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Book Review: The Real Rosebud: The Triumph of a Lakota Woman

Norma C. Wilson

University of South Dakota, Norma.Wilson@usd.edu

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The Real Rosebud: The Triumph of a Lakota Woman. By Marjorie Weinberg. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. xvii + 86 pp. Photographs, notes, references, index. \$19.95.

Weinberg's narrative shows how quickly life changed for Lakota people during the course of a century. Yellow Robe lived as a traditional Brule. Though his son, Chauncey, grew up in that world, Chauncey's adult life in Rapid City was very different from his youth. Rosebud, Chauncey's daughter, left the land of her ancestors in 1927 to spend most of her life in New York City. Yet each valued being Lakota.

Yellow Robe, born around 1826, fought the Seventh Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876. In 1883, at the Rosebud Agency, General Richard Pratt persuaded him to send two sons to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to learn what they could to help Indian people. Kills in the Woods took the name Chauncey at Carlisle.

Chauncey was successful at Carlisle. In 1893 he became an advocate of off-reservation schools for Indians and worked in Montana and Pennsylvania schools as a disciplinarian before taking a job as industrial arts instructor at the Rapid City Indian School in 1905. There he met and married Lillian Springer, a non-Indian nurse at the school.

Their daughter Rosebud, named for the Sioux reservation where she was enrolled, was born in 1907 and grew up in Rapid City where she attended public schools. In 1925 she became one of only two Indian students at the University of South Dakota, where she was known for her beauty and her cultural performances. After two years she left for New York City to try show business. There she performed

dances and told stories in hotels and theaters. After her mother's death, Rosebud persuaded her father to portray a chief in the film *The Silent Enemy*. Chauncey died April 6, 1930, the third anniversary of Lillian's death, and a month before the film opened.

In 1947 Marjorie Weinburg met Rosebud Yellow Robe at the Jones Beach Indian Village on Long Island. There Rosebud worked for twenty years, teaching youth about American Indians through archery, crafts, and stories. The women remained devoted friends until Rosebud's death. With this book, Weinberg fulfills a commitment to write the story of the remarkable Yellow Robe family.

NORMA C. WILSON
Department of English
University of South Dakota