them work, they will be better off."

Stout convinced Stafford that the bill gave ample land to "provide for the sustenance of these Indians," but Mann still had objections. He said, "We do not owe these Indians anything." He felt it was sufficient to set aside a reservation without promising that it would be permanent. It was agreed that the bill would be amended by striking out the word "permanent," in referring to the reservation for the Chippewa and Cree.

Finally, on September 5, the Senate agreed to the
House amendment to S. 3646, and the bill was signed by the speaker of the House on September 6. On September 7, 1916, one day before the close of the first session of the Sixty-fourth Congress, it was approved and signed into law by President Wilson.\(^{39}\)

In November Commissioner Sells visited the newly established reservation. The tribesmen were constructing buildings, and Sells made arrangements so they could fence their land to protect their crops from grazing cattle. But, by the end of November they were again in need of rations, and had to sell their ponies in order to live. Linderman and his friends were back on the job, demanding that something be done to help the Chippewa and Cree.

Then, on December 11 Linderman wrote to Senator Myers explaining why the appropriation of $5,000 should be increased to $10,000:

... Out of the small appropriation of $5,000, farm machinery, wire, seed and a thrashing machine were purchased, to say nothing of lumber, windows, etc., and you can readily see that there was very little left for food. I wish you would try and increase the appropriation to $10,000 where it originally was. Mr. Sells says that he is going to recommend that, because it is just and right.\(^{40}\)

He said he was sure Myers would act on the suggestion to increase the appropriation "because these people are going to need help badly."

He assured the senator that Commissioner Sells, who had recently visited the new reservation, would agree with his statement that "if they are helped sufficiently they
will make good." Linderman told Myers, "In securing the land for these people we have done a good work and some day you will be glad that you had a hand in this affair."

On December 29 Linderman wrote to Sells, reporting on the Indians' deprived condition, and again affirming his conviction that they deserved a fair opportunity:

I am gratified at your statement relative to fencing the reservation in the spring and hope you will give these Indians a start in cattle during the coming year. They are in pretty bad condition, and Mr. Gibson and myself have done our utmost to secure them clothing, . . .

I have written to Senator Myers as you suggested and have been told that the Senator would act upon his return to Washington. I hope the appropriation may be increased, because it is wholly inadequate at present, and if given a little opportunity these people are sure to make good.

He closed this letter to Sells, at the end of a trying year, with an especially poignant paragraph:

As an American citizen, I myself, am entitled to some protection, and as soon as the government takes this job off my hands I shall feel mightily relieved. It is a big job and over half the time they are disgusted with me for my inefficiency. 41

Linderman had told his Indian friends he would never give up the fight until he had played the game out and they had land to call their own. His deep understanding of their spiritual and social values strengthened his resolve to help them, and the publication of Indian Why Stories helped him succeed in fulfilling that promise. But in Chapter 6 we see that his own sense of justice caused him to persevere as he fought to get a "square deal" for the Chippewa and Cree.
CHAPTER 6

A SQUARE DEAL

The Havre Bunch

Frank Linderman was avant-garde in his thinking as he pursued just treatment of the homeless Chippewa and Cree of Montana. Seeking land for these people, upholding their cultural rights and dignity: the direction of his words and actions stand out in bold relief against the background of early twentieth-century American Indian policy.

Rocky Boy's was the last of Montana's seven Indian reservations to be created. The others—the Flathead, Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Blackfeet, Fort Belknap, and Fort Peck reservations—were established by treaties. The Rocky Boy Indian Reservation was established by law (39 Stat.L., 739), signed by the president of the United States, in 1916.

Nearly 30 years had passed since the last of the other six Indian reservations was established in Montana, and since the passage of the Dawes Act of 1887, with its allotment provision that caused many native people to lose their land after 1912. In light of the circumstances and prevailing attitudes of the day, the acquisition of Rocky Boy's reservation was an amazing accomplishment.

In retrospect, Linderman's varied interests and
careers both prepared and compelled him to spearhead the campaign that eventually secured the Rocky Boy's Reservation. Those who opposed his efforts called him sentimental, an "Indian lover." In March 1913 the Havre Plaindealer belittled his knowledge of Indians and, while mocking his concern for their welfare, referred to them as "Chief Rocky Boy and his tribe of human scavengers." But Linderman persevered. He was after a "square deal" for the Chippewa and Cree.

A square deal meant finding not just a political solution, but a just solution to the poverty of the Indians and the problem of how to help them. A political solution would satisfy the immediate concerns of opposing whites. A just solution would look to the future and give the native people the opportunity to regain their health and dignity.

Linderman believed in the Masonic axiom, "a square deal is as broad as it is long," and fought for that goal for his Indian friends. The idea of "a square deal" forged connections between Linderman and other Masons as they worked to benefit the landless Indians. Yet he challenged the intentions of William Bole, who was a fellow Mason, after Bole negotiated with the three-man "Havre delegation" while they were all in Washington, D.C., in December 1913.

In the private deal Bole had worked out, the Indians were to be located on the high, rocky hills of the two most southern townships at Fort Assiniboine, farthest from Havre. Those two townships of grazing land could not support the
600-800 homeless people who would have a claim to the new reservation. What kind of deal would that be?

Bole answered Linderman's doubts about his intentions in a letter written in February 1914. Calling forth another Masonic axiom, referring to fair play, he said he was determined "to play the game of life in the square" and tried to assure Linderman that he had the Indians' best interests at heart:

... when you know me better you will have no doubts concerning my disposition and determination to play the game of life in the square. I told the delegation from Havre in the presence of our four members of Congress that I was in Washington solely on behalf of the Indians and their welfare, ... if Fort Assinniboine was better for them and for their interest then I did not care what Havre people wanted I was for Assinniboine. I have not seen what the Plaindealer said about me or you, and I don't care. They all understand fully where I am at, ... I want to protect the interest of these Indians and get them the best possible deal, nothing else, ... Our best bet is for the south half of Assinniboine. Besides that is what the Indians themselves want. They know what is best for them.3

Bole felt his agreement with the Havre delegation was the best deal possible for the Chippewa and Cree, considering the resistance of the opposition. At least it was a start.

Left alone, Bole's plan would have been a political answer, but not a real solution, to the perplexing problems of how to help the Indians. Linderman would not settle for the political solution. He lobbied for the inclusion of agricultural land, knowing that once the Chippewa and Cree had a reservation Congress would try to cut their rations
and appropriations and expect them to support themselves by producing garden vegetables and marketable crops. To satisfy the white world's expectations, and survive the result of those expectations, the Indians would need farming land.

This is where the main problem lay—in the land. The years it took to acquire land for the Chippewa and Cree were the years of the great land boom in northern Montana. Between 1913 and 1917 over 5,000 homesteaders settled in Hill County, which was the home of Fort Assiniboine and the town of Havre. On March 13, 1913, the Great Falls Leader quoted Linderman's assessment of the situation:

Jealous boomers who look forward to the complete settling of the West stand in the way of giving land to the Indians... Each hour the task of aiding them becomes greater and the condition worse because the game is going and the farmer is coming... Assiniboine is an abandoned military reservation and belongs to the national government... Land boomers have their eyes on it and the politicians will listen to them.

Honky Tonk Town, written by Gary A. Wilson, reviews the political forces at work in Havre in the early 1900s. Through Wilson's study we get a picture of the Havre opposition Linderman and Bole had to penetrate as they tried to get a "square deal" for the landless Indians.

At this time Havre was one of the most corrupt towns in the West. In 1916 the Law and Order League of Chicago, after visiting 28 cities in the West, reported that Havre was "incomparatively the worst." The report said:

... Everything is licensed there and its most vicious forms of evil are found in broad daylight in
the streets and trading areas. There is no protection for anyone against anything. It is the sum total of all that is vicious and depraved parading openly without restraint, so long as it complies with the law of license.5

Edwin Cooley "E. C." Carruth, who was known as "Mr. Democrat" in northern Montana, was a major land locator and businessman in Havre. He had been in the newspaper business in Crookston, Minnesota, and at the Plaindealer in Grand Forks, North Dakota, before moving to Havre in 1902. He was a strong "behind-the-scenes ally" of C. W. "Shorty" Young.6

Young was the "vice king" of Havre and northern Montana, according to Wilson. He owned The Montana European Hotel and Grill, more commonly called The Honky Tonk, which was a "concert hall" for "girlie shows" and was connected to several houses of prostitution. The two-story Parlor House next door to the Honky Tonk was the residence of the "high-class" $5 girls, while the U-shaped row of "cribs" in back of those buildings housed 30 or more "less classy" $1 girls. Opium addiction plagued the inhabitants of Honky Tonk row. Young owned other houses of ill fame in Havre including the Bath House across the street from the Honky Tonk, and he owned the Star Theatre and the Mint Saloon.

Shorty Young came to Havre from the East in 1894, and by the early 1900s had become a major Democratic power in northern Montana. He was a member of the Havre city council for six years and was a member of several men's clubs, but was denied membership in the local Masonic Lodge
because of his "undesirable occupation." Wilson wrote that Young's "most outstanding personality trait was his sense of humor," but added that he also had "a strong, stubborn and cold-blooded side that knew no quarter."^7

Young had a group of hunting companions that included "Mr. Democrat," E. C. Carruth. Also among Young's cohorts was Dr. D. S. McKenzie, a member of the three-man "Havre delegation" that negotiated with Bole in Washington in December 1913. Another member of the Havre delegation was L. K. Devlin, who eventually became owner of a mining claim on the Fort Assiniboine lands.®

These men were part of the Havre Bunch who opposed giving Fort Assiniboine land to the homeless Indians. In a letter to Linderman written in early 1913 Charley Russell described the moral atmosphere in Havre, which he summed up in the colorful language of his cowboy/philosopher style:

I see where one of the Senators said that Rocky Boys band would demoralize the people of Haver. I know som about that camp an unless its changed a hole lot it would be like a dove fouling a buzzards nest not that an Injin resembles a dove aney but if all the white men I know myself among em would drop dead to night, I don think there would be a jam at the Golden Gate.®

The majority of Montanans wanted the Chippewa and Cree to have a reservation at Fort Assiniboine, but a small group of power in Havre had no heart for the Indians' need.

There were others in Montana who opposed Linderman's efforts to help the Chippewa and Cree. For instance, in 1915 the superintendent at Fort Belknap, Jewell D. Martin,
who was then in charge of the Indians camped at Fort Assini-boine, wrote Commissioner Sells, complaining that Linderman and Bole were "sentimental whites who caused more harm than good." Martin asked Sells to use his influence to stop them from interfering in the disciplinary policies Martin was trying to implement at the Chippewa-Cree camp.¹⁰

Like a "lone wolf" scout, Linderman was always on the lookout for acts of injustice and underhanded trickery that were keeping the landless Indians in a destitute condition or breaking their spirit.¹¹ He wrote to 1st Lt. Carl von dem Bussche, a fellow Mason, on July 24, 1913, "It seems that a square deal for these people is impossible to obtain and some one is always trying to beat them to it."

In a letter written February 21, 1916, Linderman thanked von dem Bussche for helping the Chippewa and Cree several times through the years:

I believe that we are going to get this land for the Indians, in spite of all the politicians, and I shall never forget your kindness in helping me on several occasions to get a little justice to drift their way.¹²

The ideal of wanting "a little justice to drift their way" was nothing more than sentimental foolishness to the men in power in Havre.
A Man of Sentiment

To Linderman, sentiment was a source of strength and a principal character of humanity. In December 1906, in answering a letter from his friend Chick Rossiter, Linderman expressed his belief that "sentiment" was connected to an appreciation for nature:

That was pretty, about the trees leaving or reserving room about them to enable them to raise a family of their kind. I think such thoughts prove a man a nature-lover and when one of those thoughts flicker in the imagination, you should follow it to the fire itself and there you will find it perfected. They grow and as they do so, their beauty increases... It's one of the things that make life worth living, this faculty of twisting an old fir, a cliff or a peak into a poem for one's self. To live, as I think a fellow should, he should have appreciation for nature... [all italics mine]

Appreciation for nature can inspire poetic and beautiful thoughts, which are like the sparks from War Eagle's lodge-fire. By following the sparks to their source, the sacred fire of creative imagination, thought is perfected.

Linderman and Rossiter had become friends in Sheridan, Montana, in the mining country around Virginia City and Bannack, among the headwaters of the great Missouri River. Linderman drew upon words from the "gold digger" and imagery from the spirit of the land there, to further elucidate his thoughts on sentiment in this letter to Rossiter:

... all we are able to save in the sluice of experience is that much gained, and a little touch of sentiment hurts no man and is "fine pay" that most of us let go over in a scramble for nuggets. A fellow who looks at a range of hills and sees only the rough edges of the cliffs is to be, or should be an object of pity. To some, those hills say, come
"The Prospector"

Sam Prichett

with those old hills, his burros, and his dog Jerry

Prichett was a friend of Linderman's from Sheridan, Montana. Linderman used this picture on his letterhead paper for his assay office in Helena and also on the membership cards for the Montana Mining Association.
up friend and we'll tell you our history--We'll tell you of nations that used to be, of creeds and religions, of crimes committed in the names of prophets and of the very coming of day. Think of the ages--musty with the very mold of years forgotten--years--yes millions of years, that those old fellows have watched roll into eternity, taking with them the work of miserable man. Damn it, man, it's appalling to me. Well--I've got to do something for Montana now. Good bye. F.B.L.13

Linderman's feelings about "those old fellows," the ranges of hills and mountains, reflect his already developed appreciation for the history of the native people and the land.

Three of the most well-known men who helped the Chippewa and Cree shared similar sentiments with Linderman. Charley Russell and Linderman were alike in their appreciation for nature, William Bole had a desire to play the game of life in the square, and Franklin Lane believed there are spiritual forces at work in the world.

In his Recollections of Charley Russell, Linderman said he had tried many times to "reconcile Charley's often-expressed belief in the orthodox Christian religion with his adaptations of Indian pantheism." Linderman described some of Russell's beliefs in this way:

... For atheist, heretic, agnostic, infidel, freethinker he had synonymous definitions, and any attempt to correct him was a waste of breath. "I notice that when these smart fellows come to the big ford," he would say, "they all quit like steers in the road." He truly believed that all who had dared question anything in Holy Writ recanted on their deathbeds--"if they possessed the breath," he would add. And yet, with all of this, he believed that the old-time Indian was right in his pantheism, especially in his reverence for the sun. And no Indian was a greater fatalist than he.14
The friendship of Linderman and Russell was based on mutual interests that were inspirational to both of them in their creative work. In an undated letter written in early 1914 Russell expressed their shared feelings about the white man's exploitation of the natural world:

Friend Frank

I thank you for the pin it is fine I will always keep it you spoke the truth when you said the Old Man had hidden many beautiful things. few would guess that the stone you picked up held anything inside but Napi was a thief and as he made the world and all the creatures he judged them by himself so he left few shiney things to tempt them The men he made were satisfied with what laid on the surfase a few shells, elk teeth and claws were there jewels but like himself they were meat eaters and thieves the grass eaters were the only honest ones but his caches would have lane till the end of time Had not another man come, one he did not make -- It was natures enemy the white man This man took from under and more he stole from the water the sky. He was never satisfide It was he who raised the Old mans caches an still hunts the few that are left When Napi saw the new thief he hid his fase in his robe and left this world and I don't blame him.

Russell and Linderman shared a common appreciation for those who had lived in nature unspoiled.

As a young man William Bole had "a knowledge of the scriptures at once profound and unusual." He became a Mason sometime in the 1880s in St. Paul, Minnesota. He later became an honorary 33rd degree member of the Scottish Rite in Great Falls, and was a member of the Algeria Shrine Temple in Helena. Bole and Linderman were both versed in the esoteric interpretation of Masonic spiritual truth.
Franklin Lane considered the reality of spiritual forces, and in 1913 placed his hope for the future in a hope that people would recognize "there is a God in the world":

We are coming to recognize spiritual forces, and I put my hope for the future, not in a reduction in the high cost of living, nor in any scheme of government, but in a recognition by the people that after all there is a God in the world. Mind you, I have no religion, I attend no church, and I deal all day long with hard questions of economics, so that I am nothing of a preacher; but I know that there never will come anything like peace or serenity by a mere redistribution of wealth, although that redistribution is necessary and must come.

On March 9, 1913, four days after he was appointed secretary of the interior, Lane wrote to a professor of law who he hoped would serve as his first assistant. He was looking for a man of wisdom, with a "great" soul, to help him meet the responsibility he felt as the "guardian" of the American Indian:

... Here we have thousands of Indians, as large a population as composes some of the States, owning hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of property which is rapidly rising in value. I am their guardian. I must see that they are protected. They have schools over which we have absolute control--the question of teachers that they are to have, the question of the kind of education that they are to be given, the question of industry that they are to pursue. ... We can save a great people; and the First Assistant has this matter as his special care. I do not know of any place in the United States which calls for as much wisdom and for as great a soul as this particular job. ... There are a lot of men who can teach law, and lots of men who can write the philosophy of the law, but there are few men who can put the spirit of righteousness into the business, social, and educational affairs of an entire race. ...

Lane saw in humanity a newly rising recognition of
spiritual forces, and hoped people would realize there is a God in the world. But the Chippewa and Cree were already living in daily acknowledgement of the spiritual forces in the world, as their ancestors had done for ages, as their elders had taught them to do. They had not forgotten.

Linderman knew this about his old tribal friends. He had learned from Full-of-dew that Manitou is "the mountains, the lowlands, the rivers, the birds, my fire, the big trees." The personal sentiments of Linderman, Russell, Bole, and Lane strengthened their ability to fight, each in his own way, for a square deal for the Chippewa and Cree.

In December 1916 Linderman again wrote to his friend Rossiter about the value of sentiment. He still believed in it, but after ten years he had developed a sense of humor about the sentiments that compelled him to help others:

... I'm so busy that I can't write a real letter. I have plenty of troubles of my own but could handle them if it were not for O. P. T.'s [other people's troubles].

Injuns, whites, niggers and all come to my camp and I sometimes wish I had been born with more guts and less sentiment. Sentiment is a hell of a lot like tradition--sort of back-listed [sic] these days but together they can whip an army just the same. A man without sentiment is just like a Seattle rose--no perfume. Though I've seen men who were devoid of sentiment after eating beans. But there are exceptions to all rules.

Because of his strong humanitarian impulse and intrepid character many people turned to Linderman for help. They could depend on him if he believed their cause was just.

Linderman understood the nature of his role in help-
ing the destitute Chippewa and Cree. His concern for their welfare was more important than any frustrations he encountered in dealing with them. An example of this is found in an incident that occurred in the winter of 1912-1913, when one day Little Bear came to Linderman's office in Helena, to tell him that Rocky Boy's people at Browning were starving.

Little Bear then "decisively" asked him for three dollars, which he was determined not to give. He had heard from Rocky Boy the day before. Within two hours he had pushed a joint resolution, seeking permanent aid for the destitute Chippewa and Cree, through the House and Senate of the state legislature, and had it signed by the governor. Later that evening at a Masonic meeting he had collected one hundred dollars for Rocky Boy's people. In the fall he had arranged for the distribution of winter rations at Fort Harrison for the Indians near Helena, and had advertised and collected clothing to help get them all through the winter.

He felt he had done enough and was determined that he would not give more money to Little Bear, so he asked, "What do you want three dollars for?" The chief said he had made a promise that if the soldiers at Fort Harrison butchered a steer, he would send whatever was left, "the head, and the guts, and the shank," to Rocky Boy, whose people were always hungry at the Blackfeet Reservation.

He told Linderman he had never lied to his friends, and now that the soldiers had butchered a steer he needed
three dollars to send the offal on the train to Browning. Linderman gave Little Bear the three dollars. Later that day Little Bear returned to Linderman's office and gave him the black stone pipe mentioned in Chapter 4, which he said had belonged to his grandfather, his father, and himself.

Years later, in recalling this story in his memoirs, Linderman explained the viewpoint of his Indian friends, who never hesitated to ask him for help:

... here I will admit that the old saw "give an Indian a foot, and he'll want a yard" is largely true. No matter how much one does for an Indian, the recipient feels that it is the Almighty alone who deserves thanks, since He put the hospitable mortal on the earth. 21

Because of his understanding of the Chippewa and Cree spiritual beliefs, world view, and social customs, Linderman was able to accept his role as one of the hospitable mortals to whom the Indians could turn for help.

Linderman's sentiment fed the fire of his fight for the Chippewa and Cree. He was tenacious when challenging what he believed to be injustice and said he could feel "as full of fight as a badger," even vengeful. He recalled a time in 1905 when, facing underhanded politics, he "wanted to play even." He said this tendency proved he was "neither a good politician nor, in office, a fair representative of the people." 22

He wrote to Rossiter on February 20, 1907, "I love a scrap." At that time he was Montana's assistant secretary of state, after having served two terms in the state legis-
lature, and was involved in some political antagonism in the local Republican party:

I hear that I'm to catch merry hell next conven­tion ... I hope to God there's a good scrap in the whole bunch when duly organized and ready for busi­ness. I guess I'll have to confess that I love a scrap. They say that I ruined and wrecked Bennett's career as a legislator--that to me, is due his defeat as Speaker and to that I say--amen, for what's the use of scrapping if you get no credit for victory won. This old bunch of ours, wants nothing and is therefore in a position to fight all comers and fight to a finish.23

"What's the use of scrapping if you get no credit for victory won." It's ironic to read that comment written by Linderman more than 80 years ago. Few people today know of the humane and literary contributions made by this accomplished figure in Montana's history, or the steadfast role he played in the lives of the Montana Chippewa and Cree.

**Full of Fight**

Linderman was a man of sentiment but he was also a veteran of the wilderness, a survivor, and a man among men. In business and political circles he was one of "the boys," "the bunch," "the gang." He interacted with men of power and influence throughout his life, including important old warriors from the Indian tribes of Montana.

He described Little Bear as a "born fighter," but he could have been speaking of himself as well. He was not afraid to stand against the opposition from Havre, and took bold steps to help the Chippewa and Cree. A brief overview
of events between 1913 and 1917 illustrates his tenacity.

After his visit with Commissioner Sells in December 1913 Linderman had thought his "long task" was ended, that the landless Indians would soon be given permanent help. But in May 1914 he wrote to Sells, "the condition of these people is pitiable." He said that without the help of a few white men the state and nation would soon be disgraced because these people "would be starving within the sight of plenty." He wondered if, to get them through the next winter, he would again have to spend his time "begging for food for them" from his friends. In spite of this he told Sells, "I have not yet lost hope."24

When they realized Congress was not going to resolve the issue in the near future, the coalition felt that Little Bear's band of homeless Cree Indians should join Rocky Boy's people at the abandoned military reserve. Establishing a camp there could help establish a claim to the land. In a letter to Commissioner Sells in 1916 Linderman said he was the one who had sent the Indians to Assiniboine.25

In February 1915, during the third session of the Sixty-third Congress, Senator Henry Myers (a Democrat from Montana) presented a bill designed to open the Fort Assiniboine lands to settlement, but the bill did not provide for the Chippewa and Cree. Secretary Lane told Myers he would have President Wilson veto the bill unless Myers agreed to amend it during the next congressional session, to include
land for the homeless Indians.

In May 1915 Rocky Boy sent a letter to Linderman in which he recalled Linderman's inspiring words—that he would "never give up" until the Indians had land. The old chief asked him to remain true to that promise.26 In September 1915 Indian Why Stories was published. During that summer Linderman was preparing the manuscript, consulting with Charley Russell on the illustrations, and corresponding with his publisher, Charles Scribner's Sons, in New York.

In early 1916 Linderman initiated a letter writing campaign that eventually pushed the politicians to positive action. In February he wrote to Myers, who was chairman of the Senate Committee of Public Lands, "I want to try a last whirl at this game, and try hard."27 Myers had introduced an amendment, S. 3646, that would give the landless Indians two fractional townships of dry, rocky, high altitude grazing land at Fort Assiniboine.

In March Linderman learned that Lane had said four townships were necessary to adequately support the needs of the Chippewa and Cree. Myers, influenced by the powerful Havre Bunch, had included only the two townships high in the mountains, more than 30 miles away from Havre. Linderman was diplomatic as he pushed Myers for the inclusion agricultural land in the amendment. He wrote "I have fought the fight for years," and said he would feel "satisfied and grateful" if Myers would add even one more township to the
reservation for the Chippewa and Cree. 

In a letter to George Bird Grinnell, written March 24, 1916, Linderman commented on his long fight for the Chippewa and Cree. He felt they would soon have land. He said he had been "busy on this question for years," but now he was certain he had "landed" and felt that he had done so "practically alone." This time he was sure the politicians would not dare "double-cross" him, because he had threatened to publish illustrated articles about the Chippewa and Cree in Eastern magazines. He wrote, "Every politician in this state has been against me, but I am sure I have won." 

The bill passed the Senate, but was delayed in the House of Representatives. Linderman wrote to Commissioner Sells in July 1916, "If we get the reservation I think we can fight the rest of the battle easier and I mean to stay in the fight until this is settled."

Finally, on September 7, 1916, the creation of the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation was signed into law by President Wilson, but this did not close the door on the problems of the Indian people, nor end Linderman's concern for their welfare. His continuing decision to represent the interests of the Chippewa and Cree was based on his personal knowledge of the real, material needs of a People in misery--people he knew well--who were suffering from hunger, cold winds, and a federal policy of "calculated neglect."
Beans and Bacon

Winters were always difficult for the Chippewa and Cree. For years, every January or February, their advocates in the white world who received desperate messages from them sent telegraphed appeals to Washington for adequate rations, to feed the displaced people. On January 6, 1913, Rocky Boy sent the following telegram from the Blackfeet Reservation to his "white confidant and advisor," 32 Frank Linderman:

We are out of grub and hungry. We receive rations one a month which is not often enough. We get very hungry before the month is up. We are specially hungry for meat, we get none. The snows are deep there is no work. We have received one hundred blankets and some mens clothing but we need meat. We are treated badly by the head man. Wish you would exert yourself on our behalf we are very hungry and need more to eat. 33

On January 26, 1914, Bole sent a telegram to Sells that read, "they are eating dogs and very hungry--need grub--ship rations at once--this will save suffering." 34 On February 16, 1915, Paris Gibson telegraphed Myers that the government should honor its agreement to feed the Chippewa and Cree at Assiniboine, or else "send troops to kill them and thus end their misery." 35

Again, in January 1916 Linderman was appealing for rations for the people encamped at Fort Assiniboine. They were not receiving adequate rations to get them through the isolation of winter. In February, he pointedly told Myers he would seek publication of fully illustrated stories in eastern magazines, showing the public the deprivation at the
Chippewa/Cree camp at Assiniboine, if the government didn't do something of permanent good for the Indians.  

Linderman later told Grinnell this threat did more good than two or three years of "begging." In fact, it elicited a telegraphed response and immediate action. On March 13 Linderman wrote to tell Little Bear and Rocky Boy that they would probably soon be granted three townships, nearly 54,000 acres of land, at Fort Assiniboine. He added:

I am glad your grub is coming regularly. I had a big fight over that too. I wish you all luck.

In February 1917 Linderman was notified that all rations had been discontinued at Box Elder by order of the Indian agent, Superintendent Rastall. In a letter to Commissioner Sells on February 14, 1917, Linderman said it was hard to find peace for himself amidst the continual needs of the Chippewa and Cree:

I wired you yesterday that Roger St. Pierre, the Farmer in Charge at Box Elder, had said that the agent had discontinued all rations [at Fort Assiniboine] and that unless something was done to reinstate them the Indians would starve. It seems that as soon as peace comes to me something turns up to kick the kettle over and trouble at once begins anew. If there could be something done that was permanent, and settle the thing once for all, it would be better for everybody everywhere.

The Indians had to have rations since there was no way for them to make a living in the winter, isolated from society as they were. They were not experienced enough, nor had seeds and tools arrived early enough the summer before, to provide food to get them through the winter.
Linderman wrote Sells again on February 23, 1917. He did not trust Rastall, who had reported to Sells that rations had not been cut off. He was determined to uncover the discrepancy between what Rastall had told Sells, and what the Indians had reported to Linderman. He told the commissioner of Indian affairs, "There are queer things that creep into this service and some one is careless with the truth, and some way I shall find out who it is."41

These letters show Linderman's willingness to persist in seeking a better life for the Chippewa and Cree. He was trying to bring "more health and happiness" into their lives. As he fought the fight to a finish, he was concerned with more than quantity—the abundance or lack—of rations.

On March 16, 1917, after visiting with Little Bear and his interpreter, Linderman addressed the issue of the quality and kind of rations that were being sent to the new reservation:

... we thrashed out many things that were troubling them on the reservation. I think ... that our talk will do considerable good. I promised you that I would tell you whatever I learned that I thought you should know, and with this letter is mailed a small tobacco sack containing a sample of the beans furnished these Indians as a ration. I am told that the eating of these miserable beans caused colic and a good deal of distress. I have never seen such beans and if they are really beans, they have been mishandled by nature. It is a crime, in my opinion, to offer hungry people such an article. The bacon that has recently been furnished is so rancid and yellow that it can hardly be eaten at all, and undoubtedly your Department is paying the regular price for both these things. ...

I thought you would like to know that what
little is furnished the old people on the reservation is not only unfit for human consumption but is adding to their ill health and so causing extra trouble. 42

The Indian Office answered Linderman on March 28, with a bland defense of the black-eyed beans and the bacon supplied to the Rocky Boy Indians:

... I am glad to learn of your continued interest in the Indians and to note your concern as to their welfare.

I have read with interest your comment on the beans and bacon which you state are being furnished the Indians. An examination of the small sample of beans which you submitted discloses the fact that they are not navy beans at all, but are black eye beans, the same as are being furnished to all of our schools and agencies for this fiscal year. ... From the appearance of the small sample of black eye beans which you submitted, I feel sure that the beans distributed to the Indians are of the same quality as were the samples on which our black eye bean contracts were based. I wish to say also that portions of these samples were tested and found entirely satisfactory by officials of the Office before awards were finally approved.

I cannot tell from the facts which you give just where the bacon furnished these Indians was obtained. ... I can hardly believe that an inferior article has been furnished the Indians, as Superintendent Ellis of the Blackfeet Agency had supervision of the purchase and inspection of this bacon, I am sending him a copy of your letter with the request that he look into the matter and advise me promptly. 43

Linderman made a polite response to Sells, repeating his first impression that the beans were "bum beans":

I thank you for your letter of March 28th, but maintain that the beans I sent you, whether they were black-eyed beans or navy beans, were bum beans. I have always maintained that it was mighty hard to recognize the "noble Roman" in a dago organ grinder, and it is equally hard to recognize an edible bean in the black-eyed specimens I forwarded you.

I wrote the Indians a long letter, which was read in camp and I understand has done a great deal
Sells' office countered with the following bureaucratic reply, full of words but not much on human feelings:

With further reference to the beans furnished to Indians residing on the Assinniboine Reservation, under the Fort Belknap jurisdiction, there is an existing contract under which purchases will be made of pink beans, in case further supplies are required, and funds available. Although I am satisfied that the black eye beans which are now being used in the Service are of good quality, I believe, from your statements, that the Indians would prefer the pink variety.

Linderman was relentless in attending to details as he pursued just treatment for his Indian friends. Grinnell had warned him of the friction involved in dealing with the bureaucracy at the Office of Indian Affairs. He wrote to Linderman on this subject on February 20, 1912:

I do not know how much experience you have had in dealing with the Indian Bureau at Washington. I have found that to have the most simple thing done, even though the head of the Bureau may wish to have it done, involves a great deal of labor. You have to start at the head, put a pry under the chief, and then lift as hard as you can to move the chief, the one next to him, the one next to him, and so on down through the line of thirty or forty subordinates, and I can tell you the friction is something tremendous.

Friction caused by Linderman's vigilant attention heated up the Indian Office for years. Denied access to jobs because of unions and prejudice, restricted by law from hunting game, with little suitable land on which to raise crops, and having no machinery or farming skills, the Indians were not yet able to provide for themselves. The government's Indian policy had captured and corralled the Chippewa and Cree.
UNCLE BILLY SAYING:

A HEATHEN IS A PARTY WHO DON'T BELIEVE IN YOUR GOD.

INDIAN MOTHER DIES HEATHEN FOR CHILDREN

Chippewa Woman Wanted to Go to Hell to be With Her Offspring

Special to The Tribune.
Kalispell, March 28.—Swapping old-time stories with F. B. Linderman recently H. P. Stanford, pioneer and taxidermist, produced a clipping from his scrap book which gives in a nutshell much of the Indian point of view. The clipping is an epitaph from the headboard of an Indian grave at Half Moon and was taken from the Inter Lake of December 21, 1890.

Illiterate, and almost unreadable, still it shows the mother love in the heart of a savage and hints of the struggle of the red man to forsake the religion of his fathers for that of the "blackrobes." The epitaph heads:

"Borned in Winnipeg, 1780. one Chippeway woman by the name of Wolf Woman. Have request she would not be baptized for her children was not baptize and they was in hell she would go and be with them, age 810, fore love will flourish in a chilling woe they unfold adversity’s rough winds that blow but cause its root to take a deeper hole while the scalding showers of a hopeless grief give a brighter glow on to each radiant leaf. First buried in Half Moon."

Copy of article about epitaph found on headboard at gravesite of 110-year-old Chippewa woman named Wolf Woman, see p. 135.
This article [n.d., n.p.] is in FBL Collection Folio IV;
Linderman notes about epitaph are found in Br 2:8.

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Our National Duty

"I never learned to fly a flag under which I could not consistently fight," Linderman said of himself. The description fits. He carried the banner of right action as he consistently sought to enlighten the realm of Indian/white relations.

Sentiment and fight were attributes that strengthened Linderman's efforts on behalf of the Chippewa and Cree. In the sight of terrible deprivation and hunger he could not remain silent. He often voiced his strong opinions against what he called "the Bureau's petrified system of perpetuating pauperism among the Indians." He was concerned with three main issues in dealing with the government's Indian policy: rations, land, and religion. His first concern was for the basics needed for survival, including adequate shelter, rations, and clothing, water and firewood, and the seeds and tools to plant the gardens they were expected to grow.

Linderman sometimes had to bully and push the Indian Office to get them to send rations to the hungry Chippewa and Cree. During months when work might be available, all but the deep months of winter, Indian policy allowed rations only for those who were not able to provide for their own needs—the women and children, the old and infirm, the sick. Official policy was stated in the following way:

The gratuitous issuance of supplies to Indians or other persons when remunerative employment is...
available is demoralizing and degrading in its influence, and has a tendency to pauperize them and make them permanently dependent. For this reason the Indian Office has directed the discontinuance of the issuance of rations to all able-bodied Indians who are able to procure remunerative employment. The Interior Department and Indian Office assumed that all "young and able-bodied men" could find work and thus should not receive rations. But union regulations and local prejudice against the "renegades" often kept the men from getting work. This was a persistent problem, and Linderman and Bole stayed with it admirably through the years.

The second issue that concerned Linderman was the landless Indians' need for a home. They needed mountain land with plenty of firewood and timber, so they could build. They needed agricultural land with good water and tillable soil, so they could feed their families. But the federal government was functioning under the philosophy of the Dawes Act of 1887, which called for the dissolution of reservation lands through the allotment plan, the assimilation of tribal people into the dominant American culture, and the elimination of tribal customs.

Linderman's third disagreement with Indian policy had to do with tribal customs. He believed native people should have the right to practice their own religion and follow their traditions. He said this was necessary for the well-being of the Chippewa and Cree.

Lindeman told Sells it was "wicked, and not in keeping with good judgment to prohibit the Sun Dance." He
said the Sun Dance was "a very serious effort on the part of the Indian to serve his God" and, by allowing its practice, Sells would find the Indian "far more satisfied in mind."

In 1924 the editor of The Forum magazine asked Linderman to express his thoughts on "our national duty toward the Indians," for a symposium about "the Indian problem." In answer Linderman wrote, "Too many [people] think locally and speak generally upon this subject":

... These people are living, as they have always lived, under different climactic conditions, so that whatever will benefit one may not bring any good to another. A member of the Board of Indian Commissioners should know this, and yet the "member" you have quoted declares that "the Indians are enjoying wealth from the proceeds of oil lands operated for them."

Oil is not everywhere. What possible benefit can come to a Sioux, a Cheyenne, a Crow, or a Flathead, from oil in the Cherokee strip? I repeat, too many think locally and speak generally. ... But I have long ago wasted all the time I can afford in arguments with officials of the Department of Indian Affairs.

Linderman listed his front-line ideas for "bettering the Indian's condition," including allowing them the right to maintain traditional beliefs and practices. He said the Indians were not bigots. Instead, they were tolerant and respectful toward other people's beliefs and religions:

I would not oblige the Indian to live in a house. His lodge (tepee) is the most healthful dwelling I have ever known. Let him live in his lodge if he desires.

Leave the Indian his God. Let him practice his own religious rites. Whatever else the Indian may be he is not a bigot. Let us be as broad as is our helpless ward. (Here I would write pages.)
Linderman had other humanitarian and pragmatic ideas that would improve the quality of life of the native people:

   Teach people that Indians are as individual as are other humans—-that there are as great differences in tribes as in other nations.

   See that no monopoly is permitted in selling merchandize to the Indians.

   Prevent the over-leasing of tribal lands for grazing purposes. Remember that cattle and horses will not live where sheep are ranged. See that the Indian has enough range for his own stock.

   Irrigate Indian lands whenever possible. Water will bring the Indian prosperity where nothing else will, since with water he can raise hay, a sure crop without pest or danger of blite.

In conclusion Linderman acknowledged the good intentions of the government, but admonished the abusive administration of Indian affairs:

   There are laws in plenty. The Government has tried to do right by the Indian. Inefficiency and dishonest administration of Indian affairs have been responsible for most of the crimes against the Indian.

   Throughout his constant correspondence Linderman sparred with bureaucrats and politicians, directing his words toward opening minds and hearts. While challenging inefficient administrators and unfair policies, he focused on wise suggestions for the development of better relations between whites and Indians.
Linderman encouraged the Chippewa and Cree to fulfill the other side of the square deal he sought for them, by working hard to become self-sufficient, and making the best of their opportunity to have a home. A letter he wrote March 30, 1916, gives an example of his clear advice to the leaders of the Chippewa and Cree, Rocky Boy and Little Bear:

I am sure that we are going to get the land very soon now. I guess I have been able to get you three townships instead of two townships. I have had a good deal of hard work to do it but I am sure that we are going to have township 29 Range 15 East. That will give us three townships, or about 54,000 acres.

I wish you would not drink whiskey. I want you to do your share toward building houses and working when they ask you to work. I want you to show that you are trying to do right always.

As soon as we get the land and get it fenced I am going to try to get you a band of cattle. I do not want them ever to allot the land. I think it is better to have it open to the tribe.

Everything looks pretty good right now.52

When Rocky Boy died, April 18, 1916, his son-in-law, Baptiste Samatte, sent a letter to Theo Gibson telling him of Rocky Boy's last words to his people, words that echo the counsel of Frank Linderman:

But these are his last words on his last breath. Never forget what I have tried to do for the homeless people in Montana toward the government and also, he said, never forget Mr. William Bole, Theodore Gibson and his father, and Frank Linderman who done and taken pains to get us a home from our government. And he told all the people to strive and labor hard so that the government may see that we are ambitious to get a home and land and also he told his people to be kind to one another and help one another.53

A letter from Samatte to Linderman, dated January 20, 1917,
demonstrates the respect the native leaders had for Co-skee-see-co-cot, "the man who looks through glass":

I received your letter. The Indians had a meeting and your letter was read to them by I. C. Reid. We were all thankful to hear your letter and that you are doing just what we wanted you to do. I thank you very much, what you tell us to do, and also to be good friends to one another. I know that you always tell us what is right for us to do. Yes I will try and do what you tell me to do. At present I am a good friend to every person. I have told all the Indians, how to be friends to one another at the meetings. And I hear our farmer in charge Roger St. Pierre tell the Indians the same thing and how to work for themselves. I believe he has done his duty the way I hear him tell to the Indians. . . . Another thing, if you hear anything from Washington what and how the things are standing, please tell us in your next letter. . . .

In July 1917 Samatte sought Linderman's advice as he wondered what to do about coal he had found on the reservation.

He trusted Linderman's honesty and valued his word:

I always bear you in my mind for I got a little business here for you and myself. For you are the only person we have who does an honest work for us people. I have found two place here coal one in the township we are at and the other in township 28. The first one I found Rocky Boy told you about two years ago, and the other one I found last August. . . . You are the only person I have ever mention this to. I have never said anything about this to our agent or to anybody else. For I see that our Ind. agent don't take any interest in us. That is why I don't want him to know this. I wish you would let me know right away what's to be done in a near future.

Throughout the rest of his life Linderman remained interested in the well-being of the Chippewa and Cree at the Rocky Boy Reservation. People wrote to him for personal advice and about family problems (see endnote 55), about present realities and the future of the reservation. They
came to his home at Goose Bay to meet with him and ask for his help. His correspondence files tell many stories of the continuing process involved in realizing a square deal for the Chippewa and Cree, a deal as broad as it was long.

There were over six hundred people living at the reservation in the first years of its existence. Until 1930 they lived together in a central camp described by Earl Woolridge, the superintendent, as "a collection of mud and stick huts on the edge of the Agency grounds." In an unpublished manuscript Linderman pictured their existence during those years:

... Few were even comfortably clothed, many were sick, and all were hungry, had been hungry for years. The men went into the mountains, cut logs, and built a huddle of tiny cabins to shelter their families from the winter that was near. And here, in this central camp, this huddle of miserable huts, the Crees and Chippewas lived for more than ten years on the scantiest of rations issued by Uncle Sam, whose sole concern was to keep the Indians on their reservation, thus preventing them from bothering the white citizens who voted.

And so, under the Indian Department's petrified system of perpetuating pauperism, the Crees and Chippewas settled down, six hundred of them, to be fed and despised while learning to loaf and hate.

Woolridge became superintendent at Rocky Boy's in 1929. By 1930 changes began to occur on the reservation. For one thing, the people had to move from the central camp to their assigned land. Then, "a new, and wiser policy was inaugurated," Linderman wrote, "and 'tried out on the dog'." It was a "work or starve" incentive plan.

Eligible individuals could borrow up to $600.00 for
supplies, food, clothing, farm machinery, and seeds; then pay off their debt by working to improve the reservation. Linderman wrote, "Never again will the Government give the Crees and Chippewas even a hand-out; and to this we say 'amen'." He felt this plan gave the people an honest chance to regain their strength and prove their self-respect.58

Linderman visited the reservation in late June 1932 and saw the houses, roads, and schools the people had built, their sawmill and flour mill, the stock they were raising, the fields and gardens they tended. He met with Woolridge, who gave him a copy of his 1932 annual report.

In the report Woolridge made a statement that proved what Linderman had staunchly repeated, many times through the years, about the character of the Chippewa and Cree:

"... During the past twelve months, more than ninety percent of our men have worked continually, either for themselves or for the Government, in labor provided for them and have shown by their efforts that they are willing to support themselves if given the opportunity."59

Sixteen years earlier, in answer to charges Linderman had made that rations for the old Indians were insufficient, a superintendent had told Commissioner Sells, "Many of the ablebodied young Indians are lying around and eating up the rations issued to the old and indigent."60 Sells sent Linderman a copy of that superintendent's report, to which Linderman had responded absolutely:

"... I have always claimed that this particular band of Indians would work and you will see that
statement proven if opportunity is given.

... Remember that when a man says that young Indians hang about and eat rations that these same Indians would be glad to work if it were to be had. Try and remember also that it is hard for an Indian to secure work among white people, ... 61

Woolridge's 1932 report showed that Linderman was correct in his knowledge of the Chippewa and Cree. They were living up to their side of the square deal.

An Honored Guest

Linderman's second book, Indian Old Man Stories: More Sparks from War Eagle's Lodge-fire, was dedicated with a poem to Little Bear, who died one year later, on September 12, 1921. The poem describes with compassion the plight of the old Cree leader, whose way of life had been destroyed:

TO LITTLE BEAR
(Chief of the Crees)

Seamed and old, the pawn of progress
   In the wicked hand of fate,
Silent, sullen, unrelenting
   In his deep, undying hate:
Hate that want brings to the haughty;
   Hate that pride alone can feel;
Hate that comes of wrongs inflicted;
   Hate and sorrow, deep and real.

Step by step and ever backward
   O'er the ground his fathers trod;
Fighting e'er, and e'er invoking
   Strength and peace from Pagan god--
Gone his greatness and his freedom;
   Grinning want alone remains;
Bison skulls and wallows mock him
   On his old, ancestral plains. 52

Little Bear had managed to continue the spiritual traditions of his father, Big Bear, and his grandfather, Black Powder. For many years he had conducted the Sun Dance, despite the
white man's rules denying him that freedom. He had often
turned to Linderman for help in continuing the Sun Dance.

In May 1925 Linderman received a letter from Day
Child, a Chippewa, asking that he again help get permission
so the people at Rocky Boy could have their Sun Dance:

I was thinking about you a lot today. I am the
leader in this tribe, that is I talk for the tribe. Time is close when we have our annual worship in prayer to God. This Agent here don't want us to hold our worship. He says the Government don't want the Indians to Pray to God according to his believe. that is he don't want us to have our annual worship the sundance. We are very sorry and hard hit to stop us from our way of asking God to help us in this world. We ask you to ask permission for us to have our annual sun dance, from the Goverment at Washington DC. We know you can do this for us. You have done a lot of things that were harder than this to get. we don't see what harm we are doing to ourselves and others [in having the Sun Dance].

The letter ended, "I am your friend in God's name, Day Child." Later, in another letter, Day Child thanked Linderman for everything he had done "about the sun dance."

Linderman attended the Sun Dance while visiting the reservation in June 1932, and returned again the next summer for the same reason. He had been sent a special invitation:

This is Your invitation
Mr Linderman. We Read your letter With Big Welcome. and See that you Would like to Visit our Reservation in the Next Season. well Sir We are going to have a Sun dance And We invite you to this. We Will Be Very glad to have you Come - and we will then have you adopted to this tribe. When We left your Place We got along fine all the Way to home We got Back here Safe and found everybody Well. and When We told the People all What you told us. they Were greatly interested and feel happy. and We Will let you know later on when to come. after we find out the dates of our Sun dance. [signed] We are Yours ...
Lodge pitched for Frank Linderman when he was a guest at the Sun Dance at Rocky Boy Reservation, ca. 1933

photo: UM Mansfield Library
In November 1931 Roasting Stick and a delegation from the reservation had come to Linderman's home at Goose Bay to seek his advice; they were thinking of having the reservation allotted. On December 10 Roasting Stick and Malcolm Mitchell sent Linderman the above invitation, along with a letter, handwritten by Mitchell, asking Linderman to help them with their petition for allotment:

Our Dear Mr. Linderman  
We have all made up our minds to be allotted. we are herewith enclosing the names of the signers (the Bill of Petition) We are almost 600 in this Reservation But four out of every Six are under age, therefore they Could not Sign. And the Reason We Send the Bill of Petition to you. if you find anything wrong We Wish you will correct it for us. We do not send anything to Washington or any of those men you told us to write to. But We Wish you will do it for us. and Send us the Copy. Our dear friend Linderman We Wish you Will help us in all your Power. We are Just like orphan Children with no home.  [signed by] Malcolm Mitchell [and] Roasting Stick [with] his X mark

Linderman was against allotment, but told the people he would help them if a large majority of them decided they wanted it. (See endnote 64)

In an unpublished manuscript, Linderman wrote about the event of going to the Sun Dance at the reservation:

Just now the Crees and Chippewas were preparing for a sun-dance, their most sacred ceremony of thanksgiving and promise. Already there was a large village of tents and tepees pitched in a circle on the chosen site. Many visiting Indians from other tribes were camped there, as well as many Crees from North of the line, all of them waiting for the sacred sun-dance.

The day before the sun-lodge was to be ceremoniously erected all work on the "Rocky-boy" reservation stopped so suddenly that one could almost feel
a jolt. Houses were left vacant, their door unlock-
ed [sic]. Nobody was at home. It was as though the
reservation had been quietly abandoned forever. The
Crees and Chippewas had gone to the sun-dance
ground. And yet here was a superintendent who made
no complaint at this....

"Are you coming to the sun-dance?" the Indians
asked me as they passed on horse-back, or in wagons
with their families.

"Yes, I'm coming," I told them all. And in the
afternoon, borrowing a bed-roll from Mrs. Woolridge,
I went to the painted lodge the Crees and Chippewas
had pitched for me on the dance-ground. Inside the
lodge a thin, aromatic, wisp of smoke from burning
sweet-grass was going straight up from the green,
untrampled native grass of the plains. Outside, at
the right of the lodge-door, the Indians had erected
a tall pole, and from its top, all new and shining
there fluttered the Stars and Stripes. And I danced
with my old friends in their sun-lodge, feeling
grateful for the sun's gifts to the Crees and
Chippewas, health, grass, berries, and bountiful
crops. Dancing, I even dared to feel a little pride
in the accomplishments of the Crees and Chippewas
themselves.

After visiting the reservation in 1932 Linderman
wrote an article, "The Rocky Boy Renegades," illustrated
with 28 photos he took, which he sent to New York for pub-
lication in an eastern magazine. For the next three years
he tried to track down the manuscript, but kept getting the
run-around. It and the photos had been lost, somewhere
between the John Day Company and the Elks magazine.

By 1933 Linderman was urging the new commissioner of
Indian affairs, John Collier, to use the Rocky Boy Reserva-
tion as a model for progress. He felt free to express his
opinions to Collier, who was an outspoken advocate of Indian
rights. On September 20, 1933, Collier had asked Linderman
to correspond with him "about the state of affairs among the
Indians up there." Linderman wrote on September 25, 1933, to inform the commissioner of the background and needs of the people at the reservation:

I shall be glad to correspond with you about the Indians of Montana. I have spent nearly fifty years among them, and yet know very little about them. And please understand that I want nothing from you or the Department of Indian Affairs for myself or for anybody else—that only my interest in the Indians prompts me to say or do whatever I may.

I have read your speeches, and I liked them. Your condemnation of the use of tribal funds for administrative purposes is sound; and so is your stand against the off-the-reservation boarding schools. These two things have been tormenting Indians for many years....

I am deeply interested in the Indians of Montana, especially in the Cree-Chippewa band now occupying the Rocky Boy reservation in Northern Montana. I should like to tell you their story. It would grip you, and make you ashamed of our race. These Indians are real workers, and if encouraged and helped will prove to the doubters that the red man has a future even in the white man's scheme of things. I am sure that the Rocky Boy reservation offers an opportunity that ought to be taken seriously for the good of the whole cause. I know of no other Indians who will work so willingly and hard.

They need more land.... Their land lies in the Bearpaw mountains where there is scarcely enough level land upon which to whip a dog; and yet these Indians are farming. The altitude is high, about 4000 feet I believe. Last July frost killed all their gardens, and they had splendid gardens, too.

I believe that more land is easily available. When I set out to get them a reservation (another long story) I at first tried to secure all of the old Fort Assinniboine Military Reservation. It was to be abandoned as a military post. It belonged to the government. There was no good reason for giving the Indians so little of it in the end. But the city of Havre protested, sending delegations to Washington. Politicians fought me to a standstill—and a large strip of land that rightfully belonged with the piece finally given to the "Rocky Boy" Indians was handed over to the city of Havre as a "play-ground and park." This strip of land is far out of the city and is unused. It ought to be permanently given to the Indians....
With a little pushing the Rocky Boy reservation can be made an example for the red race in North America, because these fellows are workers. And I'll say that I believe the superintendent there is a capable man, that he is really interested in his work. However I've lived with Indians long enough to know that a sandaled saint would lose cast as a superintendent (in the eyes of Indians).\^66

The wisdom in Linderman's direct advice to the Chippewa and Cree is obvious in a letter he wrote to the business council at the reservation on March 18, 1934:

To the Business Council (Four-Souls, Joe Corcoran, Malcolm Mitchell, John Parker, and Jim Courchane)
Rocky Boy, Montana:
I have been asked to come over there and help you make your plans for the "new deal." I will come as soon as the roads are good, unless you need me before that. If you do, and will let me know I will come on the train.
This is a serious piece of business that is before you. You must be careful. You must think a lot, and not act too quickly. Make your steps slow, and do not go too far at once. I hope you will not quarrel among yourselves. The time has come to forget about the tribes, or families, or old quarrels. You must now be one family.
I want to see you make a better showing than any other tribe.

Your friend, Frank B. Linderman\^67

In June 1934 Linderman was escorted to the Sun Dance at the Rocky Boy Reservation. Montana author Grace Stone Coates, who knew Linderman, told of this event in an article she wrote for the Kalispell Times in 1935:

Last June Dr. Linderman's escort arrived in the middle of the night, and he arose at once to accompany them. They reached camp at the old Fort Assinbinoine military reservation at 5 p.m. At night it presented a weird and beautiful sight under the moonlight. With the circling lodges of the reservation Indians were perhaps 150 tents of the visiting Indians from across the Canadian line. A shooting star swept across the camp, so close they could hear its hiss.\^68
Linderman rewrote his lost story about the Rocky Boy "renegades," in 1933 or 1934. A finished version of that unpublished manuscript was finally printed in the January 1, 1937, issue of Indians At Work, a newsletter published by the Office of Indian Affairs. He revised his description of the Indians' early years at the reservation:

... And here in this central camp, this huddle of huts, the Chippewas and Crees lived for ten years on the scanty rations issued by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, whose sole concern was to keep the Indians on their reservation so that they might not bother the white settlers who could vote.

Under the Bureau's petrified system of perpetuating pauperism among the Indians, the Chippewas and Crees sat down. There were more than six hundred of them who had to be fed and who despised learning to loaf and hated their self-styled benefactors.

In the article Linderman praised the industrious and hard working Chippewa and Cree, their interest in education,

... here is one reservation where even the older Indians are anxious to have the children learn the ways of the white men. . . .

and the progress that had been made at the reservation in the past few years. In conclusion he wrote:

The Government has given the Chippewas nothing whatever. The Indians have earned what they now have. . . . The "Rocky Boy's Renegades" are making good. Their debt to the United States Government is less than $73.00 per capita today.69

In the fall of 1937 Linderman suffered a heart attack, and in January 1938 he and his wife went to Santa Barbara, California, where he could rest and recuperate. He wrote to his friend and fellow writer, Hermann Hagedorn, on April 24, 1938:
Landed here Jan. 15th, apparently all in. Any­how the medicos had condemned me again (forth time). But Shucks, they know so little after all. . . .

We have been in hiding--have talked but twice, and shall talk no more for a long time. If one lets them they'll ride him to death so we kept as quiet as possible--and it has paid. Even when we have gone out a little we had enough "pull" with the society editor [their daughter Verne] to keep it out of the paper, so it [the pace of life] didn't get too fast.70

A skilled raconteur, renowned for his ability to hold large audiences "spellbound" and "roaring" for hours, Linderman was often asked to give public lectures. While in Santa Barbara, in one of his last public appearances, he gave a "talk" about his tribe, "the Rocky Boy Indians."71

Frank Bird Linderman died in Santa Barbara on May 12, 1938.
EPILOGUE

Storyteller, I want you to know how I like Frank Linderman. My father is dead. I loved him but if my father came back and stood on one hill and I saw Frank Linderman on another hill I would not go to my father, I would go to Frank Linderman. You know I do not lie, this is the Truth.

Day Child, 1925

Elders at the Rocky Boy Reservation still talk of the white men who helped their grandfathers find a home for their ceremonies, a place where they could nourish their cultural traditions and preserve their spiritual beliefs. They say if the people who brought the ceremonies here then, were here now, they would be thanking Frank Linderman and the others who helped them acquire the reservation.

The reason for Day Child's tribute to Linderman is found in several letters from Evan Jones, owner of a harness and shoe repair shop in Havre, who wrote to Linderman on behalf of the Indians at Rocky Boy, including Day Child, Roasting Stick, Yellow Tail, Big Sky, Willie Small, Man Child, and Jim Denny. In February 1925 they asked Jones to write "the straight facts" to Linderman, about problems at the reservation. Jones felt he could confide in Linderman:

... I will have to speak of you as "Frank," as the Indians always refer to "Frank."

Frank, have you ever seen anyone crushed within the law. These people are being stepped on within the law. [Jones went on to explain some of the problems at the reservation] ...
Frank I do not see any harm in their Sun Dance or Thirsty Dance. They hold it in a very modified form and it means much to them... I have advised them to just step over on the government park on Beaver Creek next to the reservation and hold it there. What do you think of this...?

Day Child sent a letter to Linderman in May, asking him to help the people at Rocky Boy get permission from the government to hold their Sun Dance. (Chapter 6, endnote 63) They were preparing for the dance when Jones wrote to Linderman on June 10:

The Indians want me to write and thank you for what you have done for them concerning the Sun Dance.

I was up there over Sunday and Monday they have [sic] the camp ready and are practicing songs for the worship of the Thunder bird. The missionary does not approve of this worship. But it is useless to try and win these old men away from it...

We went down on the creek to roast dinner with roasting sticks. There were Day Child, Willie Small, Chief Goes Out, Little Bow, Yellow Bird, my six year old son and myself. After we had eaten we told stories and visited. These are the words Day Child spoke to me. [see tribute to Linderman, above]

I thought you might like to know how some of these old men feel toward you...

The Indians at Rocky Boy were concerned about education. In Jones' letter to Linderman in February he said, "They want a portion of this set aside [some of the many buildings that were 'going to ruin' at the old fort] or a department created for higher Indian education." (See Appendix VI)

Today, education for the people is the "number one priority" of the tribal business council at Rocky Boy. The school system has received national recognition for its progressive, innovative program of bilingual education, and its
all-Indian school board. Community members can receive an education, from pre-school through a two-year degree at Stone Child Community College, at the Rocky Boy Reservation.

While still the smallest reservation in Montana, Rocky Boy's land base has increased to 108,015 acres; the number of enrolled tribal members has grown to approximately 3,900. Since there are no mineral deposits or other forms of material wealth to be mined at Rocky Boy, the people recognize the children as their greatest resource, education as the key to the future, and their cultural traditions as their greatest treasure.4

One of those traditions has to do with the Bear Paw Mountains, a 50-million-year-old Eocene volcanic pile shaped like a bear lying on its stomach with its head facing west. At a certain time of day, at a certain time of year, looking south to the Bear Paws from a place in the Cypress Hills, one can see the bear, its head, and paws, spread out over the land. Upon this earth bear, in deep economic, social, and geographic isolation, a rich cultural heritage continues among the Chippewa Cree at the Rocky Boy Reservation.

* * *

Linderman's efforts on behalf of the Chippewa and Cree led him into his literary career, which he pursued for the rest of his life. He felt it was his duty, and his destiny, to help "preserve the old West," especially Montana as he knew it, "in printers' ink."
By 1917 he thought he had saved enough money from his insurance business to be able to retire and concentrate on his writing. He built a large log cabin at Goose Bay on Flathead Lake, his favorite camping place in the days of his youth, and moved there from Helena with his family. By this time his daughters were in college in Missoula.

In a newspaper article written by E. R. Edgerton in 1917, Linderman explained his move to Goose Bay:

More than 20 years ago I wintered here on this bay and promised myself that some day I would come here to live. . . . If only I could write the old days into a permanent niche where time could not steal them--if only I could tell of those days as they were, so that men would appreciate them and not forget, I'd be satisfied with life.5

When a friend offered Linderman a money making opportunity in 1922, he turned it down. He said he had not thought of "lessening" his "literary efforts":

... I have long ago determined that there are more worth-while things than dollars. . . .

I want to do my work and I had rather do it well and up to the standard of the West itself as I know it than get money for flimsy or cheap literature. I am going to stick for a while, Harry, and play the string out or until I see that I am in financial danger. . . .6

Through his literary work Linderman continued to seek justice for the native American. His first inspiration to write had come from his desire to record with integrity the dignity and wisdom of the native people he knew. He used his writings to transmit a better understanding of the Indian mind and spirit into the world, and into the future.
Because Linderman believed it is the discovered good in man that builds humanity, in translating the stories of the native people he consciously chose his words to reflect the wisdom, intelligence, and humor of the storytellers. In the preface to Indian Why Stories he said, "I propose to tell what I know of these legends, keeping as near as possible to the Indian's style of story-telling." In the preface to Morning-Light he further explained his intention:

In order to give the reader an idea of the dignity with which the old-time Indian conversed, I have assumed that in speaking the Cree language, which he had learned perfectly, or in translating conversations from the Cree, Lige Mounts used nearly perfect English.

One of the most singular aspects of Linderman's literary work was that, by developing awareness of the native mind and experience, he taught about the spirit and inherent beauty of the land. He wrote about the Indians' relationship with nature, because he believed an appreciation for nature helps develop good citizenship. (See Appendix V)

Linderman was as meticulous in drawing the details of his writing, as Charley Russell was in his pictorial representations of the native people who were living in Montana Territory in the 1800s. Both men were committed to recording the truth, as they knew it, about who these people were, and what life was like in waning days of the old West.

On October 24, 1926, Charley Russell left this world for the Shadow Hills. Linderman wrote a tribute article about Russell for The Outlook magazine, but when he finished
with it the reality of the loss of his friend, a strong link to the past, sank deeper. In his memoirs he wrote:

> My time was not occupied now. I grew fidgety, wanting something to do with my hands. I wanted to tinker at something, anything, and finally thought of modeling clay, a thing I had never touched... modeling interested me more deeply than any other thing I had ever attempted.

In January 1927 he got himself a "handful of clay" and began modeling, or "working with mud." His first attempt was a small bear, standing "on his hind legs beside an old burned snag." He told his daughters, "I've got a regular bug for this sort of thing, and did not guess its existence." Sculpting became a source of peace for Linderman, a way to quiet his mind when working out a problem in his writing.

By this time he had faced disappointment in his literary career—his publisher had turned down a number of manuscripts, and while many of his books sold well, the royalties were meagre. Still, to his daughters he said of writing, "It's in my blood, I guess, and I must do it."

On June 6, 1927, Linderman received an honorary doctoral degree, an LL.D., from the University of Montana, for his literary work and his research in the field of Indian customs, beliefs, and traditions. In his writing he functioned as a mythographer, ethnographer, philologist, poet, journalist, and historian. He was an astute observer and creative listener, sensitive to the nuance of expression in the oral tradition and sign-language of the Indian story-
tellers. A well-known raconteur himself, he could build an intriguing story from a handful of descriptive words.

Professor H. G. Merriam, founder of the creative writing program at the University of Montana, knew Linderman for 20 years and often had him lecture at the university. He said, "Linderman's first love had not been the Indian but the free life of the outdoor man in contention or compliance with nature." Besides his books on the Indians, their legends and their native way of life, Linderman wrote about mining towns, prospectors, and cowboys in Montana, and his trapping days in the Flathead Valley.

In 1930 Linderman went to New York with his (now famous) manuscript of the life story of Plenty-coups, the great Crow chief. While there he found a new publisher for his work, the John Day Company. From then until his death, in spite of continuing frustrations, he kept writing.

Book sales were slow and royalties low because of the Great Depression of the 1930s, and public interest in the Indians and the West was in decline. But, he said, writing was like a "disease" and though he often threatened to "quit the game," he could not stay away from it. On April 24, 1938, he wrote to his friend and fellow author, Hermann Hagedorn:

... Haven't a thing in mind to do when I get home [to Goose Bay from Santa Barbara]--but of course I'll have to write. Couldn't help writing even if I wished to. Been wondering if a book of Injin hero-tales, stories of warriors (told in short story form) would find a market.
Linderman left this world for the Shadow-hills on May 12, 1938. For a tribute issue of Frontier and Midland, a literary magazine published by Merriam at the University of Montana, Hagedorn eulogized Linderman as

... a man who lived by the truth and hated every kind of crookedness; a man to depend on in trouble; a man who was kind, who was loyal, who could laugh and rage with equal heartiness, and was as faithful a friend and as comprehending a recorder as the American Indian ever had.

Hagedorn concluded with a suggestion that might be considered and found valuable by Montanans today:

Montana should name a mountain for him, on whose slopes, once a year, in memory of him, the white man and the Indian might meet, to smoke the pipe of reconciliation.

Frank Linderman and Charley Russell looked forward to the times they could get together and "make medicine." Perhaps, as Frank would say, they are "camped on a showery cloud," waiting for the medicine-smoke imagined by Hagedorn.

Day Child would be there on that hill. Full-of-dew might be waiting, with Two-comes-over-the-hill, a Kootenai storyteller, and Cold-wind, a Crow. Little Bear, Rocky Boy, Big Rock, Plenty-coups, Pretty-shield, Wolf and his heart woman Breath Feather, Red Robe, with his daughter, Bluebird. These and many more of Frank's friends and story characters, whose prayers are a part of the spirit of the land in the Big Sky, would gather in the atmosphere and join us on that mountain in his memory.
The west is dead my Friend
But writers hold the seed
And what they saw
Will live and grow
Again to those who read

C.M. Russell
1917

Charley Russell inscription in Indian Why Stories
written in a gift copy for Russell's neighbor Neddy Bay Lincoln
from "Paper Talk": Charley Russell's American West
(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., in association with the Amon Carter
Museum of Western Art, 1979), p. 115.
APPENDIX I

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PUBLISHED BOOKS WRITTEN BY FRANK BIRD LINDERMAN

APPENDIX II

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ROCKY BOY SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY, RESERVATION MAP, CREE ALPHABET
APPENDIX I

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PUBLISHED BOOKS WRITTEN BY
FRANK BIRD LINDERMAN


**On a Passing Frontier:** Sketches from the Northwest. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920.


**Bunch-Grass and Blue-Joint.** New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921. Verse.


Illustrated by H.M. Stoops.


Illustrated by H.M. Stoops.


APPENDIX II

LETTER TO CATO SELLS
from Frank Linderman

Dillon, Montana
March 1, 1916

Mr. Cato Sells,
Commissioner, Indian Affairs,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Sells:

Your telegram was forwarded to me here, and this morning I wired you that it would be impossible for me to come to Washington, because of a summons to appear before the Supreme Court of this state, on the 13th.

A year ago, the Governor appointed me a member of a Commission to adjust matters concerning a division of counties, and there has been objection raised by one of these counties as to the findings of this Commission, and therefore, I will have to appear as ordered.

Senator Myers is in possession of a great many letters dealing with the situation, and Mr. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, is also in possession of many letters on the same subject. I understand that the argument is made that these Indians are Canadians, and have no right to expect aid from this Government. I am conversant with the facts in the case and will set them forth as I know them.

Over sixty years ago, a band of Chippewas came to Montana from Wisconsin. They left Wisconsin to hunt buffalo and Montana was then a wild, unsettled country. Years passed, and the Chippewas were given land, but this remnant of that great tribe was not considered and in fact was forgotten. They remained here and hunted buffalo all over this state. Across the line were the Crees, who spoke practically the same language as the Chippewas, and had always been friends and allies. They intermingled and intermarried, and the Crees used to hunt and live in Montana a great deal in the early days, as everyone knows. There was no line known to them, dividing this country from that of Canada, and when the real rebellion [sic] broke out in 1885,
these Chippewas did to a certain extent help their Cree friends in the fight against the mounted police and British troops. But that is no reason why the Chippewas should be considered British subjects. Our own forefathers might have been called British for the same offense in Revolutionary days. But allowing that they were all British subjects in 1885, they have lived in Montana ever since the real rebellion \[sic\]. All old men that were in that fight are dead, and the younger men and women were born in Montana. That trouble was thirty-one years ago, and continuous residence, unquestioned residence, should make them Americans by this time, even if they were not in the beginning.

Of all the Indian tribes, the Chippewas are the greatest. History will show that they have been friendly to the white people, and that they did make war upon and practically annihilate several tribes that were always hostile to the whites.

Montana is settling fast, and every bit of open country that can be cultivated is being taken for farming purposes. Each day the situation grows more serious, and Fort Assinniboine Military Reservation is the only land available to give them, as a Reservation.

There is no use giving them land that cannot be cultivated, and the two southern townships of the Reservation are wholly unfit for agricultural purposes. The altitude ranges from 4000 to 7000 feet, and if put upon that land alone they would be unable to raise crops. I have written Senator Myers many letters, asking him to amend Senate Bill No. 3646, so as to include Twp. 29 N., R. 15 E., and I have said that we would be satisfied if that were done, and the three townships, or fractional townships, were given them. This last township does include a good deal of tillable land, and upon it these Indians did raise a good crop of vegetables last summer.

Every winter these people have starved, and I have begged food for them, and also purchased it out of my own pocket. Each winter I am compelled to advertise for old clothes and blankets for these people, and to collect the same and ship it to their camps. This has been going on for years, and the weakened conditions of these Indians make them susceptible to illness. Their women and children die of cold and hunger, and the men do their very best to secure work at that.

The Crees and Chippewas are known to be the best workers among the Indians, and I think all white men who know them will verify this statement. But they can get no employment because they are Indians; and I have had cases
where they were discharged because they were not union men, and I have heard of a case where an Indian was not allowed in a union, because he was not a white man. Aside from a few people in the City of Havre, I know of no individual in this state who is opposed to the giving of this land to these people. It is pitiful to see them going through alleys and picking from garbage cans, and in this way obtaining bits of food that have been thrown away. They have never had a home or a place to camp, and no community wants them at its back door. But the land we propose to give them is far away from the railroad, and far away from any town; and if Senator Myers would amend his bill, cutting down the size of the proposed "permanent park and camping ground for Havre's people," and give these Indians at least three townships upon which to live, everyone in the state, aside from the few I have mentioned, would be highly pleased.

These Indians are honorable in their dealings, and I have found them truthful in their statements. They are not thieves, and I have often wondered how they lived, and refrained from killing cattle when they are actually starving to death in sight of plenty. To verify the statements I have made, I refer you to Ex-Senator Paris Gibson, of Great Falls; William M. Bole, of Great Falls Tribune; Percy Raban, of Wadsworth & Raban; and Charles M. Russell, the Cow Boy Artist; all of Great Falls, Montana.

I would gladly come to Washington, and I will at all times do anything possible to aid in helping these people. They are scattered all over Montana, and there are between six and eight hundred of them. They are to be found on the Flathead, Crow, Belknap and Blackfoot [sic] Reservations; and are also to be found living in small camps on the outskirts of communities.

I could tell you stories that are true that would make you ashamed of your American Citizenship. New born babies have frozen to death this winter, and their mothers have perished too. I know two of these women who were camped on the plains when the weather was forty degrees below zero. They had one horse, and with this animal they dragged willows for a fire, which they had made under an old iron tub they had found in an alley. The horse having no feed, and being kept on the big road in the snow, froze to death; and then, the women were without fire wood, except what they could carry long distances on their backs. But the horse's carcass was eaten, and practically saved their lives, after all.

I talk with men all over this state who are prominent in public affairs, and I have never found a single man who does not say, "Do your best Linderman; we are all with
"you," but they do not come out and help as they should. I have seen camps in the snow where these people were obliged to burn small willows, and live on the flesh of dogs. I have seen them eat the head, the legs, and [send] the offal [waste parts of butchered animal] to their friends in other camps, when the soldiers butchered a beef. For long periods this winter, they were absolutely without food that was supposed to have been furnished by the Government, and in these cases they always appealed to me; and they tell me that I could, if I would, remedy the situation. I wish I could show the Committee of the House and Senate this camp of misery and want, and I do not think that there is a member of it who would not be glad to go back to Washington and lend his voice toward giving them a home, and help.

Permanent camping grounds and play grounds are well enough; but in the sight of so much misery and want, I do not think that a ham sandwich would appeal to me, even if the play ground or park belonged to the community in which I lived.

If this Government cannot and will not find a country for these people, then why in Heaven's name will they not send a squad of regular soldiers to the camps and shoot them. If, during this session of Congress nothing is done of permanent good, I am going to use the eastern magazines for the publication of articles dealing with the subject, and they will be thoroughly illustrated. I know that Mr. Lane and yourself have been fair, and when I found out that through Mr. Lane's efforts the President had threatened to veto the bill opening Fort Assinniboine Military Reservation, unless some of the land were given to these Indians, I felt indebted to him, and shall always remember him as a man with a heart.

I regret very much that I cannot come to Washington, but later, if you think it necessary, I will try to come. I wish you would let me know what is being done, and what the outlook is, in order that I may help in every way possible.

Yours truly,

Frank B. Linderman Papers
Museum of the Plains Indian
Browning, Montana, Br 1:28

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APPENDIX III

LITTLE BEAR'S ORIGIN STORY
as told to and written by
Frank Bird Linderman

Little-bear, the young Cree chief, believed that he possessed a perfect right to remain in the United States, telling me this story soon after crossing the line. "Many years ago," he said, "my father, with a strong war-party of Creees traveled to Northern Wisconsin to visit our friends, the Chippewas. Split-hip, the Chippewa Chief, had several wives, one of them being young and extremely beautiful. My father met this beautiful one beside a river where she was getting water for use in her lodge. He talked to her, made a little love to her, but she would not listen. Three times my father met this beautiful young wife of Split-hip's beside the river. Three times he talked to her, each time making a little love to her; and three times the young woman refused to listen to my father, who was Big-bear, chief of the Creees. And now this young woman told her man, Split-hip, that every time she went to the river for water a Cree warrior made love to her there.

"What man dares this," demanded Split-hip, angrily. "He is Big-bear, the Cree chief," answered the young woman.

"Big-bear is wise," said Split-hip, his anger dying. "Big-bear is brave and strong. Besides, he is my friend. I would honor him above any other man. If he makes love to you a fourth time I wish that you would listen to him."

"So she did," smiled Little-bear, "and one day I was born beside that same river in Wisconsin. My father, Big-bear, had long ago returned to his own country in Canada, and yet he knew when I came into this world. When I had grown to be four years old my father traveled again to Wisconsin, and got me. I never saw my mother again."

By ancient law among the tribes of the Northwest a child belongs to it's [sic] mother's clan, so that by the laws of white men and red men, Little-bear felt that he had a right to live in Montana. And here he elected to remain; and remain he did in spite of authorities on both sides of the line.

from "The Rocky-boy Renegades"
TMs [photocopy], FBL Estate Files

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APPENDIX IV

"THE PRESS GANG"
by Frank Linderman

Oh yes, I had quit it forever,
The scissors and paste and all that;
The haste and the frantic endeavor,
The typewriters' merry rat tat;
I tired of the holler for "copy,"
I longed for a life that was tame,
And my friends called me shabby and sloppy--
So I dropped from the newspaper game.

I left all the rush and the riot
Of giving the people the news.
And got me a job that was quiet
A kind of perpetual snooze.
Sometimes I would dictate a letter
To a pretty stenographer dame.
And I said to myself, "This is better
Than playing the newspaper game."

But something kept whispering, "Billy
You're out of your element here,
This sinecure's meant for some Willie
Who don't know a scoop from a beer;
This joint is too tied by decorum.
This routine is always the same,
Your clothes don't wear out where you wore 'em
When playing the newspaper game."

The whisper kept ever returning,
It never would let me alone,
I thought of the pay I was earning,
I thought of how fat I had grown,
Then I thought of the roar of the presses--
And who of the bunch here will blame?
And I thought of the strains and the stresses
And the lure of the newspaper game.

Whenever the newsboys would holler
Whenever the extras came out,
I tugged at my unsweated collar
And my heart strings were tugged by a doubt;
Till at last, boys, I doubted no longer,
I passed up my cinch and I came
To the call that I knew was the stronger,
And I plunged in the newspaper game.

The typewriters rattled to greet me
The smell of sour paste-pots was sweet,
I found the old bunch there to meet me,
I dropped in my battered old seat;
The news room was dingy and smoky
But a shiver of joy shook my frame,
For I'd quit the good job that was poky
And was back to the newspaper game.

Below were the linotypes clicking
And the smell of hot lead came to me,
The sport man was nervously flicking
The ash from his cigarootee!
There was rush, there was clatter and clamor.
And it stirred up dead embers to flame,
And I knew I was slave to the glamor
And glow of the newspaper game.

I tossed off my coat in a hurry,
I shoved my hat back on my head,
Amid all that nerve racking flurry
I felt as though raised from the dead.
My typewriter acted unruly
My fingers felt clumsy and lame,
But I knew I was back again truly
To the field of the newspaper game.

You can swear you will leave it behind you,
You can flee to wherever you will,
But the newspaper fever will find you
The newspaper fervor will thrill;
It makes or more likely it breaks you,
You die and leave scarcely a name,
But not until death comes and takes you
Are you free of the newspaper game.

Let the bookkeeper foot up his columns,
I'd rather fill columns with news,
Let the lawyer pore over his volumes,
Let the minister preach to his pews,
I'm back to the home of the story
T'ell with great riches or fame,
I'm right in the midst of my glory.
I'm back to the newspaper game.
"Hidden in most folks, if not in all, there is a sentiment for religion, because all men are naturally religious," said the Major. "You don't believe it? Well, they are, and the tendency has been a curse as well as a blessing, for designing prophets have led them over crooked trails. And yet--well, let me tell you of an old fellow I used to know.

"Uncle Billy we called him then, and Uncle Billy will do now. He was an old prospector and miner who came to Montana in the early sixties. When I knew him he was working a little gold lead in Madison county--the 'Camp-Robber,' he called it. The vein was small, but the 'pay' was gold and it was 'free' in the ore. So the old fellow worked it through an arastra, the crudest, and at the same time the surest way of saving gold yet discovered, I reckon.

"Uncle Billy was a bachelor, of course, and I used to visit him often. He was a keen-minded old man and neat as a pin. He had lived alone most of his life and was somewhat of a crank because he had. Most of them are, you know. But I surprised my friend one Sunday morning.

"I was near to the camp when the great beauty of the day halted me in the little clearing near Uncle Billy's cabin. The sun was rising over the big peak on the far side of the gulch, and his rays, like messengers, sped on down the rough mountain-side to wake the flowers and crawling things and warn them of his coming. A yellowhammer drummed on the dead top of a pine away in the wilds, where, high up in the golden light that glinted on his bright wing-feathers, his call woke the choirs in the thickets below. And even as the bird-song grew in volume I felt ever more keenly the silence of the great open country.

"Uncle Billy, standing on a mossy mound where the bluebells grew in clusters, was watching the sun rise, and so absorbed was he that for long I did not speak. Erect, with arms folded, bare-headed, and silent, the old man stood until the flood-light fell full upon him; when he murmured 'Amen.'

"I was startled, but he turned slowly, and without showing the least surprise, said: 'Good mornin', friend. Ye're early. Sit down and we'll have a smoke.'"
"Without further speech he began cutting tobacco for his pipe, which he filled and lighted. Then as a wreath of the fragrant mist floated past me he said:

"'I had an Injin pardner once, an' after he had gone his way all of a sudden it came to me that he was right in a heap of things. I used to watch that Injin because he was a good man; and from him I learned some queer things that seemed to fit into my own life—so I adopted 'em.

"'First of all I noticed that every beauty spot in nature was a shrine to him. He didn't tell me so, but I saw it and felt it. Before a brilliant sunset or a noisy waterfall he'd stand in silent admiration; an' I learned, after a while, that in each case he offered up his prayer to The Great Mystery. He had but one prayer, an' he told me that one: Let my children all grow old. That was all, an' it was never varied. It made me ashamed of myself an' my race. Once he told me that the birds were little people, an' after I'd learned to look an' listen, myself, I noticed that they had each just one sure-enough song, an' some of 'em only a single note. Then I thought of his only prayer.

"'I could talk to you for an hour about things I learned from that Injin. But he was an unwilling teacher, because he seemed to think that all live things believe an' think just as he did. Once I asked him: 'Who is God?' an' he replied: 'The sun, the earth, the flowers, the birds, the big trees, the people, the fire, an' the water is God. Sometimes they speak to me, an' I'm glad in my heart. Big trees speak the loudest to me. Others hear other things best.'

"'He seemed surprised at my question—seemed to think I must be jokin' him. But I'm mighty glad he answered as he did, for it blazed a new trail for me. I feel better toward my fellows an' I only pray for peace. It took a long, long time, but now I know

"'"The redman dares an only prayer; One perfume has the rose; When mornin' dawns, the robin sings The only song he knows.

The silent are the giant things That make the temple grand Amid a peace that nature meant All men should understand."'"
APPENDIX VI

ROCKY BOY SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

We believe the Owner, Maker of All Things, put us on our Mother Earth to respect one another and to be kind to one another in our relationships to all things and all people.

The Great Hawk was told the Old People long ago that all people and all things are but different branches on the same tree.

We are told that in our daily lives we must do these things:

- Respect Mother Earth and all things that live there.
- Respect the Elders, our Mothers, and our Sisters.
- Love one another and help one another.
- Pray in a good way to the Creator that we might get the power to help one another and to respect each other for our differences.
- Be truthful and respectful in our speech, which in itself is a miracle and a gift from the Creator, that we might use it only to speak good of each other and to pass on the good things of life.
- Remember that everything created on Mother Earth is useful, has a purpose, and was put here for a reason.
- Nothing is to be abused that has been created.
- Remember that all things have life, all things are related, and that all things are perfect as they have been created—wind, fire, water, rocks, animals, crawlers, birds, plants, the moon, the sun, and humans.
- Remember that the Earth was created for everyone and everything and that we are not to selfishly claim it.
- We are all to share the good things in life so that we all may live in harmony.
- Realize that we as human beings have been put on this earth for only a short time and that we must use this time to use our minds to gain wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of all human beings since we are all brothers.
- Be humble and respectful before the Creator every day and give thanks for putting us here on earth.
- Always be respectful of life. We are not to kill our fellow man.
- Remember that all of us as Elders of the Tribe, grandparents, parents and relatives are the people most responsible for the education of our children about our beliefs and how to live in this world. We are responsible for educating them to acquire the understanding, knowledge, wisdom, and respect for Mother Earth and everything that inhabits her.

In view of these teachings and beliefs of the Chippewa-Cree Tribe, we declare it to be the natural and inherent right of Tribal members to control and determine the educational goals for our children.

The Rocky Boy School is committed to the hiring of teachers and other staff members, regardless of race and cultural beliefs, to assist us in carrying out the goals and philosophy of education for our children. We firmly believe that exposure and knowledge of other people and beliefs different from ours will only be of help in advancing their overall educational achievement.

We believe in the uniqueness of the individual and want our children to have deep respect for each other and for those things and people who may be different from them. We believe that racism and prejudice, in any form, are useless exercises for the human mind because they only breed hatred, misunderstanding, and unhappiness. They ignore the realities of the world, because there are different people and beliefs which have a right to exist as long as theirs do not attempt to do away with our way of life.

We believe that the Rocky Boy School must reflect the Indian people's past and future way of life. For this reason, the teaching and learning experiences to which the children are exposed will include our language, culture, and heritage as well as that of America in the English language. The Rocky Boy School will be a bicultural school.

The learning experiences offered to the students and adults will enable them to explore and choose among different learning experiences which will aid in their development as persons with pride and self-esteem capable of relating to, understanding, and functioning in their Tribal environment and the world around them.

The Rocky Boy School is open to all people because we have been taught that we are to greet people in a good way no matter who they are or where they come from.

The Rocky Boy School recognizes that in the school the teacher has the most immediate effect on learning and is therefore committed to hiring and retaining those teachers who are committed to its philosophy and goals.

We recognize that learning is a life-long process; therefore, we are committed to acquiring, developing, and implementing educational programs that will meet the individual's special needs from birth to old age.

From "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow"

A Comprehensive Report of the Rocky Boy Educational System
DEDICATION

This "Comprehensive Rocky Boy Educational Report" is dedicated with deep respect to our Elders, who have through their wisdom and leadership provided the Rocky Boy People with those skills which have assured our survival as a people; and second, to the past and current members of the Rocky Boy Tribal Council who have provided the support necessary to improve the quality of education on the Rocky Boy Reservation; and, finally, to our young Chippewa-Cree children, in whose hands will lie the future survival of our People.

From "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow"
A Comprehensive Report of the Rocky Boy Educational System
APPENDIX VI

KEY TO THE CREE SYLLABIC CHARACTERS

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Traditional Cree Education

Long before the white man (wah-pis-ki wi-yahs) came to this country a Cree, or four bodies (Ne-i-yahw), named Hunting Berry Tree (Mah-chi-mi-nah-tik), decided to go and make peace with his Creator. He went into the mountains and started to fast (mah-chi-ki-ko-si-mow). After a long time, nobody knew how long, a man dressed in pure white came to Hunting Berry Tree. This man told Hunting Berry Tree of the blessing he would receive, something he would use, and how to make it. He was taught the Four Bodies Writing (Ne-i-yahw Mah-si-nah-i-kahn) and the songs along with it. He was told of how the world began and up to the time of Hunting Berry Tree. He was told of the future and what would happen. He was told not to lose his tradition, culture and customs. If he lost these everything would be in turmoil. And at the time, very shortly, the world would be changed again.

After the white man arrived with his missionaries and priests, many Indians were converted to that religion — the Christian religion. The white men claimed they made the Four Bodies Writing. But they did not use the songs the Cree uses. Today those songs Hunting Berry Tree were taught still exist.

It was not known where this man Hunting Berry Tree came from, or where he went after he left the people. People believed he was the spirit from the Creator.

From "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow"

A Comprehensive Report of the Rocky Boy Educational System

ENDNOTES

To the reader: most of the cross references below give the chapter number and endnote number, but not the specific page number in the text. In some instances the note refers to information found in another endnote, but usually, to find the reference, locate the chapter and endnote in the text.

PREFACE


INTRODUCTION

1. (a) the big trees spoke to him: Linderman, Montana Adventure, p. 161;
   (b) a white man with a single tongue: Ibid., p. 143;


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CHAPTER 1
PAPER PROMISES
1908–1913

(b) also, in news article 7 Aug 1913 copied in Raymond Gray, "The Cree Indians" TMs [photocopy], (Bozeman, Mont.: W.P.A. Federal Writer's Project, 1941-42), p. 83.
(c) for "moccasined feet" description: see photo of men in front of Placer Hotel, Helena, Mont.

2. (a) vagabonds and wanderers: Senator Henry L. Myers to Frank Linderman, 1 Feb 1916, in the Frank B. Linderman Papers, Museum of the Plains Indian, Browning, Montana, Box 1, File 19 [hereafter, Br box#:file#].

3. (a) you have a good friend here: in letter from William Bole to Franklin Lane, 8 Sep 1913, BIA Files;
(b) I want to make a third friend: quotation from article in the Conrad Observer, 7 Aug 1913, in Gray, "The Cree Indians," p. 84.

4. Linderman, Montana Adventure, 140-141.

5. Ibid., pp. 162-163.


11. Ibid., p. 4, p. 6.

12. Linderman to Harry Stanford, [27 Apr] 1916, Br 2-27. Date is determined by the content of the letter, see Chap. 5, endnote 36, for explanation.


15. Great Falls Tribune, 8 Jan 1909, p. 2.

16. Ibid., 10 Jan 1909, p. 12.


18. Anaconda Standard, 13 Dec 1910, BIA Files. For information on Panetoo and Full-of-Dew being the same person, see Chap. 2, endnote 56.


30. Russell to Linderman, n.d. 1913, in the Frank Bird Linderman Papers, Collection 7, K. Ross Toole Archives, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana, Box 4, File 5 [hereafter, UM box#:file#].


**CHAPTER 2**  
**FRIENDS FOREVER**


5. Ibid.: mighty blue, p. 5; lonely as a hole, p. 6.

6. Ibid., p. 8.

17. Ibid., pp. 154-161. This and the following information comes from Dempsey's account of the Frog Lake Massacre.
18. Ibid, p. 25. An existing picture of Little Bear shows his year of birth as 1866, 15 years after Dempsey's date. This would have made Little Bear 55 at the time of his death in 1921. Dempsey's date, 1851, would have made the Cree leader 70 in 1921. In Ewers, "Report on Chippewa and Cree Tribe," in a tribal background analysis taken from the "Tentative Roll of the Rocky Boy Indians," dated 30 May 1917, there are two entries for people named Little Bear: Little Bear, age 66, born 1851, birthplace Little Hills, Sask., in Montana since 1883; (Little Bear), Bad Face, age 53, born 1864, birthplace Alberta, Canada, in Montana since 1885. Neither entry shows tribal affiliation. See Ewers, pp. 138-139. See also: Chap. 2, endnote 41; Chap. 4, endnote 19.


24. Ibid., pp. 67-68. Linderman's reference to Duck Creek may be an error, intended to mean Frog Lake, or may be in reference to some encounter other than or following the Frog Lake Massacre.

25. Ibid., p. 68.

26. Ibid., pp. 68-69.

27. Ibid., pp. 99-100.

28. Ibid., p. 118.

29. Ibid., pp. 119-122.


31. Frank Linderman, "Uncle Billy Sayings" and untitled poem are from two sources: (a) sayings 1-3: newspaper article, n.p., Frank Bird Linderman Collection, Folio III, K. Ross Toole Archives, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana [hereafter, FBL Collection, Folio III]; (b) sayings 4-9: Linderman to Rossiter, 22 Dec 1906, 28 Mar 1908, 7 Apr 1909, 18 Sep 1906, 17 Jan 1936; Rossiter Collection; (c) Untitled poem: Linderman to Rossiter, 18 Sep 1906, Rossiter Collection.


33. Linderman to Rossiter, [ca. 1912], Rossiter Collection.

34. Linderman, *Montana Adventure*, pp. 123-124. Linderman was elected to the Eighth Legislature in 1902, which met in 1903; he was re-elected in 1904 to the Ninth Legislature, which met in 1905.

35. Ibid., Merriam, editor's footnote, p. 124.

36. Ibid., p. 140. Linderman did not date much of the information in *Montana Adventure*, but clues indicate the Indians were camped outside Helena in the winter of 1905-06. He opened his assay office in mid-1907; this story relates to a time seemingly not long after the
assay office was opened, and in the story he says they had been camped there "for over a year now."


41. Dempsey, Big Bear, p. 25. See also: Chap. 2, endnote 18; Chap. 4, endnote 19.

On Little Bear's place of birth, see also Appendix III, Little Bear's origin story as told to Frank Linderman.


44. Ibid., p. 116.

45. (a) Rocky Boy's date of birth: Ewers, "Report on Chippewa Cree Tribe," p. 145; (b) fine features: Linderman, Montana Adventure, p. 161; (c) not so warlike, and translations of his name: FBL note on letter from Rocky Boy, 16 Jan 1913, Br 1:24.


48. Ibid., p. 147.

49. Ibid.

50. Thomas R. Wessel, "A History of the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation" TMs [photocopy], (Bozeman, Mont., 1975), p. 38 [hereafter, "History of Rocky Boy's Reservation]. See also: Chap. 1, endnote 20, and letter from Baker to Linderman, 6 Dec 1912, in which Baker refers to his
assignment which was "to select and locate Rocky Boy's Band of Chippewas and other non-reservation Indians in the state of Montana," and his final report submitted 10 Oct 1912, in which he recommended that land at Fort Assiniboine "be set aside for Rocky Boy's Band and other homeless Indians in Montana." (in text Chap. 1)


53. Linderman, Montana Adventure, p. 150.


55. Linderman, Montana Adventure, p. 150.

56. Chief Panetoo (Full-of-Dew) to Linderman, 15 Mar 1912, 19 Apr 1912, Br 1:20. Linderman note attached to these letters reads:
   Panetoo (Full-of-Dew) was chief of the Chippewas so was Rocky-Boy. Little Bear was chief of the Cree tribe. These letters were thoroughly disinfected [to protect from the spread of tuberculosis or other contagious disease].
   -- [note written] by F.B.L.


58. Linderman, Montana Adventure, p. 152. See also: Chap. 4, endnote 27.

59. (a) Rocky Boy to Linderman, 16 Jan 1913, Br 1:24; (b) Theodore Gibson to Linderman, 2 Oct 1912, Br 1:11. Most people referred to him as "Frank" (see Epilogue).

CHAPTER 3
ON THE LAND
1913-1915


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6. (a) request for permission: Bole to Department of the Interior, 3 Oct 1913, BIA Files; (b) evidence of Rocky Boy at Fort Assiniboine: Bole to Sells (telegram) 26 Jan 1914, BIA Files; Sen. Thomas Walsh to Sells, 31 Jan 1914, BIA Files.

   Note the following evidence of why Little Bear moved to Great Falls, and my statement about Bole's influence:
   (a) Bole to Lane, 8 Sep 1913, BIA Files: I have had a great many visits from them [the Chippewa-Cree Indians]. Little Bear and his band have moved to Great Falls from Helena, and Rocky Boy has come down from Browning to be near me I guess. . . . Senator Gibson, myself and F.B. Linderman of Helena are getting up a bill to be presented at the December session of Congress. . . .
   (b) Lane to Sells, 7 Nov 1913, BIA Files:
      Here is a letter from Mr. Wm. M. Bole, Editor of the Great Falls Tribune, with respect to the Rocky Boy band of Indians. Mr. Bole is our good friend and was with me when I had an interview with this band on my western trip. You will note that he is trying to do something to help these unfortunate people. Please give his letter your personal attention and take up at once the different matters referred to by him and communicate with him direct, letting me know also what we can do in the matter.

8. Great Falls Tribune, 1 Dec 1913, p. 11.


12. Ibid., p. 266, pp. 299-300.


15. Bole to Sells, telegram, 12 Jan 1914, BIA Files.

16. Bole to Sells, telegram, 26 Jan 1914, BIA Files.

17. For this information and the quotation in the next paragraph, see Gray, "The Cree Indians," pp. 86-88.


20. Lane to Bole, 2 Jun 1914, Br 1:3.

21. Lane to Bole, 2 Jun 1914, Br 1:3.


27. Linderman to Lane, 23 Nov 1914, Br 1:16.


29. (a) Bill of Lading, Great Northern Railway Co., 8 Jan 1915, Br 2:8; (b) Paris Gibson to Myers, telegram, 16 Feb 1915, BIA Files.


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33. Linderman to Lane, 10 Jul 1915, Br 1:16.
(b) Linderman to Rossiter, 7 Jan 1911, Rossiter Collection.
38. One of Linderman's friends on the Blackfeet Reservation, whose letters are in the UM Linderman archival collection, was Hugh Monroe, and his sons Jess and Joe.
42. Scribner's to Dr. O. M. Lanstrum, 1 Mar 1915, UM 5:14.
44. Linderman to Scribner's, 14 Jun 1915, UM 4:12.
46. Linderman to Scribner's, 29 Jun 1915, UM 4:12.
47. Scribner's to Linderman, 22 Sep 1915, UM 4:12. Linderman was born 25 Sep 1869; Scribner's set date of publication of Indian Why Stories for 25 Sep 1915.
49. Linderman to Grinnell, 9 Feb 1916, UM 2:10.
50. A subtle indication of this plan might be read in the closing of a letter Linderman wrote to Superintendent McFatridge on 10 June 1915, in which Linderman said: "Scribners have accepted my book and I do not know when it will be published, but when it is Cato Sells will get his." Linderman to McFatridge, Br 2:10.
CHAPTER 4
WAR EAGLE'S LODGE


Note: Dempsey used the term "the Manitou" in Big Bear. A holy man, preparing to open the bundle Big Bear had brought back from his medicine vision, which contained a fearsome bear's paw, spoke these words:
"You got your power from the Manitou [emphasis mine] and now give it to the people," the holy man said, speaking directly to the bundle.
"I'm going to untie you now..." (Dempsey, p. 21)
Manitou is everything, nature, the all that is. Referring to the Manitou as "he" and "himself" limits the perception of this word, which is perhaps better understood as the source and flow or process of life.


15. Dempsey, Big Bear, p. 12.
16. Ibid., p. 17.
17. Ibid., pp. 20-21.
18. Ibid., p. 28. Dempsey refers to the Thirst Dance, as did early newspaper articles (1890s); Linderman refers to the Sun Dance.
19. Ibid., p. 25. See Chap. 2, notes 18 and 41. For Little Bear's origin story as told to Linderman, found in unpublished manuscript "The Rocky Boy Renegades," written by Linderman (1933 or 1934), see Appendix III.
22. The wolf war headdress and the otter skin collar are listed in the FBL Collection Catalogue, but the black stone pipe is not. The story of the black stone pipe appears in Linderman, Montana Adventure, p. 143. See Chap. 6, endnote 21, and the story above it in text (Linderman gave Little Bear $3.00 so Little Bear could fulfill a promise he had made to Rocky Boy).
23. Piegans, also spelled Pecunnies, Pikunis; a tribe of the Blackfeet. Other Blackfeet tribes are the Bloods, from Canada, and the Blackfoot.
28. Retyped notes of story that was in Demersville Inter Lake, 21 Dec 1890, Br 2:8. Sent to Linderman by Harry P. Stanford of Kalispell, n.d.

CHAPTER 5
CREATION OF THE RESERVATION
1916

1. Linderman to von dem Bussche, 17 Jan 1916, Br 1:33
4. U.S. Senate Bill 3646, 18 Jan 1916, Br 2:6. This bill was to amend the Act of 11 Feb 1915 (38 Stat. L., 807). It was introduced by Sen. Myers, read twice, then referred to the Senate Committee on Public Lands.
8. (a) Linderman to Little Bear, 26 Jan 1916, Br 1:18; (b) Linderman to Rocky Boy, 26 Jan 1916, Br 1:24.
29. Linderman to Sells, 1 Mar 1916, Br 1:28. For the entire letter, see Appendix II.
   Note: Sells wrote to Lane, "Undoubtedly this question of providing for these Indians will continue to cause the Indian Office and the Department [of the Interior] considerable embarrassment until it is definitely settled in some permanent manner." 26 Nov 1913, BIA Files.
33. Linderman to Rossiter, 7 Feb 1907, Rossiter Collection.
34. Linderman to Grinnell, 24 Mar 1916, Br 1:12.
36. Linderman to Stanford, [27 Apr] 1916, Br 2:27. Date determined by content of letter, in which Linderman said, "she passed the 'House O' Lords" three days ago." This letter was written in answer to letter from Stanford dated 22 Apr 1916; S. 3646 passed 24 Apr 1916. See also: Chap. 1, endnote 12.
40. This and the following quotes are from Linderman to Myers, 11 Dec 1916, Br 1:19.

CHAPTER 6
A SQUARE DEAL

1. Havre Plaindealer, [15 Mar] 1913, quoted in Dusenberry, The Montana Cree, p. 45. Date determined by evidence: Dusenberry said Linderman interview was printed in the Great Falls Leader on 13 Mar 1913, and the Havre Plaindealer "retorted two days later."

2. Algeria Magazine (Helena) 3, no. 3 (20 Dec 1919), found in FBL Collection, Folio III.


6. Ibid., pp. 24-25, p. 10.

7. Ibid., the story of Shorty Young's enterprises and friends is found in pp. 10-28.

8. Ibid., p. 25, p. 111.


11. "Lone Wolf" was the Cree Indians' name for Lige Mounts in Linderman's novel Morning Light. Linderman identified himself, through his early experiences in Montana Territory, with his character, Lige Mounts.


15. Russell to Linderman, [early 1914], in Recollections, between pp. 60-61. Date determined from mention of pin in letter from Nancy Russell to Linderman, 27 Jan 1914.


17. Lane and Wall, eds., Letters of Franklin K. Lane, pp. 126-128.

18. Ibid., pp. 131-133.

Note: Looking back in time we can see that native Americans suffered both physically and spiritually, and lost much of their land, during the "Progressive Era." But, in the The Great Father, a history of U.S. government and American Indian relations, author Francis Paul Prucha said that during that time the Indian Office was run by men of ability and integrity, who were serious about their role as the Indians' guardian, and were "free of fraud and corruption, misguided as their policies might seem to later generations." (Prucha, p. 264)


21. Linderman, *Montana Adventure*, pp. 142-143. When Little Bear gave Linderman the black stone pipe he said: "I give you this because you are the only white man I have ever known who does not lie." Also: see Chap. 4, endnote 22.


34. Bole to Sells, telegram, 26 Jan 1914, BIA Files.

35. Gibson to Myers, 16 Feb 1915, BIA Files.


Note: Things were still bad for the Chippewa and Cree at Rocky Boy 11 years later, according to Wessel. In the following quotation from his history of the reservation, he wrote about the quantity and quality of the rations the people were receiving in 1928:

Although report after report noted that the Rocky Boy's Indians' general state of malnutrition was a major factor in their susceptibility to respiratory diseases, Shotwell continued Keeley's policy of keeping the ration roll to a minimum. By 1928, he had limited ration recipients primarily to the old and infirmed. . . . complaints about the quality of the ration and the adequacy of the older people's diet continued. . . . the only "square meal" that many of the children received came at the noon lunch served at the day school. . . . Rations to the old and the sick consisted of fat pork, beans, flour, and tea [emphasis mine]. An inspection of the food supplies on the reservation revealed that the fat pork allotment was four years old and unfit for human consumption and that a supply of beef extract was also "utterly unfit to be consumed." (Wessel, pp. 127-128)

An example of people asking for personal advice is found in a letter from Linderman to Little Bear, 15 Mar 1915, Br 1:18:
I have a letter from somebody in your camp about Jim Chippewa and Mrs. Paneto. I cannot say what is right until I know both sides of the case. It is wrong for a man to beat a woman, and a woman should not be made to live with such a man. If Jim Chippewa has gone away I think Mrs. Paneto should be allowed to do as she pleases about taking him back. I do not know whether these people were married lawfully or not. If they were, I cannot interfere. If they were not married by the white man's law it would be different.

55. Samatte to Linderman, 10 Jul 1917, Br 1:27.
57. Linderman, "The Rocky Boy Renegades" TMs [photocopy], n.d. [1933 or 1934], p. 7.
60. C.L. Ellis to Sells, 26 Jun 1916, Br 1:28.
64. Roasting Stick and Malcolm Mitchell to Linderman, 10 Dec 1931, Br 1-23. Invitation to Linderman, n.d., but same handwriting as letter, and mentions returning from visit to Linderman's home at Goose Bay. Note: (a) Regarding Roasting Stick and Mitchell's comment "we will then have you adopted to this tribe":
   (1) Linderman to Roberts, 12 Mar 1918, FBL Estate Files, see Chapter 2, endnote 9:
      In fact I am a Chippewa by adoption and as the Crees and Chippewas claim kinship and have always been allies, I feel myself to be as much
a Cree as a Chippewa."

(2) Linderman to Sells, 10 Jun 1916, Br 1:28:
I have just returned from a talk with some of
the older men of the Chippewa tribe, and would
like to set forth to you some of the things
that were told to me by Big Rock, whom I have
known for thirty years. . . . [He] tells me
that they are issued three days rations every
two weeks, and that that is all they receive.
He is a very old man and I will stake my life on
his word to me, because I am his adopted
"younger brother." This probably means nothing
to you, but a great deal to the old man. . . ."

Perhaps Roasting Stick and Mitchell are referring to
adoption by the Cree, or by the newly forming Chippewa
Cree tribe at the Rocky Boy Reservation.

(b) Regarding allotment and Linderman's opinion of it:
(1) in 1930-1931 the families abandoned their central
camp at the agency, and moved to their individual
assignments of land on the reservation (mentioned
in Wessel, p. 141, 146);

(2) "The tiny Rocky Boy's Reservation, created long
after the others in 1916, was never allotted; and
the land remains completely in tribal hands."
(Malone and Roeder, p. 270);

(3) Linderman wrote to Montana Congressman Scott
Leavitt in Washington, D.C., 11 Nov 1931, Br 1:17:
A delegation of Chippewas, from Box Elder,
headed by old Roasting-stick, whom I have known
for 40 years, has just visited me here at Goose
Bay. These people wish to have their reserva­
tion allotted. . . . I told them that I was
against allotment, showed them what happened on
other reservations that had been allotted etc.
I finally sent them home to think again, prom­
ising that if they, or a large majority of
them, decided to ask for allotment I would help
them in the matter.

. . . Their arguments for allotment are
good, generally. And yet I advised against it.

(4) Linderman to Leavitt, 16 Dec 1931, Br 1:17:
Herewith petition from the Cree-Chippewa
Indians at Rocky-Boy asking for allotment of
their lands, etc. . . .
Remember this---the Cree-Chippewa band will
work. These are about the only Indians I know
who will get out and hustle, make a living, if
given opportunity. Perhaps they are right in
wanting their allotments--although I do not
myself like the plan. Anyhow let me hear from
you when you have time.


71. (a) one of his last public appearances: Norma Linderman Waller story about Linderman in the Kalispell News, 14 Jul 1962, Montana Historical Society newsclip file. (b) regarding Linderman's public speaking ability:
   (1) Grace Stone Coates article, 21 Mar 1935:
       Reporters admit they can't "get" Dr. Linderman on paper. "He can keep a room full of people roaring by the hour," said a newspaper man, "but if a run-of-the-mill reporter tried to take his talk it would fall flat. It's what Linderman puts into his talk besides words--no reporter can get that into print." Dr. Linderman has studied the Indian at first hand for 50 years. [Linderman was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Montana, Missoula, in 1927. See Epilogue.]
   (2) Susa Hand to Linderman, 7 Oct 1934, Br 2:28:
       You are to me--and the rest of the family--as an old friend for we've all read and reread certain of your books. Bunch-grass and Blue-joint is always at hand and read to all who'll listen. One member of our family who heard you tell stories said you hold a large group simply spell-bound for hours.... You certainly have the old timers' style in storytelling--I envy you that ability.
   (c) reference to "his tribe," see endnote 64(1)(a&b), above; Chapter 1, endnote 33; Chapter 4, endnote 7; also, for example, see Montana Adventure, Linderman's memoirs which he wrote in 1929-1930:
       (1) About this time [1912] I began to get inquiries from Washington respecting my tribe, as many people called the Crees and Chippewas. The government was preparing to abandon Fort Assin-
niboine, . . . and some time before this I had asked that a portion of this old military reservation be given these Indians. (p. 157)

(2) Many times while we waited for our reservation I tried to explain Congress to my tribe, drawing a rude map of the nation on the ground, marking off the states, showing them the number of representatives that each sent to Washington, always trying to make these Indians understand and excuse the slowness with which the ponderous body acts, even though I did not myself understand it. (p. 163)

EPILOGUE


2. (a) Evan Jones to Linderman, 19 Feb 1925, Br 1:13. Regarding reference to use of Linderman's first name, see also, Linderman to O. J. McGillis, Great Northern Railway Co., 25 Nov 1935, UM 2:9:
   I'm glad to call you, "Mac." Nobody ever called me "Mister." Even children insist upon calling me "Frank"; and my grandchildren call me "Doc," which is better than "Grandfather."
   After receiving an honorary doctoral degree on 6 Jun 1927, when Linderman returned home to Goose Bay his grandson called him "Doc." The name stuck, among his family members. (Interview with Sally Hatfield)
   (b) Second quote from this letter, Jones to Linderman, 19 Feb 1925, Br 1:13, regarding Indians' wish to have higher education available at the reservation, Jones continues with the following:
   They ask a good bit but it all seems to be within reason and they wish to progress very much. Many of the young men have expressed their desire to me at different times, to study medicine and law and they are ambitious to take part in state and national affairs.

   Linderman wrote letters in 1921-1922, and again in 1931, trying to help Day Child, who was a "full Blooded Chippewa" get enrolled with the Rocky Boy Indians. I found no evidence to show whether they succeeded, but think they did.

4. (a) facts about Rocky Boy Reservation and education system, from report: "Stone Child College--Then and Now" TMs [photocopy], [fall 1988];
(b) wealth is in the children and education: Bob Murie, interview by author, 18 May 1990;
(c) geological description, Prof. Dave Alt, telephone, 18 May 1990; description of bear: Bob Murie, interview by author, telephone, 12 Oct 1989, 18 May 1990.


Ibid., the statement above, regarding Linderman's sense of duty to preserve the old West in "printers' ink."

7. (a) Linderman, Indian Why Stories, p. x.
(b) Linderman, Morning Light, p. viii.

Linderman sculpted models of Charley Russell, Mark Twain, his Indian friends, characters from his stories and books of Indian legends, wolves, bears, and bison. A few of his sculptures, all of which were produced during the last ten years of his life, have recently been cast in limited edition bronze.

9. (a) the small bear, Linderman to daughters, 3 Jan 1927;
(b) "bug" for it, Linderman to daughters, 15 Jan 1927;
(c) in my blood, Linderman to daughters, 26 Nov 1926.; all UM 3:18.


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