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Jeffrey Ostler

University of Oregon, jostler@uoregon.edu

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“THE LAST BUFFALO HUNT” AND BEYOND PLAINS SIOUX ECONOMIC STRATEGIES IN THE EARLY RESERVATION PERIOD

JEFFREY OSTLER

Sometime in late May 1882, several thousand bison appeared on the Great Sioux reservation about 100 miles west of the Standing Rock Indian agency (see Fig. 1). According to James McLaughlin, the Standing Rock agent, the Indians knew “instinctively” that the buffalo had arrived, even though “it had been many years since the buffalo had sought the hunting-grounds of that part of the reservation.” With this “rich store of succulent meat in sight,” McLaughlin continued, “it was not

possible that the Indians could be held in check.” On 10 June, over 600 Standing Rock Lakota and Yanktonais left the agency. Days later, they located the herd and killed 5,000 bison.¹

McLaughlin’s contention that the Indians knew “instinctively” that the bison had arrived revealed the common tendency of European Americans to represent Indians as primitives, so close to nature as to be almost animal-like. (The Standing Rock Sioux themselves probably attributed their knowledge of the bison’s presence to a combination of religious and empirical sources.) With its tone of light-hearted nostalgia, McLaughlin’s and other similar accounts of the “last buffalo hunt” also reflected the standard trope of the “vanishing Indian.” Like most Americans of the time, McLaughlin saw history as the outworking of inevitable laws of “progress.” These laws decreed that the buffalo must disappear and that, when they did, Plains Indians would either die off or be assimilated by a supposedly superior “civilization.” In this narrative, the last buffalo hunt decisively marked the end of a way of life. There was little room for continuity between the past and the future.²

KEY WORDS: *bison, colonialism, Indian reservations, Lakota, Native Americans, Sioux*

Jeffrey Ostler is a faculty member in the department of history at the University of Oregon. He is currently working on a book on US-Lakota relations from the time of Lewis & Clark to Wounded Knee.

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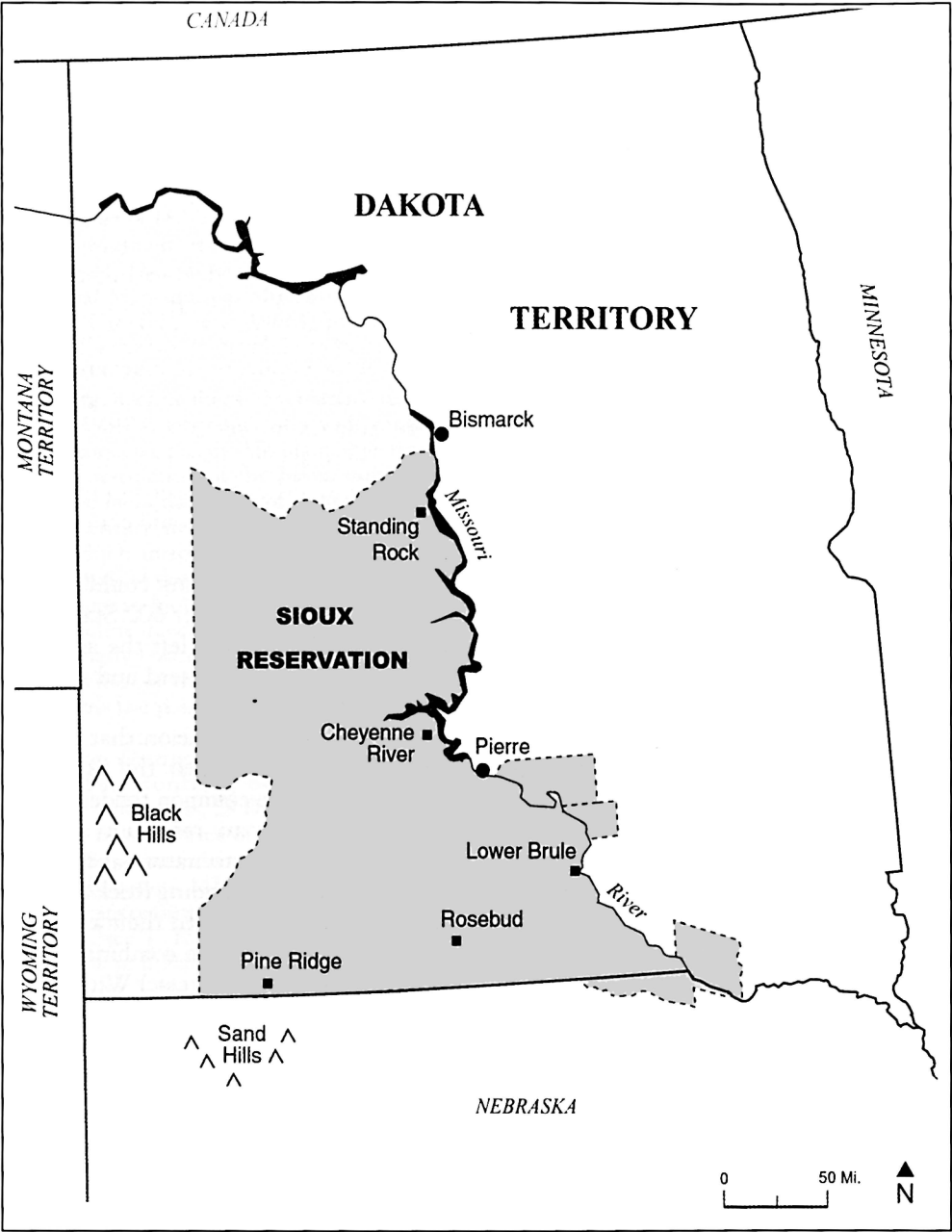


FIG. 1. Sioux Reservation, c. 1883. Map by University of Oregon InfoGraphics Lab, Department of Geography, 2001.

This moment, captured in books with titles like *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* and *The Long Death*, continues to inform our understanding of the early reservation period. While many scholars have stressed the persistence of cultural identity, they have given less attention to the continuities in Plains Indians' economic practices during the early reservation period.³ Plains Indians certainly experienced profound and often wrenching changes as Americans forced them onto reservations and began implementing colonial policies. As I argue here, however, there were important—and surprising—continuities in their economic strategies.

To understand these strategies it is helpful to remind ourselves that Indians viewed their own circumstances in the early reservation period very differently from non-Indians. Plains Indians did not think the hardships they were suffering were part of an inevitable historical process that necessarily decreed they would have to experience physical or cultural death. Although they were subject to brutal oppression and often experienced demoralization and despair, they thought it was possible to retain their familial, community, and tribal identities and develop new ways to live well under reservation conditions. For Plains Indians, the future was contingent on human action and the willingness of the spiritual powers of the universe to take pity on them. At one level, their economic strategies were practical responses to pressing needs, but they were also informed by the hope that they could "walk the good red road," in the words of Oglala Lakota holy man Black Elk.⁴

Although McLaughlin's account of the 1882 Standing Rock hunt is marred by ethnocentrism, it contains information that allows us to glimpse how the Plains Sioux viewed their situation. McLaughlin himself probably thought the bison had simply drifted onto the Great Sioux reservation, perhaps guided by Providence, but certainly not in any conscious way. In narrating the bison's arrival, however, McLaughlin accurately reported a

Sioux understanding of the bison's motivations. The Sioux, he wrote, "believed that Pte [the Buffalo People], finding himself near to extinction at the hands of the white pot-hunters, sought out the reservation that he might, in the end, fulfill his mission and die to provide walls for the tepee, robes for the couch, sinews for the bow, and meat for the store of the sons of the Lakodia." The bison had *decided* to come to the Sioux, a people they had favored many times before.⁵ Later in his account, McLaughlin further noted that "the hunt stopped when five thousand buffalo had been killed." Although McLaughlin did not draw out the implications (and may have failed to grasp them), it is clear that the Standing Rock hunters hoped that if the bison could avoid being slaughtered by non-Indian hide hunters and if they themselves practiced conservation, the animals would continue to give themselves to the Indians.⁶

As it turned out, the last large buffalo hunt at Standing Rock took place in September 1883. Indians at the Cheyenne River, Rosebud, and Pine Ridge agencies also had their last hunts around this time.⁷ Nonetheless, many Sioux did not think the bison had disappeared forever. During the 1880s, some tried to bring back the buffalo through religious ceremonies. The most famous of these, of course, was the Ghost Dance, but the Sioux experimented with other rituals. For example, to help his people find the red road, Black Elk staged a buffalo ceremony in 1884. In preparing this ceremony, Red Dog, a medicine man who assisted him, told Black Elk that it was his "duty . . . to see that the people will lead and walk the right road, because if it is not done, in the future our relatives-like will disappear."⁸

Whether or not the buffalo could return, it was imperative for the Sioux to devise ways of living well. This approach was not new. In the 1860s and 1870s, Sioux belonging to treaty bands had developed an array of economic strategies involving various combinations of hunting, trading, and using government rations

and annuities. In the 1880s Sioux people modified these strategies and developed new ones.

During the early reservation period, the western Sioux received a significant portion of their food, clothing, and material goods directly from the United States. Under the terms of the 1868 Treaty, the government was obligated to provide clothing to every person on the reservation annually for thirty years. The treaty also required the government to provide other "necessities," a requirement that it fulfilled by providing stock cattle, wagons, agricultural implements, material for housing, and household furnishings. The terms of the 1876 agreement, by which the Sioux were forced to cede the Black Hills, required the government to provide daily to every person one-and-a-half pounds of beef, one-half pound of flour, one-half pound of corn, and small quantities of coffee, sugar, and beans. These rations were to continue "until the Indians are able to support themselves."⁹

Despite the fact that annuity goods were often late and of inferior quality, Indians depended upon them to meet basic needs.¹⁰ Sometimes, to obtain food, cash, weapons, or ammunition, they bartered annuity goods such as clothing and agricultural implements.¹¹ The Sioux also creatively used annuity goods for their own purposes. A schoolteacher recalled that Indians at Cheyenne River cut the leather from government-issued boots to make "extra-fine hunting lariats."¹²

On paper, government rations afforded a minimally adequate diet. As with annuities, however, the government often failed to provide sufficient and timely rations. For example, Mary Collins, a missionary at Cheyenne River, observed in 1887 that the Indians "are hungry this week. They have received no beef issue for a long time."¹³ Another problem was that the cattle delivered by contractors in the fall tended to "shrink" during the winter. One agent stated that it was common for an animal weighing 1,000 pounds in October to weigh only 700 pounds by the spring. During a severe winter—hardly uncommon—shrinkage

could be worse. As this agent noted, "all loss, by death, or otherwise, during a severe winter is borne by the Indians, and not by the Government."¹⁴

Because rations were barely adequate at best, the Sioux had to be constantly on guard against any initiative that would reduce them further. The government's usual practice at the western Sioux agencies was to issue beef "on the hoof." Every two weeks at the agency or at scattered locations on the reservation, US officials released cattle to band leaders. Men shot the issued cattle. Men and women skinned and butchered the animals.¹⁵ Many US officials objected to this practice because it reinforced "barbaric" patterns of behavior and gave Indians a rationale to own weapons and acquire ammunition.¹⁶ For these reasons, the Indian Bureau preferred cattle to be killed and butchered by agency employees. It would then be issued "on the block" or frozen for later issue.

Sioux leaders strenuously objected to issuing beef on the block. For one thing, as indicated by the fact that the Sioux called issue day *wanasapi*, the word for a communal buffalo hunt, "hunting" cattle connected the Sioux to their past and allowed them to exercise valued skills and to perform "traditional" roles.¹⁷ Beef on the block also threatened to diminish Indians' control over their lives. It was one thing to have government officials release cattle and have Indians take over from there. It was quite another thing for Indians to contemplate the prospect of government officials throwing them pieces of beef. Sioux women, who stood in line to obtain rations of coffee, sugar, and flour, already resented the fact that "the clerks and assistants when making issues, throw the rations to the Indian women in a very disrespectful manner, 'as if they were dogs.'"¹⁸

Indians also objected to issuing beef on the block because this method cost them important parts of the animal. In 1882 the agent at Pine Ridge reported that the Oglalas were "particularly sensitive on this beef question," since by killing cattle themselves, "they are enabled

to make use of at least a fifth quarter in nutriment in the way of intestines, liver, etc." Beef on the block would also deprive Lakotas of the animals' hides.¹⁹ Indians used a small number of these hides for making moccasins and other leather goods. They sold the large majority to traders at prices between \$2.50 and \$4.00 each. A hide was worth 100 pounds of flour and some kerosene oil or a pair of women's shoes and a ham.²⁰ With people struggling just to survive, any innovation that threatened to deprive them of a valuable source of food and income was certain to meet resistance. In 1889 the agent at Rosebud predicted that any change in the present system of issuing beef would result in "open revolt." Although the agents were able to make some progress in implementing issuing on the block, the Rosebud agent's remarks suggest that issuing live cattle remained the most common method.²¹

Although the Sioux relied on government rations and annuities for a significant part of their material needs, they were not completely dependent on these sources. To a surprising extent, the Sioux continued to hunt in the 1880s. After 1883 there were no more bison, but they continued to hunt deer, pronghorn antelope, and other game.

After the buffalo were gone, White Bull recalled, people at Standing Rock, few of whom had guns or ammunition, "made arrows and kept them hid and would . . . hunt small animals."²² Although small game was important primarily as a source of food, Indians used elk, deer, and pronghorn hides for moccasins and other clothing. They also sold hides or traded them for other goods. The trader at Cheyenne River reported that in 1883 he purchased \$11,000 worth of skins and furs from Indians.²³

Indians frequently left the reservation to pursue small game. In 1887 Wyoming ranchers complained that Sioux hunting parties were "killing off all the game." In response, the agent at Pine Ridge wrote that because "deer and antelope are very plentiful in southeastern Wyoming," it was difficult to prevent Oglalas

from leaving the reservation to hunt there. The following year settlers along the Cannonball River protested to the Standing Rock agent that "two roving bands of Sioux Indians . . . are carrying on an indiscriminate slaughter of Antelope."²⁴

Elaine Goodale, a non-Indian schoolteacher, provided a rare glimpse into the activities of one Sioux hunting party. In the summer of 1889, Goodale accompanied Whirling Hawk, his family, and a few other families on a hunting expedition to the Sand Hills of Nebraska. In addition to killing several pronghorn, this hunting party was on the lookout for anything that was edible. One hot July day as the party was traveling, Goodale was "startled to see men and boys leap suddenly from their seats and race ahead of the wagons, yelling and throwing off their clothes as they ran." Soon, they were "dashing into a shallow pond, madly chasing a flock of half-grown wild ducks, not yet able to fly. Screaming with joy, they plunged after the terrified birds as they dove and rose and dove again, finally seizing and wringing their necks and casting them triumphantly on shore." Not long after, the party enjoyed an "impromptu feast." On other days, Goodale shared in meals of badger, skunk, and mud turtle.²⁵

Goodale's account brings to light another important aspect of early-reservation-era economic strategies. Although the Sioux were traditionally a hunting people, their diet had always included a variety of plant foods. Lakota names for the summer months show the importance of some of these foods: *Wipazutkan Waste Wi* (June, the months when service berries are good), *Canpasapa Wi* (July, the month when the choke cherries are black), *Kantasa Wi* (August, the month when the plums are red).²⁶ In the summer of 1889, Goodale observed women and children gathering wild cherries, *tinpsila* (wild turnips), rose hips, mint, and balm. These were important sources of nutrition.²⁷

While hunting and gathering revealed the persistence of older ways of life, other eco-

economic strategies in the 1880s involved innovation and the creative use of government programs. United States policy called for Indian families eventually to become commercial farmers. To implement this policy, government agents provided Indians with agricultural implements and seeds. These resources (supplemented by equipment and supplies Indians obtained on their own) enabled many Sioux to work small plots of land, usually less than five acres, seldom more than ten or twenty. These gardens were generally located along creek bottoms where there was water for at least part of the year. Families grew *wayahota* (oats), *wagmeza* (corn), *wagmu* (squash and pumpkins), *blo* (potatoes), and *spansniyutapi* or *wagmuspansni* (watermelons; literally, "they eat it raw" or "uncooked squash").²⁸ Indians also raised chickens and turkeys. As early as 1883, "a large number of poultry of all kinds" could be found in Pine Ridge communities. With the pseudo-precision of a skilled bureaucrat, the agent at Cheyenne River reported 1,957 "domestic fowl" in 1887.²⁹

For the western Sioux, the idea of engaging in gardening or small-scale farming as part of their economic strategies probably did not seem as foreign as one might think. Although Plains Sioux people (especially men) often spoke scornfully of farming as something inimical to their identity (and, at best, women's work), most could have easily recalled ancestors only a generation or two before with extensive horticultural experience. Many bands had planted crops in the late 1700s and early 1800s while living near the Missouri. The very name of the Minneconjous, "Planters beside the Stream," revealed an older history of woodland subsistence patterns. More recently, the Corn band of the Sicangus had grown corn (although not without enduring a fair amount of ridicule from other bands). Furthermore, the Plains Sioux had historical ties to corn-growing people—eastern Dakota and Arikara, for example.³⁰

Although the government wanted Indians to conform to the patriarchal model of the

American farm household, Sioux women probably did most of the farm work in the 1880s. In part, this was because of men's antipathy toward farming. Furthermore, Sioux men often engaged in work that took them away from the household (see below). Nonetheless, many men—especially older men—took up farming. Robert Higheagle, who grew up at Standing Rock, recalled that he often saw grandfathers "out in the fields early in the morning with the hoe."³¹

For decades US government officials had talked about a future in which Indian people would support themselves through agriculture. This fantasy was especially absurd when it came to people living on the northern Great Plains where the growing season was short, the soil often poor, and rainfall usually scarce. Most government agents who actually lived in the region eventually grasped these facts. Although some agents feared that cattle raising would retard Indians' progress toward civilization by reinforcing their "nomadic love of roaming," they eventually concluded that this was the only plausible way for them to achieve economic self-sufficiency.³²

Peter Iverson has pointed out that it was fairly easy for Indian people in North America who were familiar with horses and hunting to adapt to cattle ranching. For men who were raised in a society that measured status by the number of horses owned and valued skill in riding and knowledge of animals, the idea of herding cattle was far more attractive than tending to a patch of corn and melons. Owning several head of cattle also provided men with the opportunity to build a reputation for generosity, crucial to achieving prominence.³³

At Standing Rock and Cheyenne River, the army provided stock cattle as compensation for the confiscation of Sioux ponies in 1876. People did not forget this outrage, but they did start building a livestock population. At Cheyenne River, where 647 cows and 9 bulls were issued in 1877 and 1878, there were 2,600 head of cattle in 1880 and 5,400 in 1887. In 1890 Cheyenne River Indians provided one-fourth of the beef required

for the agency's rations. To White Swan and Charger, prominent leaders at Cheyenne River, stock raising looked like the best road to follow. They requested in 1890 that half of the money the government planned to spend to acquire plows be used to buy stock cattle instead.³⁴

The increase in these herds was the result of hard work, planning, and knowledge of animals. The Sioux used mowing machines to cut hay, and they constructed stables to shelter their animals from cold Dakota winds.³⁵ After the particularly severe winter of 1886-87, the agent at Standing Rock noted that losses of Indian cattle had been about 30 percent. Even more cattle would have died had the Indians not fed their cattle with the bark of cottonwood trees, just as they had fed their horses for generations. The agent noted that losses to non-Indian ranchers in the region were much higher.³⁶

Cattle ownership was concentrated in a few hands. The agent at Cheyenne River reported in 1887 that half of the 5,400 cattle there were owned by eight "half-breeds," a pattern that probably prevailed at other agencies. Evidence from Pine Ridge indicates that some "full bloods" also had large holdings of livestock. Yet such concentrations did not exclude widespread ownership of at least some cattle. Most families had a few head by the late 1880s.³⁷

In providing Indians with stock cattle, agents expected Indians to behave like expectant capitalists. Each family was supposed to calculate the advantages that would come from increasing the size of its own herd so that it could eventually sell surplus animals. Most Sioux, however, thought about their cattle in a social context. The Sioux had always recognized certain individual property rights, but proper uses of property—what could be done with a deer that had been killed or with a cow—were regulated by notions of reciprocal obligations among kin within the *tiyospaye* (band). Sioux people often gave cattle to needy relatives or killed them in order to have a feast. Sioux leaders used cattle to show gener-

osity. Such responsibilities could require substantial resources. In June 1887, for example, 1,000 people attended a dance at Hump's camp near the mouth of Cherry Creek. All needed to be fed.³⁸

Government agents punished Indians who did not use their stock cattle according to capitalist values. In September 1885 at Pine Ridge, for example, White Horse, He Crow, and Good Boy were found guilty of shooting stock cattle and sentenced to a fine of thirty dollars or fifty days of hard labor.³⁹ These men were not incapable of planning for the future, but they found other needs more compelling. In this way, too, Sioux economic strategies showed continuity with earlier ways of life.

The Sioux did not simply enact a cultural script that automatically conformed to a static set of values. The opportunities and pressures of colonialism encouraged some Sioux to contest "customary" notions of proper behavior and to begin to move in the direction of individual acquisitiveness. Those who moved this way, however, were subject to community discipline. "[O]ut of spite or revenge," the Pine Ridge agent reported, "evil-disposed Indians have . . . maimed or killed their neighbor's cattle."⁴⁰

The western Sioux also increased their horse herds in the 1880s. Even though the army took away most of the horses of the Cheyenne River Indians in 1876, they did not confiscate those belonging to mixed-bloods and "squaw men" (non-Indians married to Indian women). Through trade with these people and perhaps with Indians from other reservations, other Cheyenne River Indians reacquired horses. In 1878 there were only 606 horses reported at Cheyenne River. This number increased to 1,075 in 1881 and 2,785 in 1887.⁴¹ At Pine Ridge Red Cloud remained angry about the army's confiscation of his people's horses in 1876, but the government had not taken horses from all Oglala bands. By 1889 over 9,000 horses were reported at Pine Ridge.⁴²

Because Indians depended upon the range to graze their horses and cattle, they were eager

to prevent stock owned by non-Indians from encroaching on their lands. In 1887 the agent at Rosebud determined that there were 2,500 head of non-Indian-owned cattle grazing illegally north of the Nebraska state line, on the southeastern part of the reservation. According to the agent, when the Sicangus contested the ranchers' practices, the ranchers said they would pay 25 cents per head to graze on the reserve. But the Sicangus vetoed this plan, first because they wanted \$1.00 per head, and second because they feared that any funds collected would go to Washington and not be used for their benefit. When non-Indians continued to graze on their land, the Sicangus burned the grass to stop them. The agent tried to prevent illegal grazing, but it was difficult to do so. His entire force of Indian police would have had to patrol the range, impossible in view of their other responsibilities. Not surprisingly, then, illegal grazing continued. In 1889 Swift Bear and other Sicangus protested to the commissioner of Indian Affairs that "the whole country in the vicinity of Turtle Creek has been covered with cattle belonging to parties residing in Nebraska, many of whom are professional cattle and horse thieves."⁴³

There was substantial illegal grazing on Sioux lands. In April 1888 Red Cloud informed the government that 40,000 head of cattle belonging to non-Indians were on the reservation. At first glance this number may seem exaggerated, but it was a reasonable estimate if, as seems to be the case, it covered the entire Sioux reservation. In June Oglala informed their agent that a large number of cattle had crossed the South Fork of the Cheyenne River onto the reservation. When the agent investigated, he concluded that 20,000 head were grazing on that portion of Indian land alone.⁴⁴ Indians protested against the growing encroachment of non-Indians' stock on principle, but also because it damaged grasslands that they needed for their own growing herds of cattle and horses. The problem was exacerbated by the onset of drought in the late 1880s. In June 1890, because of the absence of rain,

the grass was "*very short and thin* all over the reserve."⁴⁵

Thus far, we have seen the Plains Sioux working in a variety of ways to feed themselves and to prevent government initiatives that would diminish treaty rations. They also creatively exploited the limited opportunities of the reservation economy.

One important source of income in the 1880s was hauling freight. Indian freighting was one of many arrangements that neither government officials nor Indians ideally wanted but that wound up serving the purposes of both. In 1877 the government argued that the Oglala and Sicangus should live at agencies on the Missouri River, in part because it was cheaper to transport supplies there. The Oglala and Sicangus replied that the cost of shipping goods from the Missouri to agencies on the western part of the reservation could be reduced if they hauled their own freight. Although the government would have to provide them with wagons, Indians were willing to haul for a lower rate than non-Indian companies. Sioux leaders cleverly pointed out that hauling freight would help them become "civilized."⁴⁶ US officials imagined that Indians would learn the arts of civilization behind a plow, not a freight wagon. But the discourse of civilization required them to admit that any kind of labor was a step in the right direction.

When the Oglala and Sicangus moved to their new agencies in the fall of 1878, the government employed 100 men from each agency to haul supplies. Sicangus were paid 75 cents per hundred pounds; Oglala received \$30 a month.⁴⁷ What began as an improvisation to meet the exigencies of particular circumstances quickly became institutionalized. As soon as the first wagons arrived at the agencies, they were sent back to the Missouri and to the rail station at Sidney, Nebraska. Soon the agents were calling for the government to issue more wagons so that more Indians could haul freight. By October 1879 Oglala had carried 2 million pounds of freight and earned

\$41,000; the Rosebud agent reported in August 1880 that Indians were doing all the freighting for the agency.⁴⁸ Government officials were ecstatic about the success of the "experiment" of Indian freighting. One wrote that not only had "the most sanguine expectations as to cheap transportation been fully realized," but, he exclaimed, the "Indians' hereditary prejudice against labor has been broken down."⁴⁹

The Sioux would have been surprised by the idea that they had never worked before. They embraced this particular form of labor not because they had undergone some moral transformation but because it provided a practical way to obtain wagons, it was a source of income, and it offered some freedom of movement. Indeed, they found freighting attractive precisely because it required less alteration in the patterns of their lives than some other government schemes for their improvement.⁵⁰

Sioux people earned small amounts of income from several other activities. For example, Corabelle Fellows, a day school teacher at Swift Bird's camp at Cheyenne River, informed the agent in 1884 that Hairy Dog Bear had "finished chopping his five cords of wood for the school. It is all measured correct, and good wood as far as I am a judge. I measured it myself and believe it five good cords. He did it as I directed and at your terms \$4.00 a cord, making \$20.00 coming to him." In 1889 the Standing Rock agent reported that during the previous year Indians had sold 1,800 cords to the agency and to a military contractor. At Cheyenne River, Charger's band regularly sold wood to Missouri River steamboats.⁵¹ Other Indians sold hay to feed agency livestock.⁵²

Some men and women worked directly for the government. At Standing Rock, for example, Indian laborers hauled water from the Missouri River for use at the agency. When a new water system was constructed in 1889, they dug trenches for it. Indians plowed and harvested the agency farm, herded agency livestock, and put up fences.⁵³ They built houses,

schools, and other agency buildings. They made harnesses and repaired wagons. Some worked on the agency police force. By the late 1880s a few taught in the government and mission day schools.⁵⁴

Much of this work was casual labor at a rate as low as 50 cents per day.⁵⁵ In 1888 the five assistant carpenters at Standing Rock made between \$120 and \$360 a year (an apprentice carpenter made \$60); other semiskilled workers were paid at similar rates. The captain of the police and his two lieutenants made \$15 a month; the twenty-four privates were paid \$10. The annual salary for teachers was \$600; for assistant teachers it was \$480.⁵⁶

The best jobs went to mixed bloods and relatives of prominent leaders, especially those whom agents regarded as "progressive" or were trying to co-opt. Some positions went to graduates of off-reservation boarding schools such as Carlisle and Hampton or on-reservation industrial and agricultural schools. Men held by far the majority of agency jobs. There were, however, some female teachers in the 1880s.⁵⁷ Women also did some domestic work at the agencies' headquarters.⁵⁸

Protestant and Catholic missions also provided a few opportunities for paid labor. In 1882, for example, female missionaries at Oahe, a Congregational mission at Cheyenne River, were paying a young Sioux woman 50 cents for laundering and 25 cents for ironing. Indians laborers also helped build a Catholic church for the St. Francis mission at Rosebud in 1890. Although the priests hoped that Indians would "haul stones for a house for the Great Spirit" without requesting earthly benefits, the fathers eventually had to pay them to accomplish God's work.⁵⁹

There were few opportunities for employment off the reservation. In the fall of 1887 fourteen men from Standing Rock labored for about two weeks on a Missouri River steamship at the rate of \$1.00 a day, but such work was unusual.⁶⁰ Although some Sioux may have worked occasionally for non-Indians ranchers, there is little evidence of much off-reservation work in the 1880s. It was not until the

1920s and 1930s that some Sioux began working for non-Indian ranchers and farmers.⁶¹

The only significant source of off-reservation income in the 1880s was through Wild West shows. At a time when Americans were demanding that the Sioux cease being Indian, it is ironic that many of them found employment in an American industry that paid them for being the most "Indian" of all Indians.⁶² William "Buffalo Bill" Cody opened his first show in 1883. At first, Cody hired Pawnee to entertain audiences by attacking the Deadwood mail coach. For the 1885 season, Cody was fortunate to add to his list of employees the most famous Indian name in all of North America, Sitting Bull. Cody gave the "renowned Sioux chief" second billing in the show's publicity, just below his own name.⁶³

When Cody wanted to employ Sitting Bull again for the 1886 season, James McLaughlin, the Standing Rock agent, refused to give permission. Cody then went to Pine Ridge, where he hired twenty-nine men at \$25 per month to accompany his show.⁶⁴ Although Cody obtained authority from the Indian Office to hire these people, it became common in the next few years for agents from Cody's and other shows to recruit Oglala, often without the government's authorization. In 1889 the Pine Ridge agent complained that over 200 Oglala were away with various "circus[es], Wild West exhibitions, [and] quack-medicine business[es]." Half of these "are absent . . . without permission from the Department."⁶⁵

It is difficult to determine the actual economic benefits Indians gained from working in Wild West shows. At the rate of \$25 a month, the 200 Oglala employed in these shows in 1889 would have made a total of \$5,000 a month. Assuming an average stint of four months, they would have netted an aggregate of \$20,000, an amount twice that earned by freighting during the same year. (Some were away much longer, especially those who went to Europe.) If a good portion of this money returned to the reservation, it would have been a significant economic benefit to many families. The Pine Ridge agent argued

that Oglala communities gained little from the shows. In "the great majority of cases," he contended, Indians traveling with shows "do not send a dollar home to their families during their absence," and almost always they "return to their homes perfect wrecks physically, morally, and financially." While people employed by the shows undoubtedly spent a good portion of their pay while traveling, the Pine Ridge agent's assessment of the situation, so obviously colored by his opposition to Oglala leaving the reservation, seems extreme. There is every reason to think that traveling Indians sent some of the money they earned back to the reservation. Furthermore, Cody's contracts generally included a "hold back" provision, in which Indians received one-third of their wages upon returning home.⁶⁶

In addition to working for wages, Indians also gained income through trading their own products. One important source of income was beadwork. Western Sioux women began using beads to decorate robes, shirts, pipe bags, cradles, and moccasins as early as the late 1700s. Beadwork expanded steadily from the 1860s through the 1890s. A portion of this growth can be attributed to the conditions of enforced idleness for women in the early reservation period. At Pine Ridge, for example, it was a common joke that "if anything didn't move, an Oglala woman would bead it." Most beadwork circulated within the nonmarket economy of the *tiyospaye* (band). However, women produced some beadwork for sale or trade to settlers. Goodale noted that the Indians she accompanied to the Sand Hills in 1889 attempted to trade beadwork to the settlers. She also observed that Indian women commonly sold moccasins to settlers at a dollar a pair. One authority notes that settlers "often furnished the garment to be decorated and dictated the style."⁶⁷

Sioux people also sold objects such as pipes, drums, war shirts, war clubs, and shields to collectors of Indian artifacts. At a Pine Ridge sun dance in 1881, for example, Lt. John G. Bourke purchased several pipes and was offered, but apparently declined to buy, a wooden

"medicine saucer." In addition, some Native artists sold ledger drawings.⁶⁸ Although these sorts of transactions must have occurred with some frequency throughout the 1880s, there is little direct evidence of them. As with the circulation of beadwork, this subject also needs more study. Some of these items were traded voluntarily, but trading took place in the context of government policies that both limited the value of some of the items Indian traded (a war shield had little practical use in 1881) and shaped the economic conditions that pressured Indians into trading. Furthermore, collections of Indian artifacts were not built primarily with items acquired through trade. Bourke obtained several items in his collection during a US government-sponsored attack on the Dull Knife's Cheyenne village in November 1876. One Indian agent evidently built his collection by giving government-issue horses to Indians for "a nice lot of Indian relics."⁶⁹

In their reports to Washington, agents praised some Indians for their willingness to work, but they castigated others for sitting around eating government beef, drinking government coffee, and telling stories about the good old days. (Some agents coined phrases such as the "ancient order of aboriginal coffee coolers" to ridicule people who resisted their efforts to improve them.)⁷⁰ The agents' division of their colonial subjects into two groups—those who worked and those who did not—was not only culturally biased but also empirically false, since all Sioux people clearly engaged in various forms of productive labor during the 1880s.

In addition to social labor, such as bearing and raising children, tending to the sick, making clothing, and preparing foods, Sioux people hunted, gathered, planted, and harvested. To gain extra income, they sold hides, hauled freight, cut wood, made beadwork, built schools and houses, and worked for the government. This income was vital to their economic strategies because it allowed them to obtain additional food, clothing, and guns and ammunition for hunting beyond what the gov-

ernment provided through treaty rations and annuities. This income also allowed purchases of things like tobacco, colored cloth, beads, dye (for face painting), coffee, shawls, and saddles. These items were not utterly necessary, but they made a difference between simple survival and the hope of living well.⁷¹ Sioux people also relied on extra income for important collective projects. For example, when six Sicangus were arrested for stealing horses and killing a non-Indian in 1880, Rosebud Indians raised \$332.80 to hire lawyers for their defense. In 1888, when Cheyenne River Indians heard of yet another government scheme to take more of their land, they raised \$400 to send their leaders to Washington.⁷²

Depending on their means and inclinations, different individuals and groups pursued different economic strategies. Because of access to weapons and proximity to game, some Sioux were able to hunt more than others. Some were able to earn money by freighting or cutting wood. Others did not have these opportunities or chose not to pursue them. Clearly, some families within particular communities had greater wealth than others and some communities were economically better off than others. But all western Sioux communities pursued strategies that involved some combination of the activities discussed above. It was not so much the divergence in these strategies themselves that caused government agents to divide Indians into "progressives" who worked and "nonprogressives" who did not. These categories were political labels, which agents applied according to positions leaders took on issues such as allotment, education, and cultural transformation.

Indians probably found some kinds of work enjoyable. Gardening, caring for horses, or freighting likely offered many people a certain measure of autonomy and satisfaction. Other forms of labor, however, revealed the brutal facts of colonial domination. Not only was hauling water for the Standing Rock agency back breaking and mind numbing, it must have been deeply alienating for people to place their bodies in the service of those who had taken

their land and thought of themselves as belonging to a superior race. It also must have been painful to go onto the prairie and gather the bleached bones of bison and other animals as many Sicangus did in 1886. The 330 tons of bones they collected and hauled to Valentine, Nebraska, to be shipped to fertilizer factories provided an important source of income. At the same time, however, each bone gathered was a bitter reminder of all that had been lost.⁷³

The early reservation period was a time of wrenching change. Nonetheless, the act of gathering bison bones revealed continuities with earlier ways of life. In the past, the western Sioux had often been able to hunt bison, but there were many times when they were unable to find sufficient game. Then, as in the early reservation period, they did what was necessary for their families and communities to survive and, if possible, to live well.

The decade of the 1880s was a time of unprecedented conditions and new challenges. Although the United States intended to destroy Indian ways of life through policies of education, suppression of cultural and religious practices, and allotment, the Sioux did not think of themselves as a dying people. An analysis of their economic activities reveals one area in which Indians blunted the full force of US colonialism. By winning on the issue of beef-on-the-hoof, leaving the reservation to hunt pronghorn, working as freighters, selling beadwork, or using government resources to garden, the Plains Sioux survived the transition to reservation life. Although they did not choose the circumstances under which they did so, they continued to make their own history.⁷⁴

NOTES

1. James McLaughlin, *My Friend the Indian* (1910; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), pp. 97 (quotation), 101, 109, 114. McLaughlin (p. 110) estimated there were 50,000 animals in the herd, probably an overestimate. In this essay I have used the terms "Plains Sioux" and "western Sioux" to refer to the Indian people at Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, Rosebud, and Pine Ridge agencies. Most of these were Lakotas

(Tetons), but at Standing Rock there was a substantial population of Yanktonais, another of the groups belonging to the Seven Council Fires.

2. On the theme of the vanishing Indian, see Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and US Indian Policy* (1982; Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991). For another account of a "last buffalo hunt," see Thomas Lawrence Riggs, "Sunset to Sunset: A Lifetime with My Brothers, the Dakotas," *South Dakota Historical Collections* 29 (1956): 228-43.

3. Robert M. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963); Ralph K. Andrist, *The Long Death: The Last Days of the Plains Indians* (New York: Macmillan, 1964). Examples of works that emphasize cultural persistence of Plains Indians are Morris W. Foster, *Being Comanche: A Social History of an American Indian Community* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991); Loretta Fowler, *Shared Symbols, Contested Meanings: Gros Ventre Culture and History, 1778-1984* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); Frederick E. Hoxie, "From Prison to Homeland: The Cheyenne River Indian Reservation before WWI," *South Dakota History* 10 (winter 1979): 1-24; Hoxie, *Parading through History: The Making of the Crow Nation in America, 1805-1935* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Catharine Price, *The Oglala People, 1841-1879: A Political History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996). Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), pp. 199-211; and Thomas Biolsi, *Organizing the Lakota: The Political Economy of the New Deal on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), pp. 23-31, accurately describe Plains Indians during this period as becoming economically dependent. Nonetheless, in addition to obscuring the capacity of Indian people to take action, the language of dependency can reinforce the notion of a radical break between the pre- and early reservation periods.

4. The red road was an important metaphor in Black Elk's vision as a boy and informed many of his efforts in the 1880s. See Raymond J. DeMallie, ed., *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), pp. 118, 125-26, 128-31, 240, 242.

5. McLaughlin, *My Friend* (note 1 above), p. 97. On the relationship between the buffalo and the Sioux people, see Arthur Amiotte, "The Lakota Sun Dance: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives," in *Sioux Indian Religion: Tradition and Innovation*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Douglas R. Parks (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press,

1987), p. 78; Joseph Epes Brown, *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p. 118; Raymond J. DeMallie, "The Lakota Ghost Dance: An Ethnohistorical Account," *Pacific Historical Review* 51 (November 1982): 391; James R. Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Elaine A. Jahner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), pp. 124, 144.

6. McLaughlin, *My Friend* (note 1 above), p. 114. The decision to stop the killing calls into question the contention of some scholars that the idea of conservation was simply outside the Plains Indians' worldview. See Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy," *Journal of American History* 78 (September 1991): 485; William A. Dobak, "Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881," *Western Historical Quarterly* 27 (spring 1996): 49-50. Other evidence that Indians understood the need to conserve scarce game populations is considered in Jeffrey Ostler, "They Regard Their Passing as *Wakan*': Interpreting Western Sioux Explanations for the Bison's Decline," *Western Historical Quarterly* 30 (winter 1999): 487-88.

7. James McLaughlin to Philip Wells, 15 September 1883, Walter S. Campbell Collection, box 107, folder 1, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Library, Norman; Stanley Vestal, *Warpath: The True Story of the Fighting Sioux Told in a Biography of Chief White Bull* (1934; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), pp. 238-40. On buffalo hunts at other agencies, see William A. Swan to Commissioner of Indian Affairs (hereafter cited as CIA), 7 October 1882, Cheyenne River Agency Records, National Archives, Kansas City (hereafter cited as CR-NAKC), box 263; V. T. McGillicuddy to "Whom it may concern," 23 December 1882, Pine Ridge Agency Records, National Archives, Kansas City (hereafter cited as PR-NAKC), box 53, granting Young Man Afraid and over 400 others permission to leave the reservation for a buffalo hunt.

8. Ostler, "They Regard" (note 6 above), pp. 490-91; DeMallie, *Sixth Grandfather* (note 4 above), p. 240.

9. Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 5 vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1904-1941), 2:1001, 1:170.

10. On the pervasiveness of late issue of annuity goods, see L. F. Spencer to CIA, 10 January 1889, Rosebud Agency Records, National Archives, Kansas City (hereafter cited as RA-NAKC), book 15; Little No Heart, The Charger, and Spotted Eagle to CIA, 10 September 1883, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1881-1907, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as LR, 1881-1907), file 19056-1883. On the poor quality of annuity goods, see William A. Swan to CIA, 7

January 1884, CR-NAKC, box 263; H. D. Gallagher to CIA, 19 January 1887, PR-NAKC, box 36; Kay Graber, ed., *Sister to the Sioux: The Memoirs of Elaine Goodale Eastman, 1885-91* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), p. 63.

11. J. A. Stephan to CIA, 25 February 1880, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81, National Archives, microcopy M234 (hereafter cited as LR, 1824-81), roll 851; V. T. McGillicuddy to CIA, 16 March 1880, LR, 1824-81, roll 726; Graber, ed., *Sister*, *ibid.*, p. 98; Mari Sandoz, *Old Jules* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1935), pp. 27-28.

12. Kunigunde Duncan, *Blue Star: Told from the Life of Corabelle Fellows* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1938), p. 99.

13. Louis P. Olson, "Mary Clementine Collins: Dacotah Missionary," *North Dakota History* 19 (January 1952): 73. See also H. C. Bulis to CIA, 28 February 1879, RA-NAKC, book 5.

14. J. George Wright to CIA, 28 January 1890, RA-NAKC, book 16. The agent at Cheyenne River noted that a shrinkage of 20 to 30 percent was common. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (hereafter cited as ARCIA), 1889, p. 130.

15. For a description of the issue of cattle, see Graber, *Sister* (note 10 above), pp. 59-60; Charles A. Eastman (Ohiyesa), *From the Deep Woods to Civilization: Chapters in the Autobiography of an Indian* (1916; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), pp. 79-80.

16. Benjamin H. Miller to Secretary of the Interior, 4 November 1889, Reports of Inspections of the Field Jurisdictions of the Office of Indian Affairs, National Archives, Washington, D.C., M1070, roll 36; "Report of William H. Waldby" in *Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners, 1887*, in *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1887*, pp. 925-26.

17. Florentine Digmann, S.J., "History of the St. Francis Mission, 1886-1922," unpublished manuscript, n.d., Holy Rosary Mission Records, series 7, box 14, folder 7, Marquette University Archives, Milwaukee, Wisc, p. 5.

18. CIA to L. F. Spencer, 7 December 1888, RA-NAKC, box A-357.

19. V. T. McGillicuddy to CIA, 16 December 1882, PR-NAKC, box 35, vol. 4. Documentation of the Indian Bureau's objections to the system of on-the-hoof issues and of resistance to change can also be found in McGillicuddy to CIA, 21 October 1879, LR, 1824-81, roll 724; J. A. Stephan, 31 August 1880, LR, 1824-81, roll 852; James G. Wright to CIA, 3 June 1885, RA-NAKC, book 11. Plans for on-the-block issues threatened Lakotas with the loss of hides because they called for the agents to sell the hides to pay extra employees to kill and butcher cattle.

20. On the hide trade and prices paid for hides, see James G. Wright to CIA, 28 May 1885, RA-NAKC, book 11; James McLaughlin to CIA, 7 September 1889, Major James McLaughlin Papers, Assumption College, Richardton, N. Dak., microfilm, roll 33. A list of prices at the store of E. J. deBell, a licensed trader at Rosebud agency, shows prices of \$3.00 for 100 pounds of flour, 35 cents for a gallon of kerosene oil, women's shoes from \$1.50 to \$3.00 a pair, and hams at 15 cents per pound. J. George Wright to CIA, 1 March 1890, RA-NAKC, book 16.

21. J. George Wright to CIA, 19 November 1889, RA-NAKC, book 16. To prevent a reduction in rations, Lakotas at Pine Ridge and Rosebud, where population estimates were inflated throughout most of the 1880s, resisted government censuses. ARCIA, 1886, p. 78; James C. Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 162, 306-7; Thomas Biolsi, "The Birth of the Reservation: Making the Modern Individual among the Lakota," *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 1 (1995): 28-53.

22. Campbell Collection (note 7 above), box 106, notebook 47, p. 10. See also Vine V. Deloria Sr., "The Standing Rock Reservation: A Personal Reminiscence," *South Dakota Review* 9 (summer 1971): 175; Thomas E. Mails, *Fools Crow*, assisted by Dallas Chief Eagle (1979; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), p. 73.

23. J. F. Cravens to CIA, 19 November 1877, LR, 1824-81, roll 129; US Senate, *Testimony in Regard to the Sioux Indians, Dakota*, 48th Cong., 1st sess., 1883, S. Rept. 283, serial 2174, p. 89.

24. H. D. Gallagher to Thomas [illegible last name], 7 October 1887, PR-NAKC, box 54; Gallagher to CIA, 21 October 1887 (quotation), PR-NAKC, box 36; Lewis A. Dodge to James McLaughlin, 7 July 1888, Standing Rock Agency Records, National Archives, Kansas City (hereafter cited as SR-NAKC), box 302. Despite these complaints, non-Indian hunters were probably more responsible for the decline of pronghorn. See Connie Marie Greenquist, "The American Pronghorn Antelope in Wyoming: A History of Human Influences and Management" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oregon, 1983), pp. 86-87.

25. Graber, *Sister* (note 10 above), pp. 95-113 (quotation, p. 102). See also Sandoz, *Old Jules* (note 11 above), pp. 29, 80.

26. These names are from Eugene Buechel, S.J., *A Dictionary-Oie Wowapi Wan of Teton Sioux*, ed. Paul Manhart, S.J. (Pine Ridge, S. Dak.: Red Cloud Indian School, Holy Rosary Mission, 1983). There is some variation in Lakota names for the months. See also James R. Walker, *Lakota Society*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 123; Royal B. Hassrick, *The*

Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), pp. 174-75.

27. Graber, *Sister* (note 10 above), pp. 101, 104. Gathering continued to be an important economic activity. Madonna Swan, a Lakota woman who grew up on the Cheyenne River reservation, observed that one of her grandmothers spent time gathering turnips and berries in the 1930s. She also recalled picking cherries and plums and collecting acorns with her mother and another grandmother. Mark St. Pierre, *Madonna Swan: A Lakota Woman's Story as Told through Mark St. Pierre* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), pp. 12, 23. For an overview of the Sioux diet before and during the reservation period see Ethel Nurge, "Dakota Diet: Traditional and Contemporary," in *The Modern Sioux: Social Systems and Reservation Culture*, ed. Ethel Nurge (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), pp. 35-91.

28. L. W. Bauer, Rosebud agency farmer, report on the Little White River Farming District, to J. George Wright, c. 1887, RA-NAKC, box A-357, folder labeled "1887." This reported noted that there were twenty-two families farming in this particular district. Of these, seventeen had five or fewer acres under cultivation. McLaughlin at Standing Rock reported in 1887 that "every family" was "engaged in cultivating farms ranging in size from garden patches to 40-acre fields, quite a number having between 10 and 15 acres under cultivation, and few have from 20 to 40 acres each." ARCIA, 1887, p. 48.

29. V. T. McGillicuddy to CIA, 8 October 1883, PR-NAKC, box 36, vol. 5; ARCIA, 1887, p. 18.

30. William K. Powers, *Oglala Religion* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), p. 26; George E. Hyde, *Spotted Tail's Folk: A History of the Brulé Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), pp. 43-44; Julian Rice, *Ella Deloria's "The Buffalo People"* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), pp. 181-82.

31. Patricia C. Albers, "Autonomy and Dependency in the Lives of Dakota Women: A Study in Historical Change," *Review of Radical Political Economics* 17, no. 3 (1985): 118-19; Robert Higheagle Manuscript, Campbell Collection (note 7 above), box 113, folder 10, p. 88.

32. James McLaughlin to "My Dear Captain," 25 April 1883, McLaughlin Papers (note 20 above), roll 20. By 1889 McLaughlin was finally "prepared to advocate the abandonment of agriculture, except in the cultivation of vegetable gardens, and have the Indians turn their attention to stock-growing exclusively." ARCIA, 1889, p. 166.

33. Peter Iverson, *When Indians Became Cowboys: Native Peoples and Cattle Ranching in the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), pp. 53-54.

34. George Brown to Post Adjutant, 14 August 1879, LR, 1824-81, roll 131; ARCIA, 1880, p. 20; 1887, p. 18; 1890, p. 42; Statement of White Swan and Charger, 2 January 1890, LR, 1881-1907, file 108-1890. At Standing Rock, there were 6,550 cattle in 1891. ARCIA, 1891, p. 325. At Pine Ridge, 500 cows, heifers, and bulls were issued as an "experiment" in 1879. By 1890 the people of Pine Ridge had 10,900 cattle; ARCIA, 1880, p. 40; 1890, pp. 51-52.

35. ARCIA, 1883, p. 37; 1884, p. 20; 1890, pp. 51-52, 59.

36. ARCIA, 1887, pp. 48-49. In 1890 the Standing Rock agent reported that 5,500 tons of hay had been cut. ARCIA, 1890, p. 37.

37. ARCIA, 1887, p. 18. Although it is impossible to document the distribution of cattle at any of the other agencies, complaints by the Pine Ridge agent against "squaw men" and "halfbreeds" of "cheating full blood Indians out of their stock or stealing it outright" suggests a concentration of cattle along these lines. H. D. Gallagher to CIA, 21 January 1890, PR-NAKC, box 37. Claims filed at Pine Ridge in 1891 and 1892 by people whose property was destroyed by Ghost Dancers in fall 1890 indicate that most Oglalas had a few head of livestock. This observation is based on my sampling of every tenth (beginning with claim 3) of the 609 claims filed at Pine Ridge, most of which show a claim for at least a few head. It is also noteworthy that Oglala leaders (whose claims I checked although they did not fall into my sampling sequence) made claims for fairly large numbers of livestock. For example, Fast Thunder made a claim for 56 head of cattle, Young Man Afraid of his Horses filed one for 47 head, and American Horse filed a claim for 62 head. These claims are enclosed in James A. Cooper's report, 25 February 1892, LR, 1881-1907, file 7805-92. These records are described in R. Eli Paul, "Dakota Resources: The Investigation of Special Agent Cooper and Property Damage Claims in the Winter of 1890-91," *South Dakota History* 24 (fall/winter 1994): 212-35.

38. Charles E. McChesney to CIA, 15 June 1887, LR, 1881-1907, file 15967-1887.

39. V. T. McGillicuddy to CIA, 19 September 1885, PR-NAKC, box 36. This happened frequently enough for McGillicuddy to complain about it (see CIA to McGillicuddy, 16 May 1885, PR-NAKC, box 7) and for McGillicuddy's successor, Hugh Gallagher, to require anyone wishing to kill cattle to obtain a permit (see ARCIA, 1889, p. 156). The Cheyenne River agent also disciplined people for this infraction. See Cheyenne River Agency Diary, 14 May 1888, CR-NAKC, box 273.

40. ARCIA, 1884, p. 37. The Standing Rock agent also reported three arrests for "maiming cattle" in ARCIA, 1890, p. 41.

41. Theodore Schwan, "Number Head Domestic Animals on Cheyenne River Indian Reservation," 10 November 1878, LR, 1824-81, roll 130; ARCIA, 1881, p. 25; 1887, p. 18. Of the twenty-eight people listed as having horses in Schwan's 1878 report, seven (N. Narcelle, Fred Depri [Dupris or Dupree], A. Larrabee, H. Lafferty, A. McCampbell, A. LeBeau, B. Claymour) accounted for 440 of the 606 head. These seven were listed as "Indian" and were people of mixed ancestry. It is unclear exactly how many families at Cheyenne River had horses in the late 1880s, but my surmise is that most had at least a few horses.

42. ARCIA, 1889, p. 156.

43. L. F. Spencer to CIA, 23 June 1887, RA-NAKC, book 13; Swift Bear et al. to CIA, 13 April 1889, RA-NAKC, book 15.

44. A. J. Willard to Secretary of the Interior, 23 April 1888, LR, 1881-1907, file 10868-1888; H. D. Gallagher to Acting CIA, 15 June 1888, PR-NAKC, box 54. The agent at Cheyenne River estimated that 4,175 cattle were grazing illegally along the Bad River in 1886. Charles E. McChesney to CIA, 5 July 1886, LR, 1881-1907, file 17906-1886.

45. Charles E. McChesney to CIA, 2 June 1890, LR, 1881-1907, file 17315-1890 (emphasis in original).

46. *New York Herald*, 1 October 1877, p. 7.

47. William J. Pollock to CIA, 6 October 1878, LR, 1824-81, roll 843; James Irwin to CIA, 11 November 1878, LR, 1824-81, roll 723.

48. J. H. Hammond to CIA, 5 December 1878, LR, 1824-81, roll 722; William J. Pollock to CIA, 31 January 1879, LR, 1824-81, roll 844; V. T. McGillicuddy to CIA, 16 May 1879, LR, 1824-81, roll 724; ARCIA, 1879, p. 39; 1880, p. 45.

49. Pollock to CIA, *ibid*.

50. At Standing Rock and Cheyenne River agencies, which were on the Missouri, there was no freighting until the late 1880s, when the government started to ship some supplies via rail (to Mandan, near Pierre, for Standing Rock and to Pierre for Cheyenne River). ARCIA, 1888, p. 59, reported that Standing Rock freighters earned \$2,707 over the previous year; ARCIA, 1889, p. 170, gave a figure of \$3,305.

51. Corabelle Fellows to C. E. McChesney, 27 October 1884, CR-NAKC, box 232; ARCIA, 1889, p. 169; Samuel Charger, "Biography of Martin Charger," *South Dakota Historical Collections* 22 (1946): 20. Agency records are filled with requests for the purchase of cordwood. See, for example, Charles E. McChesney to CIA, 27 August 1888, LR, 1881-1907, file 21979-1888; J. W. Bell to CIA, 12 July 1886, PR-NAKC, box 36.

52. For example, CIA to Charles E. McChesney, 17 February 1886, CR-NAKC, box 265, authorized \$56.00 to purchase hay "for subsistence of ponies

belonging to the Indian police." CIA to L. F. Spencer, 29 July 1889, RA-NAKC, box A-358, authorized purchase of 100 tons of baled hay at \$10.00 per ton and 30 tons of stacked hay at \$4.50 per ton for "Agency and police stock." Both these documents specified that purchases were to be made from Indians.

53. James McLaughlin to CIA, 8 May 1888, 5 December 1889, McLaughlin Papers (note 20 above), roll 33.

54. CIA to James McLaughlin, 3 July 1890, SR-NAKC, box 303; McLaughlin to CIA, 8 May 1888, McLaughlin Papers (note 20 above), roll 33; CIA to James McLaughlin, 21 October 1890, SR-NAKC, box 303; ARCIA, 1888, pp. 60-62. On the reservation police at Pine Ridge, see Mark R. Ellis, "Reservation Akicitas: The Pine Ridge Indian Police, 1879-1885," *South Dakota History* 29 (fall 1999): 185-210.

55. "Report of Irregular Employees at Standing Rock Agency Dakota for the Month Ending June 30, 1879," and reports for other months in 1879 and 1880, LR, 1824-81, rolls 851, 852.

56. McLaughlin to CIA, 8 May 1888; CIA to McLaughlin, 21 October 1890 (note note 54 above); ARCIA, 1888, pp. 61-62.

57. Of the six Indian teachers at Standing Rock in 1888, three (Jennie Primeau, Maria L. Van Solen, and Rosa Bearface) were female. ARCIA, 1888, pp. 61-62.

58. An entry in the Cheyenne River Agency Diary, 1 August 1886, for example, notes that "Mrs. Eagle Man commenced cooking for prisoners at noon." H. D. Gallagher to CIA, 24 March 1890, PR-NAKC, box 37, wrote that he intended to fill the positions of assistant cook, assistant laundress, and assistant seamstress with "Indian girls of the proper age who had made a meritorious record" at Carlisle.

59. Louisa Irvine to Mary C. Collins, 26 January 1882, South Dakota Conference United Church of Christ Archives, Oahe Mission Collection, box 16, Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S. Dak.; Digmann, "History of the St. Francis Mission" (note 17 above), p. 17.

60. Issac P. Baker, general superintendent, Benton Transportation Co., to James McLaughlin, 14 April 1888, SR-NAKC, box 302.

61. Greg Gagnon and Karen White Eyes, *Pine Ridge Reservation: Yesterday and Today* (Interior, S. Dak.: Badlands Natural History Association, 1992), p. 21; Raymond J. DeMallie, "Pine Ridge Economy: Cultural and Historical Perspectives," in *American Indian Economic Development*, ed. Sam Stanley (The Hague: Mouton, 1978), pp. 259, 263.

62. Phyllis Rogers, "Buffalo Bill" and the Siouan Image," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 7, no. 3 (1983): 43-53, argues that it was the

Wild West shows that created the image of the Sioux as standing for all Indians.

63. L. G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), pp. 21-27, 30.

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

65. ARCIA, 1889, p. 153; H. D. Gallagher to CIA, 17 April 1889, PR-NAKC, box 36; Gallagher to CIA, 8 May 1888, and "List of Indians Absent," c. July 1889, PR-NAKC, box 36; Gallagher to CIA, 17 April 1890, PR-NAKC, box 37.

66. ARCIA, 1889, p. 153; Moses, *Wild West Shows* (note 63 above), p. 199.

67. Richard Conn, *A Persistent Vision: Art of the Reservation Days: The L.D. and Ruth Bax Collection of the Denver Art Museum* (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 1986), pp. 56-58; Marla N. Powers, *Oglala Women: Myth, Ritual, and Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 137 (first quotation); Carrie A. Lyford, *Quill and Beadwork of the Western Sioux* (Lawrence, Kans.: Printing Department., Haskell Institute, 1940), p. 58 (second quotation); Graber, *Sister* (note 10 above), pp. 98, 105.

68. John G. Bourke Diary, vol. 41, 22 June 1881, p. 1528, US Military Academy Library, West Point, microfilm, roll 3; Janet Catherine Berlo, "A Brief History of Lakota Drawings, 1870-1935," in *Plains Indian Drawings, 1865-1935: Pages from a Visual History*, ed. Janet Catherine Berlo (New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with the American Federation of Arts and the Drawing Center, 1996), pp. 34-39.

69. Joseph C. Porter, *Paper Medicine Man: John Gregory Bourke and His American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), p. 64; Luther Standing Bear, *My People the Sioux*, ed. E. A. Brininstool, with an introduction by Richard N. Ellis (1928; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), p. 210.

70. V. T. McGillicuddy to "Whom it may concern," 23 April 1883, PR-NAKC, box 53.

71. These are some of the items from a list provided by O. M. Carter, 1 May 1880, LR, 1824-81, roll 845.

72. John Cook to CIA, 7 August 1880, and Spotted Tail to Secretary of the Interior, 1 October 1880, RA-NAKC, book 8; Charles E. McChesney to CIA, 25 January 1888, LR, 1881-1907, file 2800-1888.

73. James Wright to CIA, 4 September 1886, RA-NAKC, book 12. For a detailed discussion of the bison bone trade on the upper Missouri, see LeRoy Barnett, "Ghastly Harvest: Montana's Trade in Buffalo Bones," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 25 (summer 1975): 2-13.

74. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Moscow: Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, 1934), p. 13.