

THE INDIANS' FRIEND, JOHN H. SEGER

By DAN W. PEERY

While we are recording the achievements of Capt. John H. Seger in the advancement of civilization among the Indian tribes of the western plains and are handing down to future generations (while facts can be verified) the true story of his great unselfish work in the advancement of the Indian along the white man's road; we should not forget that there was a pioneer woman who shared with him the hardships, privations and dangers of this frontier life. No true story can be told of the work of Mr. Seger among the Indians that does not pay a tribute of praise to his wife, Mrs. John H. Seger. She was, indeed, "a pioneer woman." I do not mean to say by this that she was the first or only woman who sacrificed the comforts of civilized life in order that she might be of service to humanity. Hundreds of women have made this great sacrifice to advance the cause of religion and have acted under the spiritual fervor of the ancient martyrs. I doubt if Mrs. Seger had any of these ideas in her mind. She came out to the Indian Territory as the wife of John H. Seger and became interested in his work. With a bond of sympathy for humanity, even as exemplified by the untutored Indian, proved herself to be a real helpmate in the work of educating and civilizing these people.

As stated in the first instalment of this review, Mary Esther Nichlas was married to John H. Seger in 1875, and came with him to the frontier Indian agency where her husband had only recently been employed as superintendent of the Arapaho school. She spent her life among the Indian tribes. Many stories are told of her long journeys across the lonesome prairies in buckboard or hack. Sometimes she drove to the western part of the reservation where her husband was at work establishing a mail route or looking after the sub-agencies. On these long trips often her only companions were her small children and, perhaps, an Indian school boy, who drove the horses. She had no fear of the Indians; they were her friends and were her husband's friends as long as he lived.

There were a number of Indian uprisings very shortly after she arrived at the Darlington agency. Several hundred Northern Cheyennes had been brought there after the Little Big Horn fight in 1876. These Indians led by Dull Knife left the Agency and committed many depredations upon the white settlers and returned to their old home in the western Dakotas in 1877. In fact the entire Cheyenne tribe was in a belligerent mood most of the time.

In 1910, Fred Bard, staff correspondent for the *Kansas City Star* in Oklahoma, wrote a story of old Chief Wolf Robe. This old Cheyenne chief was a man of great dignity, and was, from an ethnological viewpoint almost a perfect type of the North American Indian. He lived to be a very old man and more than one artist used him as a model for the Indian profile. In his youth he had been a great warrior but as he grew older and associated with the white people, he saw the advantage of civilization and the utter futility of war against the white race. He became a great friend of Mr. and Mrs. Seger. In 1880, there came near being a massacre of all of the white residents of Darlington over the arrest of Mad Wolf, a Cheyenne warrior.

MRS. SEGER'S STORY AS TOLD TO MR. BARD

"In the summer of 1880, an attempt was made at Darlington to arrest Mad Wolf, a Cheyenne warrior, for compelling John D. Miles, the Indian agent, at the muzzles of the guns of Mad Wolf and his followers, to issue beef from the Government pens, contrary to instructions to the agent from the Indian Department at Washington. The incident came near causing the massacre of all the white residents at Darlington, together with fifty United States soldiers that came from Fort Reno, several miles away, to quell the disturbance.

"On the day of the trouble Gohi, a Cheyenne woman, came early, as was her custom, to help me wash. Work begun, we were busy, when suddenly I noticed a great stir and much excitement among the Indians who were camped close around the Agency.

" 'What does it mean, Gohi?' I asked. But Gohi was silent and made no answer.

“As the Indians were hurrying to and fro past the house in a very unusual manner, I realized that something extraordinary was occurring, though I had no idea at the time what it was. Shortly after dinner, looking out on the flat north of the Indian School, I saw a large body of warriors, mounted on fat, sleek, ponies, painted and adorned in the gayest style, their riders wearing war bonnets and all the gay trimmings of those days. The Indians sat gazing at an approaching troop of fifty cavalrymen, commanded by Major Randall.

OLD INDIAN TO THE RESCUE

“Taking my children, Neatha, Jesse and Bessie, I quickly ascended the stairs, to where I could get the most favorable view. Hearing a sound behind me, I turned and saw Wolf Robe, his wife, his daughter and old Gohi. Though I was greatly surprised, all of us sat down where we could watch the movements on the flats.

“The Indian ponies were prancing and the warriors on them were seemingly as gay as their ponies. We could see that Major Randall was talking to the Indians.

“I asked Wolf Robe what it meant. He made no reply, but sat gazing at the scene before us. Several times I asked the question. Wolf Robe never turned his head.

“In a few minutes we saw Major Randall turning his troops to the south. They started at a fast gallop around the beef pasture and the agency farm, making quick time towards the agent's office.

“Mad Wolf, stripped naked, save for his g-string, led his warriors in the wake of the galloping cavalrymen past our house toward the agency building. A number of Indians on foot preceded the mounted warriors.

“A number of white men who had been eating dinner at my house went out and followed the Indians, and were passing a trader's store when somebody opened a door and reached out and grabbed one of the men. Guns and ammunition were quickly

brought out, and every man armed himself for the expected battle. Save for Wolf Robe, his family and Gohi, I was alone with my children.

“The spectacular scene lasted only a short time until the crisis passed, and the impending massacre was averted through the coolness of Major Randall in dealing with the Indians. He received much valuable assistance from a number of old Indians who lately had sent some of their children to Carlisle—the first Indian Children to go from Oklahoma to that school—and feared the fate of their children if the white people at the agency should be killed. They formed an effective peace party.”

Mrs. Seger says she learned afterwards that it was intended by Mad Wolf and his followers to start the killing by shooting the Indian agent when they reached the agency. At the last moment they were prevailed upon by the Indians opposed to the massacre. Wolf Robe knew all that was going on, and in the absence of Mr. Seger had come to her home to protect her and the children. It was his purpose she thinks, the moment the massacre started to slip with her and the children into a nearby cornfield and secret place until they could be rescued and carried to safety.

As has been stated in a previous instalment, Mr. Seger received his appointment and took full charge of the Arapaho school in 1874. He assumed the management of this first Indian school at Darlington, which was referred to as “The Manual Labor and Mission School,” under a contract on the basis of six dollars and fifty cents per month for each scholar, the government furnishing such rations and annuity goods as are furnished the Cheyennes and Arapahoes at the agency.¹ This contract proved to be remunerative to Mr. Seger, yet it was at a small expense to the government as the proceeds from the school farm paid a large part of the cost of operating the school. The original contract expired in 1879, but it did not altogether end Mr. Seger’s connection with the Arapaho school, as we find him in charge in the fall of 1880—but not under the provisions of his first contract.

SEGER AS A BUSINESS MAN

When Mr. Seger quit the school work in 1879, he at once

¹*Our Red Brother*—Tatum, p. 229.

entered active business with headquarters at the Agency. He was familiar with the entire reservation. In fact, his work with the Indians had given him a knowledge of western Oklahoma possessed by but few men.

H. A. Todd² was the manager of a stage line between Caldwell, Kansas, and Fort Sill, Indian Territory, which passed through the Agency at Darlington, and his advertisement for passengers appeared in the earliest number of the *Cheyenne Transporter*,³ August, 1880. We also find in this issue, the advertisement of John H. Seger, in the same business, but taking a western route from Darlington and Fort Reno to Fort Elliott, Texas. John Seger's advertisement in the August, 1880 issue reads:

"To Travelers
JOHN H. SEGER
Is Now Running Buckboards and Hacks Between
Darlington, I. T.
And
Fort Elliott, Texas

²H. A. Todd was a well known citizen of Kansas and of Western Oklahoma. He had had lines of transportation over nearly all routes in the Southwest before Oklahoma opened to settlement. He was in the freight business but often ran stage coaches and buckboards in the transportation of passengers before the railroads invaded the country. When the Cheyenne and Arapaho country opened to settlement, he and his sons filed on land near the town of Calumet. He was elected to the Third Territorial legislature from Canadian county.

³The Oklahoma Historical Society has in its newspaper files three volumes of the *Cheyenne Transporter*, the newspaper published at the Darlington Agency from 1880 to 1886. In the first volume is written the following:

"Presented to the Oklahoma Historical Society with compliments of George West Maffet, Lawrence, Kansas, March 1, 1914, *Cheyenne Transporter*, Volumes two and three complete—from August 25, 1880 to August 10, 1882, inclusive. W. A. Eaton was editor and proprietor previous to April 12, 1882, following which came George W. Maffet, editor and proprietor. Lafe Merritt local editor."

There is also a photograph of "George West Maffet, your editor and historian."

In the second volume the same is written with this note:

"*Cheyenne Transporter* Vol. 4 & 5 complete August 25, 1882 to September 15, 1884 inclusive, with George West Maffet, editor and proprietor. Lafe Merritt, local editor."

The third volume contains the same inscription written on the front page.

"*Cheyenne Transporter*, vol. 6 & 7, Sept. 30, 1884 to August 12, 1886."

It also notes two missing numbers from volume 6, and six missing numbers from volume 7.

I think that the records will show that the *Cheyenne Transporter*

"This route connects at Darlington with stages going south to the Wichita Agency, Fort Sill, Elm Springs, Carriage Point, Galveston, Texas. East with Vinita, I. T., and the M. K. & T. to St. Louis. North with Caldwell, Hunnewell, Wellington, Winfield and Wichita, Kansas.

"Connects at Fort Elliott with stages going south to Fort Bascom and Fort Griffin, Texas, Las Vegas, and all towns southwest. West to Fort Dodge, Kansas, and all points north and northwest.

"Leave Darlington going west, Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

"Leave Fort Elliott going east Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays.

"Charges reasonable."

In the same issue appeared this local:

"John H. Seger took a run over the mail route between Darlington and Fort Elliott last week."

This was the first regular issue of the *Transporter* as a public newspaper, although it had been published at the school by the mission people and a few issues had been printed the year before. We do not know just when this route was established but it was evidently soon after his contract expired

was the first paper printed in the western half of Oklahoma. These three volumes of old newspapers are a veritable cache of history of the Southwest. They contain the daily comings and goings of the men who figured in the history and the romance of the frontier but not written as "wild west copy." They tell of the every day life of army officers, government employes, cattlemen and missionaries, as well as that of the Indian chiefs, whether they came in peace or came in war. They tell of the freighters who are the transporters of everything to supply the agency and the post. They often speak of distinguished guests from the states, statesmen, ministers of the gospel and writers, whose names are yet known to the literati of the world. Sometimes they tell of renegades, horse thieves and outlaws. There are many articles concerning Capt. David L. Payne, the Boomer, that are caustic and cynical. This paper also had its society columns and when it came to writing up a society event, none of the society editors in this state have anything on Lafe Merrit, the local editor of the *Cheyenne Transporter*. The big social event came when the officers and their ladies at Fort Reno invited the government employes at the Agency, only three miles away, to attend a reception at the Fort. Then, of course, this called for the Agency to entertain the Post.

Lafe Merrit was a good newspaper man, versatile, handsome and congenial. When Oklahoma was opened to settlement, April 22d, 1889, Lafe Merrit stepped across the line to Reno City, less than three miles from Darlington, but soon located at the new town of El Reno. He at once launched into the newspaper business. He started the *El Reno Globe*, with Ernest Parks as a partner in the enterprise. They afterward sold this paper to Peery and Clute.

at the school. Mr. Seger had the Star Route, or rather sub-contract, to carry the mail from Darlington and Fort Reno to Fort Elliott.

In order to get this story straight so that students of history may know of the obstacles to be overcome in carrying mail through a hostile Indian country and know the influence this man, Seger, had with the Indians, I shall re-publish an excerpt from a speech made by Mr. Seger at the Lake Mohonk Conference⁴ in 1902.

“* * * I will tell a story to illustrate the other class of people who think they know all about Indians.

“Once after the Cheyennes had been on the war-path and had had quite a fight with the whites, they were under the guard of the military, — a kind of prisoners of war. They were not allowed to go west of the Canadian river when hunting. About that time I took the contract to carry the mail one hundred and sixty miles west from Reno, and the reason I took it was because they said no one but Indians could carry it because it had to go in thirty-six hours, traveling night and day, and there being no path, they said white men could not do it. And they further said that no one could get the Indians to do it but Johnny Smoker, so the contractor asked me to have the Indians carry it, as I was the only one who could do so. I went to Little Robe, the ruling chief of the Cheyennes, and made an arrangement with him to carry it, and I said I would locate him on the Washita river. It was necessary for me to go over the route and stake it out and explain to him how to carry it. Just before we started on our trip Little Robe said: ‘We are going to be alone for several

⁴The first Lake Mohonk Conference was held in 1883. Mr. Albert K. Smiley, at that time and until his death December 2, 1913, a member of the United States Board of Indian Commissioners, invited a number of those interested in Indian affairs to a meeting at Mohonk Lake in the State of New York, in order to confer regarding measures affecting the interests of the Indians. This was the first of a series of October meetings which have been held annually during the succeeding years. John H. Seger was often invited to attend this important gathering of the friends of the Indians, as he was always recognized as an authority upon the subject of the conference. In later years the scope of this conference has been enlarged so as to include the peoples of the dependent tribes and nations throughout the world.

days, and we shall probably see no other human beings. The Cheyennes have been fighting with the white people, and the white people have killed a good many Cheyennes, and the Cheyennes have killed a good many white people. You don't know me very well, and I don't know you very well. I propose that we don't take a gun. We will need a knife, but I propose that we take only a butcher knife.' (He did not believe in concealed weapons.) I told him I would agree to that. Then I said: 'I, too, have a proposition. I understand driving a team, and I propose to drive the team and hitch and unhitch, because you do not understand that and as you are better acquainted with camp life, you must make the camp fire, cook and sometimes make our beds. You have nothing but dry buffalo meat, and I have provisions enough for both. You take charge of it and we will fare the same. You make the bed, and we will sleep under the same blanket and drink from the same cup.' He agreed. We crossed one hundred and sixty miles of country without seeing anyone else on the trip. When we got to Fort Elliott I showed him how to deliver the mail, how to get it, etc.; and while I was doing it a number of Texas men in the store looked on, and one of them came to me and said, 'You have got a redskin with you.' 'I have Little Robe with me,' I replied. 'I suppose he is up here to steal horses, ain't he?' 'No, sir, he isn't here to steal horses. I have a contract to carry the mail, and he is going to work for me.' 'Work for you?' 'See here, stranger, an Indian won't work.' 'Won't work,' I said. 'I have paid them for cutting one thousand one hundred cords of wood and for cutting four hundred tons of hay.' 'Well,' said he, 'I have been on the frontier all my life. I have fought Indians ever since I was grown up, and I *know* they won't work.'"

Not only was Mr. Seger proprietor of the stage and mail route to Fort Elliott but he also ran a livery stable in Darlington. At one of the stations on the mail route, fifty miles west of Darlington, he started a horse ranch. The location of this

ranch was at the beautiful walnut grove where only a few years afterward the Seger Colony headquarters and the Seger Indian Training school were established. This location was on the mail route and an ideal place for headquarters for his business.

For the next five or six years, we read many items in the *Transporter* in which the Seger name appeared. He was a good advertiser and correspondent for the paper. He always had news items for the local editor in a settlement where there were few white persons and news was scarce. I shall copy a few of the many local items in order to show how the subject of this sketch spent his time when not engaged in public service.

An item in the *Transporter* under date of September 10, 1880, is as follows:

“Mr. J. H. Seger made a trip over the Darlington-Fort Elliott mail route the latter part of last month, his business was to set things right and pay off his employes on the line. He found everything running as well as could be expected. Buckboards run regularly three times a week each way, and passengers can get very comfortable, quick and cheap conveyance.”

Another item in the same issue reads:

“J. H. Seger has a whole corral full of hay ricks. This is not the most approved way of using such enclosures but we presume he knows what he is about.”

In the same issue another item reads:

“J. H. Seger, not content with the Darlington-Ft. Elliott mail line, and several minor contracts of different kinds, has taken the mail route (180 miles long) from Ft. Elliott to Wichita Falls, Texas. This he intends to stock up and put in good condition immediately.”

It is the opinion of the writer that Mr. Seger never actually took charge of this route for no further mention is made of it.

A subsequent issue of the *Transporter*, March 1881, contains this item:

“Mrs. John H. Seger, who has been stopping at

the Washita mail station for several months, arrived at the Agency Wednesday morning."

The many local items concerning the activities of Mr. Seger appearing in the *Transporter* for the next few years gives us an idea of the work in which he was engaged during this period. The newspaper tells of Mr. Seger burning a brick kiln in the fall of 1881. He was more than pleased when he opened it and found that he had splendid brick. This was the first brick kiln burned in western Oklahoma as far as the records go.

A story under the caption, "Fine Horses," says that Mr. Seger has just received four fine graded stallions purchased in Allen County, Kansas, and then proceeds to give their pedigrees, all of them being draft horses. The local also states that two of these fine animals Mr. Seger will send out to his horse ranch in the Panhandle and the other two he will keep at his livery stable at Darlington.

There also appeared in the *Transporter*, two or three weeks later the following local:

"J. H. Seger came in last week from a trip East and says he sold his ponies at good prices and did remarkably well by the project of shipping them to the Eastern market. While in the East he purchased a fine stallion which he brought down with him for breeding purposes. He purchased the animal at Walnut, Illinois, paying the neat sum of \$500. The horse is of Morgan and French-Canadian stock, and is without question the finest horse ever brought to the Territory. The horse can be seen at any time at Mr. Seger's livery where it is now on exhibition."

There can be no question that Mr. Seger's importation of heavy draft horses, as well as those of other stockmen, bred with the Mexican-Indian ponies increased the size and value of all horses on the range in western Oklahoma and the Panhandle of Texas. While on the subject of horses, I shall re-publish a local which appeared in the *Transporter*. It reads:

"A running race between George Bent's horse, Dick, (purchased from Mumford Johnson) and W. G. Williams' ["Caddo Bill"] little sorrel stallion, has been arranged to take place Christmas day at the

Fort Reno race grounds. The race is to be for \$500 each side, and a forfeit of \$250 each, has been put up. It is to be a straight dash of 440 yards."

No mention is made as to the result of the race in subsequent issues. The writer knew the owners of both of these horses and would wager that Williams' Half-Moon horse won.

A local published in the *Transporter*, August 1883, is as follows:

"Seger sold his livery barn and residence to Chas. E. Campbell and C. M. Keller. Seger retains his stock and will go out to the range."

The cattlemen in 1882, had leased nearly all of the Cheyenne-Arapaho reservation and the year afterward they decided to fence their pastures, believing as they did, that they had a ten years lease and that they could handle their cattle with less expense and more security. There were hundreds of miles of fence to be built and some of the Indians objected to having the country under fence. Some of the cattlemen had difficulty in getting posts made and the wire fence constructed. One large company came to Mr. Seger at his horse ranch and contracted with him to build its pasture fences in the south part adjoining the Kiowa-Comanche reservation. There were many items published in the *Transporter* concerning the building of these fences. One in the January 1884 issue reads:

"John H. Seger was in from Washita for a couple of days last week and reported the fencing of ranges on the leased lands progressing as well as could be expected, considering the cold weather and the ground being frozen prevented them digging post holes for a time. Mr. Seger is manager of the fencing outfit for the Washita Cattle Company. He is using Indian labor. Among the Indians employed are: Scabby, a former Agency employe; Leonard Tyler and Thomas Bear Robe, returned Carlisle boys. These Indian helpers have been with Mr. Seger about two months and he says that they like their work and seem willing to remain with him."

From other news items we learn that Mr. Seger built over four hundred miles of fence for the cattlemen in the Cheyenne and Arapaho country. From these locals published

in the *Transporter*, it seems that he was quite active in private business for several years after his original school contract expired. Perhaps, he had undertaken too many business enterprises.

SEGER'S INDIAN STORIES

Mr. Seger was a regular contributor to the columns of the *Transporter*. He wrote stories concerning the thoughts, life and habits of the Plains Indians which contained valuable data for the student of anthropology. Some of these stories were never printed except in the *Transporter* and there is only one copy in existence. We feel that we are justified in reproducing some of these articles in the *Chronicles*.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF POWDER FACE, PRINCIPAL CHIEF OF THE ARAPAHOES

"The noted chief, Powder Face,⁵ in compliance with the request of Mr. J. H. Seger, gave the following interesting facts concerning his life and adventures. Bearing in mind that Powder Face is now one of the most progressive of his people, the radical change in his mode of life and thought is very gratifying, and his life is, of itself, a powerful refutation of the theory that the Indians cannot be civilized:

"When I was ten years old, the Arapahoes were governed by old chiefs, viz., Little Raven, Yellow Bear, Big Mouth and Powder Face, my father. Little Raven is the only survivor of the four. These chiefs were looked upon by the young men as patterns and their advice was generally heeded. These old chiefs told me it was good to fight and that the number of scalps I took would determine whether I was to be a chief or not. When I was seventeen years old, my father gave me a shield and sent me on a raid against the Pawnees. Although young, I was a good horseman and when I returned I brought six Pawnee scalps, which I gave to my father. Then the old chief gave me thirty young warriors to be chief over.

⁵The writer of this series of articles was in Powder Face's tepee on a cold winter's day thirty-six years ago on government business. He did not regard him as being as progressive as some of the younger Indians, but he could "draw the long bow." There was a crossing on the South Canadian river near where the new bridge on Highway 66, crosses, called "Powder Face Crossing."

The Arapahoes were at war with the Pawnees, Osages, Omahas, Kaws, Kickapoos, Wichitas, Caddos, Utes and the Navajoes. The Arapahoes were living on the Arkansas, where there was plenty of buffalo, deer and antelope. We had plenty to eat and were happy until the white men began to travel through our country. The old chiefs said it was good to make war on them, and as I had never heard of Jesus and did not know anything about the government or Washington, I obeyed their orders, and went against the Whites. The first year I killed and scalped five white men; then we did not fight for one year. Then we fought them again, and in that war I took six scalps. In all my encounters with the white men, I have had fifty-five horses shot from under me and have been wounded four times. One of my wounds came near being fatal.

“After our last fight with the white men, we moved to Camp Supply and there met Agent Darlington, who had come to be our Agent; and we met another man from Washington, I think it was the Commissioner. I then went to Lawrence, Kansas, and met the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. On that trip I saw more white men than I had seen in all my life before, and I began to think it were better to live in peace with them. I went with six other chiefs to Washington and saw the white men all at work, and their children in school. I saw the white man’s way was the best and resolved to take it up and have my young warriors plant corn, and put the children in school. Since then I have been trying to live like the white men. I have a hundred and seven cattle, and when I am near the agency I go to Sunday school and hear about Jesus, and see the children taught from the Bible, which is good. I am living now on the main Canadian thirteen miles from the Agency, and if I can get a light wagon or buggy, I will try and come to Sunday school every Sunday. I think that if the chiefs would all wear white men’s clothing, in a short time the young men would all follow their example.”

AN INDIAN ON EDUCATION

The following is a speech of Etahdleuh Doanmoe, a Kiowa, at Carlisle just before the holiday vacation. He was one of the Florida prisoners who voluntarily went to Carlisle to school after he was released. The speech is taken from a paper published at the school:

“Many people are asking what is best for the Indians and what to do for them. I think that education and learning how to work will help us most. We see the whites all over the country, some in towns and big cities, trading in stores, working in shops, some are lawyers and some are doctors and preachers. And they have many other occupations. And some white people live in the country and have large farms, and houses and barns. Every white man does something and then he gets money and has a good house. Then I ask how does the white man know so much when the Indian knows so little, and I try to find out so I may tell my people. Then I see that the white man makes his children go to school while they are growing up so they may have good minds full of knowledge, and I see too that he teaches his children to work, so they may have good bodies and muscles ready and strong to do something. The Indians do not know how to work the white man’s way, and they have few men among them who have knowledge to teach their children. When I was a boy the Indians did not want education and they lived in their camps and hunted the buffalo and ran horse races, and went off to fight the other tribes or the whites, and many went to Texas to steal horses. The children ran about the camps without much clothing summer or winter. Their mothers never washed them or combed their hair and they were dirty. Most of the Indians are that way now, but I know that now they want education and to learn how to work. They want to become civilized, and if our good friends among the whites do not get tired trying to educate us and teach something, I think we may become good, civilized men and women and take care of ourselves.”

HISTORIC INCIDENTS

By J. H. Seger

“Editor Transporter :

“As you have invited me to do so, I will try and write a short article for each issue of your paper, describing some of the habits, customs and characteristics of the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians. I will also describe the progress they have made in civilization in the last ten years. The history of any people is largely written in the history of their principal men, so in writing this history I will let the Indians tell their own story. If they do not tell a story that does credit to themselves, remember that they are savages.

“Little Raven came to a lodge a few days ago and found Powder Face, Tall Bear and some other prominent Arapahoes gambling. He said, ‘I am ashamed to see you who are chiefs and head men in the tribe spending your time so foolishly and setting so bad an example before the young men. I am trying to train my boys to better ways, but how can I hope to succeed when the chiefs do the things I tell them are wrong. We as chiefs should set the example to our young men and counsel them to shun drinking, gambling and all the evils associated.’

“While seated in Wolf Robe’s lodge he handed me the book containing his account with the trader and asked me to foot them up and tell him the amount. He said his boy had footed it up for him, but that he could not believe it was right, for he could not see how his boy could know more than his father. The boy did not appreciate his opinion of his ability and looked over the figures with me. The footings agreed with those formerly made by the boy. The father then cried, ‘I find that I am blind and deaf. I have a book which contains figures. When I look at the figures they are the same to me as if they were not there. When you call their names it is the same as if you had not spoken. With my boy it is not so—he can call the characters by their names and tell

their value. I am now more determined than ever to keep my boy in school.'

"When the Cheyennes were at war with the Pawnee, Black Kettle killed and scalped one of the Pawnees. Ten years later when out on a buffalo hunt he met the identical Pawnee whom he had thought dead ten years, but now found alive and well. But what most puzzled the victorious Cheyenne was that his old enemy vied with any of them in the size and beauty of his scalp lock. He had not killed him thoroughly, and inquiry developed that the fallen warrior had appropriated the hair from a horse's tail and worked it so artfully that the deception was perfect."

Another Seger article appearing under date of April 10, 1882, in the *Transporter* is as follows:

"When the grass starts in spring the question, 'Will the Indians go on the war path?' goes the rounds. In the last few years the question has been asked through force of habit, not with any apprehension that they would do so unless they are brought to starvation and have no other alternative. But no farther back than the spring of 1874, things were different. The Panhandle of Texas was then a vast Buffalo range, where the Indians could subsist without government aid. Going on the war path was then practicable, as they could fight with Indian tactics. They could move their old people, women and children far away from the haunts of the white man, where they could live by hunting, while the young men went out to fight. They would attack a wagon train or a herd of horses and hurry back to the main party before pursuit could be organized. On one occasion, when a party of Indians were raiding in Texas, the citizens, to make sure their horses put them in a stockade corral and placed a guard over them. The men on guard played cards in order to pass away the time and keep awake, one of the number going out occasionally to see how things were going. The Indians were lurking in the vicinity and had sent one of their number to see how the whites

were fixed. He had crept up and was surveying things through a crack under the door. While he was thus occupied the game was finished and a guard went out to see that all was right. The Indian had no time to get away, but concealed himself as best he could in the shadow of the house. The guard, after satisfying himself that no Indians were near, returned to the house and the game. The Indian then went to the back part of the corral, let the horses out and escaped with them before the guards were aware of what was going on.

“In 1874 the Cheyennes went on the war path and committed many depredations; but when they were closed in by the troops and forced to take the stake plains, where they were obliged to dig for water and carry it with them for two or three days, the war path became entirely too laborious. At the battle of the Sand Hills they were again severely punished. About 250 men, women and children were huddled together and kept under constant fire, and were under play of two gatling guns. Their only hope was in digging holes in the sand and keeping as much covered as possible. To stand up was sure death. Some of the squaws were so excited that they had to be held or tied out of the bullet range. One Indian declared that he would take his papoose in his arms and stand up and be shot. The squaw said she would not give up her child. In the struggle for possession of the child, it was killed. The Indian then stood up and was promptly shot. About midnight they left their pits and by wading through water hip deep, succeeded in passing the soldiers. They then scattered like a flock of quails, and it was several days before they all got together again. A number went north and joined the Northern Cheyennes. The journey was one of great suffering. Two days after the fight an old squaw who had been wounded, was found near the battle ground, where she had lain without food or shelter.

“The Indians finally came to the Agency and surrendered, had most of their ponies taken from

them and saw about thirty of their young men taken away in irons as prisoners. If the Indians should go on the war path now, they would have to take their women and children with them, and with no base of supplies, a war is not at all desired by these Indians. They will not begin hostilities unless forced to it by threatened starvation."

INDIAN RELATIONSHIPS

"Thinking possibly a few reminiscences of school life might be of interest to the reader of the *Transporter*, I will give a few:

"At one time it was a rule of the Arapahoe school that no child should go home to camp without permission, and permission was rarely granted except in case of sickness or death in the family. A boy came to me one day with tears pouring down his cheeks and asked leave to go to camp for one day, as his mother was dead. Permission was given, and he came back at the appointed time. In a few days the same boy came to me again, this time crying harder than before. He asked to go home again, and imagine my surprise when he again said his mother had just died! I said, 'How is this? A few days ago you went home because you mother was dead, and now you say she is dead again!' The lad made no answer, but cried harder than ever. A half-breed boy who was standing near then explained by saying the first mother deceased was only a half mother, while the last mother was his 'surely' mother. The boy got permission to go although things looked exceedingly mixed.

"I afterward found that although an Indian may be poor, he may have several mothers. After his real parent dies, his aunts take the place of mother. It is very seldom an Indian child becomes an orphan. They regard cousins the same as brothers and sisters and they distinguish them from their own brothers and sisters by calling them their 'far' brother or 'near' brother.

"To a white person the idea of Indian relationship seems decidedly mixed, but on the contrary the

family genealogy is kept very straight by oldest members of the family, and under no circumstances are marriages allowed between blood relations, although the 'kin' be ever so faint.

"I will give one more example of their idea of relationship: An Arapahoe girl who had been in school several years had married and lived in camp. Other Indians would get her to write their letters for them. I received one from her and she signed herself my "Affectionate Grandmother."

The following story also written by Mr. Seger appeared in the *Transporter* of December 11, 1882:

A DAY IN AN INDIAN CAMP

"As I recently spent some days in the Cheyenne camp which is now located on the Washita, some ninety miles west of the agency, I will give your readers the events of one day as they transpired:

"As it seemed to be a day of more than usual occurrences, the reader may gain some idea of Indian life. 'White Shield' invited me to spend a day in their camp, and as a special inducement for me to do so, said they would give a feast in the daytime and a dance at night and that Little Robe, Red Moon and Stone Calf would be present and all have a social time together. I accepted the invitation, not so much for the enjoyment of the feast and dance as for curiosity to witness a genuine camp scene for one day. On the morning of the day appointed I mounted my horse and galloped over to the camp (which was only six miles from where I was hanging out) unsaddled my horse and turned the steed over to the herder. Entering the lodge of 'mine host' I was soon followed by Chief Little Robe, Red Moon and Stone Calf.

"They all entered very unceremoniously, except Stone Calf who required all who were seated on the side of the fire where he passed to stand out so he could pass behind them and not between them and the fire. When he went out it was the same way. The place of honor seemed to be the opposite side of the lodge from the entrance. After all were seated

the smoking began. A board about a foot square was brought out and a handful of killikinick (dry sumac leaves) was placed in the middle of the board and a little plug of tobacco shaved up and mixed among it. A red stone pipe was then filled and the smoking commenced. By this time, there had come into the lodge about twenty young men, and the pipe was passed from one to the other, each taking a few puffs. Each one had his peculiar way of taking the pipe—some not putting the stem to their mouths without first touching the ground with the bowl, and then raising the bowl above the head. I understand this to be a salute to the evil spirit, and also to the good spirit before indulging themselves. Others always seemed to draw the smoke in at the mouth and puff it from the nose. Two pipes were soon running and the smoking was kept up for fully one hour. The smoke was then allowed to clear away and all settle themselves for a talk, which was carried on exclusively by the chiefs—the young men paying striking attention. They talked about their past, present and future, and wound up their talk by counseling the young men not to do anything to conflict with the wishes of the agent and the government.—Noticing that Bear Shield was in camp and had not attended the social, I enquired the reason of his absence. The reply was that since Bear Shield had been to St. Augustine, (Florida) he had refused to join in any ceremony or gathering gotten up under the old Cheyenne customs, but was professedly and practically “on the white man’s road.”

“During the time the men were talking and smoking the women had built a sweat house by sticking willows in the ground and bending them over so as to make a small oven shaped enclosure, over which were spread hides and blankets to retain the steam. The steam was made by dropping red hot stones in a kettle of water and in this manner the sweat house was soon filled with the steam. The parties taking the sweat bath sat around the kettle perfectly naked for about half an hour, then came out into the cool

air dried off, after which they again donned their blankets. About a dozen old men and women enjoyed the sweat house at one time.

“After this came the feast. All sat in a circle around the lodge and a large dish heaped up with rice which had been boiled with dried apples was brought in with three spoons. The dish was set down before three men at a time, who, without ceremony, made satisfied, or etiquette required them to pass the dish along. When the dish reached my locality, they politely offered me a plate and an extra spoon to run a side dish alone, but as I had to help myself out of the pan that all were eating from I could not see much discrimination in my favor. I took the will for the deed, however, and helped myself bountifully.

“After the feast, preparations were made for the dance. A large lodge was cleared of everything except one bunk, reserved for the use of the orchestra, which consisted of an Indian drum. As there happened to be two young ladies living in the lodge where I was a guest and as there are no apartments to an Indian lodge, I was offered the opportunity to see two of the belles of the camp attire themselves for the dance. I could not help reflect how backward some of our city belles would be to dress themselves for a ball before a gentleman acquaintance, even though he might be ‘a friend of the family.’ There is some difference, however, between the Cheyenne lady dressing for the dance and her pale face sister, as the former puts her ball dress over all her every day clothes.

“The most elaborate part of the Cheyenne ladies’ is paint and beads. The former she uses without stint, painting her whole face. The most popular colors are red and yellow, with black and green spots to set off the main tints. The hair is parted very freely—a sharp stick being generally used for the purpose, although, they have combs they buy of the traders. On this occasion, however, a stick was used to part the hair, and as a finishing touch, the stick

was dropped into a cup of paint and a red streak drawn where the hair was parted. Then come the putting on of beads—the whole family contributing their stock of beads and a few ear-rings to the young ladies. One of the ladies pouted a little because she had only one pair of ear-rings to wear. She had a pair for the bottom of her ears but wanted another set for the top of her ears. White Shield offered to lend her a small brass wire set from the top of his ears but this failed to satisfy the young lady. A younger sister came forward at this juncture with an extra string of beads and as this made one more string of beads for her than the other had, the extra beads were allowed to balance the extra ear-rings—thus the matter was settled.

“I went early to the dance and found a crowd of small boys about the entrance of the lodge. The drums were being tunned and the fire burned brightly in the center of the lodge. I took a seat on the ground near the entrance and some small boys huddled around me of whom I asked explanation as things progressed. The young men filed in one at a time with their heads covered by their blankets and took seats at the right of the fire. The ladies came in afterward and passed to the other side of the fire, and sat with faces uncovered, facing the gents, whose faces, except a small eye hole were entirely covered. Seeing that I had no blanket to cover my blushing face when the girls came on, one of the boys handed me a turkey tail fan to hide behind, saying, ‘be quick, or the kis-a-was (girls) will see you!’ I soon discovered a peek hole in the fan which my boy friend said was to view the girls through, so I was fixed.

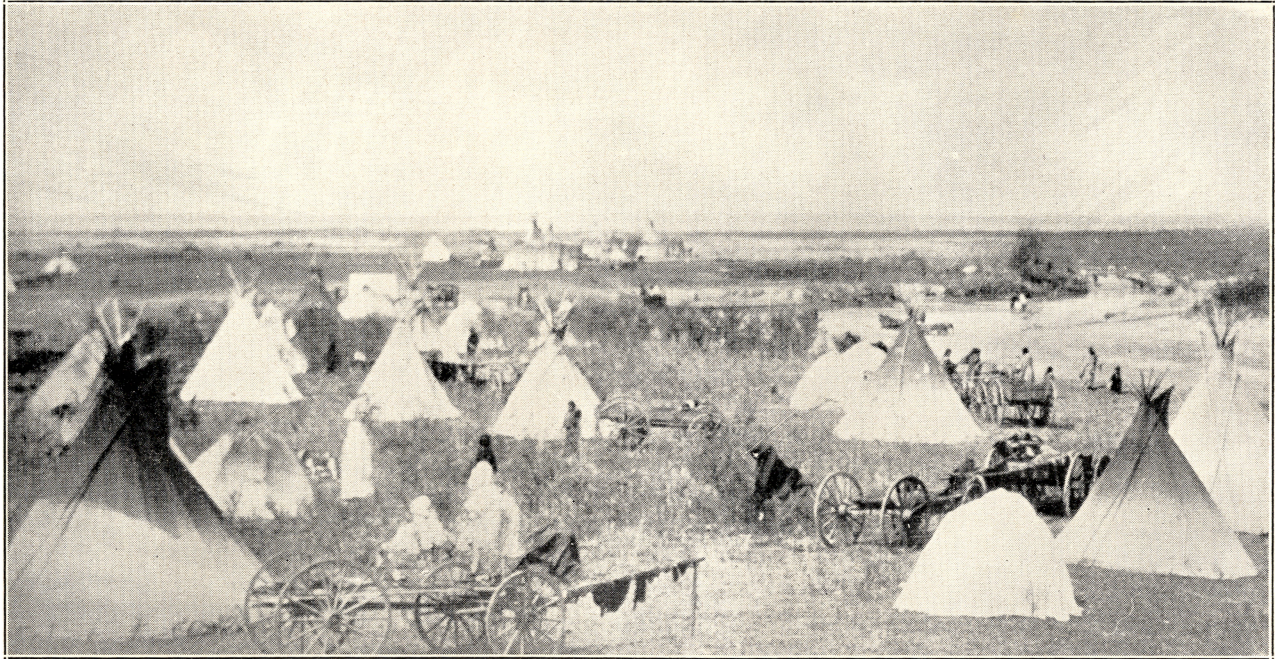
“The drums commenced to beat, and the dance was opened by two of the ladies coming across and taking me by the arms (without even saying ‘will you give me the pleasure?’) and raised me to my feet. In vain I begged to be excused, told them that I had bad cold, did not dance and belonged to the church. I was placed in position with a lady on each

side of me. They did not lock arms but pressed up to me as closely as possible. The figure they danced was simply for all to raise themselves upon their toes, then drop back on the heel at the tap of the drum. When one gent and two ladies dance they resemble the motion of a hash knife in a bowl of cold potatoes. Resolving to make the most of my experience, I commenced to dance, but could not catch the time. Instead of quickening my step, I jumped higher and higher, and finally one foot ran to land too much and I came down on one of my partners' pet toe. The reason I knew it was her pet toe was because she sat down and commenced rubbing and feeling it. This broke up the first sett, but other setts soon formed, leaving me out to my satisfaction.

"I notice all through that the young men chosen to dance were very reluctant while the ladies acted the part of gallant, and in this respect the affair resembled a leap ball in the states. There was a good deal of sameness to the dance, so I left as soon as I saw them bring in a dish of boiled rice and dried apples with the usual spoons. Retiring to bed, I did not sleep until the noise ceased, and was then soon awakened by White Shield, who asked me to go with him to another lodge, as his wife was sick and they wished to make medicine. Already two old men and two old women had come in with a drum and two rattle boxes made of dried bladders with small pebbles in them. We grabbed our blankets and hurried out—the drum commencing to beat at the sick bed as soon as we were out and the singing and thumping raised quite a racket. I soon dropped off to sleep, and was awakened in the early morn by a squaw grinding coffee by my head. As soon as I raised up and showed evidence of being up for the day, the squaw brought me a bright basin filled with water to wash in. I was surprised at the basin being so clean, and wondered why this woman should be so unusually neat, but when she emptied the basin and rinsed it out and then filled it with coffee for my own use, my wonderment ceased.

“While I was eating my warm bread and venison, my hostess informed me that White Shield’s squaw had been presented with a fine baby boy during the night and that both mother and boy were doing nicely. White Shield, himself, came in just then, and, turning to congratulate him, I found to my surprise that he knew nothing of his good fortune and that I had received the news first. Upon inquiry, I found that White Shield was thirty years old and had four wives and twelve children. — While stopping in this camp, I sampled bear meat and another meat, and wild turkey was the standard meat. There was a time in the past when the Cheyenne warrior would not eat wild turkey, for fear it would give him the cowardly disposition and the inclination to run manifested by this bird. — This, in the rough, is my experience of one day spent in a Cheyenne Camp.”

(To be continued)



Cheyenne Camp on the Canadian river west of Darlington about 1877.