



After the buffalo days : documents on the Crow Indians from the 1880s to the 1920s  
by Charles Crane Bradley

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE in Education  
Montana State University  
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Abstract:

The period in the history of the Crow Indians of Montana between the 1880's and the 1920's for a long time concerned historians less than the period ending with the Custer Battle. In this thesis I have attempted to present the important events as based on documentary evidence. Most of the documents referred to in this thesis were the letters received by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs filed in the National Archives at Washington, D.C. Reference was also made to Congressional Hearings in the Interior Department library and to Chief Plenty Coups Letter File and Note Book in the Plenty Coups Memorial.

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Thus, when the political authority on the Reservation disintegrated, members of the Crow Business Committee were ill prepared for administrative work.

The important issues concerning the Crow Reservation from the point of view of the Government included leasing Tribal lands, granting right of ways to railroads, authorizing irrigation construction, and establishing schools. Leasing Crow land to stockmen drew much excitement and considerable brain work from the Indian Office.

Leases, however, concerned the Crow Tribe less than the ceding of the western and northern portions of the Reservation. The railroads cutting through the Reservation brought economic advancement to the surrounding white people, but the Crows became dubious toward them.

The Crow Irrigation 'Survey was significant in that it was the first large scale employment of Crow Indians. Schools on the Crow Reservation were regarded by the Indian Office as indications of material progress and progress toward white man's culture. World War I involved the Crow Indians in the world situation. In short, the period from the 1880's to the 1920's was the period of a major transition in Crow culture and also a forgotten portion in the life of Chief Plenty Coos.

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Charles C. Bradley, Jr.

June 27, 1972.

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AFTER THE BUFFALO DAYS: DOCUMENTS ON THE CROW INDIANS

FROM THE 1880'S TO THE 1920'S.

by

CHARLES CRANE BRADLEY, JR.

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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MASTER OF SCIENCE

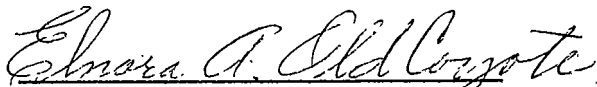
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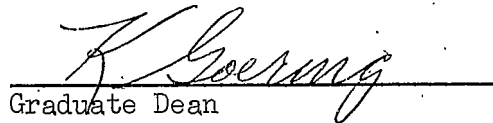
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Bozeman, Montana

August, 1970

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks are due to Dr. Elnora A. Old Coyote who for the most part made this research possible. Her concern in collecting the documentary background of the Crow Tribe allowed me to pursue my interests.

Without the guidance of Dr. Barney Old Coyote, my research would never have produced the results it has thus far. Dr. Old Coyote was largely responsible for catching my interest in the documents on the Crow Tribe. He then put me in touch with Government historians Robert M. Utley and Donald Rickey, both of whom deserve thanks. It was at the suggestion of these three men that I decided to go to the National Archives.

At the National Archives in Washington, D.C. I was sent to the Social and Economics section where Robert Kuasnika very kindly got me started. Richard Crawford, Milton Ream, John Canter, and Mrs. Anderson deserve credit for pulling all the documents for me.

I would also like to thank Eloise Pease for reading most of this thesis for me. Special recognition is hereby given to Joe Medicine Crow, Joy Taineeta, Mickey Old Coyote, and to Suzy and Allen Old Horn, all of whom have given me advice, encouragement, and pertinent information.

Finally, I thank my typist Joan O. Remple who has given this research its necessary treatment.

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## ABSTRACT

The period in the history of the Crow Indians of Montana between the 1880's and the 1920's for a long time concerned historians less than the period ending with the Custer Battle. In this thesis I have attempted to present the important events as based on documentary evidence. Most of the documents referred to in this thesis were the letters received by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs filed in the National Archives at Washington, D.C. Reference was also made to Congressional Hearings in the Interior Department library and to Chief Plenty Coups Letter File and Note Book in the Plenty Coups Memorial.

After reading between 1500 and 2000 letters concerning the Crow Reservation I concluded the basic mistake the Indian Office made was training the Crows to become farmers, herders, irrigators, carpenters, and blacksmiths. The Office of Indian Affairs never foresaw the day when a few educated Crows would attempt to manage the Reservation. Thus, when the political authority on the Reservation disintegrated, members of the Crow Business Committee were ill prepared for administrative work.

The important issues concerning the Crow Reservation from the point of view of the Government included leasing Tribal lands, granting right of ways to railroads, authorizing irrigation construction, and establishing schools. Leasing Crow land to stockmen drew much excitement and considerable brain work from the Indian Office. Leases, however, concerned the Crow Tribe less than the ceding of the western and northern portions of the Reservation. The railroads cutting through the Reservation brought economic advancement to the surrounding white people, but the Crows became dubious toward them. The Crow Irrigation Survey was significant in that it was the first large scale employment of Crow Indians. Schools on the Crow Reservation were regarded by the Indian Office as indications of material progress and progress toward white man's culture. World War I involved the Crow Indians in the world situation. In short, the period from the 1880's to the 1920's was the period of a major transition in Crow culture and also a forgotten portion in the life of Chief Plenty Coos.

## THE CLOSING OF THE OLDEN DAYS: AN INTRODUCTION

In 1930 Frank B. Linderman tried to collect by sign-language the biography of a famous Crow chief. Linderman used the French spelling, but by 1905 the Chief signed his name Plenty Coos. The story ended shortly after the Custer Battle of 1876.

"Those were happy days," he said softly. "Our bodies were strong and our minds healthy because there was always something for both to do. When the buffalo went away we became a changed people. . . . Idleness that was never with us in buffalo days has stolen much from both our minds and bodies. . . . The buffalo was not only our food but our clothing and shelter. . . . The buffalo was everything to us." (1)

The disappearance of the buffalo seemed to mean for Plenty Coos the disappearance of the Crow culture instead of a change in that culture.

Peter Nabokov edited the biography of Chief Two Leggins. Again the story concluded shortly after the Custer Battle. Two Leggins said:

Nothing happened after that. We just lived. There were no more war parties, no capturing of horses from the Piegans and the Sioux, no buffalo to hunt. There is nothing more to tell. (2)

But ironically after the Custer Battle the lives of both Plenty Coos and Two Leggins were not even half lived. What did happen as the century turned?

At the time I started collecting historical material on the Crow Indians, very little had been written about events after the buffalo days or after the Custer Battle. Furthermore, Linderman's book was non-historical, while Nabokov's was confusing. Robert H. Lowie's book,

The Crow Indians, was of no use in history, and Mark H. Brown's history, Plainsmen of the Yellowstone, involved the Crow Indians but did not center on them. The only written Crow interpretation was Joe Medicine Crow's thesis: "The Effects of European Culture Contacts Upon the Economic, Social and Religious Life of the Crow Indians."

I would probably have never known where the bulk of documents concerning the Crow Indians lay if it had not been for Dr. Barney Old Coyote. One day he checked out some volumes for me. They were congressional hearings on the political problems which faced the Crows in the early part of the twentieth century. I hooked together a chronology based on these hearings plus the sources listed above. At this point, Barney Old Coyote talked to his mother, Mae Childs, and Joe Medicine Crow. All agreed that the turn of the century was the shortest part of the chronology. With helpful hints from Don Rickey and Robert Utley, both Governmental historians, Barney Old Coyote and I decided the exploration should begin in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

At the National Archives I had a choice of about five areas of documents on the Crows. I elected to go to the Social and Economic section where the friendly personnel pulled for me nearly every letter received in the Office of Indian Affairs between the 1880's and the 1920's. The filing system changed in 1907; this was the reason for dividing this thesis into two phases. The chapters were patterned for flexible reading.

Any Crow Indian who reads this thesis should be angry. I sought

for the Indian side to the events, but the documentary evidence defended the Government side. The only thing I uncovered was the day and sometimes the hour in which these events occurred. These dates would become more valuable when the Crows disclosed their oral traditions. Then we would have a truly "Crow" history.

The history of the Crow Indians up to the 1880's was essentially linear. Few major events occurred. During the 1880's several programs were started; thus the history fell naturally into a few topics.

The events of the nineteenth century provided the setting of the 1880's. The first treaty between the U.S. Government and the Crow Indians was signed in 1825. General Atkinson and Agent O'Fallon practically forced the Crows to sign. Chief Long Hair, representing the Mountain Crows, finally agreed to sign. The Treaty merely protected white fur trappers.

In the 1830's and 1840's the Government did not concern itself with Indians. The Indians fled from white men. The enemy was smallpox. The worst epidemic broke out in 1837; by 1840 the Crows saw bad years.

Following the epidemics the Tribe regained strength to resume war path activities. On the 17th of May, 1851, a council was held at Fort Laramie. Tom Fitzpatrick, Jim Bridger, and Robert Campbell represented the Government. Although many tribes were invited, only the Crow signed. Chief Big Shadow and Sits-on-Edge-of-Fortification represented the Crows. The Crows were asked to protect white travelers; in return the Government granted the Crows nearly 39,000,000 acres and

annuities amounting to \$50,000 per year for ten years.(3) The original treaty called for annuities to be given the Crows forever, but the Senate changed the clause in 1852.

During the Civil War the Sioux raided travelers in and near Crow territory. After the Civil War the U.S. Army turned against the Indians. Generals Sherman and Sheridan held another council at Fort Laramie. On the 7th of May, 1868, eleven Crow chiefs signed a second treaty at the Fort. The Government sought to protect the Bozeman Trail which went through Indian hunting grounds and into Crow territory. Sioux and Cheyennes raided the Crows and Shoshonis for protecting white travelers, but still Crow territory remained safe grounds for white men. In the Treaty of 1868 Crow territory was reduced to a little over 8,000,000 acres, but the land was to be reserved from all disturbances. Only by a majority of the Crow males could more land be ceded. The Government promised to build an agency, to help the Crows select land allotments, to educate the Crow children. It promised to give each Crow supplies depending upon whether the Indian worked or not. The Government also promised to send a doctor and other skilled men to the Reservation. The Treaty was signed by Pretty Bull, Wolf Bow, Mountain Tail, Black Foot, White Horse, Poor Elk, Shot in the Jaw, White Forehead, Pounded Meat, Bird in the Neck, and The Swan.(4)

In that year, 1868, most of the large tribes obtained their reservations. The Sioux, Navajos, Kiowas, Comanches, Apaches, and Shoshonis got theirs. The Cheyennes of the north did not get a

reservation. But in the early 1800's the Cheyennes, Sioux, and Arapahoes formed an alliance against other tribes. This alliance became a common enemy for both the Crows and Shoshonis; thus in 1869 the Crows and Shoshonis formed an alliance.

In the 1870's Congress discontinued recognizing treaties with Indian tribes. The Indians were no longer regarded as foreign nations; they were wards of the Government. President Ulysses S. Grant applied his Peace Policy to the Indian reservations in 1872. This Policy, which lasted until his death in 1885, attempted to regulate missionary activity on the reservations. During the Grant Peace Policy, however, the Indian wars came to a climax. The embittered Sioux alliance raided the Crow Reservation. Then in 1876 the River Crows were ordered to leave Indian territory north of the Missouri River. They went south to join the Mountain Crows on the Crow Reservation. They were attacked along the way, and when they arrived at the Agency near Absarokee, there were not enough rations. That year the Crows and Shoshonis sided with General George Crook and the U.S. Army in the Battle of Rosebud against Crazy Horse's Sioux and Two Moon's Cheyennes. The Cheyennes called them women, but in both the Battle of Rosebud and in Custer's Last Stand, or the Battle of the Little Big Horn, the Crows played a decisive role as scouts and as warriors. Some of the best Crow scouts assisted the Army in wrapping up the Sioux and Cheyennes after the Custer Battle.

The Cheyennes were sent to the Southern Cheyenne Reservation in Oklahoma. Sitting Bull and his Sioux went into Canada. In 1877 Chief

Plenty Coos and other Crows helped General Nelson Miles track down Chief Joseph's Nez Perces. In 1878 the Northern Cheyennes returned to Crow territory, and the U.S. Army attacked them early the next year. Gradually the Sioux gave up. In 1880 Spotted Eagle and Rain-in-the-Face surrendered to General Miles at Fort Keogh. In the following year Sitting Bull surrendered at Fort Bufford. Eventually the Northern Cheyennes were given a reservation at Tongue River Agency.

The Crows signed another treaty on the 12th of June, 1880, ceding the land west of the Boulder River. It was ratified as an Act on April 11, 1882. The Government offered to pay \$30,000 per year for twenty-five years for the cost of running the Crow Reservation. The Government also promised to make allotments to each Indian. The Crows permitted cattlemen to drive their herds across the Reservation.

Finally, the Act of 1882 ratified the Reservation Treaty of 1868. (5)

In 1883 a selected Senate investigating committee was sent westward to "examine" Crow grievances. There were conflicting purposes for the use of the land.

The General Manager of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company, H. Haupt, wrote from St. Paul, Minnesota to the Hon. H. L. Dawes, Chairman of the Senate Committee. Haupt said the Crow Indian territory along the Railroad could not be cultivated without irrigation, but he thought with irrigation the country "could be made exceedingly productive and lead to rapid settlement." (6)

It has been, I think clearly demonstrated that the Indian, in his present condition, is incapable of providing for himself the necessaries of life, and must either starve or be dependent upon the Government for supplies. The Government must necessarily support the Indian tribes until they can be taught to support themselves. (6)

The best way to teach the Indians how to farm was to hire whites to live among them.

There are many poor men in Massachusetts and other New England States who would be glad of the opportunity to locate for themselves homes and farms, and who are also influenced by a desire to render themselves useful in performing some missionary work. (6)

In November the Senate Committee collected testimonies at the Old Agency. Bernard Bravo interpreted the comments of Iron Bull, Two Belly, Plenty Coos, Bull Nose, Takes Wrinkle, and Thin Belly. Iron Bull was the first chief to speak: "We want the Great Father to give us cattle, and we want cows that will have young ones, and we will put them at the foot of the mountains and all along the creeks, and by the springs." (7) He did not want the Agency moved to the Little Horn River even though the eastern part of the Reservation was better suited for grazing. Two Belly expected the Government to send rations to the Indians even after they learned how to farm and raise cattle. (8)

Plenty Coos spoke next and asked the Committee if they were ignorant of the fact that the Crows had already paid for the cattle the Government should give them.

By the CHAIRMAN:

Question. How did you pay for them - Answer. We sold the Boulder country and all the timber on the creeks to pay for the cattle. I don't see any pay for all this land and for the timber, but I don't ask all the time where it is.

Q. Tell us all about it. - A. There are a great many things we have never gotten pay for, but we don't ask every day where the pay is. I think the Great Father is trying to steal the agency and carry it into the lower country. (9)

The Chairman, Dawes, said the Government wanted to pay the Crows for the land, but the problem was that the Government did not know the best way to spend the money. Plenty Coos said the money should be used to buy cattle.

All the Indians that live on the prairie and wear the breech-clout are fools, but none of the Crows are fools yet.

Q. What is the reason the Crows are not fools? - A. The reason they are not fools is because they like to live in this country, and want to go to herding cattle.

.....  
Q. Do you want to go to farming like a white man, and take care of yourself like a white man? - A. We want houses and farms along the creeks, and if the Great Father will give us cattle we will raise them, and will kill a calf once in a while and eat it with potatoes.

Q. If the Great Father gives you farms and cattle, will you want rations too? - A. Yes.

Q. Do you want the Great Father to do more for you than he does for the white man? He doesn't give both to the white man. - A. We would like to have rations all the same, because we don't know anything about farming yet.

.....  
\* Q. Would you like to live and dress just like a white man, or be like an Indian and dress like an Indian? - A. I would like to have clothes like the white man, to put on when I go to work. We are not fools. The white men killed some of my relatives in the lower country, and I have said nothing about it, but I was not asleep; and they took my horses from me in the day time, too.

Q. Who did this? - A. The white men did it over on the other side of the Little Horn in open day.

Q. The white men punish their people when they steal horses. Do Indians punish Indians when they steal the white man's horses? - A. If Indians go and steal horses we follow them and kill them, but we point our guns away from the white man when he steals horses. (9)

Bull Nose thought the Committee was trying to find faults with the Indians. But the Chairman assured him they were not. So Bull Nose said:

A long time ago the Indian and the white man were both made of dirt. Do you know about that?

Q. The Great Father wants you to be just like the white man. He wants you to work on the land and take care of yourselves.

A. The Great Father ought to give us rations until all the Crows die and are gone. (10)

Dawes asked him how long the Great Father agreed to deliver rations to the Crows. Bull Nose said, "He told us he would give us rations as long as we lived. We have held on to his words, and will never forget them." Old Dog said, "I went to see the Great Father in Washington, and he told me he would give us rations as long as we live, and our children after we are gone." (10) No one bothered to explain to the Crows that the Government had modified the Treaty of 1868 before ratification in 1882.

In the course of the testimony by Bull-That-Goes-A-Hunting, Senator Logan asked him:

Would you like to have horses, cattle, or sheep? - A. We want everything that has young ones - what don't have young ones we don't want. (11)

Takes Wrinkles said he did not want to leave the area of the Old Agency as his people were buried there.

The Great Father told me when the railroad got through I would have a plenty of everything, but I have not seen it yet. I have received nothing, and I am poor, as you can see by my clothes. . . . I don't want to talk bad to these white men sitting here, and I like to eat with all the white men I see, but I don't like to pay for what I eat. I like to eat without paying for it. . . .

Senator Logan discovered that Takes Wrinkles worked on a farm.

Q. I want to ask you, as an Indian and a man, why, if you raise all these things, which would be as much as I would want to eat, why do you still want the Government to give you rations? -

A. Because the Great Father promised me rations, and he ought to give them to me.

Q. But you raise all these things. What do you do with them?

Do you eat them? - A. Yes, I eat them.

Q. Well, why do you want anybody else to give you something to eat? - A. The Great Father promised us rations if we would go to farming, and I am just doing as he told me to do. (12) ✓

Medicine Crow wondered why the Crows were not allowed to buy ammunition any longer at the store. Senator Logan questioned him.

Q. If there is no game what do you want with ammunition? - A. There are prairie dogs, antelope, and deer which I could kill and bring in to eat if I could get the cartridges at the store. . . .

By the CHAIRMAN:

Q. Hadn't you rather raise what you eat off of the ground like the white man does? - A. Both are good; what I can raise off of the ground and the game too. . . . (13)

When Thin Belly gave his testimony, he was asked if he could farm the entire Reservation himself. And he said he could. (14)

It was apparent that the Crows and the Committee were not communicating very well. Agent Henry J. Armstrong was questioned next. He said the Crows only raised vegetables, and they did not raise even a quarter of what they needed. (15) When Clerk C. H. Barstow was questioned about ceding more land from the Reservation, he thought it should be done immediately.

I don't see why these wild men, who have no use for the land, should keep it. I think the Indians are well disposed towards the Government, but they are children to all intents and purposes, and the Government should treat them as a father treats his children. The Government should point out the direction in which they shall go, and insist upon their obedience. (16)

He even thought the Agent ought to insist that the Indians exchange their horses for cattle. (16)

Deputy U.S. Marshal, A. M. Quivey, boasted of knowing the Crows well.

I believe that in five years they will be self-supporting if the proper means are employed. If they are not self-supporting then, they never will be. The longer they are allowed to dance and paint themselves, and these young Indians are taught or allowed to believe that it is dishonorable to work, the longer it will be before they become self-supporting. I also believe that it is doing them a great injury to build houses for them and put up fences on their land. They should be made to help. . . .

There is a custom among the Indians that the food in all the lodges is free to everyone, and this custom should be broken up. . . .(17)

In 1883 Special Agent G. R. Milburn had been building cabins on the Little Horn River, anticipating the removal of the Agency. The cabins Milburn was building were on 160-acre plots, and not in villages. He said none of the Crows were capable of building cabins. Game was disappearing; it was time for the Crows to farm. He also mentioned that Crazy Head and 200 Crows had stolen many horses from the Cheyennes, and there were whites who also stole horses. Spotted Horse and Crazy Head claimed the Little Horn area and would not let Milburn work on the cabins.(18)

General J. P. Hatch, commanding Fort Custer, felt the Crows were depressed because of the disappearance of the buffalo.

I look upon them as children, hardly able to reason out the case properly; but I am satisfied of one thing, that with judicious management a large proportion of them could be put, within a year, in a way towards self-support.(19)

Captain J. N. Wheelan of Fort Custer felt that at least two- ✓ thirds of the Reservation was useless to the Crows.(20)

W. H. Lyon, who was on the Board of Indian Commissioners and who was Chairman of the Purchasing Committee, thought any Indians not wearing the clothes sent them ought not to receive any rations.(21)

The Senate investigating committee concluded that the soil around the Old Agency was very poor for farming. The 3,500 Crows had been neglected and as a result degenerated into "increasing listlessness and idleness, the mother of vice and degradation." (22) The tribe who had assisted the Government the most had received the least attention. Game had disappeared, and the Crows were dependent on the Government. Supplies from the Government came in the same amount as in 1866: they were no longer sufficient. The Crows were declining not in numbers but in morale. The Reservation, which included empty hunting grounds, had become too large for the Crows, and the eastern portion of the Reservation was more valuable for them than the western part. Only farming and ranching remained for the Crows, and the eastern part was suitable for that kind of activity. "They should be taught, if not required, to exchange these ponies for cattle and this mode of life [roving on ponies] for one confined to so much of the soil as they can cultivate and turn to their support." (22)

In 1884 the Secretary of the Interior Department published the revised Regulations of the Indian Department. The Government agents on the reservations were supposed to "induce" Indians to work. Having many unprofitable Indian farms was deemed more valuable than having one profitable agency farm. The agents were to persuade the Indians to surrender their ponies for stock and poultry. The Act of July 4, 1884, prohibited whites from selling liquor to Indians, and Indians were considered "competent witnesses" in violations. Only small groups

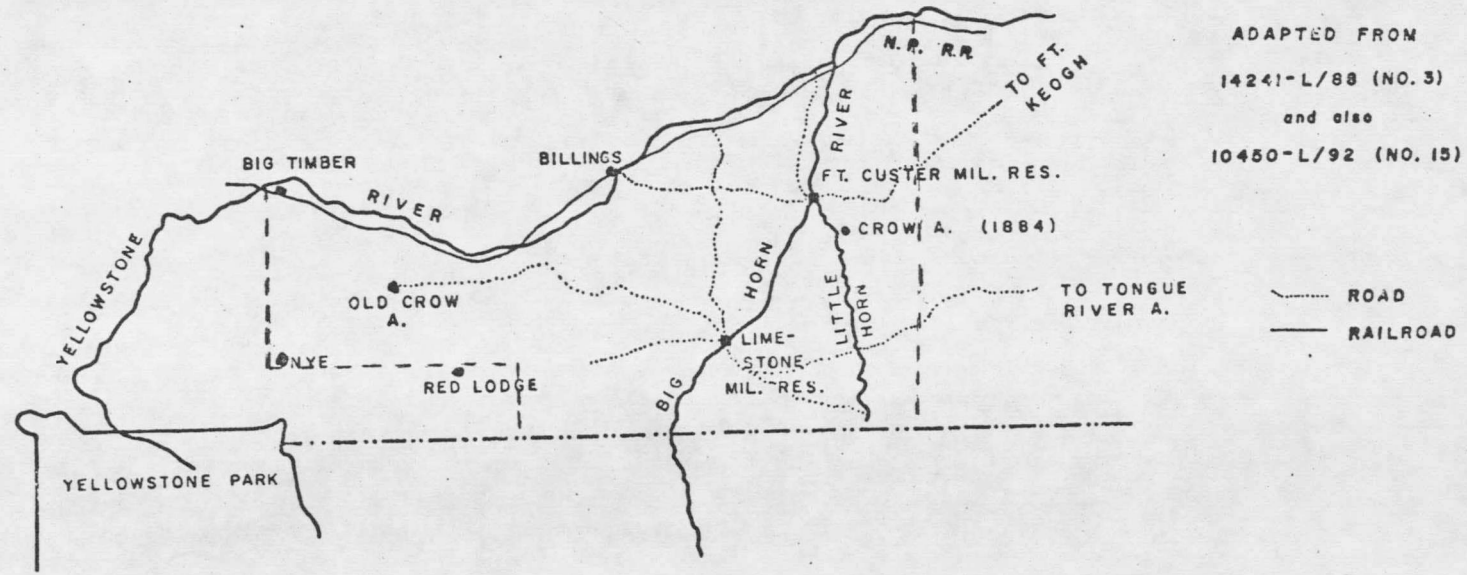
of Indians were encouraged to visit other reservations, and then only for short lengths of time.

On the 2nd of December, 1882, Secretary Teller had written about discontinuing "old heathenish dances, such as the sun-dance, scalp-dance, &c." (23) He believed the sun-dances "stimulated" passions for war. To abolish the "evil practices" the rules of 1884 called for establishing a Court of Indian Offenses on each reservation. The judges were to be the first three officers of the Indian police force. The court had jurisdiction over such "Indian offences" as sun-dances, scalp-dances, and war-dances by withholding rations for ten days; it could give Indians who engaged in plural marriages twenty days of labor; it could place a medicine-man in prison for ten days if he was found guilty of retarding progress on the reservation; it could put an Indian in prison for thirty days if he took property from a mourner; and finally the court could punish Indians who gave or sold liquor with thirty to ninety days in prison or by withholding rations for the same length of time. (23) Within six pages the Interior Department outlawed the dance, the giveaway, the medicine-man, the pony, and fire-water. The Department had at its discretion bars and starvation.

By 1885 the Agency had been moved to the Little Horn River. (See Map 1.) In September the Agent, Henry J. Armstrong, wrote his last annual report. He found the Crows to be so eager for work that he did not have enough employees to train them. The Agency had issued 746 cattle to seventy Indian families. In the spring the Crows

*Handwritten notes:*  
Crow Reservation  
1887  
Billings

# MAP I CROW RESERVATION 1887



ADAPTED FROM  
14241-L/88 (NO. 3)  
and also  
10450-L/92 (NO. 15)

participated in their first round-up, which began at the mouth of Rotten Grass Creek.

No missionary work was being conducted. Armstrong thought there was much work for the missionaries, but at the same time he admitted:

I do not think there is any Crow Indian who feels that he needs to be saved. They think they are the chosen people. (24)

He recommended five missionaries be sent to the Reservation to set up day-schools. He suggested the Government cut down the rations until the Indians gave up enough children to fill the Government school. The Indians were farming along the Little and Big Horn valleys and along Pryor Creek. A large dormitory had been built for the Crow Boarding School, and eight miles of irrigating ditch had been completed. Agent Armstrong concluded his report:

In general there are but two things the Government should do for the Indians - all Indians. The first is to secure to each and every Indian in the United States a homestead immediately. . . and in such a way that he cannot dispose of it and it cannot be taken for debt. The second is to throw open for settlement every square mile of Indian country not needed to provide homesteads for Indians, expending the money that would fairly be due them for such lands in making necessary permanent improvements, in helping the Indians to establish themselves upon their homesteads, and in the purchase of stock for them. . . . (24)

Armstrong's letter foreshadowed the events that followed.

PART I

TWENTY YEARS OF CIVILIZATION: 1880'S TO 1906

## CHAPTER I

### AGENTS, TREATIES, AND COUNCILS

The economic situation on the Crow Reservation was simple and drew little attention during the nineteenth century. There was one store at Crow Agency "managed and controlled" by Charles T. Babcock. The Indians had little money, and what they had came mostly from freighting supplies to the Agency or from selling horses. Cattle hides were sold by the Agency to pay the employees.(1)

The agents sent to the Crow Reservation by the Office of Indian Affairs were often men of strong character (see Appendix B, List 1, for the agents and the dates of their administrations from 1886 to 1906). The Crow Council had been the only means of communication between the agents and the Indians. Agent Henry E. Williamson felt differently. Several times in the 1880's J. T. Blake and J. C. Wilson sent a lease proposal for the western portion of the Crow Reservation (see Chapter II). Finally the Commissioner decided in 1886 that Indian consent ought to be obtained. Agent Williamson despised the Crow Council.

I desire most earnestly to keep clear of any transactions, or councils either with the Indians or whites, - when the interests of any individual or class of individuals are concerned as in the subject under consideration, and I am fully convinced that such action as holding a council with the Indians for the purpose mentioned, would in a great measure destroy my influence with the Tribe, and my power for benefiting. . . .(2)

Any request Williamson made in councils would be regarded by the Indians

as "asking a great favor" such that "they would surely expect and demand a most liberal return" from him.(2) Therefore, he thought it advantageous for the Indian Office to send an inspector from Washington, D.C. to hold councils.

1886 was the year that Fort Custer got a six-mile square Military Reserve. Agent Williamson soon felt the Indians living on the Military Reserve should be "induced" to leave as the women often engaged in "nefarious" business.(3)

Except for the Northern Pacific Railroad along the Yellowstone River, travel on the Reservation was limited to horseback and buggies. The North Western Express Stage and Transportation Company had the mail route from Rock Creek, Wyoming to Junction, Montana.(4) Ninety miles of the stage road and five stations belonging to the Company were on the Reservation.(5)

The General Allotment Act, also known as the Dawes Act, passed February 8, 1887. Since white husbands could not take allotments, Indian women married to white men were to "be regarded as heads of families."(6) In cases of plurality, the first wife was to "be regarded as the legal one and the others allowed to take allotments as single persons."(6) The special allotting agent for the Crow Reservation was James R. Howard (see Chapter V).

E. P. Briscoe received the Agency property from Williamson on May 11, 1888.(7) Agent Briscoe wanted to employ twelve whites for \$14,100 and twelve Indians for only \$3,030.(8) No one doubted that

whites were worth five times more than Indians.

In 1889 Briscoe reported on the Crows living near Clark Fork.

These Indians are over one hundred miles from the Agency, almost entirely from under the control of the Agent. The lands on which they live are utterly worthless for cultivation. They are living in "bands" in teepees and subsist principally by stealing, begging and blackmailing cattle-men. (9)

Agent Briscoe soon became notorious in his dealings with squaw men. Allotting Agent James Howard took upon himself the matter which he called the "persecution" of Bernard Bravo, his interpreter. Bravo was removed from the Reservation for killing a steer without permission. (10) Agent Briscoe delivered his side to Commissioner Jonathan H. Oberly.

Your telegram reached me yesterday. Judging from its tenor I must infer that the Hon. Com. has been reading the highly sensational newspaper reports of the wholesale removal of squaw men accredited to me.

I have removed two squaw men from this reservation. (Morrison & Bravo) for conduct detrimental to the welfare of the Indians entrusted to my care. (11)

Bravo had killed stock issued to his wife. Bravo's first squaw asked the Agent to remove him as she felt neglected. Briscoe put Bravo off the Reservation twice, and filed an affidavit against him, then turned him over for trial. Morrison, the other squaw man, had disobeyed the Agent's orders concerning haying. Briscoe added:

In these cases, I particularly request the Hon. Com. to allow me to use my judgement. These men need a Caesar, and I have it in my power to give it to them. No personal motives actuate me in this for I fully recognize the fact that my tenure of office is limited, But it will be of vast good for the Agent who succeeds me. (11)

Briscoe also prepared a case against James Cooper, a third squaw man. Cooper had "been engaged in cutting and hauling off pine and cedar

wood posts and selling the same to parties in Billing's."(12) The U.S. Marshal, Quivey, "caught them in the very act."(12)

Agent Briscoe held a meeting with some Crows. The Fly said he could not get the land he wanted and Bravo would not ask Howard for it until he presented a horse to Bravo. Big Medicine also said he had been asked by Bravo for money in order to get his land.(13) The Commissioner, nevertheless, ordered the Agent to permit Bravo's return to the Reservation. Briscoe had no intention of letting him return.(14)

U.S. Commissioner Bates tried Cooper for "unlawfully cutting timber on an Indian Reservation," and judged him guilty.(15) Later, Agent Briscoe had to report, "that notwithstanding the proof was positive the Jury, partly composed of men who for year's have obtained this fencing material & fire wood from this Reservation refused to indict."(16) Cooper was given the same protection as Bravo. So Briscoe closed, "As I am unable to afford full protection to the Indians intrusted to my charge by reason of the action of the Honorable Commissioner, I would respectfully ask to be relieved of my charge at as early a date as possible."(16)

Agent Briscoe was actually removed, and for a cause. There was the statement of Philip M. Gallaher and O. F. Goddard. They had gone to Briscoe's home in the previous year representing the Billings, Clark Fork, and Cook City Railroad Company at the Indian Council (see Chapter III). They said Briscoe wanted payment for his "services" in the matter of obtaining Indian consent for the Company's right of way across

the Reservation. Briscoe told Gallaher and Goddard that a free and unbiased council would go against the Company. Briscoe demanded \$2000 for his cooperation in the matter. When Henry Kaiser, the Company's interpreter, appeared at the Council, Briscoe arrested him, which was his usual way of treating squaw men. Goddard asked for a postponement of the Council for three days; Briscoe then demanded \$350, \$100 of which would go to him for holding the Indians.(17)

On July 1, Briscoe turned over the Agency property to Moses P. Wyman.(18) The last word anyone had about Briscoe was that the ex-agent was suffering from cancer with one year to live.(19)

William W. Junkin, inspecting the Agency property, sent an "Indian Labor" report, dispelling the usual cliches about Indians. "The majority of them, I believe are disposed to labor for their livelihood, but they are ignorant of the methods necessary to secure that living."(20) The season of 1889 had been hit by drought; yet some Crows sold surplus potatoes and vegetables.

But it will be some years before they take kindly and generally to agriculture. Their great desire is to engage in transportation. They have horses and delight to be with them. Give them employment of this character and they are apparently happy. Since my arrival at this agency the agent has directed them to haul coal and wood, and nearly all of them have now fuel for the winter. . . .(20)

Junkin said about twenty Indian teams were engaged in hauling rations. He thought Indians should also replace white men who were hauling the flour. Junkin said the Indians could supply all the hay and wood required at the Fort, and he recommended a contract be made with the

War Department.

There is a noticable and gratifying improvement between the Crow Indians and those on the Blackfeet reservation. They have built a large number of homes, the agent furnishing doors and windows. These homes are principally log structures. They have also, to a considerable extent, erected stables and sheds. There is little drunkenness among them and apparently no desire for whiskey. I have not heard of a single instance of an Indian being drunk.

I trust I have not made this report "rose colored." (20)

In his final report, Junkin mentioned that some of the settlers were a little too eager in their anticipation that the western portion of the Reservation would be sold. Some were already setting up homesteads (see Chapter V).

I am sorry to say that this feeling among the settlers is strengthened by the local politicians of the territory. The latter are anxious to secure the influence of the former, and their eagerness to secure that influence blinds them to the rights of the Indians. . . . (21)

On October 24, "150 to 160 teamsters reported at the agency, and the train started" for Sheridan, Wyoming to haul for Fort Custer. Inspector Junkin said, "The Indians acted as though they were going on a picnic and were delighted at the thought of earning some money for themselves." (22) Nothing more was heard about them until they appeared at the Agency for pay.

In contrast to Junkin's "rose colored" report, the Crows initiated a petition in November. The demand from the 316 chiefs and headmen was for an increase in the beef rations. Agent Wyman wrote, "Since the destruction of the Buffalo, the Indians have made many demands for an increase of beef rations." (23) The ration had originally been based on

the needs of the Tribe "while they had an abundance of buffalo." (23)

Wyman thought the Indians were justified in their demand.

Until this tribe obtain a system of irrigating ditches which will enable them to produce fair crops from their farms and gardens, - The ration of beef should be larger than is issued at present. . . . The Indians will feel much pleased and will realize fully that the Government recognized their rights in the premises and is willing to act on their suggestions as a tribe. . . . (23)

The Territory of Montana became a State in 1889. In the following year, Wyman defended the bill to segregate the western part of the Crow Reservation. He wrote to Thomas H. Carter, a Representative of the young State:

The money derived from such sale will enable the Government to make improvements in the way of irrigating the several Indian settlements, which, alone not only justifies but demands the sale of such unoccupied territory. Many other improvements are necessary ere the Crow Indian can advance in any marked degree in the direction of self support, and none of these improvements are possible until a large amount of money is at the disposal of the Gov't for the best interests of this tribe. (24)

Plenty Coos wrote against the Government requesting his people to relinquish the western portion. He knew the western portion of the Reservation must contain valuable land by the way it was being illegally settled. (25)

The process of civilizing Indians lacked goals. Agent Wyman had four educated Crow girls at his home for whom he was trying to get jobs. People in Billings offered them jobs, but the girls did not wish to leave the Reservation. He did employ two of them at the Crow Boarding School. But the other two were "cleanly attractive, and their relatives bring all the influence they can possible present, to induce them to

enter the camp, forsake all that pertains to civilization and commence the life lead by so many. . . ." (26) Chief Pretty Eagle did not wish the girls to work for white families. "I told Pretty Eagle," Wyman said, "that if he or any Indian interfered with these girls I would put them all in irons and keep them where they would have little opportunity for such mischief." (26)

Trouble for the Agent developed during the year 1890. The allotting agent, James G. Hatchitt, wrote the Commissioner an unusual report from his camp on Lodge Grass Creek.

To understand the Indian it is necessary to allot him land, camp & smoke with him & put yourself in his place - a very few days of the same life were enough to understand the Agent. I am now able to say that your Agent, Mr. Wyman, is ignorant, illnatured, cruel & crazy with a passion to rule and that the Indian, who is near enough to the Agency to be within the influence of his police, is a sullen coward being, desperate enough to clean the agency out if he could find a leader that they had confidence in. . . ." (27)

Hatchitt thought the contract with Paul McCormick for hauling oats from Wyoming did not pay the Indians enough. In fact McCormick was becoming rich off the Indians.

The first thing that attracted my attention to Wyman was, after being out two days with me, his driving within five feet of three squaws and shooting their dogs that were sitting by their sides; the flash of the gun within two feet of their faces & they falling to the ground to save being burned. Since then it transpires that his chief occupation is to shoot dogs and hurry up the school boys that he has working on the Ditch without pay. I have seen him walking around among the squaws shooting their dogs, the squaws hugging their dogs under their blankets while getting rations & several sitting over their dying dogs, crying. When the dogs were plentiful I have seen him and his daughters standing in their porch, shooting dogs; and when I left the agency there was a stench of dead dogs in every direction.

This much will answer for an illustration. Wyman tells me that

he has for "Thirty years been managing large boddies of men on Rail Roads" - others say "that means a section boss". And it must be true, for his whole conduct is more brutal than any Negro Driver I ever saw in the "black belt of Va" where was my old home. (27)

Hatchitt pointed out:

The Indians belonging to Plenty Coos band, living on Clarks Fork - from Pryor Creek westward - are not molested and are doing well compared with those under police influence near the Agency - Plenty Coos kills his three beeves a week and no Agent dare interfere with him. (28)

J. H. Cisney, Inspector, went to the Crow Reservation to look into matters. Chief Plenty Coos swore before him that he never killed any cattle without the Agent's permission. And Bear Wolf swore that he never told Hatchitt the Indians "would clean the Agency out" if they had a leader. (29) But the assistant farmer, A. C. Smith supported "every alligation" made against Wyman. The Indians were doing slave work, while drunk Indians had to work without pay. (30)

James Cisney found Hatchitt and announced he was investigating the charges against the Agent. Hatchitt denied he made any charges; so Cisney showed him his letters. "And he laughed at me," Cisney wrote the Secretary of Interior, "and said that they were not intended for charges - that he was mad when he wrote them and that . . . he and the Agent were good friends and he wanted the whole [thing] dropped." (29) Cisney found all the Crows agreed dog killing saved them "many hundred pounds of beef." (29) He found out the Indians were paid for hauling oats from Wyoming, and the Indians "were more than willing to go." (29)

Cisney returned to Smith who charged the Agent had Indians dig

post holes for the Agency stock without pay. But Cisney found that Wyman had no funds, and thus, in Cisney's opinion, "he done the right thing in this matter - the work did not hurt the Indians and at the same time was learning them to work -"(29) What Smith called a "Slave pen" turned out to be 300 acres of farm work done by the Indians who wanted to work at the Agency. All the men on the ditch construction were paid; the school boys were not paid as the work came under their Industrial training in school. Finally, as a mark of good will, the Crows met in Council with Lieutenant Robertson who wanted thirty scouts to fight in the last Sioux uprising. On December 19, sixty Crow scouts followed Robertson to the Agency. "They would compare favorably with any troop of cavalry," Cisney concluded.(29)

In September 1890 the Crows came again to the Agent requesting beef rations be increased twenty-five percent. Agent Wyman supported the petition, at the same time keeping in view the rising trouble among the Sioux.

The Indian, as the Hon Commissioner is well aware depends upon his beef for his sustenance. Deprive him of all other supplies and allow a full beef ration and the Indian is of good heart, but supply him abundantly with all subsistence save beef, and he is sadly discontented. This tribe is doing splendid work. . . .(31)

Beginning in 1891 the Crows did get their beef rations increased.(32)

John T. Brown, a surveyor, was sent to the western end of the Crow Reservation to inspect the land. "There is no timber of consequence on the western portion of the Reservation," he reported to Commissioner Daniel M. Morgan in 1890.(33) He found good grazing grass, but farming

would need irrigation. In the Nye mining area on the Reservation (see Chapter VI), Brown found gold, quartz, copper, nickel, silver, lead and iron. "I believe that if these lands were purchased from the Indians and opened to public settlement, that this would prove to be among the richest of Montanas mineral localities . . ." (33) He also reported numerous squatters waiting for the area to be opened by treaty (see Chapter V).

The Crow Indians signed an Agreement on December 8, selling the western portion of the Reservation. A clipping from the Chicago Tribune said the Crows sold 1,500,000 acres for \$900,000, or sixty cents per acre. A cattleman heard about the price and immediately telegraphed one of the Crow scouts saying he would pay twice as much as the Government. The cattleman could not believe Chiefs Wet, Plenty Coos, Pretty Eagle, and Bell Rock would settle for so little from Commissioners Richardson, Doyle and Flint. These Chiefs were, he said, "men of sense and ability, too well provided with each quality, I think, to make them willing parties to a deal that means little less than robbery." (34) The Illinois farmers grew angry about the sale because the Chicago packing plant was able to obtain western cattle at cheaper prices. The mid-western farmers had to pay for their farms, while the western "cattle kings" were able to get ranges at low prices. (34) Another clipping signed by the "Yellowstone Stock Man" said:

There is a Republican Indian Ring in Montana composed of some of the high officials of the state, . . . together with other Republicans have stolen the whole Crow Reservation and propose to

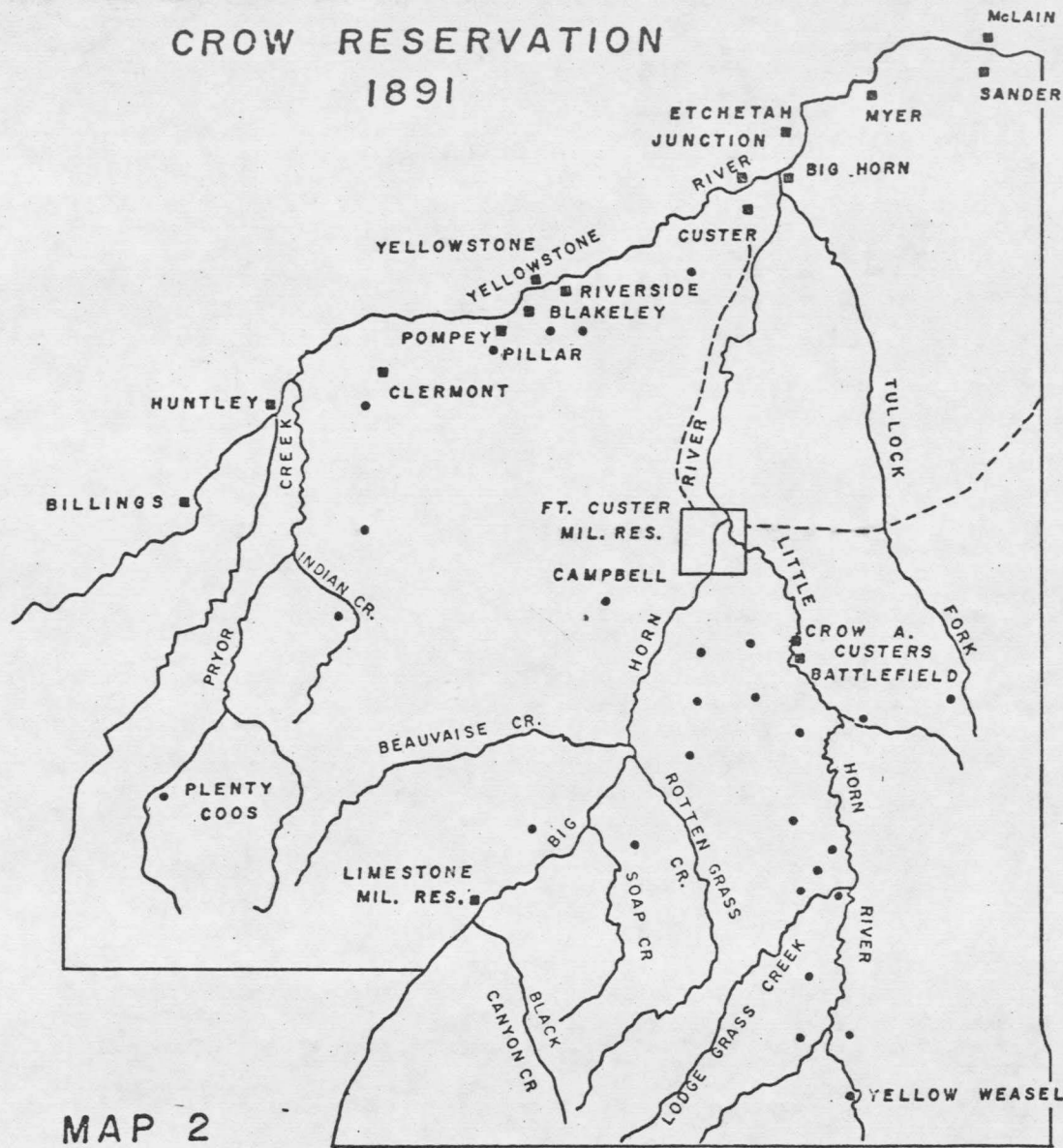
put a fence around it in the spring, export the Indians onto a more barren section of the country, . . . (35)

The Agreement of December 8, 1890, became an Act of Congress on March 3, 1891 (see Map 2). The Indians could make their selections for allotments on the part to be ceded, and the land was to be opened by Proclamation. The Indians had sixty days to make their selections, but they could not claim the land that the miners of Nye claimed when it was discovered that they were on the Reservation due to an error in the survey (see Chapter VI). Special Agent Hatchitt was to go to the ceded portion and help the Indians make their selections. (36)

Everything was understood except for one important factor. When did the sixty days, for the Indians to make their selections, begin? (37) Maggie Garrigus, one of the mixed-bloods, wrote in defense of those living on the ceded portion. They felt "that Maj. Wyman is determined by fair means or foul to cheat us out of our just dues." (38) She was sure Wyman did not want the Indians to settle on the ceded area as he used to work for the Northern Pacific Railroad, and the Northern Pacific did not want the Indians to take their "odd sections." (38)

Twenty-one followers of Two Bear and Shot filed affidavits claiming many Indians arrived too late to get their allotments from Hatchitt because they had to go to the Agency for supplies in March, and then they were called back for a Council. They added, "We do not want to be under the control of Chief Plenty Coos of Pryor Creek, and have to leave our homes and our work whenever he chooses to call us to

# CROW RESERVATION 1891



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MAP 2

Pryor Creek. (39)

The Indian Office had told Wyman to go upon the ceded portion. But when he got there, he found no Indians. He spent a whole month traveling around looking for the Indians. Only fifty-five Indians had selections which had been made before the Agreement. The rest of the Indians, Wyman decided, should move to the diminished Reservation; they would have a better market at the Agency for their hay and grain, and at Fort Custer they could help freight. (40) Meanwhile, Hatchitt had lost his instruction from the Office. When he arrived on the ceded portion, the mixed-bloods were "in great excitement" as they had been told it was too late to make selections (see Chapter V). (41)

Butchering and branding had special methods at Crow Agency. Agent Wyman, defending them in 1892, said "that the system of killing by spear is fully as humane as that by shooting . . ." (42) In regard to branding, the method used was "the cutting off the tip of the ear . . ." (42) Wyman retorted, "I do not consider that a light ear mark on stock is more painful than when our young ladies bore their own ears." (42)

Special Agent J. A. Leonard was impressed with the improvements commenced on the Reservation by Agent Wyman. There was a new slaughter house, a new irrigation ditch full of water, and a new coal bank. (43)

When Walter Graves became Superintendent of the Crow Irrigation Survey (see Chapter IV), the first problem he desired to tackle on the Reservation was forestalling the hay contractors at Fort Custer.

✓ Last year the contractors bought almost every pound of hay produced on the Reservation, and as the Indians have little judgement in regard to providing for the future, they sold practically their entire crop, and left themselves almost nothing to keep their stock on during the winter. (44)

Graves felt work on the irrigation would be retarded as long as the Indians persisted in selling too much of their hay. He recommended the Agent provide the Irrigation Survey 800 tons of hay before admitting the contractors on the Reservation. (44) Graves continued his statement in another letter:

I assume that you are somewhat familiar with the methods in vogue among the Indians for taking care of their stock. Until within the last few years they have been in the habit of allowing them to "rustle" for an existence. Their ponies subsisted as best they could, living on clover, so to speak, when grass was abundant, and reaching a condition of starvation when there was no grass to be had. But, as the Agent secured better control of them, and they were supplied with the necessary implements, they began to cut and gather the grass wherever it could be had, and stored their supplies for the seasons of scarcity. (45)

A quarter of the Crow Indians in 1892 were wearing "citizen's dress in part." (46) About a sixth of the Crows were living in houses, the rest lived in tipis. Five-eighths of the subsistence came from the Government, two-eighths from the Indians' work, and one-eighth from hunting. No Indians were "communicants" of a church. (46)

The Crows convened in Council on August 25. Nearly all the males appeared. The Council met at Crow Agency with Commissioners Weed of Helena, Pease of Livingston, and Foster of Billings, to discuss modifications of the Agreement of December 8, 1890. The interpreters were sworn in at 10:00 A.M. Chief Plenty Coos had Henry Kaiser, Chief

Pretty Eagle had Carl Leider, Medicine Crow had George Davis, and some Indians requested Tom Stewart. On the following day Agent Wyman explained to the Crows that \$200,000 more were needed for the irrigation project. The Government wanted the Indians to do the irrigation work, and they would get paid every two weeks.

Spotted Horse, Two Leggins, and Medicine Crow admitted the Indians had already been paid for the land and that the Crows could not expect to have it back. Medicine Crow went on to say, "Major Wyman made a man out of me, and I hold on to him to see if he wont make a better man out of me than I am now." (47) Deaf Bull said some of the Indians had teeth "getting sore for grub." (47) Plenty Coos wanted the Indians to live among the whites on the ceded portion in order to encourage friendship among whites.

↓ On the 27th the Council met again in the School House. The modifications of the Agreement were signed by 436 Crows. The Indians who had allotments on the ceded portion would be protected; those who had selections there, would receive allotments; the Indians were to have three years to relinquish their allotments on the ceded portion if they wanted to return to the diminished Reserve. Of the \$552,000 to be paid to the Crows by the Agreement of 1890, \$400,000 was to be spent on the irrigation project. Beyond skilled employees and civil engineers, the construction was to be done by Crows. Left over funds from annuity payments were to go into irrigation.

↓ President Benjamin Harrison signed the Proclamation on October 15,

1892, opening the western portion for settlement. (47)

When the Commissioner inquired about the feasibility of cutting down rations, Wyman replied:

In my opinion there might possibly be a small number of the Crow Indians who might be capable of purchasing rations and clothing, if they were paid money, enough per capita to supply their needs - and even then I am of the opinion that some intelligent person ought to be present with them to superintend their purchases as they have but a very slight idea of the value of money, as also it is a very difficult task to make them understand the necessity of providing for the future, . . . I do not think it would be a good policy to reduce their rations, unless it might be to cut off - Hominy and Beans which articles they do not care for, and apply the proceeds of those two articles in the purchase of more beef. . . . It may be that after the system of irrigation is completed they may be able to support themselves but not at present. (48)

In the summer of 1893 several persons on the Crow Reservation submitted charges against Agent Wyman. George Pease and six Indians sent a letter demanding jobs and stating there were enough educated Indians on the Reservation to run the Agency and replace the white employees. The letter was a little ironic in that its spelling and grammar showed little education.

Special Agent Thomas P. Smith was sent to the Reservation in July to investigate some of the Indian complaints. Hugh S. Campbell, a trader, testified before Smith that in the summer of 1891 Agent Wyman "rounded up" the Indians and "forced" them to haul hay for Fort Custer. The Contract paid little as hay was cheap. When the Indians hauled in all the hay they could, 200 tons were lacking which had to be purchased in Wyoming. Again "the Indians were rounded up by the

Crow Agency police in the beginning of Winter and forced by Agent Wyman to haul this hay . . ."(49) The Indians were never paid. In the summer of 1892 the Indians sold hay directly to Fort Custer until Walter Graves prevented them. After it was determined that there was enough hay, the Indians were allowed to sell hay again to the Fort. But this time they had to sell through a contractor for less. In July and August, according to Campbell, Agent Wyman contracted with James Haney and Paul McCormick to supply Fort Custer with dry cows belonging to the Indians. Haney and McCormick judged the cattle which were rounded up and sent to the Fort; many fat ones went with the bunch, and the Indians protested in a council.

In June of 1893 Wyman fired Wells for demanding "a settlement with & for the Indians . . ."(49) Wells told Smith:

In the Autumn of '91 the Crows were employed by Wyman on behalf of the Contractor to haul hay from Wyoming to Ft. Custer. I have been told the two trips would amount to \$1500. to \$2000. for which they have been paid nothing, . . . At the election of Nov'r 92 Wyman ordered that all men on Crow reserve entitled to vote should register & vote republican ticket. . . .(49)

William H. Steele, the Agency carpenter, testified that the Indians complained to him about never being paid for the hauling work in 1891. He also supported the claim that Wyman took five employees with him to Rosebud in 1892.

The Agency carriage used and driven by Wyman on this voting trip came back a complete wreck having been overturned and team running away. It was repaired in the Agency shop at Government expense.(49)

Thomas Smith requested a thorough inspection of the Agency, and

he recommended the Department remove Wyman.(49) No one bothered to check with Wyman to see if his eagerness in the elections was a concern for the deadlock created by western Montanans. In the same year, 1893, Montana sent only one Senator to Washington, D.C.

Inspector P. McCormick arrived at the Agency in November. He thought the Indians should "be brought together on a more circumscribed area, where they could be more under the eye of the Agent, and thereby their advancement in civilization hastened."(50) Agent Wyman told McCormick he would settle with the Indians for the freighting performed in 1891. McCormick found Wyman "a hard working, industrious man" with "the faculty of getting work out of the Indians."(50) But he also found him "uneducated, and illiterate."(50) He did not think Wyman was "perpetrating a fraud."(50) Finally, McCormick wanted the Indians prohibited from living in tipis.(50)

Lieutenant J. W. Watson received the Agency property February 7, 1894.(51) What occurred during Watson's term made the controversies over Wyman mere trivia.

Some of the settlements on the Crow Reservation became branches of the Agency. Three buildings were constructed for the Pryor Sub-agency.(52) The same kind of buildings were built for the Sub-agency on the Big Horn.(53)

Early in 1895 Inspector P. McCormick appeared at Crow Agency again.

↓ The policy pursued on this reservation for the past nine years has been to have the Indians assemble or congregate at the farm on the Little Horn river south of the Agency, and there to plant their vegetables, and sow their oats &c. This policy has had the tendency to draw the Indian away from his allotment and assemble him in bands, which is the most pleasant and agreeable amusement that could be given him. Under the administration of the present actg agent Lt. Watson, this policy was considerably expanded during the past year, on account of having more land under ditches, instead of being congregated at one farm they have been congregated at four or five. (54)

One farm produced \$1096.74 from the crops, but the farmer in charge received \$720 of it, while the rest was divided among the eighty or ninety Indians who worked the farm. No Indians would become self-sufficient under such a system. McCormick believed the big farm idea was a violation of the allotment law which was to put the Indians on individual farms. Three-quarters of the Crows were allotted, but still some five or seven hundred had no allotments.

A very small percentage of those who have been, live upon their allotments, but live in bands, or camps on the streams. I am informed, by parties here, that dancing is more prevalent and has been indulged in more the past year than for several years. . . . (54)

He thought the 10,000 horses owned by the Crows had "improved in late years by use of American stallions." (54) The Crows owned ten to twelve thousand cattle, with 4,000 head "held in common." (54) He said the Agent had made good sales of Indian cattle, but without the authority of the Department to do so.

All of that portion west of the Big Horn and north of Fort Custer to the Yellowstone river could and should be disposed of, which will give them a sum sufficient to realize an interest fund that will maintain and keep in full shape all of their irrigated country and large surplus for other purposes. (54)

He found half of the Crows living in houses and half still living in tipis.

I feel it my duty to state that an uneasy, unsettled idleness prevails among these people, in fact among most that I have visited in the past few months. Dancing is very prevalent among them. These Indians are, and have been laying in considerable ammunition. . . .(54)

Finally, Inspector McCormick discovered that money due the Indians from Wyman had never been paid.(54)

Agent Watson defended the district farms.

So far this arrangement of the Indians on six large farms has been a matter of absolute necessity, leaving out of consideration entirely the question of desirability or good policy. . . . The question at once presented itself whether to move these Indians from their waterless allotments and put them on Irrigating Ditches where they could work and raise crops, or to let them remain on their waterless allotments, with nothing to do, in idleness.(55)

Watson added, "Keeping them in bands does not perpetuate old habits so much as keeping them in idleness."(55) The Crows wanted to be on individual farms. "A few wish to do so in order to work and raise crops of their own; the most of them wish to do so in order that they may get on out-of-the-way places where the Farmer can not get to them and make them work."(55)

The Commissioner inquired about the feasibility of placing Indian youngsters in white homes as part of their education. Agent Watson responded that it was a good idea, but he doubted it would work.

"There is excessive affection between the Crow Indians and their children, and they cannot bear separation."(56) The idea had been tried before. The parents and relatives of the children visited too

often for the convenience of the white family. The agents limited the visits, and the parents demanded the return of their children.(56)

In 1895 the Crows began to agitate for a delegation to Washington, D.C. Some of them thought there was money for one in the Act of 1891. But when the Assistant Attorney General, John F. Hall, peeked into the Act, he found out that the \$5000 for a delegation was only good for one year after the Act.(57)

Agent Watson believed the time was near when rations ought to be cut down. Early in 1896 he submitted his ambitious plan. "My idea is," he told the Commissioner, "beginning the 1st of July this year - to cut off all rations except beef from all of the able-bodied males including their immediate families which they would and should naturally support."(58) It had every advantage possible. "In the first place it would cause each individual Indian to make an effort to support himself."(58) It would teach them the value of money. And the Crows would raise all the food they needed except sugar, coffee, and tea.

When Watson submitted the estimates for the annuities required for the coming year, only 1,500,000 pounds of beef was needed. Students, orphans, and children of old people would get rations. The Agent proposed "to purchase the entire quantity of flour from the Indians in 'open market' . . ."(58) He would also purchase all the oats from the Indians.(58)

In the end of January, Captain Owen Sweet inspected the clothing issued to 672 Crows. Sweet suggested the Department might do better for

the Indians by issuing money instead of cheap goods. (59)

If it was time for the Crows to support themselves, then what was the Agent supposed to do? Frank Terry, Superintendent of the Crow Boarding School, wrote the Commissioner that it was time to "abolish" the position of Agent and transfer his duties to the Superintendent of Schools. This transfer had been made at a few agencies; the consolidated position was called "Superintendent and Special Disbursing Agent." (60) Frank Terry said he had "an eye single to the making of the Crow Boarding School a first-class industrial school." (60) The plan would unify the Agency and the School.

Agency employes would assist in the work of the school, and the school employes and pupils would in turn assist with agency work; and thus, 'one hand washing the other,' accomplish better results than are possible under the arrangement that at present exists. (60)

↓ He saw no reason why the Agency should train the adults and the School the children when in both cases the process was one of learning.

Watson sent Terry's letter and added that Terry would find it impossible to do everything that had to be done. He suggested a better direction would be to expand the Crow Boarding School a little. (60)

Lieutenant W. H. Hay inspected the goods delivered to the Crows in February of 1897. He thought the clothing should have been delivered before winter. (61)

↓ Between the years 1894 and 1897 the Crows must have had a difficult time trying to support themselves. Those working on the irrigation with teams were getting three dollars per day. "Although not accomplishing

as much as white men with better horses could perform," wrote J. George Wright in 1897, "these Indians work steady and well, . . ." (62) Each of the five districts still had a field cultivated in common by the Indians, and the proceeds were divided among the Indians who worked.

Immediately after my arrival at Agency, much complaint was made by Indians regarding this method of farming, they claiming that they were never informed regarding price obtained for their crops, quantity sold or amount received, but that after grain was disposed of they were given various amounts and informed such was all was due them. . . . (62)

Inspector Wright found "irregularities of the grossest character" when he checked the Agency financial records during Watson's administration from spring 1894 to 1897. The differences were outstanding between the amount "represented" and that "actually" paid. "Fictitious" vouchers amounting to \$13,947.49 had been made to Indians for hay, coal, freighting, or some kind of labor. But actually Watson had only paid \$8802.95 for all these goods, and most of the money had been paid to hay contractors, coal dealers, local traders, or railroad companies. Sometimes Watson paid a different group of Indians than stated on the vouchers. A total of \$10,908 had not gone where the vouchers stated, and \$7365.95 from grazing and sale of hides had no statements. A grand total of \$18,247.35 had not been accounted for by Agent Watson.

Many Indian cattle were shipped each year to Chicago, and the Indians did not receive what was paid for them. Agent Watson often withheld some of their payments in order to purchase articles for them. Inspector Wright declared that the Agent had no right to sell Indian

cattle without the owners' approval. Between 1894 and 1897, \$19,052.36 were never paid to the Indians for cattle sold; \$26,455.22 due the Indians was missing; \$22,563.68 from the Common herd was not accounted for; \$46,000 for the Common herd had been used by Watson for something else; and he owed the Indians for grain they delivered in 1896. Wright added:

↓ Lt. Watson states that many of the irregularities above referred to were made knowingly, but with no intention to defraud the Government or Indians; but for the purpose of obtaining funds to purchase needed agricultural implements and other articles for Indians, and for other necessary expenditures not authorized; . . . (62)

Watson submitted a total of 455 bills, but Inspector Wright doubted their credibility, and they still left \$14,532.99 unaccounted for. "In view with all circumstances connected with my investigation," Wright concluded, "I do not believe that Lt. J W Watson has benefited himself by these irregularities or money so gained or that he has appropriated any of this money to his personal or private use . . ." (62) But he thought Watson was wrong in his method of obtaining funds, he was wrong in using Indian money without their consent, and he seemed to be a sick man.

The clerk, C. H. Barstow, who had been at the Agency since 1878, admitted paying the Indians before inspecting the supplies they brought in. Several employees signing certificates of inspection before weighing supplies. William Steele, who was the farmer-in-charge at Pryor, gave Inspector Wright grocery bills amounting to \$3108.30 from 1894 to 1897. But Steele's annual salary was only \$900.

✓ In December Barstow and Steele were dismissed; two more employees resigned; and two were promoted. The cash accounts of Watson were thoroughly examined, and, on January 1, 1898, Captain George W. H. Stouch took over the Agency. (62)

After Watson was gone, investigations turned to Dr. Portus Baxter, the Agency physician. Baxter was supposed to be removed from the Agency in 1895, but the order was revoked. When pressure was brought against him in 1898, Dr. Baxter sent a petition signed by the employees stating that they had confidence in him as a physician. He wrote his own defense.

You are no doubt fully aware that the greatest obstacle an Agency Physician has to overcome is the Indians' prejudice against a white physician and their superstitious belief in their native Medicine Men. So that the statement of an Indian that he has no confidence in a white doctor is an absurd charge to bring against an Agency Physician. (63)

Nevertheless, Agent Stouch wanted Dr. Baxter removed from the Agency. The Assistant Surgeon for the U.S. Army, Charles E. Woodruff, was convinced that Dr. Baxter charged the Indians for his services. (64)

(1895) On May 6 came the order from Secretary C. N. Bliss to break up the community farms and to apportion "in severalty ownership among the Indians" the 30,000 acres of land irrigable at that time. (65)

About the farming methods on the Reservation, Agent George W. H. Stouch wrote:

The only change made under my administration is, that instead of a district working one piece of ground, and dividing the proceeds pro rata, the districts are divided into small plots, and about six

↓ individuals work each plot, and the proceeds divided according to the number of days' work performed by each. . . .(66)

When there was enough irrigable land so each Indian received forty acres, he said, "We will then be ready for an allotting agent."(66)

That summer Agent Stouch estimated the Crows could supply all of the beef required on the Reservation.(67)

↓ In June Edward H. Becker was assigned charge of Crow Agency.

By August he was exasperated with Indian complaints. The Watson accounts of 1897 were still unsettled.(68) In September he wrote Commissioner Jones:

I wish to say that the complaints of the Indians regarding the money due on vouchers now in your Department, is almost unbearable. They are coming in in wagons loaded to the guards to file protests against the office for the unjust treatment they have received in this matter. They think that inasmuch as the Government has practically cut them off on rations they should at least receive money justly due them for supplies furnished this Agency. . . .(69)

Agent Becker wrote again in October.(70) By March, 1899, when Agent Becker inquired about the \$15,508,77 claim, the Treasury Department was handling it.(71)

Fort Custer was abandoned in 1898 and Army inspectors sent from Fort Yellowstone, Wyoming. Lieutenant F. T. Arnold found all the clothing good in 1899, except for the blankets. They were too thin, too light, and too coarse. "By taking hold of the edge with the fingers," he reported, "I could tear them with very slight effort."(72) Commissioner W. A. Jones demanded a sample of the material.(72)

Agent Becker wrote Commissioner Jones:

On behalf of the Crow tribe of Indians, I desire to be placed on record for furnishing the entire amount of flour needed at the Cheyenne Agency . . . for the fiscal year 1900, beginning July 1st, next.

The grade of flour will be of first class quality. . . .(73)

By February Agent Becker was able to say the people of northern Wyoming were buying Crow flour, and the nearby towns preferred "the Crow brand to that of any other flour offered in their markets." (74) The Crow Reservation was becoming a bread basket.

Agent Becker had \$10,000 from the Indian herd fund to distribute; \$8620.78 was due to the Indians from the sale of their cattle in 1898. Becker wanted the amount deposited to his credit so he could pay the Indians. But his request had never been fulfilled, and, as Becker said, the Indians were "beginning to be somewhat suspicious on this account and imagine that it might be a repetition of the Watson affair." (75) Becker accused a Commissioner of intercepting the money. (76)

In 1898 the Government believed it was time for the Crows to cede the northern portion of their Reservation. Assistant Commissioner A. C. Tonner telegraphed Agent Becker to hold a council with the Indians and assist the commissioners. The Crows met and two of the commissioners talked to them briefly. There was to be another council in January, 1899. But snow prevented the arrival of the commissioners. Annuity payments were put off, and the Indians camped in the western part of the Reservation. In the end of February the Crows appeared at the Agency, but the Council was moved to the Big Horn Sub-agency. "I thought this a very unwise policy," Becker wrote, "for to this a suspicion of jealousy

would be created among the leaders of the tribe." (77) Therefore he did not attend the meeting. He thought the Indians had no use for the northern portion, bordering the Yellowstone River. When the Crows asked for Becker's advice about selling the area, he refused to help them.

The Commissioner disagreed with Becker; the Agent was supposed to assemble the Indians and always advise them. (77)

↓ In April Becker wrote Senator Thomas Carter that he thought the Crows would sell the northern portion. He confessed he had "property interests" in that area. In any case Becker offered to help the Government obtain any portion of the Reservation. (78)

But Agent Becker was hiding more interests than just land. The Clerk of the Indian Office, Dickson, telegraphed the Commissioner on May 17 that he found evidence at the Agency to warrant the suspension of Becker. (79) The same day Becker telegraphed for a public hearing. (80) Three days later Charles H. Dickson completed his report and presented his charges to Becker. Agent Becker employed three lawyers and a stenographer and demanded the full report. (81) Dickson listed twenty-two charges against Agent Becker. Becker had used "intimidation" and "misrepresentation" to obstruct the investigation; he used profane language before employees and Indians; he had not made any effort to stop the liquor traffic on the Reservation; he had made fun of the Indians in councils; he was influenced by cattlemen leasing Reservation land, and he had interests in Babcock's store; he had not accounted for all funds; without authority he let stockmen graze on the Reservation,

and without authority he often left the Agency. Dickson added, "For past week he has acted (even according to statement of his friends) like a crazy man." (82) Finally, Agent Becker commenced issuing unauthorized annuity payments in order to obtain Indian support. (82)

Inspector Arthur Tinker appeared on the Reservation shortly afterwards. One of Becker's attorneys told Henry Kaiser, a squaw man, that the other witnesses against Becker had withdrawn. But it was another example of "intimidation." A second Inspector showed up. He was W. H. Graves, the former Superintendent of the Irrigation Survey. (83) Senator T. C. Power, on behalf of Becker, telegraphed the Commissioner:

I am afraid through trumped up affidavits of Squaw men and others arranged by unscrupulous interested parties Becker of Crow Agency is having a hard time. Will you see the President whom I understand has called for his resignation and ask that he has a fair chance. Becker was the only outspoken Honest McKinley newspaper man in all Eastern and Southern Montana three years ago . . . (84)

Inspector Arthur M. Tinker was not idle. He collected speeches and statements in defense of Becker. George Pease wrote a statement for the Crows of Lodge Grass:

We hear that some talk of putting our Agent Major Becker out, now we want him to stay as our agent. Be cause he is our friend & looks after our interest, we know why all this Kick is made, it is be cause he wont let those robbers get their work in on him. And another thing we like to keep him be cause he is the first Agent we ever had for along time that don't get drunk & he all ways pay us what money its coming to us & don't put it in the Banks & draw interest on it & tell us its busted & can't get our money. And we can tell you more if its necessary. (85)

Seventy-six Crows signed the statement, including Spotted Horse, Medicine Crow, White-Man-Runs-Him, Old Crow, Bright Wing, and Yellow Tail.

At the Council on May 29, Tinker spoke with Plenty Coos. Plenty

✓ Coos, however, was more concerned with the treaty severing the northern portion of the Reservation and with the unfulfilled promises remaining from the previous treaties. In the Council of May 31, Spotted Horse presented his concern with the way the rations were cut off without Indian consent, and he wanted Indians to replace the office employees at the Agency. Plenty Coos was critical of Becker for not getting a school or a mill for Pryor. (85)

When Inspector Walter Graves arrived at the Agency on May 24, he noted that Becker had surrounded the Agency with Indians, some of whom were hostile to the Irrigation Survey. Dickson was trying to find the facts while Becker's lawyers were trying to prevent the search. Then Graves found out that the First National Bank of Billings had 30,000 sheep on the Reservation. The Bank had paid Becker, but he never accounted for the money. Becker called upon his friends for \$7000, which they provided him, so that he could produce it if requested. Graves thought Dickson was too frank and too ignorant of "chicanery and crookedness" to delve deeply, and Tinker was "at the mercy of the Agent." (86) Tinker held an open court investigation, but the employees did not want to appear in front of Becker's "jeering crowd" of squaw men and half-breeds. Inspector Tinker threatened the employees with suspension if they did not appear. Dickson protested that there was supposed to be "an investigation and not a trial." (86) Becker called the Indians together several times to tell them that the Department had robbed them by spending their money on the ditch work, and he asked them to demand

settlement of their claims. He told the Indians not to sell more land.

Graves concluded:

This entire business is so farcical that it is humiliating to anyone to be in any way connected with it. The conduct of Agent Becker has been so frivolous and irrational that had it not been for the vicious and evil results it might be treated with contempt, but he has sown the seed of discontent and suspicion in the minds of the Indians, and the Government will be reaping the harvest for many years. . . .(86)

The Department sent John E. Edwards in June to act as Agent, and wired Tinker to go to Cheyenne River Agency. (87) Becker sent a list of vouchers "covering all outstanding indebtedness" during the time he was Agent. The list contained vouchers mostly to traders. But he still owed the Crow Indians \$1169.25 for hay, \$41.01 for oats, \$170.20 for flour, and \$2654.64 for beef. (88)

Dickson inspected the traders on the Crow Reservation. E. A. Richardson traded at Crow Agency; he had straight ledgers and itemized accounts of Indian purchases. A. L. Babcock had a store at the Big Horn Mission. Charles T. Babcock, however, had a disreputable business at the Agency, and the Indians complained about his store. Sits Down Spotted entered an agreement with this store to supply eighty sacks of wheat. The store owed him \$69, which Dickson settled while he was there. Warren A. Evans, the deputy postmaster at the Agency, confused White Swan, a crippled scout of the Custer Battle, about the number of pension checks he received. White Swan only received two checks, and Charles Babcock told him one of the checks was not worth as much as it was. The other checks had been opened and forged. Evans produced

evidence that White Swan was accredited by Babcock's store with the other checks. But White Swan told Dickson what happened was that he borrowed a wagon for the Decoration Day celebrations. When he returned it, he was informed he owned the wagon and the store charged him \$100. Dickson recommended Babcock's license be allowed to expire.(89) By April of 1900, C. T. Babcock sold out to A. L. Babcock.(90)

In the end of July, Dickson reported on the Agency mill where the Indians exchanged their wheat for flour. The records from April 4, 1896, to May 31, 1899, showed that the miller, Ross, was not giving equal pounds of flour and feed for the pounds of wheat received. Ross claimed the differences were due to shrinkage and weeds. The amount of shrinkage on some loads seemed extreme, but Dickson found no case in which Ross made extra money from the Indians.(91)

On March 25, 1901, President William McKinley ordered another survey and allotting of the Crow Reservation.(92) John K. Rankin, the allotting agent, found two abandoned military reservations on the Crow Reservation. Old Fort C. F. Smith, which had been abandoned in 1871 was on the Limestone Military Reservation. The Fort Custer Military Reservation, six miles square, had been abandoned in 1898. There was nothing left of Fort Smith "beyond a few piles of adobe."(93) And Fort Custer was "dismantled, dried up, and rapidly going to destruction."(93) The Secretary of War relinquished these areas on April 23, 1902.(94)

↓ On August 14, 1899, Chief Plenty Coos, Two Leggins, and 535 Crow males signed an Agreement with Commissioners B. F. Barge, J. H. McNeely, and C. G. Hoyt to cede a portion of surplus lands north of Fort Custer. The Crows were to cede 1,082,000 acres, which was about one-third of the Reservation. The irrigation project would still be on the diminished Reservation, and each Indian man, woman, and child would have 1200 acres. The Government was to pay the Crows \$1,150,000, to be distributed for irrigation, for heifers, jackasses, ewes, for barbed wire, for the school, for a hospital, for a mill at Pryor and at Big Horn, and for a trip to Washington. The remaining money was to be held in trust, and the interest was to be used for annuity payments. The Indians could hold allotments on the ceded portion, but the Secretary of Interior was to set a date by which time those living on the ceded portion would have to elect to move to the diminished Reserve or stay on the ceded tract.

The Agreement became a bill and was introduced into the Senate in 1900.(95) In the following year the Crows initiated four amendments to the bill, and Agent Edwards went to Washington, D.C., in support of ceding the northern portion.(96)

The thumping of drums was still considered evil, instead of beautiful. On January 6, 1902, the Commissioner prohibited dances and feasts on the Crow Reservation, and the agent was to use his power to suppress them. Agent Edwards suppressed the custom of throwing away wives, but he did not think dancing should cease as long as it was mere dancing.(97)

In spite of three petitions from the Crows to retain Edwards, the Department sent Samuel G. Reynolds as Agent. Early in 1902 the Commissioner issued instructions to cut down the subsistence and clothing estimates and raise the number of Indians employed. (98) Agent Reynolds cut rations from 950 able-bodied Indians under forty years of age and from their families. He also reduced the rations for all others to one-half. There were, however, no nearby ranches to hire Indians, and the nearest towns were seventy miles away. The Crows abandoned the community farms, and moved to their allotments. The beef shipments from the Crow herd amounted to nothing. (99) A fierce hail storm destroyed the ripening hay crop. "This storm was so severe that it blew down almost every tepee and tent on the Reservation," Reynolds reported. (100)

There were 470 Indians who needed no rations, 300 who needed beef rations part of the time, 400 who needed full beef rations, and 700 who needed full rations. (100) By 1903 the Agency was filled with efficient Indians. Harry Throssell and Frank Shiveley were office clerks; Henry Ketosh, an engineer; Woodtick, the blacksmith at Pryor; David Stewart, the Agency blacksmith; Frank Shane, the carpenter; Carl Leider was the chief herder with Richard Wallace, Sees a White Horse, and Bad Bear as his assistants.

Special Agent Frank M. Conser believed the Indians needed better supervision.

The Crows are quite immoral and the marriage tie has very little significance with them. The accompaniments of the Indian dance make it a source of much evil and tend to keep them impoverished to quite an extent. . . . (101)

At the Big Horn dance during Christmas 1901, the Pryor Crows, numbering about 500, gave the Big Horn Crows 500 horses, 23 buggies, 200 shawls, 600 blankets, 800 quilts, 50 tents, 50 stoves, 1000 elk teeth, coffee, tea, sugar, overcoats, shirts and clothing, or a total of \$13,610 of goods. Conser thought it was "appalling" that the Crows should be so generous, and he was glad the Agent was "discouraging dancing and prohibiting the giving of presents." (101) Conser also mentioned the difficulty Rankin was having making the allotments. "Family names are not adhered to and in the future to determine the heirship to these lands will be difficult." (101) Keeping family history records, and keeping records of all the marriages, divorces, and adoptions caused Agent Reynolds to request three more Indian clerks in May. (102)

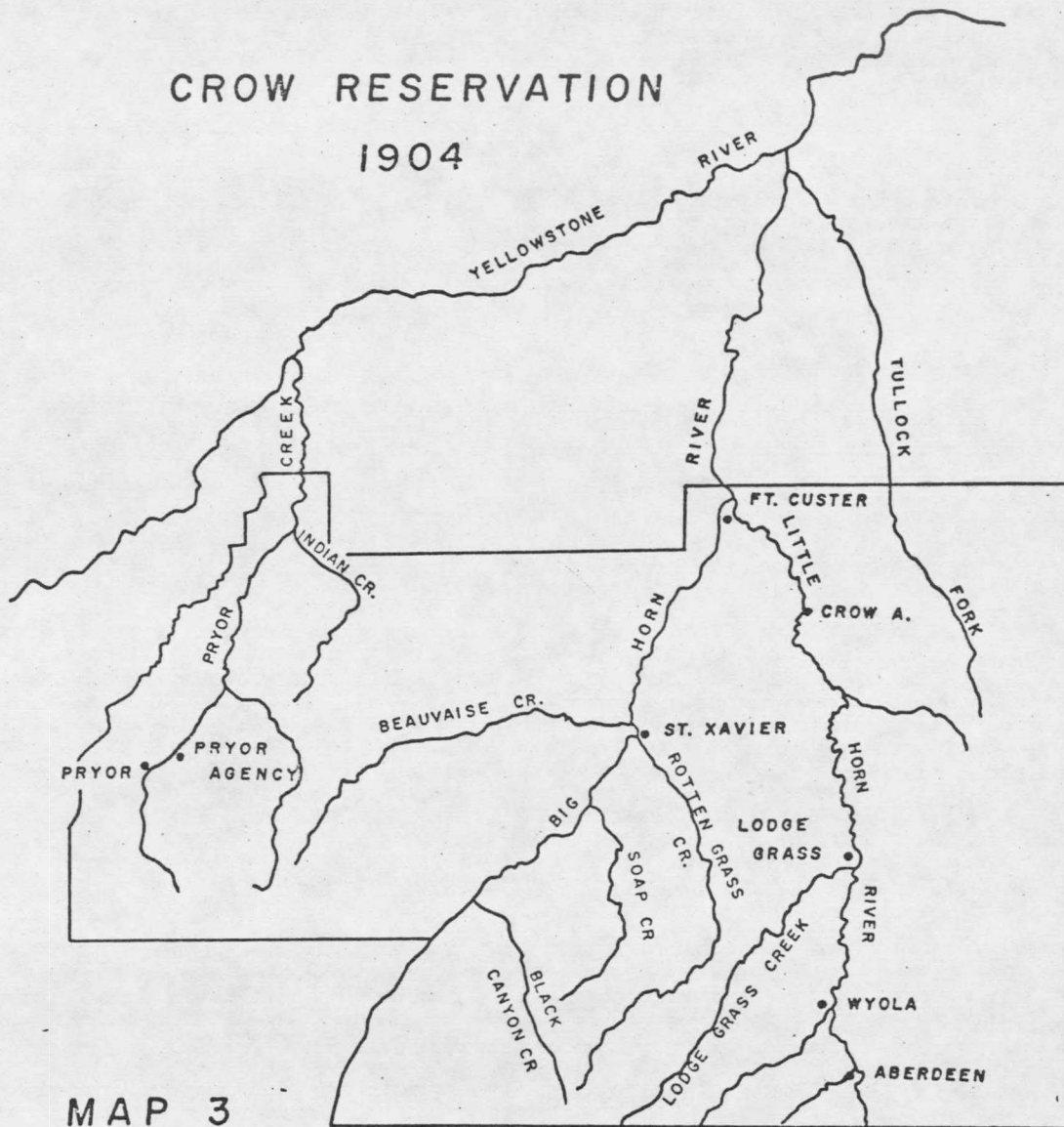
↓  
Congressman Joseph Dixon of Montana introduced the bill containing the Agreement of 1899 into the House at the end of 1903. There were several differences between the bill and the treaty. The Government could not give the Crows the sum of money as promised in the Agreement because of the homestead laws passed in the 1902 Act. The land would be sold first, then the money received would be given to the Crows. Agent Reynolds predicted the irrigable land would sell without trouble, but irrigable land was only 150,000 acres of what had to be sold. The other million acres would be auctioned in tracts of 320 acres. "This in my mind," Reynolds wrote, "will prohibit the selling of these lands almost entirely. . . . as we figure that it takes from 20 to 30 acres of this kind of land to run a critter or

horse."(103)

When the bill passed the Senate, eager homesteaders thought the land was open. Agent Reynolds made several trips to "eject" whites who had moved in and already cut Indian fences.(104) The controversial Act was approved on April 27, 1904 (see Map 3). The first part reaffirmed the Agreement of 1899. The second part of the Act included the modifications of 1901. The First Article relinquished the northern portion of the Reservation including Fort Custer. The Second Article disposed of the land under the Reclamation Act of June 17, 1902, governing homestead and town-sites. The Government was to sell the land before appropriating money. The money was to be appropriated in accordance with the Agreement as modified in 1902. Thus the Crow fund became hopelessly divided among items of doubtful interest to the Crows. The Ninth Article stipulated the Indians had to move back to the diminished Reserve before a time specified by the Secretary or stay on the allotments of the ceded portion. This Article was designed to prevent the confusion which developed when the western portion was opened (see Chapter V). The President was permitted to lower the prices of the land if it did not sell.(105) Some of the land never sold.

The proof that homesteaders were disappointed about the land ceded in the 1904 Act was shown in the numerous bills introduced into Congress to open the remaining Reservation (see Chapter IX). Rankin and Reynolds wrote a joint letter against one bill in 1905. They also thought the northern portion should not be opened until the proposed

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MAP 3

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High Line ditch of the Reclamation Bureau was constructed as this would bring the Crows more money for the land (see Chapter IV). (106) But money was never appropriated for the ditch, and on July 16, 1906, the northern portion was opened for entry. (107)

Special Agent Charles McNichols reported in the fall of 1904 that "partly as a means of allaying the discontent of the Indians at not being allowed as heretofore, to visit County fair distant from the reservation an agricultural fair for Indians products was held near the Agency." (108) \$500 was received from the receipts, and gambling was prohibited.

The interest the Indians took in preparing their exhibits, in oiling their harness and grooming their stock is described as very encouraging. Intense interest was taken in the various competitions and it is said that a large percentage of the Indians are already planting crops and caring for stock with a view to next fall's fair. . . .

It is just possible that such fairs may yet prove a great aid in getting Indians interested in agriculture. I believe this is an entirely new feature of reservation work. (108)

McNichols said the "real test of assimilation has not yet begun here."

The Crows are wedded to the old life as few other Indians are. Nearly all the adult males wear long braided Hair. The women all wear distinctly indian dress-blankets, short skirts and leggings. The school girl discards the dress of civilization as soon as she returns to camp or allotment. . . . (108)

Father P. Prando of the St. Xavier Mission, remarking on Crow morals to Agent Reynolds, said "that putting the other tribes he had been with down to the lowest point the Crow Indians would still be forty degrees below that." (109) Prando referred to

an instance that took place at a Christmas dance in the Black Lodge district last December: --One of the Indians announced that all the squaws who had been true to their husbands during the past year could go into the center of the ring and receive prizes. Two squaws stood up and two bucks immediately arose and announced that one of the squaws was not telling the truth as they had been intimate with her during the past year. (109)

In 1905 Agent Reynolds broke up all camps on the Crow Reservation "where any number of Indians were congregated . . ." (109)

Agent Reynolds requested money from the 1904 Act to establish a permanent fair grounds at the Agency. The Crows used to go to the fairs at Billings and Sheridan. "Our Western fairs cater largely to the wild west element and consist more largely of sporting character than they do to an agricultural character." (110) The Agency got the money and the authority.

At the end of 1901, the Crows owed the five stores on the Reservation a total of \$21,540.26 for credit. In the fall of 1902, Agent Reynolds told the traders not to trade on credit the things the Indians did not need. But, by December, the Crows owed \$19,658.07. In the end of 1903, they owed \$15,839.36. The Crows bought seeds and implements from the traders, and many young Indians by 1905 thought they had no obligation to pay for the things they bought. (111)

The ex-Agent, J. E. Edwards, who had been trading at Crow Agency, sold his business to E. A. Richardson. Edwards wrote that trading with the Indians was becoming unprofitable.

Through the policy of the Department whereby an agent was not allowed to insist upon an Indian paying all of his just debts, the Crows have become harder each year to collect from; and now if informed that they have reached their limit of credit will repudiate then and there all

debts, knowing that the agent can do nothing and that there is no other recourse for the trader. (112)

Plenty Coos requested the Commissioner use the funds that were to be set aside for the hospital, sheep, and jackasses in the 1904 Act to buy cattle. But the Commissioner replied the money could be used only in accordance with Article Two of the Act. Plenty Coos wanted the rations increased because the people were not getting enough food. But the Commissioner told him to see the Agent. Referring to a Supreme Court ruling that Indians could go off reservation to buy whiskey, Plenty Coos wanted the Commissioner to make a special exception to prevent the Crows. The Tribe wanted Reynolds for another four years as he had "stimulated them to work and make a living," and they wanted to have "recreation and amusement" permitted on Sundays as they were working hard during the week. The Commissioner said there was a difference between "rest" and "excitement." He did not want the Indians to engage in activities "which may tend to demoralize home life or prevent your proper progress along the line of civilization." (113)

Inspector James McLaughlin visited the Reservation in January 1906. Rations had been completely cut off, and the Crows were building with materials from Old Fort Custer. (114)

News of open land spread far. A fellow called McIntosh in Chicago claimed to be a member of "one of the tribes of Crow Indians." (115) McIntosh conducted what E. L. Cudebeck of the Dentistry School deduced was a swindle among the Negroes telling them they could go to the Crow

Reservation and purchase homes from the Indians.(115) Later, George Slater described a man in Illinois called Pain who claimed to be a Crow with authority "to raise a colony of colored people and adopt them into the Crow Tribes of Wyoming" where they could obtain 320 acres of land.(116)

Agent Reynolds punished eleven cases of Indians throwing away their wives in the first two months of 1906. Throwing them in the guard house was the solution used.(117)

The second Crow Fair took place in the end of September; it was called an "industrial fair."(118)

The expense of running the Crow Reservation was solved by selling land. From 1880 to 1904 the Government had no other recourse. The Act of 1882 gave the Crows money for the land west of the Boulder River. The money was handled by the Office of Indian Affairs to run the Reservation and build homes for the Indians. The Crows agreed to sell the western portion of the Reservation in the Act of 1891. The Department chose to use the money in constructing the Crow irrigation system. In the Agreement of 1899 the Crows sold the northern portion of the Reservation. The money this time was to be used for many things including the purchase of cattle. Between the signing of the Agreement and the ratification of it in the Act of 1904, the Government passed another law governing the disposal of land. The Government did not actually break the Agreement of 1899; it had to modify it. Yet three mistakes were made in passing the Act of 1904. First, the Government did not hold a council to inform the Crows of the necessity for modifying the Agreement of 1899. Second,

✓ the land had to be sold first before the Crows could get money from it, and the land had to be sold in small homestead tracts. It never sold very well. Third, the Act divided the Crow fund into too many parts. The problems of a divided fund were known two years later; by 1909 the Crows regretted it. After 1904, however, the Office of Indian Affairs opposed selling Crow land (see Chapter IX).

The agents ruling the Crow Reservation from the 1880's to 1909 were men of strong character. There was Agent Williamson who refused to deal with the Indians in councils. Agent Briscoe, who hated squaw men, only lasted a year in office. His resignation of early 1889 was clouded by hints of corruption. The multi-sided Agent Wyman was difficult to understand. He saw prestige involved in holding Indian councils, in employing Indians, and in filling all the schools. Many complaints were lodged against the man, so that in 1893 investigations were held. It was true he had on at least one occasion failed to pay the Indians for work they did. Many small things which looked wrong were added up against him. Wyman was finally removed in the end of 1893. Lieutenant Watson assumed charge beginning in 1894. By 1897 investigations proved he had misused thousands of dollars. Captain Stouch was transferred to Crow Agency for a few months. It was long enough for him to straighten out the finances, count up the Indian cattle, and tidy the Reservation for Agent Becker who took over in 1898. Becker was certainly the most obscure character. In being the first one to oppose the policy of selling Reservation land in 1899, the Indian Office thought Becker

committed his first sin. His sin was really patronizing the Crows before it was a policy to patronize Indians. Then, too, by holding sway over the Crows, Becker was able to cover up a few thousands of dollars.

Agent Edwards came to the Reservation in 1899 and set everything straight again. His appointment was one of the best moves the Indian Office made, and by 1901 he was successful in bringing the cattlemen to their knees (see Chapter II).

From Appendix B, List 2, it is possible to see that by Agent Briscoe's time there was equal employment of Indians and whites at the Agency. Agent Wyman increased the number of employees, still keeping Indians and whites equal. After Wyman's time the Indian employees were outnumbered until the coming of Agent Reynolds in 1902. By 1903 many of the office positions were filled with Indians.

In the 1880's the line of communication was primarily from the Department of Interior to the Office of Indian Affairs to the agent, and eventually to the Indian Council. Beginning in the 1890's a few chiefs went to the agents and personally requested councils. After the turn of the century, the situation changed rapidly. As the future seemed more and more insecure, a few Crows saw the need for a smaller organization, speedier action, more specialization and independence (see Chapter X).

## CHAPTER II

### CATTLE GRAZING

Driving cattle to Montana from Texas commenced in 1866 when Nelson Story brought his herd to Bozeman. In the 1870's thousands of herds were driven north. Although barbed wire was being invented, it did not reach the Crow Reservation for twenty years. Thus cattlemen hired riders whose reputations varied. As the thundering hooves filled the ranges surrounding the Crow Reservation, there arose from the cattlemen protest for more grazing land. The problem belonged to the Interior Department. South of the Yellowstone River and north of Wyoming Territory was just such land; it had fed buffalo for centuries. With the buffalo nearly gone, the grass bowed in the wind as if inviting sharp flat teeth. An exciting game developed between the cattlemen and the Office of Indian Affairs. The game began with one trespassing case and did not end until after forty years of corruption. On the surface both parties engaged in the game for economic reasons; theoretically both parties should have benefited. The Government, for its part, needed money to buy food for the Crows, and the cattlemen had the money. To make the game interesting, there was a third party who supposedly owned the grass. The game was new to the Crows, and it took them twenty years to learn a few tricks.

The procedures for grazing cattle on the Crow Reservation remained obscure until the Senate requested a report concerning the taxing of cattle grazing or crossing the Reservation. Agent Armstrong reported there were only two grazing permits on the Reservation at that time. The background of these two permits was included in the Secretary's report of December 30.

In 1882 a battalion of cavalry under Major Merrill was stationed near Billings on the south side of the Yellowstone River. James L. ~~Ash~~ Ash was given permission to bring his cattle over the River to supply the military with milk. His cattle soon became so accustomed to the range that neither Ash nor the Agency herder could keep them off the Reservation. Late fall in 1883 Ash asked the Agent for permission to leave his cattle south of the River, and Armstrong let him.

In 1883 Thomas Kent, a squaw man on the on the Reservation, sold his herd and went into the sheep business. Then R. B. Briggs sought permission to leave the 750 cattle, which he had bought from Kent, on the Reservation under Kent's management. The Department instructed the Agent on July 7 to issue a temporary permit.

In August J. C. Wilson, of Kansas, wrote Commissioner Thomas Ryan that he wanted to lease a portion of the Reservation. The letter went to the Secretary's office. Secretary M. W. Joslyn responded with no particular objections provided the Indians granted permission and the Department supervised. But the lease was not approved.

In the following year Secretary Teller wrote Agent Armstrong:

If the Indians, on their own motion, choose to allow stockmen to pasture their cattle on the reservation, paying therefor a fair sum, they have the right to do so under the statute of the United States. But under no circumstances should the agent initiate such a movement, and all the agent should do is look after the interests of the Indians and see that they are not cheated. . . .(1)

When another party wanted a Departmental lease, Commissioner Stevens replied that Departmental leases did not exist. The Indians gave grazing permission, and there were to be no "permanent improvements," liquor, or fire-arms allowed on the Reservation.

A Council was held on October 29, 1884. All the land west of Pompey's Pillar and west of Fort C. F. Smith was to be leased to J. T. Blake and J. C. Wilson, except for the Yellowstone bottom lands. The area covered 1,500,000 acres and much mountainous land. If the lessees failed to pay, their cattle and horses were to be held. The agreement was signed by Chiefs Fringe, Old Dog, Horse Guard, Takes Wrinkle, Spaniard, Old Crow, Dog Eye, Long Elk, Pretty Gutts, Crazy-Sister-in-Law, Old Nest, Medicine Crow, Bear-in-the-Water, Bull Goes Hunting, Two Belly, Big Ox, Fire Fish, Big Forehead, Plenty Coos, Pretty Eagle, Iron Bull, Spotted Horse, Crazy Head, Buffalo Well Known, and a total of 439 Crows.

After the Agency was moved, Malcolm McDonald of Stillwater wrote the President that Armstrong was forcing the Indians to lease the Reservation west of the Big Horn to "a Denver syndicate of cattle men." (1) He claimed the Agent threatened to withhold rations unless the Crows signed the twenty-five year lease. Armstrong replied that he had not

forced the lease signing. The Committee of Citizens of Yellowstone County complained to Commissioner Hiram Price that the area actually contained 3,500,000 acres.(1)

As Armstrong had not realized the Department raised the beef contract twenty-five percent, he told the Crows during the Council of 1884 that they would have to decrease the beef rations in order "to make our supply of beef cattle last through the year."(2) He said the Billings Committee of Board of Trade interfered with the business by locating unfriendly Indians through a squaw man. These Indians went to Junction City where the Committee "worked upon them."(2) They told the Indians not to talk to the Agent and to prevent other Indians from talking with him. "They got Spotted Horse who is as mean an Indian as ever lived to sign the remonstrance against the lease as a War Chief . . ."

On the day they took testimony as they called it, they had Spotted Horse and Deaf Bull, who is a terror among the Crows, take seats at the table next to the seat that was reserved for the Indians the committee proposed to question; for the purpose of compelling all the Crows to talk as they wanted them to talk or to keep those who would not talk so from talking at all. . . .(2)

Spotted Horse threatened to kill the Indians who did not stop farming. Hence the tribe fell into "doubt as to what was the best thing for them to do, and so either staid away entirely to avoid quarreling with Spotted Horse and his young men and Deaf Bull, or else said they wanted the lease stopped . . ."(2)

In the spring and fall round-ups, cattlemen were allowed to send

representatives to claim strays which had wandered upon the Reservation. But some of the cattlemen violated this regulation. By 1885 Agent Armstrong wanted troops to prevent "the stock men from the north side of the Yellowstone coming upon this reservation for the purpose of rounding up and removing their cattle which they have purposely driven across the Yellowstone . . ." (3) Protest came from the Board of Stock Commissioners in the Territory of Montana. Granville Stuart wrote the Secretary that the Agent was preventing the cattlemen from recovering lost cattle which crossed the River during storms. (4) Armstrong replied that the association made untrue statements. He heard from reliable men living along the Yellowstone "that these cattle were driven across in great numbers." (4) Hay was strewn across the river to attract them. (5)

√ The Act of 1882 granted permission for cattlemen to drive their herds across the Crow Reservation. James Cox drove cattle across the Reservation in August, 1884, without paying the toll. In 1885 the Case of U.S. v. James M. Cox was tried, and U.S. lost because the letter reducing the charge had been written five days after the cattle commenced crossing. (6)

In 1886, the application for Thomas Barry to graze sheep on the Reservation met "the approval of the tribe . . ." (7) J. A. Campbell, manager of the Columbia Land and Cattle Company, wanted to graze his cattle on the north-east corner of the Reservation because he found it difficult to keep them off. (8) Soon many cattlemen desired to graze on the Reservation. They had to obtain Indian consent through the agent,

then their applications were forwarded to the commissioner for Departmental approval.

Secretary L. Q. C. Lamar refused to recognize the Blake and Wilson lease.(9) Agent Williamson reiterated the need for grazing permits. "Without permits issued," he wrote, "thousands of cattle will be driven on reserve without permission and they will run the risk of paying one Dollar . . . per head fine, rather than have their cattle die on the ranges that are overstocked off the reserve. . . ."(10)

James A. Campbell had been among Crow scouts for many years and was a scout at Fort Custer. As Campbell was still having difficulty keeping his cattle off the Reservation, he met the Indians at the Agency office on November 19. Chief Plenty Coos, Two Belly, Spotted Horse, Pretty Eagle, Old Dog, and others all consented to let Campbell graze his cattle on the Reservation until they desired him to remove them.(11)

There was a Council at the Agency on April 23, 1887. Representing the Crow Tribe were 350 chiefs and head men. Agent Williamson reminded the Indians that "many cattle have grazed on your reservation for which you have received no pay."(12) He told the Indians each head of a family could receive a wagon if they granted grazing permits. Chiefs Crazy Head and Plenty Coos wanted J. A. Campbell to graze east of the Agency and Nelson Story to graze in the west by the Old Agency. The votes were all "yes."(12) By May five cattle companies desired grazing permits for that year.(13)

Secretary Lamar, after considering the report on grazing permits, wrote the Commissioner that permits would expire November 1.

The Agent should be instructed to have the Indians in council designate as early as possible the portions of the reservation which they desire to permit cattle to be grazed upon. Natural boundaries should be selected as far as possible to separate the grazing lands from those allotted to or cultivated by the Indians. When this is reported to your Office proposals should be invited by public advertisement for permits under proper regulations, for the privilege of grazing cattle on the portions of the reservation designated by the Indians for that purpose; . . . (14)

The Third Article of the Act of April 11, 1882, stipulated that the Tribe could consent to permit cattle to cross or graze on the Reservation, but the permits were to be regulated by the Secretary. The Council of April 23, 1887, came to be regarded as that Tribal consent, and the Department chose to regulate by leasing to the highest bidders.

Agent Williamson wrote against the bidding system. The Tribe had "in most instances mentioned the persons whom they are willing should put their herds on the reserve . . ."(15) The cattlemen the Indians wanted on the Reservation had "treated the Indians kindly and fairly . . ."(15) In approving the Blake-Wilson lease proposal, the Indians

. . . did not do so with a single eye to accomodate all the stock which the whole of their reservation, . . . would sustain. . . . What the Indians as a tribe desired was, that certain portions of their unoccupied lands should be let to stock men in whom they had perfect confidence, . . . (15)

If the Department wanted to enforce its regulation against the desires of the Crows, then someone else would have to be sent out because Williamson refused to face such "great embarrassment."(15)

✓ Allotting Agent James Howard also wrote against leasing to the highest bidder. "These Indians," he said, "would 'Kick' and 'Buck', and would not stand a lease at all." (16) He said the Crows had not forgotten what Sitting Bull told them the previous year: "that the white men only wanted to squat them down on a small piece of land, and take the balance from them in some way" . . . " (16)

When Inspector Frank Armstrong arrived in October to investigate the Crow uprising (see Chapter VI), he reported to Secretary Lamar that the Department had a better idea of what to do about cattle grazing than Agent Williamson did. What was more, the Secretary's orders and the Commissioner's orders had not been complied with by the Agent; no councils had been held. The cattlemen occupying the Reservation would bid the highest for each area, and the Indians would get more money from them.

As to the matter of Indians having a special preference for certain parties, such preference or favors, are generally obtained by a little tract or liberal lobbying on the part of those favored, or on account of some special kindness shown the Indians . . . (17)

Inspector Armstrong held a Council on November 7 and telegraphed the Secretary that the Crows would designate the parts of the Reservation for grazing "under the directions & arrangements of the Dept . . ." (18) But the next day the Crows petitioned the President "to have all herds removed from this Reservation as soon as grass comes in Spring" except for Campbell's herd. (19)

The Commissioner ordered that the Agent hold another Council to

designate areas for grazing to be let to highest bidders. The Crows went "through the snow and storm" to the Council held on December 31. Chiefs Pretty Eagle and Plenty Coos were disappointed that what they had told Armstrong had not been sent to the Commissioner, but to the Secretary. They said the only man they would consent to have on the Reservation was Campbell, and they wanted him east of Tullock Fork. All the Indians present supported the statements by the two chiefs.(20) (Unfortunately the Council with Armstrong was not available for comparison.) Hence ✓ the Crow Indians were successful in holding off the bidding system for three years.

On April 27, 1888, there was another Council. Chiefs Pretty Eagle and Old Dog wanted only J. A. Campbell allowed to run his cattle on the Reservation. But Chief Plenty Coos wanted all cattlemen removed from the Reservation.(21)

✓ Agent Briscoe wrote Commissioner Atkins that "on his way home from that council, 'Plenty Coos' ordered the Cattle men to move, but told them they 'could come back after a while' if they would pay him money."(22) So Briscoe visited Plenty Coos' band and found that none of the Indians wanted the cattle moved. He reprimanded Plenty Coos, but Plenty Coos said it was the sheep he wanted removed. "I am fully satisfied," Briscoe wrote, "that 'Plenty Coos' wants the cattle to stay, and only urged their removal thinking he would make money there- by."(22)

There were 30,000 cattle and 30,000 sheep on the Reservation.

Most of the cattle belonged to Campbell of the Hardin Campbell and Company, James L. Ash, the Cramer Brothers, Nelson Story, Jeffers and Maynard, R. B. Briggs, Dilworth, Anderson, and Paul McCormick. These cattlemen were on the Reservation, as Agent Briscoe said: "with the full knowledge and consent of the Indians except as to 'Plenty-Coos'." (22)

Ten cents per head was the customary charge on cattle driven across the Reservation from Wyoming to the Northern Pacific Railroad. In 1888 a number of cattlemen were confronted with the same charge per head on cattle driven from the Yellowstone River to the railroad right of way at Custer Station or Huntley; it was a total distance of about one mile. At the end of December, Senator Charles Reade took the cattlemen's side.

"Mr. Briscoe has evidently mistaken the spirit of the regulations," he wrote. "The letter of the law may allow this charge, but it is worthy of inquiry whether Congress contemplated an obstruction to daily railroad traffic by the imposition of this tax." (23) A newspaper clipping from the Pioneer Press explained that Agent Briscoe seemed "to be as badly rattled on the law and regulation as his predecessor." (22) Agent Briscoe replied that he had acted under authority from Commissioner Upshaw to collect tolls on all cattle and sheep crossing the Reservation. Hence he had written to the Northern Pacific Railroad not to ship any cattle until all tolls were collected. The owners of 1200 cattle refused to pay the toll, and the Northern Pacific agent would not aid in collecting the toll. Briscoe wanted the matter taken to the U.S. District Attorney.

Secretary W. F. Vilas asked for a report on the amount of grazing

that was taking place on the strip of land between the Yellowstone and the stations to see whether any damage needed to be compensated.(23) Agent Briscoe sent his report in 1889. The cattle being driven to Custer Station were held north of the Yellowstone until the cars were ready; the cattle were then driven across the River and over one-half mile to the station. No damage was done. At Huntley the case was different. Often the cattlemen held their cattle south of the Yellowstone on the Reservation. Agent Briscoe thought all cattle going onto the Reservation ought to be taxed or else the Montana cattlemen would have an advantage over the Wyoming cattlemen.

I will say that whenever I have been advised by the owner's of a herd of Cattle that they intended driving onto the Reserve, I have deemed it my duty - to give them all the protection in my power - and have always met the herd with a policeman - who had order's to guide & protect the herd and allow no Indians to disturb them. Consequently all driver's were satisfied except two parties who came onto the Reservation via 'Pryor's Gap'. These men failed to notify me of their intention to drive to Huntley, so I could not protect them. One Indian - 'Sharp Head' attempted to black mail them, and threatened to stampede the herd's unless they gave him beef - They were compelled to comply with his demand's - and then protested against paying the toll - and blamed me for not affording them protection.

This Black mailing scheme on the part of the Indian is the principal objection to opening free cattle trails across the Reservation. The Indians will black mail and unless a toll is paid the Government is under no obligations to afford protection.(24)

No advertisements for bids appeared in 1889. Agent Briscoe issued a grazing permit to the Hurlbut Land and Cattle Company. When the manager desired to increase his herd, Chief Plenty Coos and Pretty Eagle requested a Council which was held on June 30. Plenty Coos did not want the extra cattle of the Hurlbut Company on the Reservation. He and

Pretty Eagle objected again on July 7.

When Agent Wyman sought instructions from the Commissioner regarding the Hurlbut Company, he received notice that the permit issued by Briscoe "was unwarranted and in excess of his authority." (25) The Agent was supposed to hold a council to determine "the number of cattle (if any) they were willing to have driven upon their lands, and the portion of the reservation they are to have pastured." (25) Agent Wyman himself could not understand the Indians objecting to the Hurlbut Company on the Reservation as they liked the equipment purchased with the money. But he could not call a council as the Crows were in the mountains collecting their winter supply of berries.

Agent Wyman also believed the cattlemen grazing herds of 2000 or more on the Reservation should hire Indians as one third of their employees. The Columbia Land and Cattle Company, Hardin Campbell and Company, and Nelson Story employed Indians. The Agency also had three Indian assistant herders who were worth more than whites hired for twice the salary.

The Commissioner eventually approved the increase of cattle for the Hurlbut Company, but he requested a council be held to discuss how many cattle the Indians would permit to graze away from their farms; the boundaries of the pastures were not to be mentioned. (25) All that Agent Wyman reported was that both Plenty Coos and Pretty Eagle withdrew their objections to the Hurlbut Company. (26)

Inspector W. W. Junkin supported Briscoe's view in the cattle

toll problem. He did not recommend free trails. Allotting Agent Howard had surveyed a strip including 800 acres between the Yellowstone River and the Northern Pacific right of way. Two squaw men had claimed parts of the strip for "their Indian children and have charged for corralling stock in their inclosures," Junkin said. (27) There was a border dispute between the Agent and the Wyoming cattlemen. The Wyoming cattlemen claimed a line two miles north of the survey and ranged their stock on the disputed area. The Wyoming ranchmen wanted the Agent to fence the southern border of the Reservation. "A threat by the agent to fence the south line with sheep brought some of them to arms." (27)

1890 became the Year of the Sheep. Alex Fraser wrote for the "wool growers of Yellowstone County" to Congressman Carter.

As the matter now stands, the cattle men are granted rights over large tracts of the Reservation to the detriment of the sheep men. Whereas the income from the cattle outfits is only about one half the amount which could be realised if the sheep men had an equal show. (28)

On February 20 Chief Plenty Coos and a dozen Crows went to the Agency. Plenty Coos reiterated that the Crows wanted Campbell, the Hardin Campbell and Company, the Hurlbut Land and Cattle Company, J. L. Ash, Paul McCormick, and Nelson Story to have their cattle on the Reservation. But Plenty Coos wanted all sheep removed from the Reservation.

Wyman informed the Commissioner that Plenty Coos "has quite a following, and feels that his word should be law with all the Crows and

he is not at all inclined to look with favor upon any Indian who may disagree with him . . ." (29) Plenty Coos was correct about sheep grazing on cattle ranges, however. As Wyman put it, the problem with sheep was that they could not travel long distances and thus ate out the grass near the streams. (30)

F. D. Pease advocated terminating cattle leases. He thought Indians and half-breeds should have sheep. The advantage of sheep was that they brought money twice a year; whereas cattle brought money only once every four years. (31) Agent Wyman admitted the Crows might benefit from raising sheep, but sheep would be better on allotments than on open ranges. (32)

In the Crow Council of March 15, Chief Plenty Coos and Wet spoke against having sheep on the Reservation except sheep belonging to squaw men. Plenty Coos and Pretty Eagle wanted only six cattlemen allowed on the Reservation, and they named the six they wanted: Campbell of the Columbia Land and Cattle Company, the Hardin Campbell and Company, Portus Waare of the Hurlbut Land and Cattle Company, Ash, Story, and W. M. Spear representing Paul McCormick. They turned down four other cattlemen. Agent Wyman wrote Commissioner Morgan and said the only reason the Crows might have for objecting to these four cattlemen on the Reservation was due to the selfish influence of Chief Plenty Coos and Pretty Eagle. He thought their demand was irrational and should not be given weight. (33)

The Billings Gazette had an article containing the speeches by

Chief's Pretty Eagle and Plenty Coos. Pretty Eagle and Plenty Coos both stated they wanted no sheep, no horses, and no more cattle brought on the Reservation. F. D. Pease retorted that the "council shows the Handy work of the cattlemen . . ." (34)

Chief Plenty Coos requested another Council on May 9. Supported by Bell Rock and others, he added Porter to the six cattlemen the Crows would permit on the Reservation. (35)

On the 3rd of May, the Commissioner instructed the Agent to issue no more sheep permits, to terminate the present ones, and to remove sheep and horses from the Reservation, but by August Agent Wyman wanted the time extended.

This season has been the dryest known in Montana for several years, in some sections there is no grass or but a very slight growth. Within two weeks a number of prairie fires have started - some of them caused by the R R trains - in different portions of the reserve, - often burning large tracts for miles and miles in extent, across such tracts, stock of any kind cannot be driven except at severe loss. (36)

For many years Nelson and Walter Story ran their stock on Clark Fork and wintered them west of Pryor Creek. In 1890 they wished to run their stock east of Pryor Creek. But other cattlemen had permits on that area, and the Indians had a settlement there. The Indians came to the Agency for the Council on the 3rd and 4th of November to discuss with General N. A. Miles about selling a portion of the Reservation to the Cheyennes. Walter Story came too, and demanded the right to throw his herd across Pryor Creek. Agent Wyman refused him the right. At the Council Chief Plenty Coos, supported

by Wet, Bell Rock, and Pretty Eagle, said that Story's cattle had usually been on Clark Fork; they did not want his cattle east of Pryor Creek. Plenty Coos confessed his lack of appreciation for Story's donation of lumped-jawed cows and unmarketable flour. Other Crows claimed that Story did not pay for damages to their crops, nor did he hire Indians. Wyman explained what was motivating Story.

That the reason Mr. Story so earnestly desires to bring his very large herd of cattle east of Pryor Creek . . . is . . . because he feels certain that the western portion of the reserve is to be eventually segregated, and he is evidently determined to obtain a foot hold east of Pryor. (38)

Nelson and Walter Story wrote the Commissioner that previously Plenty Coos' band permitted their cattle to drift east of Pryor Creek; but this year Portus Weare and Paul McCormick had permits on the land east of Pryor. The Storys complained Weare's and McCormick's line-riders were giving harsh treatment to their cattle. (39) Agent Wyman pointed out the discrepancies between what the Storys said and what Plenty Coos said; the Storys commenced throwing their cattle across Pryor. (40) The Commissioner telegraphed Agent Wyman to permit the Storys' cattle to cross Pryor Creek. (41) The Secretary ordered that if the range would not support the Storys' cattle, then each cattlemán on the Reservation was to reduce his herd proportionately. (38)

Inspector James Cisney telegraphed the Secretary that there was "serious" trouble developing over the Storys' cattle. The Storys had three times as many cattle as they claimed. (42) At the end of November, Cisney reported that the Storys were disobeying orders.

"They have put many cattle across Pryor in the night & at other times." (43)

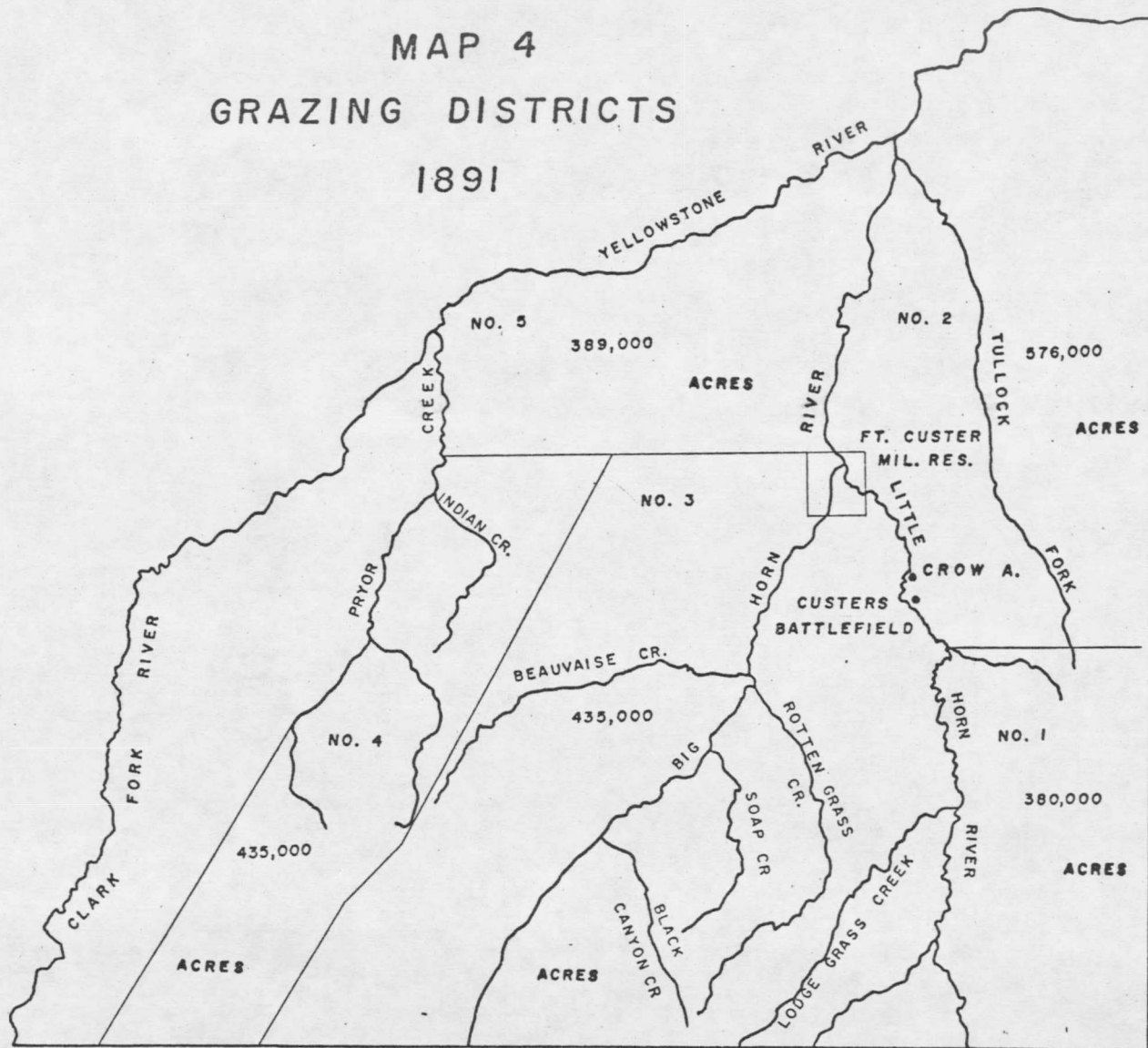
By December Wyoming cattlemen brought many thousands of cattle onto the southern portion of the Reservation. Samuel Garvin and the Hurlbut Company had removed their line-riders from the Wyoming border, and all the Agency employees and the Indian police were on Pryor Creek counting the Storys' cattle. The Secretary instructed that if the Wyoming cattle were on the Reservation prior to November 20, they should not be removed during the winter. (44)

William Warner, attorney, sent affidavits of six witnesses of the November conference with Inspector Cisney. Three of them claimed Lovell's cattle were on the Reservation before November 20, and three claimed Wyman used his influence to manipulate the conference and determined who could have cattle on the Reservation; they also said Cisney directed profane language at the cattlemen. (45)

Lovell and Story had 10,000 cattle on the Reservation, and the ranges were over-stocked by the end of February 1891. (46) It was time to organize the grazing situation and time to control the cattlemen. The Commissioner telegraphed Agent Wyman to divide the Reservation into five districts; the Agent did so (see Map 4). (47) The leases were to be for three years, for cattle only; proposals were to be sealed and accompanied by a certified check. (48)

The clerk explained the Commissioner's instructions to the Crows. There were no leaders, and the Indians present had no objection to letting to the highest bidder so long as Campbell was allowed to

MAP 4  
GRAZING DISTRICTS  
1891



ADAPTED FROM  
26188/91 (SC 133)

stay on the Reservation. But the next day the Indians went with Pretty Eagle to Fort Custer to converse with the commanding officer, General James S. Brisbin. Pretty Eagle told the General that he wanted the Hardin Campbell and Company, McCormick, Garvin, and the Hurlbut Company to stay on the Reservation, even if the Department should require them to pay more. He did not want to let to the highest bidder "independent of the character of the man . . ." (49) Medicine Crow said the Crows would not permit more cattlemen or strange ones on the Reservation. "If they don't believe that we are talking straight now," said Old Woman, "let some of them try to put cattle on the Reservation and see how quick we will put them off." (49) Then all the Crows shook hands with Brisbin.

It was obvious to Agent Wyman that the Crows had not understood that Hurlbut Company, Campbell, McCormick, Hardin, and Garvin had to leave the Reservation if strangers offered more money. When they did understand, "they all became excited and went from their camp direct to the Fort to talk with the 'soldier chief' . . ." (49)

The Council of April 25 was held at the request of 250 Crows. Chiefs Pretty Eagle, Plenty Coos, Medicine Crow, Wet, and Spotted Horse were very strong in their dissent to the bidding system and strong in their demand that the only cattlemen allowed on the Reservation be Williams of the Hurlbut Company, James Campbell, Sam Garvin, Paul McCormick, and S. H. Hardin. Pretty Eagle promised, "We will kick them off of our land." Plenty Coos comment was,

"If the 'Great Father' does not want any trouble with the Crows, don't send any more cattlemen among us. Don't send any strangers whose faces we don't know." (49) When Agent Wyman asked for a vote, not one Indian stood up for the bidding system and many shouted against it. "The Indians are not wholly unwise," Wyman wrote the Commissioner, "and they know that strangers coming on their lands with large herds of cattle, and paying for the range more than any one else can afford will not care very much for their (The Indians) property. . . ." (49) There was the danger that a "thoughtless and reckless man" west of Pryor might get one of the districts. (49) In all, Agent Wyman sent twenty-five pages defending the idea of leaving the men the Crows liked on the Reservation.

Commissioner R. V. Belt replied with a punch.

This Office regrets that any of the Crows, who, as a tribe, have been so obedient to, and respectful of, the wishes of the Government, should be guilty of the dictatorial expressions ascribed to them, and without one word of admonition, reproof or remonstrance from you. . . . It will be admitted that the Indians have the right to withhold their consent to the driving or grazing of cattle on their reservation, but if they desire to permit the grazing of cattle thereon as a means of revenue, it is for the Secretary of the Interior to prescribe the rules and regulations under which such permission shall be given. (50)

The Commissioner thought Wyman should have told the Indians that the new regulation was for improving the grazing business.

Furthermore, this Department would not hesitate to use its authority for the removal from the reservation of any Indians whose conduct shall be such as to render their presence thereon detrimental to the peace and welfare of the Indians upon the reservation. (50)

The fact that the Indians "when unattended by their chiefs or leaders" understood the system and thought it was good, but changed their minds

one day later, made it seem "these leaders were induced in some way, by parties in interest, or in the service of the United States at the Agency . . ." (50)

Agent Wyman pointed out that in the beginning of the Council he did present the Department's side to the issue, and he mentioned the need for better control of cattlemen such as Story and Lovell. Wyman said he doubted the Crows thought he had any kind of sympathy for them; he doubted the cattlemen had influenced the Crows; and he doubted the Crows intended violence. (51)

√ The proposals were opened in June. They amounted to \$29,781.50, or more than had ever been paid for grazing on the Crow Reservation. Samuel H. Hardin took district 1. District 2 was taken by M. Rosenbaum, manager of the Columbia Land and Cattle Company. District 3 went to Portus B. Weare. Thomas Paton of New York offered the most per year for district 4. District 5 was awarded to Matthew H. Murphy. The troublesome men west of Pryor did not even bid, and the men who won the districts were all known by the Crows, except for Paton. (52)

√ A year later the first fence went up on the Crow Reservation after Spotted Horse, Old Dog, and twenty-two Crows signed consent for J. A. Campbell and M. Rosenbaum to fence the eastern boundary of district 2. The fence was to keep out trespassing stock and wild horses east of the Reservation. (53)

When Special Agent Thomas P. Smith was investigating the charges against Agent Wyman in July 1893, he took down testimony by Samuel Garvin.

Garvin said that Agent Wyman had an "annual bribe fee" whereby he received a total of \$500 from the cattlemen who wanted permits on the Crow Reservation. Judge Alexander Fraser of Billings helped Wyman collect the bribe, and it was paid in 1893 in spite of the bidding system. Garvin also said that when the Secretary ordered the removal of horses and sheep from the Reservation in spring 1890. Fraser, who was in the wool business, threatened to expose Wyman's bribe if the Agent applied the order to the sheepmen. Hence, Wyman advocated extending the time for sheep. When the bidding system commenced, the cattlemen became hardhearted. In the winter of 1892 to 1893, the manager of the Hurlbut Company wanted Garvin to sell out to him, and he told Garvin that Weare had a knife in his boot for him.(54)

In spite of the lease system, the Crows had trouble keeping their cattle. "Recently I have been collecting evidence against three of the most notorious of the cattle and horse thieves," Agent J. W. Watson wrote in 1895, "and at this present time have the chain almost complete around them . . ."(55) But chaining thieves did not take place under Watson's administration.

In the same year the Custer County authorities claimed the lessees on the Reservation owed state and county taxes.(56) By September the sheriff had seized sheep belonging to Mrs. Kent, a squaw, for taxing.(57)

Secretary Hoke Smith renewed the same leases to 1899.(58)  
In 1896 he authorized advertising for bids on district 6.(59)

By August the bid of E. L. Dana for the Granger Cattle Company was approved.(60) No Indian consent was obtained for renewals or for advertising.(60) Trouble was bound to occur.

Agent Watson wrote about the problem of wild horses from Wyoming which came on the Reservation every spring. "They damage the ranges . . . and in addition to this injure the cattle very much by exciting them and driving them around when they are gaining in flesh."(61) A problem connected with the wild horses was Indian ponies. Indian ponies had been the basic part of economy for the Crows. Suddenly, in 1896 Agent Watson believed the situation had changed.

Although now they have many large valuable draught horses and are constantly getting more they have still a large percentage of the pony type which are of no use at all and at the same time are very injurious to the ranges. There being no market for these ponies I have concluded - though I would not wish to have it done - it would pay the Indians to kill all these surplus ponies in order to get rid of them and the damage they do . . .(61)

Watson's idea was authorized thirty years later (see Chapter XIII).

In December the lessees, headed by Thomas Paton, wrote Commissioner Daniel M. Browning that when they got the leases on the Reservation, there was no mention of paying state and county taxes on the cattle. If the Supreme Court sustained the Custer County officials, they wanted their leases cancelled.(62) Agent Watson wrote Commissioner Jones that "the officials of Custer County . . . claim the right to come upon the reserve with a numerous following, to round up the cattle wherever found drive them to any place they desire, and there sell the cattle for any taxes assessed on same."(63)

The cattle lost weight and were not properly assessed. The case went to Judge Knowles of the U.S. District Court of Montana who decided the lessees owed no state or county tax. The case was appealed in the U.S. Court in California where the decision was reversed.(63)

↓ By 1898 the large cattle companies discontinued, leaving more room on public domain. Shipping stock cost more. State taxes had been added for cattle grazing on the Crow Reservation. Portus Weare and Thomas Paton complained about Indians killing their stock. Both claimed the Indians killed exactly 2000, which Agent G. W. H. Stouch thought was a strange coincidence. Although the Crows admitted killing stock, they denied killing any stock belonging to Weare and Paton. Weare's lease was transferred to McCormick, who promised to build fifty miles of fence.(64)

While Agent Stouch was issuing rations, one of "the representatives of about five hundred Indians" presented some objections to the McCormick fence.

Their chief reason being that they were not interviewed on the subject, and their permission had not been obtained. They assert that the first contracts or leases were for a period of three years; these were made with their knowledge and consent; and the continuance of same for one year was likewise procured. But all leases granted since 1895 were secured without their knowledge and consent and they now enter formal protest against the erection of this fence, or the execution of a new contract with Mr. McCormick, without their full approval.(68)

Agent Stouch halted work on the fence.(65) But Secretary Thomas Ryan approved the original proposal.(66) And the Crows continued their complaint against the fence.(67)

Thomas Paton abandoned district 4 and headed to England or Scotland. Agent E. H. Becker thought it would be difficult to obtain a reliable cattleman for the district as most of them had permanent ranches and would not want to move their cattle. He suggested bringing back sheepmen. The advantage of sheepmen was they purchased all the hay the Indians could provide. The Secretary ordered bids to be taken for district 4 for both cattle and sheep. (68)

✓ In 1899 Agent Becker reiterated what Watson had said about the Crows losing cattle. Most knowledgeable men felt the Crows should own about 12,000 cattle by then, but in fact they owned only 5,700. Becker's solution was to employ four whites and three Indians to guard the Common herd. (69) Later Becker wrote:

In checking up the accounts of several Indians who have been working on the cattle round-up on this reservation during the past six or seven years, I find that they are well-to-do when it comes to ownership of cattle bearing their respective brands. In my opinion these Indians have pursued closely the tactics of a man by the name of Maverick, noted in years gone by, in the state of Texas, for his cunningness in branding calves that really belonged to his neighbors. . . . (70)

Agent Becker withheld \$1000 from the sale of "mavericked" cattle and thought it should be returned to the Common herd fund rather than paid to the Indians. (70)

Charles H. Dickson, Clerk of the Indian Office, wrote the Commissioner:

I have found, that with scarcely a single exception, all the Indians of this reservation are very bitterly opposed to a continuation of this system of leasing, and claim that they have never been consulted--as they by right should have been; that they have never been

regularly called into any council for the purpose of ratifying any of these leases upon the reservation, although they have learned that some sort of an agreement was entered into several years since, when a very few (three or four) of their head men were taken to the town of Billings and there prevailed upon to sign some sort of a paper relating to the leasing of a portion of their land, and they claim that this was not in accordance with the law or treaty stipulations. . . . (71)

Since the Crow herd was decreasing, the solution, as Dickson saw it, was to allow the leases to expire in 1900 and fence the Reservation.

No bids were received in 1899. "I have every reason to believe that there was collusion on the part of Agent Becker with other parties," Dickson reported, "and that nearly all of this time the range has been stocked by some cattle but principally sheep." (71) The First National Bank of Billings had sheep on the Reservation during Becker's administration. Three other men had sheep on the Reservation, too. The only benefit the Indians had received from the sheepmen were revenues from sale of hay to them. Dickson assured the Indian Office that J. E. Edwards knew how to make stockmen pay for their privileges. (71)

The day of judgment began when a week later Agent Edwards seized 20,000 sheep belonging to the President of the First National Bank. (72) Soon he commenced collecting money from stockmen for damages. (73)

Agent Edwards made an arrangement with Samuel Garvin at the end of August. Garvin agreed to pay \$200 for his basin on the Wyoming line. He had never paid for it before. "The conditions are such that this money is almost a gift," Edwards reported. (74) The part on the Reservation side was only accessible in the summer time, and the Indians

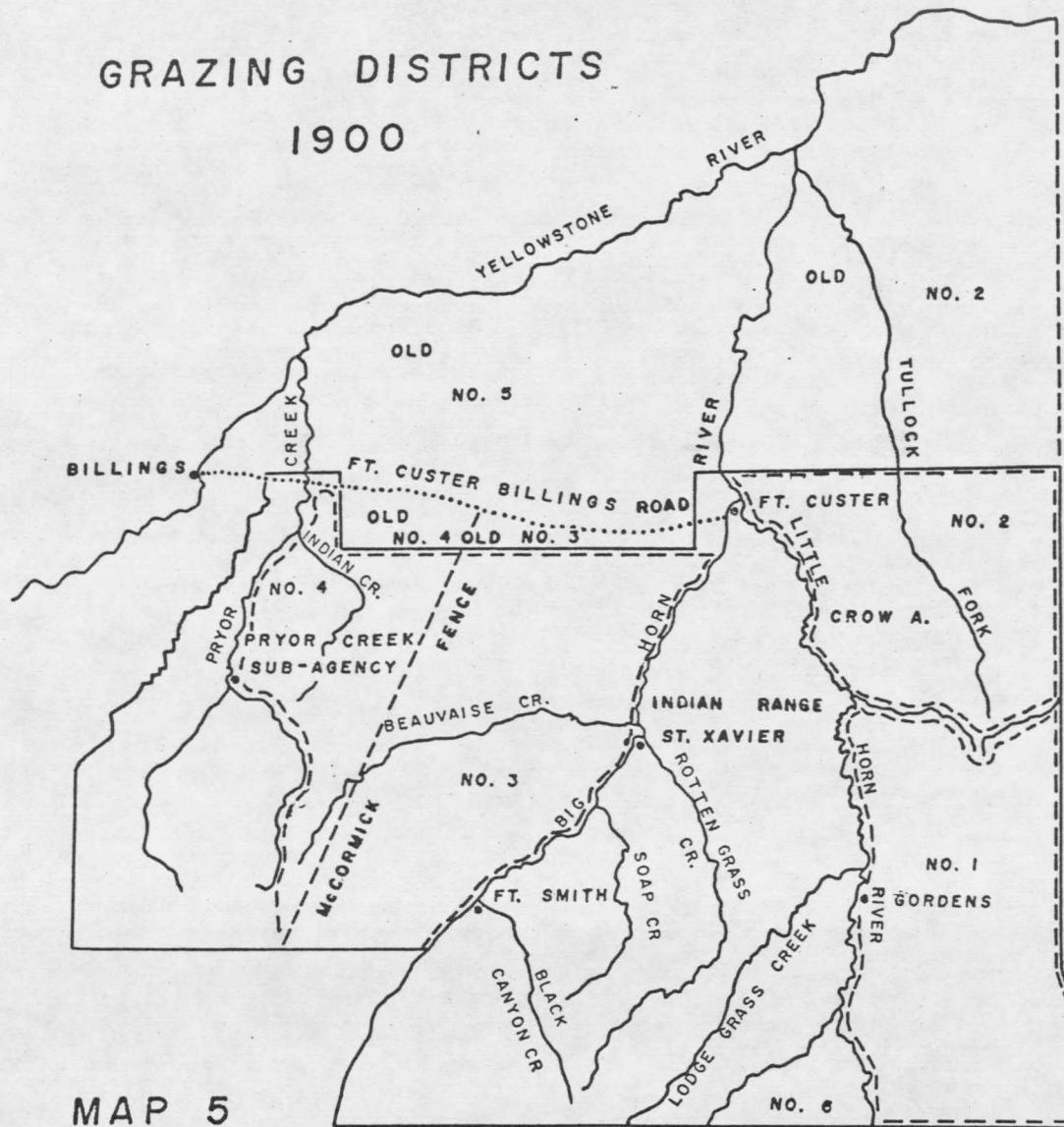
never went into this basin. Paul McCormick on district 3, Matt Murphy on district 5, and the Columbia Land and Cattle Company on district 2 agreed to pay for the five-mile exemption strips. These areas were usually a total loss for the Indians as little hay ever remained for their cattle.(74)

In the same month Agent Edwards sent the proposal of C. M. Bair to graze sheep on district 4. Bair agreed to pay the Indians for their hay. Secretary Hitchcock ordered a re-advertising of district 4 as he thought Bair's bid was too low.(75) Agent Edwards replied in October that Bair made the best proposal; the Indians would gain more from selling hay and oats.(76) So in December Edwards entered an informal lease with Bair.(77)

↓ Due to the Agreement with the Crows in 1899 for the cession of the northern portion of the Reservation, the grazing districts were changed in 1900 (see Map 5).(78) Advertisements were made on districts 2, 4, and 5. Secretary E. A. Hitchcock approved the bid of Charles J. Hysham on district 2, the bid of C. M. Bair on district 4, and the informal bid of Thomas B. McPherson on district 5 which was on the ceded portion.(79) S. H. Hardin remained on district 1.(80) And district 6 was kept by Edwin L. Dana.(81)

Agent Edwards discovered in late winter, 1901, two freshly branded steers. The brands had been altered and the steers belonged to Indians. The theft proved to be a classic after Agent Edwards sent an "outfit" into Garvin's basin to recover 757 head of Indian

# GRAZING DISTRICTS 1900



MAP 5

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cattle. The individually owned cattle had been branded I D, while the Common herd had been branded C.O. The altered brands were a combination of the two brands: ~~CD~~. Agent Edwards found Sam Garvin in Billings. Garvin claimed the cattle belonged to Robert Lee, and Lee produced a bill of sale. Yet, no one doubted the brands had been altered. Garvin claimed 600 head of the cattle had been mortgaged to the First National Bank at Billings. But only thirty-five head bore the brand he had mortgaged.

Thus Agent Edwards requested \$500 to convict both Lee and Garvin.

"In addition to the cattle I have followed into Wyoming and recovered 100 head of stolen Indian horses." (82) By March 21, Agent Edwards had recovered 140 unbranded yearlings along with the stolen cattle of Garvin's basin. The First National Bank, "being very anxious to get back any part of the \$24,000.00," supported Garvin. (83) Garvin employed four of the best civil lawyers in Montana. (83) Secretary Hitchcock requested a U.S. District Attorney to prosecute Garvin and Lee. (89)

Agent Edwards wrote:

A most unfortunate thing occurred during this hearing at Billings; a white man living on the north side of the Yellowstone River, opposite the reservation and off of it, has found, this winter, fifteen head of his cattle killed on the range. He placed a guard over his range and on the day of the hearing succeeded in catching three Crow Indians killing a beef belonging to him. The Indians were brought into Billings and proved to be "Little Light", his son, and "Throws It Away", all full-blooded Indians. "Little Light" confessed to me that he shot the beef and that his son and "Throws It Away" helped him dress it and carry the same to camp. Two white men were watching the whole proceedings. The son of "Little Light" is but sixteen years of age. I went personally to the prosecuting attorney and the owner of the animal in question and there requested

that they make no charge against the son and allow him to return to the reservation where I would place him in school from which he had been excused on account of the sickness of his father. I am much pleased that we are now able to punish members of this tribe for the killing of cattle in a manner to be remembered by them. I have, whenever a case was proven to me, punished them by imprisonment in the guard house, but this they do not have the same fear of as they do in being taken away from the reservation and placed in prison. It will have a most wholesome effect on the killing of cattle, both of their own and those belonging to whites, is one of the most serious problems we have to contend with here. As aforesaid, it is most unfortunate coming at the time when public interest is most strong over whites stealing the Indians' cattle.(85)

Robert Lee and Agent Edwards argued one day at the depot in Billings while one of Lee's men stood nearby "with a cocked winchester."(86) Edwards brought his best witness, a man who had worked on Garvin's ranch during the summer the cattle were stolen. But Edwards had to send "into the mountains for him" as Garvin and Lee had threatened to kill him.(86)

Agent Edwards telegraphed from Helena on December 25 that the "cattle case" was won, and Lee and Garvin were declared guilty.(87) The only complaint that Edwards had was that Garvin and Lee had stolen \$30,000 to \$35,000 worth of property, but under Federal law they only had to pay a \$1000 fine and go to prison for one year.(88)

In the following year Chiefs Pretty Eagle, Plenty Coos, Two Leggins, Medicine Crow, and a total of 750 Crows signed a petition urging the distribution of the C O herd.(89) The Crows signed a second petition in September.(90)

Agent Samuel G. Reynolds telegraphed the Commissioner on the 25th of August.

I left here last night with the sheriff and three employes after a band of cattle thieves we succeeded in capturing one of the leaders. I will start at once for the rest. This gang drove off a bunch of yearlings & calves and have taken many horses from the Indian herds . . . (91)

By September Reynolds had one of the thieves in the guard house, one bound over to the Federal Court, and he was searching for the other three in the mountains. (92)

Lee Simonsen moved onto district 3. (98) Drought and grasshoppers swept the ranges in 1903, and the beef market suffered a low. (94)

Agent Reynolds felt the need for twenty-four six-shooters with smokeless cartridges.

Our police are not armed at all at this writing, what guns we have are absolutely worthless, as they are all out of repair and are not worth the expense of repairing. We are constantly bothered by horse and cattle thieves who live along the borders of this reservation and stealing stock. All of these fellows go heavily armed and nearly all of them are desperate characters . . .

We made two very successful attempts last fall and in both instances, I armed the Indians with borrowed guns, and we succeeded in breaking up two bands entirely, and sent two of their number to the penitentiary and three made their escape and never been herd from since. . . . (95)

Osa Foree was captured in the mountains by Sheriff Neilson of Sheridan. (96) Foree was convicted of stealing calves from the Reservation, and he was given one year in the penitentiary. (97)

Agent Reynolds held a council on the 3rd of February 1905 to discuss grazing. (The Commissioner did not receive a copy of this council until 1909, a fact casting suspicion on its authenticity.)

Ten chiefs and leaders, including Chief Plenty Coos, signed their X's to an agreement to lease by permit the grazing districts provided

the lessees would purchase all Indian surplus hay. They further requested that Dana be permitted to retain district 6 and Bair be permitted to retain district 4. They wanted Frank M. Heinrich to stay on the Reservation but not on the Indian range. Agent Reynolds wrote that Heinrich had been the first to notify the Agency of Garvin's theft, and he proved to be the principal witness in the case convicting Sam Garvin. After Garvin and Lee were convicted, Heinrich "was granted a grazing privilege for the ranging of stock in the country south and west of Black Canon . . ." (98) He built a fence to prevent Indian cattle from drifting into Wyoming. "We have made three convictions for cattle stealing since," Reynolds added, "sending the party in each case to the penitentiary and Mr. Dana and Mr. Heinrich were the main witnesses and upon their testimony convictions were made in each of these cases." (98)

The facts are that the Indians in a great many cases will not protect their stock, and I will cite one instance: At the time Harrison and Coggins stole sixteen unbranded steer calves they drove them to a corral on Lodge Grass Creek where they kept them over night. In the morning six or eight Indians, who happened to come there, sat on the corral and watched the thieves brand the calves and also saw them drive them from the reservation. The suspicion of the Indians was never aroused and it was several months after we secured the conviction of Coggins that I found this fact out and talked with the Indians regarding the matter. The information came to the office from one of Dana's lineriders who saw them driving the calves from the reservation. (98)

Secretary Hitchcock approved the one-year permit to Heinrich north of Garvin's basin. (98)

On March 10 Reynolds captured two men from a gang on the east side of the Reservation. But Dr. Orlando Ferguson wrote Reynolds from

Hot Springs, South Dakota, that two or three years previously a gang of horse thieves ran off with 200 head of Crow ponies

and the detectives got after them. they heard that the detectives was on close pursuit and they drove the poneys off in a gulch. and rounded up a heard of Range horses and hurding them when the detectives came up on them. and when they saw that there was no crow horses amonge them they let them go.

Later the thieves sold them to one of their fathers. There were fifty or a hundred horses left, according to the doctor, and he recommended a U.S. Marshal be sent before they started their spring stealing again. G. W. Hall, a stock inspector at Havre, reported to Reynolds that rumors from Butte had it that a quarter blood Cherokee named Hall and Yorkurn, a Texan, were going to try running Crow horses into Canada. (99) The plan was probably conceived after a bet.

With Ferguson's information, Agent Reynolds headed for Hot Springs and investigated the gang on July 2. The horses had been stolen in the fall of 1901, and Agent Edwards had sent two from this gang to the penitentiary. Agent Reynolds caught three more of them for cattle stealing. "I know that these fellows are still an organized gang," Reynolds wrote, "and I think we have them in such shape that it will be doubtful whether they will bother us any more." (100)

Most of the hay raised by the Crows was grown between the Little and Big Horn Rivers. Agent Reynolds thought the lessees on districts 1, 2, and 4 should be required to purchase all surplus hay on the Reservation, in addition to that grown on their districts. (101)

Chief Plenty Coos and Big Shoulder Blade visited the

Commissioner in Washington, D.C. Plenty Coos said the Tribe was unanimous in their desire to have district 4 leased under the permit system, but they wanted districts 1 and 2 let to the highest bidder. The permit system granted better control over the number of stock because the charge was per head instead of per acre. District 4, or the Pryor district, was where about a third of the Crows lived, and they were continually chasing the lessee's stock off their allotments. Plenty Coos wrote to Secretary Hitchcock reiterating what he had told the Commissioner.

The bids were approved in May. Edwin L. Dana was awarded district 1; James L. Ash got district 2. The bids were rejected for district 4, and C. M. Bair received a permit for his 35,000 sheep.(102)

When Agent Reynolds learned Ash got district 2, he wired the Commissioner:

Hold up Ash lease. Believe Sam Garvin brother-in-law a partner.(103)

But the Secretary had already approved the lease.

After Garvin had been released from the penitentiary, he had been working for Ash, by then an invalid. Together they ran sheep west of the Pryor district.(103) J. L. Ash had paid \$900 to E. W. Toole and \$500 to W. M. Johnston, both lawyers, for the defense of Garvin. Reynolds had been employed at the First National Bank in Billings when the \$900 check was passed to him.(104)

R. V. Belt, formerly the Commissioner, was now the attorney for J. L. Ash. He sent an affidavit stating there was no connection between

Garvin and Ash, and that Garvin had no interest in the lease. Belt thought the Agent was simply making accusations because he was disappointed in the continuation of the Ash lease. (105) J. L. Ash was none other than the man who received the first permit to graze on the Reservation in 1882.

↓  
With the turn of the century, the hey-day of the cattle barons began to fall. S. H. Hardin, who had previously been grazing cattle on the Reservation, proposed to build a sugar beet factory in Wyoming and grow the beets on the Crow Reservation. By 1905 there were 70,000 acres of irrigable land on the Reservation; those acres were suited for sugar beets. Women and children could help. Hardin argued the beets would improve the soil, the work would help train the Indians in irrigation methods, the project would bring "a better class of whites" to the Reservation and better schools to the Indians, and the factory would provide job opportunities. Hardin felt that a five-year lease would not be profitable, thus he wanted a twenty-five-year lease on 10,000 acres. Improvements on the land would belong to the Indians when the lease terminated. If wheat and alfalfa were systematically used as rotation crops on the farm land, the Indians might receive \$100,000 in twenty years. Special Inspector Levi Chubbuck believed Hardin would actually need 20,000 acres to bring that much money to the Crows, but he suggested Hardin start with a five-year lease on 5000 acres. The Department withheld approval for fourteen years (see Chapter XII).

There were several white men, married to Indians, who were enjoying the custom of running cattle on the Reservation, regardless

of whether the cattle actually belonged to them. Reynolds told them to make arrangements with the Commissioner and lessee if they were on leased tribal lands. If the cattle were grazing on Tribal lands, they were required to pay the grazing tax per head into the Tribal fund. "None have desired to do this," Reynolds wrote. (107) In fact two whites came onto the Reservation, ran stock for a season, bought no hay from the Indians, and ran the stock off the Reservation before Reynolds heard about them. (107)

Agent Reynolds received a letter from the "Howe Bros." who wanted permission to gather their horses on the Reservation. Reynolds wrote them to report to the Sub-agency in Pryor and Van Hoose would assist them. Flood Howe, who wrote the letter, had been caught the previous fall stealing Indian horses and had been sent to the penitentiary for a year. (108) While Agent Reynolds was at Pryor, he heard that the Howes had come and left with horses. Reynolds wired the stock inspector, A. A. Campbell, and they caught the brothers with Indian horses. (109) The two were finally convicted in 1906 making the tenth successful stealing case on the Crow Reservation. (110)

The cattle grazing game made many twists and turns from 1882 to 1906. The cattle barons constantly invented new tricks to obtain free grass. The Indian Office invented new regulations for each new trick. It took time for the regulations to take effect. By 1887 the Interior Department was ready to begin applying regulations. But Agent Williamson's refusal to hold a council with the Crows prevented the leasing system from

↓ replacing the informal permit system. The Interior Department had determined that leasing to the highest bidder was a fairer system than permitting to local friends of the agents. The cattlemen, however, decided leasing was unfair, and in 1889 they rebelled by preventing all bids from reaching the Indian Office. In the following year, the Crow chiefs also went against the leasing system. They were supported by Agent Wyman. The Department threatened to make a stand against the cattlemen, the Indians, and the Agent. But in 1890 a drought brought the feud between cattlemen and sheepmen to a head and presented more urgent problems to the Department. The drought also brought much trespassing during the winter, thus swinging the Agent to the Department's side. While the Crow Reservation was severed in 1891, attention was focused on establishing the leasing system. A pause in cattlemen tricks resulted for awhile. The cattlemen now turned against the Indians. Thieving was conducted on a large scale, but nothing could be done about it. Agency corruption occupied local interests, and the exposition of the copper kings in western Montana occupied State interests. Finally in 1901 the first thief was caught. Agent Edwards had practice in cattleman tricks, and his appointment was a timely one. Cattleman after cattleman was caught thieving. Yet by 1906 litigation against cattlemen had barely commenced. The agents still had to deal with Ash and Heinrich (see Chapters XII and XIII).



































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































