The "Sioux Outbreak" in the Illustrated Press

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Western South Dakota grabbed national media attention a century ago with the spread of the Ghost Dance movement, the killing of Sitting Bull, and the confrontation at Wounded Knee. If newspaper readers across the country in 1890 had confined themselves to the two major illustrated weeklies, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper's Weekly,* they would have seen South Dakota as a place of great adventure and danger. As with television today, the emphasis of the weeklies was on pictures, and the cavalry and Indians provided great source material.

Established in 1855 and 1857 respectively, *Leslie's* and *Harper's* were forerunners of the picture magazines of the mid-twentieth century. At a time when newspapers rarely printed news photographs, these publications used both photographs and drawings in dramatic ways. The emphasis a story received often depended on the picture that accompanied it. On the other hand, if a good story had no picture, an illustrator in the New York headquarters of either newspaper would draw one, even if he had not witnessed the scene or event depicted. While images were their mainstay, the illustrated weeklies also pointed with pride to the depth of their news coverage. Because printing technology at first allowed the printing of illustrations on

only one-half of the newspaper's pages, the alternate double pages were often filled with interpretive stories and editorials in addition to long travel articles, gossip, poetry, and fiction.[1]

Besides relying on artists at the scene and in their New York offices, both weeklies employed engravers to transfer pictures to plates for printing. In the 1850s, engravers had redrawn the original pictures onto wooden blocks, which were then carved—the un-inked areas being cut away—and used on the printing press. The halftone, created through a photographic process that broke images into patterns of dots, giving the illusion of a continuous gradation from dark to light, was not available until 1880. Even then it was adopted gradually. By 1890, however, the illustrated weeklies used a variety of pictorial techniques, ranging from hand engravings to sophisticated halftones.[2]

Frederic Remington's first published illustration shows the complex relationship between an artist on location and the staff in New York. On his first trip West in 1881, the nineteen-year-old Remington toured Wyoming and Montana. Having failed to take a sketchbook, he made a drawing on a piece of wrapping paper and sent it to *Harper's Weekly*. There, William A. Rogers, an experienced western illustrator, copied it for publication in *Harper's* the following year as "Cow-boys of Arizona: Roused by a Scout." The credit line read, "Drawn by W. A. Rogers from a sketch by Frederic Remington." The sketch had been made in Wyoming or Montana, but because it lent itself well to an article on the Southwest, its title was conveniently changed. By 1890, Remington had become a regular free-lance illustrator for *Harper's Weekly* and other major publications. Although westerners could spot errors in his drawings, *Harper's* pointed with pride to their realism. Remington's work in South Dakota for the illustrated weekly brought him as close as he ever came to witness-

1. William E. Huntzicker, "Frank Leslie," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography: American Magazine Journalists, 1850-1900,* ed. Sam G. Riley, vol. 79 (Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1989), pp. 209-22; Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines,* vol. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), pp. 452-65, 469-87. The *Newspaper Annual* (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer & Sons, 1892) reported circulation figures around the time of the Wounded Knee conflict at eighty-five thousand for *Harper's* and seventy thousand for *Leslie's.* Both publications were printed on newsprint in about the same size as today's tabloid newspapers.

2. Philip C. Geraci, *Photojournalism: New Images in Visual Communication,* 3d ed. (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1984), pp. 146-47. For a detailed discussion of the various processes employed in illustration during the last half of the nineteenth century, see Robert Taft, *Photography and the American Scene: A Social History, 1839-1889* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1938), pp. 419-50.

ing the cavalry action he so often depicted. It also presented the artist with an excellent opportunity for self-promotion.[3]

Exactly how many correspondents the two publications had in South Dakota to cover what they called the "Sioux outbreak" is not known, but both *Harper's* and *Leslie's* printed several long stories filled with details and opinions obtained from soldiers and other witnesses. News reports covered the conflict from an almost exclu-

Frederic Remington

sively white perspective, and both daily newspapers and the illustrated weeklies exaggerated the possibility of an uprising among all Indian nations of the Northwest. Readers across the country saw the ominous signs of a conspiracy in the rapid spread of the Ghost

3. Peggy Samuels and Harold Samuels, *Frederic Remington* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), pp. 35-36, 150.

Dance, a religious movement based on the vision of Wovoka, a Nevada Paiute who prophesied the disappearance of white people and the return of the buffalo. Wovoka's teachings brought new hope to a people who had only recently been confined to reservations where they suffered from starvation, the continued loss of land, and the elimination of tribal customs under a government policy of assimilation. By the fall of 1890, the Sioux on four reservations west of the Missouri River in South Dakota had begun participating in the Ghost Dance, heightening the tension between whites and Indians.[4]

White fears of an uprising led to the concentration of troops in the area and, in turn, to greater Sioux anxiety. At the end of November, as army troops under Maj. Gen. Nelson A. Miles arrived on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations, many of the Ghost Dance participants gathered with their leaders Short Bull and Kicking Bear at the Stronghold, a remote point on a Badlands table in the northwestern corner of the Pine Ridge reservation. Daniel F. Royer, newly appointed agent at Pine Ridge, feared the Ghost Dance and had implored the army to arrest its leaders, who merely laughed at his repeated orders to stop dancing. On the Standing Rock reservation, Agent James McLaughlin viewed Sitting Bull, as well as the Ghost Dance, as a potential source of trouble and ordered the Indian police in mid-December to arrest the Hunkpapa chief at his home on that reservation. Another leader under observation because he embraced the Ghost Dance was Big Foot of the Miniconjou band on the Cheyenne River reservation.[5]

In one of the first references to the trouble in South Dakota to appear in an illustrated weekly, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* for 22 November 1890 strongly reflected the view that Sitting Bull was a troublemaker. Calling him the "high priest of the Indian Messiah craze," *Leslie's* presented a half-page illustration of a grouchy-looking Indian standing in front of a tipi lecturing his followers, who were gathered around a campfire (Figure 1). An illustration made

4. Robert M. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 69-70, 91-98. On the debate as to whether the Ghost Dance among the Sioux actually posed a threat to whites, see Raymond J. DeMallie, "The Lakota Ghost Dance: An Ethnohistorical Account," *Pacific Historical Review* 51 (Nov. 1982): 385-405. Russell B. Thornton discusses the demographics of the Ghost Dance in *We Shall Live Again: The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance Movements as Demographic Revitalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

5. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, pp. 96, 103-5, 121-22; James McLaughlin, *My Friend the Indian* (1910; reprint ed., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books, 1989), pp. 217-18.

Figure 1. The Indian Craze over the "New Messiah—Sitting Bull Seeks to Foment Disaffection among the Sioux Bucks," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, *22 November 1890*

from a David F. Barry photograph of Sitting Bull in full headdress also appeared on the page. On the same date, a *Harper's Weekly* editorial sympathized with the Indians' problems, blaming the political patronage that resulted in the appointment of incompetent or dishonest Indian agents for most of the difficulties on the plains. Yet, in the next paragraph, the publication cheered the government for taking seventeen million acres of "surplus lands" from Indians under the allotment program. Proceeds from the sale of these lands were to be invested to pay for the worthy cause of "Indian education and civilization."[6]

On 6 December, *Harper's Weekly* published nine Remington pictures, including a double-page illustration of the Ghost Dance (Figure 2). The other illustrations filled two pages under the headlines "Chasing a Major-General" (Figure 3) and "Concentrating

6. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* 22 Nov. 1890, p. 280; *Harper's Weekly,* 22 Nov. 1890, p. 902.

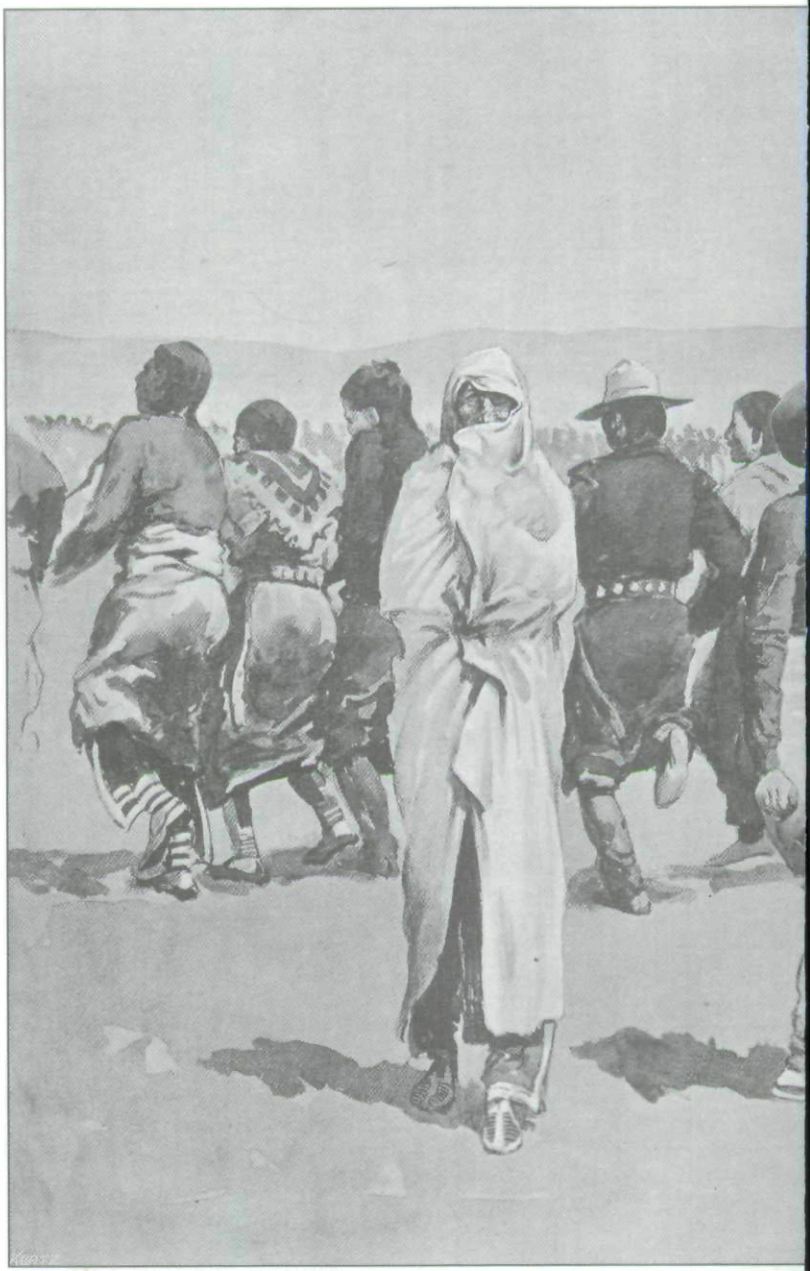
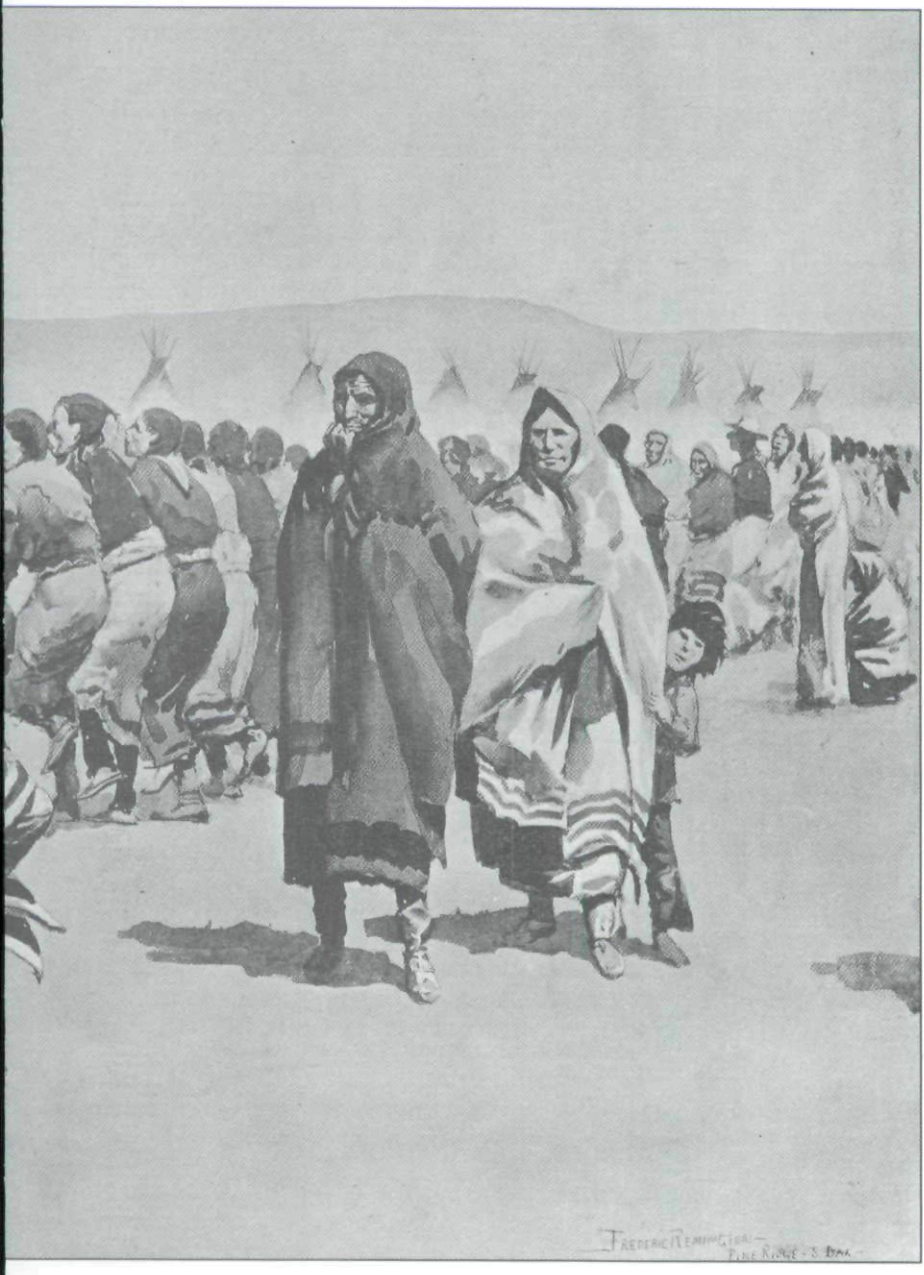


Figure 2. The Ghost Dance by the Ogallala Sioux at Pine Ridge Agency, Dakota, Harper's Weekly, *6 December 1890*



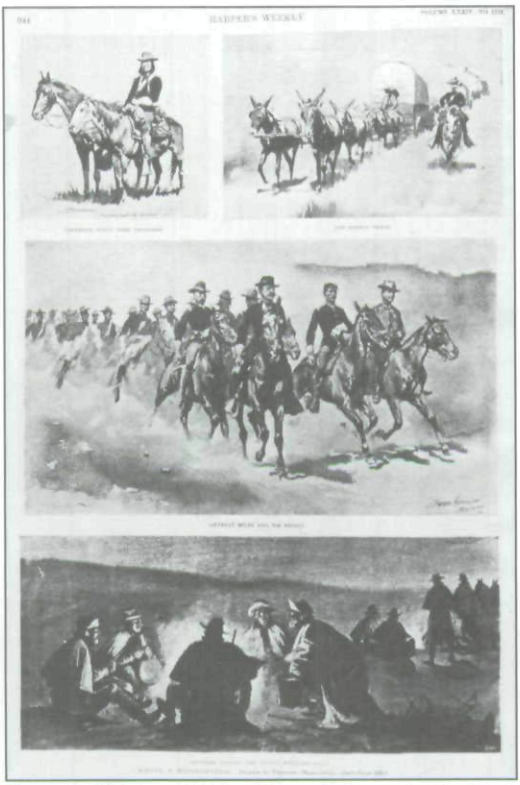


Figure 3. Chasing a Major-General, Harper's Weekly, *6 December 1890*

Troops on the Northern Indian Agencies." To accompany the pictures, Remington wrote two articles, one an entirely laudatory description of life in Miles's fast-moving cavalry and the other a call for reporters to honor the army's need for secrecy. Eastern newspapers were readily available on the plains where English-speaking Indians had access to them.[7]

In addition to the Remington articles and illustrations, *Harper's* printed a description of the Ghost Dance by Lt. Marion P. Maus of the cavalry. With Christianity, the Ghost Dance religion shared a

7. *Harper's Weekly,* 6 Dec. 1890, pp. 944-47, 960-61. Remington's articles from *Harper's* have been reprinted in Peggy Samuels and Harold Samuels, eds., *The Collected Writings of Frederic Remington* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1979).

belief in a "Great Spirit" and a "happy hunting-ground," Maus wrote. Its vision of an idealized world filled with luscious grass and an abundance of buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope offered a sharp contrast to the poverty of reservation life. Under such conditions, Maus contended, the Indian could not be blamed for believing in a Messiah who would save him from the whites who had caused many of his problems. "Little wonder he looks for a change, and longs for his once free life, and gladly grasps the new belief in the red Saviour, which is rapidly spreading to every Western tribe," the lieutenant said, going on to describe the visions of several Indians, including Sitting Bull. Like most stories, this one referred the reader to an accompanying picture, stating that both Maus and Remington had witnessed the Ghost Dance on the Pine Ridge reservation.[8]

On 13 December, *Leslie's* reported that the Indian troubles had begun to subside with General Miles's deployment of troops to the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations. Yet, the account noted, the two-thousand-man cavalry was at a disadvantage against a force of six thousand warriors, some of whom were "desperate men."[9] According to the report, another prophet had usurped Sitting Bull's role as a Ghost Dance leader, and some dancers had been arrested and incarcerated.[10] A page of rough sketches by artist Jerome H. Smith showed a chief speaking for peace, ranchers bunching cattle for protection, an exodus of "half-breeds and squaw-men," and the Ghost Dance (Figure 4).[11]

Leslie's story of 20 December, written by an anonymous officer, began by recalling the arrival of the army at Big Foot's village the previous April to force the Cheyenne River Sioux onto a smaller reservation. Big Foot's band had opposed the Sioux Act of 1889, implemented two months earlier, that had opened several million acres of reservation land in western South Dakota to white settlers. *Harper's* had recently portrayed the sale of this land as democratic because three-fourths of Sioux men had agreed to the act.[12] *Leslie's,*

8. Ibid., p. 947. Stanley Vestal, in *Sitting Bull, Champion of the Sioux: A Biography,* New Ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), states that Sitting Bull danced the Ghost Dance once, received no vision, and publicly stated his skepticism. He supported the right of his people to practice the religion, however (p. 272).

9. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* 13 Dec. 1890, p. 351.

10. This may have been the Brulé Short Bull, who at the end of October predicted the coming of the millenium within one month and called for even more intense dancing. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation,* pp. 105-6.

11. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* 13 Dec. 1890, p. 354.

12. Ibid., 20 Dec. 1890, p. 372; *Harper's Weekly,* 22 Nov. 1890, p. 902; Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation,* pp. 48-53, 80, 82.

however, reported the view of Big Foot and his followers: "That they should be governed by the votes of their brethren in other parts of South Dakota seems to them unjust and cruel."[13] According to *Leslie's,* the Sioux had not yet been paid the money promised them for the Black Hills ten years earlier and had no guarantee of ade-

Figure 4. The Recent Indian Excitement in the Northwest, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, *13 December 1890*

quate food or housing on the smaller reservation. *Leslie's* provided detailed descriptions of variations of the Ghost Dance that seemed to remove its menacing image and explained that Sitting Bull and

13. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* 20 Dec. 1890, p. 372.

his followers had adopted the religion to regain lost prestige. Yet, the article added, "Without doubt this trouble has done great injury to South Dakota. It will retard the settlement of that State, and its effect is already felt by the railroads in greatly decreased passenger traffic."[14]

On 20 December, *Harper's Weekly* published illustrations adapted from David F. Barry photographs of Sitting Bull, Gall, and John Grass and contended that Sitting Bull, an "irreconcilable," had lost his position to these "progressive" former allies who had adopted the white man's religion and lifestyle.[15] *Harper's* described the obstinate Sitting Bull as dangerous precisely because he had seen his authority eroded and warned that danger of an Indian conflict was great: "A single spark in the tinder of excited religious gatherings may precipitate an Indian war more sanguinary than any similar war that has ever occurred. . . . Never before have diverse Indian tribes been so generally united upon a single idea. The conspiracy of Pontiac and the arrayment of savage forces by Tecumseh are insignificant by comparison."[16] To emphasize the perceived danger, *Harper's* gave Sitting Bull sole credit for the Little Bighorn fight fourteen years earlier, telling readers that he had "incited the war in 1876" that led to Custer's "defeat and massacre."[17]

Modern reporters would marvel at the play of stories that surfaced the following week. Even though Sitting Bull and seven of his followers had been killed as the Standing Rock Indian police attempted to arrest him, his death received only the following mention on the editorial page of *Harper's:* "If the death of Sitting Bull should pre-

14. Ibid.

15. *Harper's Weekly,* 20 Dec. 1890, p. 996.

16. Ibid., p. 995. The Ghost Dance of 1890 was not the first time American Indians had turned to a religious movement for help in restoring their old ways of life. In 1763, following the close of the French and Indian War, the Ottawa chief Pontiac had led an unsuccessful rebellion designed to eject the British from the Old Northwest. His coalition had been encouraged, in part, by the exhortations of Neolin, a Delaware prophet who preached the restoration of the tribes' powers. In the early 1800s, the Shawnee leader Tecumseh worked with his own brother, a mystic named Tenskwatawa, to advance the cause of Indian unity among the tribes of the Old Northwest. During the War of 1812, Tecumseh sided with the British in a futile attempt to rid the region of American influence. Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1988), pp. 438, 442-44, and Howard R. Lamar, ed., *The Reader's Encyclopedia of the American West* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1977), pp. 1162-63.

17. Ibid. Because these newspapers appeared as much as a week before their publication dates, those dated 20 December were probably on the street before Sitting Bull died on 15 December.

vent an Indian war it would have a most happy effect." The editorial writer went on to credit General Miles with the newspaper's own recent fears of an Indian conspiracy to surpass that of Pontiac's and then treated the possibility with some skepticism, stating, "There are as yet apparently not enough facts known to corroborate it, and the death of Sitting Bull will perhaps disconcert it." However, the main sources of trouble—hunger and broken promises—remained. Responding to a presidential proposal to transfer the Indian Bureau from the Department of the Interior to the War Department, the writer stressed the greater value of appointing to the Indian Bureau men of high character rather than those with political connections.[18]

While a Remington picture did make the *Harper's* cover on 27 December, it was not of the bloody shootout between Sitting Bull's followers and the Indian police but of a galloping horse carrying a Cheyenne scout from the Fort Keogh scout corps commanded by Lt. Edward W. Casey. It was designed to illustrate an article in which Remington outlined his solution to the Indian problem. Citing Indian Bureau incompetence and the futility of asking Indians to farm the old buffalo range, Remington agreed with the president that the army should take over the administration of Indian programs. Further, Washington could both gain the Indians' respect and give them gainful employment by hiring warriors to serve the government as soldiers in a semimilitary organization. Remington went on to describe and provide illustrations of successful American Indian soldiers, including the scout on the cover.[19]

Typically, the 27 December cover of *Leslie's* lacked the artistic quality of *Harper's* Remington cover, but it provided some news. Illustrations by Edward W. Kemble showed an Indian policeman warning settlers of an impending uprising and featured the smoldering cabin of some "friendly Indians" while a group of plundering Sioux disappeared over a hill (Figure 5).[20] The story inside, however, stated that tensions had abated as a result of the show of military strength and the killing of Sitting Bull, who was described as "a victim [of] his own mendacity."[21] The article also related some of the details of the

18. Ibid., 27 Dec. 1890, p. 1002.

19. Ibid., pp. 1001, 1004-6. This edition of Harper's also contained an obituary, complete with a portrait, of Gen. Alfred H. Terry, who died at his New Haven home the day after Sitting Bull died at Standing Rock. Curiously, it only mentioned that Terry was twice commander of the Department of Dakota and totally ignored the expedition he commanded against Sitting Bull and others at the time Custer was killed. Instead, the obituary dwelt on Terry's Civil War heroism (pp. 1007, 1012).

20. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* 27 Dec. 1890, p. 385.

21. Ibid., p. 391.

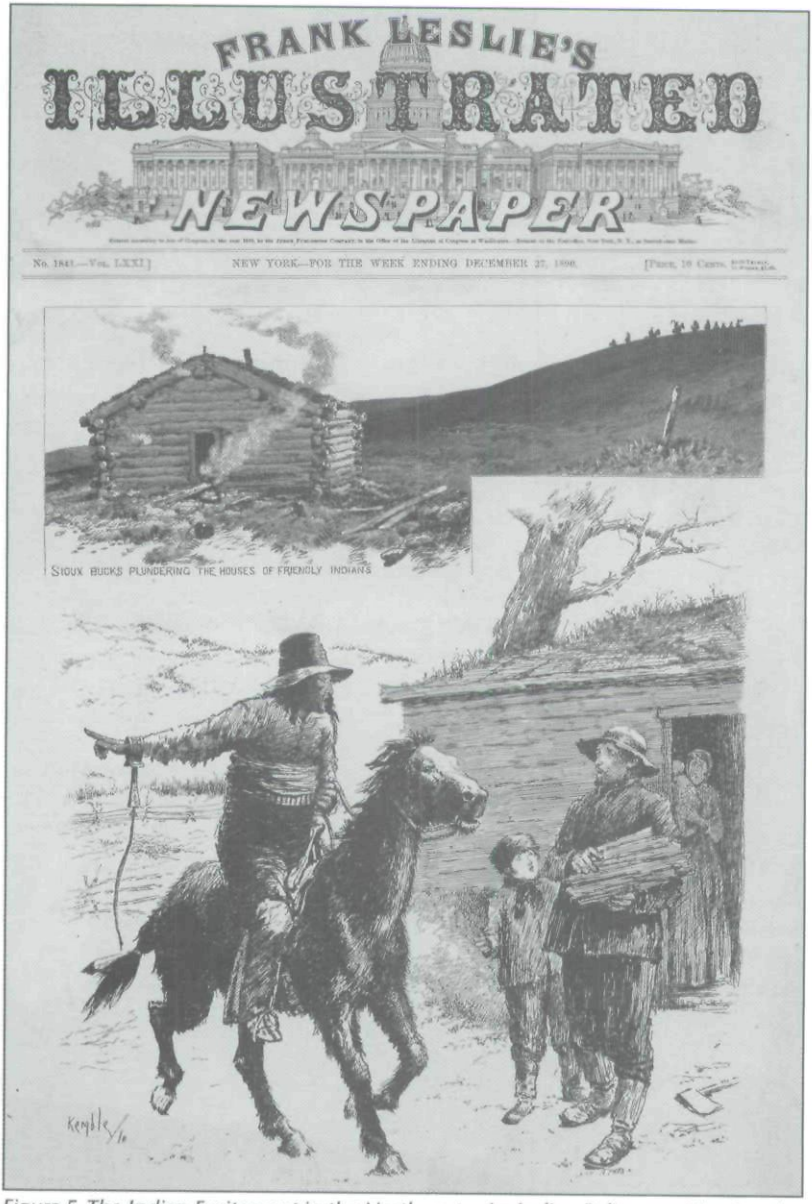


Figure 5. The Indian Excitement in the Northwest.—An Indian Policeman Warning the Settlers of a Probable Uprising, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, *27 December 1890*

Sioux leader's death, reporting that General Miles ordered the arrest of Sitting Bull on 12 December, but Agent McLaughlin, hoping to avoid bloodshed, had arranged to have thirty-nine of his Indian police, rather than the army, arrest the chief. Some of the men sent to do the task, however, had been bitter enemies of Sitting Bull and his followers. When the large group of Ghost Dance participants present at his Grand River settlement attempted to block the arrest, a struggle and bloody shootout ensued in which Sitting Bull and thirteen other people, including his unarmed seventeen-year-old son, were killed. The *Leslie's* writer was equally concerned about the potential danger from those who fled Sitting Bull's camp as he was about the fourteen deaths that resulted from the violent arrest attempt. The issue also presented a page of David F. Barry photographs of the reservation, including a portrait of Sitting Bull (Figure 6).[22]

On 10 January 1891, *Harper's Weekly* published a double-page illustration of Remington's "The Last Stand,"[23] which, an accompanying article stated, was of special interest in "these days of Indian warfare in the Dakotas." The heroic last stand depicted is not that of the Sioux, but of the United States Cavalry, and the text reminded readers of Custer's annihilation at the Little Bighorn. Even though the soldiers' final moments are at hand in this illustration portraying a fictional battle, "there is no sign of quailing in this party of doomed men; stalwart, stout-hearted, keen-eyed, these bronzed veterans will make the red warriors pay the full price for their victory. The last survivors will perhaps have a spare cartridge left, with which to save themselves from capture by a merciless foe." Although other articles in the issue made it clear that this scenario did not apply to the current conflict, the writer took a rhetorical sweep: "How many scenes of which this is typical have been enacted on this continent, who can say?" The writer reminded his audience that the nature of plains warfare continued to put army troops at a disadvantage, implying the current situation was one of great danger for the soldiers.[24]

22. Ibid., pp. 391, 395; McLaughlin, *My Friend the Indian*, pp. 211-12, 214; Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, pp. 150, 158-59, 162. It is impossible to reconcile the two sides of this event, especially the killing of Sitting Bull's son. The two major opposing views are McLaughlin, *My Friend the Indian*, pp. 194-222, which does not even mention the death of Crow Foot, and Vestal, *Sitting Bull, Champion of the Sioux*, pp. 293-307.

23. *Harper's Weekly*, 10 Jan. 1891, pp. 24-25.

24. Ibid., p. 23.

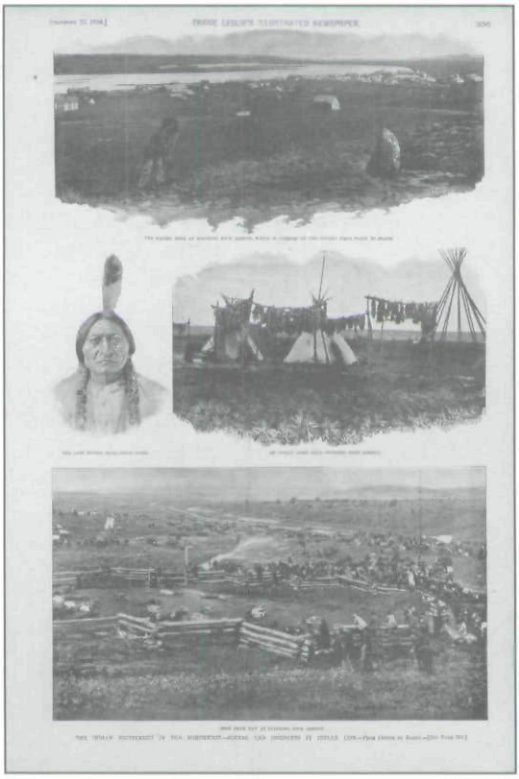


Figure 6. The Indian Excitement in the Northwest.—Scenes and Incidents in Indian Life, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, *27 December 1890*

An article in the same issue singled out Big Foot, the Miniconjou Sioux leader from the Cheyenne River reservation, as a new target. The paper reported that General Miles had attributed "a great deal of the recent trouble to the arming of the Indians by the government, and to Indian duplicity, of which the report from Big Foot's band seems to be a confirmation."[25] While the editorial failed to define Big Foot's duplicity, it blamed the discontent on a lack of food and called once again for the government to honor its treaties with the Indians. Ironically, Big Foot and his people had already been killed at Wounded Knee, but the magazine was probably in press or on the streets before the news arrived.[26]

25. Ibid., p. 18.
26. Ibid., pp. 18-19.

No one, including reporters, had anticipated much trouble when Maj. Samuel M. Whitside went out in late December to find Big Foot, whose band was believed to be heading toward the hostile camp on the Stronghold. Whitside's troopers intercepted the 350 members of Big Foot's band on 28 December and were reinforced at their camp on Wounded Knee Creek by the rest of the Seventh Cavalry under Col. James W. Forsyth. The next day, during a tense personal search of the men for weapons, a shot went off, igniting a morning of violence. Found dead at the scene were 146 Indians and 25 whites. The death count was undoubtedly much higher if those who escaped and later died from injuries or whose bodies were removed from the battlefield could be counted. The shot that sparked the tragedy apparently came from a rifle over which two soldiers and a deaf Indian had been struggling.[27]

Although this event was the biggest northern plains story since the Little Bighorn, the news appeared only gradually in the illustrated press. Of about twenty-five journalists who had gathered at Pine Ridge Agency to cover the anticipated Indian war, only three—William Fitch Kelley of the *Nebraska State Journal,* Charles W. Allen of the *Chadron* (Nebraska) *Democrat,* and Will Cressey of the *Omaha Bee*—witnessed these events at Wounded Knee Creek, where Kelley became so caught up in the fight that he killed at least three Indians. At the time, Remington had been traveling with Lieutenant Casey and his Cheyenne scouts and had later joined a wagon party headed for Pine Ridge Agency, only to be turned back by hostile Sioux. The artist did not find out until New Year's Day that he had missed the "war."[28]

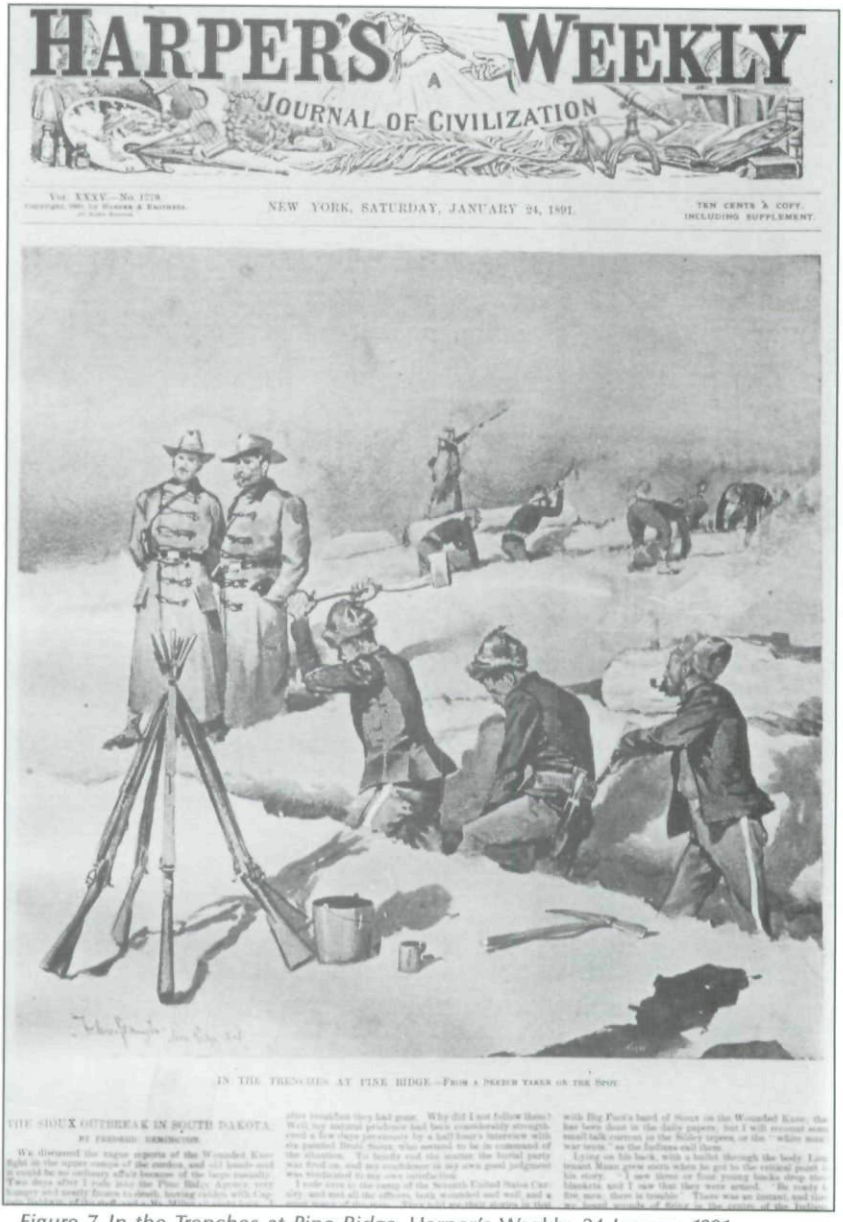
Remington covered the incident for *Harper's* by interviewing surviving members of the Seventh Cavalry on 3 January 1891. He turned their tales of the massacre into such a glorious triumph that the exaggeration made even General Miles, who already had grave doubts about the army's actions in the situation, even more uneasy.[29] Remington's cover illustration of soldiers in the trenches was "from a sketch taken on the spot" (Figure 7), and "The Opening of the Fight at Wounded Knee," which appeared inside, was credited as "Drawn by Frederic Remington from a Description by the Seventh Cavalry Engaged"(Figure 8).[30]

27. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation,* pp. 194-97, 212, 227-28.

28. Elmo Scott Watson, "The Last Indian War, 1890-91—A Study of Newspaper Jingoism," *Journalism Quarterly* 20 (Sept. 1943): 213; Samuels and Samuels, *Frederic Remington,* pp. 149-51.

29. Samuels and Samuels, *Frederic Remington,* p. 151.

30. *Harper's Weekly,* 24 Jan. 1891, pp. 57, 65.



HARPER'S WEEKLY
A JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 1891.

IN THE TRENCHES AT PINE RIDGE.—FROM A SKETCH TAKEN ON THE SPOT.

THE SIOUX OUTBREAK IN SOUTH DAKOTA.

Figure 7. In the Trenches at Pine Ridge, Harper's Weekly, *24 January 1891*

As information became available, both national weeklies began providing more coverage. *Harper's* gave a detailed description of the battle and the events leading up to it through a report by 1st Lt. John C. Gresham of the Seventh Cavalry. His tone seemed defensive, and the account contained such statements as "Big Foot's band was the worst of their race." Gresham stressed the troopers' inexperience on the plains, stating that many had never seen Indians before this encounter. He does not mention the possibility of a revenge motive by a few Seventh Cavalry officers who may have fought some of the same Sioux at the Little Bighorn.[31]

The stories in *Leslie's* became more detailed with the appearance of reports from correspondent J. M. McDonough. The 24 January issue carried McDonough's 7 January dispatch, in which he managed to present the cavalry as underdogs. "In the annals of American history," he wrote, "there cannot be found a battle so fierce, bloody, and decisive as the fight at Wounded Knee Creek between the Seventh Cavalry and Big Foot's band of Sioux. . . . This affair at Wounded Knee was a stand-up fight of the most desperate kind, in which the entire band was annihilated, and, although the soldiers

31. Ibid., 7 Feb. 1891, p. 106.

Figure 8. The Opening of the Fight at Wounded Knee, Harper's Weekly, *24 January 1891*

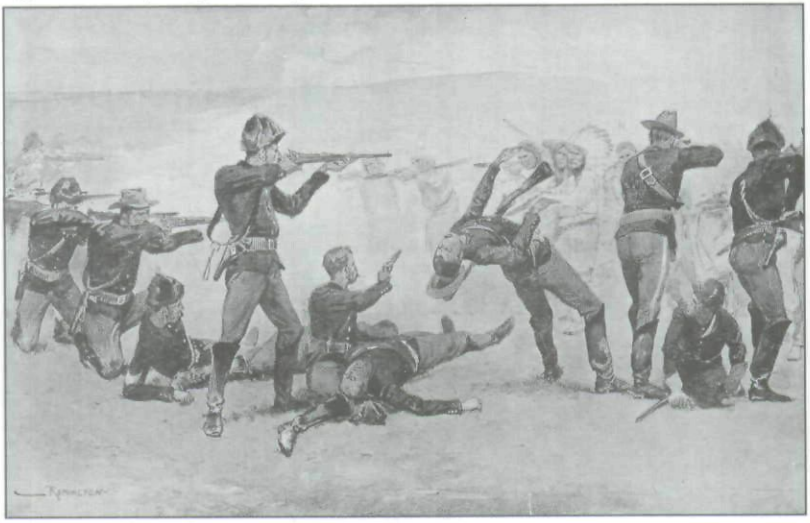


Figure 9. The Recent Indian Troubles.—The Military Guard, Searching the Field after the Fight at Wounded Knee, Discover the Body of Big Foot's Chief Medicine-Man, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, *7 February 1891*

outnumbered their opponents nearly three to one, the victory was won by Troops B and K, about one hundred strong, at least twenty less than the warriors in front of them."[32]

Even though the illustrations for McDonough's article again lack the quality and detail of Remington's pictures, they provide more information. Ranging from rough sketches to halftones, they included a combat scene, a number of the hostile chiefs, and the body of Big Foot. All were said to be from photographs "taken exclusively for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.*"[33] Two weeks later, a picture "most skillfully drawn by Mr. Daniel Smith" showing the body of Yellow Bird, the medicine man who appeared to have had a role in starting the conflict, occupied a full page (Figure 9).[34] While the importance of the subject justified the illustration, the accompanying copy clearly showed that its inclusion was a response to the competition of *Harper's* and Remington. Praising Smith's picture as "most lifelike" and calling it "one of the most striking pictures of

32. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* 24 Jan. 1891, p. 479.
33. Ibid., pp. 476, 484.
34. Ibid., 7 Feb. 1891, p. 13.

the Indian difficulty," *Leslie's* claimed that its correspondents provided the "first and best representations" of the brief but exciting Indian war.[35] *Leslie's* used several other Smith prints, including one of a relief corps finding a baby alive next to its mother's body several days after the battle (Figure 10).[36]

Historian Robert M. Utley has described the ultimate surrender of the Ghost Dancers on 15 January as anticlimactic, "with none of the ceremony befitting the end of the biggest military operation in the United States since the Civil War."[37] Pomp and circumstance

35. Ibid., p. 7.
36. Ibid., 31 Jan. 1891, p. 493.
37. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, p. 260.

Figure 10. The Relief Corps Searching for the Dead and Wounded after the Fight with the Hostile Sioux at Wounded Knee—Discovery of a Live Papoose, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, *31 January 1891*

came a week later, on 21 January, when General Miles reviewed his thirty-five hundred soldiers to mark the formal end of hostilities. The event, of course, lent itself to a number of Remington illustrations, such as those depicting the long columns of cavalry and infantry (Figures 11, 12). Chicago reporter Charles G. Seymour contributed to *Harper's Weekly* a vivid description of the ceremonious occasion, made complete by the playing of "Garryowen," Custer's charging music. In his story, Seymour quoted Miles as being satisfied with the outcome of the winter campaign, which, according to the quotation, had squelched the Indian conspiracy to wage war throughout the entire Northwest. Miles also took the opportunity to criticize Colonel Forsyth for allowing the troops that had surrounded the Indians at Wounded Knee to be in a position where they were caught in cross fires. Some may have died from Seventh Cavalry bullets.[38]

South Dakota events continued to make national news as reports came in of the assassination on 7 January of Lieutenant Casey, commander of the scouts Remington had recently held up as a model for ending Indian wars. Following a seemingly peaceful parley with some Indians in the hostile camp at Pine Ridge, Casey had been returning to his horse when Plenty Horses, a Brule, shot him in the back of the head.[39] Remington, who had liked Casey and read about the murder while on the train home, vented his anger in print: " 'Try to avoid bloodshed,' comes over the wires from Washington. 'Poor savages!' comes the plaintive wail of the sentimentalist from his place of security; but who is to weep for the men who hold up a row of brass buttons for any hater of the United States to fire a gun at? Are the squaws of another race to do the mourning for American soldiers? Are the men of another race to hope for vengeance? Bah!"[40]

Remington's outburst notwithstanding, *Harper's* and *Leslie's* continued their calls for more food, more education, and more honesty on the part of government officials in their dealings with the Indians. On 7 March 1891, *Leslie's* published a typically assimilationist solution to the Indian problem in a guest editorial by John B. Riley, who believed that the hope for supplanting tribal ways lay in the education of Indian children. According to this former su-

38. *Harper's Weekly,* 7 Feb. 1891, pp. 106, 108-9, 112. On 4 January, Miles had ordered a court of inquiry to investigate Forsyth's leadership during the Wounded Knee conflict. Forsyth was eventually cleared of wrong-doing. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation,* pp. 245-49.

39. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation,* pp. 257-58.

40. *Harper's Weekly,* 31 Jan. 1891, p. 87.

perintendent of Indian schools, rooting out the "filthy, barbarous" Dakota language and teaching Indian boys trades and Indian girls homemaking would accomplish the aims of civilization.[41] Lieutenant Gresham, who had reported on Wounded Knee in the 7 February issue of *Harper's,* advanced a different, more straightforward plan: Get white men off the reservations as quickly as possible and train Indians for all jobs from menial tasks to the trades and professions. Teachers and religious leaders should also be Indian. "In short," wrote Gresham, "let no work be given white men that can be done by Indians. This rule should be rigorously observed."[42] This idea of self-sufficiency and white noninvolvement received little attention in the press, however.

Although the great majority of reports and editorials that appeared in *Harper's* and *Leslie's* reflected white perspectives, the illustrated weeklies were not as filled with fabrications as were many daily newspapers. The sensational reports that stimulated fear among the reading public and contributed to the tragedy at Wounded Knee came mainly from the dailies' free-lance correspondents, who were paid on the basis of the amount of space they filled on a page. At least one reporter, Thomas H. Tibbles of the *Omaha World-Herald,* had to argue with his editor that reports of a full-scale Indian war were exaggerated.[43] In general, the national illustrated weeklies, which did not feel the time pressure of the daily newspapers, solicited more thoughtful articles from both correspondents and participants. Nevertheless, the perspectives of the Indian agents, the army, and white reformers predominated. With other white publications, the illustrated newspapers shared the attitudes of the dominant society in treating American Indians either as obstacles to or beneficiaries of the inevitable progress of white civilization.

The illustrated weeklies, however, succumbed to a new kind of pressure: the demand for exciting pictures, which fueled an active, conscious search for stories that could be dramatically illustrated. Moreover, because illustrators had not witnessed many of the scenes they depicted, their illustrations of events and the people involved—hostile Indians, for example—tended to reinforce old stereotypes. Finally, the pictures themselves became sources of self-promotion and puffery for both the newspapers and, as in Remington's case,

41. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* 7 Mar. 1891, p. 78.
42. *Harper's Weekly,* 7 Feb. 1891, p. 106.
43. Watson, "The Last Indian War," pp. 206-7; Thomas Henry Tibbles, *Buckskin and Blanket Days: Memoirs of a Friend of the Indians* (1957; reprint ed., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books, 1969), pp. 301, 305.

Figure 11. The Sioux War—Final Review of General Miles's Army at Pine Ridge—The Infantry, Harper's Weekly, *7 February 1891*

Figure 12. The Sioux War—Final Review of General Miles's Army at Pine Ridge—The Cavalry, Harper's Weekly, *7 February 1891*

the illustrators. In a foreshadowing of modern photojournalism, a single image came to take on new significance by symbolizing an entire issue or event. Coverage of the Sioux outbreak of 1890 shows how the news media, in this case the illustrated newspapers, can turn real people and events into sensational stories and images that ultimately play a role in shaping public opinion.

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