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Review of *Holding Stone Hands: On the Trail of the Cheyenne Exodus* By Alan Boye

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Holding Stone Hands: On the Trail of the Cheyenne Exodus. By Alan Boye. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999. Illustrations, maps, notes. xi + 347 pp. \$24.95.

In 1995 Alan Boye, an English professor at Lyndon State College in Vermont, began a thousand-mile journey on foot retracing the steps of Little Wolf's and Dull Knife's Northern Cheyennes in 1878-1879 that took them from Indian Territory to Montana. The Cheyennes were escaping from deplorable conditions on the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Indian Reservation at Darlington Agency near Fort Reno, Indian Territory. Troops from four federal military departments were eventually placed in the field to stop them.

Fighting their way through Indian Territory and Kansas, the Indians eventually split into two groups in Nebraska. Dull Knife's followers were captured and taken to Fort Robinson where on 9 January 1879 they made a dramatic escape for freedom rather than return to Indian Territory. By 22 January, almost half of them had perished. Little Wolf made it to Fort Keogh, Montana, where his people remained. By 1900 the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation was created as a result of one of the great odysseys in American history, one that rivaled the Nez Perce and Navajo journeys.

Occasionally joined by tribal members, Boye trekked through four states on a modern spiritual journey where time stood still. For the Northern Cheyennes accompanying him, here was a chance to touch the past and experience some of the same world views their ancestors had dwelled in over a century ago.

Boye's spiritual awakening and inspiration are revealed in illuminating prose. The evocative emotion generated by the journey's magnitude, its sights, and the ways in which a sense of place can put an individual in touch with touching history is profound.

This book is not, however, a scholarly work of history and should not be promoted as such. Although Boye uses government documents to blend historical commentary with his per-

sonal experience, his treatment is not comprehensive. He completely misses a number of important manuscript collections from the Walter Camp Papers, the Ellison Collection in the Denver Public Library, and collections in the Kansas State Historical Society. The most visible omission is Thomas Marquis's 1926 interview with Iron Teeth, which gave history the only firsthand account of the odyssey by a Cheyenne woman.

There are also historical errors. There is meager evidence that Little Wolf traveled to Washington with Stone Calf in 1873. Crazy Horse was stabbed, not shot. The endnotes are non-specific in regard to page citations. Much of the historical narrative is offered through the eyes and words of local ranchers and regional history buffs. There is no index or formal bibliography.

Alan Boye's contribution to this important topic is chiefly literary and spiritual. In this he succeeds. As the works of John Neihardt, Bruce Cutler, and Scott Momaday show, there is an important niche for literary efforts that link the saga of the Indian Wars to the present. *Holding Stone Hands* merits a respected place among them.

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