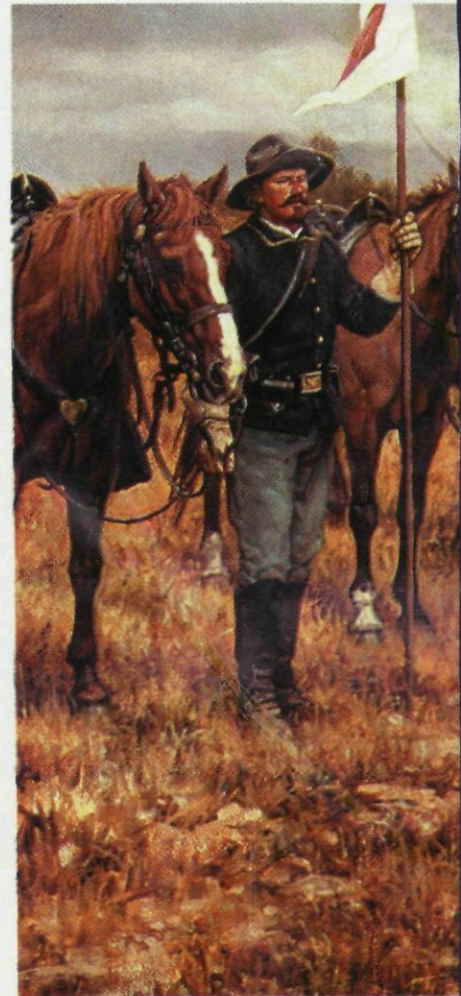


# *The Indian Trail of Broken Treaties*

CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE PLAINS INDIANS AND EURO-AMERICAN SETTLERS AND SOLDIERS HAVE OFTEN BEEN BLAMED ON BROKEN TREATIES, BUT WHO ACTUALLY DID THE 'BREAKING' HAS BEEN CONFUSED BY HISTORICAL MYTHS AND MODERN INTERPRETATIONS.

BY GREGORY MICHNO



Anyone with an interest in Western history as it has been interpreted during the past half-century has no doubt seen, heard and read countless litanies about how white men continually broke treaties with the American Indians. White soldiers and settlers are nearly always depicted as being the first to violate agreements that the Indians, if left in peace, would surely have kept. The tale is often repeated, but like so many historical myths, it dissolves upon closer examination.

The idea to treat with the Indians was an old one, going back to the time of the first white settlers in the New World. When the Colonies finally became the United States, that approach had not changed. George Washington, in 1783, wrote that his government's policy must be to keep on good terms with the Indians, and to purchase

their lands in preference to driving them off by force of arms. That strategy remained in effect for another century. The first Congress created the War Department in 1789, and Indian affairs remained under its jurisdiction until transferred to the Interior Department in 1849. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was created in 1824, and a commissioner of Indian Affairs established in 1832. Regardless of the jurisdiction, the underlying idea was to pay for Indian lands, draw a boundary line and hope that the land-hungry Americans would stay on their own side. It generally did not work.

In what has been called the most important Indian treaty in the nation's history, the 1795 Treaty of Greenville opened up the Ohio country, and brought forth thousands of settlers, speculators and surveyors, marking out thousands of square miles of townships and sections that would carry the pattern of land ownership across the breadth of the land. The Americans could hardly be





Three Plains Indian leaders arrive at an Army camp to negotiate a peace, in *Truce Between Fighting Men*, a painting by Steven Lang. Peace talks and treaties were commonplace in the West from 1851 to 1871, but violations of the various agreements were even more common (Lang Fine Western Art, Marina, Calif.).

held back at an imaginary wilderness line, however, and the Indians were continually moved farther west with new treaties and new deals.

The idea of buying the Indians' land and constantly moving them west began to change in the late 1840s. Most of the Indians had been removed west of the Mississippi, where it was thought there would be little further intercourse between the tribes and the white Americans. A mighty river, however, was no deterrent, and the word of fertile lands and gold discoveries soon drew tens of thousands of Americans into Indian lands once again. Realizing that the old system would no longer work, the commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1848 reported that it would be judicious "to colonize our Indian tribes beyond the reach, for some years, of our white population." Thus, the idea of the reservation system evolved. The federal government would try to concentrate the tribes into restricted areas, where it was believed depredations

from both sides could be better controlled, and where the Indians could more easily be induced to accept an agricultural economy.

The first major attempt to apply this policy to the Western tribes occurred near Fort Laramie (in what would become Wyoming) on September 17, 1851. Superintendent of Indian Affairs David D. Mitchell, agent Thomas Fitzpatrick and several other officers and officials met with the Lakota (Sioux), Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, Assiniboiné, Gros Ventre, Mandan and Arikara tribes to make "an effective and lasting peace." The agreement has become known as both the Treaty of Fort Laramie of 1851 and the Treaty of Horse Creek, since negotiations were actually held some 35 miles from the fort at Horse Creek (in present-day Nebraska). In the first article, all tribes agreed to "abstain in future from all hostilities whatever against each other." In the second article, all agreed that the United States could build roads and forts





through their territories, and in article four, the tribes agreed to make restitution for any wrongs committed against U.S. citizens. Article five designated tribal boundaries, and the various bands agreed to acknowledge each other's territories. In article eight, it was agreed that any violation of the provisions would allow the United States to withhold annuities.

With the treaty duly agreed to and signed, the Lakotas promptly went north, and over the next two years, attacked the Crows, invaded their lands in what would become Wyoming and Montana, moved in and drove them out. The Cheyennes joined in the attacks in 1853. In 1854 they raided into Mexico and New Mexico Territory, stole stock and killed or captured Anglos and Mexicans. Even so, the United States never ceased paying annuities. Although Lieutenant John Grattan fired into a Lakota village on the North Platte River in August 1854 over a dispute about a Mormon cow (leading to the death of his command, the so-called Grattan Massacre), Indian signatories of the Treaty of Fort Laramie had been violating their agreements for three years.

Thus began a string of treaties with the more hostile Western tribes, who were facing the possibility of reservation life for the first time. Was there a difference in character between the Eastern and Western tribes that tended to make the latter more readily disregard their oaths? Was the reservation system too restrictive? Did the chiefs always understand the treaty provisions? Was it ever really possible for the signatory leaders to impose their will on other members of their tribe? Were the less hospitable lands the Plains Indians occupied simply not as desirable, making the whites less inclined to encroach upon them? For whatever reasons, a survey of some of the more important treaties made during the latter half of the 19th century with the most warlike of the tribes in the Great Plains and Southwest shows that it was the Indians who most often were the first to break their promises. The fact will not be popular with many of our politically correct generation, but facts should not be based on popularity.

On July 1, 1852, U.S. authorities made a treaty with the Mescalero Apaches in Santa Fe, and on July 11 Indian agent John Greiner went to Acoma, New Mexico Territory, to sign essentially the same agreement with Chiricahua Apaches under Mangas Coloradas. The Indians agreed to abide by U.S. laws, said they would not fight with U.S. citizens, would allow forts to be built on their lands, would allow free, safe passage



through their lands, and would refrain from making any predatory incursions into Mexico. Mangas accepted the treaty. He didn't like the article that said he would not be allowed to raid below the border, however, so he simply ignored that part. Later in the same month he signed the treaty, Mangas led his warriors on a raid into Mexico. In September 1852, other Apaches didn't even bother going to Mexico, but began raiding around Fort Webster in New Mexico Territory. The Indian promises were again short-lived.

On July 7, 1853, at Fort Atkinson, Kansas Territory, an agreement was reached between the United States and the Kiowa, Comanche and Apache tribes. The articles provided that there would be peace between the Indians and the United States, that the government could build roads and forts in Indian lands, and that the Indians would make restitution for





injuries done to U.S. citizens and would cease molesting them. There were to be no raids in Mexico, and the Indians agreed to restore all captives. Article eight stated that if the Indians violated the treaty, annuities could be withheld. The Senate made amendments to the treaty, which the Indians agreed to, and signed, on July 21, 1854.

The same month the amendments were signed, Comanches

**Above:** Cheyennes, Arapahos, Kiowas and Comanches have all set up their tipis at Medicine Lodge Creek in southwest Kansas in October 1867 to talk peace with U.S. officials, as seen in the November 16, 1887, *Harper's Weekly*. **Below:** A serene scene from the peace council at Medicine Lodge, where the Kiowas and Comanches agreed to treaty provisions on October 21, and the Cheyennes and Arapahos did the same on the 28th. The author contends that it was the Indians who first broke the promises of the Medicine Lodge Treaty.



THE GRANGER COLLECTION, NEW YORK. ABOVE: WEIDER HISTORY GROUP ARCHIVE

held. Unfortunately, some annuities were already being withheld for depredations by some of these bands after they perpetrated the Spirit Lake Massacre in Iowa in 1857, breaking a treaty they had signed in 1851. The lesson did not seem to register. After signing the new treaty in 1858, the Dakotas went right back to attacking the Chippewas in 1859, plus depredating and killing the stock of white settlers adjacent to their reservation. They had repeatedly violated the treaty agreements long before the deadly Minnesota (Great Sioux) Uprising in August 1862.

Portions of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes signed the Treaty of Fort Wise, Colorado Territory, on February 18, 1861. As part of the stipulations, the tribes agreed to cede all lands previously claimed by them and to allow roads through their new lands. The reservation land was to be assigned in severalty to individual Indians. They were to be protected if they behaved, settled down and resided on the reservation, and induced all the other bands to join them. Those bands that did not settle on the reservation within one year were not entitled to any benefits. All annuities could be discontinued entirely if the Indians did not make a reasonable effort to comply with the provisions.

The signatory bands of Cheyenne and Arapaho never complied with one provision of the treaty. They did not settle, nor could they convince any nonsignatory bands to settle. In fact, because the Cheyenne Black Kettle sold out his people without their consent, the other bands were so angry that he lost much of his prior influence and favor with them (see "Warriors and Chiefs" in the December 2005 *Wild West*). The episode illustrates one major problem in treaty making: Indians who did not sign did not believe the provisions bound them. And, even among the bands of leaders who did sign, there was always the excuse that they could not hold in their

went to Texas and fought with soldiers of the Regiment of Mounted Rifles, wounding two enlisted men and fatally wounding Captain Michael E. Van Buren. In August they raided into south Texas near Cotulla, and fought and wounded several Rangers. Also in August, Comanches attacked but failed to capture a stage carrying \$300,000 in specie on the Lower Military Road near Howard's Well, Texas. There were numerous raids during the next few years; the three tribes completely ignored the agreement they had made.

On June 19, 1858, in Washington, D.C., the United States signed a treaty with the Wahpeton, Sisseton, Wahpakute and Mdewakanton Dakotas. The treaty contained many of the usual provisions, including one that stated the Indians would commit no depredations on U.S. citizens, nor would they fight with other tribes. If they did so, annuities would be with-





**Left:** The first major treaty with Western tribes was signed at Horse Creek, near Fort Laramie, in 1851. By 1871 treaty making with Indians was dead. **Below:** Major General Winfield S. Hancock led a costly campaign in the summer of 1867 against the Cheyennes, who later blamed him for breaking the October 14, 1865, Treaty of Little Arkansas in Kansas. The author argues that the warriors had broken that treaty nearly a full year before Hancock arrived in western Kansas.

1866, and they attacked soldiers at Fort Phil Kearny and Fort C.E. Smith in August 1867.

While the "friendly" Sioux were making new treaties in Dakota Territory, the Cheyennes and Arapahos signed the Treaty of Little Arkansas in Kansas on October 14, 1865. The treaty proclaimed perpetual peace between the Indians and the United States and among the other tribes. A reservation encompassing lands on both sides of Kansas' southern border was set up; the Indians agreed to live on it, and agreed not to leave it without U.S. consent. If they got approval to leave the reservation, they agreed not to depredate and not to camp within 10 miles of a road. They agreed to relinquish all

young men. If that argument had any validity, so too did the point made by General William T. Sherman. His men too were sometimes uncontrollable. "Tell the rascals so are mine," Sherman said, "and if another white man is scalped in all this region, it will be impossible to hold mine in." The Cheyennes, totally ignoring the Fort Wise Treaty, were already at war with the United States in 1864 when Colorado Territory soldiers attacked them at Sand Creek.

In October 1865, U.S. commissioners made a series of treaties with various Sioux bands at Fort Sully in Dakota Territory. In the agreements, the Indians promised to cease hostilities with the United States, to end attacks on other tribes and to withdraw from existing roads or any others later established. The problem was that all the signatories were from generally friendly bands, and those still roaming Nebraska's Sand Hills, the Black Hills and Powder River Country did not consider themselves bound by the treaty. If that was the case, then they were still operating under the Treaty of 1851, which they did sign.

As mentioned earlier, these Lakotas had repeatedly broken that treaty's stipulations. They probably had no second thoughts about breaking them again when they refused to allow roads and forts in their territory as promised. As soldiers built Forts Reno, Phil Kearny and C.E. Smith along the Bozeman Trail, the Lakotas furiously attacked and killed soldiers and emigrants alike. Wagon train ambushes and fights along Crazy Woman Creek, Clear Creek, the North Platte and Peno Creek, along with a major raid on the Pawnee Agency in Nebraska, all occurred in 1866. Plains Indians wiped out the command of Captain William Fetterman in December

claims to lands north of the Arkansas River, but they could still hunt there. The United States was allowed to build roads and posts on Indian land. All former treaties were abrogated.

The agreement lasted until May 1866, when Cheyennes ignored their promise of perpetual peace by killing, scalping and mutilating Lew Cassil and his party of five hunters near Jamestown, Kan. The warriors had broken the Treaty of Little Arkansas nearly a full year before the arrival in western Kansas of Maj. Gen. Winfield S. Hancock, the man who the Cheyennes later blamed as the one to first break the peace.



WEIDER HISTORY GROUP ARCHIVE

Four days after the Cheyennes and Arapahos signed the Treaty of Little Arkansas, the Kiowas and Comanches signed a similar document. They promised the same perpetual peace with the United States, agreed to live on their reservation set up for them within the confines of present-day Oklahoma, agreed not to leave the reservation without consent and promised to refrain from depredations while off the reservation. The Kiowas and Comanches lost even less time in breaking their promises than did the Cheyennes.

The month before the treaty, the Comanche Eagle Drinking and the Kiowa Little Mountain, signatories of the treaty, had captured several children in Wise County, Texas. The Americans refused to give out treaty

presents while the captives were being held. The Indians simply turned them in and collected the gifts.

The ink, as they say, was hardly dry on the treaty, when the



signatory Indians rode off to Texas to take more captives. In January 1866, they killed a number of settlers and captured 13-year-old Hubert Weinand. In March they were in Texas again, killing, stealing stock and capturing James, Samuel and Jennie Savage in Parker County. Later in the year, they captured Eliza and Isaac Brisco, Theodore and Bianca Babb, Fremont Blackwell and Thomas Sullivan. But the attack that brought the most anger was led by Satanta, another signer of the Treaty of Little Arkansas, on the Box family in Montague County, Texas. After killing the father, the Kiowas raped the mother and oldest daughter, and carried away Mary, Margaret, Josephine, Ida and Laura Box. They killed infant Laura on the road back to Kansas, where they sold the other captives to authorities at Fort Dodge. The settlers and soldiers were outraged when they heard the details of the torture of women and children. The attack was a major incident that brought General Hancock to the Kansas plains. The Indians' continual disregard of the treaties only made it worse for them.

The wars that developed because of Indian indiscretions needed to be "ended" by additional treaties. Two Octobers after the Little Arkansas agreements, the same tribes were back in Kansas, this time at Medicine Lodge Creek, about 70 miles south of Fort Larned. Once again, many of the same stipulations were put down on paper. All war between the Indians—Cheyennes, Arapahos, Kiowas and Comanches—and the United States and its citizens was to cease. The Indians agreed to stay on their reservations, but they could hunt south of the Arkansas River with U.S. consent. They would not oppose any railroads and would not attack any persons at their homes or while traveling. They would not kill or capture whites, nor oppose any military posts. They would not attack any other tribes friendly to the United States. Once more, the treaty was not worth the cost of the paper.

The Kiowas and Comanches signed the Treaty of Medicine Lodge on October 21, 1867. The next month they were ready to go raiding in Texas. By early January 1868, Big Tree led about 300 Kiowas and Comanches across Red River and, within two days, killed seven whites and took 10 captives, six of whom were soon killed. In early February, Comanches raided farther south into Llano County, Texas, attacking women and children in the Friend and Johnson cabins. In



**Top:** The U.S. peace commissioners meet with representatives of the Sioux and other tribes in a Fort Laramie tent in the spring of 1868. Among the commissioners are Brevet Maj. Gen. William S. Harney (second from left, white beard), who retired from the Army in 1863; Lt. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman (third from left); and civilian negotiator Nathaniel G. Taylor (seated at far right). **Above:** Brigadier General Alfred Howe Terry (far left) poses with other peace commissioners and a blanketed Indian woman during the Fort Laramie negotiations.

June and August 1868, similar attacks, murders and captures were made on the McElroy and Russell homes in north Texas.

The Cheyennes and Arapahos also signed the Treaty of Medicine Lodge in October 1867. It was very similar to the one signed by the Kiowas and Comanches, except it outlined a different reservation, this one wholly within Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). Treaty stipulations also included giving the Indians the right to hunt south of the Arkansas River. They promised not to attack white settlers or travelers and not to attack any tribes friendly with the United States. It is important to note that there was never any provision in the treaty that said the Indians were to be given weapons or





THE GRANGER COLLECTION, NEW YORK

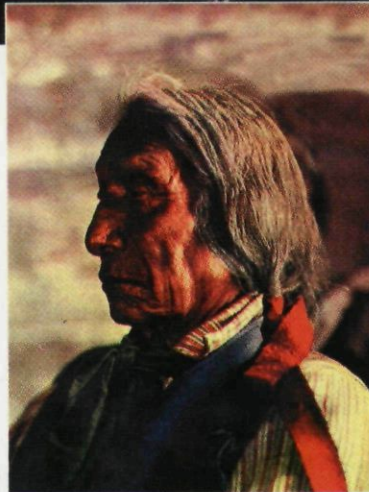
**Left:** Oglala Sioux Old Man Afraid of His Horses, second from right, stands among some of the men who signed the Treaty of Fort Laramie in May 1868. The Lakotas and Cheyennes, the author points out, broke the terms of that treaty many times before the Battle of the Little Bighorn in June 1876. **Below left:** The most famous Oglala leader, Red Cloud, held off on signing the Treaty of Fort Laramie until November 1868, but did not directly fight the whites again.

ammunition, and, if the Indians held up their end of the bargain, they would receive annuities at the agency every October 15.

As was the usual case, only one month later, a war party of Cheyennes and Arapahos broke the promises. This time the warriors rode to east-central Kansas to attack the Kaws but were handily beaten. The defeat meant that a revenge raid would be needed. In the spring of 1868, the Cheyennes again attacked the Kaws, plus some white families, thus breaking three promises: attacking friendly Indians, riding north of the Arkansas and attacking settlers. Also, in May of that year, other Cheyennes went beyond the Arkansas, camping near Fort Wallace and attacking wagon trains on the Smoky Hill River. The Indians arrived at Fort Larned in June, four months before the agreed-upon October issue date, demanding arms and ammunition that were never promised to them in the treaty. Under pressure, agent Edward Wynkoop acquiesced and gave them guns and ammunition on July 29. With that, about 200 Cheyennes, Arapahos and Lakotas headed for north-central Kansas, ostensibly to fight the Pawnees, which they were not allowed to do either. Instead, they attacked white settlers. When the initial raids were over by late August, about 40 Kansas settlers had been killed, several women raped and several women and children captured. The U.S. authorities apparently never learned.



Some of the last major treaties to be made with the tribes that had been driving the peace commissioners to distraction for the past 20 years were signed at Fort Laramie between April 29 and May 10, 1868. In them, the various bands of Lakotas, Cheyennes, Arapahos and Crows agreed to the usual stipulations that they had already agreed to repeatedly. All war between the tribes and the U.S. government and its citizens would cease. Any "bad men" among all parties would be arrested and punished. The Lakotas were assigned a reservation that fell in the bounds of present-day South Dakota west of the Missouri River, but the right was given to all government officers, agents or employ-



WESTERN HISTORY COLLECTION, DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

ees to enter the lands. Survey rights were also granted. The Indians promised to send their children to school. They relinquished the right to occupy any other land. They pledged to withdraw all opposition to any current or future military posts, and not to oppose railroads in existence or later to be constructed. They promised to not attack, kill, scalp or capture any whites, nor attack anyone else friendly to the whites. The United States in turn agreed to abandon its posts along the Bozeman Trail and close the road within 90 days. It should be noted, however, that not until November 1868 would Lakota leader Red Cloud make his

mark on the treaty that many other of his tribesman had signed in May.

Before the soldiers could pull out of the forts, the Lakotas attacked them at Fort Reno on July 19, 1868, breaking the treaty before the time frame stipulation had even run its course. Still, as promised, the U.S. Army abandoned the posts and closed the road within the time limit. And, not as promised, but as should have been expected, the Lakotas were back in Kansas in August 1868, far south of their reservation, raiding and killing along with the Cheyennes. Also in August, they were far north of their reservation at Fort Buford on the Missouri River, stealing stock and killing and wounding seven soldiers. In August 1869, Lakotas were in south-central Nebraska, wiping out a party of 10 surveyors under Nelson Buck. In September 1869, they killed civilians and soldiers near present-day Lander, Wyo. In December 1869, Lakotas attacked mail stages in Wyoming Territory between Fort Laramie and Fort Fetterman. In April 1872, they attacked railroad property near Fort McPherson in Nebraska, and in August they attacked soldiers at Fort McKean (in present-day North Dakota), as well as a surveying and railroad party traveling through the area. The surveyors were far away from the Indian reservation, and the Indians had expressly pledged to not harass any such expeditions.

In 1873 it was more of the same, as Lakotas repeatedly attacked another railroad expedition and fought with its 7th Cavalry escort under Lt. Col. George A. Custer. Even Custer's government expedition into the Black Hills in 1874, so loudly

*Continued on page 54*



# JAXONBILT HAT COMPANY

CUSTOM HATS & RENOVATIONS

"KICKIN' QUALITY"

ROY S. JACKSON

P.O. BOX 417 ~ HWY 93 SOUTH

SALMON, IDAHO 83467

WORK (208) 756-6444

HOME (208) 756-1016

www.jaxonbilthats.com

"OPEN ROAD"



CUSTOM HATS  
5X 10X 50X 100X  
From \$145 to \$540  
free shipping in the  
continental USA!!!

Other Old West & Movie  
Favorites Available!!!

We Accept

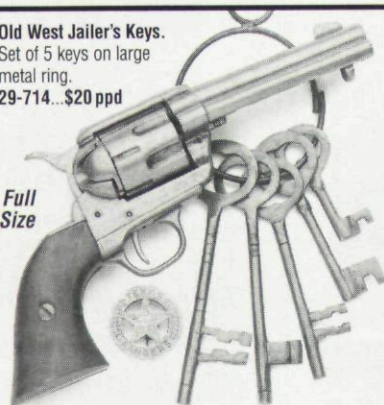


Ask about our other colors & styles!  
Custom orders welcome.

## Old West Jailer's Keys.

Set of 5 keys on large  
metal ring.  
29-714...\$20 ppd

Full  
Size



## Old West Set

M1873 "Fast Draw" Pistol. Replica non-firing .45  
calibre single action revolver with 4.75" barrel. Action  
works; spin the cylinders, cock the hammer and pull  
the trigger. Wood grips. Length: 10.5". Weight: 2 lbs.  
22-1186/G Antique Gray Finish Model .....\$65 ppd

### Deluxe Texas Ranger Silver Badge.

Historically accurate, solid copper, nickel-plated, then  
silver plated and finally antiqued, with pin back.  
14-331 Deluxe Texas Ranger Badge .....\$19 ppd

## COLLECTOR'S ARMOURY, LTD. Dept. WW

Send ☐ Money Order ☐ Check Enclosed  
P.O. Box 1050, Lorton, VA 22199 ☐ 60 page catalog

Catalog Requests & Credit Card Orders Only:

Call Toll Free: 1-877-276-6879

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Money Back (Less Postage) if Not Satisfied

## DEADWOOD continued from page 28

walking with her best friend at recess, and going to church with her family on Sunday. I couldn't forget her."

E.B. Farnum, the Reverend Henry Smith, Dan Dority and Johnny Burns are lesser characters on *Deadwood*, and not too much is known about their real lives. Farnum was a successful Deadwood businessman and investor, as well as a judge who sentenced many horse thieves and cattle rustlers to hanging. On the HBO drama, Preacher Smith suffers from a brain tumor and is smothered by Swearingen; in real life, however, he was probably murdered by Indians while walking to a neighboring camp to deliver a sermon. Less is known about Dority and Burns. Most likely both men worked as bartenders and managers for Swearingen during the Gem Theater's heyday. Other real-life personalities have shown up in the third season, such as George Hearst (see "Westerners," in August 2000 *Wild West*), a nearly illiterate mining tycoon who fathered the future newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst.

Thanks to the seamless craft of *Deadwood* producer and writer David Milch, the men of *Deadwood* live once again. Sol Star checks his inventory and readies the hardware store for another day's customers. Outside on the street, Sheriff Bullock warns a peddler hawking locks of Indian hair to stay away from reputable merchants. Over at the blacksmith shop, Charlie Utter outfits his horse for a trek across the mountains. Back at the Gem, Al Swearingen pours himself another cup of coffee and peruses the latest edition of the *Pioneer*.

Perhaps Misters Star, Bullock, Utter and Swearingen—possibly Wild Bill Hickok, too—would be puzzled by their newfound celebrity, and find our interest in their gritty lives baffling. Under different circumstances perhaps, they might have faded into obscurity and remained strangers to us, like many other men of the Wild West. But one fact is undeniable: *Deadwood* would have been a very different place without them. ww

Author Mary Franz writes from Chestnut Hill, Mass. Suggested for further reading: *The Real Deadwood: True Life Histories of Wild Bill Hickok, Calamity Jane, Outlaw Towns, and Other Characters of the Lawless West*, by John Ames; *Old Deadwood Days*, by Estelline Bennett; *Deadwood: The Golden Years*, by Watson Parker; and *Wild Bill Hickok: Deadwood City—End of Trail*, by Thadd Turner.

## TREATIES continued from page 44

condemned by Indians and many modern-day white historians alike, was allowed under the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. In 1876, when the Lakotas were far from their reservation and occupying Crow lands, the U.S. military had the proper authority to attempt to make them comply with the treaty by trying to force them back onto the reservation. It is painfully obvious, however, that the Lakotas and Cheyennes had broken the treaty many times before the Battle of the Little Bighorn in June 1876.

By 1871 Congress seemingly had finally realized that attempting to make lasting treaties with the American Indians was like trying to store water in a sieve. It outlawed further treaty making and stated that henceforth no Indian tribe would be considered an independent nation. In 1887 the Dawes Act attempted to address the Indian "problem" differently, by parceling out tribal lands to individual Indians in severalty, with rights and responsibilities not unlike every other U.S. landowner, and declaring that those who received allotted lands would be citizens of the United States. The act was not very successful either, and was overturned in the Wheeler-Howard (Indian Reorganization) Act of 1934, which restored the lands to tribal ownership.

Some American citizens were never very successful in honoring their government's treaties. In that respect, Indian tribes experienced the same problem. With the above list of broken treaties on the record, it is incredible that historians can suggest that every time the Indians went to war, it was the white man's fault. It is an invalid generalization. Propagating such nonhistorical discourse, simply because it appears to be the "right" thing to do, is not right. Injustices against Indians in the Wild West are also on the record and should not be taken lightly. But the U.S. government, military and civilians were not always to blame for failed treaties. The Indians had their fair share of culpability. ww

Frequent Wild West contributor Gregory Michno is the author of *Lakota Noon: The Indian Narrative of Custer's Defeat*; *Battle at Sand Creek: The Military Perspective*; and *Encyclopedia of Indian Wars: Western Battles and Skirmishes 1850-1890*. They are recommended for further reading, along with *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, edited by Charles J. Kappler; and *Documents of United States Indian Policy*, edited by Francis Paul Prucha.



Copyright of *Wild West* is the property of Primedia Special Interest Publications and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.