

Ashkoota Binnaxchikua (Where the Camp Was Fortified)

By

Elias Goes Ahead

Frontier Heritage Alliance

For the

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Report Prepared by Elias Goes Ahead and David Eckroth
Frontier Heritage Alliance
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I. Ashkoota Binnaxchikua (Where the Camp Was Fortified) Abstract

This report has been prepared with a grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program. (Grant No. GA) to the Frontier Heritage Alliance, Sheridan, Wyoming.

This information is organized into the following sections: Abstract, Table of Contents, Explanation of the Grant and FHA Research Objectives, Explanation of the FHA approach to Research, Maps, General History Prior to the Battle, Elias Goes Ahead’s Report of the Battle of Arrow Creek, First Person Accounts, Second Person Accounts, Oral Histories, General Account Facts In Agreement With Photographs and Map, Bits of Crow History, General Account Fact With Differences, Extensive Archeology Survey Results, Appendix, and Audio Disks and Tapes.

The purpose of this report is to place in the public record ... compiled over ... This study verifies the location of and describes the Battle of Arrow Creek (Ashkoota Binnaxchikua). It is the Elias Goes Ahead’s position that the Battle of Arrow Creek was

the most significant historical event in the history of the Crow Indians. Had they failed to hold of the Sioux attack, the Crow nation would have been utterly decimated.

Explanation of the Grant ABPP and FHA Research Objectives

Explanation of the Frontier Heritage Alliance's approach to Research.

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2. Report on National Archives Research on Battle of Pryor Creek, July 2005, Time Bernardis To Frontier Heritage Alliance.
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a. The Battle of Pryor Creek: Where the Entire Camp was Under Siege (Ashkoota's Binnaxchihkuua) (John McDermott)

At mid-19th –century, the last best hunting grounds of the Indians of the Northern Plains lay east of the Big Horn Mountains, encompassing the valleys of the Bighorn, Rosebud, Tongue and Powder Rivers, all of which emptied into the Yellowstone. A strange and mysterious land explored by a few whites, it was one of the least known territories in the United States. The inhabitants of the region were nomadic, warlike, and proud. Thinking back on his days in the army, one veteran of the Indian Wars surmised that only such a land could produce a human so untamed and resourceful as the American Indian. (1)

How many Indians resided in this country was still a matter of conjecture. In the early 1860's the Office of Indian Affairs, estimated that the North American continent was home to 294,574 members of the red race, the War Department counted 306,925, and the New York Times put the number at between 300,000 and 350,000. Plains traveler and Frenchman, Professor Louis Simonin, estimated that there were 400,000. Of this number most officials believed as many as 50,000 lived and fought in the region between the Platte River on the south, the Big Horn Mountains on the west, the Yellowstone River on the north, and the Missouri River on the east (2) Of these perhaps as many as 16,000

were Tetons or Western Sioux, known among themselves as the Lakotas, one of the Seven Council Fires of the Sioux Nation. (3) Divided into seven subdivisions – the Oglalas, Brules, Hunkpapas, Miniconjous, Sans Arcs, Two Kettles, and Blackfeet – the Lakotas were the first of their nation to penetrate the Black Hills of South Dakota and the territories of western Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana.

These lands were disputed, with the Lakotas fighting other groups for supremacy. The most important population figure in this war of conquest was not the number of members in their tribe but the number of fighting men. Most recent studies estimate that by 1855 Lakota warriors numbered about 3,200. (4) From the Oglalas, some of the first to push forward, came Red Cloud, Man Afraid of His Horses, and Crazy Horse, charismatic leaders who believed it was good to die young. When asked what Indians went to war with him in the 1860s, Red Cloud replied that the Lakota coalition included all of the Oglalas except 20 with BigMouth, the leader of the southern Laramie Loafers, and many of the Minniconjou, Hunkpapas, Sans Arcs, and Brules. (5) Allied with the Lakotas were the Cheyennes and Arapahos, both smaller tribes that divided into southern and northern branches after the establishment of Bent's Fort in 1832 and Fort Laramie in 1834. North of the North Platte in Nebraska, Wyoming, and southern Montana were the Northern Cheyennes, numbering around 2,000, whose chiefs included Dull Knife, Little Wolf, Crazy Head, and Black Horse. Black Bear, Black Coal, and Medicine Calf were well-known chiefs of the Northern branch of the Arapaho tribe, which numbered about 1,500.

(6)

Enemies of these tribes and those who contested with them in territorial battles were the Arickaras of North Dakota, the Pawnees, Winnebegos, and Omahas of Nebraska, the Shoshonis of Western Wyoming, and the Crows of Central Montana. Now only the latter two remained in the way of Sioux conquest, and attention centered on the Crows. At mid-century, the Crows numbered about 320 lodges, divided into two bands. The larger was that of the Mountain Crows. It had 220 lodges, containing about 2,000 people. Led by White Mouth, these Indians lived along the Yellowstone and Bighorn rivers. Included in this group were the Kicked-in-the-Bellies, sometimes identified separately but living in the same area as the Mountain Crows. (7) Other chiefs included Eye, Shot in the Jaw, Thin Belly, Black Foot, Bird on the Creek, Roman Nose, Lone Horse, Bad Tooth, and Bad Elk. Numbering about 100 lodges, the second group, called the River Crows, roamed the region around the mouth of the Yellowstone. Rotten Tail was their principal chief. (8) In total, the Crows could field about 1,200 warriors. (9)

Located on the Missouri River in the first decades of the 18th century, the Oglalas and some Brules began moving west to find better hunting. By the beginning of the 19th century, they controlled the Black Hills of South Dakota. By 1820, they commonly spent the summer hunting in the valley of the North Platte in southeastern Wyoming. (10) Traders followed them westward and in 1834 William Sublette and Robert Campbell built Fort Laramie on the North Platte at the mouth of the Laramie River, causing many of the Oglalas to take up full-time residence in the area. As the Lakota began to explore north of Fort Laramie they ran into the Crows, and, in the late 1830s and 1840s, the Powder River became the western and northern frontier of the Lakotas and the eastern

and southern frontier of the Crows. This was to become a war zone, where both sides contested for the surrounding territory. **(11)**

In the mid-1840s, new pressure exacerbated the territorial conflicts between the Crows and the vanguard of the Sioux. At this point, migrating whites thickened the stew. Headed for Oregon and later Utah and California, restless pioneers in their covered wagons moved across the midsection of the nation, rolling along the Great Platte River Road across Nebraska and Wyoming eventually to diverge on trails to Oregon, Utah, and California. Eighteen Forty-three was the first year of significant migration, totaling about 1,000 persons, but by 1852 nearly 70 times that number traveled westward. **(12)**

As emigration increased, hostility grew, since travelers scared away and depleted the Indians' game. Soon hunting became difficult in regions near the emigrant road. IN 1849 the whites brought sickness with them in the form of cholera, measles, and smallpox, increasing Lakota anger. **(13)** To protect whites from acts that might come from the rising resentment, the Federal Government established three forts along the overland road – Fort Kearney (1848) in Nebraska, Fort Laramie (1849) in Wyoming, and Fort Hall (1849) in Idaho.

In September 1851, Indian commissioners met with the Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahos, Shoshonis, and Crows at Fort Laramie to seek formal agreement concerning travel through the area. In the end, the Indians guaranteed whites safe passage and acknowledged the permanence of military posts in their homelands in return for annual

payments of \$50,000 in trade goods. **(14)** Furthermore, the Fort Laramie treaty of 1851 momentarily quieted the conflict on the plains by defining the general areas claimed by the tribes and asking each to respect the lands of the others. The treaty defined Crow country as follows:

Commencing at the mouth of Powder River at the Yellowstone, thence up Powder River to its source; thence along the main range of the Black Hills and Wind River Mountains to the head-waters of the Yellowstone River, thence down the Yellowstone River to the mouth of Twenty-five Yard Creek; thence to the headwaters of the Muscle-shell River to its mouth; thence to the head-waters of Big Dry Creek, and thence to its mouth. (15)

This vast territory covering about 38 million acres was rich in natural resources. Trader Edwin Denig called it “perhaps the best game country in the world.” **(16)** Succulent grasses covered the hills on the eastern slope of the Big Horn Mountains, and rushing streams fed from the snow-topped range bubbled and dashed thither and yon. Wild cherry trees, aspen, birches, willows, and cottonwoods lined the streams. There were countless buffalo and antelope and deer in unbelievable numbers. Grizzly, black, and cinnamon bears roamed the region, while otters, mountain lions, wolves, and coyotes added variety. Bighorn sheep were present in the mountains that took their name. The streams were full of trout, catfish, and bass. Ducks, geese, wild pigeons, and grouse abounded. Wild fruits included plums, cherries, strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries,

currants, buffalo berries, service berries, and grapes. (17) As one chief told fur trader Robert Campbell, “The Crow country is in exactly the right place.” (18) Because of the abundance of its resources, especially its immense buffalo herds, the region drew other less fortunate tribes, as a magnet draws iron. (19).

Following the 1851 Treaty, some of the southern Sioux established a peaceful relationship with their traditional enemies. Taking leadership roles were Big Robber, who had been appointed chief of all the Crows by the 1851 commissioners, and the elderly chief, Red Fish, and his son, Lone Horn, influential members of the Minniconjous. Evidence indicates that the three agreed upon joint use of the region between the Crow and Sioux territory as defined by the 1851 Treaty. From the Powder River east to the Black Hills had been disputed territory, so that no tribe had dared to camp there too long. Now the Minniconjous and the Crows met in true amity in this game-rich land, maintaining peaceful relations for the next six years. (20) Other bands of Sioux, showed some indications of pacificity, except the Northern Sioux, especially the Hunkpapa, who continued to raid the Crows with vehemence as before. (21)

In the meantime, however, white intrusion along the Oregon Trail caused serious trouble. On June 15, 1853, some Sioux warriors seized the ferry boat used by travelers to cross the North Platte River near Fort Laramie in an attempt to stop the rising tide of emigration. Troops from the post charged the Indian camp, killing three warriors, wounding three, and taking two prisoners. A year later, a battle occurred between a large band of Brules and Fort Laramie soldiers in which 2nd Lt. John L. Grattan, an interpreter,

and 29 infantrymen died. In retaliation, on September 3, 1855, General William S. Harney's troops attacked Little Thunder's band of Brules at Ash Hollow in present-day Nebraska, killing 85 and capturing 70 women and children. The Harney campaign ended disturbances for a time. **(22)**

This conflict along the Great Platte Road, with its associated loss of game and the general decline in eastern buffalo herds, quickly turned the attention of the Lakotas west and north.

Isolation from whites seemed the best solution, and self-interest overcame diplomacy.

Beginning in 1857, the Oglala, Brule, and Minneconjou Lakotas and the Cheyennes and Arapahos abruptly ended any and all previous accommodations and waged full-scale war on the Crows for possession of the southern extremities of their traditional homeland.

(23) When Military authorities later asked the Cheyennes why they and the Sioux went to war against the Crows, the chiefs answered, "We stole the hunting grounds of the Crows because they were the best. The white man is along the great waters [the Missouri], and we wanted more room. We fight the Crows because they will not take half and give us peace with the other half." **(24)** Simply put, the land was a prize much coveted; a refuge from white rapacity, it was worth dying for.

At the same time, the Crows had to contend with another populous Indian tribe coming from the north, the formidable Blackfeet, who were well supplied by English traders with

firearms. **(25)** The coming of the Sioux and the hostility of the Blackfeet to American fur traders had led to the withdrawal of all of the little trading posts in Crow country. The last to go was Fort Sarpy on the Upper Yellowstone in 1859. **(26)** This made it especially difficult for the Crows to get firearms, as they now had the Blackfeet to the north, and the Sioux and their allies to the east and south, and trips to places such as Fort Union Trading Post and Fort Laramie were long and dangerous at best. **(27)**

In the late 1850's, the Sioux began to get the upper hand in battle. Their *modus operandi* seems to have been to follow the yearly sun dance that brought Lakota bands together with an attack on the Crows. The great numbers of warriors insured numerical superiority, and the rites of the sun dance created added incentive. **(28)** There were other reasons as well. In 1859 the Crow annuities ended up at the Upper Platte Agency by mistake where the tribesmen could not get them. In the same year, the Crows told U.S. expeditionary Captain W.F. Raynolds that a small village of their people had been wiped out by a huge Sioux war party of 80 lodges. This was evidently the war party of Black Shield, spoken of in the Sioux winter-counts. The Crows killed Big Crow, son of Black Shield, and the chief sent around a pipe, resulting in a great assembly of Sioux. **(29)** The Crows, however, did not give up right away. Their continual raids on the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapahos in 1858 and 1860 drew complaints from Upper Platte Agent Thomas Twiss, the official even recommending the establishment of a military post to control the Crows. **(30)**

In the early summer of 1859 or 1860, a Crow party killed a young Lakota warrior of special skill. He already had counted many coups, entitling him to wear a war bonnet made of eagle feathers. (31) His mother pledged to mourn her son's death until it was avenged. Almost every evening for a whole year, she lead her son's horse through the camp, imploring the warriors to accept the challenge:

“Is there a man among the mighty Dakotas who will take his horse and go fight the Absarokee?”

Finally, Brave Wolf, a young man who had been spurned by the family of the maiden he wished to marry and had decided to commit suicide in battle, took the reins from the grieving mother. The chiefs and headmen quickly met in council, and they decided that any actions taken by the young man would have consequences for the whole village. Therefore, those assembled agreed to take a full year to plan an expedition against the Crows in order to destroy them. As one warrior put it, the Crows were not many, but they were “shrewd and tricky in battle.” Another council that fall decided to extend an invitation to all the bands of the Sioux and to their allies, the Cheyennes and Arapahos, to join in the great undertaking. In May, 1860, the tribes assembled on the forks of the Big Goose and Little Goose Creek, the site of present-day Sheridan, Wyoming. The village was so large that camp criers had to change horses several times in order to make a complete circle of the village. This may have been the biggest gathering of Indians at any one time in North America, even dwarfing the camp on the Little Bighorn River some 16 years later.

Scouts reported that the Crows were at Pass Creek, only a half-day's ride to the north. The war chiefs quickly convened in council. At their request, the Arapaho chief rose to speak:

The Dakota people and their Cheyenne friends know me as Night Horse ... Other tribes also know me. I fear no man of any enemy tribe. I am an Absarokee by birth, and I will not fight my relatives. This is not Indian war you are planning. To destroy another tribe is wrong. I don't want any part of it. However, I give permission to my warriors to stay and fight with you if they desire. You have heard me, Aho!

Night Horse then left camp and headed for the Bighorn Mountains, sending his two half-Crow sons to warn his relatives. In the meantime, the Crows had started west. They were at Rotten Grass Creek, when Night Horse's sons arrived and warned them that a huge enemy war-party was only 24 hours away. While the Crows traveled in haste toward the Bighorn River, there was much gaiety in the Sioux camp on Goose Creek. As groups of warriors started out, wives sang their farewell songs and trilled encouragement, warriors emitted war cries, and old men sang songs of praise. Joining the expedition were many wives and girlfriends of the warriors and many old and retired fighters who wished to watch the defeat of their traditional enemy.

Advance scouts reported the location of the Crow camp of 400 lodges a short distance below Bighorn Canyon. The head chiefs decided on a dawn attack, but at daybreak they found an empty camp. The Crows had departed, leaving their campfires still burning. An inspection of the site led Sioux braves to estimate the Crow fighting force to be about 1,200 warriors. According to Sioux oral history, their own force numbered 8,000 to 10,000 fighting men (32) News of the Crow numbers brought a smile to the face of the leading chief. "Washtay!" (good), he yelled, and the warriors released a thundering war whoop that shook the nearby Bighorn Mountains. The chief shouted:

Today when the sun sets, there will be no more Absarokee left! We will kill all their warriors and even the old men; we will save their young boys and raise them to become Dakota warriors, and we shall marry their wives and daughters to raise more warriors to fight the whites when they follow us to our new land."

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 2. Edward Howland, “Our Indian Brothers,” Harper’s 56 (April, 1878), p 774; “Our Western Indians,” New York, Times, June 17, 1867, p. 4; Report of General Halleck, Division of the Pacific,” in Report of the Secretary of War (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1867), p. 69; Louis L. Simonin, The Rocky Mountain West in 1867 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, p. 133.
 3. Kingsley M. Bray, “Teton Sioux Population History, 1655-1881,” Nebraska History 75 (Summer 1994), pp. 172, 174.
 4. Ibid., p. 172
 5. Statement by Red Cloud, July 17, 1896, Indian Depredation Claim of John Richard, Jr. No. 3373, Records of the United States Court of Claims Record Group 123, National Archives; Letter from C.Y. Campbell, U.S. Special Indian Agent, Crow Creek Agency, to Gov. A.J. Faulk, Governor of Dakota Territory, December 25, 1866, Letters Received, Dakota Superintendency, 1867 Records of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75.

6. John D. McDermott, Guide to the Indian Wars of the West (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), pp. 13-16.

7. "The Crow Indians." Army and Navy Journal, June 20, 1868. The article outlines the problems the Crows suffered at the hands of their enemies and prophesied their continued decline: "They were at one time the most powerful tribe in the Northwest, but at present are weak, and unable to cope with their numerous enemies. All other Indians seem to be against them and repeated attempts have been made to drive them from their country. The Crows are poor, possessing but few ponies, and the few they have are poor in quality and rapidly decreasing in numbers. Other Indians are constantly stealing from them, and they can neither buy nor steal enough to make up for their losses."

8. Letter from Kinney, Fort Phil Kearney, June 4, 1867, to N.G. Taylor, Hall-Kinney Collection, Microfilm Roll MS618, Nebraska Historical Society; Letter from John W. Smith, Omaha, Nebraska, September 18, 1867, in "The Crow Indians," Omaha Daily Herald, September 19, 1867, p. 2; Chicago Tribune correspondent writing from Fort Phil Kearney in "The Crow Indians," Army and Navy Journal, June 20, 1868, p. 699; Robert Lowie H. The Crow Indians (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), p. 4; James Austin Hanson, Northwest Nebraska's Indian People (Chadron, Nebraska: Chadron centennial Committee), pp. 32-33. 9. Collin G. Calloway, "The Only Way Open to Us": The Crow Struggle for Survival in the Nineteenth Century," North Dakota History 53 (Summer 1986), p. 27.

9 Kingsley, M. Bray, "The Oglala Lakota and the Establishment of Fort Laramie," Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly 36 (Winter, 2000), p. 214.

10. Robert M. Utley, "The Bozeman Trail before John Bozeman: A Busy Land": Montana Magazine of Western History 53 (Summer, 2003), pp. 21-22.

11. For some excellent studies of the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails see John D. Unruh, Jr., The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1860 (Urbans: University of Illinois Press, 1982; Merrill J. Mattes, The Great Platte River Road (Lincoln: Nebraska Historical Society, 1969); George R. Stewart, The California Trail (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962); David Lavender, Westward Vision: The Oregon Trail (McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. 1963); Wallace Stegner, The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail (McGraw Hill, 1964); and David Dary, The Oregon Trail (New York: Random House, Inc., 2004).

12. Jeffrey Ostler, The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee (Cambridge, United Kingdom, 2004), p. 33.

13. The commissioners and chiefs signed the document on September 17. The treaty negotiations and signing were skillfully covered by B. Gratz Brown of the St. Louis Missouri Republican.

14. Charles Kappler, ed., Indian Affairs, Laws, and Treaties, vol. 2 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), p. 595

15. Edwin Denig, Five Tribes of the Upper Missouri: Sioux, Arickara, Assiniboine, Cree, Crow, ed. By John C. Ewers, 2nd ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), p. 139.

16. Henry E. Palmer, "Powder River Indian Expedition of 1865, With a Few Incidents Preceding the Same," In Civil War Sketches and Incidents, Papers Read by

Companions of the Commanders of the State of Nebraska, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, vol. 1 (Omaha, Nebraska: The Commndery, 1902), p. 76, 96
“From Conner’s Expedition,” (Central City, Colorado) Miner’s Registry, September 25, 1865, p. 2; Anthony D. Marshal, “The Phil Kearney Fort Massacre,” Overland 61 (March, 1913), pp. 228; Letter from Carrington, Fort Phil Kearney, September 26, 1866, to Adj. H.G. Litchfield, Indian Operations on the Plains, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 33, 50th Cong., 1st sess., 1887, p. 27; Henry B. Carrington, “The Indians of North America, : Transactions of the British Association of Science, Henry B. Carrington Papers, Sterling Library Yale University; “The Sioux Paradise,” New York Herald, July 7, 1877, p. 3; “Lieut. Caprenter’s Report, September 27, 1877,” unidentified newspaper article, Scrapbook of Mrs. George Crook, Crook-Kennon Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

17. James Bradley, “Arapoosh,” Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana, vol 9 (Helena: Historical Society of Montana, 1923), pp. 306-307.

18. Collin G. Calloway, “The Only Way Open to Us”: The Crow Struggle for Survival in the Nineteenth century,” North Dakota History 53 (Summer 1986), p. 27.

19. Kingsley M. Bray, “Lone Horn’s Peace: A New View of Sioux-Crow Relations, 1851-1858,” Nebraska History 66 (Spring, 1985), pp. 2-31.

20. Calloway, p. 32.

21. Eli Paul, Blue Water Creek and the First Sioux War, 1854-1856 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004).

22. Robert Utley, "The Bozeman Trail before John Bozeman: A Busy Land," Montana Magazine 53 (Summer, 2003), p. 23; Guy Gibbon, The Sioux: The Dakota and Lakota Nations. (Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publisher, Ltd., 2003) p. 113.
23. Margaret Irvin Carrington, Absaroka, Home of the Crows. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), p. 17.
24. Anthony McGinnis, Counting Coup and Cutting Horses: Intertribal Warfare on the Northern Plains, 1738-1889 (Evergreen, Colorado: Cordillera Press, 1992), p. 63; George E. Hyde, Red Cloud's Fork (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1937), pp. 92-93.
25. John Sunde, The Fur Trade on the Upper Missouri, 1840-1865 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), pp. 45, 459-460; Mahlon Wilkinson testimony, September 12, 1865, in Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Report on the Condition of Indian Tribes, 39th Cong., 2nd sess., 1866-1867, S. Record 156, serial 1279, p. 416; Frank B. Linderman, Plenty Coups, Chief of the Crows (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958, p. 49; Calloway, "The Only Way Open to Us," pp. 28-30.
26. Letter from Blanchard, Virginia City, August 18, 1864, to Rev. Milo Badger in Robert H. Keller, Jr., "A Puritan at Alder Gulch and the Great Salt Lake: Rev. Johnatan Blanchard's Letters from the West, 1864," Montana: The Magazine of Western History 36 (Summer 1966), p. 69.
27. Hyde, Red Cloud's Folk, p. 91
28. Ibid., p. 92
29. Frank Rzeckowski, "The Crow Indians and the Bozeman Trail," Montana: The Magazine of Western History 49 (Winter, 1999), p. 32; Frederick E. Hoxie, Parading

Through History: The Making of the Crow Nation in America, 1805-1935 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), chaps. 2-5.

30. The following is based on Joe Medicine Crow, “The Battle of Pryor Creek, : Crow Country, Montana’s Crow Tribe of Indians, Rick Graetz, and Susie Graetz, eds. (Billings: Northern Rockies Publishing Company, 2000).

31. According to recent studies, the Lakota totaled 3,200 warriors at this time, consequently, with the Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho fighters, the men in the war party may have numbered at most 4,000 to 5,000.

b. Fighting in the North Country An Ethnohistoric Chronology of Crow Military Conflicts with the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho in the 1800's by Time McCleary, Professor Little Bighorn College

Contemporary Crow and Sioux people recall that the lands most contested by their ancestry were within the Powder River Basin. Composed of a large geologic syncline this area begins north of Miles City, Montana and extends south to Laramie, Wyoming. From east to west it encompasses the lands between the Black Hills and the Bighorn Mountains. The basin is drained by the Powder, Tongue, Rosebud and Bighorn Rivers, which all flow to the Yellowstone River in the north, a tributary of the Missouri. This topographically diverse region has been occupied by Native peoples for thousands of years (Fredlund 1981).

When the ancestors of the Crow entered the area in the mid-1400s they encountered the Shoshone and Kiowa (Frison 1976; Harington 1939: 159). They allied with the Kiowa, but pushed the Shoshone further west. The next comers were the Suhtai followed by their cousins the Cheyenne, who entered the southern end of the Powder River Basin by the late 1600s, early 1700s (Schlesier 1994: 317). The Arapaho allied themselves with the Cheyenne in the mid-1700s (Schlesier 1994: 323). The Western Sioux entered the Black Hills about 1775 and displaced the Crow and Kiowas from the eastern edge of the Powder River area (Hyde 1937: 20).

Archeological evidence suggests that sporadic, though large scale, pedestrian battles occurred between the various groups during these early years. The outcome of these battles was the restructuring of land holdings and capturing of women (Frison 1976).

c. The Battle of Pryor Creek – By BIA An account that includes Pre and Post History, written for National Landmark Report

d. Lone Horn’s Peace: A New View of Sioux-Crow Relations, 1851-1858 by Kingsley M. Bray, 1985 Nebraska History

VII. The Battle of Arrow Creek (1864)

a. Ashkoota Binnaxchikua (Where the Camp Was Fortified) by Elias Goes Ahead: Based of first and second hands accounts of the fight.

Mouth of Lodge Grass Canyon

After two scouts had discovered a Sioux encampment, a Crow warparty started out to attack a Lakota encampment, located on Goose Creek, near present-day Sheridan, Wyoming. The purpose of the raid was to extract revenge for the killing of several Crows by Cheyenne warriors, although Shot-in-the-Hand stated that the incident was related to the killing of three women (berry-gatherers) by Lakota warriors.

The Crows did not reach the Sioux encampment owing to discoveries and disagreements (quarrels) among the pipe-carriers or ranks. The large force of warriors broke up and were about to go their separate ways when Bull-Chief, a camp crier, carried the pipe and gathered all the principal war-chiefs to smoke. After the pipe smoke session, peace was established among the war-chiefs of the bands. The disagreement among the band chiefs

was that Blackfoot, and Iron-Bull, both head-chiefs did not have potent enough medicine to successfully lead the Crows. After much discussion, White-on-the-Edge ordered the camp moved from the junction of the Little Horn and Lodge Grass Rivers to the mouth of the Lodge Grass canyon near the old Packs-in-the-Hat allotment (southwest of Lodge Grass)

The River Crow camped here, at the mouth of Lodge Grass Creek under “Winkling Eye” and joined forces with White-Head, a Mountain Crow chief.

The Crow camped and waited here for the enemy. Meanwhile at the large camp of the Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Northern Arapaho, the warriors prepared to march after the Crows. A young band of Arapahos could not wait for the planned invasion and they snuck out the night before the three tribes were to advance.

Mouth of Rotten Grass Canyon:

The Arapahos followed the trail of the Crows until they reached the mouth of Rotten Grass Canyon. The Crow were on the north side of the canyon while the Arapaho were on the south. Here they observed the Crow camp through the night and at daybreak they witnessed the Crow warriors holding their weapons over fires of incense, in a ritual indicating their wish for success in battle.

The Arapahoes then sent out a small force of their men to try to bait the Crow into revealing their strength. A small force of Arapaho warriors came up below the mouth of

the canyon on the north side unknowingly placing themselves between the Crow lodges and a group of mounted Crows who suddenly appeared from behind them. The mounted Crows charged this small group of Arapahos and forced them to flee the field of battle. At this point, the main force of the enemy, in a long line now revealed themselves to the Crows on the north side of the canyon. The Arapaho wore their war regalia including war-bonnets that made them look especially colorful with the morning sun shining its rays down on them.

When the mounted Crows surrounded and attacked the decoy of Arapahos, they rode their ponies, hanging low on their sides firing under their ponies' necks. In this way three Arapahos were killed, and all the rest of them were chased back down Rotten Grass Creek Canyon. Some of the Arapaho looked back up for a moment and then rode on down to the bottom of the canyon.

The Crow women then surrounded the three dead Arapahos and danced over them victoriously. There was a single enemy that approached the Crow camp. A number of Crow men quickly surrounded the stranger with the intent to kill him, when he told them who he was. He stated, "I am Horse-in-the-Night". He informed them that he was born in captivity when his Crow mother was captured by the Arapahos some years before and he knew both the Crow and Arapaho languages. After the Crows found out he was half Crow and a member of the Bad-War-Deed Clan they allowed him to live. He then told the Crows that different bands of the Lakota with their allies, Cheyenne and Arapahoes have smoked the war-pipe together and planned to invade the Crows hunting ground and

wipe out every male Crow they could find, and take over their women, children, ponies, and country. Horse-in-the-Night then told his half-brethren, "I am glad you have killed some of the Arapaho because I had told them not to fight with your people, but they would not listen." He further stated, "Your people must leave this place and go hide in the mountains and leave your lodge-poles behind for there are many warriors who are marching towards your people as we are speaking." The Bad-War-Deeds clan, after hearing his warnings gave him many presents and they packed them on some ponies as he went back to the Arapahos to the south.

Some of the Crows did not believe Horse-in-the-Night and were convinced they were being set up for an ambush. Others believed he did not lie because Crow wolves (scouts) reported a great deal of enemy movement to the east of their camps. White-on-the-Edge decided to move the camp northwest to the present site of Fort Smith at the mouth of Grapevine Creek just below the canyon entrance.

Mouth of Bighorn Canyon: Grapevine Creek Camp

The Crows stopped and camped along the cottonwood trees at the mouth of Grapevine Creek, which flows from the west into the Bighorn River. The lodges were set up, the equipment unpacked and all the horses were rounded up in close proximity. The following day, war-chiefs called for sham-battles so that the war-ponies were battle ready. The following night and into the early hours of the morning, camp criers rode through the camp waking the people to get ready to move on. One of the camp criers shouted, "Horse-in-the-Night did not lie, a Crow pony was heard nickering further and

further away from its owners lodge until it was not heard anymore. After the harangue by the camp criers, the Crow moved quickly in a northwest direction.

The Dakota wolves arrived at the abandoned campsite within a few hours of the Crows departure. This was evidenced by the smoke of the campfire rising in the morning air. The Dakota wolves followed no further, instead waiting for the invasion force to arrive.

That morning or the night before, the Crows moved their camp. White-on-the-Edge gathered the war-council together to discuss their options. One war-chief suggested hiding in the Pryor Mountains but another chief said the mountains were too rough and would slow their caravan down. White-on-the-Edge suggested that they would fight the Dakota on the Elk River (Yellowstone River) because their enemies were bad swimmers, to which the other war-chiefs agreed. One Crow warrior then spoke his mind and mentioned that his father's father had never run away from the enemy in their own country, always fighting the enemy and they could not run away now.

Accordingly, the Crow moved their camp below the confluence of Grapevine Creek, which flows into the Bighorn River, nestled by a large number of Cottonwood trees. Upon the flat, the Crow continued to display their abilities in war stunts in a sham battle, and the ponies were trained to get used to the sound of gunshot and the other noises of battle.

Does this paragraph go here?

Headwaters of East Pryor Creek and Hay Creek

The Crow caravan slowly moved on until they reached the headwaters of East Pryor Creek and Hay Creek (The location of the camp is at the old Paints-on-the-Lips, and Long-Foretops Allotments) Here they pitched their camp and waiting for their stragglers to catch up with them. Meanwhile, Crow scouts were sent to watch for movements of the invasion force.

The invasion force followed Lodge Grass Canyon to the mouth of Big Horn Canyon and then traveled north about three to four miles where they discovered the Crow camp, nestled along the cottonwoods at the mouth of Grapevine Creek.

Here campfires still smoldered into the clear morning air. The Sioux found all manner of Crow sign, particularly noticing the Crow ponies' hoof marks, perhaps indicating their preparation for battle.

The leading Lakota chief selected a few warriors and advised them to herald through the men with the following announcement; "There could not be over four men of fighting ability to every Crow lodge. Let us stand ten men to every campfire by the Crows. When they did this, there was still a great number of Dakota and their allies left over which was proof that they greatly outnumbered the Crows. Learning of their vast superiority in numbers, they let out a loud yells, danced, and showed their war armaments, tied to a sticks or to the end of their firearms. They assembled and said; "Tomorrow we will get together and wipe out the Crows."

Again Bull-goes-Hunting, a Crow leader, suggested that the rocks on the other side of the Elk River, where there are rocks, (Yellowstone River and the place where present-day Billings, Montana is located) would be a good place to defend themselves against superior odds. The Crows camped for the night on Hay Creek and East Pryor Creek.

Sentinels were placed around the camp as camp criers rode through the village shouting to the people, “pitch your lodges further away from the main circle for the Lakota are getting more bolder and they have been among our ponies and when we were at Grapevine Creek, two boys were almost taken by Lakota wolves, so stay alert and tie your horses close to your lodges in case we have to move out right away.”

That night while the Crows pitched camp, the Lakota and their allies continued traveling rapidly toward East Pryor Creek. This invasion force also had a few women along with them to help cook and take care of their camp chores.

When the invasion force approached the camp, sometime near four o'clock in the morning, War Chief Blackfoot's medicine helper, the white goose, warned him by flying over the camp, honking continuously. Blackfoot walked out of his lodge, jumped on his horse and rode through the camp shouting. “Wake up everybody, and start packing for my medicine is in distress and keeps flying over my lodge warning me that the Lakota are near us and we must leave right away.”

The Crow, alarmed at the events, moved very early that morning. Their scouts, keeping watchful eyes on the movement of the invasion force informed Chief White-Head that there was a group of Dakota in the vanguard and several war chiefs leading them in the direction of the foot of the Pryor Mountains.

White-Bear was a member of the Crow war-party that was instructed to intercept the enemy near the mountain's foothills. The Crow on fresh ponies reached the foothills first and lay in wait until the Lakota appeared not far from these hidden Crow warriors. In the meantime the main bulk of the invasion force hurriedly followed White-Head's caravan toward the mouth of Tatoo Face Creek and Arrow Creek.

East Pryor and Tatoo Face Creek

The Crow camp was setup between East Pryor and Tatoo Face Creek, near the Pryor Mountains that night. The Crow danced with the three Arapaho scalps when some boys were playing outside throwing dirt at people. There were a couple of Lakota who snuck up on these boys and seized one of them and tried to drag him while the other boys thought they were Crow playing with them. The boy struggled and threw himself down at which point the Lakota let him go. (Is this paragraph in the right order?)

The Crow boys ran to camp and informed them as to what had happened. The boys noted that the Lakota smelled different from the Crow. The camp criers then promptly rode through the camp cautioning the people to be careful, stating that their enemies were getting bolder. The Crow men spent that night molding bullets for their flintlocks. That

night their were neither Lumpwoods nor Foxes, everyone was Crow. (Is this paragraph in the right order?)

The other Crow war party at the foot of the East Pryor Mountains set up an ambush for the lead group of Lakota warriors and succeeded in killing their medicine-man. The surviving Lakota were then chased back towards the Big Horn River. These Sioux warriors, confused and scared, scattered through the rolling country of East Pryor.

The following morning, White-Head, the Crow medicine-pipe carrier (White-Head), who had instructed the Crow wolves to watch every movement of the invasion force, was informed that the enemy was less than a day's march away. The chiefs had a council and decided that they could not get to the Yellowstone in time and that they must march quickly to Arrow Creek and their on the banks make ready to fight and die. They struck camp early and hurriedly moved to Arrow Creek. Two or three hundred of their warriors rode in front leading their fast war horses, and as many warriors remained in the rear of the caravan. A number of Crow warriors caught up with some of the Crow who were hurrying to the Yellowstone and advised them to stay with the caravan. One young warrior Bell-Rock, who was with his band, ignored their advice and his group continued on his way to the Yellowstone.

Arrow Creek

White-Head or White-on-the-Edge, a great medicine man, who carried the pipe, led the Crow to a point about a mile below the present location of Keiser Ranch on the west side of Arrow Creek. Here, the Crow camped on the level ground skirting Arrow Creek and a smaller creek to the south. To the west of the camp lay hilly terrain and broken ground.

Crow medicine men quickly built small sweat lodges, purified themselves and sought their animal helpers for assistance in the coming battle. Some of the stragglers were slow in pitching their lodges.

Some Lakota scouts, about a mile away, spied upon the crow camp in the early morning hours. A few hours later the main invasion force arrived, showing themselves from behind the high hill tops. Meanwhile their scouts withdrew in the direction of their main body. Before they arrived, the Sioux scouts ran into a small band of the Crow buffalo dancers, who retreated to the main Crow camp.

The battle at Arrow Creek

Around this time, an old Crow man (Hits-himself-over-the-Head) was coming back towards the Big Horn in search of his son who was hunting. He ran into some Cheyenne warriors. High-Backbone, who wore a stuffed blue hawk on his head counted first coup on the Crow. Poor-Elk counted second coup and Limpey counted the third.

Ten Crow warriors, including Shot-in-the-Hand crossed Arrow Creek, riding their war-horses and recovered the body of Hits-himself-over-the-Head. Then, the Lakota sent out

some warriors as bait to lure the Crows closer to them with the intent of tiring out their ponies while the enemy would attack the Crows with their own fresh ponies.

Bull-Chief and several others tried to check the ten advancing Crows by following them. The ten Crows pursued the Lakota decoys as they rode up the high hill tops where they disappeared. Shot-in-the-Hand and the remaining pursuers rode up the hill and, upon reaching the crest, found themselves among a few thousand enemy warriors, half of whom were on foot. The little band of Crow warriors fired into the horde of enemy warriors and hastily retreated down the slope of the hill toward Arrow Creek. About this time, enemy warriors could be seen on the hill gathering about in preparation to charge upon the Crow camp.

The main Crow camp hastily left the bottomland near Arrow Creek and advanced toward the higher ground west of the creek. Some of the Absarokee (Crow) warriors moved ahead to the higher ground to begin entrenchment. The chief (White-Head) ordered a number of the warriors to make a large corral of the lodge poles and drive in all the pack horses, as well as those horses belonging to the men who would fight on foot. All the men available were told to take cover near the entrenchments and prepare to fight the oncoming Sioux and their allies. They proceeded to spread out on three of the four sides.

White-on-the-Edge ordered the lodges to be pitched as closely together as possible on the level ground beyond the crest of the hill. The invading forces would have to cross

the creeks and then pass through a ravine in order to attack the fortifications. The Crow warriors would have a significant advantage here, as their men located at the entrenchments would not only have the high ground, but also a view of the bottomland up to the creek and beyond. Their muzzle-loading weapons could easily reach targets at distances beyond the creek.

While the fortifications were being prepared, White-on-the-Edge smoked four times, while the stragglers moved to the fortifications. After the lodges were erected in a close circle, the women gathered all the horses inside the corral to hobble them, then pushed them down on their sides so enemy bullets and arrows would not hit them.

The women proceeded to dig trenches inside the lodge-circles and heaped up the dirt on the outer edges so as to provide shelter for themselves and their children. The fortifications were so close together that one could not pass between them. The main camp (fortification) was semi-circular in form and approximately three hundred yards from one end to the other. The Crow defense line stretched for a total length of nearly half a mile. For protection, the lodge poles forming the framework were covered with heavy buffalo hides. A wall consisting of lodge poles and great piles of bedding and rawhide cases was built to further strengthen the fortification. Beyond the walls lay the trenches that the women and children lay in. (Elias is this correct?) The lodge covers were turned inside out so that everything looked black which gave a fierce and warlike impression.

All the women, children and those too disabled to fight were told to remain in the camp. However, the warriors were instructed to protect the camp and fight to the best of their ability. The older warriors encouraged the young men to keep up their fighting spirit, keep up their faith in their medicine ornaments, and to push the enemy back without failure. Voices could be heard in the Crow camp, ringing out that our enemies have cooperated and intend to clean up on us, be brave. (What source does this come from?)

The warriors opened their medicine bundles, painted themselves according to their visions or dreams and mimicked their animal helpers. There smell and smoke of cedar and sweet grass wafted all along the lines of the fortification. The growling of the grizzly bear, the howl of the wolf and coyote, the hooting of the owls, along with the sounds of various other animal helpers could be heard through the Crow camp. The women singing the war songs for their men complimented the warriors' sounds.

Across Arrow Creek and Tattoo Face (East Pryor Creek), lay two distinct groups of Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapahoe. They advanced in hordes, darkening the hills, mounted on their war ponies. The invading force stopped on the slopes overlooking the creeks and the mounted warriors rode back and forth waving their guns at the Crows. It seemed as if every man capable of bearing arms was gathered for this show of force. The Lakota and their allies were better armed than the Crow. Their warriors carried a wide variety of weapons, including war-hammers, knives and tomahawks, muskets, and bow and arrows. From the Crow vantage point, their enemies appeared to be as thick as ants and a overwhelming site.

Shot-in-the-Hand and the other retreating warriors came galloping down across the creek, calling out, "They are coming, they are coming, the whole Lakota nation. Go kiss your wives and children for you are going to die. We shall be killed, they are so many.

Women go sharpen your knives and axes and prepare to kill yourselves, for it is better to die than to be taken by the Lakota." (Whose quote is this and where did it come from?)

Shot-in-the-Hand, upon returning to camp, promptly kissed his wife and children for he did not expect to see them again. His wife said she would kill her children then herself rather than be taken by the Lakota. For the Lakota are bad." (Where does this quote come from?)

Shot-in-the-Hand then determined that he would get right into the middle of the enemy so that if he were to die his wife shall not see him, or if he was not killed he would not see his children taken. Then he thought of his medicine and what the spirit had told him - that guns could not harm him, and that he should not die by an arrow. However, the Lakota had knives, tomahawks and other hand-held weapons. He put on his best fighting shirt, mounted his white horse with yellow ears, and then tied his cinnamon bear skin about his horse's neck for it was his medicine. The horse whinnied and began to strike the ground with his feet. (Is this correct?) Eager to get into the action, Shot-in-the-Hand broke into his bear medicine song.

The Crows could no longer run, even had they wished to go farther, burdened as they were with their women, children, and horses. There was nothing to do but stand and fight.

The two primary war-chiefs, Iron-Bull and Sits-in-the-middle-of-the-Land (Blackfoot), rode through the village speaking to the warriors and to the women whose hearts were on the ground. “This is the day to go fighting to your Father”, they told them. Those words sent their blood rushing about. (Whose quote is this?)

The warriors, understanding that there may be no tomorrow, caught their best horses and stripped their own bodies in preparation to die fighting. While they painted themselves the drums kept beating, and the women sang war songs.

Crazy-sister-in-Law, one of the warriors, had stripped down and painted his face and body in yellow zigzagging patterns. This pattern made it difficult to see Crazy-sister-in-Law as he sang his medicine song, “I am the bird among the prairie-dogs”, gave a Crow war-cry, and armed with his medicine, the stuffed skin of the long-legged owl tied on his head, and his coup stick, rode his gray horse through the village.

The Crow had about five hundred good warriors over the age of eighteen. These warriors were possibly joined by those boys as young as 15 and by the older men beyond their prime, with a combined force of perhaps a thousand warriors. (Is this ok as is?)

A nephew of Shot-in-the-Hand rode up to him and asked for some of his bear medicine. Shot-in-the-Hand thought to himself, “What a time for my nephew to ask for his medicine”, as he looked at his horse, a bay with a flat hammer-head face, small legs and hoofs and a bony rump. Nonetheless, he told his nephew to come towards him, and he told him that fear and awkwardness were in his stomach and he instructed his nephew to sit on his legs and drink a substance as he sang the bear song, and lifted his nephew on his feet. In this way, the nephew vomited as his uncle told him that this was how the cinnamon bear adopted him while he fasted in the Crazy Mountains. Shot-in-the-Hand cut a piece of hide from his sacred bearskin and tied it on top of his nephew’s head and told him not to fear anything because his bear medicine was powerful. His nephew jumped on his horse, quickly struck him with his quirt, and proudly pranced his war-horse into the ranks of the mounted Crow who were ready to meet the invasion force.

The Crow made final preparations for battle and those assigned to serve as snipers concealed themselves below the hill, near the creek in the tall grass and behind some trees. Shot-in-the-Hand had an old muzzle-loading gun with a short barrel, about two feet long. He loaded it up with powder, a lot of it, and he put in many pieces of iron -not bullets, but old pieces of iron. He mounted his favorite horse, and placed his lance and bows and arrows and a knife where they would be accessible. His shield was slung on his back to be ready for use when necessary.

The invasion force, confident as they were, did not charge at full speed over the rise.

They rode in two groups, shouting and waving their weapons, one on each side of East Pryor Creek.

Right in front of this force, riding a dark roan calico horse (Is this a paint or a Apaloosa or a Pinto?) was young Brave Wolf wearing the clothes of the slain son and a war-bonnet with two streamers flying behind.. The thundering horde charged down the hills towards the creek with Brave-Wolf first reaching the creek and crossing to the other side.

The mounted Crows and the sharpshooters met them on the west side of Arrow Creek. Some of the men with rifles stationed themselves near an open flat area, which was the first line of defense, and was located on the west side of the creek. Brave-Wolf crossed the creek and rode among the mounted Crow warriors - but soon lost his nerve and reined his horse, turning to flee. About this time, Wolf-Head, a River Crow (who was well-known as an expert marksman) with bow and arrow quickly caught up with him. Brave-Wolf wrapped his arms around his horse's neck in an attempt to become less of a target. Wolf-Head moved to one side and once more Brave-Wolf whipped his horse with his quirt but was shot several times by arrows to his back as he rode hard in the direction of Arrow Creek. Another Crow, Bear-Cap, caught up with him and shot another arrow into his right side. The nephew of Shot-in-the-Hand also struck Brave-Wolf, counting coup upon him as Brave-Wolf fell over in the middle of the creek.

Brave-Wolf did not strike a blow or kill anyone to avenge the son of the Lakota chief. This warrior who had professed to give his body to the Lakota Nation to avenge the slaying of the young Lakota had died in vain. About the time Brave-Wolf fell, the Crows and their enemies, the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho met head on with their horses as warriors on both sides let fly thousands of arrows toward each other. The Crows say it was raining arrows that day. The small valley exploded with war whoops, gunfire, and the thunder of thousands of horses' hooves beating the ground.

He-Dog, a Lakota warrior, observed Brave-Wolf's retreat toward the creek. He attempted to rescue him but was too late in his efforts. Brave-Wolf was already dead by the time He-Dog arrived.

Those Crow on horseback rode at a tangent, toward their enemy, letting their arrows fly as they charged. This first group of The Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho had crossed the creeks and were now in the flats. Ahead lay a ravine and a high hill which had to be circumvented in order to reach the main Crow camp. This charge was met not only by mounted Crows but by the volleys of those defenders fighting on foot.

One of the Crow who had a horse shot out from under him was sighted by Shot-in-the-Hand, who came to his aid and took him onto his horse. Shot-in-the-Hand thought of his medicine and that the spirit had told him that a gun could not harm him. This gave him strength. He had used all his arrows and was among the enemy with his lance.

The followers of the invasion force sat in clusters here and there on high escarpments near the battle scene. While some men smoked the pipe, the Lakota women sang victory songs and emitted shrills of encouragement to their fighting men below. This was about the time when the sun is half-way to mid-day (approximately 10:00).

Some of the Crow sharpshooters near the creek opened fire on the mounted Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho, knocking a good many men off their horses. The invading force was pushed back up the hill where they regrouped.

Tattoo-Face, Crazy Pend d Orille, and Shot-in-the-Hand quickly rode their ponies right up to the enemy lines, while laying on their sides to avoid being too obvious a target thus making the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho reload and shoot at them. Their enemies missed and the three Crow returned unscathed to their own lines.

About this time the enemy alliance charged down to the creek as some Crow warriors let out shouts of “now charge, now charge” and gave the war cry as they rode across the creek.

The Crows pushed hard against the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho and compelled them back up the hill till they came to some level ground. There behind the rise the Crows encountered still many enemy warriors on foot, whom they could not move.

The many Lakota warriors on foot were like the ice in the river in the spring. By now the

Lakota began to push the Crows back down the slope of the hills on the east side of the creeks. It can be presumed that Red Cloud, American Horse, High-Backbone, Crow-King, Man-afraid-of-his-Horses and He-Dog were among the invading force.

High-Swallow and His-horse-is-Spotted rode into the Lakota lines and were followed by other Crow warriors. During this action, High-Swallow was shot through the skull with an arrow which stuck into the bone. His-horse-is-Spotted escaped unscathed.

When the Crows pushed the lead Lakota warriors back to the thickest part of their line, the tide turned once again, as the Lakota drove the Crow back down the hill. While the Crow retreated down the hill, one of the warriors named Fights-Crazy jumped off his horse. Shot-in-the-Hand rode toward him in order to rescue him. By that time the whole Crow line had made it almost to the creek, leaving these two warriors to fend for themselves. Another Crow, White-Chest, also was surrounded and killed up on the hilltop. It seemed as if every Lakota there fired at them. They came down upon the three warriors - Fights-Crazy, Shot-in-the-Hand, and Arm-around-the-Neck - but Shot-in-the-Hand and Arm-around-the-Neck, surrounded by Lakota had stripped themselves of their weapons. Before the Lakota could finish them off, they both galloped to a place that no horseman dared to go, such a steep hill that it was considered impossible to maneuver by horse. By the time Shot-in-the-Hand and Arm-around-the-neck had reached the bottom of the high hilltop by the creek, they were both riding on their horses' necks but they had not been thrown off, as would have been expected.

Shot-in-the-Hand's warhorse galloped north of where they rode down to the creek, and he again rode into the thick of the enemy. He was on the east side of Arrow Creek when a Lakota warrior rode right up to Shot-in-the-Hand and aimed his bow and arrow point blank to his face. The Lakota warrior's bowstring snapped, and Shot-in-the-Hand kicked him off his horse. By now, Shot-in-the-Hand had used all of his arrows and was now among the enemy armed with his lance. When his lance broke, he went to grab his knife and found it missing. In the heat of the battle, he had forgotten about his gun. Suddenly remembering it, he drew it as at half a dozen Lakota came charging at him. He aimed the weapon and fired upon the enemy. He shot his load of powder and iron pieces right into them and, after the heavy blue smoke blew away, many of the Lakota warriors had been unseated. One particular Lakota warrior rode at him and hit him from behind with a stone war club. Shot-in-the-Hand was stunned by this blow. He did not know how long he had blacked out, but when he came to, the enemy was still around him, although his gun was gone.

Shot-in-the-Hand, recovering his senses, found his knife and drew it. There was a small break among the Lakota to which he rode. He had forgotten his shield, still slung on his back. He brought it around to use as protection, since his only weapon was his knife. There were five arrows sticking in it and not one had pierced his body. His good spirit bear was watching over him.

At the time Shot-in-the-Hand and Arm-around-the-neck jumped down the very steep hillside, the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho pushed back the Crow little by little, not on

the run as they were fighting for their home that day. While the fighting was fierce, some of the Lakota were on the hilltop smoking and looking on. (This is a repeat of what happened on page 20. Does it go here or on the last page?)

Wolf-lays-Down, a Crow warrior who had bought his medicine (wolf) from another man for 400 or 500 elk teeth, advanced into the fray to rescue his brother-in-law, One-Feather, who was on foot. One-Feather jumped on the back of Wolf-lays-Down's horse, and they rode from the enemy. A Lakota struck Wolf-lays-Down on his head, and he suffered a deep gash but returned to the Crow lines.

Shot-in-the-Jaw, one of the mounted Crow warriors, was approached by several Crow warrior during the heat of the battle. His companions told him, "isn't that your brother being surrounded by swarms of Lakota?" Shot-in-the-Jaw scanning the field of battle saw his brother and raced his horse through the hordes of Lakota warriors. His brother then jumped on the back of his horse, and they rode for the safety of the Crow lines. Sometime between his rescue of his brother and their retreat to the Crow lines, Shot-in-Jaw received the wound that gave him his name (Shot-in-the-Jaw).

Bull-Chief, whose medicine helper was the morning star and dressed as the spirit in his vision, rode among the Crow shouting directions as they were being pushed back to the creek. Another Crow (Bull-Tongue), whose medicine was the hawk as well as the buffalo-bull given to him by Along-the-Hillside, saw this medicine bundle in a vision on a fast prior to the battle. He found himself in the thick of the fight as the Crows were

forced back across the creek. When reflecting on the battle, he thought often of the odds, that only about five hundred lodges of Crows fought overwhelming numbers of Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho.

Once more the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho slowly pushed the Crow across the creek and again the Crow sharpshooters fired in unison with ill effect on their enemy. Bellows of blue gun smoke could be seen along the tree line on the west side of Arrow Creek. Suddenly, the repeated charges by the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho ceased. It was about noon, and the enemy had succeeded in pushing the Crows across the creek.

There followed a short period of calm and those Crow warriors located between the creeks and their main camp reorganized in preparation for the next Sioux onslaught. The assault didn't come. Instead a lone Lakota war-chief rode down to the creeks and made signs to talk with the Crow.

White-on-the-Edge and his war chiefs summoned a certain Crow who could speak a little of the Lakota tongue. This man was sent to talk with the Lakota across the creek. He rode down to the west bank of the creek and conversed with the Lakota man who held the pipe.

The Lakota lit his pipe and smoked as the Crow made a sign that he had something to say. It was not unusual for this occurrence to happen in Plains Indian warfare. The Crow said to the Lakota, "This day you have come a long way and in great numbers, it is not a

large warparty that has come to fight us Crow but you have brought many warriors to annihilate us and take over our homeland, if it is a grand fight you want this day, then you warriors will have enough of it and as we are speaking, our relatives the River Crow are coming down fast from the Musselshell country and Mountain Crows are coming from the west. When they get here you warriors will surely get enough fighting as they have never experiences before, I have spoken.” These words were a bluff, with the intended hope of instilling fear into the hearts of the enemy. There actually was no help coming for the Crow.

Strange Events

Not long after this meeting, certain strange events started to take place. It was said that an old woman snuck off from the north side of the fortification toward the lower end of Arrow Creek and lit some dry cottonwood branches, resulting in a huge fire with smoke rising high into the air causing an appearance of a band of Crow warriors coming in from the north. To the west a large stampeding herd of elk threw up a cloud of dust, the movements resembled the sounds of war-whoops and gunfire. Inspired by these occurrences, many of the old men and women beat the war-drums and hollered out that another war-party was coming from the south of Arrow Creek. The Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho could plainly see a huge cloud of dust moving rapidly toward the battleground. This cloud of dust was actually caused by a large buffalo herd moving in the vicinity of Dry Head country, possibly frightened by the noise of battle.

Tension was surmounting as the Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho combined their forces

for a renewed assault, hoping to dislodge the Crow defense line before help arrive. Meanwhile, some of the older Crow warriors rode along the defense line shouting encouragements to the younger warriors.

On the west side of the creek the flats seemed to be covered with horses, some lying dead and some still kicking. In one small space (approximately three acres) there could be counted eighteen horses dead.

Reacting to the renewed assault, the Crow sharpshooters and those on horseback dismounted several hundred yards in front of the fortification site, holding that position so as to block the Sioux and their allies from entering the main camp.

Some of the Lakota rode to the dry ravine located to the north and encountered a group of River Crow under Winkling-Eye and Bull-Nose, who were hidden there. Some Crow historians speculate that Plenty-Coups and Medicine Crow were among the defenders on that side of the battlefield. (Who thinks this is so, and how old was Plenty Coup when he died, and what year did he die? Also ditto for Medicine Crow)

Among those dismounted warriors defending the north side of the camp was Hunts-to-Die. Hunts-to-Die. He remained mounted as he previously had been wounded in a fight with the Lakota and Cheyenne at Powder River. This warrior was tied onto his horse due to his wound. He rode to the threat of the enemy approaching the main camp located on the high ground where the women and children remained.

Seeing the approaching threat to the main camp, those seasoned warriors nearby shouted out to the young boys, “Today, you must become men and fight like men. You have your family and country to protect and the rest of you Crows, do not run toward the camp but stand your ground and fight.”

Four of the Crow defenders located on the north side of the fortification stood like mountain lions, unmoving. It seemed as if each time they fired their weapons an enemy warrior fell.

The fighting remained intense as the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors pushed the Crow defenders toward the top of the hill. About this time, Young-man-afraid-of-Horses and He-Dog of the Teton Sioux rode down a Crow with a sword. The Crow had painted his face black and had previously counted coup on some Arapahos when they met each other earlier at Lodge Grass Canyon.

The battle now became one of hand-to-hand fighting, where knives, and spearheads flashed and arrows filled the air. The smoke of the muskets hung like smog over the defense line as wounded warriors lay strewn over the battleground. One of the Crow, a warrior named Across-the-Bank, was severely wounded; his shoulder was blown off by a bullet. Despite his wound, Across-the-Bank, using his one good arm grabbed a hatchet and was ready to engage in a suicide charge when his sister and mother pleaded with him not to commit this suicidal act. His infant daughter (Little Horse) did not have a mother

and if Across-the-Bank died, the family would have no one to hunt meat for them.

Succumbing to their pleas, Across-the-Bank gave up his desperate plan and continued to fight the Lakota. (Little-Horse was the great grandmother of Mrs. Mardell Hogan Plain Feather, a prominent member of the Crow Tribe).

At opportune times, a certain Crow would leap from the trenches of the fortification and run to the Crow fighting positions to retrieve wounded warriors whom he then tossed onto his shoulders and took them back to the relative safety of the trenches. Many of the wounded were taken back to fortifications in this way. After this grand battle, this brave individual was named Turns-back-Plenty.

Cuts-Turnip, the Father of Medicine-Snake and Otter Woman, both the **aunt and mother** of Plenty-Coup, was severely wounded between the legs by a Lakota arrow while fighting near the trenches. The battle was becoming extremely desperate as the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho were forcing the Crow to the very doors of their lodges. The women and children, hiding in the interior were huddled in sheer terror as they could not see the battle raging outside their positions. The women lay inside clutching knives and sharp objects, ready to use them upon themselves and their children in case the enemy overpowered their men and broke into the lodges. They could hear their men shouting to hold their lines as well as the enemy war-whoops all along the front of their fortification. Some of the women and children peaking under the lodge covers were struck by arrows and bullets, which seemed to strike the lodges like hail. Groups of Crow warriors

desperately rushed to fill the gaps where the Lakota and their allies attempted to penetrate their lines.

Big-Medicine, five years old at the time (Later one of the first Indian Policemen on the Crow Indian Reservation) was taken by his grandmother out of the safety of the trenches . She grabbed her big red horse, and they jumped on its back, whipping it to a gallop in an easterly direction. One of the camp **police** soldiers, seeing them flee, caught up with them and grabbed the reins, asking where they were going? She hastily replied, “We are riding out to find the Mountain Crows. The Lakota will kill us all this day so we are trying to escape.” The camp **police** soldier replied, “You are not going anywhere today, so take your grandson back to the trenches and stay there!” The camp **police** soldier then struck the horse with his war-club right between the ears. As the horse crumbled to its knees the two rolled and tumbled right on the ground, both screaming in fright then ran back to the fortification.

The Crow warriors fired their weapons so much that the barrels were becoming increasingly hot. The Crow, in the days of the muzzle-loading musket, had a custom of not ramming the bullet home with a wad. Consequently, the ball was apt to, and frequently did, roll down the barrel towards the muzzle and then was discharged with little force.

Some of the Lakota who were shot off their mounts would stand right back up and start shooting from under their horses necks. In this close fighting, Sioux, Cheyenne, and

Arapaho warriors were thrown to the ground, struck by bullet or arrow in front of the trenches. Some of the Crow warriors, protecting the lodges were also hit in the heavy barrage of fire. The wounded warriors lie in the vicinity of the fortification, agonizing in pain.

War-clubs, knives, lances, revolvers and axes became the weapons of choice during this stage of the fighting. Lakota horses fell dead with their riders tumbling down the hill. Lakota foot soldiers ran toward the lodges, doing their best to dodge enemy fire while their wounded comrades dashed down the hill, away from the fray. Many of these warriors were picked up by their allies and put on horseback, while others simply hung onto the tails of the horses moving in the direction of the creek.

Near this time, the River Crows, under Winkling-Eye and Bull-Nose, held their line on the north side facing the ravine. They fired volley after volley at the Sioux, who broke and fled back to the creek. This group of Crow warriors pursued the enemy to the vicinity of the creek bottom. It seemed as if every time they shot enemy warriors would fall.

Hunts-to-Die rode up into the camp circle, got off his mount and hobbled over to the ravine on the north side to get to the cover of a little washout. He was planning to stay there, but bullets were striking the ground around him like hail. (Is this paragraph in the right place, should it be above the previous paragraph?)

The Lakota also were seen spreading out to the west. The Crow reacting to this move sent warriors to the washouts in that direction. A certain Crow named Man-that-has-his-heart-black-Always and a group of Mountain Crows faced the Lakota in that direction. The warriors on the west side of the fortification could be heard shouting, "Face the enemy." This location is very close to the present day Kukowski ranch.

Lakota warriors on this side of the battlefield rushed at the Crows and managed to engage in hand-to-hand combat. It was here that Man-whose-heart-is-Black was surrounded by a half-dozen warriors. He fought so ferociously that his medicine helper (Grizzly bear) began to manifest and his fangs were showing and his mouth filled with froth as he swung his knife wildly and stabbed to death six of the Lakota men. The other Lakota warriors backed away and abandoned their efforts to attack from the west end of the fortification site. When the sun was close to the hills in the west, men could be heard shouting for more powder. Crow women came running down from the camp with powder in an effort to assist their men.

Near this time, the Crow initiated another counter-strike and once again pushed the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho down the hill and across the creeks. This movement gave time for the women to run to the creek, fetch water, and return quickly to their lines. Some of these women were caught in the ensuing fight. These women, carrying their buffalo paunch containers of water would zigzag in front of the horses causing them to miss them as they headed back to their defensive lines. Teenage girls also assisted the warriors by carrying water to them. One of the young girls who gave out drinking water

to the thirsty warriors was Medicine-Girl (Max-Pe).

A Lakota who tagged along on a slow horse just to watch the battle had his brother hand him one of the two extra horses he had brought along. This horse was fast and long-winded. He decided to get into the fight about the time the Crows started to counter attack. During the Crow counter-attack, he decided to retreat as fast as his horse could run. Then the horse started to weave and lose speed. Soon blood could be seen spattering from the horse's mouth; then it rolled over, dead.

Crazy-Head, a Crow fighter whose medicine was the buffalo bull, and who had obtained it from Chokopsh, a noted war-leader of a former generation, who died around 1807 was shot through the stomach as he rushed among the Lakota during the heated charges. He survived his wound afterwards.

As the Sioux and their allies recovered from the Crow counterattack, Fast-Elk, an Ogallalla Lakota, counted coup on a Crow warrior as they forced the Crows back to their lines once more. Fast-Elk was about 26 years old at the time of the battle. Shield, a thirty-one year old Lakota warrior, also participated in the battle.

At this point only a few of the Crow men were killed but some of the women and children had been killed. The Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe had overshot their arrows when aiming at the men with guns and the women had come from the shelters to see the fight and some of them had been killed. Some of my great-grandmothers on my great-

great-grandfather's side (Cuts-Turnip's Side) were in the trenches and at times would peak under the lodges they mentioned the fighting was fierce as men were struggling to hold the line. Sometimes they would see the Lakota men riding on horseback trying to penetrate the lodges only to be stopped at the very door by a Crow warrior with a weapon in his hand. There was a lot of shouting and shooting in front of the lodges and trenches and again the women would fall back into the trenches.

Groups of Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho would go back across to the east side of the creek and stand together looking back at the battlefield.

Another strategy was planned – about thirty elite (strong-bow society) warriors struck out north going along a ravine and rushed forward into a bunch of brush from where a draw led to an open space. Here the Lakota were standing and shooting from a distance. A group of young warriors with guns snuck up on them as they were only about twenty yards from them. They fired together in unison and the results were deadly as the Lakota fell like a bunch of sticks. The rest of the enemy ran and the sudden killing of so many seemed to dishearten the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho, all along the lines.

Then the shout arose, “The Lakota are running; mount your horses.” The men got out of the trenches quickly as the women got fresh ponies from inside the corrals for their men. Hunts-to-Die's nephew brought his horse as soon as he heard the shout and he got on and tied himself to the saddle. The fortification was like a nest of ants swarming out when you kick into the hill. The Crow mounted and charged them. The Crows charged all

along the lines and drove them into the creek and they bunched so that the water was dammed up and the creek below went dry for awhile. The three tribes fired a fuselage of bullets from a distance across the creek giving the old men and women on the hilltop time to stop smoking and get on their horses and left. Some of the Crows often wondered why they had come at all.

The Lakota were being driven up the hilltop and they began to throw their dead and wounded in one or two instances. This was near sunset. When the Crows got to the level above they stopped driving them and they went away moving slowly like a herd of buffalo after they had been chased.

All along their line we could see them, repacking the dead on their horses. As they drove away a man named Two-Face, a Lakota who had been living among the Crow, rode out after them and nearly caught up with four of them. They stopped and he called out, "I am Two-Face." Then one of them came and embraced him; that was his nephew. They exchanged horses and Two-Face returned. His nephew told him that many of the Lakota would not live to get home. They left seven dead men on the ground.

Some of the best feats in battle were displayed by the Crow medicine men which routed the enemies back to their camp on the Goose River. There were no further attempts to clean up on the Crow by this overwhelming force.

At this particular battle, Bull-goes-Hunting's medicine rock's presence had much to do in directing and guarding the skill of the men in this battle.

The enemy drew off and one of their chiefs began to talk to them. One of our men who was born a Lakota but who had been brought up by the Crows, and knew the Lakota language cried, out, "Keep quiet, keep quiet, let me hear what he is saying." So the Crows stopped shouting and listened and the Lakota told them what the chief was saying. He was telling them that all their big warriors had been killed and that they would not win the fight. That the Crows were the greatest fighters of all the Indians and that they would fight on. They could not win and he counseled that they give up the fight. They had lost a big number of men. They turned and fled away leaving their wounded.

The Lakota who earlier had his horse shot under him could hear hoof beats of the Crow and their charging war-whoops as he hurriedly ran and he thought surely he would be killed when he saw a Lakota horse trotting by, dragging the reins. The succeeded in catching the horse, which he recognized as the fastest and most durable horse of the Lakota and escaped.

There were several women with the enemy that time when the Lakota scattered and ran away one of the women fell off her horse. Crazy-sister-in-Law captured her, giving her, as a slave to his brother-in-law, Warm-Robe. This woman's Crow name was Good-Trader. She lived with Warm-Robe and his women and learned to love them. Whe3n she had a chance to get a man of her own she would not go with

b. First Person Accounts of the Battle (Transcripts of Interviews and Published Accounts)

1. Crow Account: Shot-in-the-Hand's account of the battle of Arrow Creek: As told by Shot-in-the-Hand at the home of Bird Horse on the Crow Indian Reservation, Interpreted by Bull Chief, September, 1920.)

We were camped in the Rotten Grass country. Not very far away there was an encampment of Sioux. It was near the end of summer and the women were busy gathering berries, the survis berries, choke cherry pounding and drying them for storage. The wild plum was also becoming ripe and they were gathering them also. In this way the women were scattered some far from camp. A party of Sioux crept up unobserved upon some women and killed three of them. Then fled to their camp. That our women were killed in this way maddened us and we called for revenge.

As was the custom our best horses were tethered near the tipi and a party of us, were quickly mounted and gave chase to the murderers. We rode hard for we were determined to avenge the death of our women. We came up to them, shooting our arrows at them and some fell. We caught to them and killed with the knife, but one or two escaped. Among the killed was the son of their chief. We took his arms and clothes and scalped him. Leaving him naked on the prairie, and returned to our own people. The Sioux were many more than we and we expected they would attack us when they found the son of their chief naked and disgraced on the plains, and prepared for battle. But they did not

come but struck their camp and moved away. The Sioux were a big tribe and greatly outnumbered us, yet we generally conquered them in battle.

Shortly after we heard that they were gathering all their tribe together with the meant of attacking the Crows.

One day we saw a small scouting party of Sioux and rode after them but they turned back to their own people. We shot our arrows at them and one who was lagging behind fell from his saddle. He arose, threw away his arms, held up his hands and advanced toward us. He made signs of friendship. When we came up to him, he told us he was a Crow by birth but had been brought up by the Sioux. That the Sioux were calling all their fighting men together for the chief was determined to avenge the death and disgrace to his son and had sworn that he would kill every man Crow, and take captive all the women and children and bring them up as Sioux, and that not a man of the Crows would be left alive on the earth, and that there would be no more Crows. He said that the Sioux were many and that there was no hope for us if we had battle on the plains as they would surround us and kill us all; that they were better armed than we. He said, "your only hope is to get beyond the Yellowstone, for the Sioux were bad swimmers and would have to attack from across the river."

All this was told to our chief and he called a meeting of all the chiefs and they decided that the advice was good and that we must cross the Yellowstone river and there prepare for battle with them. Messengers were sent out calling all the tribe together, men,

women, and children, telling to travel at once toward the Yellowstone and to take all their belongings with them, leaving nothing behind; that the Sioux were coming, all the fighting men of the tribe, and had vowed to kill every man Crow until there were no more of the tribe, and that all the women and children would be made captive or killed.

We sent scouts out to try and locate the enemy and to keep us informed of what they were doing, that we might be prepared. We struck camp and moved towards the Yellowstone, but we were slow. We left behind all that we did not want but had to take our teepees, our stores, which we packed on travois, and all could not be packed on horses.

Our spies told us that the Sioux had brought along only enough women to attend the camp and had left all the others behind, that they were in great numbers and we must hurry. But we could not hurry and dared not leave any behind. We remembered what had happened to our women when they were picking berries.

We got as far as about where we are now, a little to the east – when one of the spies came in and told us that the enemy were but a day's march away. The chiefs had a council and decided we could not get to the Yellowstone in time and that we must march quickly to Pryor creek. We caught up with some who were hurrying to the Yellowstone and advised them to stay with us but they continued on their way.

We halted the other side of Pryor creek and prepared for battle. The chief ordered us to make a long corral of the teepee poles and drive in all the horses used for burdens and

also all the horses of the men who had rifles for they would fight on foot. Then he called together the women and said, "Dig ditches in which you can take shelter with the children. Make haste, hurry. Dig, dig, dig!" So they dug ditches and prepared all the bundles to make shelter from the arrows and shots of the enemy.

All the men with rifles were to fight on foot and they were told to take all the cover they could and lie concealed. They were spread out on three sides, for one side we had to the creek.

We heard afterwards what happened in the camp of the Sioux from one of them which was wounded and fell into our hands.

They had gathered every man who was capable of bearing arms. They were in great numbers. Also they were better armed than we for they had every man one of those stones mounted on a stick as well as knives and tomahawks.

When they came to the place where we had camped the night before the chief counted the places where the teepees had been. He turned to the men and said, "See, allowing but three men to every teepee we outnumbered them 20 to 1. Twenty to one. We will surround them and kill them all. Two days from now the Crows will be no more. Two days from now, there will not be a man Crow in the world. We will kill them all. You will all have many women to work for you. We will take the women and children by them and we shall be a big tribe." And they all shouted and gave their war whoop.

Then the chief said to them, “Who will wear the clothes of my son and ride his horse, and be the first in the fight and fight till he died. But no one answered for they had no desire to die but thought of the easy victory they would have when fighting 20 to 1, and the women they would take captive. And he brought the clothes of his son-his best war shirt, and leggings and bonnet-and they were fine. There was a young man who was not right in his head and he thought how fine it would be to wear such fine clothes and he would offer himself and would fight until he died. And they took off his clothes and put on those of the son of the chief and brought out the horse and put him on that. He was proud of himself in the clothes and that the chief himself had helped to dress him and he rode down the ranks and sang and shouted and said, “See, I am going to fight in the clothes of the Chief’s son, until I die, to avenge his death. I give my body, my whole body to the Sioux.” Some of the chiefs lifted him from his horse and did him much honor, and took him to a teepee and laid before him a choice cooked smoked tongue of a buffalo. And they themselves put four pieces into his mouth (four is the sacred number of the Sioux; all acts of great importance are done four times) and then he helped himself to as much as he wanted.

They were joyful at the prospect of the easy victory they expected to get. Well, you will see. That is what the wounded captive told us happened in the camp of the Sioux.

I told you how we had prepared for them. How we had one side facing the creek at the deep part where the bank was steep, how we had made a corral and herded all the horses there. How the women had dug pits to hide themselves from the arrows, and how all the

men with rifles had been spread out and under cover on foot.

I had an old muzzle loading gun with a short barrel, about two feet long. I loaded it up with powder, a lot of it, and I put in a lot of pieces of iron: Not bullets but old pieces of iron. This I put on my horse, a fine horse, a white one with yellow ears. He was my favorite fighting horse and he was well trained. I also had my lance and bows and arrows and a knife. My shield I slung on my back to be ready.

We sent out scouts to get touch of the enemy and what they were doing – how many they were and how they were forming. They had not gone beyond the first rise on the ground when they came galloping back and called out “They are coming, they are coming, the whole Sioux nation. They outnumbered us many times. Go kiss your wives and children for you are going to die. We shall all be killed, they are so many. Women, go sharpen your knives and axes and prepare to kill yourselves, for it is better to die than to be taken by the Sioux.” And the women sharpened their knives and their axes. And I went and kissed my wife and children for I did not expect to see them again. My wife said she would kill the children herself rather than be taken by the Sioux. For the Sioux are bad.

I determined I would get right into the middle of the enemy so that if I were to die my wife should not see me, or if I were not dead I should not see my children taken. Then I thought of my medicine and what the spirit had told me. The guns could not harm me and that I should not die by an arrow. But the Sioux had knives and tomahawks and the big stones on the end of sticks. I had on my best fighting shirt and I got on my horse, my

white horse with the yellow ears. And I tied the cinnamon bear skin about his neck – this that you see here – for it was my medicine. As I put on him, he whinnied and began to paw the ground with his feet. He wanted to get into the fight. And it made me feel good and I broke into the bear song.

The enemy came over the rise in a half circle shouting, singing their war song and waving their weapons. Right in front was the young man wearing the clothes of the son of the chief. Our men with the rifles poured shot into them as they came and many dropped from their horses. The young man lost his nerve, he was afraid. He reigned his horse and turned to fly, but our men shot him in the back and thus he died. He had not struck a blow or killed anyone to avenge the son of the chief.

We who were on horses rode at a tangent, the enemy swerved; we let our arrows at them and charged. We got all amongst them. My horse whinnied again, my good white horse with the yellow ears. I let fly my arrows. One of our men who had had his horse shot (unreadable ends in der) him I reached down and took up behind me. He was shot by a rifle shot and fell. I thought of my medicine and that the spirit told me that a gun could not harm me. It gave me strength. I had used all my arrows and I was among the enemy using my lance: I found myself surrounded and I rode at them with my lance.

It got broken or something: anyhow presently I found myself without it and all the enemy around me. I went to draw my knife; how I wish I had a knife like this (taking up a cheap butcher knife he had bought at the store) but it was a good one.

I had forgotten about my gun. Suddenly I thought of it and drew it. The enemy drew off. I let them have it. I shot right into them and many fell off their horses. One rode at me and hit me from behind with those stones on a stick. I was dazed. I know not how long. When I came to myself the enemy were still around me but my gun was gone. It had been taken from me by the man who hit me. He had gained a point to be a chief: he had taken a weapon from an enemy. I drew my knife. There was a small break in the enemy and at this I rode behind a small rise and away from the enemy. I had forgotten my shield which I had slung on my back. I brought it round to use as a protection as I had only my knife. There were five arrows sticking in it and not one had pierced my body. My good spirit bear was watching over me.

Then enemy drew off and one of their chiefs began to talk to them. One of our men who was born a Sioux but who had been brought up by the Crows, and knew the Sioux language, cried out, "Keep quiet, keep quiet, let me hear what he is saying." So we stopped shouting and listened and he told us what the chief was saying. He was telling them that all their big warriors had been killed and that they could not win the fight. That the Crows were the greatest fighters of all the Indians and that they would fight on. They could not win and he counseled that they give up the fight. They had lost a big number of men. They turned and fled away leaving their wounded.

So the Crows were not wiped of the face of the earth. We are many today.

Only a few of our men had been killed but some of our women and children had been killed. The Sioux had overshot their arrows when aiming at our men with guns and the women had come from their shelters to see the fight and some of them had been killed. Again I kissed my wife and children.

I am an old man now as the spirit bear said I should be. I have never been harmed by a gun and an arrow will not cause by death.

2. Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Account:

c. Secondary Accounts of the battle of Arrow Creek

The North American Indian “The Apsaroke” (A Sioux Invasion: Hunts-to-Die’s Account)

Just below Lodgegrass canon, where the creek emerges from the mountains, is a level but stony place. Here occurred a battle between the Apsaroke and the Arapaho, in which three of our enemies were killed and the rest driven across a gully. On the otehr5 side they drew up and stopped, and we were on this side along a low ride. They looked pretty with so many different colors shining in the sun.

One man rode out from their line, came down into the gully and up on this side. We said to one another, “Keep quiet, and when he is close we will kill him.” When he came near he made signs: “Be quiet, my friends. I am coming. I am Horse In The Night.” So he came to us and we took him among us. He was an Apsaroke of the Bad Coup clan, born in captivity, for his mother had been taken by the Arapaho. He could speak Apsaroke.

The members of his clan took him to one of their lodges and gave him many presents, and the Arapaho moved away.

Horse-In-The-Night said: "Listen well. Do not think I am lying to you. I have put my life in your hands by coming among you, helping to save your lives. Right behind us the warriors of all the Lakota tribes are coming. They mean to kill every man and take your country, your women and your children. They are coming. Perhaps they have seen you already. Move westward to some place where you can put up a good fight, for they are very great in number. I begged these Arapaho not to have this battle, but they were foolish and it is good that you have killed some of them. But now throw away your lodge-poles and go. The big bands have smoked the pipe together and are coming? Soon after his speech the things that had been given him were packed on horses and he went back to the Arapaho.

We were then on the headwaters of the Little Bighorn, whence we moved northwestward, but we did not throw away our lodge poles. It was dark when we stopped on the Bighorn, about twelve miles south of where Fort C.F. Smith was afterwards built. IN the morning, before sunrise, the crier went through the camp calling, "Horse-in-the-Night did not lie! Be on your guard against the enemy and keep moving!" We were sure that Horse-in-the-Night did not lie, because in the darkness a certain man who heard his horse, whose voice he knew, nickering; then the sound was repeated from a great distance, then came another sound as if a man had struck its face trying to make it be quiet. In the morning the horse was gone, and we were sure that Lakota scouts had taken it.

As we learned afterwards from the Lakota, they got to that camp whiel the fires were still smoking. We had no time to put out fires. They placed ten men at each camp-fire, and even then there were men left. Seeing how great they were, they all gave war-cries, and shouted, "This day we shall take their wives and children and have their country! Their women shall be ours and their boys shall herd our horses! We were about four hundred lodges: some were with the River Crows visiting, and some of the Kick Belly's were away in the Gallatin valley. With the Lakota were some of the Cheyenne and Arapaho.

That day we moved around Pryor Mountains on the north, and on the night of the following day the camp was between East Pryor and Tatoed Face creeks. There we danced with the three Arapaho scalps. The boys were playing outside, filling their loin-cloths with dust and throwing it at people. Two men crept up on them, seizing one of them by the arms, and began to run with him. The other boys thought they were Apsaroke men playing with them, so they pursued and threw stones at the men, while the boy cried and finally threw himself down bodily, and the men released him. He came back, and the boys ran to camp and told what had happened. The boy himself said the men were Lakota, because they used a kind of perfume different from that of the Apsaroke. Then the old men rode through the camp cautioning the people to be watchful: the enemy were growing very bold. That night and the next we spent in molding bullets for our flintlocks. Some had Springfield rifles and made their own cartridges. There were neither Lumpwoods nor Foxes, everybody was only Apsaroke.

The next day, we moved down Tatoed Face creek to Arrow (Pryor) creek, two or three hundred warriors rode in front leading their fast war-horses, and as many more behind. Others rode at the sides. White-on-the-Edge, an old man and a great medicine man, carried the pipe. Blackfoot and Iron Bull were the chiefs, but their medicine was not potent enough to be able to carry the pipe at the front in such a time of danger. About a mile below where Keiser now is, we camped on level ground. On the east was Arrow creek, and on the south another small creek; on the west was hilly, broken ground, and on the north a small dry ravine. Inside these four protections was a high, level pieced of ground on which we camped. Many of the stragglers halted in the bottom, some of them five or six hundred yards away from the main body. The Lakota would have to cross the creeks and the ravine to attack the camp, and between them and the high place the low land was narrow. We had about five hundred good warriors of more than eighteen years of age, but counting the boys of fifteen and upward there were more.

On the march from Tatoed Face creek to this place, a small war-party, which had left us on Lodgegrass, rejoined us and reported that a great army of Lakota were following us. A few of this party were missing. Early in the next morning, while the women were packing, - we intended to make our stand at the Yellowstone, - an old man crossed Arrow creek to look for his son from the high place. White-on-the-Edge had announced that he would smoke four pipes, while the stragglers closed up, and he sat smoking with his chiefs, when the old man across the creek was chased by three or four Lakota, who had crept upon him in a ravine. They chased him down the hill and struck him in the back with a lance, tumbling him off his horse. Some of our men, having by that time crossed

the creek, rescued him, and the Lakota went back. Then all the Lakota in the world charged down from behind the hills in two great divisions, one on each side of East Pryor creek. The line was half a mile wide, and they were thick. We galloped down to the creek. One of them, riding a roan horse, crossed to meet us, and Wolf Head struck him and was struck by him, but the Lakota, instead of coming into the thick of us, turned and rode back toward his people. He was struck full of arrows in the back, and Bear Cap followed put an arrow through him and the men fell into the creek. It was about the time when the sun is half-way to midday. Someone shouted Navadhi, navadhi, navadhi! "Now charge!" and everybody yelled the war-cry and dashed across the creek."

We drove them back up the hill, but when they reached level ground at the top there were still coming behind them so many Lakota on foot that we could not move them. They were like ice in the river when it breaks up in the spring. Then they began to push us back, but after we had given way a short distance High-Swallow and His-Horse-is-Spotted turned into the thickest of the enemy's line, and the rest of us, seeing that, charged after them and pushed the Lakota up the hill again. High-Swallow was shot through the head with an arrow, but His-Horse-is-Spotted was not hurt. When we forced them back to the thickest part of their line again their numbers checked us once more, and as we were pushed down the hill, Fights-Recklessly jumped off his horse to fight and Shot-in-the-Hand started toward him to rescue him. By that time the whole Apsaroke line had got almost to the creek, leaving these two alone. It seemed as if every Lakota there shot at them. They swept down upon the two and covered Fights-Recklessly, but Shot-in-the-Hand rode down the hill surrounded by Lakota, who stripped him of

everything that he had –shield, bow, quiver, and lance; but before they could kill him he galloped over a place that no horseman since has ever dared to descend. When they pushed us back it was little by little, not on the run. We were fighting for our homes that day! While the fighting was going on, a great many Lakota were up on the hilltops smoking and looking on.

When the first charge came, the lodges had been quickly put up again in a close circle, and the women, gathering all the horses inside and hobbling them, had dug a trench inside the camp-circle; and between the earth thus heaped up and the lodges, they lay with the children out of the way of stray bullets. The lodges were so close together that one could not pass between them, and the covers were turned inside out, so that everything was black. This looked war-like and fierce, and reminded the Sun of the skin-covered sun-lodges that had been erected for him.

About noon the Lakota succeeded in forcing us across the creek. We gathered between the camp and the two creeks, and they combined their forces and crossed. I was tied on my horse, for this battle was after I had my bad wound that took away my hip, and every time I shot he bucked and reared. It was fine that day! Everybody except me dismounted there, so that the fighting should not go up the hill to the camp. On the west side of the creek the prairie dog village was covered with horses, some lying dead and some kicking. In one small space were eighteen horses dead.

Some of the enemy came around to the north where the dry ravine was, and we placed men there. Four of the men were like mountain-lions; they did not yield; every time they shot, somebody on the other side fell. The Lakota spread out to the west too, and men had to be stationed there in a washout.

We were being pushed back toward the top of the hill. I rode up into the camp-circle, got off, hobbled over to the ravine on the north, and got into a little washout. I was going to stay there. Bullets were striking the lodges like hail. I shouted to the men below me, "Face the enemy!" Sometimes the Lakota, with war-bonnets streaming, would appear above the edge of our side of the ravine and then fall back shot. They looked pretty. Those four brave men were like that many angry bears. They would push the enemy back clear across Arrow Creek, and then run back to their places south of the ravine. We shot so much that our guns were hot. When the sun was close to the hills in the west, all along the line men were shouting, "Powder!, Powder!" and women came running down from the camp with powder.

In the ravine some young men rushed forward into a clump of brush, from which a draw led to an open space where about thirty Lakota were standing and shooting from a distance. These young men were only about twenty yards from them. They fired together, and the Lakota fell like a lot of sticks. The rest of them ran, and the sudden killing of so many seemed to dishearten the enemy all along the line. Besides, a woman had stolen out of the camp and set fire to the timber down the creek, and the Lakota thought that the cloud of smoke was a signal from another band of Apsaroke. The shout

arose, “The Lakota are running!” Kadhakinadhu, kadhakinadhu! “Mount again!” My young nephew brought my horse as soon as he heard the shout, and I got on and tied myself in the saddle. It was like a nest of ants swarming out when one kicks into their hill as we charged all along the line and pushed them into the creek. We drove them up the hill, and some in the panic threw away their dead and wounded; they left seven behind, and we lost eight altogether. The men on the hilltop stopped smoking and got on their horses and went. I wondered why those men had come.

When we got to the level above, we stopped driving them, and they went away moving slowly like a herd of buffalo after they had been chased. All along their line we could see them repacking the dead on their horses.

d. Oral Histories

1. Joe Medicine Crow, *From the Heart of the Crow Country: Account of the Battle of Pryor Creek*: This account is taken from a Sioux survivor of the battle who lived in the Crow Reservation in later life and also taken from a Crow warrior, Child-in-the-Mouth.

The Dakota, particularly the Hunkpapa and the Oglala, routinely came to the Crow country on horse-capturing and coup-counting raids. Intertribal warfare on the Plains was the dangerous sport through which young men climbed the military ladder to attain

chieftaincy. A warrior must complete four acts of bravery to become a chief. This was the essence of Plains Indian warfare, not goals of booty, territory, or conquest.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the surging westward expansion of the United States impacted the Sioux and Cheyenne then dwelling in the area now called North and South Dakota. This pressure drove the tribes westward. Their excursions into the Crow country became more frequent and more hostile. The traditional boundary of the Crow land was the Powder River, but soon it was replaced by the Tongue River, fifty miles to the west. By 1865 the Sioux and their Cheyenne allies were in the Bighorn valley, harassing wagon trains on the Bozeman Trail going to the gold fields in the Rocky Mountains.

In fact by 1860 these tribes considered occupying the Crow country, which was then still unmolested by the ever more numerous white men.

The story I am now going to tell is about a serious planned invasion and attempted conquest of the Crows about 1860 or 1861. The site of the great battle of Pryor Creek is about twenty miles south of what now is Billings, Montana.

In 1955 it was my good fortune to have acquired a reliable Sioux version of the battle from Charles Ten Bear, a Crow Indian Historian. He explained that about 1910 an old Sioux Indian and his wife came to the Crow Reservation and lived with Yellow Crane, where Charles Ten Bear was also living for the winter. This Sioux man was a survivor of

the big battle of Pryor Creek and often would tell the whole story in detail. Furthermore in 1935 Joe Childs, a fine Crow historian told me the Crow account of the battle. He said his father, Child in the Mouth, had been an active participant in the conflict and never tired of telling and retelling the battle story. Joe Childs would say, I've heard the story so many times that I know all about it as if I were there myself." One afternoon this fine storyteller and I sat on a hill overlooking the Pryor Creek battlefield. After smoking tobacco in silence for a while, Joe Childs commenced. But first the Sioux story.

In the early summer of 1859 or 1860, a Crow war party killed a fine young Dakota warrior. Already he had counted a number of battle coups, which entitled him to wear an eagle-feather war bonnet. His mother was overwhelmed with grief and decided to mourn until her son's death was avenged. Almost every evening this distressed mother would lead her son's horse through the camp. The horse, a dark roan, was always bridled, addled with the late warrior's war bonnet tied to the saddle horn, and ready to go. As she passed the row of teepees, the woman would wail and challenge the warriors. "Is there a man among the mighty Dakotas who will take this horse and go fight the Absarokee? Only when my son's death is avenged will I cease mourning!"

She repeated this performance almost daily for one whole year.

This daily routine was disturbing to the warriors and brought misgivings to the elders, particularly to the medicine men, who concluded that what the woman was doing was not good. Her lament portended misfortune to the tribe. But even the chiefs could not dissuade her from wailing constantly through the camp.

Then one day the situation changed abruptly and dramatically. A young man named Brave Wolf came forward. He had a good reason for this. Brave Wolf was very much in love with a maiden and wanted to make her his woman. According to custom, he asked his sisters and aunts to arrange a wedding. The women were silent. An outspoken aunt finally said they did not like the girl and did not want her as a sister-in-law or daughter-in-law. The young man was deeply hurt and decided to kill himself. In those days a man might commit suicide by killing himself directly with a weapon or by joining the Brave Hearts, the warriors who took the suicide oath to die fighting for their people. By allowing himself to be killed by an enemy, Brave Wolf would die with glory. Brave Wolf decided to join the Brave Hearts and die fighting the Raven People, as the Dakota often called the Crows.

Brave Wolf had already made up his mind by the time the wailing woman approached. He arose, walked deliberately, and took the reins of the dark roan war horse. At this moment the woman changed her cry and began a song of victory, emitting the loud Dakota women's shrill. "At last, a brave one has taken my son's horse!" Within moments a big crowd gathered around to see the intrepid young man. Brave Wolf was the instant hero of that day!

Quickly a council was called, and to the assembly a leading chief spoke: "This is not just one man's decision; by this action today, we, the Dakota, are committed in what could be

a very important and serious undertaking. I ask if the Wakan'tanka, the Great Power, has meant it to be this way.”

Many talks followed, considering the real meaning of this happening. The head chief closed the council saying, “Surely Wakan'tanka must have arranged something for the Sioux Nation. It has taken one year before the horse was taken, and I say let us take one whole year to make plans against the Raven People. They are not many, but they are shrewd and tricky in battle. The time has come that we must destroy them. But first we must take time to make plans.”

The graver crises at hand for the Dakota bands, however, was the coming of the whites in such great numbers. They were rapidly decimating the buffalo herds and desecrating their sacred mountains, the Black Hills, with diggings for the yellow metal. Their hunting grounds had been getting smaller and smaller, with fewer and fewer food animals. They had to find new grounds. To the west was a vast area still teeming with buffalo, deer, antelope, and other game, and it was still free from molestation by the whites. Only the Crows lived there, and they were not many.

Later that fall another council was called. It was here decided that all the bands of the great Dakota nation and the Cheyenne and Arapaho be invited to join Brave Wolf in a great undertaking. Teams of two men were selected as emissaries to all the other bands to participate in what they would describe as a grand venture to move into the good country of their traditional enemies, the Absarokee.

The emissaries did their work well during the winter. By the next May all the Dakota bands, the Cheyenne, and the Arapahos began coming to the designated place of gathering – the forks of Big Goose Creek and Little Goose Creek, where Sheridan, Wyoming, now stands. As the bands arrived and set up their tepees, the encampment grew larger and larger. It was said that camp criers had to change mounts several times before making a complete circle around the entire encampment. This was probably the largest gathering of Indians at any one time in North America. Sitting Bull's famously "large" camp on the Little Bighorn some sixteen years later would be lost from sight in this gigantic camp at the forks of Goose Creek.

In the meantime, scouts came back and reported that the Crow were camped in Pass Creek, only a half-day's ride to the north. The war chiefs of the bands of the Cheyenne and Arapaho allies quickly gathered in council. Time was of prime importance as their common enemy was moving away quite rapidly; their scouts had seen the big camp at Goose Creek. One by one the band chiefs spoke about the impending battle.

The Arapaho chief was asked to speak. He was tall and impressive in appearance. He said, "The Dakota people and their Cheyenne friends know me as Night Horse, Arapaho chief. Other tribes also know me. I fear no man of any enemy tribe. I am an Absarokee by birth, and I will not fight my own relatives. This is not Indian war you are planning. To destroy another tribe is wrong. I don't want any part of it. However, I give

permission to my warriors to stay and fight with you if they desire. You have heard me. Aho!”

That same day Night Horse broke camp and departed, heading for the Bighorn Mountains to the southwest. He quickly dispatched his two half-Crow sons to warn the Crow camp of the war expedition massed against them by thousands of Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapahos bent on destroying the whole Absarokee people.

In the meantime, the Crows broke camp rapidly and headed west. By evening they were camping by Rotten Grass Creek, a day's travel from Pass Creek, when Right Horse's sons arrived. Immediately they were surrounded by alert Crow warriors, but when one spoke some Crow words and said they were the sons of Night Horse, they were escorted to the lodge of the head chief. A Crow who could speak in the Arapaho language explained to the Crow chief and his elders that a huge army of Dakota and their Cheyenne allies were only a day's ride behind them. Night Horse's advice was that this small camp of Crows move away as fast as possible and join with other camps of Crow bands.

The chief listened, but others said, “We shouldn't listen to these sneaky Arapahos; they are up to some trick.” Or “We Crows are not all women, and we don't run away from the Dakotas,” and such remarks. Finally the head chief told the half-Crow messengers they would think over the information they had brought. A wise elder interrupted: “These

boys have ridden a long way; what they have told us must be true. Even our own scouts know about the big hostile camp. We must leave and travel fast.”

Tepees were taken down hastily, horses packed, and soon the Absarokee were on their way. The evening camp was set up on the west side of the Bighorn River. Horses were tied, equipment unpacked, and everything readied for a quick departure the next morning at daybreak.

While the Crow were making the fast march toward the Bighorn River, there was great activity in the camp at Goose Creek: Warriors busily packed their horses, women prepared packs of extra moccasins and pemmican snacks for their men, and boys played at being warriors. As the great horde of warriors started out, there was much gaiety. Wives sang farewell songs and shrilled encouragement, warriors whooped war cries, and old men sang songs of praise. At the head of the mighty procession was Brave Wolf himself, riding the prancing roan with his double-trailer war bonnet fluttering behind. He was indeed magnificent, the very image of a great Dakota warrior.

The Sioux storyteller recalled that many noncombatants joined the march, mainly wives and girlfriends of the warriors and many old and retired warriors who wanted to see the utter defeat of their traditional enemy. He said he decided to go, too. While he was taking the liberty of ‘borrowing’ his brother’s buffalo-hunting horse, his sister-in-law discovered him and scolded him harshly: “You leave that horse alone. With it your brother brings meat. You are not worthy of even toughing that horse!” He said he slunk away to get the only horse, a slow and lazy one, and followed the already departing

group. He went on to say that he was going mainly to look on and see the annihilation of the Absarokee. He added that he felt safe with so many good warriors around.

The advance scouts reported that the Crows were camped at the Bighorn River a short distance below the canyon. At once the head chiefs decided to attack the Crow camp, consisting of about four hundred lodges, at dawn the following morning, but at daybreak the Crows were gone, the campfires still smoldering. Here the chief in command mentioned his men to stop. He wanted to estimate the size of the Crow fighting force. He would allocated ten Sioux warriors, each armed with guns, to every Crow tepee site. Even after all the lodge sites had been allocated in that way, the remaining warriors were a larger group, all bearing guns, bows and arrows, spears, and tomahawks. At this the chief smiled and shouted, “Wssh-tay” (good), and the warriors let out a thundering war whoop that shook the nearby Bighorn Mountains! The chief shrilled, “Today when the sun sets, there will be no more Absarokee left! We will kill all their warriors and even the old men; we will save their young boys and raise them to become Dakota warriors, and we shall marry their wives and daughters to raise more warriors to fight the whites when they follow us to our new land.”

The commander quickly estimated, on the basis of three Crow warriors for each lodge, that the Absarokee were outnumbered at least twenty-five to one (twelve hundred Crows against eight to ten thousand Sioux and allied warriors.) It has been said that this was the first time in Sioux history that all the bands came together to wage war against a common

enemy. Moreover, it's never happened since. Not even Sitting Bull was able to muster so many warriors on the Little Bighorn sixteen years later.

When Joe Childs finished his smoke, he recalled that many times he and his father, Child in the Mouth, would sit at the same spot, and relive that glorious day in the history of the Crow Indians.

Joe Childs explained that when Night Horse's sons came and warned the Crows, the decision was made to hasten far into the interior of the Crow country where the other Mountain Crow camp was. At that time of early morning when "one can begin to see the lines in his palm," the four hundred lodges on the Bighorn were taken down and packed on horses. Soon the horses were in a fast trot. That evening the travelers reached Pryor Creek, about fifty miles to the west. At sunset the Crow were still very much alive. Their hostile pursuers couldn't catch up and had to wait another day to do what they had come out to do.

The events of the fateful following day began quickly and dramatically. At early dawn a Crow man named Hits Himself Over The Head was searching for his horses when he suddenly came up a hill to look over upon a seething mass of men and horses. The scene was one of bustling activity, as warriors got their war horses ready, put on their battle regalia, and were about to mount and charge down the hill toward the Crows. Hits Himself ducked out of sight and raced for the Crow camp. As he approached he hollered the warning call, and the head chiefs were already gathering to hear his report.

Immediately they dispatched ten gallant warriors to hold off the initial charge just long enough to set up battle lines and put up a fortress of tepee poles and covers, which the women were busy doing.

The ten men charged right into the enemy and fired into the ranks, killing a number of Sioux. As they swerved to return, thousands of warriors roared down the hills in hot pursuit, truly a thundering charge. And seen at its head was a warrior on a dark roan horse wearing a war bonnet with two streamers flying behind. As they approached the creek, the pursuers halted. Brave Wolf crossed the creek and headed directly to the first line of defense already set by the Crow war chiefs. But about halfway there Brave Wolf suddenly changed his mind and turned to flee. At this moment two Crows took pursuit. One noted for his accuracy with bow caught up with the Dakota warrior and sent an arrow into him. As he tumbled to the ground, the other Crow pursuer jumped off his horse, quickly scalped the fallen Brave Wolf, waving the trophy at the Sioux, and gestured that he would do the same to many of them that day.

Thus the long-awaited day for exterminating the Absarokee began. Suddenly the small valley exploded with war whoops, gunfire, and the thunder of thousands of horses' hooves beating the ground. The followers of the war party now sat in clusters here and there on a high escarpment near the battle scene. While some men smoked the pipe, the women sang victory songs and emitted shrills of encouragement to their fighting men below.

My storyteller, Joe Childs, now on his feet, launched into a lively and exciting description of the fight as if here were right there at the real battle! He pointed to an open flat area and said that was where the Crows had set up their first line of defense. Crow warriors noted for their fine marksmanship with guns and bows took a similar position nearby. As the enemy crossed the creek and charged, one of the veteran Crow chiefs gave a loud command, and the Crows opened a concerted fire with deadly results. Quickly the Dakotas regrouped and made another charge, again suffering heavy casualties. When this happened several times, the ferocity of the Sioux attackers dwindled, and the Crows commenced launching their own offensive charges.

It may be explained at this point that for this particular encounter – a clear life-or-death situation – the Crow war chiefs adopted the strategy of warriors working together as a team under the direction of a war chief; the traditional display of bravery, where individuals would charge into the enemy ranks trying to count coups by striking an enemy with a stick was put aside.

The repeated charges by the Dakotas suddenly stopped. The Crows waited and wondered. Then a wise Crow Indian decided to take advantage of the lull to try a bluff, hoping to instill fear into the attackers. He rode toward the enemy making the sign that he had something to say. This often happened in Plains Indians warfare. Through the intertribal sign language, he said: “You have come along way. By the size of your party against the Absarokee this day. You are not an ordinary war party this time Yes, the Raven People will fight you in a great way. Right now our two other bands are on their

way to help us. They will arrive soon, and then you will have a real fight on your hands. I have spoken, Aho!”

The truth was, no help was coming at all. But the bluff was quickly followed by strange happenings. As the Crow was returning to his ranks, the Sioux onlookers on the hill were on their feet pointing excitedly toward the north; then they waved frantically and shouted to their warriors below that a large war party was coming up the creek. At this moment it so happened that a large herd of elk had become excited by the noise of the battle and had started milling around. Their sharp hooves stirred a swirling cloud of dust. Their white rumps looked like war bonnets!

Again the ones on the hill hollered – another war party was fast approaching from the west. This time the warriors could plainly see a huge cloud of dust moving rapidly toward the battleground. This phenomenon was caused by a large herd of stampeding buffalo frightened by the noise of battle in the valley.

And now there was feverish excitement as groups of Dakota warriors milled around. The Sioux war chiefs quickly ordered a determined charge, hoping to dislodge the Crow defense lines before help arrived. Once again the lines held and inflicted heavy casualties.

At this time, a third strange thing took place. Now the Sioux saw a lone warrior riding hard from the hills to join the Crow defenders. He was mounted on a dark horse with

white markings on its flanks. His weapon was a two-pronged spear made of elk antler. Suddenly this mystic warrior hollered, “Kokohay! Kokohay!” and charged. He was followed by several Crow warriors. The man charged right into a group and began spearing Sioux warriors right and left. Other groups stood their ground and opened fire with many guns. Their shots were harmless; the man was invulnerable to bullets and arrows. He would circle and return, repeating the one-man onslaught. At this time the Crow ranks holding the defense lines broke loose into a full charge. The Sioux and their Cheyenne and Arapaho allies gave ground, before long breaking into a full retreat, with every man for himself. The strange Crow warrior was right behind them, shouting, Kokohay! Kokohay!” and continuing to wield his deadly spear.

Here I will digress and take up Charles Ten Bear’s Sioux version, as told by the one who tagged along on the slow horse just to watch the battle. This man explained to Ten Bear that just before the charge into Pryor Creek Valley, his brother handed him one of the two extra horses he had brought along. This horse was fast and long-winded. SO he decided to get into the battle about the time the Crows started to counterattack. He recalled that he decided to retreat as fast as his horse could run. Then the horse started to weave and to lose speed; soon he could see blood spattering from the horse’s mouth; then it rolled over, dead.

Now he was afoot and could hear, “Kokohay! Kokohay!” not far behind him. He thought he would surely die. But very fortunately he saw a Sioux horse trotting by, dragging the reins. He succeeded in catching the horse, which he recognized as the fastest and most

durable horse of the Sioux, and escaped. He joined a group and hastened back toward the big camp at the forks of Goose Creek. Whenever they stopped for a short rest in the dark, suddenly they would hear, "Kokohay! Kokohay!" Above them in the sky. On they would go.

The Sioux storyteller related to Charles Ten Bear that when his group reached the base camp on Goose Creek, already there was wailing throughout the camp. After two days of waiting, when no more warriors returned, the various bands dispersed. He said that his own band moved southward to Big Piney Creek, about a half-day's travel, and camped for the night. Camp criers cautioned the people to be alert. Not long after the campfires were put out, the silence was suddenly broken with Crow war whoops and gunfire. A rider (the Crow war chief Hillside) ran his horse through a Sioux lodge where a woman was in labor. The horse stepped on the woman and child, killing them instantly. No one slept that night. Early the following day the band fled toward the Black Hills and camped at Crazy Woman Creek, not far from the Powder River. Here again the camp criers warned everyone to stay inside the tepees after dark. But one old man had to go outside to relieve himself. While he was crouched, a colt looking for its mother came behind him quietly and nudged him with a wet nose. The poor old man screamed, collapsed, and died. He was the one hundredth casualty.

Charles Ten Bear's Sioux informant estimated that about one hundred Sioux and Cheyenne warriors failed to return from the land of the Absarokee. Many were killed by grizzly bears or drowned in the wide and swift Bighorn River.

After the era of intertribal warfare on the Plains – which ended with the battle of the Little Bighorn of June 1876 and with Chief Joseph’s surrender at the Bears Paw Mountains in 1877 – the Plains tribes would visit back and forth among the various Indian reservations. Indian agents would issue visitation passes. Here the tribal historians of the different tribes would exchange information and verify in detail all the facts pertaining to a particular battle. In this way many great Indian-to-Indian battles were recorded in the memories of the tribal historians and storytellers.

On one occasion, some Sioux came to visit the Crows. Among the inquiries, the visitors wanted to know the name of the ferocious warrior who almost single-handedly stampeded the Sioux and Cheyenne that day at Pryor Creek. The Crow historians, some of them veterans of the Pryor Creek battle themselves, could not recall such a warrior among the Crow that day. There was absolutely no recollection of such a person as described by the Sioux, even though the Sioux insisted that he had been there that day.

After hearing about the mystery warrior from the Sioux, Crow historians finally came up with an explanation. It was recalled that during the height of the Sioux attack, an old Crow woman came out of the fortification, walked to a point where she could see the enemy, stood, and prayed: “Old Man Coyote, teacher and benefactor of the Absarokee people, one day you made a promise. You said that after you had been gone from us for some time, if one day the people should be in great danger, that you would come back to

help us. You said that we should pray for your quick return. I now pray for you to come and help us survive this very day. Come, come!”

It was believed that the woman’s prayer was answered when Old Man Coyote, the Great Spirit’s helper to the Absarokee, suddenly appeared in the form of a special warrior and stampeded the enemy. It was also believed that it was Old Man Coyote’s help that caused the elk and buffalo herds to mill around, raising clouds of dust that looked like fast-approaching relief. Perhaps Night horse was right when he said to the chiefs at Goose Creek that the plan to exterminate another tribe, the Absarokee, was wrong and a bad thing.

Today this story is known by a few Crows. At one time, traditional storytellers kept the story alive. The Sioux and Cheyenne seldom, if ever, talked about the humiliating defeat at Pryor Creek. Their story has been almost completely lost in secrecy since that day in the 1860’s.

2. Joe Medicine Crow Interview

3. Barney Old Coyote Interview

Shot-in-the-Jaw as he was on his horse during the heat of the battle, other Crow warriors said to him, “isn’t that your brother being surrounded by swarms of Lakota.” And Shot-in-the-Jaw saw that it was his brother and he raced his horse fast and ran through the hordes of Lakota warriors and his brother jumped right on the back of his horse and both

Crows came out of their alive but Shot-in-the-Jaw had a bullet wound in his jaw, thus he was called Shot-in-the-Jaw.

Also during the battle, sweat-lodges were in use in intervals and 9-10-11 year old girls handed out cups of water to the Crow warriors on the battle front. The day of the battle was hot when it took place in August, 1861. Max-Pe (Spirit) was one of the young girls who handed out the cups of water to the warriors.

4. Grant Bull Tail, Interview

5. Irvin Stewart, Interview

6. Alias Goes Ahead, Interview

7. Pius Crooked Arm, Interview, Nov. 1999 (Elias Goes Ahead)

The Dakota and different tribes (Cheyenne and Arapaho) got together near present-day Sheridan Wyoming and they had a war-council and their plan was to invade the Crow country and once and for all wipe out the Crow except for their women, children and capture their ponies.

The Dakota and their allies moved right away towards Crow country. After a few nights camping as they moved closer to the Crows, there was a certain young man who was killed by the Crows. The parents of the slain son after each time the Dakota camp, they

would lead their son's horse (calico pinto roan) along with his folded war-costume on the horse's back throughout the village hoping that some warrior would accept the reins of the horse but no one seemed to dare accept it. This happened each day until one day a young man (Brave-Wolf) took the reins and would lead the invasion force. The invasion force camped along the way one night when the older brother of Brave-Wolf warned him that "the Crows are great fighters and they are going to chase some of you back as their ponies can run all day until they chase you down. I want you take my black horse, he can run all day, but the bay horse even though he is fast, he is short winded. You have a better chance of escaping with your life with the black horse." Brave-Wolf's older brother gave him a stern warning.

Later after the main force of the allies moved out, the brother of Brave-Wolf went to his lodge and found the long winded black horse had been left and Brave-Wolf had taken the short-winded red horse. The older brother spoke, "How foolish Brave-Wolf can be by not taking his black horse." He would say to himself and he quickly took the black horse and led it following the invasion force far away until he caught up with the invasion force and at the head of the large procession of the invaders he found Brave-Wolf and he hastily scolded Brave-Wolf by saying to him, "You are foolish and have no ears, I have told you not to take the red horse because he is short-winded but the black horse is long-winded and can run all day and the people you are heading into are great fighters and they will chase you. If they chase you, I want you to get a good head-start." The older brother then took the red horse back and handed him the black horse. The Dakota headmen spoke saying that "We are already on our way and why would Brave-Wolf's

brother take back the red horse.

Their words made Brave-Wolf angry; in the meantime the calico roan pinto with the war-costume on the saddle was being led in the evening by the family in the camp. Brave-Wolf asked to bring the calico paint to him and he put on the war-costume and the war-bonnet and got on the horse, with this action the Dakota women all shrilled in a loud voice to excite the invasion force and the men sang praise songs as Brave-Wolf whipped the horse into a gallop and executed a one-man sham battle in front of the crowd.

Then Brave-Wolf made one final gesture by grabbing the bridle of the black horse and took it off and slapped its face with his hands turning it away and told the crowd, “When some of you returned to the big camp on Goose Creek, tell my brother he can adopt the black horse as his brother.” The invasion force still moved on until they were getting nearer of the Crow camp.

Sits-in-the-Middle-of-the-Land of the Crows had for his medicine, “the white goose” and knew what was at hand and told his comrades and the camp to broaden the lodge around the camp because his (maxpe) medicine goose was worried and late last night the white goose flew from the rear of the camp honking above the camp. Sits-in-the-Middle-of-the-Land again warned the camp to widen the village area. He knew that the invasion force was right upon them as he got his horse and rode him early in the morning among the camp, shouting, “Our enemies are upon use this coming day and something bad is going to happen because my medicine (white goose) is nervously worried.” , “You men

are courageous, do not run back toward the lodges.” He rode throughout the camp shouting and repeating his words.

An old man (Hits-himself-over-the-Head) told the Crows my son went to fight the enemy and last night I dreamt he came back and I wish to go find him but the camp police soldiers told everyone not to leave camp because the enemy were already waiting to kill them. But the old man left the camp anyway on his horse and rode into the hills where some of the Dakota and Cheyenne attacked him and killed him instantly counting coup on him.

Then the Crows ran back to camp as the rider of the calico roan paint (Brave-Wolf) rode in front of the invasion force but the Crows confronted him and chased him and killed him and counted coup on him. The Crows who protected the fortification waited momentarily and then the great fight began. In the heat of the battle Crazy-Pend Oreille and One-who-Shoots, both of these men could not be shot. One-who-Shoots told his comrades, “I will ride in front of their lines and make them empty their guns and then the rest of you will follow behind and charge their lines.”

One-who-Shoots then opened his cinnamon-bear medicine to protect him and then rode in front of the enemy at full gallop as the enemy opened a heavy fire at close range. One-who-Shoots could not be shot as he got to the other end of the line and then the mounted Crow warrior force charged right into the thick of the Dakota Cheyenne and Arapaho lines before they could reload, knocking them off their horses and killing them with their

stone-clubs, crushing their skulls, pushing them back with such force that the invasion force were thrown back from the line.

After the alliance withstood their charge and reloaded, Crazy Pend' Orielle made his medicine of "Old Man Spirit" and made war-whoops of his medicine and he rode in front of the enemy making them shoot at him expending their guns and again the mounted Crows charged and pushed the Dakota and their allies back. Again the Dakota and their allies stopped and made another stand, reloading their guns. Another Crow, Tatoon- Face said it was his turn to ride among the enemy and make them use up their ammunition and again the mounted Crows killed more of the Dakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho with them scattered all over the field.

While the fighting was at its heaviest all along the lines between the creek and the fortification site, the camp sentinels / guards told the civilians (women and children) not to leave the perimeter but the grandmother of Big Medicine who was five years old at the time of the battle (and years later became the first Crow Indian policeman on the Crow Reservation) took her big red bay horse and rode westward when one of the camp-guards caught up with her and asked her where she was going and she replied, "I'm going to the Many Lodges to the west" and the camp-guard responded hastily, "Of course you're not going anywhere today", and he grabbed the reins of the big red horse and got his war club and hit the horse between its ears knocking the horse down causing Big-Medicine and his grandmother to fall and both rolled to the side screaming and hollering as they both ran back to the trenches at the fortification site.

Meanwhile after Tatoo-Face made his lone charge and made the enemy reload and again the Crows charged and killed more of them.

The Dakota and their allies retreated across Arrow Creek. There were so many horses crossing the creek that it dried up temporarily. There was a herd of elk that out of curiosity kicked up dust heading towards the battlefield. This led the Dakota and their allies to believe more Crows were coming to the aid of their brethren and causing groups of enemy warriors to retreat. The retreat turned into a desperate running fight for the Dakota and their allies.

The Crow heroes were the three (Tatoo-Face, Crazy-Pend d' Orille and One-who-Shoots) that gave the Crows a big victory over their bitter enemy the Dakota.

The fortifications of the lodges were close together tightly and the trenches were dug deep to solidify the protection of the women and children.

The Crow individuals and their medicine helpers were potent enough to withstand the superior numbers of the Dakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho on the battlefield.

The Crows always warn their warriors never to retreat back to their lodges in every battle or conflict. The lodge was sacred to the Crows and this is why if they retreated back to their camp, they would be defeated and overrun which in the case of the Arrow Creek

Battle this almost happened when the Dakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho reached the very doors of the fortification only to be turned back by the desperate counterattack of the Crows.

The red-pinto rider could not be seen by the Crows but the enemy could see this warrior. The Crows say he was among them helping fight the Dakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho. The Crow say he might've been He-that-Made-First-Things, or Old-man-Coyote. Again the Crow did not see him but they were sure he was visible to their enemies. He was a terrible force to be reckoned with against the Dakota and their allies.

The Late Hank Bull Chief Sr., Fred Turn's Back Sr., Harry Bull Shows Presently: Pius Crooked Arm

The Red Pony rider that watched over the Crow nation in times of war described in several versions especially after the great battle of "Arrow Creek" around the year 1862 10 miles north of Pryor, Montana.

According to a Lakota man named "The-Bear-That-Chases" who was just a little boy at the time of the battle would converse years later with an actual Crow warrior participant named, "Shot-in-the-Hand." In these conversations, the Bear-that-Chases describes based on information and stories from the Oglala warrior participants how this mystic warrior looked on the day of the battle. One description was his body was all red and he wore a buffalo horn cap and he was seen riding on a black horse and his weapon, a long staff with the tip a two pronged elk horn tips. The second description he rode a yellow pinto horse and a two tailed long war bonnet and a war shirt and carrying the same

weapon as described above. The third description he rode a grey horse and war shirt and again a two tailed long war bonnet and the same weapon. The fourth description was he rode a white horse and the same war shirt and again the two tailed war bonnet and the same weapon.

In the heat of the battle at Arrow Creek the red pinto rider would appear from the north end of the battlefield and hit the right flank of the Lakota battle line and knock over the horse riders or spear them and pull them off by grabbing their hair. The Crow warriors would say they could not see this Red Pinto rider but the Crow women and children could see him in the action and they would all shout and repeat the words “They are being driven away” “They are being driven away.” This is the moment when the Crow warriors make a counter charge and they would break their lines in half and force the alliance of Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe warriors to retreat in disorganized fashion and leave behind their dead. Some Crow men just see a zigzagging line of heat wave where ever the Red Pony rider went.

Even the thunder from the heavens would shoot down among the Alliance warriors and black smoke was seen by its hits on the ground from participants.

One Crow warrior whose medicine was the sacred arrow wrecked havoc on the Alliance warriors, this particular Crow ran out of arrows in the heat of battle near the Arrow Creek and he would simply blow into the palm of his hands and arrows would appear as fast as

he could draw them on his bow and he actually would shoot three arrows at a time at the coming Alliance horse riders.

8. Ralph Pete Goodluck, Interview

9. Hank Bull Chief, Interview, November, 1997 (Elias Goes Ahead)

Shot in the Hand was caught in the horde of Oglala, Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors but escaped with just his flintlock gun tied to his back and rode down a very steep hill to the bottom of the creek and rode further north and he attacked their front lines as he was hit in the head by a Lakota war club. He momentarily blacked out but stayed on his horse but found himself among the Oglalas as a dozen enemy warriors on horseback were almost upon him. He remembered his gun tied to his back and swung it over his shoulders and quickly shot at them, scattering the little pieces of iron scraps he shoved down the barrel of his flintlock gun. This method had a devastating result as the shot from Shot-in-the-Hand's gun killed a half-dozen men and horses.

10. Pretty-shield's account of her fathers participation in the battle of Arrow Creek: Interviews of Frank B. Linderman from Publication, "Pretty-shield Medicine Woman of the Crows", published 1932, University of Nebraska Press.

“And even though my father was a small man he was a great warrior. He looked like his medicine, the long-legged owl that lives with the prairie dogs. The Lacota and Cheyenne and Arapahoe came often to bother us. Many times they came together, so that they greatly outnumbered us. Our men were constantly fighting. They had to fight. Ahh, how our men did fight to hold our country against our enemies; and there were so many enemies of the Crows.

“One when the Lacota and Cheyenne came together against our village was on Arrow (Pryor) Creek. The odds were five to our one. There seemed to be little chance for the Crows, when my father rode through the village on the gray horse. He had stripped and painted his face and body yellow. Zigzagging through the yellow paint, lengthwise, there were shivery lines that were like those one sees dancing over hot fires on the plains when the air is clear. These lines made it difficult to see my father, who was singing his medicine-song: I am the bird among the prairie-dogs.”

“He gave the Crow war-cry, and then, armed with only his medicine, the stuffed skin of the long-legged owl, tied on his head, and his coup-stick, he rode out alone against the enemy. So strong was his medicine that the Lacota and Cheyenne could not stand against him. They opened, scattered, and then the Crows were upon them, winning a great victory, because of my father’s medicine, the long-legged owl that lives with the prairie-dogs.”

“There were several women with the enemy that time,” she went on. “When the Lacota

scattered and ran away one of the women fell off her horse. My father captured her, giving her, as a slave to his brother-in-law, Warm-robe. This woman's Crow name was Good-trader. She lived with Warm-robe and his woman and learned to love them. I liked this slave-woman and learned to love them. I liked this slave-woman very much. When she had a chance to get a man of her own she would not go with him until Warm-robe said, "yes." It was One-leg a good man, who took Good-trader as his woman; and they had several children. Finally, when there came peace between the Lacota and the Crows, Good-trader's Lacota man came here to get her. But she would not listen to him now." Pretty-shield chuckled. "She said, "Look at my lodge, and then think of your own. Go away from here" I remember how glad I felt when Good-trader spoke these words to her Lacota man, I liked her even more when I heard them.

VIII. General Account Facts In Agreement With Photographs and Maps

a. Bits of Crow History – Samuel Plain Feather discusses mystic warriors. Personal conversation with Elias Goes Ahead, Dec. 1, 2000

When the Crow camp of Mountain and River Crows were moving swiftly between Fort Smith and Tatoo creek near Arrow creek the Crows camped at a spot near Beauvis creek. At this camp area several Lakota scouts came upon the outskirts of the camp to spy on their numbers and weapons and such. Just below their point they had a view of a couple in the act of making love thus while the Lakota scouts tried to get a closer look the Crow man as he was finished with his wife slowly stood up and pulled a six-shooter from his warshirt and this gesture had prevented the Lakota scouts from attacking the Crow couple

during sex. The Lakota scouts were not surprised because they were well aware of the alertness of the Crow warriors even at a most inconvenient time as well. One Lakota Scout was satisfied because the Crow always were ready to do battle anytime and anywhere.

**b. The Supernatural & Devine Intervention Of the Battle Of Arrow Creek:
Unknown Author**

The oral history recollections of Crow elders of the supernatural relating to the battle are consistent with stories from the Lakota revealing what took place spiritually during that eventful day. Here are some of those spiritual events that were collected by Elias Goes Ahead.

The ten spirit horses that were given to Medicine Moon and Little Hawk by the Great Spirit were a brown pinto, black pinto, sorrel pinto, red pinto, yellow pinto, a whole colored black horse, a gray and a white horse. Two are unknown according to documents pertaining about the spirit hoses:

The Crow warriors could not see these two specter horsemen but the Crow women and children could identify them. Some of the Crow women during the Battle of Arrow Creek viewed one of the ghost riders as they peeked out under the trenches and saw this war chief decked out in a fine split tail-feathered war-bonnet and a Crow chieftain's war shirt riding on a gray horse. The Crow women could only see a blank face on the ghost

horseman. This was the moment when the enemy Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho were at the very foot of the lodge doors of the fortification or circling of the tipis of the Crows.

The late Fredrick Turns Back recollected a story from an old Crow Indian named Gets-Down who described one of the spirit horsemen on a white horse wearing a splendid split-tailed eagle feather war bonnet that touched the ground and had a lance with sharp elk horn tips that were forked at the end. This spirit horseman went among the hordes of Lakota and Cheyenne and would create a wave in front of him as he would viciously pierce them left and right creating havoc among the invaders. Another late elder named Harry Bull-Shows told of one of these specter horsemen coming from the north side of the battle line in the vicinity of the Joseph Buffalo Bull Tail residence riding a gray horse wearing a war bonnet and carrying a lance and attacking a force of Cheyenne horsemen and by grabbing their hair, pulling them off their horses and piercing them to the ground. According to the late Harry Bull-Shows, the Crow women and children would shout, “They are running, they are running.” When these spirit horsemen appeared and low and behold the enemy would be in retreat.

Grant Bull-Tail recalls that only signs the Crow warriors saw on the battlefield where these warriors appeared were heat waves zigzagging and moving along the enemy as Lakota and Cheyenne and Arapaho horse riders would fall off their steeds. Another late Crow elder, Hank Bull-Chief whose grandfather Shot-in-the-Hand, a warrior participant in this battle had a Lakota friend named The-Bear-That-Chases who could speak the Crow language who told Shot-in-the-Hand the description of the spirit horseman in which

the Lakota warriors witnessed that day. The Bear-That-Chases described from the participants the spirit warrior that appeared among them rode a coal black horse and the war-chief himself had his body painted red all over and wore a buffalo-horned cap on his head and carrying the elf-horn tipped lance and thrashing invaders endlessly. To the Lakota this coal black horse and the red rider were invulnerable to bullets and arrows. The red pinto and the sorrel pinto horse hiders were all over the battlefield and according the late Vincent Goes Ahead Sr. sometimes the enemy would see a yellow pinto then a black pinto to a bay pinto horse rider. Soon little bunches of Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho would disappear running away from the field of battle in fear of these spectre warriors.

Sometimes the enemy saw a splendid split-tail war-bonnet touching the ground from the riders ahead and wearing a red cape riding a gray or white horse on one end of the Crow line and the other end a rider on a brown or red pinto horse. Some of the spirit horses had their tails tied up and according to the Lakota they were extremely colorful with their spirit riders decked out in full war-costume regalia. Even to this day, elders from Arrow Creek at the turn of the nineteenth century recalled their memories of seeing these spirit horsemen at this famous battle site anytime of the day. The elders say they would see either the white horse or the gray horse rider. Another Crow lady named Shirleen Big-Hail Glen recalled how her elders used to tell her about the meadowlark and chickadee and how they would keep pestering the two little Crow boys while they were in Shoshone captivity and tell these two that they were Apsalooka and not Shoshone and then fly off. Bernadine Bad-Bear remembers her elders telling her these spirit horsemen riders were

sacred pipe carriers and they led many a war party against enemies and before they had moved on to the Spirit World that when the Apsalooka were ever in dire need of divine intervention and that if they were to be called upon they would surely appear to assist the Apsalooka.

At the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty, the Crow delegation under Chief Black-Foot sat down with the Sioux delegation and after they had smoked the pipe the Crows were asked what man rode the beautiful brown pinto and fought wonderfully? The Crows responded to the question by telling the Sioux that no such Crow rode a brown pinto at the Battle of Arrow Creek that day. The Sioux delegation remembered how they admired the brown pinto rider and how their bullets and arrows could not hit this spectre horseman.

The late Crow elder Vincent Goes-Ahead Sr. told one story of the passing of the buffalo days and into the reservation era when many old timers gathered together in North Dakota where the sister tribe of the Crows, the Hidatsa and Mandan lived, shared many stories together. A group of Sioux Indians was there and they sat down with the Crows and soon war-records were the main discussion. The spirit horsemen were inquired about and again the Crows did not have an answer as to who were these ghost warriors.

The Crows could only explain that these spirit-warriors would appear at desperate times when they were surrounded by insurmountable odds.

The other supernatural events that took place during the battle was that in the heat of the

battle and the Lakota and Cheyenne fiercely charging against the Crows, the thunder from a cloudless sky would bolt down among the enemy throwing riders off their horses as hot blue smoke would bellow from the ground where it was hit.

A Crow warrior whose medicine was the sacred arrows was seen by the creek holding off the enemy, as there was much fighting around him. This Crow shot his arrows off till he had exhausted all his arms when the enemy saw that they could move in on him he quickly blew into the palm of his hand and three arrows would appear so that in this way he shot off three arrows at the time. The Lakota were pushed back by this lone archer for a time as three arrows found targets at close range when finally a Lakota horse rider got behind the Crow archer and with a rawhide lariat looped the neck of the Crow and dragged him down. Other Lakota warriors quickly roped the wrists and ankles of this Crow warrior and stretched him four ways till he was torn apart muscle to socket. This lone Crow did much damage to the enemy before he was killed.

c. Greatest thing that happened to the Crows with the aid of Bull Goes Hunting's Medicine Rock (Unknown Author)

The greatest event in the career of Bull Goes Hunting with the aid of his medicine rock was manifested publicly in the following story: The Sioux, the Cheyenne, and the Arapaho banded together and gave smoke to one another, saying "Let us cooperate and clean up on the Crows". Let us kill all the men folks, and divide the women and children and the horses among us. We are composed of three large tribes, we could easily defeat them. While the large camp of the Crows was on the flat near a creek flowing from the mountains, (Near where Packs The Hat's place is now) the combined forces of the Sioux,

the Cheyenne, and the Arapaho was concentrated on the Tongue River near the big mountains (in Wyoming). The three tribes reviewed their warriors arrayed in their best war costumes, and mounted on war decorated ponies; putting on a sham battle. They were entirely satisfied that in the next morning, they would clean up on the Crows. There was an Arapaho who was a dear friend to some of the Crow men, stealthily got away from his fellow tribesmen, and disclosed to the Crows what the three tribes were plotting to do within the next few days. The lone Arapaho rider was espied by Crow spies who took him to the Crow camp where he disclosed the arrangements of the three tribes. The Arapaho friend told the Crows that the three tribes have planned to clean up on the Crows by killing all the men, and divide all the women, children, and the horses among them. This is why I have come in order to give you a chance to get away. So move quickly, leaving all heavy articles behind. Get away as far as you can before they overtake you. Accordingly, the Crows moved their camp to that other side of the "Big Horned Sheep River", (Big Horn River, in the Crow Reservation) below the confluence of the Grapevine creek into the Big Horn River, nestled near to where there was lots of cotton trees. Upon the flat, the Crows displayed their abilities in war stunts in a sham battle, and the ponies were trained to know or to get accustomed to the noise of battle, etc. The Crows moved from this place and camped in the vicinity of the headwaters of the creeks now called East Pryor and Hay creek. Close to where Painted Lips and Long Foretops places are now located. When the combined forces of the Sioux, the Cheyenne, and Arapaho arrived at the camping place of the Crows on the Big Horn, they selected a few men to get together and advise them. These men heralded the following announcement; "There could not be over four men of fighting ability to every Crow

tepee. Let us stand ten men to every campfire left by the Crows. When they did this, there was still a great number left over which was proof that they greatly out-numbered the Crows, they let out great loud yells, dancing and showing their war-ornaments that were tied to a stick or to the end of their guns. They assembled and said; "Tomorrow, we will get together and wipe out the Crows".

Little Nest's father suggested that the rocks on the other side of the "Elk River" where there are rocks, (Yellowstone River and the place where Billings is now located), would be a good place to withstand big odds against us. The Crows moved very early in the morning, but the enemy moved at the same time that they were within eye stance before they were gone very far. So the Crow had to rapidly pitch their tepees below where the East Pryor Creek empties into the main Pryor Creek. They had all the tepees put up very close together to for a circular barrage. All good horses for rely were kept within the tepee barrage for instant use. All the women and children with disabled old men were told not to leave the camp. All warriors were warned to not go back to camp, but to fight his best. Some strong men went to a higher ground close by and made preparations for entrenchments. (These could be seen even today). The older warriors kept encouraging the younger men to be brave and to do their best to save the entire tribe. To keep the faith of their medicine ornaments; and to run the enemy back without fail. Voices would ring out that our enemies have cooperated and intend to clean up on us, be brave.

One part of the enemy advanced near the foot of the mountains. The other part of the enemy followed the creek down to its confluence with the main creek. (East Pryor

Creek). Some of the Crow warriors met the vanguard of the enemy near the mountains, and killed their leader (medicine man). This confused them and scared them so that they got away in every direction through the rolling country. The lower part of the enemy warriors was met and a great many of their warriors were killed. This site is known as “Where all the 4 tepees were used” When the rider of the calico-roan horse was killed, the enemies were confounded, and gradually fled back, escaping with their lives and horses. The best feats were displayed by the Crow medicine men which routed the enemies back to their camp on the Big Horn River. There was no further attempt to clean up on the Crows by this overwhelming force. At this particular time, Bull goes Hunting’s medicine rock’s presence had much to do in directing and guarding the skill of the men in war. If it wasn’t for this medicine rock, the remnant of the Crows after a small pox epidemic, or after such a battle as this one, would not have increased so well. Afterwards these enemies met the Crows on Sweetgrass and made friends by shaking hands, and by smoking the pipe of Peace. This ended war between these tribes forever.

IX. General Account Fact with Differences

X. Extensive Archeology Survey Results

XI. Audio Disks and Tapes

Appendix A: Arrow Creek Participants

a. Crow Participants

1. White-on-the-Edge (White-Head): An old Crow medicine man was chosen to be the pipe carrier over the two other chiefs (Blackfoot and Iron-Bull) to lead the Mountain

and River Crows. The Teton Lakota, Northern Cheyenne and Northern Arapaho gathered together in one large camp at Goose creek (Sheridan, Wyoming) and planned to wipe out the Crow nation in one battle. The Crows disputed among themselves as to who would lead them against the invasion force of Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho at their camp on upper Lodge Grass creek. Chief Blackfoot was not popular among the Crow warriors and Iron-Bull whose medicine was not powerful enough to lead the Crows and thus White-on-the-Edge who had proven himself as a medicine man was chosen.

2. Blackfoot (Sits-in-the-middle-of-the-Land): A Mountain Crow chief whose medicine was the white goose. He was one of the key leaders during the Arrow Creek fight against the Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho.

3. Iron Bull: Another Mountain Crow chief who served as one of the prominent leaders during the Arrow Creek fight.

4. Wolf-lies-Down: This Crow warrior charged into the hordes of Lakota warriors and saved his brother-in-law (One Feather) who had lost his horse and was completely surrounded by the enemy when Wolf-Lies-Down broke through their lines and got One Feather by the arm and threw him on his horse and both rode back to the Crow defense line. Wolf-lies-Down was wounded on the head but survived.

5. One-Feather: A Crow warrior who was rescued by his brother, Wolf-lies-Down during the Arrow Creek fight.

6. Crazy-Head: A Crow warrior who was shot in the stomach when he charged among the enemy but he would survive also in this great battle.

7. Crazy Pen D'Orille: This Crow warrior sang his medicine song and told the other Crow warriors to wait until he ran in front of their lines and made them fire their guns until they had to reload and then yelled at the Crows to charge right into their lines while the Lakota tried to reload their guns. This was an effective strategy especially around the Arrow Creek area.

8. Crazy-sister-in-Law: A Crow warrior who would paint himself up yellow and red zigzag lines on his body and charged among the Lakota and knocked down enemy warriors on foot.

9. One-who-Shoots: This Crow warrior like Crazy Pen D'Orille would dash in front of the alliance of enemy warriors and make them spend their powder and bullets while the mounted Crow riders would again push the enemy back across Arrow creek while they tried to reload. One Who Shoots and Crazy Pen D'Orille would ride on the side of their ponies while running in front of their line of fire.

10. Fringe-on-his-Face: This Crow warrior also rode on the side of his mount while running in front of the Lakota shooters singing his medicine song and made them spend powder and bullets. Bullets and arrow would go through their horses and bodies like they

were going through fire while there was much powder smoke burns on them yet they were not wounded.

11. Pretty-Eagle: A teenage Crow Indian who tried to join the other young teenage boys and men to fight the Teton Lakota when they were at the door of the circled tipis on Arrow Creek. The fox hole pits within the tipis was where the women and children were kept and the

12. Pretty-Shield's Father

13. Max-Pe:

14. Winking-Eye: A River Crow chief at the battle of Arrow Creek.

15. Bull-Chief: A Crow Camp Crier

16. Bulls-goes-Hunting: (Image available)

17. White-Bear:

18. Wolf-Head: River Crow warrior and an exceptional marksman

19. Bear-Cap: Counted coup on Brave-Wolf, a Sioux leader at the battle of Arrow Creek.

20. Shot-in-the-Hand

21. High Swallow

22. His-horse-is-Spotted

23. White-Chest: A Crow warrior who was surrounded and killed up on the hilltop. They came down upon the three warriors

24. Fights-Crazy

25. Arm-around-the-Neck

26. Nephew of Shot-in-the-Hand: Counted coup on Brave-Wolf

27. Bull-Tongue: A Crow warrior whose medicine was the hawk as well as the buffalo-bull. (Image Available)

28. Bull-Nose: A River Crow chief

29. Hunts-to-Die: Image available

30. Across-the-Banks:

31. Cuts-Turnip:

32. Man-whose-heart-is-Black

33. Two-Face:

34. Big-Medicine: He was a five year old child at the time of the Battle of Arrow creek.

35. Child Child-in-the-Mouth: Crow warrior, present at the battle of Arrow Creek.

This warrior recounted his version of the battle to the Crow Historian, Joe Childs in 1935

b. Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho Participants

1. Brave-Wolf:

2. He-Dog:

3. Bear-that-Chases: Lakota warrior who described the Crow spirit warriors in the battle of Arrow Creek.

4. High-Backbone:

5. Poor Elk:

6. Limpey:

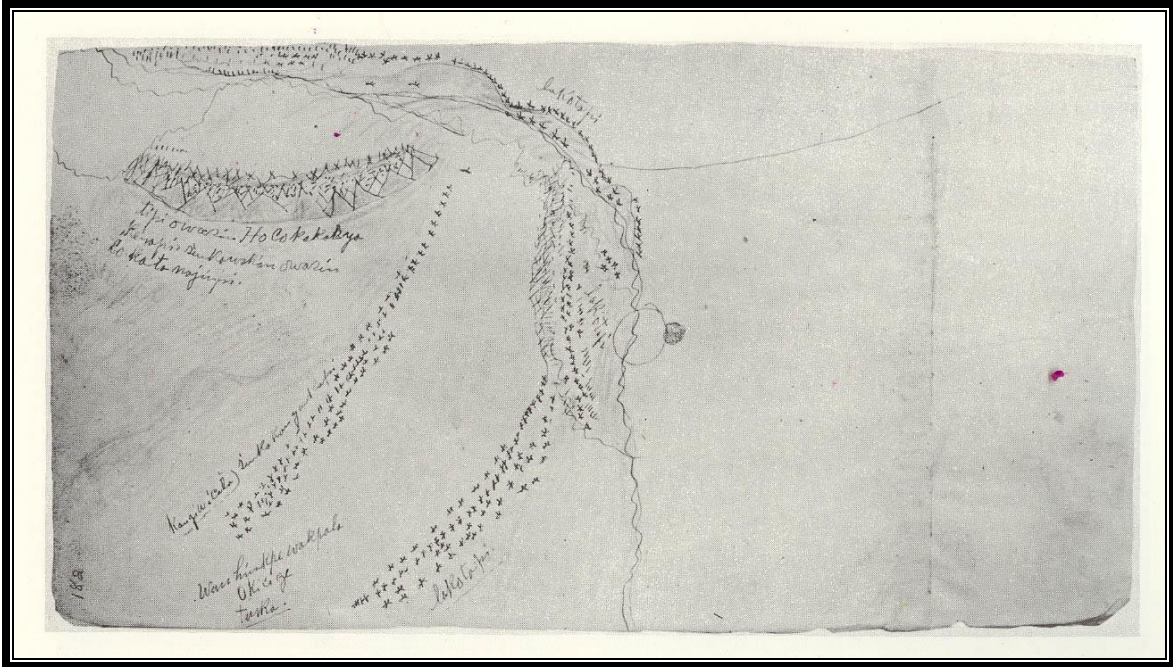
7. Fast-Elk: An Oglala Sioux, born in 1838. He fought in four great battles with other tribes, and participated in the Fetterman massacre in 1866. He counted coup once in a fight with Apsaroke, when their village on Pryor creek was surrounded by the Sioux.

8. Shield: (Oglala, Photo available Curtis Collection)

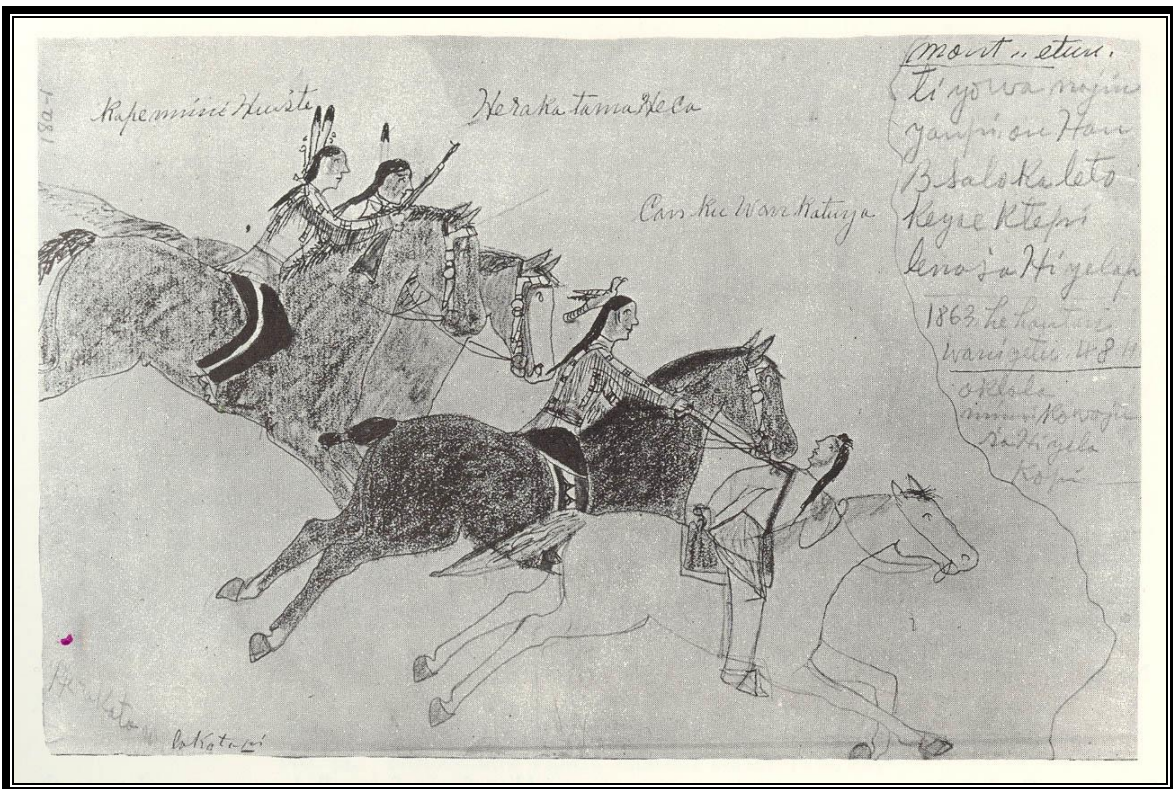
9. Struck By Crow: Oglala. At eleven he accompanied a party against the Apsaroke, the ordeal in which Fast Thunder served as a warrior (Arrow Creek).

10. Man Afraid of His Horses:

Appendix B: Images and Photographs



First Arrow Creek Fight - Amos Bad Heart Bull No. 41: This fight is also known to the Oglala Sioux as “Defending the Tent” (Tiyonajin Wicayapi) since the Crow set up their lodges as barricade and thus defended their camp. A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux



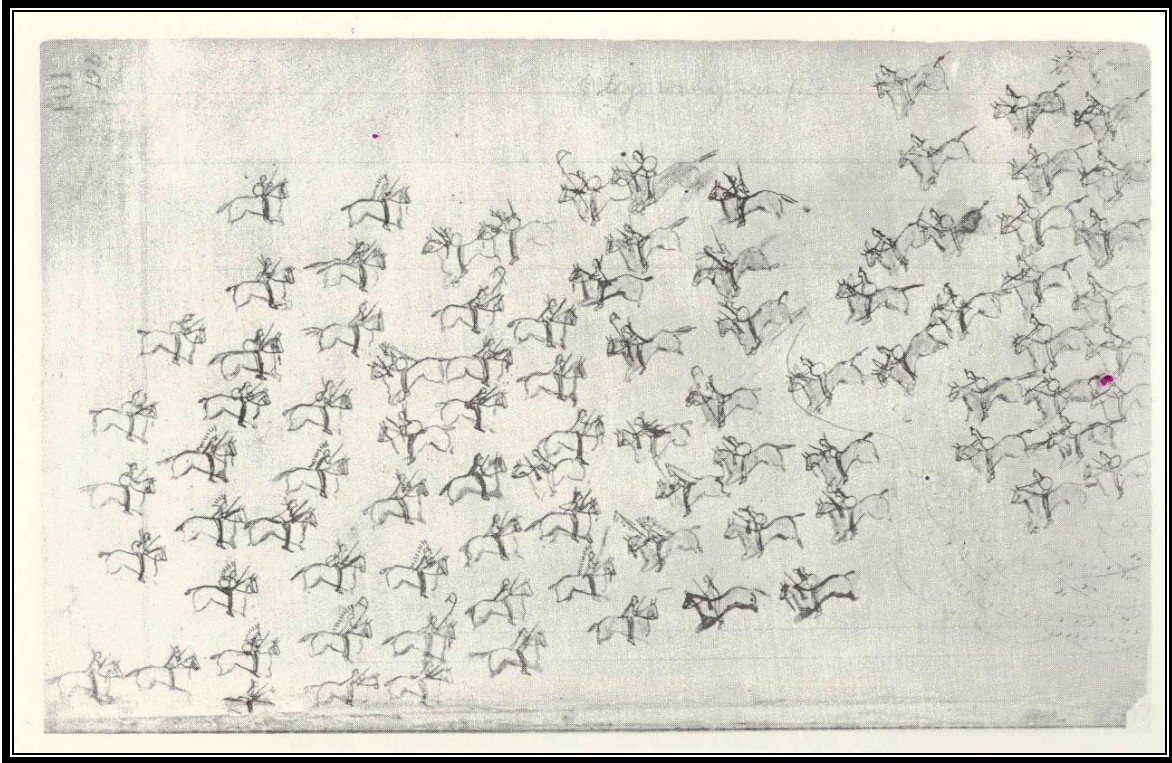
First Arrow Creek Fight - Amos Bad Heart Bull No. 42: Three Cheyenne warriors pursuing a single Crow. The foremost Cheyenne (seen in the act of counting coup upon the unfortunate Crow) is High Back Bone (Canku Wankatuya); the second is Poor Elk (Heraka Tama Heca); and the third, Swinging Lane, or Limping (Kapemini Huste). The stuffed bird (a blue hawk) worn by High Back Bone is his personal charm (wotawe). The three names here given are the same as those of three prominent Dakota warriors who are mentioned elsewhere in the Bad Heart Bull manuscript, but these are Cheyenne allies. A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux



First Arrow Creek Fight - Amos Bad Heart Bull No. 43: Brave Wolf (Sunkmanitu Ohitika, a Cheyenne warrior is brought in pierced by arrows. He fell in midstream on his dash back toward his own lines. His comrades rushed to his rescue but he was dead. A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux

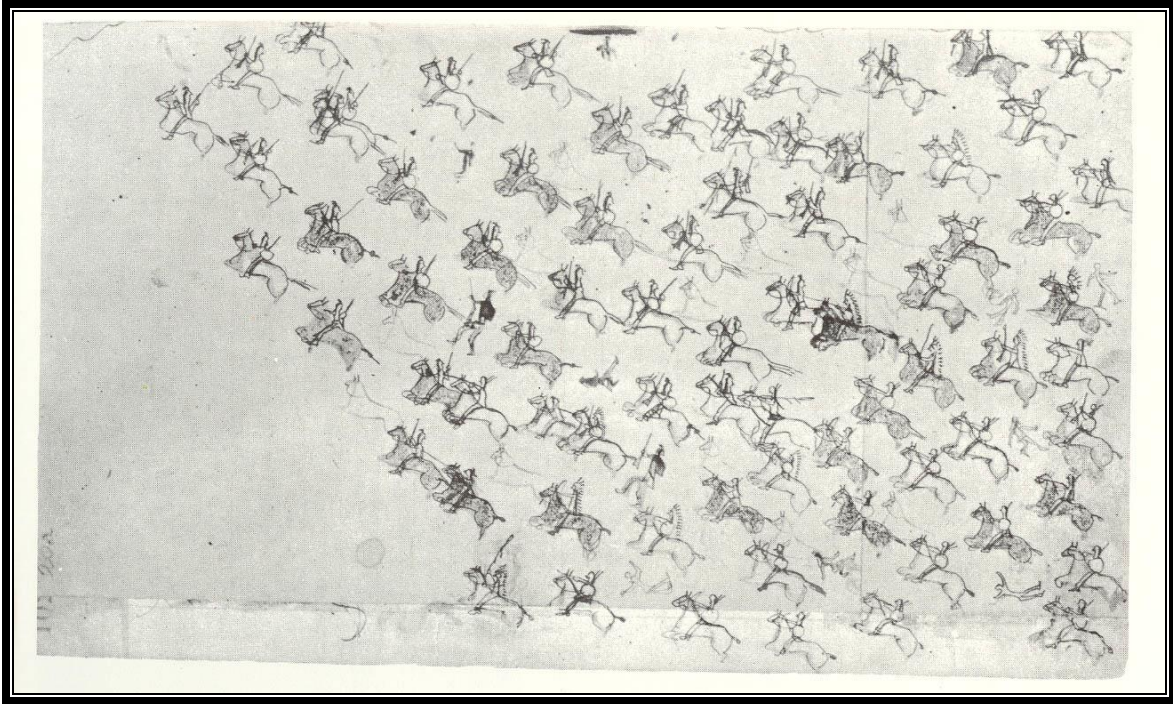


First Arrow Creek Fight - Amos Bad Heart Bull No. 44: This image shows Brave Wolf riding toward the Crows. He Dog said he saw him thus and then saw him come back covered with Crow arrows. *A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux*

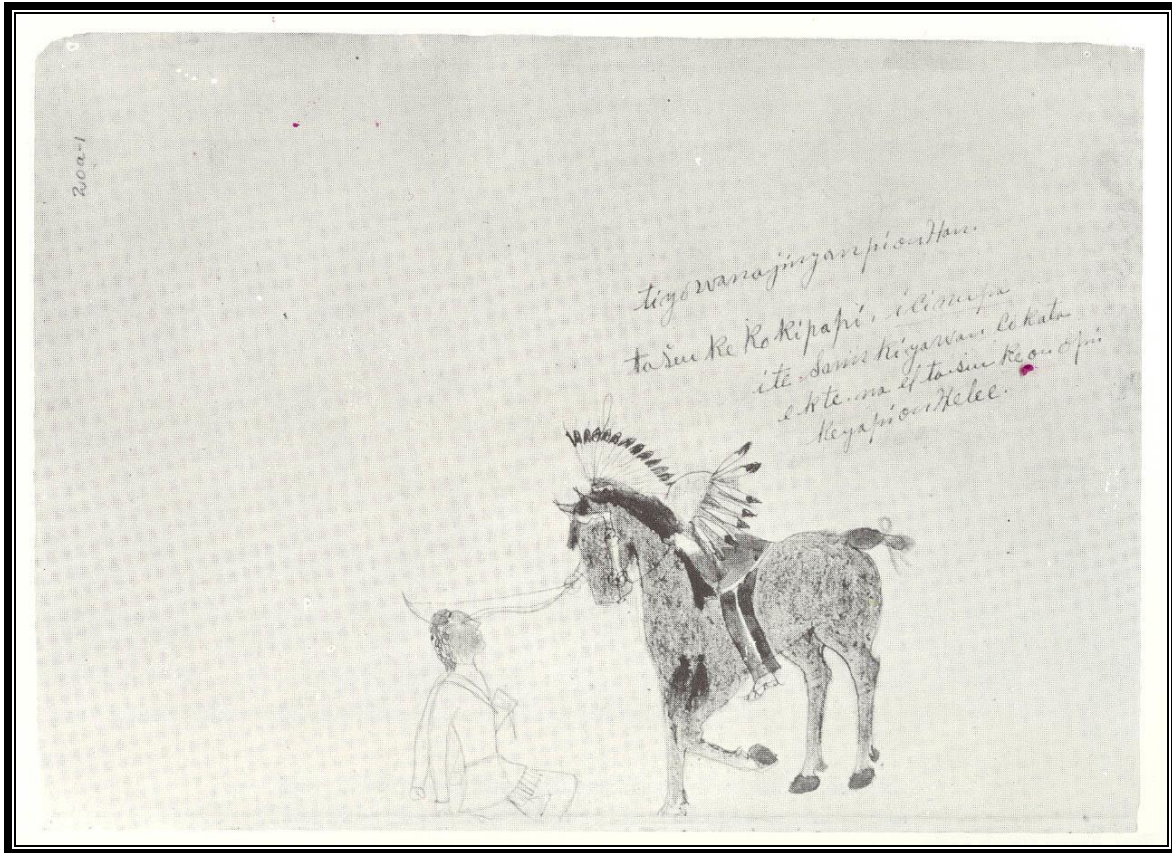


First Arrow Creek Fight - Amos Bad Heart Bull No. 45: This image portrays the Dakotas and Crows opposed, the Crows turning back the foremost Sioux. This is the moment when the Dakotas have driven the Crows to their very doors, only to be stopped.

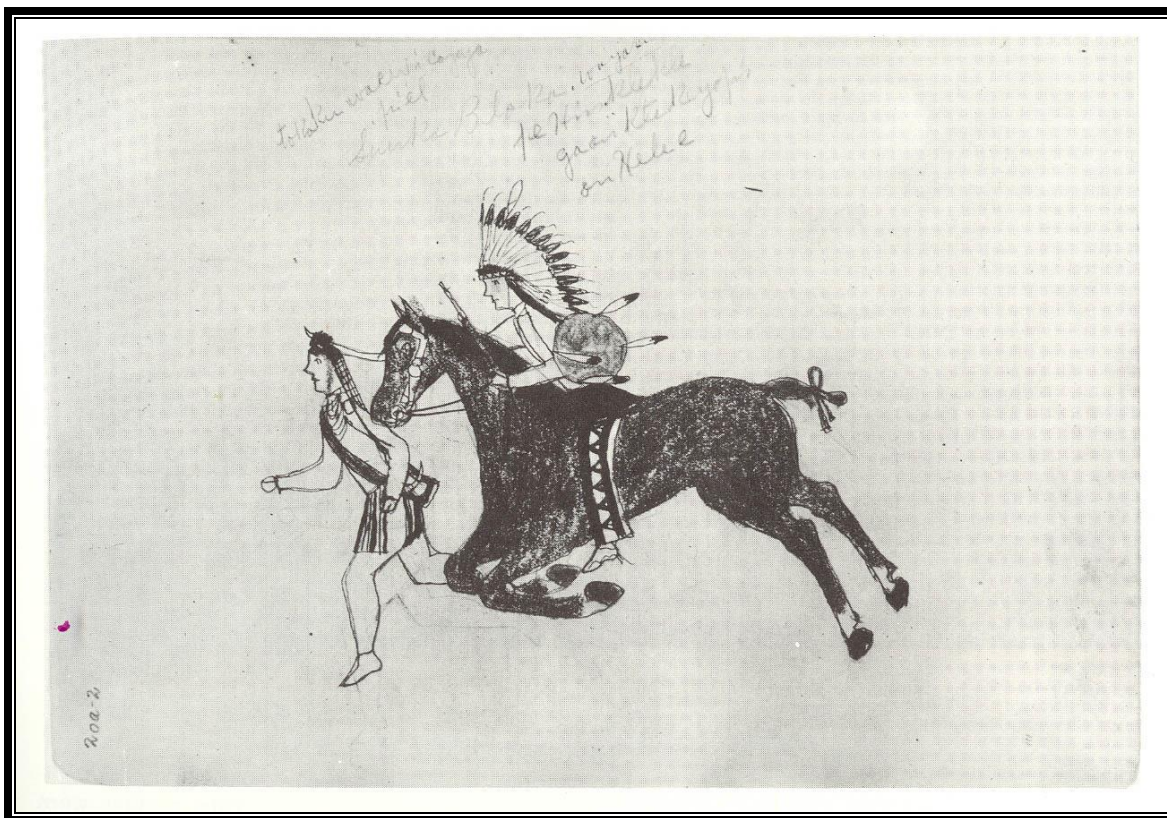
A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux



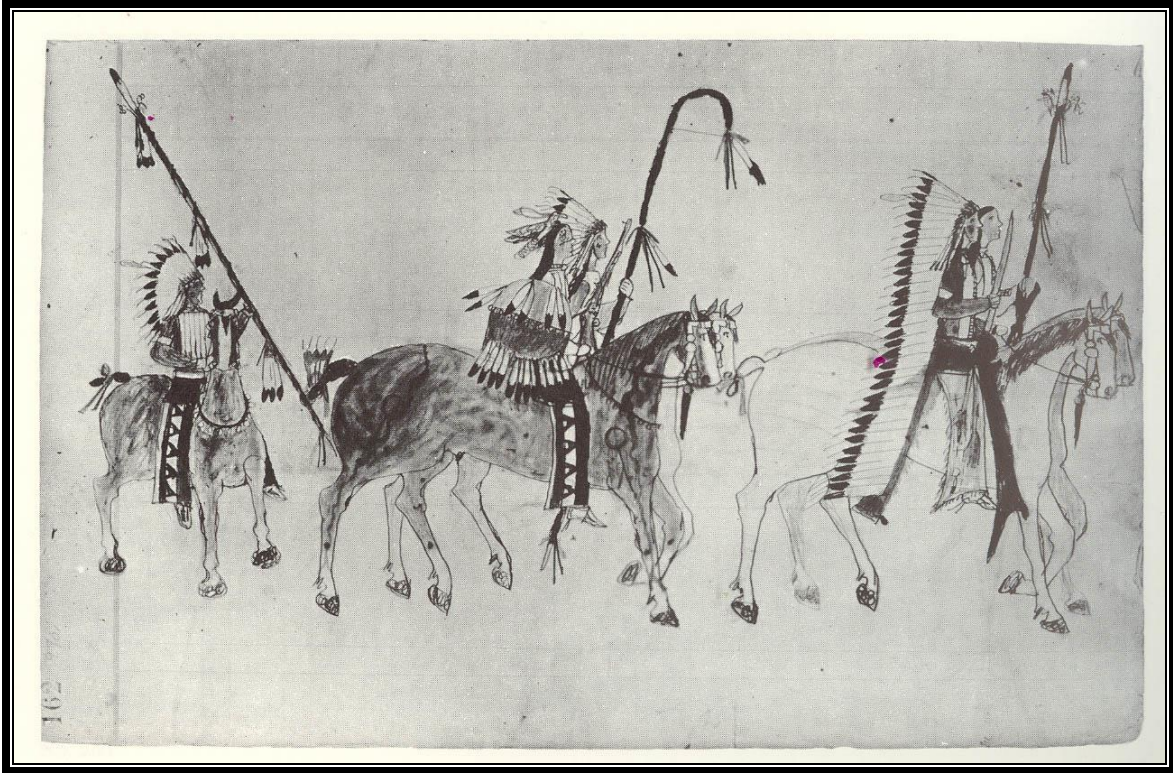
First Arrow Creek Fight - Amos Bad Heart Bull No. 46: This image portrays one of the Sioux charges in which they had the advantage over the Crows. A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux



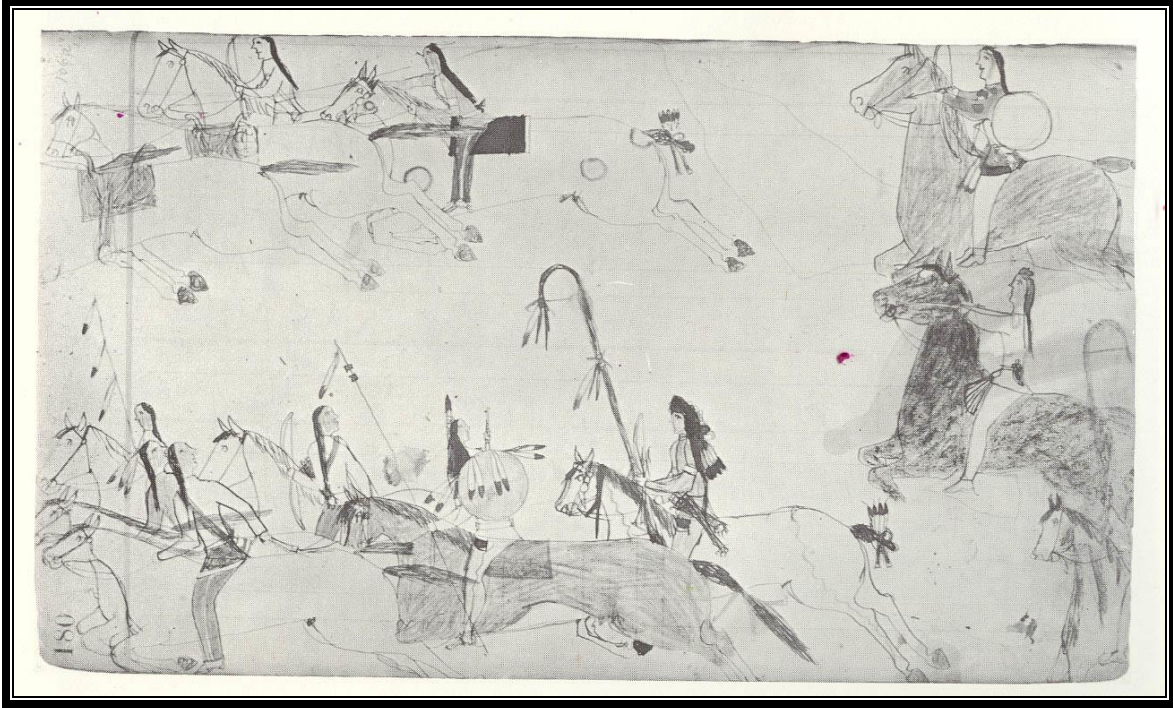
First Arrow Creek Fight - Amos Bad Heart Bull No. 47: Young Man Afraid of His Horses killed, at the camp one who had his face painted black. His horse was wounded. A few days before the battle a party of Crows had successfully attacked a party of Cheyenne and Arapahos. The black paint on the face of the Crow here pictured was a sign of victory. This warrior was one of the members of the party that had done much killing. During the fight he was killed in one of the charges on the Crow camp. A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux



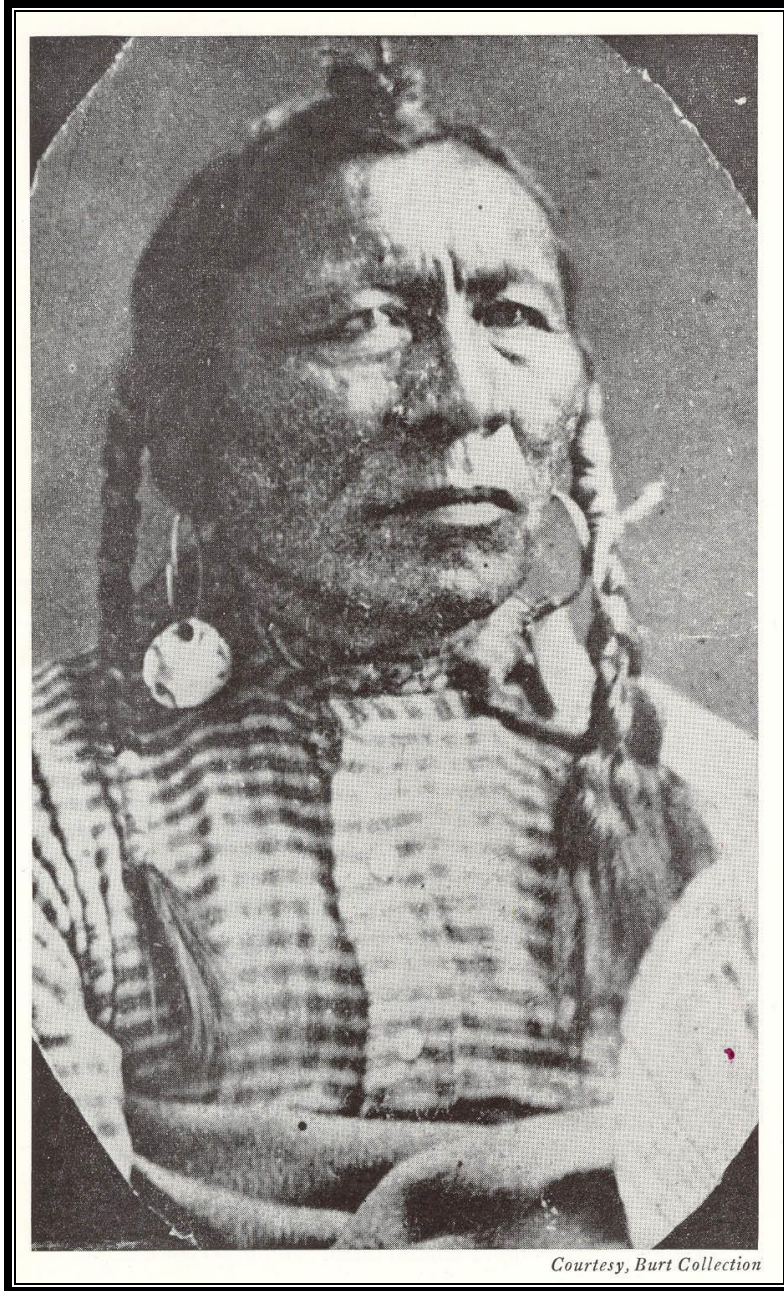
First Arrow Creek Fight - Amos Bad Heart Bull No. 48: He Dog (Sunka Bloka) killed a Crow with spotted hair. He Dog stated that this Crow was unusually richly arrayed. From the Crow's horse he secured a silver-mounted bit, and from the man himself a good war bonnet, a shield with eagle feathers, a sword (slightly bent!) – very likely the one with which he is counting coup upon him – and other less important bits of accoutrements. A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux



Amos Bad Heart Bull No. 202: This is a photo of a party of Sioux warriors around the time of the battle of Arrow Creek. A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux



Amos Bad Heart Bull No. 220: This image depicts a group of Sioux warriors fleeing from the Crows. A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux

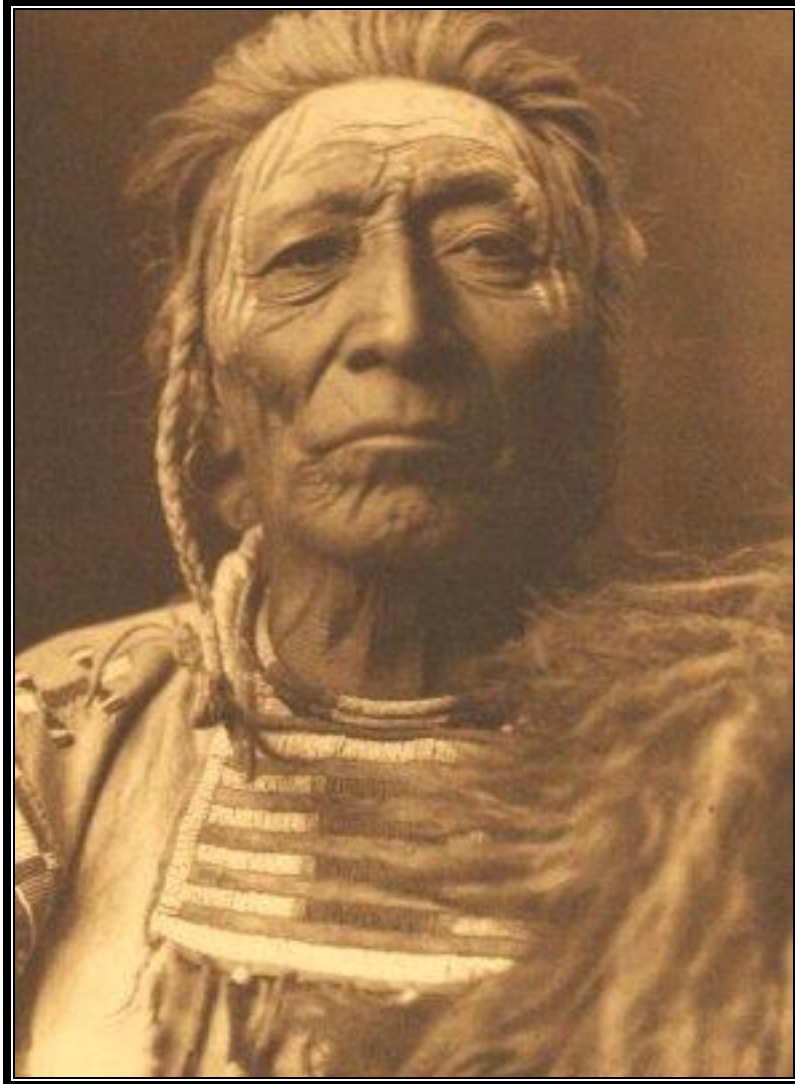


Courtesy, Burt Collection

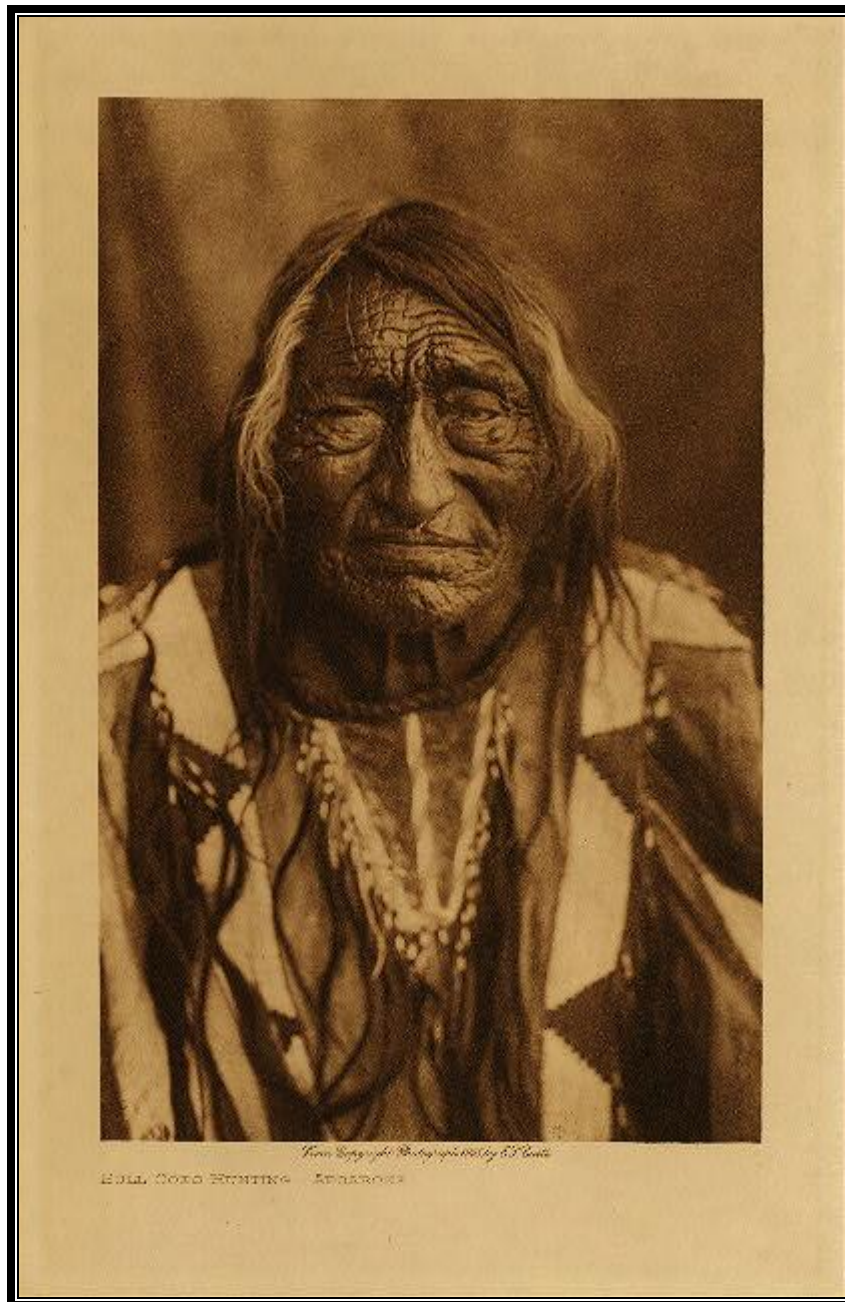
This image is of the Crow Chief Iron Bull, Courtesy, Burt Collection.



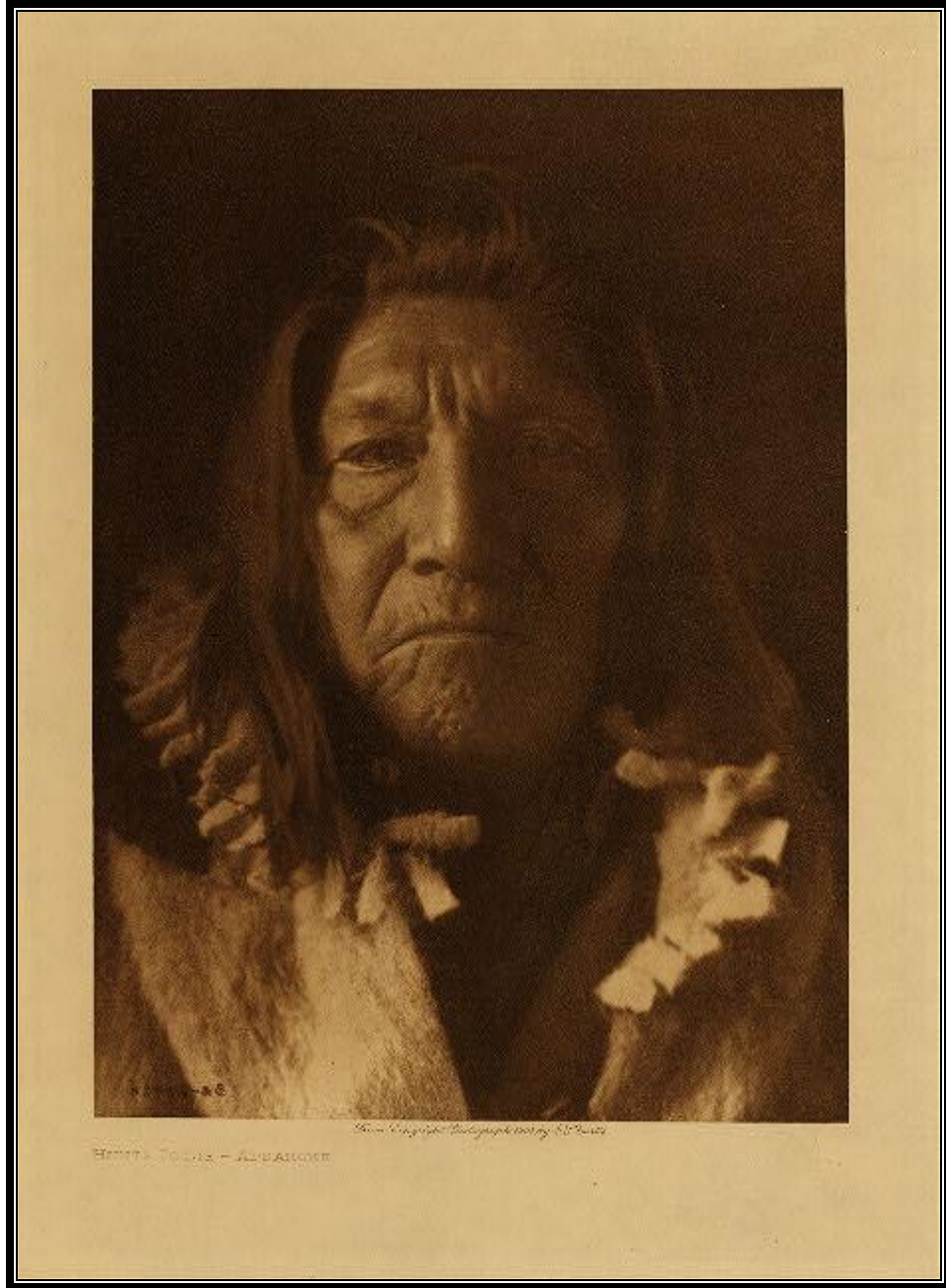
Crow Indians at Fort Laramie: Dr. Mathews, Mountain Tail, Blackfoot, Pounded Meat, Winking Eye, White Fawn, White Horse, Poor Elk Shot in the Jaw, Pretty Young Bull. Courtesy, E.E. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library.



Bull Tongue: A Crow warrior at the Battle of Arrow Creek.
Coutesy: Edward S. Curtis Collection



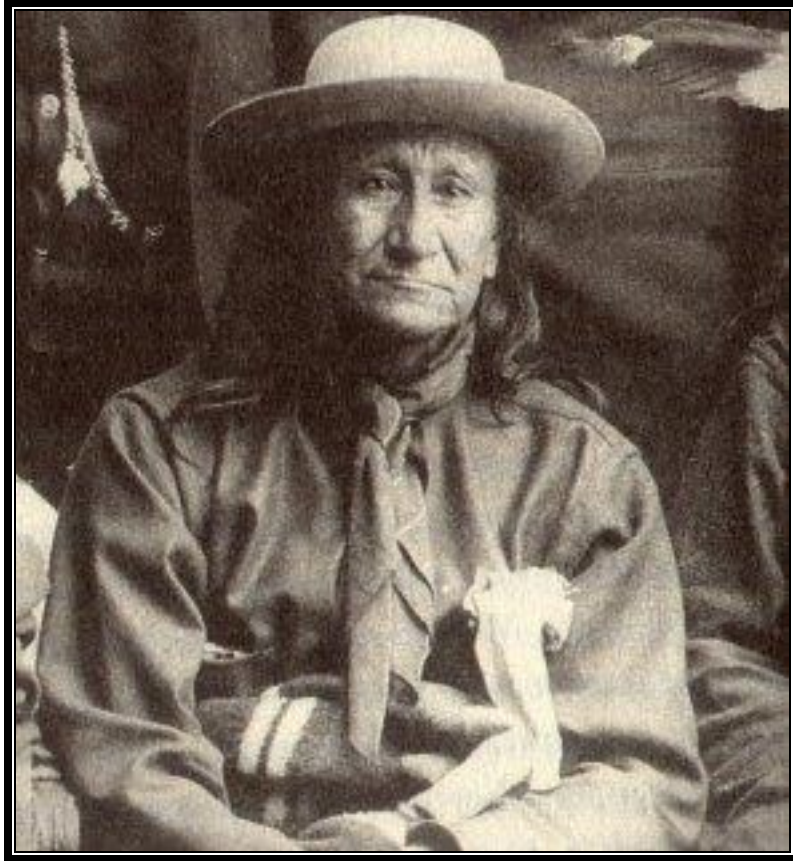
Bull Goes Hunting: A Crow warrior present at the Battle of Arrow Creek. Courtesy: Edward S. Curtis Collection



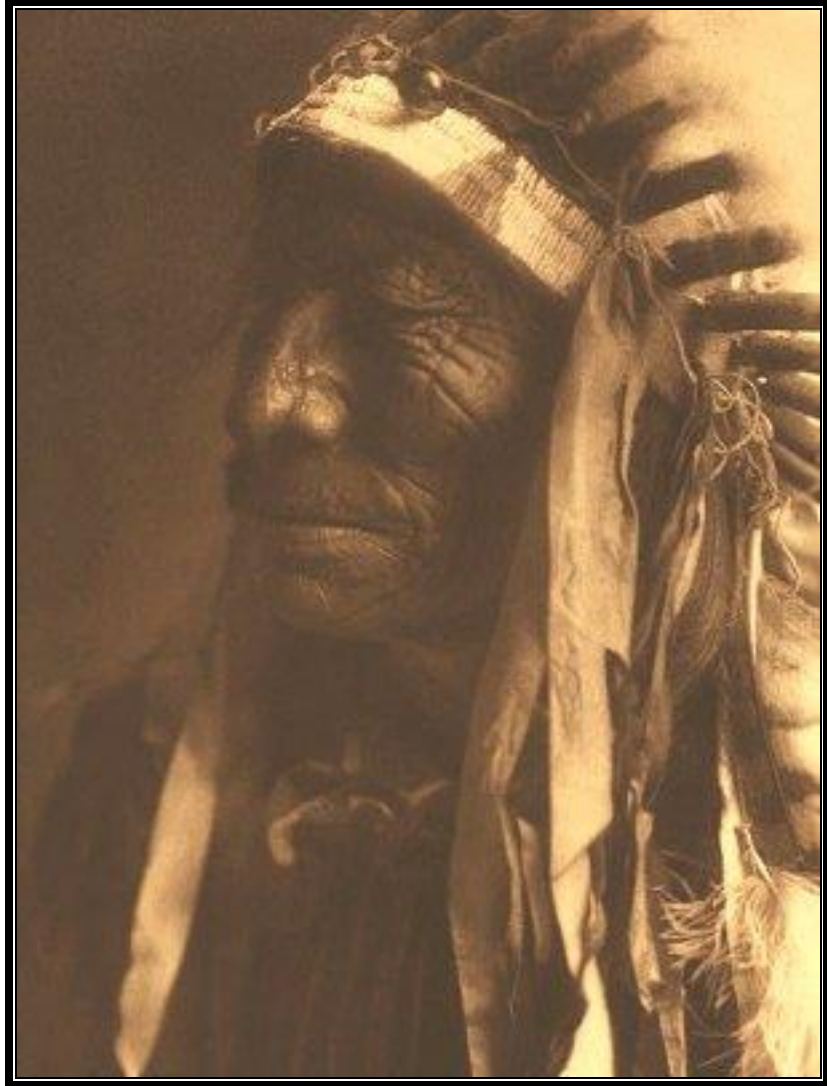
Hunts To Die: A Crow warrior at the Battle of Arrow Creek. Courtesy: Edward S. Curtis Collection



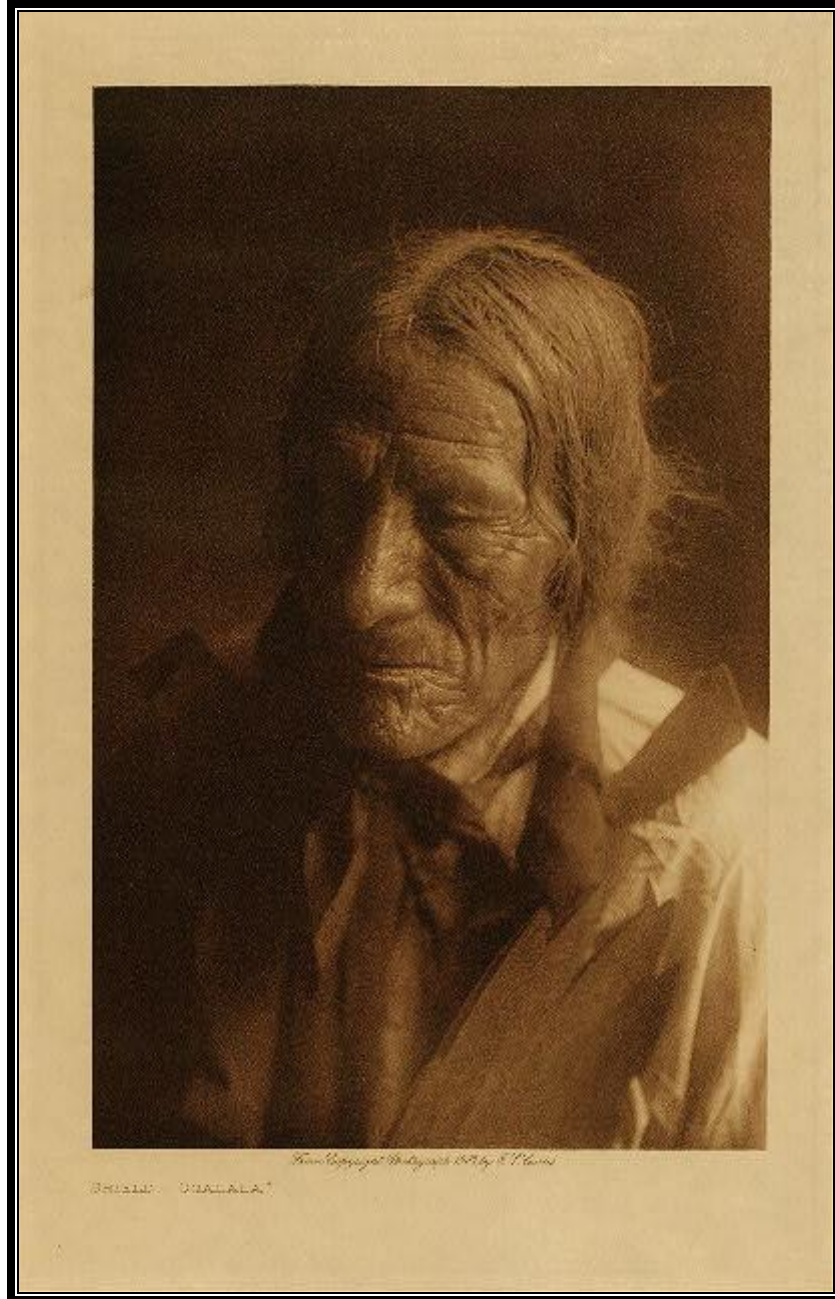
He Dog: He was an Oglala warrior present at the Arrow Creek fight and numerous other battles throughout this era. Courtesy of the Little Bighorn Battlefield National /NPS



Young Man Afraid of His Horse (Tashun-Kakoki: Oglala Sioux warrior present at the battle off Arrow Creek: (Still working on tracking down credits for this photo)



Fast Elk: An Oglala Sioux warrior present at the battle of Arrow Creek, Courtesy: Edward S. Curtis Collection



Shield: Sioux warrior who fought at the battle of Arrow Creek.
Coutesy: Edward S. Curtis Collection

