

# Manuscript Sources in Sioux Indian History at the Historical Resource Center

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A little over one hundred forty years ago, artist George Catlin started on his now famous voyage up the Missouri River. Armed with journal and sketchbook, he intended to compose a written and pictorial record of various Plains Indian tribes. Catlin's motivation for this task emanated from his conviction that the Indians of North America faced cultural extinction.<sup>1</sup>

Triumph over the looming specter of cultural annihilation is an important historical theme among the Sioux Indians. Throughout the nineteenth century they suffered from wars, starvation, and federal bureaucracy. In spite of these ordeals, many aspects of Sioux civilization have survived. Much of their history appears in the narratives, journals, diaries, and letters written by a horde of nineteenth-century explorers, fur traders, missionaries, and soldiers who descended upon the Sioux.<sup>2</sup> This vast array of primary literature provides a great deal of

1. John C. Ewers, *Indian Life on the Upper Missouri* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), p. 192.

2. Three of the more interesting are: Edwin Thompson Denig's *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*, edited with an Introduction by John C. Ewers (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961); George Crook's *General George Crook: His Autobiography*, 2d ed., edited and with an Introduction by Martin F. Schmitt (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960); and Pierre Antoine Tabeau's *Tabeau's Narrative of Loisel's Expedition to the Upper Missouri*, edited by Annie Heloise Abel, translated from the French by Rose Abel Wright (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939).

information about the nineteenth-century Sioux. Like Faulkner's blacks, they have endured.

Less is known about Sioux history prior to 1800. Scholars have gained some information from a comparative handful of exploration and fur trade narratives. Most of these accounts are sketchy, at best.<sup>3</sup> Other researchers have learned as much about the pre-nineteenth-century Sioux from such artifacts as winter counts. The winter counts offer a varied but valuable pictographic record of yearly events that individual tribal leaders and historians considered significant. Analysis and comparison of recorded entries have led to some understanding of Sioux historical perspective. On the other hand, winter counts, like eighteenth-century narratives, require the researcher to generalize from a dearth of facts. This paucity of primary information presents a major barrier to the study of Sioux history prior to 1800.

Historians are occasionally hamstrung as much by a wealth of misinformation as they are by a scarcity of basic facts. This problem often plagues the researcher who works with nineteenth-century narratives of Sioux life. In many cases, these accounts were written by a missionary, fur trader, or Indian agent who showed more interest in what the Sioux "ought to be" than in what they actually were.<sup>4</sup> Such writings are often

3. Abraham P. Nasatir collected some of these narratives in his *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri, 1785-1804*, 2 vols. (St. Louis: St. Louis Historical Documents Foundation, 1952).

4. This characteristic occasionally graces the writing of fur trader Edwin Denig, who observed that "good Indians" were those who were "well 'disposed toward whites." Considering the high mark up that Denig placed on trade goods, it is surprising that he saw any evidence of the Indian's even disposition (Denig, *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*, p. 23).

Ethnocentric thought pervades the annual agency reports to the commissioners of Indian Affairs. The Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, with its provisions for breaking up the reservation community, had profound influence upon a whole generation of Office of Indian Affairs employees. In 1892 Rosebud Agent J. George Wright proudly reported "the surveying of a number of townships and preparations now being made to allot land." Such work indicated "no little advancement" among the Rosebud Sioux. Wright, along with others, was convinced that government plans for "individualizing and therefore the civilization of the Indian" were at once synonymous and proper. It probably never occurred to him that the Sioux already had a richly endowed civilization (U.S., Department of the Interior, Office of Indian

less than sympathetic and reliable. One contemporary scholar has even concluded that nineteenth-century Americans who wrote about the Indians "were only talking to themselves about themselves."<sup>5</sup>

In recent years, various Sioux Indians have contributed significantly toward the conservation and redemption of their heritage. Sioux oral testimony, as gathered by the American Indian Research Project at the University of South Dakota, has added depth and fresh perspective to the historical record. The writings and papers of many Sioux leaders and historians, including Charles Eastman, Luther Standing Bear, and Ella Deloria, are also useful, both as historical sources and as cultural antidotes. For this reason, manuscript libraries are making a vigorous search for other rare and valuable manuscripts by and about Sioux Indians.

The South Dakota State Historical Resource Center has many manuscript collections dealing with the Sioux. Most are records of white men's observations. To one degree or another, these manuscripts present the problem of cultural bias in interpreting historical sources. However, some reveal an uncommon level of sympathy for Indian culture. Many of the government agents, missionaries, fur traders, soldiers, and settlers represented in these manuscripts were life-long residents among the Sioux. In their eyes, the Indians were more than "wards," souls to be converted, or sources of profit: they were neighbors, friends, and relatives. These individuals were influenced by certain nineteenth-century white notions of the Indians, but they were also forced to evaluate such ideas in the light of years of close association with the Sioux. To that extent, these writers went beyond "talking to themselves about themselves"; herein lies the value of their written legacy.

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Affairs, *Sixty-First Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1892* [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1892], p. 464).

5. Roy Harvey Pearce, *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization*, rev. ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), p. 232.

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PROCESSED COLLECTIONS: Collections are listed in accession file number order.

- H21.1      ROBERT FLOYD KERR PAPERS, 1891-1919.      1½ linear feet
- Collection includes miscellaneous newspaper clippings and manuscripts concerning Indians and the Indian war period. See especially folders 29-32.
- H68.3      WILLIAM JOHNSON HURLBUT PAPERS, 1870-1878.      1 linear foot
- Hurlbut was a surveyor. This collection includes thirty-four of his pen and ink sketches of various Dakota Territory settings, including several depictions of Sioux scenes and artifacts. Many of the sketches are of tipis. All were done in 1871.
- H69.5      CHARLES EDMUND DELAND PAPERS, 1890-1935.      1½ linear feet
- Collection includes one folder of newspaper clippings related to Indians, plus letters, manuscripts, and miscellaneous papers related to Deland's study of the Mandans, the Sioux, and "Welch" Indians. The papers also reveal his interest in the notion that the Mandans may have had Siouan origins.
- H71.6      JOSEPH R. BROWN TRADING POST LEDGER, 1858-1861.      1 item
- Ledger kept at Lower Sioux Agency, Minnesota.
- H72.2      JOHN R. BRENNAN FAMILY PAPERS, 1882-1972.      2 linear feet
- The bulk of this collection dates from the period 1900-1917 when Major Brennan was superintendent of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Items dating after Brennan's death in 1919 were collected by his wife, Jennie L. Brennan, and his family. The collection includes a Senate document, telegrams, and other papers related to the Battle of Lightning Creek, Wyoming, between Wyoming authorities and Pine Ridge Sioux.
- Folder 25 and the Brennan Diary-Scrapbook for 1907-1915 contain papers related to the original Wounded Knee Massacre and to the 1913 filming of the event. The photograph albums also contain Wounded Knee photographs.
- The collection also consists of correspondence between Brennan and Thomas Sweeney of Rapid City;

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Cato Sells, commissioner of Indian Affairs; James McLaughlin, an inspector with the Department of the Interior; Ralph H. Ross, a fellow Indian agent; F. E. McIntyre, also an Indian agent; F. C. Campbell, agent at Cheyenne River Agency; General Marion P. Maus; the First National Bank of Rapid City; and Buell and Gardner, Attorneys at Law, Rapid City. In addition, the collection includes a diary kept by Indian Agent Valentine T. McGillicuddy at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, 15 March 1879 to 23 August 1880.

H72.4 UPPER MISSOURI SIOUX AGENCY RECORDS, 1863-1870.

242 items

This collection is largely composed of official agency correspondence and reports dated between 1866 and 1869, when Joseph R. Hanson was agent.

H74.9 DOANE ROBINSON PAPERS, 1880-1946.

7 linear feet

Doane Robinson served as secretary of both the South Dakota State Historical Society and the South Dakota Department of History between the years 1901 and 1925. Several manuscripts in this collection deal with Sioux Indian history.

Folder 5 contains a John R. Brown letter of 23 February 1904, concerning Red Cloud's hostile activities at Pine Ridge, and a Mrs. John R. Brennan letter of 7 May 1904, listing the children of Red Cloud.

Folder 8 contains a 10 October 1907 letter from O. S. Mason giving the correct interpretation of the name "Tashunka Kokipa" for both Old-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses and Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses.

Folder 9 contains a George Waldo Reed letter of 13 October 1909, concerning the burial places of Gall and Rain-in-the-Face.

Folder 24 contains a William Garnett letter of 15 December 1923, giving Red Cloud's parentage.

Folder 25 contains a 27 November 1924 letter to Frank Hebert stating that Black Fox fired the first shot at the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890.

Folder 44 contains papers relating to Joseph R. Brown and Truth Teller at Crow Creek. The folder also contains correspondence with Samuel J. Brown concerning the Sisseton Sioux and other related topics.

Folder 92 contains correspondence and other papers, dated 1908, concerning the Indian courts on the various Sioux reservations in South Dakota.

Folder 101 contains a 1908 letter from Charles Percival Jordan discounting the existence of a photograph of Crazy Horse.

Folder 164 contains correspondence with D. F. Barry concerning the role of Rain-in-the-Face in the Little Big Horn Battle.

Folder 167 contains a Charles Percival Jordan manuscript relating his experiences among the Sioux, which includes an account of Crazy Horse. The folder also contains recollections of Red Cloud by Charles Percival Jordan.

Folder 236 contains the six-page manuscript "The Education of an Indian Boy," which concerns Red Cloud.

Folder 237 contains the four-page manuscript "Red Cloud" and the manuscript "Rain-in-the-Face."

H74.42 CHARLES PERCIVAL JORDAN PAPERS, 1878-1924.

1 ledger book  
(40 cm.)

Charles P. Jordan was closely associated with the Indians of Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations for almost fifty years. Between 1874 and 1924, he served at various times as chief clerk, acting superintendent, and post trader at the two agencies.

This collection is contained in a ledger labeled "Letters Forwarded." It includes copies of outgoing correspondence that Jordan made when he was a clerk at Spotted Tail Agency, Yankton, Rosebud Agency, and Rosebud Landing, 1878-1879. The remainder of the ledger was used by Jordan as a scrapbook for newspaper clippings, correspondence, writings, and other papers. Several Jordan letters in the collection deal with the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890.

H74.77 EPISCOPAL CHURCH RECORDS, 1868-1963.

1 linear foot

Collection includes bishop reports, journals of convocations, and other papers from the Missionary District of South Dakota, the Bishop of Niobrara, and various South Dakota churches. Most of the papers concern Bishop William Hobart Hare and Indian missions and are in the form of printed reports, circulars, and letters for the period 1873-1900.

H74.83 JOHN POAGE WILLIAMSON PAPERS, 1866-1915.

62 items

Williamson (1835-1917) was the son of pioneer

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Minnesota missionary Thomas Smith Williamson. He spent his youth in Minnesota, was educated in Ohio and Illinois, and returned to Minnesota as a missionary in 1860. In 1863 he followed the exiled Santee Sioux to Fort Thompson on the Crow Creek Agency in Dakota Territory, and in 1866 he went with them to Niobrara, Nebraska. In 1869 he moved to Yankton Agency in Dakota, where he became general missionary to the Sioux for the Presbyterian Church. This collection consists of John Poage Williamson correspondence, 1867-1913, and miscellaneous papers, 1866-1915.

H74.87 VALENTINE T. MCGILLYCUDDY PAPERS, 1879-1924.

31 items

This collection consists mainly of correspondence from the period 1884-1887. Most of this concerns an investigation of Dr. McGillicuddy's accounts as Indian agent at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Also included is a notarized statement McGillicuddy made in 1922 concerning the services of William Garnett as an interpreter.

H74.105 THOMAS SMITH WILLIAMSON PAPERS, 1858-1875.

49 items

Collection consists mainly of letters from Williamson to his son, John Poage Williamson, both missionaries among the Sioux. The correspondence is mostly from the period 1863 to 1875, and much of it deals with the Santees who were driven out of Minnesota after the uprising in 1862. Folder 1 contains a manuscript, probably written by Thomas Williamson, concerning Indian languages. A J. P. Williamson letter of 1863 describes the desolation of the new reservation at Fort Thompson.

H74.115 JAMES McLAUGHLIN LETTER, 1920.

1 item  
(16 pages)

Enclosures include typescript copy of a lengthy statement by William Garnett about the death of Crazy Horse at Fort Robinson in 1877.

H74.180 LAWRENCE KEITH FOX PAPERS, 1922-1946.

½ linear foot

Folder 5 contains a 10 October 1937 letter from Rudolph Cronau giving his reminiscences of Sitting Bull and telling of a photograph found on his body

after his death. Folder 11 contains various letters and other papers concerning Sitting Bull.

H75.11 ROSEBUD YELLOW ROBE COLLECTION.

30 items

The collection consists of miscellaneous papers (mostly xeroxed copies) concerning the Yellow Robe and Frantz families. The papers were donated by Rosebud Yellow Robe and her husband, Alfred A. Frantz. Rosebud Yellow Robe is the daughter of Chauncey Yellow Robe, who was a well-known chief of the Brule Sioux.

H75.17 BEN ARNOLD MANUSCRIPT.

14 notebooks

Collection consists of Arnold's reminiscences of life on the frontier, about 1864 to 1890. Arnold worked at various jobs in Wyoming, Montana, Nebraska, and the Dakotas, where he frequently came into contact with Indians.

H75.21 MRS. FRANK EATON COLLECTION.

3 items

Collection consists of a "song" composed by One Bull, an Indian chronology for the years 1789-1926, and Bear Stands's certificate for voting in favor of opening the Sioux Reservation in 1888.

H75.29 YANKTON AGENCY CASH ANNUITY RECORD, 1864.

1 item  
(18 pages)

This collection consists of ledger sheets that contain the record of cash annuities paid to the Yankton Sioux Indians, 4-5 October 1864. The record lists eight major bands by chiefs, head-men, and heads of families. The eight bands are those of Struck-by-the-Ree, Jumping Thunder, Medicine Cow, Little White Swan, Feather-in-his-Ear, Pretty Boy, Mad Bull, and Left Hand. Information provided includes names, numbers of men, women, boys and girls, and amounts paid. The record is signed by W. A. Burleigh, agent to the Yankton Sioux.

H75.32 WILLIAM JOSHUA CLEVELAND COLLECTION, 1875-1910.

66 items

Cleveland (1845-1910), a native of New Jersey, served as an Episcopalian missionary at various Sioux



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reservations in South Dakota for most of the forty-year period following 1870. The collection includes numerous newspaper and magazine clippings, a scrapbook, and a few letters.

- H75.51 THE EPISCOPAL MINISTRY TO THE SIOUX—BUSINESS RECORDS RELATING TO THE CONSIGNMENT AND PURCHASE OF INDIAN LANDS, AND TO THE BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE OF CHURCH STRUCTURES ON INDIAN RESERVATIONS, 1874-1911.

1 linear foot

These records are from the office of Bishop William Hobart Hare. As bishop of Niobrara and later of the Dakotas, Hare inaugurated a program of building schools, chapels, and rectories at the Sioux and Ponca Indian reservations in the region. The records include correspondence, building specifications, contracts, receipts, and material relating to the purchase, sale, consignment, and transfer of land.

- H75.58 WHITE BEAR MAPS: FORT PHIL KEARNEY AND THE FETTERMAN MASSACRE.

2 items

This collection consists of two penciled, roughly drawn maps by Chief White Bear of the Brule Sioux. The maps illustrate Fort Phil Kearney and the Fetterman Massacre.

- H75.71 EMMA VIGNAL BORGLUM MANUSCRIPT, n.d.: "THE EXPERIENCE AT CROW CREEK: A SIOUX INDIAN RESERVATION AT SOUTH DAKOTA."

1 item

Collection consists of Borglum's account of a four-month visit to the Crow Creek Indian Reservation during the summer of 1899. She describes Sioux ceremonies, Plains environment, and Sioux family life. The original manuscript is in the Library of Congress.

- H75.73 REV. JOSHUA DAVIS NOTEBOOK, 1884-1907.

1 item  
(150 pages)

Davis, an officer of the Indian Rights Association, traveled widely in the American West, visiting various Indian reservations and missions. Sometime in the mid-1880s, he began to keep a notebook as a record of his information on American Indians and Indian affairs.

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H75.82      CROW FEATHER PAPERS, 1851-1876.

10 items

Crow Feather, a chief of the Sans Arc Sioux, was the first signer of the Treaty of 1865. Papers in this collection include several letters signed by government agents and military officers testifying to Crow Feather's good conduct, a circular from the superintendent of Indian Affairs to Indian agents and traders outlining the provisions of the Treaty of 1851, and an announcement signed by General Harney declaring Crow Feather to be the chief of the Sans Arc.

H75.114      J. D. GOULETTE MANUSCRIPT, n.d.

1 item  
(17 pages)

Goulette, a mixed-blooded Sioux, was ninety-seven years old when he wrote this manuscript some time after World War I. He was a self-taught construction engineer and had worked for Gulf Oil Company before moving to Tucson, Arizona, in 1932.

This partly autobiographical manuscript deals with steamboating on the Missouri, freighting between the Black Hills and Pierre, politics and the Indian, and hunting on the Yankton Reservation.

H75.134      PHILIP FARIBAULT WELLS PAPERS, 1866-1891.

2 items  
(49 pages)

Wells was born in Minnesota in 1851. His mother was a Santee Sioux Indian. Wells spent his youth developing a proficiency in several languages, including French and Sioux. He later served as chief interpreter and guide for the army during the Messiah War. He was present at the Wounded Knee Massacre. Wells died in 1947.

This collection consists of a Wells manuscript on the Fetterman Massacre, which was based on interviews with Red Cloud in 1887 and Jim Bridger in 1872. Another manuscript details Wells's recollections of the Messiah War. This manuscript formed part of Wells's "Ninety Six Years Among the Indians of the Northwest," which appeared in *North Dakota History* in 1948.

H75.176      SIMON J. KIRK MANUSCRIPT, n.d.

1 item  
(14 pages)

Simon Kirk was the grandson of Chief Oihduze of

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the Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakotas, and the son of Job Carl Kurtz and Oihduze's daughter, Mary Tamnuga. After completing studies for the ministry at the Santee Normal Training School, Kirk entered the Indian Service in 1898. He resigned in 1931.

His manuscript opens with a short history of the Sissetons and Wahpetons under the leadership of Chief Oihduze and continues with his own experiences as a youth. Among the subjects covered is the reaction of Standing Rock Reservation Indians to the death of Sitting Bull.

H75.190 LUTHER NORTH LETTERS AND MANUSCRIPT.

5 items

Captain Luther North (1846-1935), along with his brother Major Frank North, organized and commanded the Pawnee Scouts used by the army during the Plains Indian wars. This collection consists of four letters in which North briefly describes the Battle of Summit Springs, the death of Tall Bull, and the character of William Cody. The final item in the collection is a brief manuscript, "Indian Camps of the Plains," in which North describes the general layout of Indian villages.

H75.225 DELORME W. ROBINSON PAPERS, 1893-1909.

36 items

Robinson was president of the State Board of Health. He also conducted research in the history of South Dakota. Among his papers is correspondence with Father Martin Kenil regarding Sitting Bull. Other correspondence with C. P. Jordan regards Spotted Tail.

H75.251 CROW DOG TRIAL AND RELATED PAPERS, 1882-1883.

13 items

This collection consists of petitions, affidavits, and a brief of the Dakota Territorial Supreme Court concerning the trial of Crow Dog, a Sioux Indian, for the murder of Spotted Tail, also a Sioux, in August 1881. The Supreme Court eventually released Crow Dog on the grounds that the lower federal courts had no jurisdiction over the Sioux Reservation.

H75.262 MARY C. COLLINS PAPERS, various dates.

16 items

This collection consists of various miscellaneous items relating to or written by Mary C. Collins, a

Congregational missionary at the Standing Rock Reservation during the late 1800s. Included within this collection are poems and several anecdotes about Sitting Bull, Little Eagle, Cross Bear, the Little Big Horn, and portions of several missionary pamphlets.

H75.306 WILLIAM T. SELWYN CORRESPONDENCE, 1892-1893.

28 items

In the Treaty of 1892 the Yankton Sioux agreed to relinquish what was described as surplus lands off their reservation for a cash payment of \$600,000 and other considerations. William T. Selwyn, or Wicahaokdeum, a Yankton leader, was instrumental in securing and maintaining Yankton support for the treaty. This collection consists of a series of letters between Selwyn and John J. Cole, commissioner of Indian Affairs and coauthor of the treaty, and others. Selwyn was eventually appointed assistant farmer on the Yankton Reservation.

H75.313 CARL GUNDERSON SURVEY BOOK: FIELD NOTES, about 1907-1908.

1 item

Gunderson worked as a survey engineer for the Federal Indian Service. He compiled at least one population and residence census of Indian families while visiting various South Dakota reservations. His enumerations for the Bullhead District, Standing Rock Indian Reservation, comprise the subject matter of this survey book. Notations include family names, given names, and residence locations, by township, section, and subsection number. Gunderson's apprenticeship in basic demographics served him well. In 1924 he was elected governor of South Dakota.

H75.321 SIOUX MISCELLANY, various dates.

215 items

This collection consists of miscellaneous items relating to the Sioux. Documents include originals, typescripts, and photocopies. The collection is organized largely by topic and type of manuscript.

H75.342 REV. JOHN B. RENVILLE INTERVIEW, 1901.

2 items

Renville describes how American Indian agent and fur trader Manuel Lisa played Teton against Santee as a means of breaking British influence among the Sioux during the War of 1812.

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UNPROCESSED COLLECTIONS: Collection titles and accession file numbers may change after processing.

- H74.18 THOMAS LAWRENCE RIGGS FAMILY PAPERS.

8 linear feet

Papers from the Oahe Mission and the Oahe Industrial School, about 1880 and thereafter, deal with religious and industrial missions among the Sioux.

- H75.568M U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR. OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS TYPESCRIPT: "READJUDICATION OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL SIOUX INDIAN PERSONAL PROPERTY CLAIMS, ACT OF MAY 3, 1928 (45 STAT. 484)."

1 roll

(35 mm microfilm)

This report summarizes results of "the investigation and determination of the claims of individual Sioux Indians of specified Indian reservations in the State of North and South Dakota, Montana, and Nebraska for allotments of land and for losses of personal property and authorized to be adjudicated by the act of May 3, 1928 (45 Stat. 484)."

- H75.788M CROW CREEK AGENCY, DAKOTA TERRITORY, ISSUE BOOK, 24 JUNE 1880-19 AUGUST 1882.

½ reel

(35 mm microfilm)

Lists certain vital statistics and ration issues for various bands residing at Crow Creek.

- H75.789M LOWER BRULE AGENCY, DAKOTA TERRITORY, LETTERS, 1876-1879.

½ reel

(35 mm microfilm)

- H75.790M LOWER BRULE AGENCY, DAKOTA TERRITORY, LETTERS, 1876-1879.

1 reel

(35 mm microfilm)

- H75.791M LOWER BRULE AGENCY, DAKOTA TERRITORY, LETTERS AND RATION ISSUE ABSTRACTS, 1879-1881.

½ reel

(35 mm microfilm)

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- H75.819M    CROW CREEK AGENCY, DAKOTA TERRITORY, LAND ALLOT-  
MENT BOOK, 1880-1881.

1 reel  
(35 mm microfilm)

Entries are by family name, both English and Dakota. They provide the allottee's age and sex. Landed holdings are recorded by section, township, and range. Size is indicated by acres and one-hundredths. There is an entry index, which is arranged by anglicized family name.

- H76.15      J. B. McCLOUD MANUSCRIPT, n.d.

1 item  
(14 pages)

McCloud's reminiscences of his experiences in the Messiah War.

- H77.21      BEN BLACK ELK INTERVIEW, 1972.

1 cassette tape

A wry, philosophical reflection upon past and present themes in the history of Sioux-white relations.

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