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RANGERS, MOUNTIES, AND THE SUBJUGATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, 1870-1885

ANDREW R. GRAYBILL

During the 1840s and 1850s, more than 300,000 traders and overland emigrants followed the Platte and Arkansas rivers westward across the Central Plains, the winter habitat of the bison. The rapid environmental degradation of this area had the effect of driving the bison to the extreme Northern and Southern Plains, where white hidehunters slaughtered the animals.¹ By the mid-1870s indigenous peoples at both ends of the grasslands, in places such as the Texas Panhandle and the upper Missouri River valley, fiercely defended the dwindling herds in an attempt to avoid starvation.²

KEY WORDS: Blackfoot, Canada, Comanche, Cree, Kiowa, North-West Mounted Police, Texas Rangers

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The Indians' predicament was not theirs alone, however, as Native efforts at self-preservation posed a significant threat to Euro-American plans for the frontier. To that end, government officials on the peripheries of the Great Plains developed a remarkably similar strategy: the use of mounted constabularies to pacify indigenous peoples. Indeed, the North-West Mounted Police were created and the Texas Rangers renewed and reorganized in the early 1870s specifically to address the pressing "native question" confronting Texas and western Canada, among the few places where bison still roamed after 1870. Of course, authorities in Austin and Ottawa relied on other armed forces to wrest control of their hinterlands away from indigenous peoples—most notably the US Army and the Canadian militia—but no two groups rendered more effective service in this regard than the Rangers and the Mounted Police.³

Few scholars have situated the efforts of these constabularies within the context of the rapidly changing conditions for Indians on the Great Plains after 1865. Studies of the Rangers tend to regard their post-Civil War anti-Indian vigilance as merely the continuation

of an inevitable conflict between incompatible cultures, while Canadian historians have overlooked the more coercive dimensions of the Mounties' duties, especially in the 1870s.⁴ An examination of the two forces, however, reveals that both Austin and Ottawa called on their rural police to manage indigenous populations facing societal collapse, and that the constabularies responded in similar fashion: by controlling or denying the Natives' access to the bison.

Though fought almost entirely to the east of Texas, the Civil War was nevertheless costly for the state, as it lost some of its leading antebellum political figures.⁵ More disturbing, perhaps, was the recession of the frontier, a byproduct of the manpower needs of the Confederacy, which had left Texas unable to defend itself from Indian attacks, long a feature of Anglo-Native relations in the state. Given the instability of the Civil War era in Texas, the violence of this period was among the worst that the state's population had yet endured, with one historian estimating that over 400 residents were killed, wounded, or taken captive between 1862 and 1865 alone.⁶

With the end of the war, however, Austin turned its attention once again to the nagging problem of Native depredations, which, if anything, seemed to be growing worse after 1865. In north Texas, settlers complained frequently of Kiowa and Comanche raids emanating from the Indian Territory just across the Red River.⁷ It would be difficult to overstate the anxiety caused in Austin by such missives, as state officials worried that the violence, if unchecked, would halt migration to west Texas, a concern voiced explicitly by a number of whites.⁸

Texans were not alone in their dire assessments of the circumstances along the frontier, as several federal officials dispatched to the region commented on the adverse effects of Native violence on white settlers. One such observer was Lawrie Tatum, the Indian agent at Fort Sill in the Indian Territory. Tatum, however, sounded a slightly more optimistic

note than did Texas residents, noting that the Comanche responsible for the raids were "fast passing away," and that unless they soon chose a more civilized path, "it is not likely they will last much beyond the present generation."⁹

Tatum's letter is particularly useful in evoking the climate along the state's northern and western frontiers, for it suggests that white settlers were not the only residents of the Southern Plains experiencing great hardships following the Civil War. Like many of the settlers, though, Tatum seems not to have recognized the powerful correlative relationship between the sufferings of both Anglos and Indians at this time. White insecurities stemmed directly from the Natives' own dilemmas and shaped Austin's strategies to secure the Texas frontier.

The Comanche who raided in northern Texas during the nineteenth century were descendants of the group's eastern branch, which had migrated to Texas from present-day Colorado in the mid-eighteenth century. The Kotsoteka—or "buffalo eaters"—hunted elk, black bear, deer, and antelope, but as their name suggests, their principal means of subsistence was the bison.¹⁰ By the early 1800s the Kotsoteka were in full control of the bison-hunting grounds below the Canadian River, and Comanche bands ranged as far into Texas as the Hill Country, located in the central part of the state.¹¹

Hunting alongside the Comanche were the Kiowa, who—despite cultural and linguistic differences—had forged an extremely close alliance with the Comanche during the late eighteenth century.¹² Like the Comanche, the Kiowa inhabited the grasslands south of the Arkansas River, developing a cultural and economic reliance on the region's bison, whose numbers—estimated by Dan Flores at approximately eight million—must have seemed inexhaustible to the Indians during the first half of the nineteenth century.¹³ Such was not the case, however.

By the early 1860s a combination of human and ecological factors had reduced the number of bison.¹⁴ Compounding matters for the Indi-



FIG. 1. This bison cow and her calves—photographed in the 1890s in Canada's Banff National Park—were among the few remaining buffalo on the Great Plains in the late nineteenth century, as the vast majority had been killed off by changing ecological conditions and especially human predation. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, NC-27-11.

ans was the fact that white settlement and expansion into the Central Plains had pushed the dwindling herds into Texas, which had expelled the Comanche from their reservation on the Brazos River in 1859.¹⁵ Caught between a scarcity of game and the brutal tactics employed by the US Army in defending railroads and Euro-American settlers, the Kiowa and Comanche—with estimated populations in the late 1860s of 2,000 and 4,000, respectively—met several times with federal representatives, hoping to establish peace and to chart a course for Native survival.¹⁶

Treaty negotiations also provided Indian leaders a chance to vent their frustrations with US policy, as captured in a speech by Eagle Drinking, a Comanche chief, at the 1865 pro-

ceedings on the Little Arkansas River. In response to Commissioner J. B. Sanborn's proposal that the Comanche and Kiowa cede lands north of the Canadian River and accept settlement on a reservation in the Indian Territory, Eagle Drinking replied: "I am fond of the land I was born on. The white man has land enough. I don't want to divide again."¹⁷ Nevertheless, in exchange for a supposedly permanent hunting ground in far northwestern Texas, Eagle Drinking, among others, signed the treaty on October 18, 1865.

As the Comanche and Kiowa were to discover, however, peace negotiations often promised more than they delivered. For instance, while the bands who signed the 1867 Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek believed that the

agreement had guaranteed them exclusive access to the hunting grounds below the Arkansas River, the treaty never expressly forbade Euro-Americans from entering the area. Thus, the white hidehunters who poured into the Texas Panhandle after 1870 drove to the brink of extinction the very herds of bison on which the Indians had pinned their own hopes of self-preservation.¹⁸

Frustrated by the disappearance of the bison and exasperated by the perceived duplicity of federal officials, as many as two-thirds of the Kiowa and Comanche—including those who had previously accepted treaty obligations—ventured into Texas during the late 1860s. While their primary objectives no doubt were bison and the horses needed to hunt them, many Indians also increased their attacks on white settlements with the intent of driving off those who would endanger their access to the diminishing herds.

These were the bands of raiders so bitterly described by Euro-Americans along the Texas frontier in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Seeking a definitive end to the conflict and the promotion of further Anglo migration, the Texas legislature passed a bill in June 1870 authorizing the institution of a "Frontier Force." This act had the effect of reestablishing the Texas Rangers, who had lapsed into irrelevance during the Civil War and Reconstruction and were replaced with the state police by a skeptical Republican administration.¹⁹ Four years later, this detachment of Rangers was reorganized into the six companies of the Frontier Battalion and charged with containing "marauding or thieving parties" of Indians.²⁰ Their mission was relatively straightforward: to drive Native Americans from within the borders of the state beyond the reach of the resources on which their survival depended.

Considering that after the Civil War the United States had committed significant military resources to Texas for the purposes of frontier defense—including one artillery, three cavalry, and four infantry regiments—one is tempted to ask why state administrators felt it

necessary to resuscitate the Rangers.²¹ There are two answers. In the first place, the Rangers were revered within Texas as Indian fighters par excellence, a reputation that dated back to the brutal campaigns led by Capt. John Coffee Hays against the Comanche in the 1840s.²² Faced now with a level of Indian violence not seen since those days, Texans looked to the Rangers once more to deliver them from "the many tribes of savages" along the frontier, a job for which they seemed uniquely qualified.²³

Archival records suggest that the Rangers were indeed well suited to the task of Indian conquest. For one thing, the overwhelming majority of the men who served in the Rangers had come to the force from rural parts of Texas, the Plains states, and the South, and as such very likely had experience with Native Americans, something the Rangers themselves considered of inestimable value.²⁴ As one captain who fought in west Texas noted: "The US Troops don't understand the character of these Indians, nor are they acquainted with the character of the country. My men are all frontiersmen, thoroughly acquainted with the whole country and well versed in [their] machinations and tactics."²⁵

But beyond their storied history and famed expertise, the Rangers were called upon by Austin and celebrated by the citizenry because they were enthusiastic in executing the state's Indian policy. For instance, although there were approximately 4,500 federal troops serving in Texas at any given time after the Civil War, the 450 Rangers of the Frontier Battalion engaged Indians in battle on more than one-third as many occasions as their army counterparts between 1865 and 1881.²⁶ Moreover, though possessing only one-tenth of the army's manpower in the state, the Rangers killed half as many Indians as the federal troops did over the same period (82 to 163, respectively) and managed to wound two more (26 to 24).²⁷

As important as the reputation of the Rangers was to their reestablishment in the 1870s, perhaps more significant was the fact that public officials and private citizens alike had little

faith in the US Army detachments sent to protect them from Kiowa and Comanche raiders.²⁸ For one thing, Texans were convinced that the military presence was simply too small and scattered to make much difference in the event of an Indian attack. The most frequently repeated complaint regarded the distance between army posts, which afforded huge gaps through which Indians could enter the state.²⁹ Part of the problem, in the eyes of Texas observers, was that authorities in Washington DC habitually underestimated the Indian dangers along the state's frontiers. To be sure, federal officials did have their doubts about the dire conditions reported in Texas, as exemplified by an 1871 visit from Gen. William T. Sherman to Fort Richardson, which he made with the express purpose of debunking the Texans' anxieties. Sherman believed the hysteria little more than a ruse intended to draw federal troops away from Reconstruction duty, although he changed his mind after narrowly escaping a mixed party of Kiowa and Comanche raiders near the Salt Creek Prairie.³⁰

Perhaps more vexing than the army's apparent inability to defend them, however, was the sense among many Texans that the federal government was simply not committed to a policy of total Indian removal from the state. For their part, Austin officials in the post-Civil War period had clearly determined that Anglos and Indians could not coexist within the boundaries of Texas, as evidenced by the collapse of the state's two reservations within five years of their 1854 establishment, and the exile of all remaining Natives to the Indian Territory.³¹ Washington, on the other hand, had settled on President U. S. Grant's so-called "peace policy," a less confrontational plan that sought diplomatic solutions to Anglo-Native conflicts, like the 1867 Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek that allowed Indians the right to hunt buffalo in the Panhandle.

This federal moderation, Texans believed, had infected the military detachments stationed in the Southern Plains. Though capable of striking with indiscriminate ferocity—as seen at the Washita River, Summit Springs, and the

Marais River—the army seemed just as likely to display a peculiar quality of restraint. For instance, soldiers in Texas rarely followed up their smaller victories with decisive engagements, belying the genocidal bent often ascribed to them by modern historians.³² Limited perhaps by the tenets of the peace policy or preferring instead to wage a war of attrition, the US Army did not attempt the complete removal of Indians from the state during the 1870s, and on occasion even allowed Natives to remain within its borders after the Natives' defeat in the Red River War of 1874-75.³³

Such decisions drove Texans to distraction, like the citizens of Donley County, who in 1878 complained to Austin that "the few United States troops stationed in the Pan Handle are totally inadequate to cope with the present danger." Instead of asking for more US soldiers to come to their relief, however, the people of Clarendon begged for a Ranger squad to "aid us in our present distress."³⁴ With the failure of the Red River War to end the Indian presence in Texas, state officials heeded these requests, relying increasingly on the state police to accomplish what Washington could not—or would not—do.

As most of the defeated Natives had returned to their agencies in the Indian Territory by the summer of 1875, federal officials in the region declared that peace (if perhaps an uneasy one) reigned in the area. As an indication of Washington's confidence that conflict on the Southern Plains was over, the army reduced its troop strength in Texas, diverting extra forces to the Northern Plains, where the United States faced stiff opposition from groups of Sioux, Cheyenne, and Blackfoot Indians resisting the same white encroachment that had triggered the Red River conflict.

Texans, however, were not nearly so sanguine about conditions along their northern and western frontiers, as Indians still crossed into the state periodically in search of game to augment their meager rations. For instance, Judge Emanuel Deibbs of Wheeler County in the Panhandle wrote to Austin in June 1879 that "a band of Pawnees came through this

Co. creating a great deal of excitement, and almost resulting in a serious difficulty with them."³⁵ Although the Indians returned to their reservation without incident, the message was clear: the problem of Indians in north Texas was by no means resolved, despite the end of the Red River War.³⁶

The Rangers would certainly have agreed with this sentiment. Adj. Gen. William Steele commented that perhaps the only perceptible difference between the periods before and after the Red River War was that "during the past year [1875], the Indian raids have been by small parties, who depended upon their adroitness in concealment, rather than in their strength, for safety."³⁷ Overall for the period between August 1875 and December 1877, Steele reported that fifty-seven Indian parties had entered the state, killing forty citizens and making off with nearly 900 horses and mules.³⁸ Where had all the Natives come from? wondered Texans from Austin to the small towns scattered along the growing frontier.

As it turned out, many of the Kiowa and Comanche bands chased by the Rangers had passed into the state with the consent of soldiers stationed both in Texas and the Indian Territory. Complaining to military officials of starvation on their agencies, Indian chiefs sought permission for hunting parties to cross the Red River, which by that time was the last refuge of the bison on the Southern Plains. The soldiers, motivated in part by expediency—reducing starvation could alleviate the tensions posed by confinement on the reservations—but also by compassion, often complied with these requests.

Such was the case with Lt. A. M. Patch, who described his encounter with a band of Indians near Fort Elliott in 1879. As Patch explained, the group's leader "complained bitterly of his Agency, saying that his people did not get enough to eat there, and that he did not want to go back until he found buffalo [and that] he did not intend any mischief." Impressed with their good disposition, Patch released the Indians on the condition that if the Indian sent back to the reservation by the

chief for a valid hunting pass did not return, the group would immediately depart the state.³⁹

Texans, predictably, complained vociferously about this practice, believing that the incursions of the Native hunting parties were merely the prelude to another major conflict in the region. As one citizen in Brown County explained to Gov. O. M. Roberts in February 1879, "[T]here was now on Texas soil over one thousand 'Indians,' pretending that their mission was 'hunting,'" adding that there was "great danger of an outbreak, in the Spring, on our frontier."⁴⁰ Such threats presented dire implications for the nascent stock-raising industry of west Texas, which residents hoped would bind the area to more developed parts of the state.

For their part, military officials defended their actions, insisting that settlers greatly exaggerated both the size and frequency of such Indian forays while flatly dismissing Anglo claims of alleged "outrages" committed by the Natives.⁴¹ Although some commanding officers attempted to ameliorate the situation by promising to send military escorts along with Indian hunting parties, others explained that troop reductions made this practice largely infeasible.⁴² Bvt. Maj. Gen. John Pope, commander of the Department of the Missouri and a noted advocate of fair treatment for the Indians, evinced less patience for the Texans' complaints, explaining that "insufficient subsistence" by the government made bison hunts "absolutely necessary."⁴³

Abandoned by the federal government, Austin turned to the Rangers for help in settling the state's Indian question once and for all. The police did not disappoint, resolving, it seems, to pursue with ferocity every Native band trespassing in the state. Such grim determination emerges in an 1878 letter from Lt. G. W. Arrington, who wrote to Adj. Gen. John B. Jones, Steele's successor as adjutant general, that he had heard rumors of several Indian bands camped just across the state line in Wilbarger County. Volunteering to intercept them, Arrington added that he was "satisfied we can bring back scalps with us."⁴⁴

More significantly, the Rangers aimed to cut off the Fort Sill Indians from any access to the state's remaining bison, believing that this tactic would deter Natives from entering Texas and would cause the federal government to seal the borders. Jones went so far as to claim in an 1879 letter that there were no bison or game of any kind in northwest Texas—surely an exaggeration—in the hopes that Pope and his men might put a stop to the crossings.⁴⁵ When this failed to solve the problem, the Rangers adopted more radical measures, which brought them into direct conflict with Washington and the military establishment.

Tensions ran highest in the Panhandle, where a small number of whites had established profitable stock-raising operations that they believed were endangered by the continued Indian presence. Seeking to protect these ventures by driving off Natives in search of bison, Ranger detachments squared off against military officials in the region. One such encounter took place in June 1879, when Arrington traveled to Wheeler County—on the border between Texas and the Indian Territory—to investigate the complaints of local ranchers.

Arriving in the town of Sweetwater, Arrington was accosted by Gen. John W. Davidson, who accused the Rangers of foolishly trying to bring on “a merciless and useless war.” When asked by the general if he would kill any Natives he encountered, Arrington replied that he “most assuredly would if they were armed.” Vowing to protect the Indians of the Panhandle, Davidson said he would not allow “an armed mob to be travelling through the country,” and ordered his men to fire upon the Rangers if they disturbed any Natives.⁴⁶

Perhaps the most explosive encounter between Rangers and soldiers of the US Army took place earlier that year. Moved by the desperate conditions facing a band of Kiowa and Comanche who had left Fort Sill in search of food, Nicholas Nolan, a captain in the Tenth Cavalry, arranged for the group to cross into Texas with a military escort.⁴⁷ A squad of Rangers patrolling along the Red River discovered

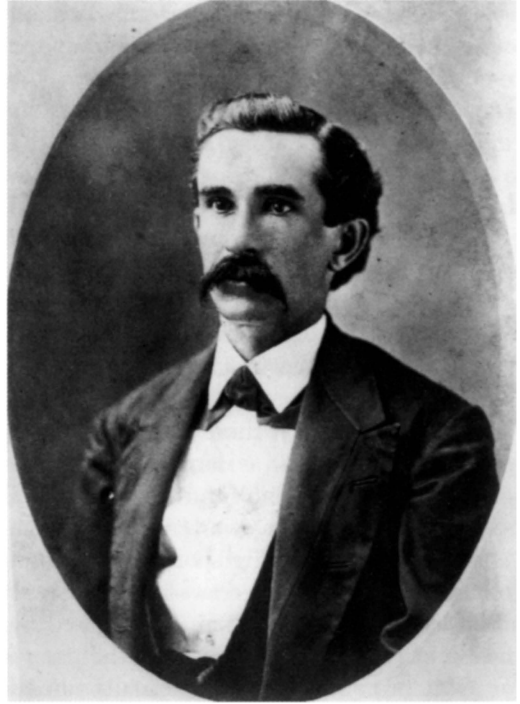


FIG. 2. As commander of the Frontier Battalion and later as Adjutant General of the State of Texas, John B. Jones directed many of the Ranger efforts to remove Native Americans who crossed into the state during the 1870s. He died in 1881 at age 47. Courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

the party, and “without any provocation” attacked the Indians—killing Sunboy, a Kiowa chief—despite the clear presence of the accompanying ten-man military detachment, an action that set off a bitter quarrel between Nolan and the Ranger commander.⁴⁸

While these efforts were no doubt successful in driving the Indians from Texas, the Rangers received substantial help from both houses of the U.S. Congress. Troubled by the continuing violence in Texas, and persuaded, perhaps, by the impassioned appeals of the state's representatives in Washington, Congress approved a bill in the spring of 1880 that expressly prevented reservation Indians from entering any part of Texas. Most telling was the sentence that concluded section 1 of the act, which read, in part, that “any officer or

agent of the Army or Indian Bureau who shall violate this law shall be dismissed from the public service."⁴⁹

Native Americans did not disappear entirely from the state after 1880, although the greatly reduced demand for Ranger anti-Indian duty suggests how complete their removal efforts—with an assist from Congress—had been. The near-total disappearance of the bison and the continued vigilance of the Rangers had made Texas virtually uninhabitable for Indians by the dawn of the 1880s, as Adj. Gen. W. H. King noted in his annual report for 1882: "Practically, there is very little use for any Rangers so far as danger from Indian raids is concerned," a notion that would have been unthinkable even two years before.⁵⁰

To be sure, there were sporadic reports of Indian sightings by rail crews in west Texas around this time, but when investigated by the Rangers—who would stop by the camps for a day or two—such scouts usually turned up very little.⁵¹ Ironically, it was this much less violent Ranger assignment (the supervision of rail camps) that delivered the final blow to Native resistance in Texas. By keeping a close watch on track and grading crews in the trans-Pecos region, the Rangers facilitated the extension of the all-important iron roads, which brought with them, into even the farthest reaches of the state, the white settlers of Austin's aspirations.

At the other end of the Great Plains, Canadian officials in the early 1870s did not face the same troubling reality of Indian-white conflict that their Austin counterparts did, largely because of sparse Euro-Canadian settlement north of the forty-ninth parallel.⁵² Nevertheless, Ottawa's fears of such violence were hardly less intense, for the august goals of the new National Policy—especially the construction of a transcontinental railroad and the promotion of Euro-Canadian migration—would languish if confronted by systematic Indian resistance.⁵³ Before settlers could establish homesteads and entrepreneurial ventures on the prairies, Ottawa needed assurance

that white migrants would suffer no harm at the hands of potentially defensive Natives.

These official concerns were not unfounded, as suggested by reports arriving in the capital from Canadians already on the Plains. Although the federal government had laid the groundwork for peaceful westward expansion by negotiating treaties in 1871 with bands of Ojibwa and Swampy Cree Indians in southern Manitoba, Ottawa had made few inroads among the Native groups farther west who inhabited the territory between Lake Winnipeg and the Rocky Mountains. These Indians, particularly the Cree and Blackfoot peoples, deeply resented the growing Euro-Canadian presence in their midst, and insisted that settlers and surveyors first obtain Native permission before venturing onto their lands.

The Cree Indians, so vehemently opposed to Canadian expansion, occupied the southeastern Plains of the Dominion's frontier, an area on either side of the border separating the present-day provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Their ancestors had migrated to this territory from the Great Lakes, and once on the Plains the woodland Cree acquired horses and gradually abandoned trapping in favor of hunting buffalo, which had become the central element of Cree existence by the early 1800s. With an 1860 population of approximately 12,000, the Cree were the largest single indigenous group on the Canadian Plains, and they controlled the fertile hunting grounds along the Battle and North Saskatchewan rivers.⁵⁴

The principal rivals of the Cree for both horses and access to the bison were the estimated 10,000 Indians comprising the three groups of the Blackfoot Confederacy: the Blood, Peigan, and Blackfoot proper.⁵⁵ Described by one historian as "the strongest and most aggressive nation on the Canadian prairies" after the mid-eighteenth century, the Blackfoot claimed the area to the southwest of the Cree hunting grounds, a region that straddled the international boundary between the Dominion and the United States.⁵⁶ Given the expansionist ambitions of the Blackfoot

Confederacy, hostilities with the powerful and proximate Cree were a regular feature of Blackfoot life until 1870, when the groups treated for peace.⁵⁷

By that time, both the Blackfoot and the Cree faced greater problems than the horse-raiding expeditions launched by one people against the other. In the first place, in 1869 the Hudson's Bay Company had sold the vast North-West Territories to the recently founded Dominion of Canada, leaving the status of the region's Indians in doubt.⁵⁸ More distressing to the Natives, however, was the rapid decline in the area's bison population, accelerated—as in the south—by white hidehunters. Already pressured by the Indians themselves, as well as the Métis—the mixed-blood descendants of European trappers and Indian women—the once great herds had been pushed to the far western edge of the Northern Plains by the early 1870s.⁵⁹

Keenly aware of the threat to their existence posed by the land transfer and the disappearance of the bison, the Cree and Blackfoot looked upon white newcomers with great skepticism. As one Hudson's Bay Company trader explained to the lieutenant governor of the North-West Territories in 1871, a deputation of Cree chiefs had come to see him at Edmonton, where they sought "to ascertain whether their lands had been sold or not, and what was the intention of the Canadian Government in relation to them." The trader enclosed a message from Sweet Grass, a Cree chief, that began in part, "We heard our lands were sold and we did not like it; we don't want to sell our lands; it is our property, and no one has a right to sell them."⁶⁰

The Blackfoot were no less concerned by the growing white encroachment. As explained by Constantine Scollen, an Oblate priest traveling among the Indians in the mid-1870s, "The Blackfeet are extremely jealous of what they consider their country, and never allowed any white men, Half-breeds [Métis], or Crees to remain in it for any length of time." Compounding Blackfoot anxieties, Scollen explained, was the advent of the North-West

Mounted Police among the Natives, as the Indians believed that the police had come not only to establish law and order, "but also to protect white people against them, and that this country will be gradually taken from them without any ceremony."⁶¹

Fueled by these anxieties, the Cree and Blackfoot sought to preserve their nomadic existence by challenging the outsiders who arrived in their territory without Native consent and who killed or scared off the dwindling game on which Indian survival depended. Ottawa, on the other hand, was no less resolved to promote its own agenda for the area, and turned now to the North-West Mounted Police for help in resolving the impasse. Unlike the Rangers, however, the Mounties' mission—as described by Deputy Prime Minister Hewitt Bernard—was essentially a nonviolent one: "[T]o give confidence to peaceable Indians and intending settlers."⁶² This the police would accomplish through negotiation.

Before considering the role of the North-West Mounted Police in facilitating treaties between Ottawa and the Plains Indians, it is worth asking why the federal government chose this approach to begin with, instead of adopting more confrontational methods. One factor, at least in western Canada, was the long history of Hudson's Bay Company control there. Company traders had cooperated with and supported many Indian groups, which had served no doubt to foster some degree of trust between Natives and whites. Ottawa hoped to capitalize on these relationships as it extended its power into the prairies. As important was the Canadian government's dedication to the treaty-making process, which as historian Jill St. Germain explains, had survived largely intact since the days of the Proclamation of 1763.⁶³

Practical considerations dictated a peaceful plan of action as well. Even had the Canadian government chosen to conduct an aggressive campaign against the Blackfoot and Cree, there was a more immediate obstacle than the Dominion's diplomatic obligations: Ottawa simply did not have the money needed

to implement such a strategy. For instance, during the 1870s the United States spent nearly \$20 million each year on its Indian wars, but Canada's entire budget for the same period was only \$19 million.⁶⁴

The Mounties were an obvious choice to initiate the treaty process, as they were the Dominion's principal representatives in the area and had been sent west by Ottawa expressly to make contact with Native groups and to obviate any possible conflicts between Indians and whites.⁶⁵ Charged now by the government with laying the groundwork necessary for treaty negotiations between Canada and the Plains Indians, the Mounted Police sought to establish diplomatic relations with the Blackfoot and the Cree, and to win the confidence of the Indians' most influential chiefs. To that end, the police distributed gifts of blankets, tobacco, tea, and ammunition.⁶⁶

By all accounts, the Mounties' initial efforts were a great success. Describing a meeting between the Mounties and a group of Blackfoot Indians, Father Scollen exclaimed, "All honor I say to the 'Mounted Police,' who have been able to inspire with such confidence these poor members of humanity." For their part, according to Scollen, the Indians had graciously received the hospitality of their "new white friends, and the assurances of more peaceful days in future."⁶⁷

Despite the progress in Canadian-Indian relations facilitated by the Mounted Police and the fact that the Cree and Blackfoot had for several years petitioned Ottawa to meet with them, many chiefs assumed a diffident posture when treaty commissioners actually arrived in the West in 1876 and 1877. As Alexander Morris, lieutenant governor of the North-West Territories, explained after receiving several Cree delegations at Fort Carlton, "[T]hey dreaded the treaty; they had been made to believe that they would be compelled to live on the reserves wholly, and abandon their hunting."⁶⁸

Although Morris assured the Indians that "we [do] not want to take that means of living from you," he went on to sketch a scenario

that would indeed circumscribe, if not eliminate, Cree access to the bison, saying that "if a man, whether Indian or Half-breed, had a good field of grain, you would not destroy it with your hunt."⁶⁹ Even more unambiguous indications of the government's designs for the Plains Indians appeared in the boilerplate of the "numbered treaties," the accords by which Canada obtained title to every acre of the prairies. The wording of the agreements granted the Indians the right to roam over the lands they had ceded "excepting such portions of the territory as pass from the Crown into the occupation of individuals or otherwise."⁷⁰

Maintaining access to the hunting grounds, however, was of little consequence to the Indians if there were no bison on the prairies to hunt. While many Cree and Blackfoot chiefs revealed their willingness to try farming if the bison disappeared, Native leaders made it clear to the treaty commissioners that they preferred a nomadic existence for as long as possible and urged the government to preserve the bison. By the time the governing council of the North-West Territories took up the matter in 1877—implementing measures aimed at limiting Indian but not necessarily white predation—the herds had dwindled so significantly that the measure was quickly repealed the following year.⁷¹

In the end, the bison's near-extinction and the seeming inevitability of white settlement led many Cree and Blackfoot chiefs to sign Treaties Number Six and Seven in 1876 and 1877, respectively, despite their misgivings. In addition to the presents the commissioners gave them, the Indians were convinced to "sell" their lands to the government by guarantees of annuity payments in perpetuity, the supply of farm implements and requisite agricultural instruction, as well as promises of education for Native children. In this way, Ottawa's plans for inducing Natives to move onto reserves closely mirrored similar efforts by US officials.⁷² Also of critical importance in encouraging the Indians to sign, it seems, was the role of the North-West Mounted Police, which had sent detachments to all of the treaty proceedings.

Straight-backed and clad in scarlet tunics, their presence lent prestige and a certain measure of royal authority to the ceremonies, although their influence probably derived more from their own gift offerings and their vigilance in containing unsavory American traders. As Crowfoot, leader of the Blackfoot nation, said during the negotiations for Treaty Number Seven: "If the Police had not come to the country, where would we be all now? Bad men and whiskey were killing us so fast that very few, indeed, of us would have been left to-day. The Police have protected us as the feathers of the bird protect it from the frosts of winter. I am satisfied. I will sign the treaty."⁷³

Although the completion of the Blackfoot Treaty in October 1877 had, in effect, severed the Indians' last remaining link to the Plains, simply extinguishing Native title in the West had by no means solved Canada's Indian "problem." After all, Ottawa had promised, albeit with qualifications, not to impede Native access to bison hunting grounds, and the treaties made Indian occupation of their allotted reserves strictly voluntary. The drawbacks of such an arrangement—that is, one in which the Plains Indians were free to continue a nomadic existence—soon emerged.

Government observers, while recognizing the Indians' determination to continue hunting bison, knew also that the herds were on the brink of extinction, and they worried about managing Canada's indigenous populations once the buffalo were gone. Considering that the extension of the Canadian Pacific Railway was imminent, and that with its construction would come thousands of workers and settlers, the government believed it imperative to eliminate any threat posed by nomadic Indians to the white newcomers by removing the Natives from the prairies. Once again, Ottawa turned to the Mounties, who sought to end the dependence of the Plains Indians on the bison.

A critical if seemingly indirect step in this direction was the Mounties' attempts to eliminate the liquor trade in the North-West Territories, which experienced explosive growth

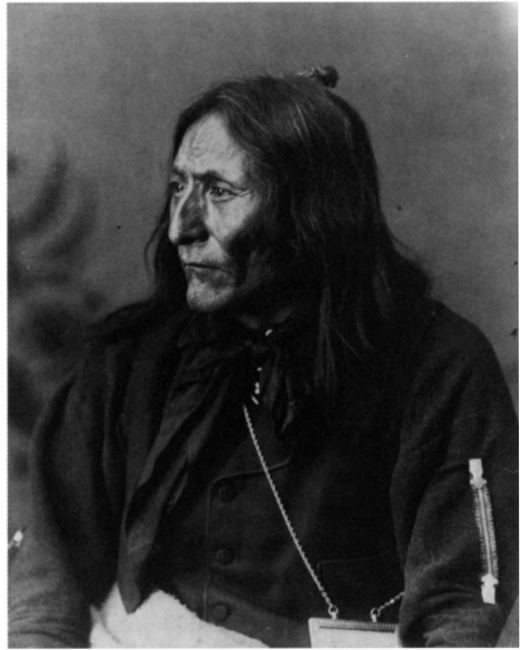


FIG. 3. In 1877, as the head chief of the Blackfoot, Crowfoot helped negotiate Treaty No. 7, an agreement that ceded the southern portion of present-day Alberta to the new Canadian nation. In his remarks, Crowfoot noted that the benevolent presence of the Mounted Police had invested him with the confidence necessary to sign the accord. Courtesy of the Glenbow Archives, NC-29-1.

after the Hudson's Bay Company ceded its lands to Canada in 1869. With no legal injunctions against the sale of alcohol in the North-West Territories, white traders prohibited from selling liquor in Montana poured across the international boundary and established forts with colorful names such as "Whoop-Up," "Slide-Out," and "Standoff."⁷⁴ At the posts, Euro-Americans did a booming business in buffalo robes, even after the great herds had started their precipitous decline.⁷⁵

Indians supplied many of these hides in exchange for liquor, which introduced great social disorganization in Native communities.⁷⁶ Natives intoxicated by vast quantities of whiskey—often spiced with tobacco, molasses, pepper, and ginger to heighten its effects—died in horrific numbers, with one missionary

estimating that forty-two otherwise healthy Blackfoot men had perished in drunken brawls or by freezing to death in the winter of 1873-74 alone. Still, the Indians came regularly to trade hides for liquor.⁷⁷

Concerned by the turbulence in the North-West occasioned by alcohol, with the Cypress Hills Massacre in 1873 only the most notorious example, Ottawa armed the North-West Mounted Police with a mandate to crush the region's liquor traffic, which the Mounties sought to do upon their arrival in the West.⁷⁸ Police vigilance, however, had a more practical side to go along with its ostensibly humanitarian objectives. As the minister of justice explained in an 1874 letter to his counterpart at the ministry of the interior, the liquor trade "has had the effect of demoralizing the Indians and retarding all efforts toward civilizing and quieting them," so that "little can be done towards inducing settlers to go into that valuable section of the country."⁷⁹

Given Ottawa's plans for "civilizing and quieting" the Natives—which involved the Indians taking up homesteads and learning how to farm—officials saw that stopping the liquor trade could go a long way toward weaning Indians off of the bison and thus ending Native nomadism, as alcohol was a consequence of and continued inducement to the robe trade.⁸⁰ Morris, in fact, made federal intentions and the importance of the Mounted Police in implementing those plans explicitly clear to the Cree in 1876, during the deliberations at Fort Pitt that preceded the signing of Treaty Number Six.⁸¹

The Mounted Police worked tirelessly to extinguish the sale and consumption of alcohol in the North-West Territories throughout the 1870s. Statistics from the latter part of the decade, when such record-keeping by the Mounties began, indicate that liquor-related offenses constituted a significant percentage of total police arrests and prosecutions: 13 percent in 1878, 24 percent in 1879, 23 percent in 1880, and 14 percent in 1881.⁸² The majority of these cases concerned the importation of liquor or its sale to Indians, although

the police also went after the Indians themselves.⁸³

No less important to Ottawa in ending Indian nomadism were the Mounties' efforts to eliminate horse theft by Indians, especially raids on Native camps lying across the border in the United States. For bison-hunting peoples like the Cree and Blackfoot, horses were indispensable, as they greatly facilitated the hunting of bison while allowing Native bands to transport their families and belongings across vast distances in the Plains.⁸⁴ But beyond these economic motives, horses also served a social purpose as well. The size of a Native man's horse herd, as well as the quality of his mounts, were critical factors in determining a warrior's status in the community.⁸⁵

In order to build and maintain their herds, small bands of Cree and Blackfoot warriors regularly attacked the camps of rival Native groups. Although they certainly stole from each other, the Cree and Blackfoot often targeted herds controlled by groups to the south, in contiguous parts of the United States. The Cree, for instance, frequently poached from Mandan and Hidatsa camps located in the Dakota Territory, while the Blackfoot coveted steeds belonging to the Crow and Flathead, Montana groups who lived to their southeast and southwest, respectively.⁸⁶ As with the horses themselves, these raids served social as well as economic purposes, for success in warfare lent prestige to young men seeking advancement in their communities.

Mounted Police reports from the late 1870s and early 1880s confirm the central importance of horse theft to the Indians of the Northern Plains, and the growing international dimensions of the raids during this time period. Most vexing to the Mounted Police was the fact that Canadian Indians considered areas north of the international boundary as something of a safe haven, referring to the forty-ninth parallel as the "medicine line," and believing that they were immune from punishment once they had crossed it. Ottawa worried that such incidents might be unproductive of cordial diplomatic relations with Washington.⁸⁷

However, considering that in the overwhelming majority of such cases Indians stole from other Indians, and with little attendant violence, one is led to ask why the Mounted Police worked so hard to eradicate the problem. The answer, it seems, hinges on the recognition by Canadian officials that, as with the liquor trade, putting a stop to Native horse theft would severely impair the Indians' ability to maintain a nomadic existence.⁸⁸ It stood to reason that a dearth of horses would clearly complicate the bison hunt, while simultaneously removing both a means of and further enticement to Native mobility. Moreover, denying Indian access to horses obviated their need to cross the international boundary, serving to further circumscribe the Indians' nomadic behavior.

Ironically, despite the best efforts of the Mounties in crushing the liquor trade and curtailing Native horse theft, the provision—rather than the denial—of access to the buffalo spelled the end of Native nomadism in the Canadian Plains. Following their arrival in the West, the Mounties used their influence, as well as the power of federal law, to prevent conflicts between Native groups. While this certainly had its positive effects for Cree and Blackfoot communities, it also precluded them from defending their hunting grounds from outsiders such as whites and Métis, a fact noted with some concern by the Blackfoot in deliberations for Treaty Seven.⁸⁹

Whether this was a calculated strategy intended to deprive the Indians of their life source—akin to the policy of noninterference adopted by the United States in the 1870s—is unclear; police sympathy for the Indians' plight seems to suggest that it was not.⁹⁰ What is certain, however, is that this "tragedy of the loss of the commons," in combination with the Mounties' more deliberate attempts to control Cree and Blackfoot access to the bison, accelerated the economic collapse of Plains Indian societies in the Canadian West.⁹¹ With few or no bison north of the international boundary after 1881, and rapidly shrinking numbers in the Montana river valleys

below—where the Indians were forbidden from hunting, anyway—the Cree and Blackfoot retreated to their reservations and the prairies fell finally and firmly into Ottawa's possession.⁹²

Although there were episodes of Native unrest in Texas and western Canada after the early 1880s—most notably, Canada's North-West Rebellion of 1885, although this was more an affair of the Métis than either the Cree or Blackfoot—by that time white settlement and industrial development proceeded apace at either end of the Great Plains. Observers in both capitals attributed this state of affairs to their rural police, crediting them—in remarkably similar language—as having served as the "vanguard of civilization."⁹³

There were, however, real and significant differences between the forces with regard to their policing of indigenous peoples, the most obvious of which turns on the Rangers' liberal use of violence by comparison to Mountie restraint. Several factors may help to explain this. In the first place, the Mounties arrived on the prairies in 1874, charged with creating optimum conditions for white newcomers, well in advance of their arrival. Moreover, as explained by historian Roger Nichols in his comparative study of Indians in the United States and Canada, the power of the North-West Mounted Police to manage both military and civil affairs may have simplified Ottawa's Indian policy in the West.⁹⁴

In Texas, by contrast, the Rangers inherited a tradition of police service based on the armed protection of a continually expanding frontier, one long marked by bloody encounters between Anglo-Texans and Native peoples. Rather than entering portions of north and west Texas in order to lay the physical, legal, and diplomatic groundwork necessary for Euro-American occupation as the Mounties had done, the Rangers traveled to flashpoints of conflict along an already settled frontier, seeking to defend territory that Anglos had tried to conquer. For Nichols, it is this difference in settlement patterns between the US

and Canadian Wests that explains—more than any other factor—the higher levels of violence in the United States, and not “any superior policy or more careful handling of Indian-related issues by Canadian officials.”⁹⁵

Perhaps the central feature in explaining Ranger brutality and Mountie nonviolence hinges on the fact that one was a state force and the other a federal one. The Republic of Texas gained admission to the United States in full possession of its lands, and after the failure of its Indian reservations in the 1850s was free to handle its Native peoples as Austin saw fit. This entailed driving Kiowa and Comanche into adjacent states and territories, where the Indians then became a problem for Washington to solve.

The Mounted Police, by contrast—as agents of a federal government committed to larger, national goals and one keenly aware of the newfound global scrutiny that came with nationhood—did not have such an aggressive option at their disposal. Moreover, they were bound by Ottawa’s diplomatic and financial constraints in their handling of Canada’s indigenous peoples. The Mounties could not simply drive the Cree and Blackfoot across the international boundary into Montana, nor could they wage a costly and inevitably controversial war against them.

These divergences should not obscure the powerful similarities linking the efforts of the two constabularies throughout this period. The central mandate governing both the Rangers and the Mounties during the late 1870s and early 1880s was identical: to prevent Native populations from interfering with white migration and the establishment of Euro-American military and political authority at their respective ends of the Great Plains. In each case, the police focused their efforts on denying Indian access to the bison. The Rangers accomplished this by closing the borders of Texas to Indian outsiders and by attempting to exterminate those Natives who managed to cross into the state to hunt bison. The Mounties employed more indirect and less vicious strategies—attacking the liquor trade,

curtailing horse theft, and preventing intertribal warfare—which destabilized Native reliance on the buffalo.

These are critical differences, to be sure. After all, it is difficult to imagine a Kiowa or Comanche leader offering the Rangers anything but scorn and hostility, in marked contrast to Crowfoot’s effusive praise for the Mounties at the signing of Treaty Number Seven. And yet by the mid-1880s, the bleak conditions of reservation life facing the Kiowa and Comanche strongly resembled the poverty and starvation afflicting the Blackfoot and Cree on their reserves. Considering that in both instances it was largely police vigilance that had produced such results, the insistence by many Canadian historians that the North-West Mounted Police afforded gentle treatment to the Natives it controlled seems, in fact, to be no sure thing at all.⁹⁶

NOTES

1. Elliott West, *The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 13-50.

2. Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 123-63. For more on the Canadian bison, see William Dobak, “Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 27 (Spring 1996): 33-52.

3. S. W. Horrall, “Sir John A. Macdonald and the Mounted Police Force for the Northwest Territories,” *Canadian Historical Review* 52, no. 2 (June 1971): 181. The Rangers, on the other hand, split into two divisions four years after their 1870 re-instatement, with the larger Frontier Battalion combating Indians in the northern and western sections of the state. See Charles M. Robinson III, *The Men Who Wear the Star: The Story of the Texas Rangers* (New York: Random House, 2000), 168-204.

4. For the Rangers, see Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense* (1935; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), especially 3-15; Robinson, *The Men Who Wear the Star*, 155-81; and Robert M. Utley, *Lone Star Justice: The First Century of the Texas Rangers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 105-42. For the Mounties, see R. C. Macleod, *The North-West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement, 1873-1905* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 143-

61. Although John Jennings, among others, recognizes the use of force by the Mounted Police against Indians, he argues that such strategies only emerged in the early 1880s, with the advent of the so-called pass system that required Natives to seek permission before venturing off of their reserves. See his study, "The North-West Mounted Police and Canadian Indian Policy, 1873-1896" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1979).
5. James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 404-10.
6. Robinson, *Men Who Wear the Star*, 149-52.
7. See, for example, petition from San Saba County to E. M. Pease, October 5, 1868, in Dorman H. Winfrey and James M. Day, eds., *The Indian Papers of Texas and the Southwest, 1825-1916* (1966; Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1995), 4:289.
8. Letter from P. Gallagher to E. J. Davis, January 24, 1870, in Winfrey and Day, eds., *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:297.
9. *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 42nd Congress, 2nd Session, 1871, House Executive Document 1, 919-20.
10. Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Western Comanche Trade Center: Rethinking the Plains Indian Trade System," *Western Historical Quarterly* 29 (Winter 1998): 494; W. W. Newcomb, *The Indians of Texas: From Prehistoric to Modern Times* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 160-63.
11. Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology, Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800-1850," *Journal of American History* 78, no. 2 (September 1991): 469; Thomas Kavanagh, *Comanche Political History: An Ethnohistorical Perspective, 1706-1875* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 136.
12. For more information on the Kiowa, see Blue Clark, *Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock: Treaty Rights and Indian Law at the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Hugh D. Corwin, *Comanche and Kiowa Captives in Oklahoma and Texas* (Guthrie, OK: Cooperative Publishing, 1959); and Jane Richardson, *Law and Status among the Kiowa Indians* (New York: J.J. Augustin, 1940).
13. Flores, "Bison Ecology, Bison Diplomacy," 471.
14. See Isenberg, *Destruction of the Bison*; and Flores, "Bison Ecology, Bison Diplomacy."
15. Newcomb, *Indians of Texas*, 358.
16. For Kiowa population estimates, see *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, 1869, House Executive Document 1, 826-27. For the Comanche, see Kavanagh, *Comanche Political History*, 471-73.
17. *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 39th Congress, 1st Session, 1865, House Executive Document 1, 717.
18. Isenberg, *Destruction of the Bison*, 124.
19. See Robinson, *Men Who Wear the Star*, 155-67; and Frederick Wilkins, *The Law Comes to Texas: The Texas Rangers, 1870-1901* (Austin: State House Press, 1999), 1-24.
20. H. P. N. Gammel, ed., *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897*, vol. 8, pt. 1 (Austin: Gammel Book Company, 1898), 86-91.
21. Thomas T. Smith, "US Army Combat Operations in the Indian Wars of Texas, 1849-1881," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 99, no. 4 (April 1996): 509.
22. See Frederick Wilkins, *The Legend Begins: The Texas Rangers, 1823-1845* (Austin: State House Press, 1996), 71-90.
23. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas, 1875*, Texas State Library and Archives (cited hereafter as TSLA), Austin, 3-4.
24. A rare sample of demographic information on some sixty recruits reveals that forty-five of them—or 75 percent—listed farmer, ranger, cowboy, or ranch hand as their previous occupation, with the most common states of former residence (besides Texas) including Missouri, Mississippi, and Tennessee. See Frontier Battalion Enlistment Rolls, 1877-83, Adjutant General Records (cited hereafter as AGR), Ranger Records, TSLA, Austin, box 401-1160, folder 21.
25. Letter from Telesforo Montes to William Steele, September 15, 1875, TSLA, AGR, General Correspondence (cited hereafter as GC), box 401-393, folder 11.
26. There were 135 Indian battles involving federal troops for this period, and 54 in which the Rangers took part. See *Special Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas, September 1884*, TSLA, 52; Smith, "US Army Combat Operations," 503.
27. *Special Report of the Adjutant General of Texas, September 1884*, TSLA, 52; Smith, "US Army Combat Operations," 527. Yet another measure of Ranger brutality emerges in the small number of Indians they took as captives. Whereas US Army records indicate that 214 Indian women and children were taken prisoner in post-Civil War skirmishes in Texas, the corresponding figure for the Rangers was six, suggesting that killing was preferred to captivity as a method of removal.
28. For an excellent discussion of the army as a less-than-effective frontier police force, see Robert Wooster, *The Military and United States Indian Policy, 1865-1903* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).
29. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas, 1875*, TSLA, 3; letter from J. W. Throckmorton to E. M. Stanton, August 5, 1867, in Winfrey and Day, *Texas Indian Papers*, 4:236.
30. Robinson, *Men Who Wear the Star*, 166-67. For another example of federal skepticism regard-

ing Texan Indian reports, see letter from Lt. J. W. Davidson, Tenth US Cavalry, to assistant adjutant general, January 11, 1879, TSLA, AGR, GC, box 401-398, folder 1.

31. Two Indian reservations were established in Texas in 1854: the first, on the Brazos River, was to be used by the smaller remnant tribes (Delawares, Shawnees, Tonkawas, Wichitas, and Caddoes); the other, about forty miles away, was set aside for the Comanches. Poor management coupled with Anglo-Texan hostility to the concept, however, forced the reservations to close less than five years later, with the remaining Indians moved to Indian Territory and their lands declared "abandoned" and thus available for white homesteading. See Newcomb, *Indians of Texas*, 354-58, and Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, vol. 8, pt. 1, 376-79.

32. Smith, "US Army Combat Operations," 529.

33. The Red River War began in the late spring of 1874 when Indians of the Southern Plains attempted to drive Euro-American hidehunters out of the Texas Panhandle. The Natives were dealt a crushing defeat by the US Army at Palo Duro Canyon in September, and most returned to their reservations by the following spring. For the best single-volume account of the conflict, see James L. Haley, *The Buffalo War: The History of the Red River Indian Uprising of 1874* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976).

34. Letter from citizens of Clarendon, Donley County, unaddressed, December 30, 1878, TSLA, AGR, GC, box 401-394, folder 8.

35. Letter from Judge Emanuel Deibbs to O. M. Roberts, June 11, 1879, Texas Adjutant General Records (cited hereafter as TAGR), Center for American History (cited hereafter as CAH), University of Texas at Austin, box 2Q401, folio 13.

36. For other examples of settler complaints at this time, see *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas*, 1878, TSLA, 35-36.

37. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas*, 1876, TSLA, 3.

38. Report of Indian depredations, January 1, 1878, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:399.

39. Letter from A. M. Patch, Fourth Cavalry, to post adjutant, January 22, 1879, TSLA, AGR, GC, box 401-398, folder 2.

40. Letter from I. B. Sadler to O. M. Roberts, February 3, 1879, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:412.

41. Letter from J. W. Davidson, Tenth Cavalry, to assistant adjutant general, January 11, 1879, TSLA, AGR, GC, box 401-398, folder 1.

42. See telegram from E. O. C. Ord to O. M. Roberts, February 13, 1879; telegram from T. M. Vincent to O. M. Roberts, February 13, 1879; and telegram from Davidson and E. R. Platt to T. M.

Vincent, February 17, 1879, all in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:416-18.

43. Letter from J. Pope to O. M. Roberts, April 2, 1879, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:421-22.

44. Letter from G. W. Arrington to John B. Jones, December 18, 1878, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:405-6.

45. Letter from John B. Jones to O. M. Roberts, February 15, 1879, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:417.

46. See letters from G. W. Arrington to John B. Jones, June 18 and 21, 1879, and letter from Benjamin Williams, John Donnelley, and J. W. Husselby to Gov. O. M. Roberts, undated, all TAGR, CAH, box 2Q401, folio 13.

47. Letter from Nicholas Nolan to post adjutant, January 8, 1879, TSLA, AGR, GC, box 401-398, folder 1.

48. Letter from J. A. Wilson to assistant adjutant general, January 17, 1879, TSLA, AGR, GC, box 401-398, folder 2; letter from G. W. Arrington to J. B. Jones, January 20, 1879, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:409-10.

49. House Resolution 5040, in Winfrey and Day, *Indian Papers of Texas*, 4:443-44.

50. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas*, December 1882, TSLA, 26-27.

51. For examples, see letter from S. A. McMurry to W. H. King, September 15, 1881, TAGR, CAH, box 2Q401, folio 12, and letter from G. W. Baylor to W. H. King, September 30, 1881, TAGR, CAH, box 2Q401, folio 12.

52. Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 137. For a brief but excellent account of the interactions between Natives and newcomers in the region, see Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal Peoples and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

53. For more on the National Policy, see Hugh G. J. Aiken, "Defensive Expansionism: The State and Economic Growth in Canada," in Hugh G. J. Aitken, ed., *The State and Economic Growth* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1959), 79-114.

54. See John S. Milloy, *The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy and War, 1790-1870* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988).

55. The name "Blackfoot" comes from the Indians' term for themselves, *Sik-sik-a*, meaning "black foot" or "black feet," which likely referred to their moccasins, either because they were painted black or discolored by prairie fires. The Bloods were known also as the *Kai-nai*, or "many chiefs," while "Peigan"—or *Pi-kuni*—translates into "scabby robes." This last group was divided into north and south divisions, with the former living in southern

Alberta and the latter in northern Montana. It is worth noting that Indians and scholars north of the US-Canadian border use the term "Blackfoot"—which I have adopted—while those on the American side use the plural "Blackfeet." See Hugh Dempsey, "The Blackfoot Indians," in R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson, *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), 385-87. In describing the relationships between the three groups, one scholar has explained that "A common language, common customs, a tradition of common origin, and frequent inter-marriage prevented open warfare between them, despite frequent feuds; against their own enemies they presented a united front. Yet even in their own eyes the union was too imperfect to require a common name, and the use of the term Blackfoot to cover all three tribes was really an unwarrantable extension by the early whites." Diamond Jenness, *The Indians of Canada* (1932; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 319.

56. *Ibid.*, 317.

57. John C. Ewers, *The Blackfeet; Raiders on the Northwestern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958); 260-61. Milloy, *Plains Cree*, 116-18. In a sense, this détente paralleled the situation in the south-central United States, where a grand alliance of Comanches, Kiowas, Southern Cheyennes, and Southern Arapahoes emerged in the 1840s.

58. The legislation providing for the transfer of the Hudson's Bay Company territory—known also as "Rupert's Land"—contained several provisions designed to weaken Indian resistance to white settlement in the North-West Territories, the most important of which empowered Indian Affairs officials to remove the Natives' elected leaders "for dishonesty, intemperance or immorality." See J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, 3rd ed. (1989; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 197-98.

59. William Dobak has argued that by the 1870s, Canadian Indians killed annually one-third more buffalo than they needed, in large part to satisfy the demands of the trade in bison robes. See Dobak, "Killing the Canadian Buffalo," 52. See also Isenberg, *Destruction of the Bison*, 111-13. For more on the Métis, see Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

60. Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories* (Toronto: Willing and Williamson, 1890), 169-70.

61. *Ibid.*, 248-49. Scollen exaggerated when he claimed that the Blackfoot barred the entry of

whites into their territory, as American, Canadian, and European traders had lived among the Blackfoot for years.

62. Letter from Hewitt Bernard to minister of the interior, May 30, 1874, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa (cited hereafter as NAC), Record Group (cited hereafter as RG) 10, vol. 3610, reel C-10106, file 3461.

63. Jill St. Germain, *Indian Treaty-Making Policy in the United States and Canada, 1867-1877* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 1-12.

64. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, 210.

65. See Horrall, "Sir John A. Macdonald and the Mounted Police Force."

66. See letter from E. A. Meredith to J. A. Provencher, August 27, 1875, NAC, RG 18, Series A-1, file 333.

67. Letter from Constantine Scollen to James Macleod, June 24, 1875, NAC, RG 18, Series A-1, vol. 7, file 362.

68. Morris, *Treaties of Canada*, 183.

69. *Ibid.*, 218.

70. *Ibid.*, 285-86.

71. Ewers, *Blackfeet*, 278-79. The law prohibited the use of buffalo jumps or pounds (tactics employed only by the Indians) as well as the slaughter of calves under the age of two, which were especially prized by the Natives for the soft, supple hides from which they fashioned robes for their children. See Hugh Dempsey, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 78-79.

72. For an excellent account of such similarities, see Hana J. Samek, *The Blackfoot Confederacy, 1880-1920: A Comparative Study of Canadian and US Indian Policy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).

73. Morris, *Treaties of Canada*, 272.

74. For more on the development of the liquor trade in the Rocky Mountain northwest, see Paul Sharp's classic *Whoop-Up Country: The Canadian-American West, 1865-1885* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955).

75. Parliament of Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1877, X, vol. 7, no. 9, "Report of the Secretary of State of Canada for the Year Ended 31st December, 1876," Appendix D, North-West Mounted Police, 25.

76. For more on the liquor trade among Indians and its deleterious social effects, see Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

77. Ewers, *Blackfeet*, 35, 258.

78. Often cited (erroneously) as the reason for the deployment of the Mounted Police, the Cypress Hills Massacre took place in southern Alberta in 1873. Convinced that a group of Assiniboine Indians

had stolen their horses, a party of Montana wolf trappers ambushed the Natives in retaliation. In a carefully planned attack, the wolfers descended on the drunken and unsuspecting camp, killing sixteen men, women, and children and mutilating their corpses. News of the massacre was widely reported throughout the region. See Robert S. Allen, "A Witness to Murder: The Cypress Hills Massacre and the Conflict of Attitudes towards the Native Peoples of the Canadian and American West during the 1870's," in Ian A. L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier, eds., *As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 229-46.

79. Letter from S. A. Darion to minister of the interior, May 28, 1874, NAC, RG 10, vol. 3610, reel C-10106, file 3461.

80. For more on the relationship between liquor and the trade in animal furs and hides, see Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 69-96.

81. Morris, *Treaties of Canada*, 240.

82. William Waiser, *The North-West Mounted Police in 1874-1889: A Statistical Study* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1979), 32.

83. Parliament of Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1880-81, vol. 3, no. 3, "Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ended 31st December, 1880," Part 2, North-West Mounted Police Force, Commissioner's Report 1880, 32. For examples—albeit from a later period—see letter from J. H. Moodie to officer commanding at Battleford, March 3, 1893, NAC, RG 18, Series A-1, vol. 82, file 346; and report of E. G. Wood for November 1894, NAC, RG 18, Series A-1, vol. 92, file 190.

84. For more on the importance of horses to Plains Indians, see Preston Holder, *The Horse and the Hoe on the Plains: A Study of Cultural Development among North American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), 89-137; and Isenberg, *Destruction of the Bison*, 39-47.

85. John C. Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1980), 240-56.

86. See *ibid.*, 171-215; and Milloy, *Plains Cree*, 69-82.

87. Parliament of Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1880-81, vol. 3, no. 3, "Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year Ended 31st December, 1880," 7, 15-16, 31-33.

88. Brian Hubner makes this point in "Horse Stealing and the Borderline: The NWMP and the Control of Indian Movement, 1874-1900," in William M. Baker, ed., *The Mounted Police and Prairie Society, 1873-1919* (Winnipeg: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1998), 53-70.

89. Morris, *Treaties of Canada*, 271.

90. For evidence of police compassion, see letter from James Macleod to R. W. Scott, November 17, 1876, NAC, RG 18, Series A-1, vol. 9, file 69.

91. Irene M. Spry, "The Tragedy of the Loss of the Commons in the Canadian West," in Getty and Lussier, *As Long as the Sun Shines*, 203-28.

92. It is worth noting that in the late 1870s, the North-West Mounted Police allowed select bands of Indians to cross into Montana to pursue whatever bison they could find, alleviating the Natives' starvation and saving the government thousands of dollars in rations they otherwise would have provided to the Indians. The US Army, however, forced these groups of Canadian Indians back across the international boundary, which effectively ended the practice. See letter from L. N. F. Crozier to J. Johnston, December 6, 1879, NAC, RG 10, vol. 3705, reel C-10123, file 17962.

93. Parliament of Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1883, vol. 10, no. 23, "Annual Report of the Minister of the Interior for the Year ended 30th June, 1882," Part II, North-West Mounted Police Force, Report of the Commissioner 1882, 12-13"; *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas, February 28, 1882*, TSLA, 30.

94. Roger Nichols, *Indians in the United States and Canada: A Comparative History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 223.

95. *Ibid.*, 220.

96. See for instance, Macleod, *North-West Mounted Police*, 143-61; John Jennings, "The Plains Indians and the Law," in Hugh A. Dempsey, *Men in Scarlet* (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975), 50-65; and Desmond Morton, "Cavalry or Police: Keeping the Peace on Two Adjacent Frontiers, 1870-1900," in Baker, *Mounted Police and Prairie Society*, 3-16.