



Ledger art made by Northern Cheyenne Chief Wild Hog in 1879.

Northern Cheyenne Warrior Ledger Art: Captivity Narratives of Northern Cheyenne Prisoners in 1879 Dodge City

by Denise Low and Ramon Powers

On February 17, 1879, Ford County Sheriff W. D. “Bat” Masterson arrived at the Dodge City train depot with seven Northern Cheyenne men as prisoners. The State of Kansas was charging them with forty murders in what would later be identified as the last “Indian raid” in Kansas. In 1877 the government had ordered all Northern Cheyennes to move to Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, which most of the tribe had found intolerable. A group of about 350 Northern Cheyenne men, women, and children escaped in September 1878. They fought skirmishes and raided throughout western Kansas, and eventually split into two groups—one under leadership of Little Wolf and one under Dull Knife (or Morning Star). The Little Wolf band eluded the U.S. Army, but 149 of those under Dull Knife were finally imprisoned at Camp Robinson in Nebraska.¹ While army officials determined their fate, they remained in custody into the winter. They attempted to break out of captivity on January 9, 1879, and, after military reprisal, perhaps less than fifteen men remained alive. A few who escaped sought refuge at the Pine Ridge Agency in South Dakota. Military authorities sent most of the survivors back to Indian Territory except for seven men who were destined for trial in Kansas. The seven men arriving in Dodge City, a remnant of the Dull Knife fighting force, would face Ford County charges.²

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1. Tom Weist, *A History of the Cheyenne People* (Billings: Montana Council for Indian Education, 1977), 84. Weist counts sixty-one killed in the outbreak.

2. Camp Robinson was renamed Fort Robinson in December 1878, prior to the January 9 breakout. Peter J. Powell, *Sweet Medicine: The Continuing Role of the Sacred Arrows, the Sun Dance, and the Sacred Buffalo Hat in Northern Cheyenne History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 1:272–74. Powell suggested that fifteen men survived the Fort Robinson breakout, and he gave the names of nine adult men taken in custody: “Wild Hog, Old Crow, Left Hand, and Porcupine had been handcuffed in the prison tent when the others broke from the barrack. Tangle Hair, Noisy Walker or Old Man, Blacksmith, The Sioux, and Young Stub Foot were the men who had survived the fighting without fatal wounds or mutilations” (p. 272). Dull Knife and his family escaped and fled to Pine Ridge.

Local newspapers reported that “overpowering” crowds gathered at railroad stops from Fort Leavenworth to Topeka to see the Cheyenne men, who had become notorious in the national and local press.³ In Lawrence, Masterson and his marshals were obliged to fight off “hoodlums,” and in Topeka a thousand people thronged the train platform. When the prisoners finally arrived in Dodge City on the evening train, however, they were not greeted by a single onlooker. The Cheyenne men walked to jail—except for one who collapsed from his wounds, and “there he remained until a wheel borrow [*sic*] was procured, upon which he was placed and carted to his destination.” They were bound and confined: “The Indians were placed in jail, where they still remain, their hands and feet closely shackled. They sit in rows upon the damp floor of the dim dungeon with sorrow and despair deeply engraved upon their manly countenances.”⁴ The prisoners were all in poor health. A Topeka newspaper iterated their wounds: “Big Head had one hand shot away and carries his arm in a sling. Left Hand and another were wounded in the legs and limp painfully.” In addition, their leader Wild Hog earlier had attempted suicide and had a deep wound in his chest. Authorities believed they continued to be suicidal: “They are in a very desperate condition of mind and would, it is thought, commit suicide if they had a chance.”⁵

These reviled, pitiable men would remain in Dodge City almost five months, until they were relocated to Lawrence on June 25, 1879. During that time they expected to be executed, officially or at the hands of a lynch mob. Yet these seven Northern Cheyennes, improbably, survived and helped sustain the Cheyenne way of life. They also collaborated to create four extant ledger art notebooks and three loose drawings, which they sold, bartered, or gave to their incarcerators. These glyphic drawings, done in a Plains Indian idiom, endure as their personal documentation of this critical period in Northern Cheyenne history.

3. *Ford County Globe* (Dodge City), February 17, 1879. Local papers included those in Sydney, Nebraska, and in Leavenworth, Lawrence, Topeka, Caldwell, and Dodge City, Kansas. The *New York Times* published stories about the Cheyennes involved in the Fort Robinson breakout January 12 and 18, 1879; and September 28, 1879.

4. *Ford County Globe*, February 17, 1879; *Topeka Commonwealth*, February 17, 1879.

5. *Topeka Commonwealth*, February 17, 1879.

The prisoners recovered sufficiently in the Ford County Jail to give interviews to journalists and eventually to take advantage of the legal system. Newspapers noted they ate well, smoked gifts of tobacco, and received medical attention.⁶ The journalistic reports, which editorialized freely, veered between admiration—calling the prisoners “manly”—and insult—labeling them “wild” and “savage.” When they were allowed to bathe in the Arkansas River, the accounts embraced both characteristics: “Officer Duffy says they disported in that limpid stream with aquatic fervor. Bathing will check their wild ardor and cool their savage breast.” The eastern press expressed a growing sympathy for the Northern Cheyenne people. A reporter for the *Saint Louis Post and Dispatch* wrote: “If they had been wild beasts doomed to extermination their treatment could not have been more cruel and merciless.” The local *Dodge City Times* acknowledged changing sentiments regarding cruel treatment of the “Indians,” yet it concluded “the best Indian, is a dead Indian.”⁷

The Northern Cheyenne men also must have had more than mixed feelings about their captors, yet they censored their feelings publicly and in their ledger drawings. No representation of hostilities against the U.S. Army or settlers appears in the drawings. This self-censorship of war scenes may indicate the Northern Cheyennes’ awareness of the use of ledger art images by the army to vindicate its reprisals against Indians. Indeed, General Philip H. Sheridan justified the attack on a Cheyenne encampment at Washita Creek on November 27, 1868, with “a book of Cheyenne pictographs enumerating the recent depredations committed by this [Black Kettle’s] band.”⁸ Ledger art war scenes would also have jeopardized the Dodge City Cheyenne ledger artists’ legal case. The ledger notebooks created in Dodge City were filled with carefully calculated images that represented the Northern Cheyennes’ transition to reservation life. Despite the pressures of imprisonment, the men created distinctive Northern Cheyenne images.

6. *Ford County Globe*, February 17, 1879; Stan Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit: The U.S. Cavalry and the Northern Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 228.

7. *Dodge City Times*, February 8, 1879; May 17, 1879; *St. Louis Post and Dispatch*, reprinted in the *Newton Kansan*, February 20, 1879.

8. Donald J. Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 329. The discussion by Sheridan occurs in a letter to General Sherman, November 1, 1869, 41st Cong., 2nd sess., H. Ex. Doc. 1, pt. 2, 47–48. Sheridan also included a letter written by Ed Guerrier regarding scalps and plundered goods.



Seven Northern Cheyenne prisoners, held on charges of murder and destruction of property committed during what would come to be known as the last “Indian raid” in Kansas, were photographed on the steps of the Dodge City Jail in April 1879. The reverse of the photo identifies the men as 1) Tangle Hair (Rough Hair); 2) Strong Left Hand; 3) Old Crow; 4) Porcupine; 5) Wild Hog; 6) Noisy Walker (Old Man); and 7) Blacksmith. Also pictured are 8) interpreter George Reynolds and 9) Franklin G. Adams, secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society from 1876 until 1899.

These images expressed the self-understanding of the Northern Cheyenne prisoners, who knew themselves as *Tsistsistas*, meaning “The People.” According to Sioux accounts, French explorers encountered this group in the woodlands country of the upper Mississippi Valley by 1650. In 1680 the explorer LaSalle referred to “Shahiyela” who lived at the headwaters of the Mississippi. Called Cheyenne by other tribal groups, they were an Algonquian-speaking people who moved from the Great Lakes region to permanent villages in present-day southwestern Minnesota and eastern North Dakota before emerging onto the plains in the last decades of the eighteenth century. At that time they acquired horses and occupied camps in the Black Hills. Gradually, they shifted from semi-sedentary subsistence to nomadic hunting, and by the nineteenth century their livelihood depended on following the buffalo. In the 1830s, the tribe split into two groups: the Northerners, occupying the Tongue and Powder

Rivers region in present-day Montana and Wyoming and the Black Hills of the Dakotas; and the Southerners, occupying present-day western Oklahoma and Kansas and eastern Colorado.⁹

The Northern Cheyennes continued to engage in subsistence hunting and intertribal skirmishes, and as Euro-Americans extended their reach into the region, they found themselves involved in intermittent conflict with the U.S. Army, culminating in the battle of the Little Bighorn (also known as the Battle of the Greasy Grass) on June 25, 1876. In response, the U.S. Army attacked and destroyed Dull Knife’s village on the Red Fork of the Powder River in November 1876. Although most of the inhabitants survived, they were destitute and surrendered at Camp Robinson in the spring of 1877. In

9. Weist, *A History of the Cheyenne People*, 10; Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian; Being a series of volumes picturing and describing the Indians of the United States, and Alaska* (Seattle, Wash.: E. S. Curtis, 1907–1930), 6:87.

a conference with the army, Northern Cheyenne leaders were persuaded or tricked into going south to join with the Southern Cheyennes in Indian Territory. The army escorted the group south to the Fort Reno area, and along the way they stopped near Dodge City for a week.

The seven Cheyenne men who were imprisoned in Dodge City in 1879 were not, then, unknown to the local citizenry. According to historian Frederic Young, during their 1877 removal the Cheyennes and their army escorts camped “nine miles west of the city along the north bank of the Arkansas River.” In a later Topeka interview, Sheriff Masterson said he had “frequent opportunities for becoming acquainted with them” during their Dodge City stopover on their journey to the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Agency in Indian Territory.¹⁰ As a result, he was later able to identify individual Northern Cheyenne for authorities.

The 1877 Cheyenne removal south made an impression on Dodge City citizens. On July 11 Mary Magdalene “Maggie” Brulport recorded in her diary: “Gus took me over to an Indian Camp about 9 miles from here[.The tribe] numbering about Eleven hundred. Saw them—in real camp style. Squaws [*sic*] working[,] men lying about idle—held a papoose in my arms[. T]hey are Sheyennes [*sic*].” She was friendly enough with the women to hold a baby. A few days later she recorded, “Just came from seeing the Indians moving[,] looked like a moving Panorama on the Arkansas River.” In turn, members of this Cheyenne entourage visited the townspeople, as Brulport recorded: “The Indians came over into the town and Danced one of their War dances this P.M.” The *Dodge City Times* reported further description of the interactions between the townspeople and the Cheyenne people: “The Indians filled the city most of the day, dancing, passing the hat, going from door to door, begging and bartering.”¹¹ During this visit of almost a week, the Cheyenne people became familiar with the community of Dodge City and the citizens of the town became familiar with the Indians through trade and personal relationships.

In 1877 Dodge City was only five years old. Most residents, curious about the Northern Cheyenne Indians who camped nearby, were part of the vast migration of European-Americans who, from the time of their

10. *Topeka Commonwealth*, February 16, 1879, quoted in *Ford County Globe*, February 17, 1879; Frederic Young, *The Delectable Burg: An Irreverent History of Dodge City 1872 to 1886* (Dodge City: Kansas Heritage Center/Boot Hill Museum, Inc., 2009), 250.

11. Young, *The Delectable Burg*, 250, paraphrasing the *Dodge City Times*. Mary Magdalene (Bower) Brulport diary, July 11, 1877, State Archives Division, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka.

first appearance on the Eastern Seaboard, had moved relentlessly westward into land occupied by indigenous peoples. In the early nineteenth century they extended their reach beyond the nation’s boundary by trade with Santa Fe, first under Spain and then Mexico, along a route running from Missouri to New Mexico. The U.S. Army established forts along this trade route, the Santa Fe Trail, including Fort Dodge in 1864. The Dodge City Town Company, organized in 1872, soon flourished as a community with a railhead site for the shipment of cattle from the large herds driven north from Texas.¹²

Dodge City founders set out to establish the familiar economic and cultural traditions they had known in the East and to exploit the natural resources of the West. The *Ford County Globe* of January 15, 1878, described Dodge City as a “commercial emporium,” where businesses assumed “proportions that are truly enormous. Millions of pounds of supplies are here transferred from the rail road trains to the mule and cattle trains, which permeate this vast country in all directions.” Dodge City was “part of the production machine of the East”; its cattle ranching and shipping seemed far from the urbanization that was the driving force in the country at large, but, in fact, it was an integral part of the nation’s expanding urban-industrial economy. In addition, a Victorian impulse—the replicating of lifestyles of the East—was emerging in the midst of this raucous cattle town. A part of that developing cultural ethos was a fascination with the aboriginal cultures settlers were displacing, including a fascination with their artistic creations. Some whites viewed Native artifacts as records of vanishing “primitives,” while others saw their arts as romantic depiction of a noble people.¹³

These two peoples—the Northern Cheyennes, who were fighting to preserve their traditional, tribal way of life, and the Euro-Americans, who invaded western tribal lands as they pursued business and agrarian interests—came into conflict,

12. Stanley Vestal, *Dodge City: Queen of the Cowtowns* (Lincoln, Neb.: Bison Books, 1998); Robert M. Wright, *Dodge City: The Cowboy Capital and the Great Southwest* (New York: Arno Press, 1975); Leo E. Oliva, *Fort Dodge: Sentry of the Western Plains*, Kansas Forts Series 5 (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1998); Young, *The Delectable Burg*; C. Robert Haywood, *Victorian West: Class and Culture in Kansas Cattle Towns* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991); Robert R. Dykstra, *The Cattle Towns: A Social History of the Kansas Cattle Trading Centers Abilene, Ellsworth, Wichita, Dodge City and Caldwell, 1867 to 1885* (New York: Atheneum, 1970).

13. Judith A. Barter and Andrew J. Walker, *Window on the West: Chicago and the Art of the New Frontier 1890–1940* (New York: The Art Institute of Chicago in Association with Hudson Hills Press, 2003); Haywood, *Victorian West*, 81–82; *Ford County Globe*, January 15, 1879.

and that conflict played itself out, in part, through the captivity of the seven Northern Cheyennes being held for trial in the Ford County Jail in Dodge City in 1879. The prisoners' experiences evolved through five months, with ledger drawings serving as their only direct form of expression. Interviews they gave to newspapers created a public image, but one that was beyond their editorial control. The press gave contradictory opinions, but it never ignored the group, and the impending trial incited public interest. All the while it was through their ledger art that the Cheyenne prisoners recorded their perspective on what was happening to them and their people.

In 1879, even before they arrived in the hands of Sheriff Masterson, the national and regional press sensationalized the captives. Just before their arrival, the Dodge City press heightened expectations: "The trial of these savages will add no little to the zest of an exciting life on this frontier, and will generally excite comment and interest." However, some news media representatives who saw the Cheyennes in jail cultivated sympathy. Reporters from the *Cherokee Advocate* followed the case, and an anonymous Native American (probably Cherokee) writer prefaced his conversation with Wild Hog with empathetic words: "The interview has filled me with shame, sorrow, and anger; and I am going to tell my countryman [the] story of the Northern Cheyenne."¹⁴ Correspondents from the *New York Times*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* visited the prisoners and traded cigars for interviews. Within a few weeks, the *Ford County Globe* reported: "Quite a number of our citizens, as well as strangers, have visited the prisoners during the past week and tried to converse with them." In this February 25, 1879, article, the prisoners, other than Old Crow, were reported as "sullen," but nonetheless they proclaimed their innocence and said "other Indians committed the murders charged against them."¹⁵

As their legal case developed, the Cheyenne captives were able to mount a defense and hold onto hope of an eventual release. A Salina attorney, J. G. Mohler, volunteered to represent the Cheyenne men. Even before their arrival in Dodge City, Mohler had expressed concern about the Northern Cheyenne prisoners' "forlorn condition & the belief that they are not either



Wild Hog was the leader of the men imprisoned in Dodge City. During their incarceration the group expected to be executed, officially or at the hands of a lynch mob. Yet they survived and collaborated to create ledger art, which they sold, bartered, or gave to their incarcerators. These glyphic drawings, done in a Plains Indian idiom, endure as their personal documentation of this critical period in Northern Cheyenne history. Image courtesy of the Paul Dyck Foundation.

in law or justice, amenable to the laws of the State of Kansas, for any of their acts." And, he added, "justice shall be done to these people."¹⁶ The prisoners insisted that the Northern Cheyennes who followed Little Wolf had done the killings, not them.

It perhaps helped their case that some of the Northern Cheyenne prisoners were former U.S. Army scouts. Mohler requested that officers under whom they had served in campaigns against the Lakota be brought to court as witnesses on their behalf. Court proceedings were delayed.¹⁷ As the months dragged on, the prosecution had difficulty finding witnesses. Mohler, building his

14. "The Wronged Cheyenne," *Cherokee Advocate* (C.N.), October 15, 1879; *Dodge City Times*, February 15, 1879.

15. *Ford County Globe*, February 25, 1879. Unfortunately the correspondents from *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* failed to file any stories on the Northern Cheyenne prisoners.

16. J. G. Mohler to Major General John Pope, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), Correspondence, 1871–1880, November 1878–1879, roll 429, National Archives, Washington, DC.

17. *Ford County Globe*, February 17, 1879; Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 228.

case for the Cheyennes, summoned Colonel Nelson A. Miles, General Jonathan Pope, Secretary of Interior Carl Schurz (who was to bring copies of treaties), Lieutenant William Clark from Fort Keogh, the agency physician from Indian Territory A. E. Hodge, army scout and interpreter Amos Chapman, and even William “Dutch Bill” Greiffenstein, mayor of Wichita and friend of the Cheyennes.¹⁸ The prisoners were eventually charged only with the murder of Washington O’Conner near Meade Center on September 17, 1878. Finally, Mohler succeeded in relocating the trial to Lawrence to assure impartiality of the legal process. Todd Epp summarized the fairness of the legal procedures:

The amazing aspect about the case of the *State of Kansas v. Wild Hog et al.* is that . . . Cheyenne Indians, with hardly a friend in the world (or at least in Kansas) could obtain a dismissal of murder charges in the white man’s court. It appears every legal safeguard was granted to the Cheyennes; right to counsel, change of venue, right to confront witnesses, and the right to subpoena.¹⁹

Cheyenne and Arapahoe Agent John D. Miles visited the prisoners before they left Dodge City and inquired into their treatment and their willingness to work if returned to the reservation. He secured the release of Old Crow, a former U.S. Army scout, who persuaded the judge that he was not involved in the Kansas killings. He returned to Indian Territory with Chapman. The remaining six Northern Cheyenne prisoners were taken to Lawrence and placed in the Douglas County Jail on June 25, 1879.²⁰ The proceedings were delayed through the summer, as witnesses were summoned. Finally, Douglas County Judge Nelson Timothy Stephens refused to continue the case when Ford County Attorney Mike W. Sutton failed to appear on October 13, 1879. In a sudden end to their

18. *Western Home Journal* (Lawrence), July 3, 1879. See also Barry C. Johnson, “Cheyennes in Court: An Aftermath of the Dull Knife Outbreak of 1878,” *English Westerners’ Brand Book* 4 (July 1962): 6–12 and (October 1962): 2–6.

19. Todd D. Epp, “The State of Kansas v. Wild Hog, *Et Al.*,” *Kansas History* 5 (Summer 1982): 146.

20. Walt Whitman, visiting Lawrence on the Kansas quarter centennial, attended a large celebration of old settlers on September 14 and 15, 1879. During the same visit he apparently met with the Cheyenne party of prisoners. In later writings he confused the nearby town of Topeka with Lawrence, as he wrote in *Specimen Days*: “At a large popular meeting at Topeka—the Kansas State Silver Wedding, fifteen or twenty thousand people—I had been erroneously bill’d to deliver a poem” (Walt Whitman, *Specimen Days in America* [1883; reprint New York: Dover, 1995: 141]). Whitman scholar Emory Holloway documented the poet’s visit with the prisoners: “Whitman

long ordeal, the Northern Cheyennes were freed by the court and returned to Indian Territory, accompanied by Miles.²¹ Four years later, most of them received permission to return to their northern homeland when the Northern Cheyenne reservation was established.

The seven imprisoned Northern Cheyenne men left behind in Kansas, in the possession of Dodge City citizens, four ledger notebooks filled with drawings produced during their months of incarceration. The drawings communicate how the captive men understood their people and their changing place on the plains. These images reflect the traditional artistic style of the Northern Cheyenne people, who, like many plains peoples, developed a representative and glyphic form of pictorial writing on animal hides—robes, tipi linings, shields, and other objects.²² Such drawings communicated brave deeds that accorded recognition and prestige to individuals. The conventions of this tradition generally were transferred to paper by the 1860s, when that medium was often available in the form of purchased or seized bookkeeping ledgers. Drawings made on ledger paper took the place of those made on objects, which the military destroyed during post-Civil War attacks on villages. Other types of paper, bound and loose, were used when available, but ledgers had the advantage of being portable. The Dodge City notebooks are not full-sized ledgers, which typically measure 8½ by 14 inches, but rather smaller bound volumes of lined paper measuring 3½ by 5½ inches.

Pre-reservation-era ledger art was associated with men’s war deeds and war societies. Often the books

accompanied a group of officials to see a number of these Indians in prison. They uniformly refused recognition to any of the impressively introduced government men but, following the lead of one of the old chiefs, each extended to Whitman his hand and voiced a cordial ‘How?’” (*Whitman: An Interpretation in Narrative* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926], 223; quoted in Robert R. Hubach, “Walt Whitman in Kansas,” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 10 [May, 1941]: 150–54). An artist and friend of Whitman, Sidney H. Morse, recalled an 1887 conversation with the poet in which he referred to the incident (*In re Walt Whitman*, ed. Horace Traubel, Richard Maurice Bucke, and Thomas Biggs Harned [Philadelphia, Penn.: David McKay, 1893], 382–83). A poem about this incident is in Denise Low’s *Ghost Stories of the New West* (Topeka: Woodley Memorial Press, 2010), 51–52.

21. “The Cheyennes Discharged,” (Lawrence) *Kansas Daily Tribune*, October 14, 1879.

22. According to ledger art scholar Joyce Szabo, “Most frequently robes but also some lodge covers, tipi linings, and occasionally shirts were the possible decorative fields for explicit testimony to the owner’s exploits in battle or successes in horse stealing. The robes, covers, linings, and pictographic shirts were autobiographical accounts that were condoned by the basic structure and needs of Plains society” (Joyce Szabo, *Howling Wolf and the History of Ledger Art* [Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994], 10). Male warriors achieved recognition through performance of deeds of bravery that were expressed in “heraldic hide painting” (*Howling Wolf*, p. 10).

were cocreated by war society members. Writing during the 1870s, Captain John G. Bourke, army officer and ethnologist, emphasized the communal origins of the books when he quoted an Arapahoe man: “The ‘war-record’ books we find are not necessarily the military history of one person: pretty nearly every boy has one which he keeps as a memento of his own prowess, but it is extremely common for intimate friends to insert in each other’s books, evidence of mutual esteem by drawing scenes from their lives.”²³ The warriors in regalia throughout these books reveal a martial spirit, showing men in military dress with the details of legging beadwork, headgear, face paint, horse decoration, and weapons indicating war-related prowess. The Dodge City prisoners were familiar with such war-related ledger drawings. One of their companions, Little Finger Nail, carried his ledger book of drawings during the Fort Robinson breakout; he died with it strapped to his body. Another military-themed ledger associated with this band is known as the Fast Bull or Fort Robinson Ledger, and two other warrior artists, including Little Shield, were members of Little Wolf’s band, which split from Dull Knife’s band in Nebraska during the flight north in 1878.²⁴

The Dodge City notebooks were created by warriors in captivity. Dodge City resident and historian Frank A. Hobbles told the local newspaper in 1920 that “the imprisoned Indian chiefs were constantly applying to the officers for something with which to amuse themselves, and on one occasion they were given some

23. John Gregory Bourke diary, April 29, 1877–May 9, 1877, United States Military Academy Library at West Point, West Point, New York, cited in Peter J. Powell, “They Drew from Power: An Introduction to Northern Cheyenne Ledger Book Art,” in *Montana Past and Present, Papers Read at a Clark Library Seminar, April 5, 1975*, eds. Peter J. Powell and Michael P. Malone (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, 1976), 36–37; Denise Low, “Composite Indigenous Genres: Cheyenne Ledger Art as Literature,” *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 18 (Summer 2006): 87.

24. One is at the United States Military Academy Library at West Point and the other is at the Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois, and apparently was collected by Lieutenant Charles H. Heyl, according to a letter from Candace S. Greene to Ramon Powers, January 18, 1985, author’s personal collection. Little Finger Nail’s ledger is located at the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, along with another warrior ledger, referred to as the Fort Robinson Ledger; both were produced during the Cheyenne captivity at Fort Robinson. See also Douglas J. Preston, “Little Finger Nail’s Ledger Book,” *Natural History* 89 (October 1980), 82–87. According to ledger art scholar Janet Catherine Berlo in “Drawing and Being Drawn In: The Late Nineteenth-Century Plains Graphic Artist and the Intercultural Encounter,” in *Plains Indian Drawings, 1865–1935: Pages from a Visual History*, ed. Janet Catherine Berlo (New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with the American Federation of Arts and the Drawing Center, 1996), “that the indigenous people were killed and their art valued as relics of a vanishing civilization is one of the many perverse paradoxes of the late nineteenth-century anti-Indian military campaigns” (p. 13).

paper, pencils and crayons to do some drawings.”²⁵ Although this account is a recollection of some forty years later, it seems most plausible given other evidence of the extensive interaction of the prisoners with those who were holding them in jail. Three of the four extant Dodge City ledger notebooks contain attributions—two are by Wild Hog and one by Porcupine. Two of the notebooks—referred to here as the Northern Cheyenne-Straughn Ledger and the Wild Hog-Clayton Ledger—have been held in the collections of the Kansas Historical Society in Topeka, Kansas, since their donations in 1920 and 1939 respectively, and two—the Wild Hog-Schøyen Ledger and the Porcupine-Schøyen Ledger—are held in the private Schøyen Collection in Spikkestad, Norway. In addition three drawings on two loose sheets of paper and one drawing on the back of a business card are also attributed to the seven Northern Cheyenne warrior-artists incarcerated in Dodge City. The two loose sheets are in the Kansas Historical Society holdings. The business card is held by the National Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian Institution.²⁶

Acquisition of the loose drawings and the Kansas Historical Society (KSHS) notebooks is documented, but the exact chain of possession of the two Schøyen notebooks is unknown. The first ledger to surface, along with two sheets of drawings, was donated by Sallie Straughn to the KSHS in 1920. At the Society’s annual meeting in October 1922, KSHS Secretary William Elsey Connelley “presented the name of Mrs. Sallie Straughn of Denver, Colo., for honorary membership. He said that Mrs. Straughn had presented to the Society a very interesting and very valuable relic in the shape of a notebook filled with pictures drawn with colored crayons. The pictures were made by Northern Cheyenne Indians while in jail at Dodge City.”²⁷ It appears Straughn

25. Greene to Powers, January 18, 1985; *Dodge City Daily Globe*, May 27, 1920.

26. Northern Cheyenne-Straughn Ledger, or “Book of Drawings made by Northern Cheyenne Indians while confined in jail at Dodge City after Dull Knife Raid of 1878,” Kansas Historical Society, State Archives Division, Topeka, also available online at kansasmemory.org/item/208508; Wild Hog-Clayton Ledger, “Pictures Drawn by Wild Hog and Other Cheyenne Indians,” Kansas Historical Society, State Archives Division, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, also available online at kansasmemory.org/item/208521; Wild Hog-Schøyen Ledger, MS 2956/1, “Cheyenne Chief Hageeta’s Ledger Drawing Book,” Schøyen Collection, Spikkestad, Norway, portions available online at schoyencollection.com/amerind.html; Porcupine-Schøyen Ledger, MS 2956/2, “Cheyenne Chief Porcupine’s Ledger Drawing Book,” Schøyen Collection, Spikkestad, Norway; Cheyenne Indian drawings, Kansas Historical Society, State Archives Division, Topeka, Kansas, also available online at kansasmemory.org/item/211157 and kansasmemory.org/item/211158; Pictograph by Chief Wild Hog, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

27. Kansas State Historical Society, *Twenty-third Biennial Report, 1922* (Topeka: State Printer, 1923), 50.

made the donation at the same time that she gave Frank Hobbble "a couple of sheets of the drawings which she found in her home. The two drawings are supposed to describe an Indian wedding. . . . On the back of one of the sheets is the picture of a horse." Hobbble arrived in the Dodge City area as a child in the spring of 1879; later he worked as an official for the Santa Fe Railroad. He became a member of the KSHS's board of directors and a major contributor of "relics" to the Society. It is possible that Straughn, who was living in Denver, may well have been disposing of items she had collected in Dodge City and contacted Hobbble, and he may have recommended that she contribute them to the Society. Newspaper accounts detail Hobbble's plan to exhibit the drawings Straughn had given him "for a few days" in Dodge City before turning them over to the KSHS.²⁸

Sallie Straughn's acquisition of the ledger is a matter of speculation. Her husband, Colonel John Straughn, was the jailer for Ford County in 1879, and Sallie was the jail matron. The newspaper editorialized: "The prisoners are under the immediate charge of the humane jailor, Col. John W. Straughn, who will liberally provide for them in the comforts of prison fare, and such accommodations as are usually given prisoners."²⁹ In exchange for such "accommodations," or perhaps as a gift, Straughn acquired one of the notebooks.

A second notebook was donated in 1939 to the KSHS by Dora A. Clayton. Her husband, James H. Clayton, was the clerk to the Indian Claims Commission. The commission was created by the Kansas Legislature in 1879 to investigate losses resulting from the Northern Cheyenne attacks on Kansas citizens near Dodge City and other western Kansas settlements. On a page in the Clayton notebook, the following statement is inscribed: "These pictures were drawn by Wild Hog and other Northern Cheyenne Chiefs, while they were confined in the Dodge City jail, in May 1879." There is no information indicating when the inscription was placed in the notebook. In a letter to the Society dated August 6, 1939, Mrs. Clayton incorrectly referred to the Indian Commission's investigation of an 1872 "Indian uprising." She stated that the drawings were made by the Cheyenne men while confined in jail at Fort Dodge. In truth, the Northern Cheyenne prisoners were held in the civilian, not military, jail of Ford County in 1879. Despite some factual errors by Mrs. Clayton, however, she and her husband had a clear connection to the Northern Cheyenne, and the notebook's inscription

28. *Dodge City Daily Globe*, May 27, 1920.

29. *Dodge City Times*, February 22, 1879.

correctly attributes its artwork to the Northern Cheyenne prisoners held in Dodge City.³⁰

The Smithsonian loose drawing (figure 1) was presented to John Wesley Powell, director of the Bureau of Ethnology, on December 30, 1889, by J. Odenbaugh, a physician from Wharton, Ohio. In an accompanying letter, Odenbaugh provided uniquely detailed information about the creation of the drawing.³¹ He explained that he visited Wild Hog and the other prisoners while they were incarcerated in Dodge City. He was introduced to Wild Hog by the interpreter Mr. Bennett as a "Medicine Man," and Odenbaugh recounted observing the drawing process:

The Chief [Wild Hog] seemed very much pleased to meet me. Called up his warriors, who were seated on the floor, and they all marched around a circle, repeating something. The Chief then asked Mr. Bennett for some paper. He handed him his card, and he [Wild Hog] drew a picture on the card and handed it to me, at the same time requesting Mr. B. to say to me, "That as long as I carried that card no harm could befall me, and if I ever met any of his people to show the card to them, and they would be good to me. He also said that [it] was from the "Great Medicine Man," and his people would understand it. The picture evidently meant something, as the Chief seemed in great earnest during the ceremony, drawing, and presentation of the card.³²

Wild Hog indicated that the men's dance and song were part of the creation of the drawing, and further that it had protective properties. Wild Hog also represented the pictograph as a universally understood image for Northern Cheyenne people. Although in his letter Odenbaugh gave no reason for his presence in Dodge City and incorrectly dated the time and place of his en-

30. John W. Straughn was a Civil War veteran serving as a lieutenant colonel with the Indiana Volunteers; he was an early settler in Dodge City and served as deputy sheriff, county jailer, and county coroner in the 1870s and 1880s. See also Fredric Young, *Dodge City, Up Through a Century in Story and Pictures* (Dodge City, Kans.: Boot Hill Museum, Inc., 1972), 47, 111.

31. J. Odenbaugh to J[ohn] W[esley] Powell, December 30, 1889, Garrick Mallery Collection on Sign Language and Pictography, MS 2372, box 11, folder Cheyenne, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. J. Odenbaugh signs "M.D." after his signature. Odenbaugh, born in 1849, graduated from Miami Medical College of Cincinnati in 1880 and then practiced medicine in Wharton, Ohio, according to *The History of Wyandot County, Ohio* (Chicago, Ill.: Leggett, Conaway and Co., 1884).

32. Odenbaugh to Powell, December 30, 1889.



Figure 1: Wild Hog drew this figure on the back of Dr. J. Odenbaugh's business card when the physician visited the prisoners in Dodge City. Odenbaugh recalled that the "warriors, who were seated on the floor . . . all marched around a circle, repeating something," and that the "ceremony, drawing, and presentation of the card" seemed to mean something significant to the imprisoned men. Drawing courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives, Washington, DC.

counter with Wild Hog as occurring in "Aug. 1878" at the jail in "Fort Doge [sic] Kansas," his detailed description of Wild Hog's production of the image establishes the drawing's authenticity.³³

The two notebooks and two loose sheets of drawings in the Society's collections and the Smithsonian drawing were assumed to be the totality of the artistic creations of the Northern Cheyenne prisoners until recently. A few years ago, the authors were made aware of the

33. The only previous reference in the modern literature to the Wild Hog image in the Smithsonian's Garrick Mallory Collection is in Candace Schober Greene's dissertation: "Women, Bison, and Coup: A Structural Analysis of Cheyenne Pictographic Art," PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 1985.

existence of a third ledger held in the Schøyen Collection in Spikkestad, Norway, outside of Oslo. Communication with Martin Schøyen, who created and manages the collection, led author Ramon Powers to visit the collection and, to his surprise, a fourth ledger exists, the Porcupine-Schøyen Ledger.³⁴

The provenance of the two Schøyen Collection ledger art notebooks is less complete, despite their inscriptions. L. M. Hyatt signed his name and noted the details of his acquisition of the Wild Hog-Schøyen Ledger notebook: "This book purchased from 'Hagetta' (Wild Hog) the Northern Cheyenne Chief who is now confined with tribe for the murders of the whites in Kansas in 1879—This chief with six warriors being the remnants of the party captured in February[.] These drawings are by him while in prison. L. M. Hyatt." And in the second notebook, Hyatt wrote about a similar interaction: "These drawings were made by Porcupine while in prison by me purchased from him Apr. 4/79 at the prison—L. M. Hyatt." These inscriptions, if indeed accurate, indicate that Hyatt acquired the two books from the artists themselves.

Records about Hyatt are scanty, but one 1883 newspaper account gives an L. M. Hyatt's occupation as gambler; he was incarcerated in the Dodge City Jail at that time and later run out of town. A March 1879 newspaper account reported that while in prison the "Indians" were playing the card game casino, presumably with a deck someone gave them to pass time.³⁵ Although no direct evidence except the ledger inscriptions ties the Cheyenne prisoners to Hyatt, perhaps he was the person who gave or bartered the cards.

Where the two Schøyen ledgers were held after Hyatt inscribed them is a mystery. The trail picks up in the twentieth century when Ohio rare book collector Bruce Ferrini acquired the two ledgers and in turn sold them to Schøyen, according to the collection catalog: "Provenance: 1. Cheyenne chief Hagetta, Dodge City, Kansas (1878–1879); 2. L. M. Hyatt, Dodge City, Kansas (1879–); 3. Bruce Ferrini, Akron, Ohio."³⁶ More than likely, someone else owned the ledger notebooks between Hyatt and Ferrini, who lived from 1950 until 2010.

34. Wild Hog-Schøyen Ledger, Schøyen Collection. The Schøyen Collection is held in a rehabilitated seventeenth-century Norwegian farmhouse in which Martin Schøyen has installed conservation measures to protect the ledgers and a large number of other rare manuscripts acquired from around the world.

35. *Dodge City Times*, May 3, 1883; *Ford County Globe*, March 25, 1879.

36. Wild Hog-Schøyen Ledger, schoyencollection.com/amerind.html.



Figure 2: A buffalo and her calf, from the Northern Cheyenne-Straughn notebook, were made with smudged ink and pencil. The fingerprints of the artist appear at several places in the ink, including at the bottom center of the large animal.

The Dodge City ledger notebooks have not been studied at length by Cheyenne community members or by non-Cheyenne scholars, with the exception of Smithsonian Institution anthropologist Candace S. Greene.³⁷ What follows is an attempt to better understand the Northern Cheyenne cultural idioms through which the ledger artists interpreted their people and the changes they experienced throughout the late 1870s. Still, more work remains to be done in order to contextualize these ledger notebooks with documentation and to increase awareness of their importance to Northern and Southern Cheyenne communities, as well as the Kansas communities that came into contact with the Dodge City prisoners. It is the authors' hope that this discussion is the beginning of that ongoing work.

37. Greene, "Women, Bison, and Coup."

The small ledger notebooks the prisoners used for their drawings contain sixty pages. Three of the notebooks are full of drawings, in most cases on both sides of the pages; the fourth has drawings on only half the pages. The four notebooks and three loose drawings created by the Northern Cheyenne prisoners, when counting each two-page scene as a single image, add up to 245 images, including:

- Northern Cheyenne-Straughn notebook: 83 images
- Wild Hog-Clayton notebook: 55 images
- Wild Hog-Schøyen notebook: 69 images
- Porcupine-Schøyen notebook: 34 images
- KSHS loose drawings: 3 images
- Wild Hog-Smithsonian loose drawing: 1 image

These ledger art drawings are comprised of lead pencil outlines filled in with pencil, colored pencil, pigments,

or crayon. The colors include blue, red, yellow, black, gray (watered down black ink), pink (thinned red water color), orange, and brown. In all the ledgers, black ink, probably pen ink, is smudged by finger into the outlines of some drawings (see figure 2). Candace Greene has noted this technique makes the Dodge City ledger art “unlike . . . any other Cheyenne drawings I have seen.”³⁸ Overall, the notebooks appear to have been made with limited resources, with red, blue, orange, yellow, and black being the predominant colors.

The subjects of the Dodge City drawings, as well as their organization in the ledgers, also make these books unique. Most of the early ledger drawings are, according to Greene, “aligned horizontally along the length of the pages, often paired with the opposite page. The ledger book must be rotated in order to read the drawings.”³⁹ Additionally, sequences of two-page drawings can be reversed. The Wild Hog-Clayton notebook appears to have been started at one end, then rotated and continued from the other end, so the two parts of the book align oppositely. The Wild Hog-Schøyen notebook reverses direction three times—on pages 13, 19, and 20. Wild Hog is alleged to be the author of both books where reversals occur, indicating that this technique may be a marker of his distinctive style.

These reversals and the apparent lack of overarching sequential narrative suggest that each drawing or diptych is unique. Narrative meanings are not constructed in a page-by-page manner. Rather, repeated stylistic details and subject matter are notable as overall trends. For example, almost all the figures’ feet are hoof-like, and seldom in these ledgers are feet or moccasins drawn in normal proportion. This may be a stylistic idiosyncrasy, as scholar of Northern Cheyenne ledger art Peter Powell believes, or it may emphasize a theme of flight. Cheyenne oral traditions refer to Cheyenne refugees as being like small buffalo herds, with fleeing Northern Cheyenne turned into buffalo to escape the pursuing troopers.⁴⁰ Drawings in all four notebooks have this repeated detail.

The two loose drawings from the Kansas Historical Society depict a courting (perhaps wedding) scene and a camp scene, in which a group of men and women stand

before a tipi; the second image has a horse drawn on its reverse. The subject matter of the drawings from the four notebooks falls into four general categories, including, in order of frequency:

Camp scenes: 101 images

- 55 courting scenes of men and women with a courtship blanket or other indicator
- 24 scenes of men and/or women lined up in a row, some clearly dancing
- 14 scenes of men and/or women on horseback
- 8 scenes of single or multiple tipis

Wildlife: 86 images

- 30 bird scenes, often including more than one bird per scene
- 56 scenes of other animals, often more than one per scene

War: 28 images

- 23 scenes of individual warriors in regalia, one per scene
- 5 combat scenes, with Crow and other tribal people, though never with the U.S. Army

Hunting: 27 images

Most of the Dodge City drawings depict the ordinary rituals of everyday camp life. For example Cheyenne courtship rituals, which had their own protocol, appear in fifty-five scenes in the notebooks. Often close friends, siblings, or cousins would arrange relationships. A courting scene from the Wild Hog-Schøyen Ledger (figure 3) shows details of men, women, and their dress. Two men on horseback approach two standing women. The men’s German-silver hairplate ornaments hang from the backs of their heads, tied to their scalplocks. One man, in an orange shirt, has a two-stranded necklace. The second man, in a black shirt, holds a quirt. The women are wrapped in a striped blanket, and beneath it their skirts show, one blue and one black, as well as their leggings. Both women wear face paint.

Other intricately drawn courtship scenes can be found in the Northern Cheyenne-Straughn Ledger. This book often contains more precisely drawn details than those produced by Wild Hog, and in this regard it more closely resembles Porcupine’s works as well

38. Greene to Powers, January 18, 1985.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Marjane Ambler quoting *Notame’hehe*, “North Woman,” in “Coming Home,” in *We, The Northern Cheyenne People* (Lame Deer, Mont.: Chief Dull Knife College, 2008), 30; Greene to Powers, January 18, 1985. Also, James N. Leiker and Ramon Powers, *The Northern Cheyenne Exodus in History and Memory* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), 118–19, presents Lucille Spear’s account of the Northern Cheyenne in their escape north.



Figure 3: A courting scene drawn by Wild Hog, one of fifty-five depictions of courting rituals in the Dodge City notebooks, shows two men on horseback approaching two women. The men's German-silver hairplate ornaments hang from the backs of their heads, tied to their scalplocks. One man wears a two-stranded necklace; the other holds a quirt. The women are wrapped together in a striped blanket and wear face paint. Drawing courtesy of the Schøyen Collection, Spikkestad, Norway.

as other Cheyenne ledger artists.⁴¹ The Northern Cheyenne-Straughn Ledger perhaps shows the work of a third artist from among the seven Northern Cheyenne men incarcerated at the Ford County Jail. In one of its courtship scenes (figure 4), a woman, a man, another woman, and another man stand together in couples. Three of the figures wear Lakota blankets with beaded rosettes or hourglass symbols associated with courtship. Use of such symbols is not surprising, given that some of the seven Dodge City prisoners, like many Northern Cheyennes, had close ties with Lakotas. Wild Hog's wife, for example, was Lakota.⁴² The figures' dress includes striped leggings, detailed face paint for the women along the edge of the face and hairline, and precisely drawn designs on the strip that joins two lengths of trade cloth at the waist. The second woman has three stripes drawn

41. Ambler, "Coming Home," 30; Greene to Powers, January 18, 1885. Both have the unique idiom of hooves drawn in place of feet for all figures, so collaboration is apparent. Greene notes this use of hooves is distinctive.

42. Frank W. Blackmar, ed., *Kansas: A Cyclopaedia of State History, Embracing Events, Institutions, Industries, Counties, Cities, Towns, Prominent Persons, etc. . . , with a Supplementary Volume Devoted to Selected Personal History and Reminiscence* (Chicago, Ill.: Standard Pub. Co., 1912), 2:916-17; William K. Powers, "The Art of Courtship among the Oglala," *American Indian Art* (Spring 1980): 40-47, illustrates his article with a photograph of such a courtship blanket with a beaded strip on strouding (Denver Art Museum, cat. no. BS-136). This "dress" blanket was "made especially for a young man by his *tankeku* (elder sister)" (p. 45).

around each ankle. The artist of this drawing kept coloring precisely within lines and fabric selvedges clearly marked.

The Dodge City notebooks contain other depictions of camp life. A number of drawings in the notebooks show three to six people of same or mixed gender standing together. In some instances, their sashes and braids swing and their arms are extended (figure 5). Sometimes marks on the ground beneath them indicate the movement of their feet. In other drawings the groups show no other activity besides standing together. This type of drawing is repeated in the ledgers, counting for nearly as many images as those showing hunting. Odenbaugh noted that the prisoners marched in a circle during his visit, "re-

peating something."⁴³ Similar circles may be flattened out to single rows on the two-dimensional paper of the ledger notebooks.

Along with camp life, scenes of wildlife comprise the majority of the Dodge City notebooks. The Northern Cheyenne men drew wildlife that would have been in the region or in their homeland at that time: turkeys, grouse, skunks, buffalo, elk, and a snapping turtle, an animal not found in their Montana homeland but common in Indian Territory and western Kansas (figure 6). Drawings of individual or grouped animals include twenty-nine birds, twenty-eight elk, fifteen bison, three antelope, three bears, three skunks, and one each of beaver, opossum, snapping turtle, and dog. As bison became less available on the plains in the late 1870s, elk replaced them as game, which could explain the greater number of elk in the books. Females with young, including elk, buffalo, turkeys, and antelope, appear seventeen times. Greene notes this repetition as another unique feature of the Dodge City ledger art notebooks.⁴⁴

Birds, like elk, dominate the pages of the books. Turkeys, which were commonly hunted by the Cheyennes, appear singly and in groups on thirteen separate

43. Odenbaugh to Powell, December 30, 1889.

44. The numbers given here do not include the animals depicted in hunting scenes, which are discussed below. Greene to Powers, January 18, 1885.

pages. Owls, which the Cheyenne people believed were spirits of deceased people, are depicted four times.⁴⁵ Other game birds include four blue grouse and two plump birds with distinct white neck rings, which are probably killdeer. Three raptors in the ledgers are likely golden eagles, which inhabit the western plains. These eagles, with detailed, black-tipped tail feathers, resemble a golden eagle image in the privately held Pamplin Ledger, which is also Northern Cheyenne.⁴⁶ One image of a small flock of black, scissor-tailed birds probably shows swallow-tailed kites, and another drawing portrays a small flock of black-and-white birds that appear to be magpies.

Two drawings depict blue and red birds that cannot be identified. The unidentified birds may be symbolic, as Cheyenne people organized bird taxonomy into overlapping figurative as well as literal categories: “holy,” “great,” and “ordinary,” which correspond to “tiers of the cosmos, the Blue Sky-Space, the Near Sky-Space, and the Atmosphere.” Ordinary birds include “ground birds” of the “atmosphere” that are hunted for food. Notable in the Dodge City notebooks is the relative lack of war-related birds of the upper tier. Eagles, magpies, and kites are the only birds in these notebooks that are associated with war imagery.⁴⁷ This exemplifies the incarcerated Cheyenne men’s avoidance of war-related themes in their drawings.

One of the most unusual images in the ledgers is of a snapping turtle (figure 7), which has both realistic and supernatural attributes. The animal is seldom represented in Cheyenne ledgers or other media; but examples can be found on a few surviving shields,

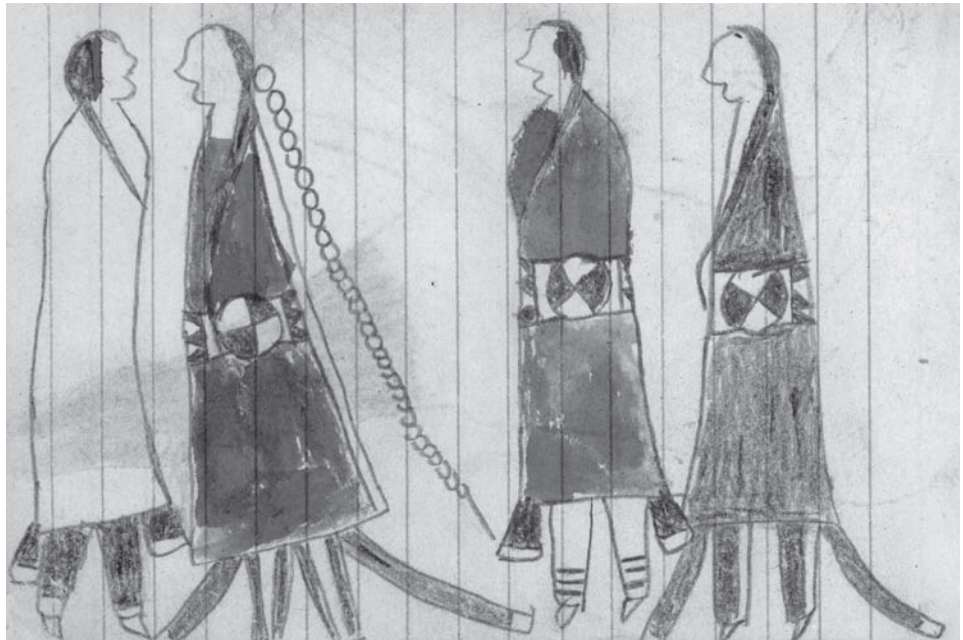


Figure 4: In a courting scene from the Northern Cheyenne-Straughn Ledger a woman, a man, another woman, and another man stand together in couples. Three of the figures wear Lakota blankets with beaded rosettes or hourglass symbols associated with courtship. The figures’ dress also includes striped leggings, detailed face paint for the women along the edge of the face and hairline, and precisely drawn designs on the strip that joins two lengths of trade cloth at the waist. The artist of this drawing kept coloring precisely within lines and fabric selvages clearly marked.

including one made between 1860 and 1880 that is now held by History Colorado in Denver.⁴⁸ The turtle’s serrated back and tail, as well as its clawed feet, indicate it is of the snapping turtle species. According to an early historian of the Cheyennes, George Bird Grinnell, snapping turtles were a food source to Southern Cheyennes. The blue head has horns and two lines of energy radiating from the skull, which are representative of Cheyenne spiritual images.⁴⁹ The other animals in the ledger notebooks appear to be realistic, without spirit lines or other supernatural variations.

Fewer than 2 percent of the 245 Dodge City drawings indicate combat, and none illustrate action against the U.S. Army. Another 9 percent are indirectly related to war, showing warriors on horseback in full military regalia (figure 8). In the Northern Cheyenne-Straughn

45. John Stands In Timber and Margot Liberty, *Cheyenne Memories* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 295; Mike Cowdrey, “The Turtle Hangs Before: Celestial Templates in Cheyenne Cosmology,” *European Review of Native American Studies* 17 (2003): 7–8.

46. Craig D. Bates, Bonnie Kohn, and Benson Lanford, *The Cheyenne/ Arapaho Ledger Book from the Pamplin Collection* (Portland, Ore.: Robert B. Pamplin, Jr., 2003), 301, plate 198. Bates authored the notes on the plates.

47. John H. Moore, “The Ornithology of Cheyenne Religionists,” *Plains Anthropologist* 31 (August 1986): 178.

48. Jean Afton, David Fridtjof Halaas, and Andrew E. Masich, *Cheyenne Dog Soldiers: A Ledgerbook History of Coups and Combat* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1997), 85, plate 43.

49. Grinnell writes: “In the country of the Northern Cheyennes there are few water turtles, but they are abundant in the southern country, and are commonly captured and eaten.” George Bird Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians: Their History and Ways of Life* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1972), 1:307; Imre Nagy “Cheyenne Shields and their Cosmological Background,” *American Indian Art* (Summer 1994): 38–45; Powell, *Sweet Medicine*, 439; Greene, “Women, Bison, and Coup,” 23.

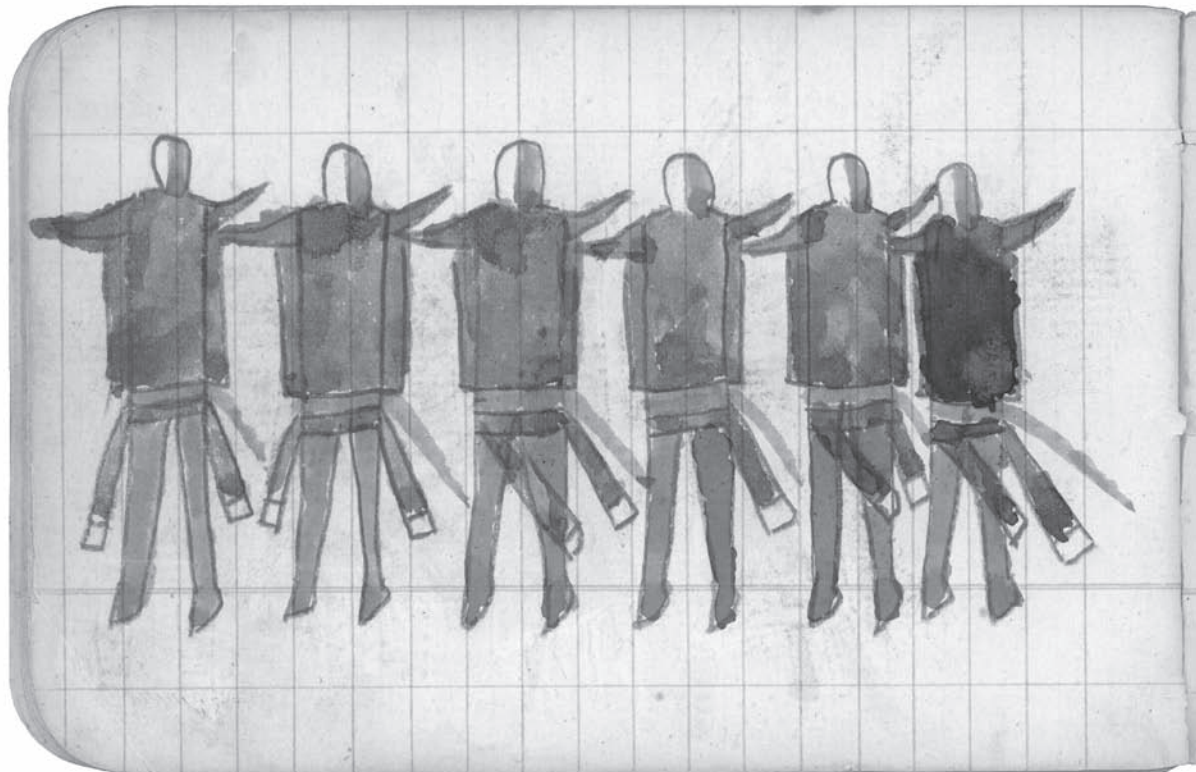


Figure 5: A drawing made by Wild Hog shows a group of six men dancing together. Their movement is illustrated by the swinging of their sashes. In other depictions of similar groups in the Dodge City notebooks, movement is demonstrated by marks on the ground beneath the figures' feet. Such drawings may represent a ceremony that took place as part of producing the art preserved in the notebooks.

ledger, twenty-three images of individual warriors appear—their outlines are almost identical except the color of the horses, warriors' clothing, and the type of weapons carried. Such warrior scenes imply the theme of war and its honors but avoid references to combat or war-like actions, which could have compromised the artists' legal position.

The only combat scene in the Wild Hog-Clayton Ledger shows a two-page narrative (figure 9), beginning on the left-hand page, of a Native man on a black horse fleeing a Northern Cheyenne man on a red horse. The Cheyenne man, holding a quirt, wears his hair in simple braids. He wears the very long breechclout characteristic of Cheyenne men. The enemy, with black shirt and proportionately shorter breechclout, wears his hair in the characteristic style of the Atsina (Gross Ventre). The Native man turns and fires his carbine at the Cheyenne man chasing him, a chase that is indicated by the direction of the hoofprints between the horses. The animals are stylized and reduced to minimal details. The red horse has its tail tied in red trade cloth, which

indicates deliberate preparation for war. The man atop the black horse discharges his gun, but no blood appears on the pursuer's body. This is a skirmish, not a killing.

Killing is at times depicted in the hunting scenes that occur almost as often as war-related imagery and comprise 11 percent of the drawings in the Dodge City notebooks. Hunting is another kind of warfare, but in the drawings the hunters' regalia are simpler and their horses are not prepared with paint or cloth ties in their manes or tails. The hunting scenes in the Wild Hog-Schøyen Ledger and the Wild Hog-Clayton Ledger are similar in style. In a one-page scene from the Wild Hog-Schøyen Ledger (figure 10), the simply drawn hunter holds his bow with an arrow ready to fly, and four arrows already protrude from a buffalo. The man has one leg drawn astride the horse, but the detailing of his features is minimal. Pencil outlines are filled with lead and color pencil. In a hunting scene in the Wild Hog-Clayton Ledger (figure 11), pencil outlines are filled with colored pencil, water color, and ink. Still, the similarities of style are evident. The eyes of the bison in both drawings are left uncolored. The

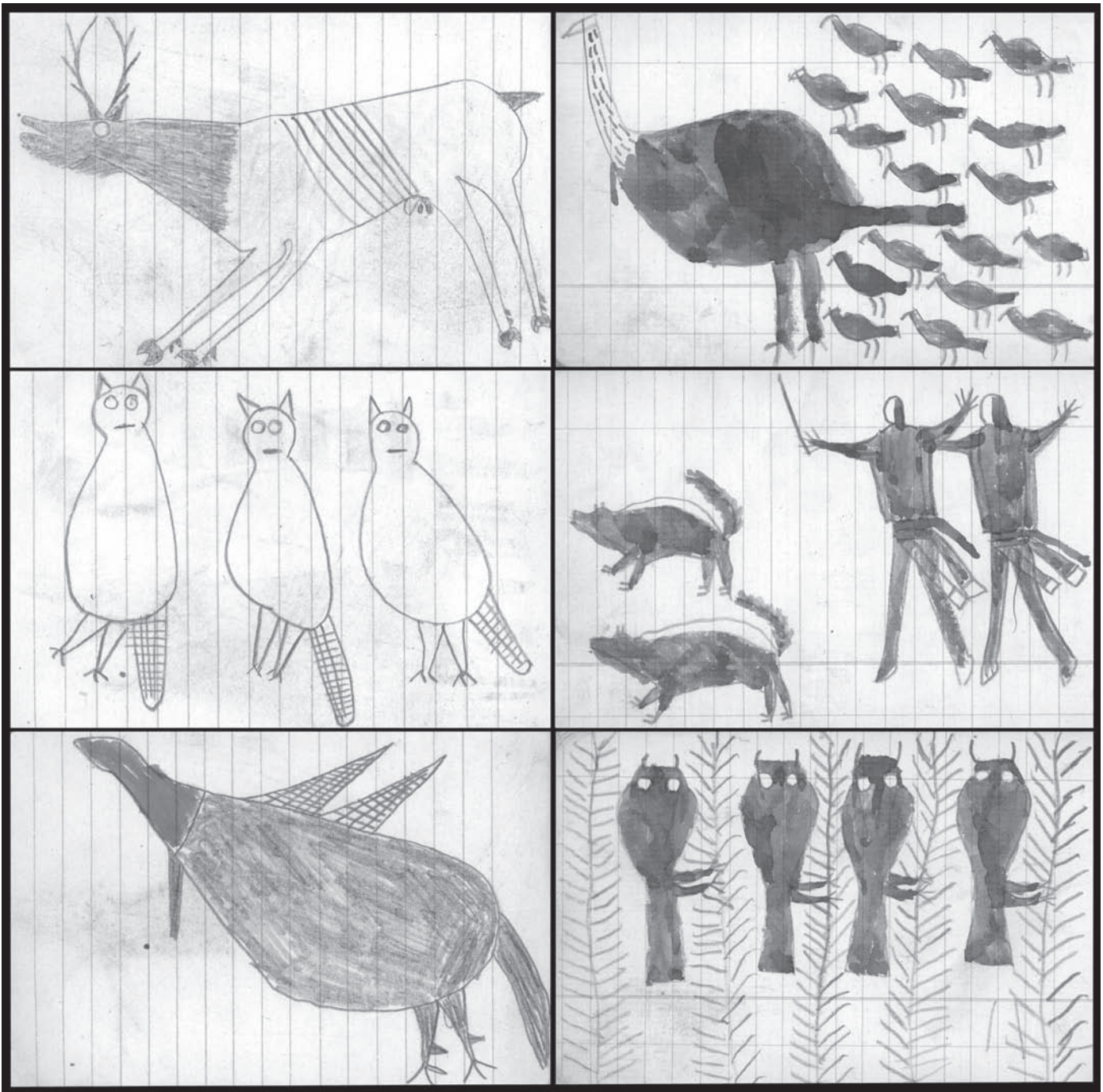


Figure 6: Many of the drawings made by the Dodge City prisoners reflect remembrances of their homeland, including the scenes of camp life and wildlife that comprise the majority of the notebooks. They also included images of animals the Northern Cheyenne encountered on their moves through Indian Territory and western Kansas. Shown is a small sampling of the wildlife from the notebooks: from top to bottom at left, an elk, three birds, and a turkey from the Northern Cheyenne-Straughn Ledger, and, at right, a turkey with her young, two men hunting skunks, and four owls in the trees from the Wild Hog-Clayton Ledger.

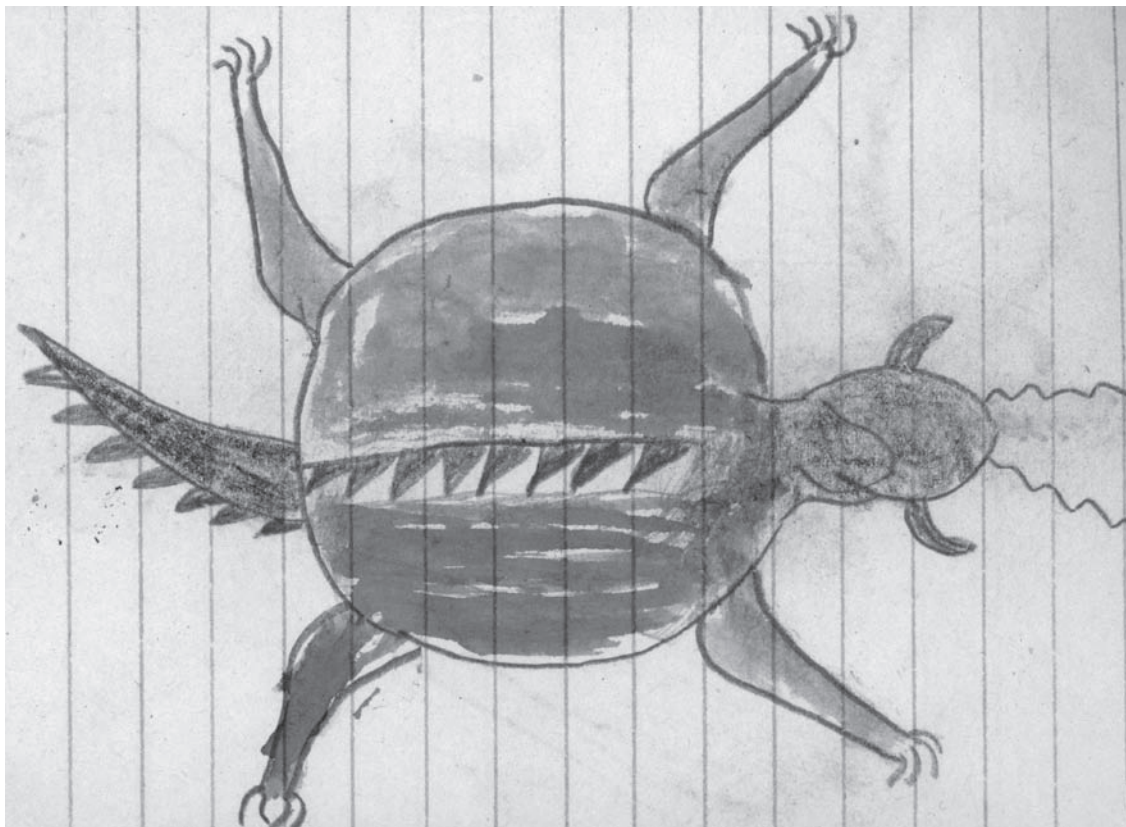


Figure 7: One of the most unusual images in the ledgers is of a snapping turtle, which has both realistic and supernatural attributes. The animal is seldom represented in Cheyenne ledgers or other media; but examples can be found on a few surviving shields. In the Northern Cheyenne-Straughn Ledger, the turtle's blue head has horns and two lines of energy radiating from the skull, which are representative of Cheyenne spiritual images. The other animals in the ledger notebooks appear to be realistic, without spirit lines or other supernatural variations.

horses have small heads proportionally, they are not given eyes, and their bodies are rectangular. The feathers on the arrows are identical. In both drawings, the bison are larger than the horses, which implies the hunters' prowess.

Along with ten illustrations of bison being hunted in the Dodge City notebooks, there are hunting scenes involving five elk, four turkeys, five unidentified birds, two skunks, two bears, one owl, and one beaver. In the nineteenth century, as some of the drawings suggest, a wide variety of animals was commonly eaten that would not be part of a modern diet. Hunter Richard Irving Dodge wrote of a twenty-day hunting expedition southeast of Fort Dodge in 1872 that included the expected buffalo, deer, antelope, turkeys, grouse, quail, killdeer, and water fowl, but also rattlesnakes, owls, snipe, hawks, badgers, raccoons, robins, and meadowlarks.⁵⁰

50. Richard Irving Dodge, *The Plains of the Great West* (New York: Archer House, 1959), 118.

The inclusion in the Dodge City notebooks of animals unknown to the Northern Cheyenne in their homeland, coupled with the shift in the drawings from depictions of combat to portraits of warriors in their finery, demonstrates that the prisoners held in the Ford County Jail adapted their pictorial histories to their new realities. Other surviving drawings produced by Cheyennes imprisoned under different circumstances show similar shifts, including the ledger art of a group of Plains Indians, many of whom were Southern Cheyenne, held at Fort Marion in Florida from 1875 to 1878. In both situations, these Cheyenne men adapted hide painting and pre-reservation ledger art idioms to their new situations. Ledger art scholar Joyce Szabo described the Fort Marion experience of adaption: "While the warrior-artist of the Plains recorded his scenes after the fact of battle in order to portray his outstanding accomplishments or those of his cohorts, the Fort Marion artist was often presenting a detailed

window on his new world.” The drawings became more immediate and diary-like, as Szabo noted; the subject matter changed from war to “representations made from close observation of daily occurrences with actual self-portraits placed in specific locations.”⁵¹ The Dodge City prisoners, like those at Fort Marion, shifted attention from war to benign subject matter: courting, dancing, and camp scenes, depictions of hunting, and drawings of game animals, which could have been part of the pre-incarceration daily fare, although they also produced five combat scenes and drawings of twenty-three warriors in regalia. During captivity, from February to June, they made images of regional birds, buffalo, elk, and other animals, as well as Northern Cheyenne men and women.

For both the Fort Marion and Dodge City prisoners, no indication exists in the drawings of the difficult journeys they were forced to undertake, the depressing jail environments they were made to endure, the recent deaths of their relatives over which they grieved, or the wounds they suffered. Nor is there mention of the gawking crowds looking in upon them. Self-censorship is one of the most significant characteristics of this group of ledger drawings. Only a few war scenes occur in the entire body of images, representing only skirmishes with tribal enemies. These notebooks directly contrast with the ledger produced by the Dodge City captives’ Northern Cheyenne compatriot Little Finger Nail, who made his book during the same flight from Indian Territory. His drawings are records of war events, some from the raids through Kansas and Nebraska, and in this way they are more typical of pre-reservation era ledger art drawings.⁵² Little Finger Nail’s ledger was taken from his body by a soldier after the final assault on the Northern Cheyenne holdouts who had broken out of the Fort Robinson barracks prison.

The Dodge City and Fort Marion ledger books stand as distinct examples of drawings made in captivity, and their carefully curated subject matter demonstrates the survival strategies of those who created them. They allow for a glimpse into a short but significant moment in the lives of their imprisoned artists. Fortunately, more information about the men behind the Dodge City ledger notebooks is known. Although it is not possible to create full biographical sketches, given that those keeping records pertaining to the incarceration of the Northern Cheyenne men in the Ford County Jail were uninterested in such questions, some information does

exist. Background on the men before and after their imprisonment can be found in interviews with Northern Cheyenne elders and government records, such as those of the Kansas legal proceedings, where the names Wild Hog, Old Crow, Strong Left Hand, Porcupine, Tangle Hair, Noisy Walker, and Blacksmith, with some variants, were recorded. Early oral traditions about the Cheyenne captives are also a source of information, even if they are incomplete. L. M. Hyatt, for instance, printed the following list in Porcupine’s ledger, noting the Cheyenne names of the prisoners and his rendering of the names in English:

Hazetta—Wild Hog
 Norrnenaha—Left Hand
 Quamuttse—Blacksmith
 Coutsamaha—Old Man
 Ituta—Tall Man
 Meou—Porcupine

He provided no name for Old Crow. It appears that Hyatt’s translation of the names was based on the sound of the Cheyenne words used to form them, rather than on their meaning. A modern scholar of the Cheyenne language recently found no basis for the translations Hyatt provided.⁵³ Based on these sources, brief biographies of all the men are possible, providing, alongside the ledger art they recorded during their imprisonment, a fuller picture of changes they and their people lived through in the late 1870s.

Wild Hog, one of the named ledger notebook artists, was born around 1840 and died about 1889. Wild Hog was selected as one of the Elkhorn Scrapper War Society chiefs in the summer of 1864, and he was among those Northern Cheyennes who enlisted in Lieutenant William P. Clark’s company of Indian scouts in 1877. As the army negotiated the move to Indian Territory in the south on April 22, 1877, Wild Hog was present in the meetings, along with Dull Knife, Little Wolf, Tangle Hair, Blacksmith, and other military leaders. In the flight north during the fall 1878, Wild Hog was among the Elkhorn Scrapers who protected the women, children, and elderly. During the Fort Robinson breakout, he was shackled apart from the main group in order to leave the Northern Cheyennes leaderless. After trial in Kansas, Wild Hog eventually returned to the north country. He

51. Szabo, *Howling Wolf*, 68.

52. Little Finger Nail Ledger; Preston, “Little Finger Nail’s Ledger Book,” 82–87.

53. Wayne Leman, a linguist of the Cheyenne language, was not able to more fully decipher the meaning of the Cheyenne names. Wayne Leman email message to Ramon Powers, December 17, 2010, author’s personal collection.

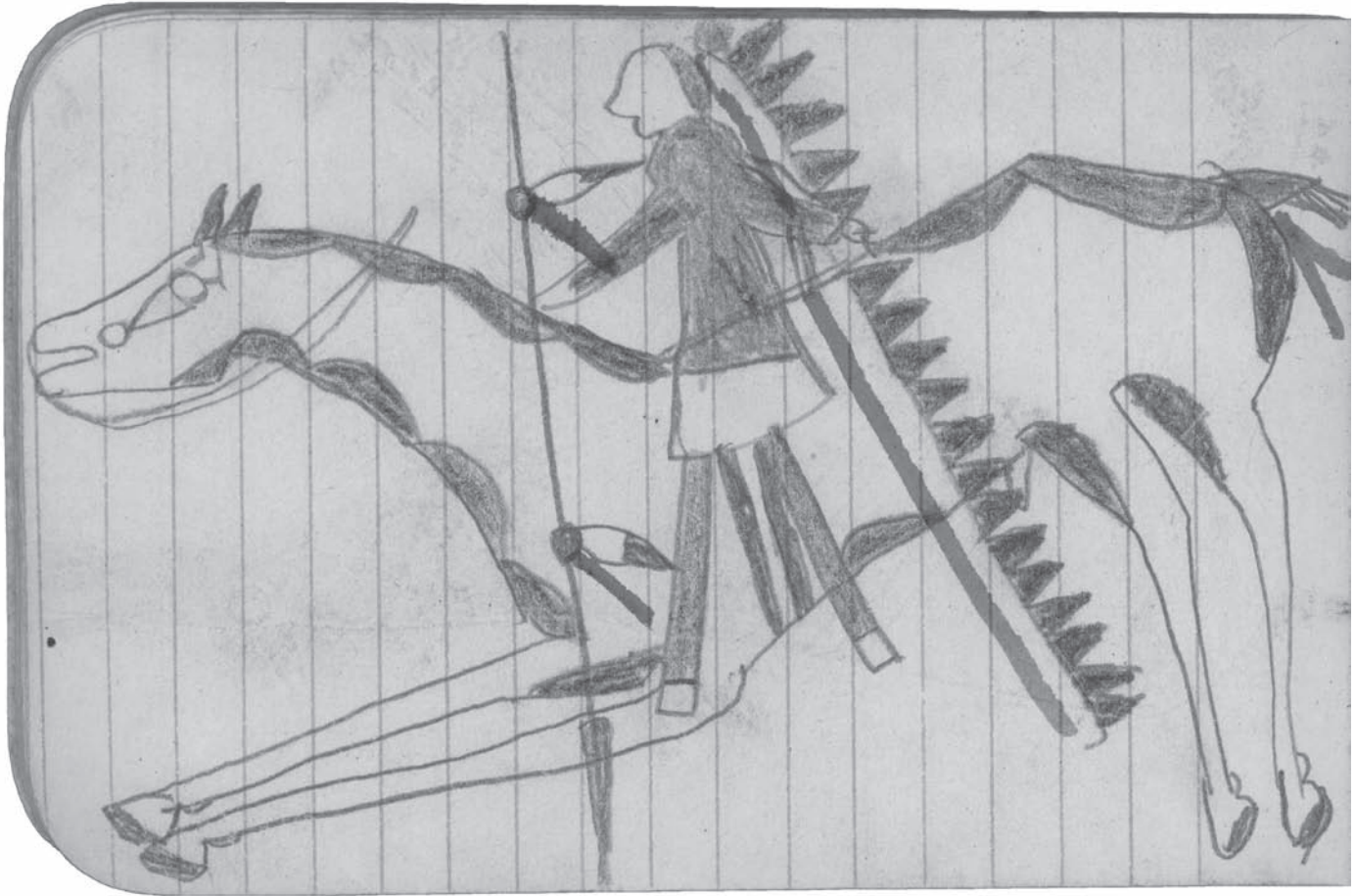


Figure 8: Very few of the Dodge City drawings indicate combat and none illustrate action against the U.S. Army, suggesting that the prisoners were conscious of how such scenes might jeopardize their legal case. Some of the notebooks' drawings are indirectly related to war, such as this one of a Northern Cheyenne man in regalia atop his horse from the Northern Cheyenne-Straughn Ledger.

spent time on the Pine Ridge Reservation, and, according to Nebraska writer Mari Sandoz, her father, Jules, knew Wild Hog and described him as mystical. Descendants of Wild Hog continue to live on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana.⁵⁴

Porcupine, the other name associated directly with the ledger notebooks, left little evidence of his early life. Porcupine survived the Fort Robinson breakout because he was held with Wild Hog in the prison tent at Fort Robinson, apart from the others. Other than being listed as a warrior, no source identifies the warrior society to

which he may have belonged. Later, on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, Porcupine was identified as one of the Custer-fight veterans. He was also involved in organizing the Ghost Dance on the reservation in the 1890s. He was still alive in 1922 when reservation physician and accomplished photographer Thomas Marquis took his photograph with other Northern Cheyenne elders.⁵⁵

Old Crow, also called Crow, was the most senior leader of the group. He served as a U.S. Army scout with Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie in the attack on the Northern

54. Peter J. Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain: A History of the Northern Cheyenne Chiefs and Warrior Societies, 1830-1879, with an Epilogue, 1969-1974* (San Francisco, Calif.: Harper and Row, 1981), 1:454, 2:1142, 1005, 1143-44, 1150-52, 1153, 1155-59, 1165, 1171-72, 1179-80, 1182, 1184, 1186-87, 1392; Mari Sandoz, *Letters of Mari Sandoz*, ed. Helen Winter Stauffer (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 312; Wild Hog, *Testimony Taken by a Select Committee Concerning Removal of the Northern Cheyenne Indians*, 46th Cong., 2nd sess., 1880, S. Rept. 708, 11-13, 34. Wild Hog's wife also asserted that "Everything is better there than here"; "Proceedings of a Board of Officers Convened by Virtue of the Following Special Order: Headquarters Department of the Platte, Fort Omaha, Nebraska,

January 21, 1879, Special Order No. 8 By Command of Brigadier General Crook," Records of the U.S. Army Command, RG 98, in Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1871-1880, November 1878-1879, roll 429, National Archives, Washington, DC; John H. Monnett, *Tell Them We Are Going Home: The Odyssey of the Northern Cheyenne* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 187, 191-93.

55. Afton, Halaas, and Masich, *Cheyenne Dog Soldiers*, 308; Thomas B. Marquis, *The Cheyennes of Montana*, ed. Thomas B. Weist (Algonac, Mich.: Reference Publication, 1978), 90; Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 2:1238; Margot Liberty, ed., *A Northern Cheyenne Album: Photographs by Thomas B. Marquis* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 173.



Figure 9: This combat scene from the Wild Hog-Clayton Ledger, the only one in that collection, shows a two-page narrative of a Native man on a black horse fleeing a Northern Cheyenne man on a red horse. The Native man turns and fires his carbine at the Cheyenne man chasing him, a chase that is indicated by the direction of the hoofprints between the horses. The man atop the black horse discharges his gun, but no blood appears on the pursuer's body. This is a skirmish, not a killing.

Cheyenne camp in November of 1876. In the 1878 escape north, he apparently was among the leaders imploring young warriors not to kill settlers. While they were at Camp Robinson, he participated in various councils with the post commander during the critical days before the breakout. On the morning of the breakout, he was placed in irons. After Old Crow was escorted back to Darlington Agency, Indian Territory, in July of 1879, he remained in the south when other Dodge City prisoners went north to the new reservation. He lived into the 1920s, as is evidenced by his inclusion in tribal census rolls. In the south, he resisted the new way of life along with other chiefs. However, his power waned as those in the south saw their reservation dismantled.⁵⁶

Tangle Hair, also called Rough Hair, was born in 1831 or 1832. According to Peter Powell, he also was called Frizzle Hair, Frizzle Top, and Big Head by whites; Hyatt translated his name as "Tall Man." He was present at

56. He is enumerated by U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885–1940, June 30, 1887, Oklahoma, Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency, Darlington, Indian Territory, microfilm M-595, roll 27, National Archives, Washington, DC; his family includes wife Pipe Woman (#1200), age thirty-nine; son Meat, (#1201), age fourteen; daughter Little Burnt (#1202), age three; and daughter New Lodge (#1203), age one. The boy who appears beside him in the 1879 Lawrence photograph could be his son, who would have been six. Old Crow appears in the U.S. Census, 1920, Oklahoma, Custer County, Deer Creek Township, with a household that includes Mrs. Old Crow and widowed niece Ruth Porcupine and her children. He also appears, listed as part of the Seger-Cheyenne and Arapahoe Agency, in U.S. Census Rolls, 1885–1940, June 30, 1926, Oklahoma, Cheyenne Indians of Seger Cheyenne and Arapahoe Agency, microfilm M-595, roll 479, National Archives, Washington, DC, with a wife named Around, born 1862. See also, Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 2:827, 1060, 1186, 1187, 1190, 1195, 1199; Donald J. Berthrong, *The Cheyenne and Arapaho Ordeal: Reservation and Agency Life in the Indian Territory, 1875–1907* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 213.

Camp Robinson in 1877 during negotiations to move the Northern Cheyennes south to Indian Territory. Tangle Hair was half Lakota and half Cheyenne. Because he spoke both languages, he was a translator during the group's imprisonment at Camp/Fort Robinson, and he was treated as a leader. In the Fort Robinson outbreak, he was the first to jump out a shattered window and was among the Dog Soldiers who covered the Northern Cheyenne rear as the women and children fled the barracks. He was shot through both legs, and because of his wounds, he could not flee and was captured.⁵⁷

Blacksmith was a prominent fighting man, of mature age, and probably a Dog Soldier. As noted, he was present—along with Dull Knife, Little Wolf, and Tangle Hair—at the 1877 meetings with the U.S. Army to talk about the Cheyenne removal to the south. After the Fort Robinson breakout, he was among the warriors who formed the rear guard as the Northern Cheyennes fled out of the barracks and past the stables. When he was captured on the bluffs, he had not been wounded.⁵⁸

Noisy Walker, also called Old Man, was another Dog Soldier who had been part of the Fort Robinson breakout rear guard. He apparently was shot early in the fight. He was taken to the guard house where he lay bleeding from gun-shot wounds in both legs.⁵⁹ Though debilitated at the time, he recovered.

57. Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 1:225; 2:1074, 1203, 1213, 1240; *Testimony Taken by a Select Committee Concerning Removal of the Northern Cheyenne Indians*, 11–13.

58. Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, 2:1146, 1203, 1213.

59. *Ibid.*, 2:1213.

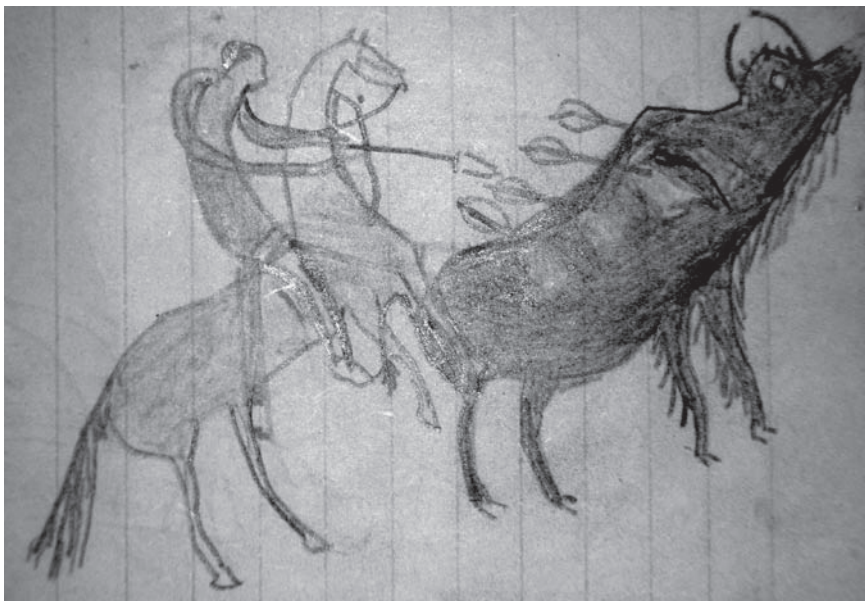


Figure 10: Hunting is depicted throughout the Dodge City notebooks, as, for example, in this scene from the Wild Hog-Schøyen Ledger in which the simply drawn hunter holds his bow with an arrow ready to fly, and four arrows already protrude from a buffalo. The man has one leg drawn astride the horse, but the detailing of the man's features is minimal. Pencil outlines are filled with lead and color pencil. Drawing courtesy of the Schøyen Collection, Spikkestad, Norway.

Strong Left Hand, or Left Hand, a Dog Soldier chief, was reputedly so strong that he could kill an antelope with a single thrown rock. He was identified among the chiefs or headmen when the Northern Cheyenne under Dull Knife surrendered to troops from Camp/Fort Robinson. He was the one who informed those in the barracks that Wild Hog had been placed in irons.⁶⁰ During his imprisonment at Camp/Fort Robinson, he was counted among the leaders and included in negotiations.

In the 1870s, the people of Dodge City and the Northern Cheyenne people had a series of interactions that ranged from extreme violence to trade and lawful negotiations. The two groups encountered each other in 1877 when Cheyenne families camped nearby, held a dance in town, and bartered for goods. Just over a year later, those same Northern Cheyennes were described as “Red Demons” in the local newspaper’s headline after they attacked cattle camps south of Dodge, killed herders and settlers, destroyed livestock, but skirted the town. When authorities returned seven of those Northern Cheyenne to Dodge City for trial for

60. *Ibid.*, 2:1161, 1191, 1197.

the murder of area herders and settlers, the townsfolk viewed them as “villains,” but gradually they became objects of curiosity and even sympathy. During their five-month captivity, the prisoners exchanged their artistic creations in gratitude or payment for the commodities of their captors. Records show that the Northern Cheyenne prisoners successfully negotiated with individuals—gambler L. M. Hyatt; the jailer John Straughn and his wife Sallie; clerk to the Indian Claims Commission James Clayton and his wife Dora; and the Ohio physician J. Odenbaugh. Despite the exigencies of prison life, they sold or bartered ledger drawings. They had some success in negotiating with the court and press, and they prevailed in their legal battle. The ledger notebooks they created are an aspect of this complicated interaction and demonstrate that the Northern Cheyenne men adapted their ledger art

tradition by self-censoring war images, perhaps in an effort to shape how their captors understood them.

Two opposing views continue to have currency in contemporary public memory, as Kansas communities develop a more nuanced understanding of the Plains Indian war. Oberlin, Kansas, has a Last Indian Raid Museum, the name of which references the settlers’ view of the conflict, but also a historical marker that shows sympathy to the difficulties faced by the Cheyennes. Differing interpretations of the events surrounding the Northern Cheyennes’ incarceration have been summed up by Sarah Krakoff, a professor of Indian law: “Whether one sees the events just described as The Last Indian Raid (the individual-conflict view) or as an installment in the Odyssey of the Northern Cheyenne (the conflict-between-sovereigns view) depends on one’s frame of reference.”⁶¹ The Dodge City ledger notebooks document an important chapter in the unfolding story of the Northern Cheyenne identity and sovereignty. Although the drawings created by the Northern Cheyenne prisoners virtually omit war scenes, they nonetheless reflect many aspects of their cultural world. Despite

61. Sarah Krakoff, “The Last Indian Raid in Kansas: Context, Colonialism, and Philip P. Frickey’s Contributions to American Indian Law,” *California Law Review* 98 (Fall 2010): 1278. See also Leiker and Powers, *The Northern Cheyenne Exodus in History and Memory*.

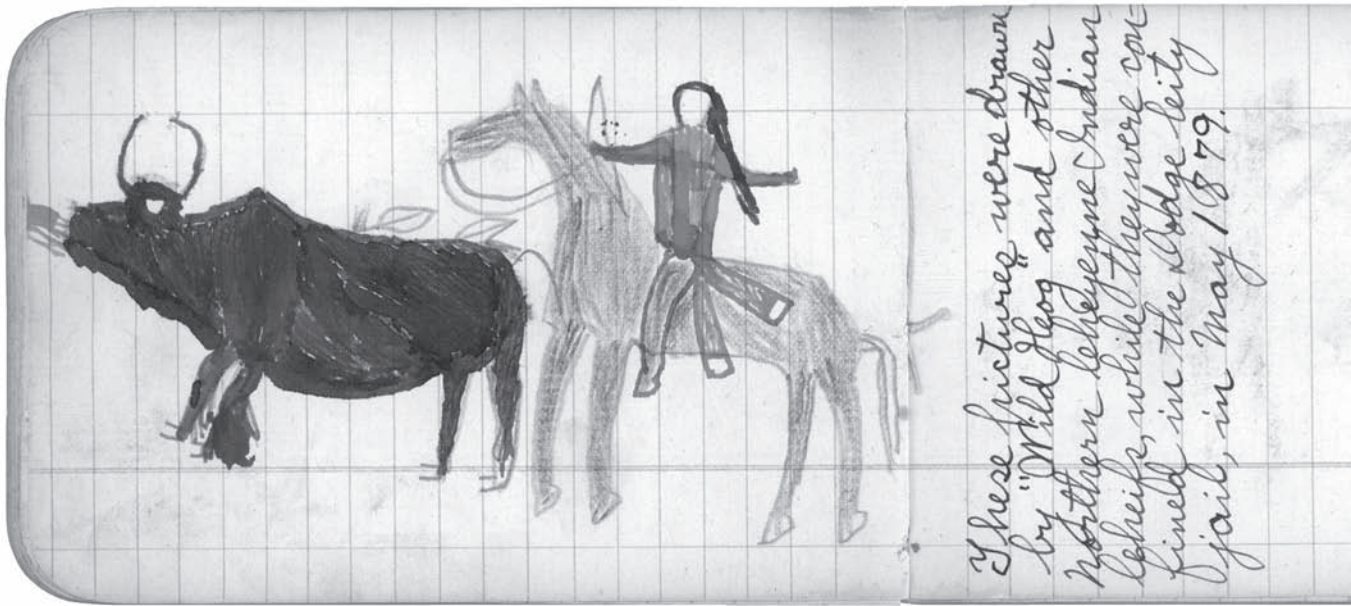


Figure 11: In a hunting scene in the Wild Hog-Clayton Ledger, which sits opposite an inscription later added to the book by one of its collectors, pencil outlines are filled with colored pencil, water color, and ink. The figures show similarities to those in hunting scenes in the Wild Hog-Schøyen Ledger. The eyes of the bison in both drawings are left uncolored. The horses have small heads proportionally, they are not given eyes, and their bodies are rectangular. The feathers on the arrows are identical. In both drawings, the bison are larger than the horses, which implies the hunters' prowess.

hardships of prison life, the artists asserted themselves as Northern Cheyenne people in their creation of these drawings.

The Dodge City books and drawings held at the Kansas Historical Society, the Schøyen Collection, and the Smithsonian Institution add to the scholarship of ledger art and are unusual because of the detailed information available about those who made them and their provenance, including a firsthand account of the creation of one of the drawings. These drawings were made at the cusp of the Cheyenne reservation era, and they reflect their creators' new understandings of the changing cultural and natural worlds in which they found themselves. The repetitions of certain images—like female animals with young—are unique among all Plains Indian ledger books. Also unique is the substitution of hoof-like feet for people rather than moccasins. The occasional smudging of ink with fingers, leaving distinct finger-prints, is unseen among other ledgers as well.

These small Northern Cheyenne ledger notebooks and related drawings—held in Topeka, Kansas; Spikkestad, Norway; and Washington, DC—are part of a significant body of Native America ledger art that is being preserved and interpreted by scholars. The study of ledger art is a developing field that includes important works by Karen Petersen, Peter Powell,

Candace Greene, Michael Cowdrey, and Joyce Szabo. Ross Frank, director of the Plains Indian Ledger Art Digital Publishing Project, has established a website with seventeen complete ledgers presently available, including the Kansas Historical Society ledgers; the Schøyen Collection ledgers are soon to be added. Frank articulates the importance of the ledgers: "Increasingly scholars are asking larger questions about ledger art through research that identifies undocumented ledger artists; contextualizes the life's work of an individual ledger artist; and links the content of ledger art firmly to cultural, religious, and cosmological concepts and beliefs crucial to understanding the information that these materials can convey to us."⁶²

Recent Native scholars of ledger art have begun to refer to ledgers as "Indigenous literary texts," a description that serves to reclaim them as part of cultural sovereignty. Author Denise Low has written of ledger art as a "composite indigenous genre," a legitimate literacy in its own right.⁶³ The images are a dense sign system recording military prowess, history, natural history, literature, art, and spirituality. Native oral tradition, which encompasses history and spiritual beliefs, is also

62. Norman Frank, "Project Information," <https://plainsledgerart.org/overview/>. The KSHS ledgers and loose drawings are also available on Kansas Memory; see n. 26 above.

63. Low, "Composite Indigenous Genres," 84.



In a photograph taken in Lawrence, Kansas, at the time of their release, the freed prisoners pose in fresh shirts, sitting with some of their wives and children and with no non-Cheyenne translator. No identifications are given on the photograph, but other records suggest that Old Crow's son and Wild Hog's daughter sit left to right in the front row; in the second row sit Porcupine, Old Crow's wife, Old Crow, and Wild Hog; and in the third row sit Old Crow's daughter (?), Noisy Walker (Old Man), Strong Left Hand, unidentified, Blacksmith, Tangle Hair (Rough Hair), and Wild Hog's daughter (?). They pose in local photographer W. H. Lamon's studio.

represented in ledger texts. The adaptability of the ledger art genre—from recording war honors on hide paintings to recording reservation life on paper—shows a cultural vitality not erased by colonial narratives.

Contemporary Cheyenne artists such as Hachivi Edgar Heap Of Birds and Harvey Pratt continue to reference the images and materials of plains ledger art. Heap Of Birds, who is influenced by the Fort Marion prisoner ledger artist Bear's Heart, has articulated his connection to the tradition:

The strong lead forged by Bear's Heart should be followed by our contemporary art practice. For today's Native artist, it is imperative to pronounce strong personal observations concerning the individual and political conditions that we

experience. . . . At times this visual expression should speak of human rights and issues of tribal sovereignty, but most important, our art must articulate viewpoints from a deeply personal perspective.⁶⁴

Heap of Birds speaks to the situation faced by the seven Northern Cheyenne men imprisoned in Dodge City, where they faced death and expressed themselves in the art form that connected them to their cultural sovereignty. Their drawings reflected their experience "from a deeply personal perspective," and at the same time alluded to their traditions.

Implicitly, these notebooks record the remarkable recovery and adaptation of seven men who experienced

64. Edgar Heap Of Birds, "Of Circularity and Linearity in the Work of Bear's Heart," in *Plains Indian Drawings, 1865–1935*, 66–67.

extreme hardships and loss. In Dodge City in 1879, they were able to interact with former foes, renegotiate their situation, and assert self-expression. The notebooks are an aspect of this transitional process. In a photograph taken in Lawrence, Kansas, at the time of their release, the group poses in fresh shirts, sitting with some of

their wives and children and with no non-Cheyenne translator. They pose in a photographer's studio, not on the steps of a jailhouse. Some wear neckties, most drape blankets around themselves, and all are unquestionably Northern Cheyenne. [KH]