

Excavation Shows Holt County Was Once The Home of Many Indians

By J. B. O'Sullivan

(Continued from last week.)

The Indians at the great battle, or massacre, of the whites at the Little Big Horn, certainly used their heads. The reds were hidden in a grove of cottonwood trees beforehand, and when the men under Captain Reno made an effort at fording the stream so as to reach the men of Custer, they were in exactly the right position to halt them, and halt them they did. The Reno men went back and joined the men under Captain Benteen where every man had all he could do to save himself from instant death.

After this massacre, the white soldiers told tales that rocked the civilized world. While the Indians at the time were despised in one way, in another way they won great respect as generalists in warfare that in a way brought to their own homes.

The soldiers said the trap, or whatever one calls it, was so carefully laid the whites were unable to get a drink of water while rivers of it trickled away almost at their feet. Anywhere they went to quench their thirst meant instant death, or at least rifle balls cutting within a few inches of their bodies. Man after man stole along the ground after water and bit the dust before he could dampen his parching lips and tongue.

Among the unusual things reported at the battle was that one man, whom a bullet merely grazed along his foot, died while another who had a bullet through his body from one end to the other recovered in fine shape.

Those who survived this great avalanche of Sioux hatred said they were astounded when they beheld the remains of beloved General Custer and several hundred men, stretched in every conceivable position, and every one but the general mutilated in a certain manner common to most of the Indians, who in this case, remarkable as it sounds, was so respected the knife men passed him by as a mark of respect for his glorious career on the field of battle.

It is strange to read that the soldiers credited the Sioux women with mutilating the white dead, but the men were given credit for removing the scalps. The women, in a frenzy of delight at finding so rich a harvest after their great fighting machine had done its work, hurriedly removed the clothing of the soldiers, cutting off an entire leg or arm if boot or glove refused to yield at the first yank.

The fighting was not history in a few minutes as may be gleaned when it is stated the Sioux calmly set about enjoying themselves with a little target practice at bodies of the fallen whites. Here and there one was raised up and leaned against a tree or rock and the jokers paced back and literally crammed their human pin-cushions full of arrows that had been fashioned from whiskey barrel hoops.

One who claims to have looked over the battlefield before anything was disturbed, said that the Sioux women took everything from the body of General Custer save his stockings. As a general, he might have had need for the foot-pieces, not here, but hereafter, wandering in the land of clouds in the vicinity of the Happy hunting grounds. It does seem strange wild and untutored Sioux should slaughter a deadly enemy and then turn around and exhibit even a modicum of respect, but the white leader had proved to them that he was all man and so they came across with at least enough respect to desist from mutilating his helpless body.

There were stories about General Custer having shot himself to avoid capture or suffering. Every man who had anything to do with the battlefield at the time has indicted Custer met the angel of death face to face and took his bad medicine as one is supposed to take it, when it gets ready for another victim.

The cause of the death of the general was said to have been several wounds; a deep one in his head, one in his side, and a third almost a foot in length in the upper part of one of his legs. Witnesses say they saw no powder marks on his body, sure to be in evidence when it is considered that the only powder used at the time was the black, smudge-making variety that often made so much smoke until around 1890, that a man shooting a prairie chicken or duck or rabbit had to run out of it or wait until the air cleared before he should know whether he hit his mark or helped the wild game celebrate their Fourth of July.

The general, many have said, still had his hair on after the conflict, another sterling mark of respect his enemies paid him even as he lay cold in the grip of death. They severed every one of the scalps but his. It is true his clothing, excepting stockings, was removed, but he had no further use for it in the eyes of the savages and so they made off with that.

The wonder of it all has been, and may continue to be, how in the world did the Sioux do it? History says there were several underlying reasons why the Sioux won so signally. One of these is said to be that white ras-

cal, traders and trappers and care-nothings, had for years made a practice of trading the Sioux the finest Winchester repeating rifles and oceans of cartridges for them and that the white soldiers were equipped only with an inferior weapon, slow to load, quickly fouling and little better than shotguns for the purpose at hand. That, if true, alone would have won the battle for the Sioux.

Another commentator on the subject infers that Custer had trained up as a scout an Indian who never forgot his blood was Sioux and who plotted and schemed until he got Custer's command to put themselves in a trap from whence no enemy could hope to escape.

Some of those who were on the ground early said they heard the false scout yarn and that they knew there had been such an Indian and that after the battle his body was very much minus, indicating, they stated, the man was carefully taken care of and not killed as were the 263 others, because he was playing his part and had safely wormed out of the inferno at the right time. This Sioux is said to have informed General Custer he wanted to join his command because old Sitting Bull placed a reward on the head of Custer amounting to several hundred horses, and that he hated that idea against such a great paleface. If Custer actually gave this man a job he did so at the cost of his own life and those under him, not knowing which way the fellow's heart beat.

That the Sioux had carefully made plans to win that battle there is no question. Take the size of their forces. From several quarters it is safe to place the number of Sioux in the ranks that day at 4,500, and, counting women and children, out for the big day, it is safe to say there were at least 15,000. The dead must be robbed, the bodies mutilated and a picture show like that was well worth seeing, so everyone brought his family, friends, relatives and acquaintances.

Boys always have wished to get out and go after Indians, bear, a catamount or sudden death itself. Soldiers of that day on the little Big Horn have left glimpses of how they lived, and died, their living often being like prolonged death.

The regulation shoes were heavy, of extra stiff hide, so much so, in fact, the soldiers in the field often left them on for months. Had they removed them, after a wetting, they would have dried in shapes that would have prevented them wearing them again. So they kept them on. Even at that, the shoes went out of shape and caused the men to suffer.

The soldiers on such chases at times were out on the prairie as long as half a year and there was no chance for taking enough time out to shave, cut hair, wash or do any lolling or day dreaming of some Indian princess in a fleecy castle while hard and sharp stone or steel arrows were making a pin-cushion of a fellow's pants.

Other luxuries at this time are given as several shirts, only one pair of pants, and that not arrow proof, one or two blankets, a coat and the horse blanket, used under saddles, rare luxury for doubling the comforter supply when the thermometer descended to around 30 degrees below zero.

When it came to eating, the real frontiersman had a meal that should make a boy's mouth water, for something else. The bread was represented by a creation called hard-tack, somewhat like hard tacks squeezed into a hard mass, beans of several varieties, dry, wet, white, cooked, half cooked, raw and excited. This was often eaten with variations of rabbit, chicken, venison or maybe bear meat unless the bear decided to have man steak. And to make matters worse, the boys saw times when they were forbidden to light a campfire. That would be, for instance, when a hot trail of the Indians was being followed and to make a fire meant a free hair cut, to say nothing of many close shaves. In many cases, when flour issue was made instead of hardtack, and fire starting was annulled, the soldiers had to dip water from some cow track, splash in some of the flour, and gulp it down to keep body and soul together so you and I may write about or read of it without danger of a permanent hair cut.

Always, the enemies were pursued in great haste during the coldest weather when a fellow should like to hole up and brag about what he should do on the morrow. The reason for this strange state of affairs is that the Indians often were in dire straights during the coldest weather. They had been kept on the move and were with-

out many necessities of their way of living and therefore the more easily killed or captured. As a famous army man said, "an army moves on its belly." No food, no move. Indians on the move, harassed on all sides, had no way to cut grass for use of their horses in winter. They had little of anything and that was the time to talk business to them and the white leaders knew and practiced what they knew.

When it comes to the Indian being merciless to his captives, it must be remembered that many of the men the government sent against them were heartless, often inflicting injustices on the enemy, creating a frenzy of hatred and in turn giving the Indian a name he never could live down.

General Custer himself is credited with having directed an attack against the village of a chief named Black Kettle, when the people were asleep, and of his men killing warriors, women and children without reserve.

Given the proper materials, such as weapons for use in battle, the Indians of whatever nation appears to have been able to supply plenty of brain-work to carry out plans. They must have been thorough-going, either carrying out any plan or letting the thing slip to utter ruin. In the instance of the Little Big Horn it must be admitted the white man did the slipping.

Nearly every nation of the brown folk had one great institution that is not well known today and that was the conclave. Along about the time of the new moon, in the month of August, members of a nation gathered and a great general annual conclave was started. During the rest of the year there were lesser conclaves but today it is of record some of these great conclaves lasted 30 days and that some of those attending travelled as far as 500 miles to get there. Their conclaves may be likened to our state fair, the great ones, and the lesser ones were much on the order of our county fair. Those nations practicing agriculture did just what we do, brought their finest beans, corn, melons and so on, and the best of their handiwork, beaded goods, leather, stone work, decorated pottery, and their skilled people had their contests, one of which was a contest to see who could keep the greatest number of arrows in the air at one time. As far as may be determined at this time, the best at this once popular game kept seven in the atmosphere. Like all other games there were tricks in doing this. One of these was that the shooter had his shafts and arrowheads in seven sizes, the long one for shooting the highest, and the smallest trim and light for rapid handling just before No. one struck the earth. The arrow compe-

titions were on the first day program, showing who was boss of the conclave and what they considered of prime importance.

Medicine men selected another site for other contests. Most conclave sites were near some stream or lake and one reason for this is the fact great quantities of food was necessary and part of this must be fish. Fish then must have been so plentiful there was no more trouble in getting them out than the labor of lifting and carrying them to the cook.

It is presumed there were many methods of taking fish. They used fish-hooks of stone, very much like our hooks of steel, baited and caught fish as we do, with hook, line and pole, but there was a faster method in use for conclaves and no fish laws to worry fishermen. A suitable place was picked out by some one in authority and there a dam was built by using stone axes to sharpen tree trunks which were hammered down deeply in the bed of the stream. Often the piling was sharpened by placing the ends of the logs in a fire, wetting out the fire at the proper time, then completing the task with the axes. Most of us should call the men lazy for doing the job this way, but it might be they were using their heads as well as their hands and feet.

The next operation in making this wholesale fish trap was the placing of a great amount of brush against the piling, so thick the water passed thru but the fish could not. The limbs were of a certain small size. Here and there in this dam, small entryways were made through it. Fish, always eager to get somewhere else, would dart and find they were trapped. The Indians had dip nets and spears, and either of these implements were used in removing the fish from the traps.

In several nations the first five, ten or more fish caught at a new dam of this nature had great significance and to show how wise these fellows were chiefs themselves had the pleasure of eating them. Well, if they did not, the bottom might fall out of something; at least they could quickly satisfy their hunger and make the others think they had to do it to ward off something terrible.

At one of these conclaves there were rich and poor Indians, just as there are whites today. The lame, halt, beautiful and homely, the rascal, salt of the earth, the good and the bad were there, and one of the ways of rating one financially was by the number of fine arrowpoints he had. Knives scrapers, nuggets and beads counted. Much time and chatter was spent examining this and that and great respect was paid the one having the longest and finest blade, not because they

thought perhaps he might attempt to show how easily and neatly it penetrated flesh, but because the possessor was considered very rich.

(Continued next week.)

M. E. CHURCH NOTES

The pastor is back from a short vacation and full time services will be resumed Sunday morning and evening. Next Sunday morning at eleven o'clock the Rev. Paul M. Hillman, district superintendent, will preach. We hope there will be a large congregation to hear him.

Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock the fourth quarterly conference will be held. Reports from all church departments will be made and a delegate and alternate to the annual conference will be elected. This will be a congregational meeting and all members of the church are invited.

Sunday evening the Epworth Leagues will meet at 7 and there will be preaching service at 8.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Sunday School 10:00—R. M. Sauer, superintendent.

Morning Worship 11:00—"The Divine Circuit."

The pastor is back for the years work, praying and hoping for a most

helpful and glorious season. The unfortunate delay on the return trip from Michigan caused considerable regret and inconvenience. Perhaps with doubled effort we can regain the loss so sustained.

H. D. Johnson, Pastor.

Wemys: Do you know any reliable rule to figure the cost of living?

Powys: Yes. You take your income for the year, whatever it is, and add 25 percent to it.—Pathfinder.

Wife: This railway waiting room is very cold. I am frozen.

Husband: Then go and sit under the summer time table.—Lustige Koelner Zeitung, Cologne.

(Political Advertisement.)

CAMPAIGNING FOR YOUR VOTE

for the office of Sheriff of Holt county at the Primaries, August 14th, on the Democratic Ticket. A resident of our county for many years, several years experience in Marshal and Constable offices, and I understand the duties and obligations of the office for which I am now a candidate.

YOUR SUPPORT SINCERELY APPRECIATED

F. P. MURPHY
Candidate For Sheriff

A. L. BORG
Republican Candidate For
Sheriff of Holt County
A Native of Holt County. 36
Years of Age. A World War
Veteran.
Your Support Will Be Sincerely
Appreciated at the Primaries,
August 14th.

(Political Advertisement)

(Political Advertisement)

JOHN P. SULLIVAN DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR County Assessor

As I will be unable to see all of my friends personally, I am taking this means of soliciting your support. I am an early resident of Holt county. Have had experience as precinct assessor, as a farmer and taxpayer. I stand for lowest taxes possible and Strict Economy.

YOUR SUPPORT WILL BE SINCERELY APPRECIATED AT THE
PRIMARIES AUGUST 14TH

(Political Advertisement)

(Political Advertisement)

LUELLA A. PARKER Candidate For County Superintendent

Since the duties of my office will prevent my talking with each of you personally, I take this method of soliciting your support for my re-election to the office of County Superintendent.

My wide acquaintance over the county, my intimate knowledge of each district and its problems, my personal acquaintance with each teacher and pupil in the county, I feel, especially qualified me for this office.

I am thoroughly acquainted with school problems from every angle, I believe. This knowledge having been acquired from actual experience, not only in this office, but as a parent and tax payer. From experience, I know the problems a parent faces in his effort to educate his children, also the difficulties a tax payer meets in trying to pay his taxes during these strenuous times.

No doubt, I have made mistakes, but I have at all times tried to run this office as economically and as efficiently as possible. I have tried to be fairminded and just to everyone.

Our children are, after all, our most precious possessions, our citizens of tomorrow. The world does not owe them a living, but it most certainly does owe them an opportunity to so fit themselves to enable them to make their own living when they grow up, so that they may not become dependents upon their county and state.

Would a change in this office just now, during this period of economic unrest, be a wise thing? Think it over carefully.

I deeply appreciate the hearty good-will and fine cooperation you have all shown me. I thank you most sincerely. If you feel that I have discharged the duties of this office efficiently, and that I can continue to give you good service, I would appreciate your support toward my re-election to the office for another term.

(Political Advertisement)

(Political Advertisement)



C. A. Sorensen
CANDIDATE FOR THE
REPUBLICAN NOMINATION
FOR
GOVERNOR
ABLE, PROGRESSIVE and
INCORRUPTIBLE
A man of Unblemished Personal
Character and Great Courage.



HUGO F. SRB
Democratic Candidate for
CONGRESS
THIRD DISTRICT
Native of Nebraska. Resident of
District 34 years.
Graduate Wayne Normal and Uni-
versity of Nebraska Law College.
Served two terms as State Sen-
ator. Sponsored bill repealing old
and obsolete laws.
Advocates SOUND and ADE-
QUATE circulating medium of Ex-
change.
The best test of Qualification is
Service in the past.

A SENSATION! New WHITE ROSE

Knock Proof -- Regular Price
Gasoline at its Best!



MELLOR MOTOR COMPANY
Phone 16
O'Neill, Nebr.

Joe McNichols Democratic Candidate For Supervisor, 3rd Dist.

YOUR SUPPORT AT THE
PRIMARIES ON AUGUST 14
WILL BE GREATLY APPRE-
CIATED.