

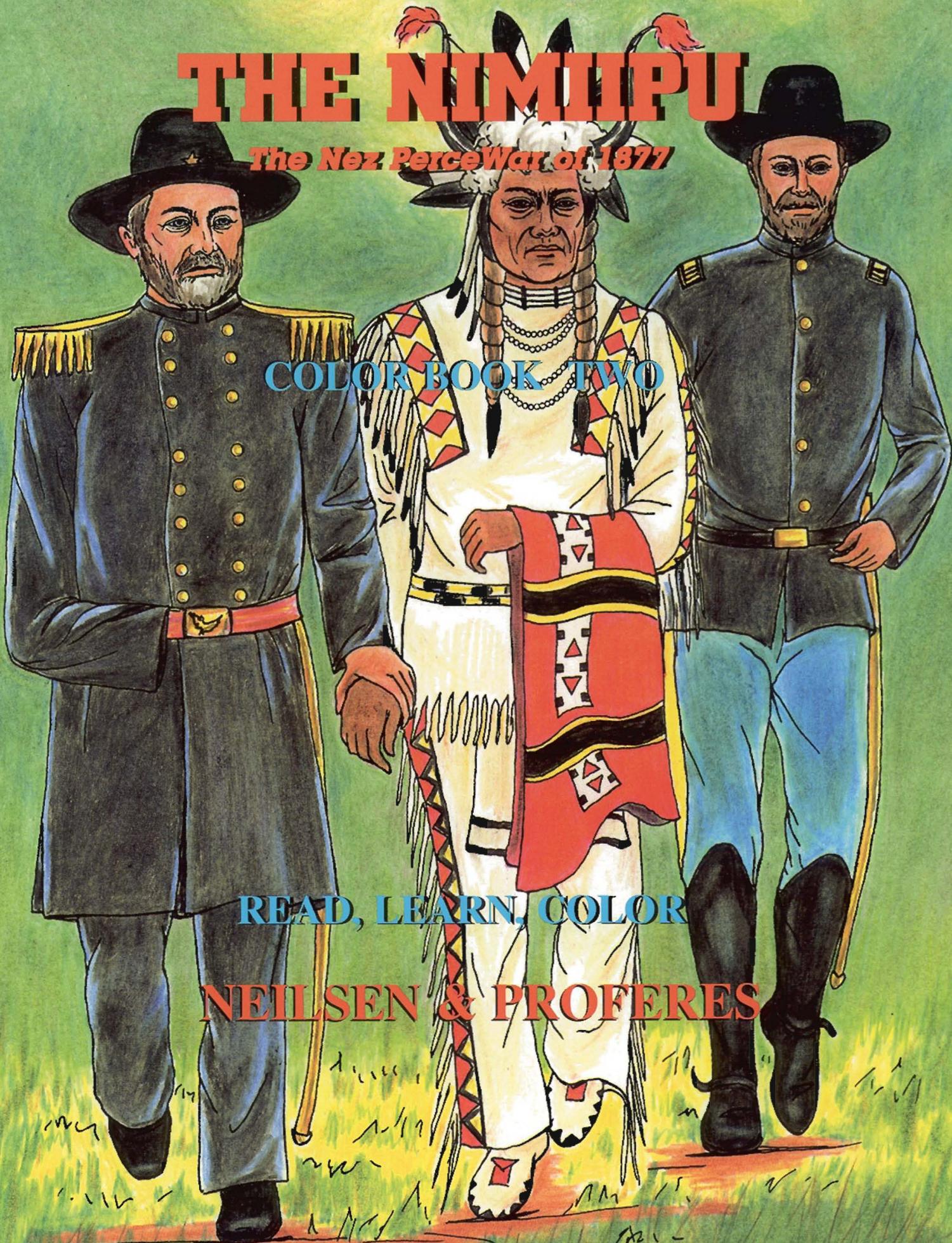
THE NIMIPIU

The Nez Perce War of 1877

COLOR BOOK TWO

READ, LEARN, COLOR

NEILSEN & PROFERES



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BIRCH HILL BOOKS

Lewiston, Idaho

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Front cover: *Howard Shows the Rifle, colored with Crayola Color Pencils. Colored by Janessa Neilsen.*

Dedication:

To Ollokot, Looking Glass, Toohoolhoolzote, Poker Joe, and all the others who lived this drama, suffered, and died during this unnecessary war, and to the courageous survivors whose lives were forever changed.

Sacred things are just that, sacred, even though they are part of custom and culture. Out of respect for sacred things we did not include any illustrations of sacred places or sacred rituals.

Beliefs that are touched upon in the Nimiipu Color Books are part of Nez Perce culture and are not being promoted in a religious way.

In the early 1970's Allen Slickpoo gave Nez Perce names to a series of 20 museum size oil paintings that told the story of the Nez Perce War of 1877 from the Native American viewpoint. These were the paintings that were to become *The Nez Perce Bicentennial Exhibit*. At that time there was no standardized spelling of the Nez Perce language, spelling was phonetic. The titles which Mr. Slickpoo gave these paintings went on each painting along with my title and signature, in oil, with a small brush. It is much too late to change that.

Except for the title "*Nimiipu*" (Nee-mee-poo), most of the Nez Perce words in this book are spelled the old way. It has been only just recently that there has been a standardized spelling of Nez Perce words, adopted from a dictionary written by a Japanese linguist. Nimiipu is actually spelled "Nimiipuu", but so many Nez Perce, including Horace Axtel, have published works with "Nimiipu" with just one "u" that I decided to do the same at this point in time.

I would like to thank Horace Axtell for his input, "Scottie" Wilfred Scott, and Mrs. Scott, Ann McCormack, and others from the Nez Perce Cultural Committee for their help and suggestions. These people reviewed this book for it's cultural and historic content, and to insure that there was nothing here that is offensive to the Nez Perce.

I would also like to thank Keith Thurkill, U.S. Forest Service, Missouli, Montana and Sandi McFarland, U.S. Forest Service, Orofino, Idaho for their suggestions.

A special thanks to Paul Wapato for his efforts in 2002 to help us get the Nimiipu coloring books into print. Mr. Wapato is President of NPNIITE, Nez Perce National Historical Trail Foundation.

And last, but certainly not least, a special thanks to Its-ee'-ya-ya ye'-yow'-its' and his mate.

Jo Proferes.

The Nez Perce War of 1877

This was a totally unnecessary war, as are all wars except those fought in self-defense. Joseph and his people had already submitted to General Howard's demand that they come to the reservation in Idaho, in spite of the fact that they had signed no treaties, though other Nez Perce had signed for them. These people had protested, saying that others could not take away their right to make their own deals. All these people became known as the *Non-Treaty Nez Perce*. They had left the Wallowas, crossed flood swollen rivers, and arrived on the Camas Prairie near Cottonwood, Idaho, and the women were digging camas when two young men, astride a frisky horse, accidentally rode over a pile of camas bulbs and destroyed them. The angry husband told the young man piloting the horse that if he were so brave, why didn't he go kill the white man who had murdered his father. The young man accepted the challenge, and with two cousins rode off to do exactly that. The man was not at home, so they rode on, and killed every white man they could find who had killed or abused Nez Percés. Joseph was away, down on the Salmon River, butchering beef.

All the Nez Perce were held responsible for the actions of the young men. Thus began this war. The Nez Perce moved down to the bottom of White Bird Creek, where the young men had killed the local store owner and burned the store. They would send a peace party with a white flag to intercept the Army before soldiers could fire into their camp.

The Army came. Early in the morning of June 17th, they fired on the peace party with the white flag. Thus began a war that followed the Nez Perce across Idaho, into western Montana, back down into Idaho, up to Montana, across Yellowstone Park in Wyoming, back into central Montana, and north to the Bear's Paw Mountains, where they camped on Snake Creek, 1300 miles from home, and fought the last battle before Joseph surrendered. He was the only chief left alive to do so besides Chief White Bird, who elected to leave on foot with his tiny band of people rather than surrender. He made it to Chief Sitting Bull's village in Canada, as did several of Joseph's people, including his young daughter, known as Sarah.

Joseph and those with him were promised that they would be returned to Idaho, but they were sent to a swamp at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas where half of them contracted malaria. Many adults and children died. Not one new born survived in exile. They were forced to live in filth. Their condition was so bad that Joseph said, "The Great Spirit Chief who rules above seemed to be looking some other way and did not see what was being done to my people."

As Aubrey L. Haines, former National Park Service historian has said:

"The great tragedy which underlies the events portrayed here is that the *Nez Perce Campaign* was our most unnecessary war. It was a conflict drawn out of greed and misunderstanding. The Nez Percés had their own, parallel civilization. They understood money and its uses, and even those who had not accepted Christianity adhered to high ethical standards. All that was needed was a little more time.

"The Government followed a misguided policy which discounted the cabins and garden patches and herds against some presumed value of reservation life, and it mandated a removal from ancestral lands which was carried out with inconsiderate haste. In the process, a peaceable people was goaded into a war they did not want.

"The Nez Percés fought bravely and with humanity, to a defeat which was the inevitable result of such an unequal contest. Their travail should have ended there, but it did not; for a vindictive Government held the captive remnant in an inhospitable place, far from home, and far too long.

"As an unknown writer has justly said: 'No one ever wins a war; one side only loses more than the other. The Nez Percés lost their homeland and the white race lost its honor.'"

The Nimiipu were a very spiritual people. Their ties to the land were expressed in many rituals and sacred ceremonies. They always remembered Man Above, and they blessed their food, aware that animals had given their lives so that they would be sustained.

The Nez Perce (together with the Salish Kootenai people of Montana) sent, in 1831, four delegates to Saint Louis. They wanted to see how the whites lived, what they knew about the powers available to man, from God. They sought Spiritual Power to add to what they already possessed.

As a result of this inquiry Henry Spalding and his wife came to the Nez Perce in 1836. Any change in the life style of the Nez Perce was due to the influence of Mrs. Spalding. She was kind and compassionate, while he was not. She influenced the women, who were often the head of households. Henry Spalding was the first in a long line of missionaries, of every possible faith that could come and fight for converts, and among themselves. Christianity had arrived.

In 1869 Congress passed an act dividing up "Indians" among the denominations who were fighting amongst themselves to save "heathen" souls. There was more of an incentive here than the mere winning of brownie points for heaven. Missionaries were subsidized by the government to convert the "heathens". Uncle Sam had figured out a way to solve the "Indian Problem". The Nez Perce reservation was awarded by Congress to the Presbyterians. Slickpoo Mission (a Catholic mission), built two years before the Congressional Act, was allowed to remain active.

Besides the many factions of Christianity the missionaries also brought agriculture to the Nez Perce, so that by the time white men began to move onto the reservation many Nez Perce were already farming and raising gardens to supplement their diet of wild game, beef and wild fruit. They kept milk cows and beef herds. Buffalo had to be hunted far away and dried, then brought home. Of course there were still many men who went to Montana to hunt buffalo, not just for food and ceremonial purposes, but also for status and adventure.

In Chief Joseph's home land, the Wallowa country of Northeastern Oregon, there was, and is, wonderful grazing land. Members of the tribe who lived there raised great herds of cattle and horses, just as the ranchers do who now live there. These Nez Perce of the Wallowa country had established a good business with the settlers going to the west of Oregon. They took worn out horses in trade on fresh horses and sold the pioneers flour and other supplies. They knew the value of money, they used some of the white man's cooking utensils and their apparel was a mixture of both cultures. They also knew that the white man had his eye on the Wallowa country as well as all other Nez Perce land and all Native American lands.

The treaties and all the trouble they generated were the direct cause of not only the war of 1877, and a division of the Nimiipu, but hard feelings between them and their white neighbors even now.



Chapman & Miles

Ad Chapman, above left, acting as scout for the army, fired the first shots at White Bird to officially open the war. Colonel Miles, right, accepted Joseph's rifle at the surrender to bring the war of 1877 to a close.

An Elder and His Sons

There was already great discontent among what was to become the non-treaty group of Nez Perce long before May, 1877, when General Howard called the meeting at Ft. Lapwai. The white man had his eye on all Nez Perce land, including the Wallowa area where Chief Joseph's father, Old Joseph, and his people had been raising horses and cattle for decades.

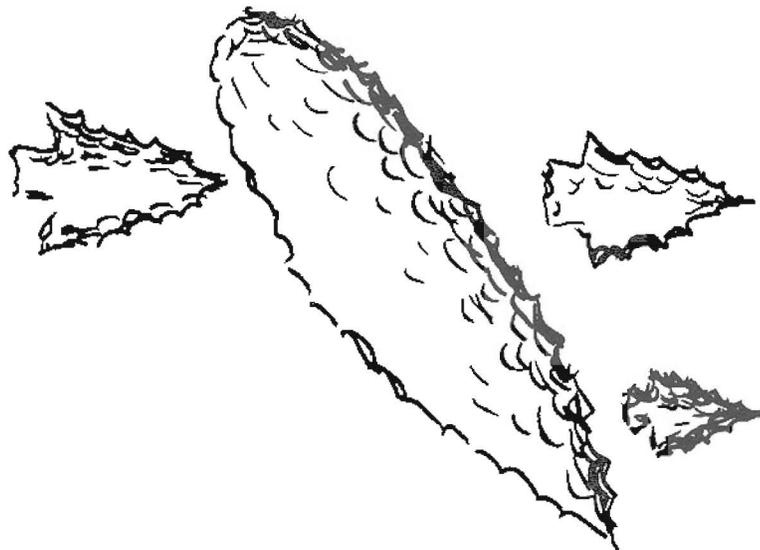
Joseph's band was one of five whose land was coveted. There was also Hahtalekin's and Hussishusis Kute's Palouse, White Bird's Salmon River, Toohoolhoolzote's Snake River, and Looking Glass' Clearwater River, Middle Fork, area. Looking Glass finally signed the last treaty, but was still attacked. He just wanted peace, to be left alone.

Old Joseph had been baptized a Christian by Spaulding and given the name Joseph. He later rejected the religion as well the treaties relinquishing their land. He was so angry at what he called the "Thief Treaty" (the 1863 treaty where the government accepted a few signatures in lieu of all signatures of all leaders) that he shredded his copy of The New Testament.

Old Joseph's last admonition to his son, Chief Joseph, was, "...Always remember that your father never sold his country. You must stop your ears whenever you are asked to sign a treaty selling your home. A few more years, and white men will be all around you. They have their eyes on this land. My son, never forget my dying words. This country holds your father's body. Never sell the bones of your father and mother."

Old Joseph had refused to sign a treaty, and when Chief Joseph maintained that he had never signed a treaty, nor sold his land, he told the truth. (Many of the Christian Nez Perce who did sign may have been coerced.)

According to this great man, "If we ever owned the land we own it still, for we never sold it. In the treaty councils the commissioners have claimed that our country had been sold to the government. Suppose a white man should come to me and say, 'Joseph, I like your horses, and I want to buy them.' I say to him, 'No, my horses suit me, I will not sell them.' Then he goes to my neighbor, and says to him: 'Joseph has some good horses, I want to buy them, but he refuses to sell.' My neighbor answers, 'Pay me the money, and I will sell you Joseph's horses.' The white man returns to me and says, 'Joseph, I have bought your horses, and you must let me have them.' If we sold our lands to the government, this is the way they were bought."





An Elder and His Sons

Old Joseph's sons, Chief Joseph and Ollokot, and Joseph's nephew, Yellow Wolf (upper left) all had major roles in the war that followed Old Joseph's refusal to sign away his people's land. Yellow Wolf's mother was actually Joseph's first cousin, not sister, but first cousins were considered siblings.

General Day after Tomorrow

General Oliver O. Howard was the one who called the May 3, 1877 meeting at Ft. Lapwai for the purpose of ordering the non-treaty Nez Perce to move to the northern Idaho reservation.

He was called *General Day after Tomorrow* by the Nez Perce because he was almost always two days behind them. They also called him *One Arm*.

On July 13, 1877, when the non-treaty Nez Perce (women and children with household goods) crossed the Clearwater River at Kamiah in skin boats and established camp, Howard failed to cross over after them.

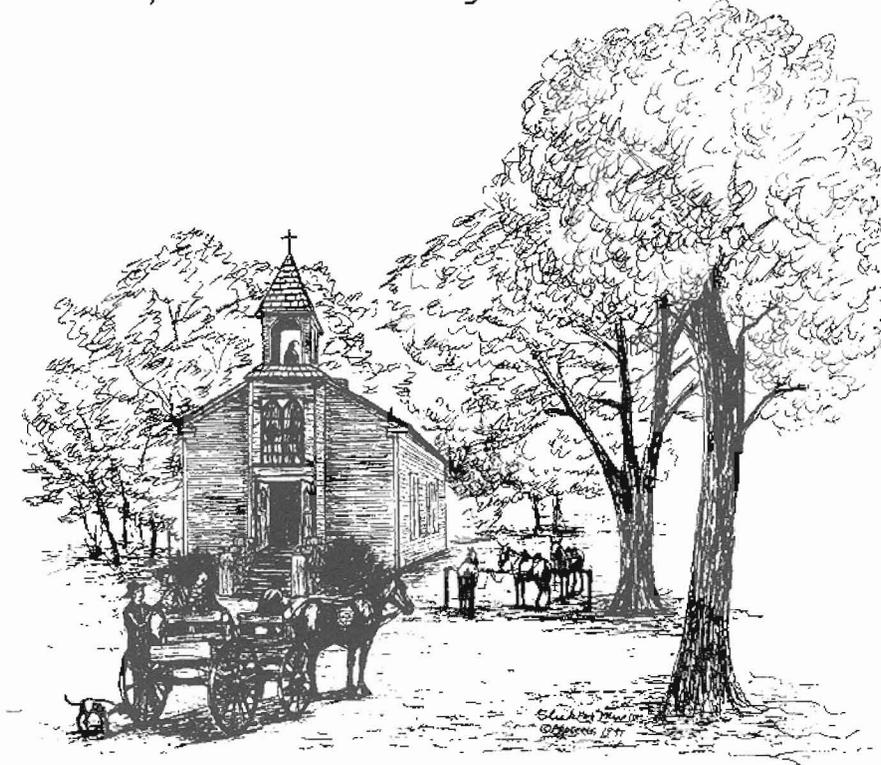
He did make an attempt to block the Lolo Trail by ordering troops to go around, and ahead of them, but canceled the maneuver when the Nez Perce anticipated his intention and one of them produced a white flag of truce.

While the flag holder conversed with army officers across the river from him, the rest of the non-treaty group broke camp and went up the mountain.

Howard was still in Kamiah the next day, a Sunday, where he was reported to have preached a sermon in the Presbyterian church which still stands beside what is now Highway 12, close to *The Heart of the Monster*, on the opposite side of the highway. Another church on the Nez Perce reservation was *Slickpoo Mission*.

Slickpoo Mission (on Mission Creek between Lapwai and Craigmont on what is now Highway 95, a tourist attraction today), was one of Father Cataldo's Native American missions. It was built in 1867, two years before Congress passed an act dividing up "Indians" among the denominations who were fighting amongst themselves to save "heathen" souls. There was more of an incentive here than the mere winning of brownie points for heaven. Missionaries were subsidized by the government to convert the "heathens". Uncle Sam had figured out a way to solve the "Indian Problem".

The Nez Perce reservation was awarded by Congress to the Presbyterians. *Slickpoo Mission*, built two years before the Congressional Act, was allowed to remain active.





General Day after Tomorrow

**Toohoolhoolzote-Na Paa-enps
(Toohoolhoolzote Is Arrested)
Howard Shows the Rifle!**

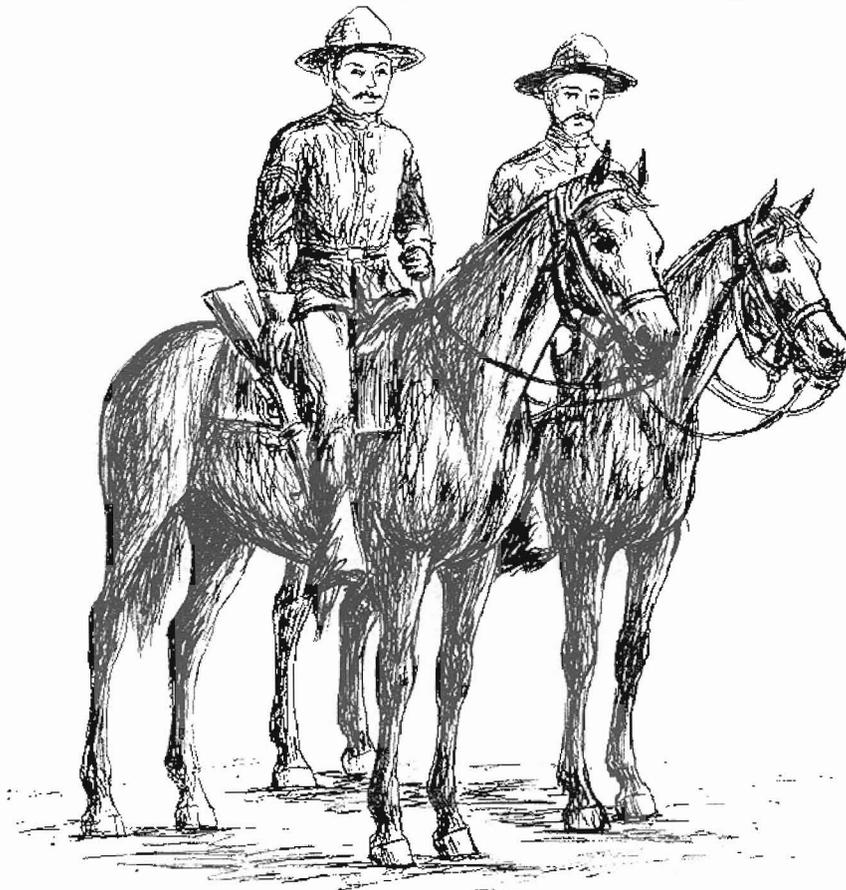
Fort Lapwai, Idaho, May 3, 1877. The non-treaty Nez Perce were invited to air their complaints. They had chosen Chief Toohoolhoolzote as their spokesman. General Howard was in charge. Others present included Agent Monteith, Archie Lawyer, James Reuben, and non-treaty leaders: Joseph, Ollokot (Joseph's brother), White Bird, Looking Glass, and Hoo soos khoot. Also present were many warriors, women and children. All were unarmed.

These Nez Perce people felt their case had not been properly heard and were therefore eager for the council. Howard was not inclined to hear their complaints. He had actually allowed the council for the express purpose of telling the Nez Perce that they must move onto the reservation, and that was that! He gave them thirty days to collect all of their belongings (including widely scattered livestock) and cross flood-swollen rivers to come to the reservation.

Toohoolhoolzote argued against this unreasonable request, and refused. For speaking his mind, he was jailed. General Howard and Captain (Colonel by 1881) Perry led him to the guardhouse.*

This act, according to some Nez Perce survivors of the war, was the actual cause of it, though cruel treatment by whites, broken treaties, and greed for Nez Perce land and gold certainly helped set the stage for war.

* "...Colonel Perry and I led Too-hul-hul-sote out of the council." NEZ PERCE JOSEPH, Oliver O. Howard, Lee & Shepherd, Boston, 1881. Page 67.





Luggage

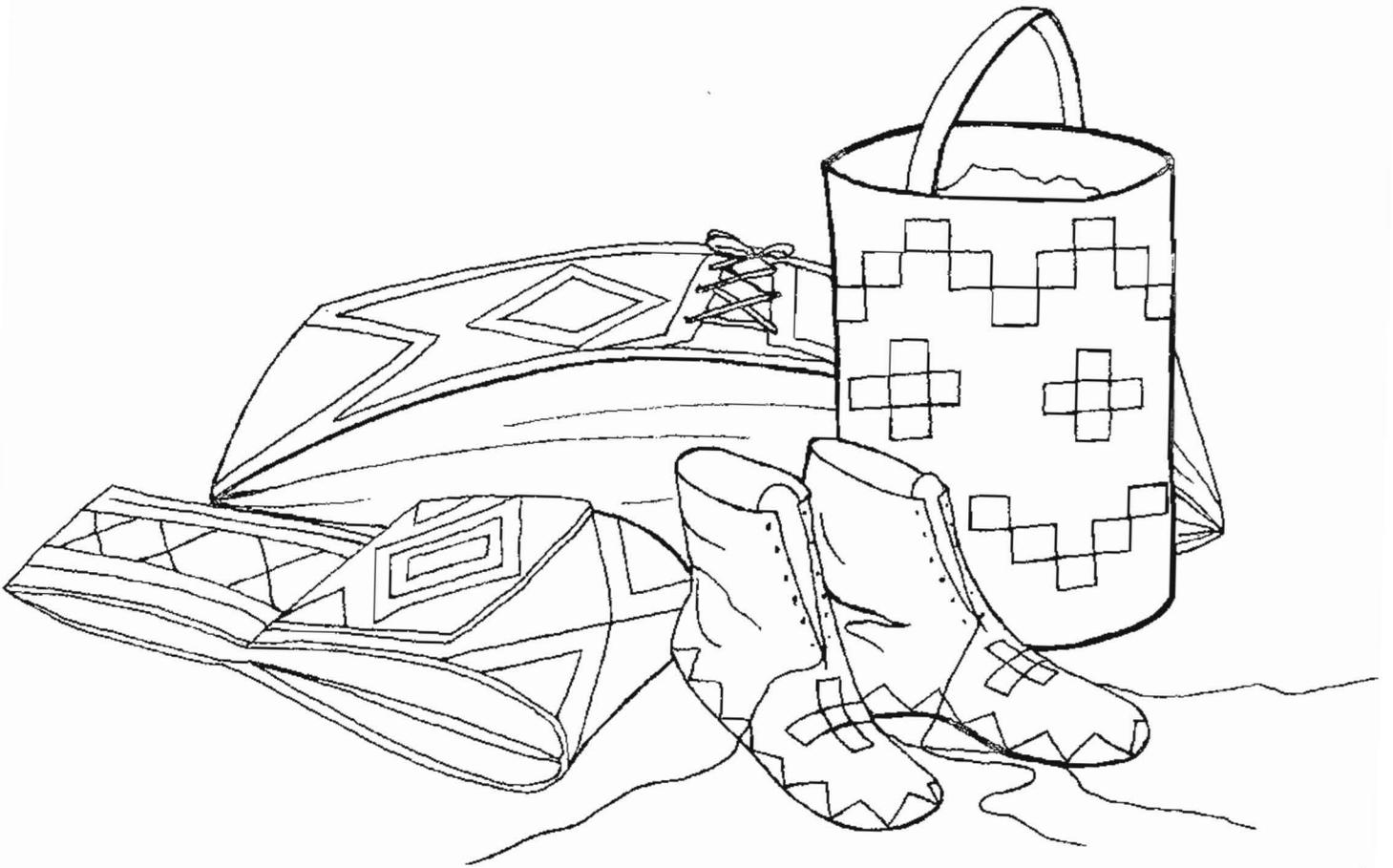
The Nez Perce made and used saddle bags, bags with handles or straps, and parfleches, or what we'd call suitcases. All these items were made of leather or rawhide, and decorated with paint or beads. Parfleches and rawhide items were always painted. Scabbards for knives, awls and other tools were also made from leather, and designed to be worn on a belt.

Soft leather purses and other types of pouches were also used. Beads were used to decorate the softer leather items. Baskets and bags were woven from cat-tails and reeds. Corn husk was also used. Decorative designs were woven into these items.

Luggage was used not only for clothing and personal items, but for food storage. Flour was kept in parfleches.



Moving



Luggage

"See what You Do"

By the first of June about six hundred people of the non-treaty group had gathered near Tolo Lake on the prairie a few miles west of what is now Grangeville, Idaho, to dig camas.

A lot of camas was drying in the sun when young men on horseback began "horsing around", riding their ponies around the campground. One of the horses, carrying two riders, began to act up, and stepped on some of the camas bulbs.

The husband of the lady who had dug the bulbs was furious. "See what you do!" he shouted. "Playing brave, you ride over my woman's hard worked food! If you so brave, why you not go kill the white man who killed your father, Eagle Robe?"

This was the spark that set off the violence which led to the entire group's being held responsible for the acts of three young men. The son of Eagle Robe and two of his cousins set out to find his killer. They did not find him but killed another white man known for his brutal treatment of Nez Perce. By evening they had killed three more and wounded three others along the Salmon River. Chief Joseph was away, butchering beef while all this took place. Then other Nez Perce decided to exact revenge on about fifteen more whites.

Joseph thought he could explain, but Howard was sure that Joseph was responsible, and refused to listen. War, which neither Joseph nor the people wanted was the result. The first battle was fought at White Bird, Idaho.



Digging Camas



"See What You Do"

Soldiers Coming

Sign language was almost a universal form of communication, enabling all tribes to communicate without knowing each other's dialects. Flags and blankets were both used to signal.

The Nez Perce used blanket waving as a signal that the enemy was approaching. At this time, soldiers were the enemy. Guards were posted on hillsides above camp to watch for soldiers. A blanket being waved on the hillside above was easily seen and interpreted by messengers below.

When word came that soldiers were coming, horses were brought in, camp was struck, and horses were saddled and packed. The tipi poles were used much as the shafts of a one horse cart, but the large ends dragged behind since there were no wheels. The small ends were tied together above the horse's neck.

Willow branches were laid across and attached to the bottom shafts, above the ground, to form a base for baskets, bundles of household goods, folded or rolled up tipi covers, stretchers for the ill, or cages for puppies and toddlers. These were called pony drags, or travois.

The Nez Perce were so adept at packing that they could tear down a camp and be moving in as little time as a half hour. Everyone that was able, helped, and each knew his or her job. It was the women who did most of the packing and moving.

Children packed the larger dogs, which had been beasts of burden before the horse. Some children occasionally teased the dogs because they failed to recognize the seriousness of the situation. This didn't happen when the war began in earnest.



Packing



Soldiers Coming

Messengers

It was the job of the children, both boys and girls, when old enough, to tend the horse herd. The Nez Perce had many good horses. Their horses were noted runners long before the U.S. Army showed up with thoroughbreds. The Nez Perce quickly acquired thoroughbred stallions to breed with their mares for even faster horses. Horse racing and betting were favorite sports. Only the best stallions were saved for breeding, the rest were gelded. Much care was given favorite horses. The whites of fresh bird eggs was rubbed into their feet, making the feet tougher and less brittle, and adding shine.

The children who tended the horse herds also acted as couriers or messengers. They learned responsibility at an early age, and while they were loved they weren't pampered or spoiled.

During the war Nez Perce scouts kept track of the U.S. Army and its soldiers, and children kept the rest of the people informed. Horses were one of the Nez Perce's major concerns. Without horses they would perish at the hands of the soldiers. All of them, old men who didn't fight, and women and children as well as warriors trying to defend them, would die.

The children who tended the horses were warned first as a messenger (usually an older child) made his way to the main camp, if the horse herd was between the soldiers and the camp.

Sometimes the messenger would meet a boy or girl on the way to relieve someone already with the horses, and he, or she, would carry the warning to those tending the horses while the messenger went on to the main camp.

In a war in which civilians are attacked, everybody is involved, not just warriors, or soldiers.



Messengers



Messengers

Looking Glass

Chief Looking Glass was a strong minded individual who wanted peace and attended, under a white flag, a meeting of white men, and told them so. Then he returned to his village, about three miles up river from present day Kooskia, Idaho, on the Middlefork of the Clearwater River.

On July 1, 1877, during the Sunday breakfast, the U.S. Army attacked his village, destroying it and literally forcing him to join the non-treaty Nez Perce who were on the South Fork of the Clearwater.

Had his village not been attacked, he would not have joined the non-treaty group, would not have made a speech proposing that they should all go to Montana (where the "Crows were his friends"), would not have been elected leader, would not have been in charge at "Place of Buffalo Calf", also known as the Big Hole (where he refused to post guards that fateful night of August 9, 1877, thinking they had left the war in Idaho), and would not have been killed at Snake Creek, near the Bear's Paw Mountains in northern Montana.

Had Looking Glass' village not been attacked, would the fate of the Nez Perce been different? He was a good man, an eloquent speaker, but a man who, according to some of his contemporaries, listened only to his own council.





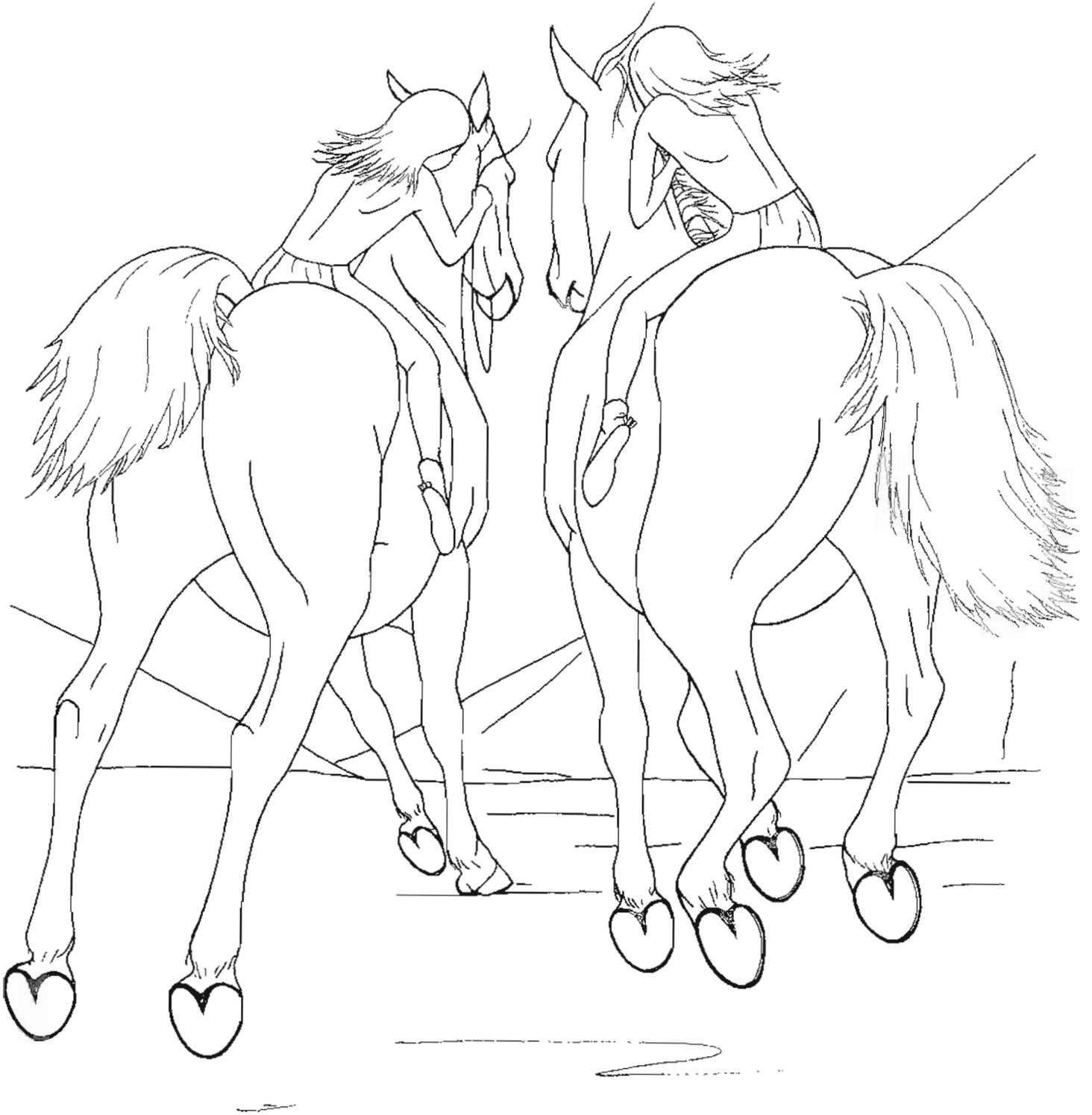
Chief Looking Glass

At the Clearwater

After the Nez Perce left White Bird and made their way around the present day Grangeville area, they camped on the west bank of the Clearwater River across from the present village of Stites, Idaho. Here, on July 11, 1877, General Howard, from the bluff across and above the river, opened fire with his howitzer. A shell hit near some boys who were racing their ponies beside the river. Racing was a favorite sport, along with practicing mock attack while hanging from "under the neck", a feat accomplished by braiding a hair rope into the horse's mane near the withers to form a loop around its neck. Horse hair (from mane or tail) made rope that was very strong, almost like a nylon rope.

Due to a lack of communication the women were caught unprepared, and in their haste to pack and leave they left a lot of things behind, including food that had been cached. Tipi poles they could get in the forest. The food, like dried camas, and other things would be hard to replace.



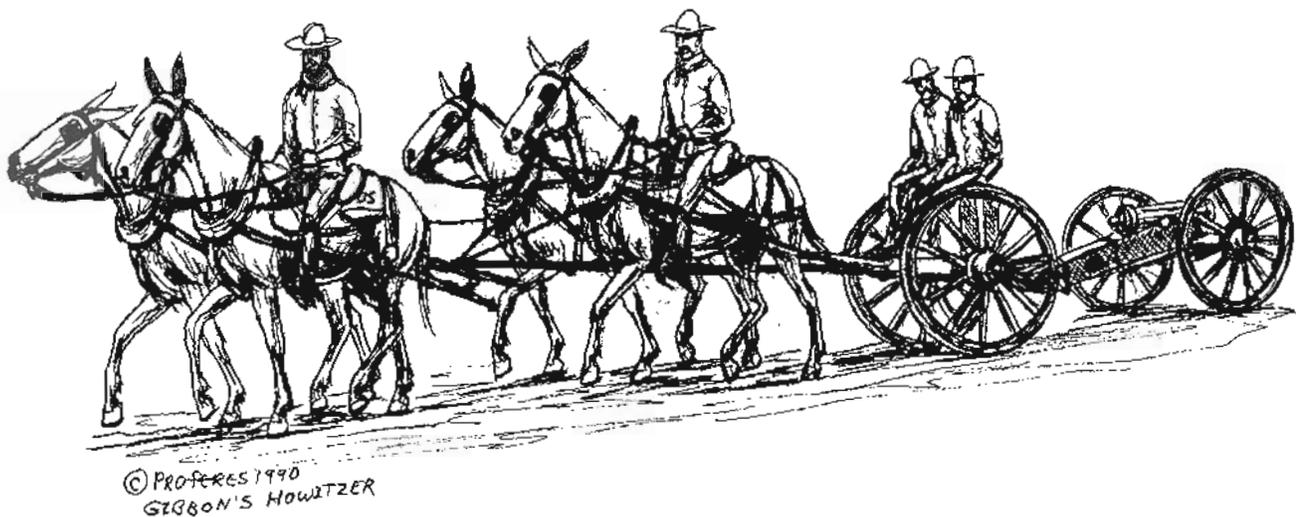


Boys Racing Their Horses

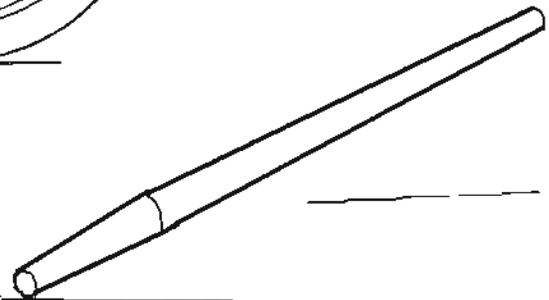
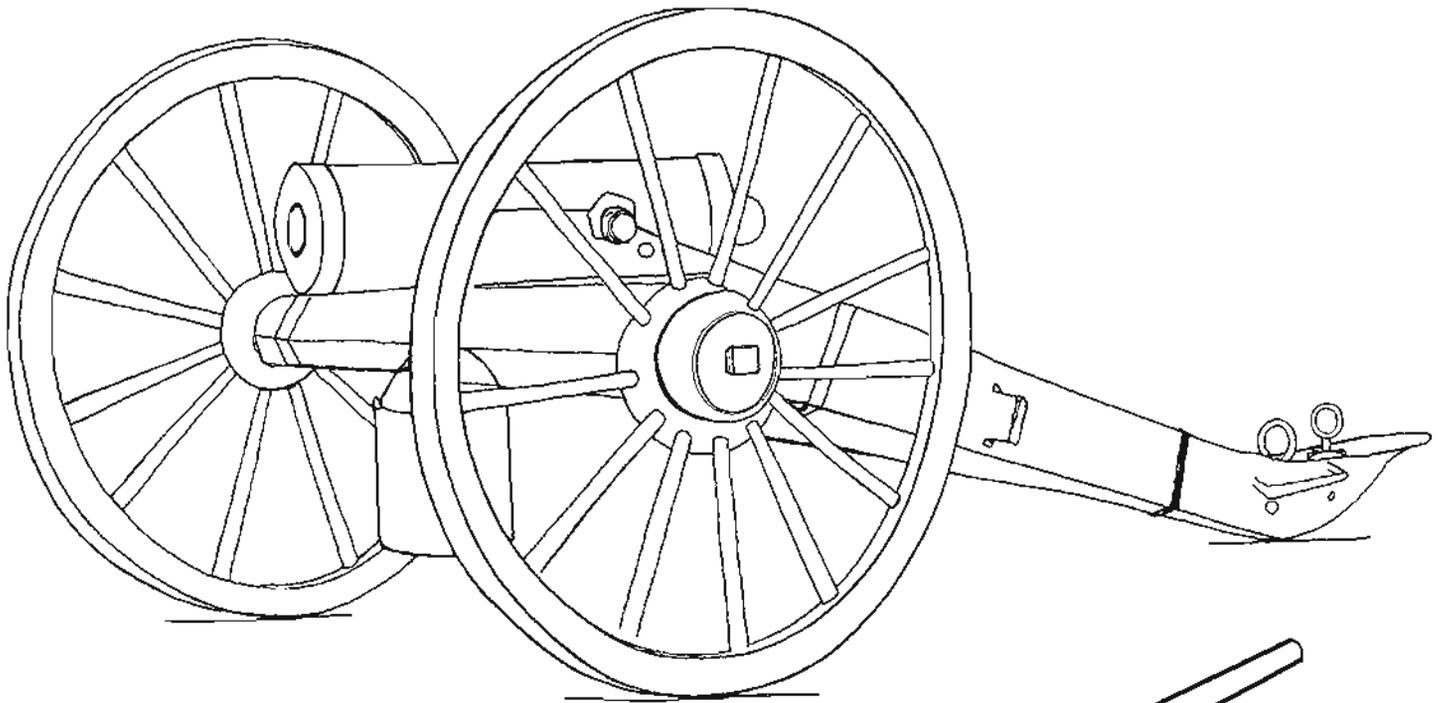
Howitzer

The Howitzer is a cannon mounted on an axle with two wheels and a long, heavy tongue, which stabilizes the weapon when firing, and yet fastens to a "trailer hitch" on another set of two wheels on an axle, with another tongue. This makes a four wheeled wagon that can be pulled by a team of horses or mules.

There was a boom, or handspike, fastened to the end of the tongue. This boom was used to move the tongue, and "aim" the cannon. It was removable, with a tapered end that was pushed through two rings or brackets near the end of the tongue.



Mountain Howitzer, Pulled as Wagon by Four Mule Team



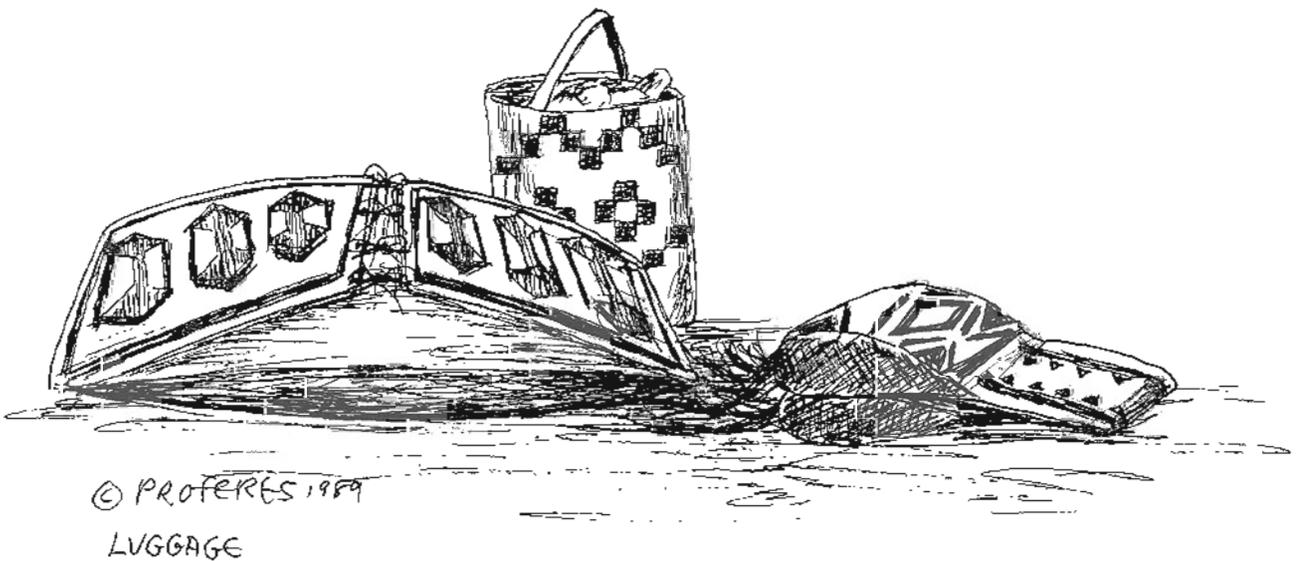
Mountain Howitzer

Skinboats

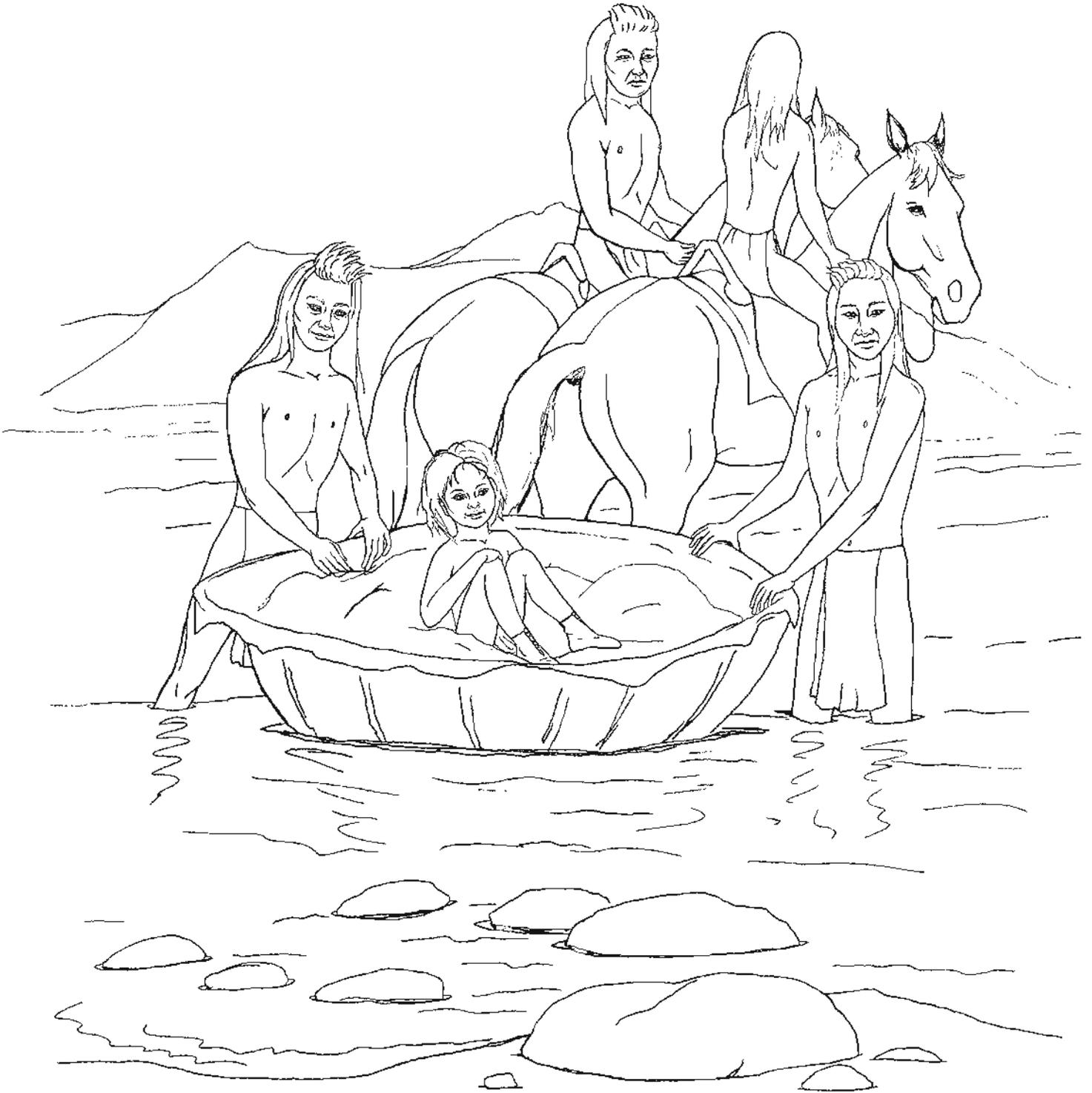
Skinboats, AKA "Bull Boats", were traditionally made from a large buffalo bull hide. They could also be made on the spot from green saplings and tanned buffalo robes, hair side in. They were floating leather baskets that were used to transport household goods and supplies, children, puppies, and grown people across rivers and other bodies of water.

Skinboats were steadied by two men, one on each side, swimming alongside, while being towed by ropes attached to two swimming horses with riders.

Like breaking camp and packing, assembling skinboats and crossing rivers was done very quickly when necessary. With military precision.



Nez Perce Luggage



Skinboats

Moose

Moose, one of the largest North American animals was plentiful in areas along what came to known as the Lolo Trail. A bull moose can be more than seven and one-half feet tall at the shoulder, and reach tree branches which are about fourteen feet off the ground. This is where the expression, "big as a moose", comes from. A moose also is one of the meanest, ugliest animals on earth, having a big head that looks as if it's mother were a cow and its daddy a horse. It has a funny nose that "closes" when it grazes under water (which it frequently does, being partial to water lilies), and a big "wattle" hanging from its jaw. This animal, hard as it is to believe, is a deer. It also has antlers, which it sheds, and which were used by the Nez Perce for making useful items. It tastes like beef.

Draw and color your own moose on this page. Use the artist's drawing of a moose as a reference or create your own.

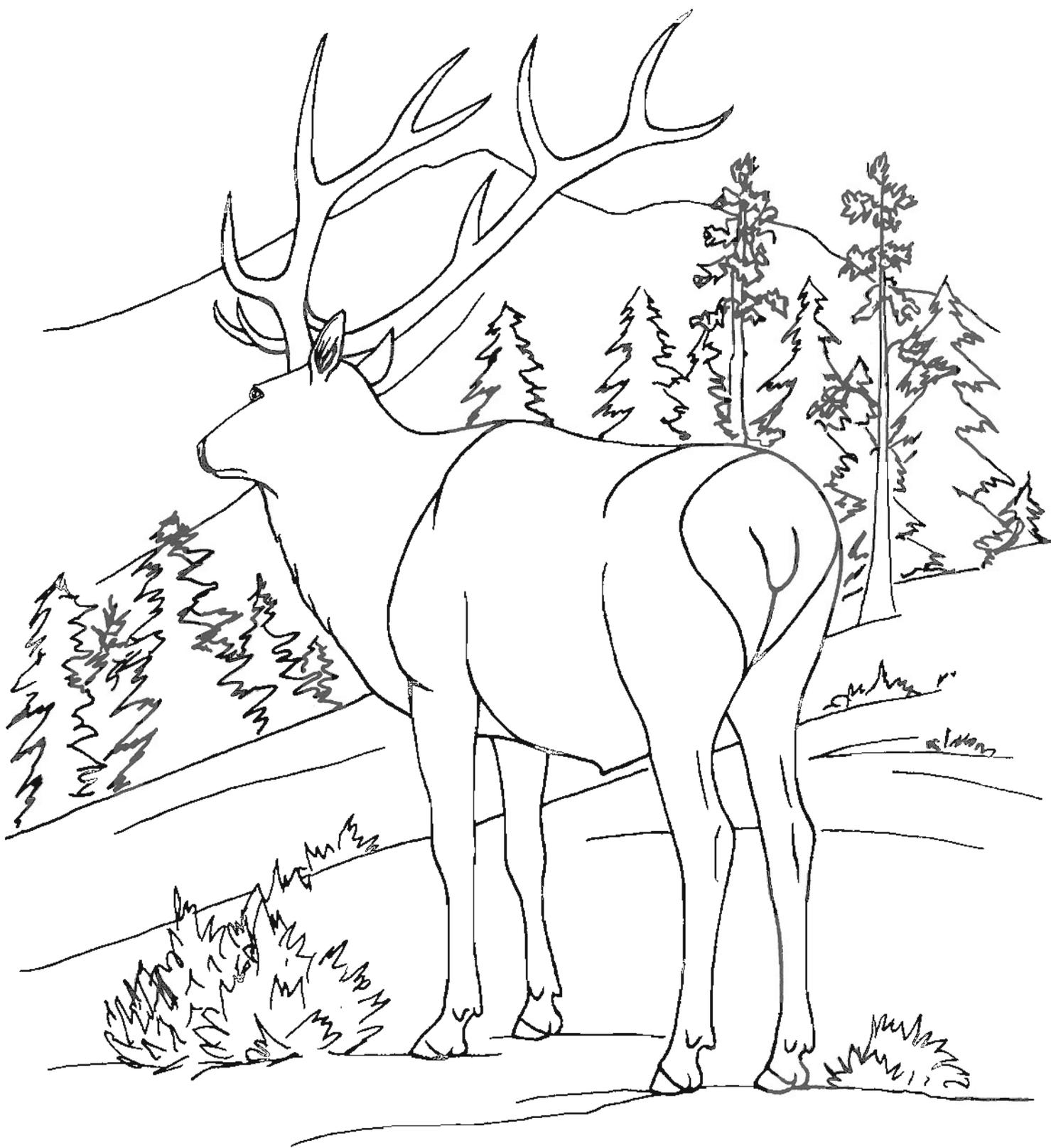


Bull Moose

Elk **(Wapiti)**

Wild game was plentiful in Montana. There was no need to go hungry. The Nez Perce took the time to hunt. It did seem that they had left the war in Idaho. The antlers from elk was used for saddle trees, handles for whips, tukas (digging stick for camas and other roots), and other useful things. These people did not waste. Elk belong to the deer family, and they also chew their "cud".

Draw and color your own elk on this page. Use the artist's drawing of an elk as a reference or create your own.

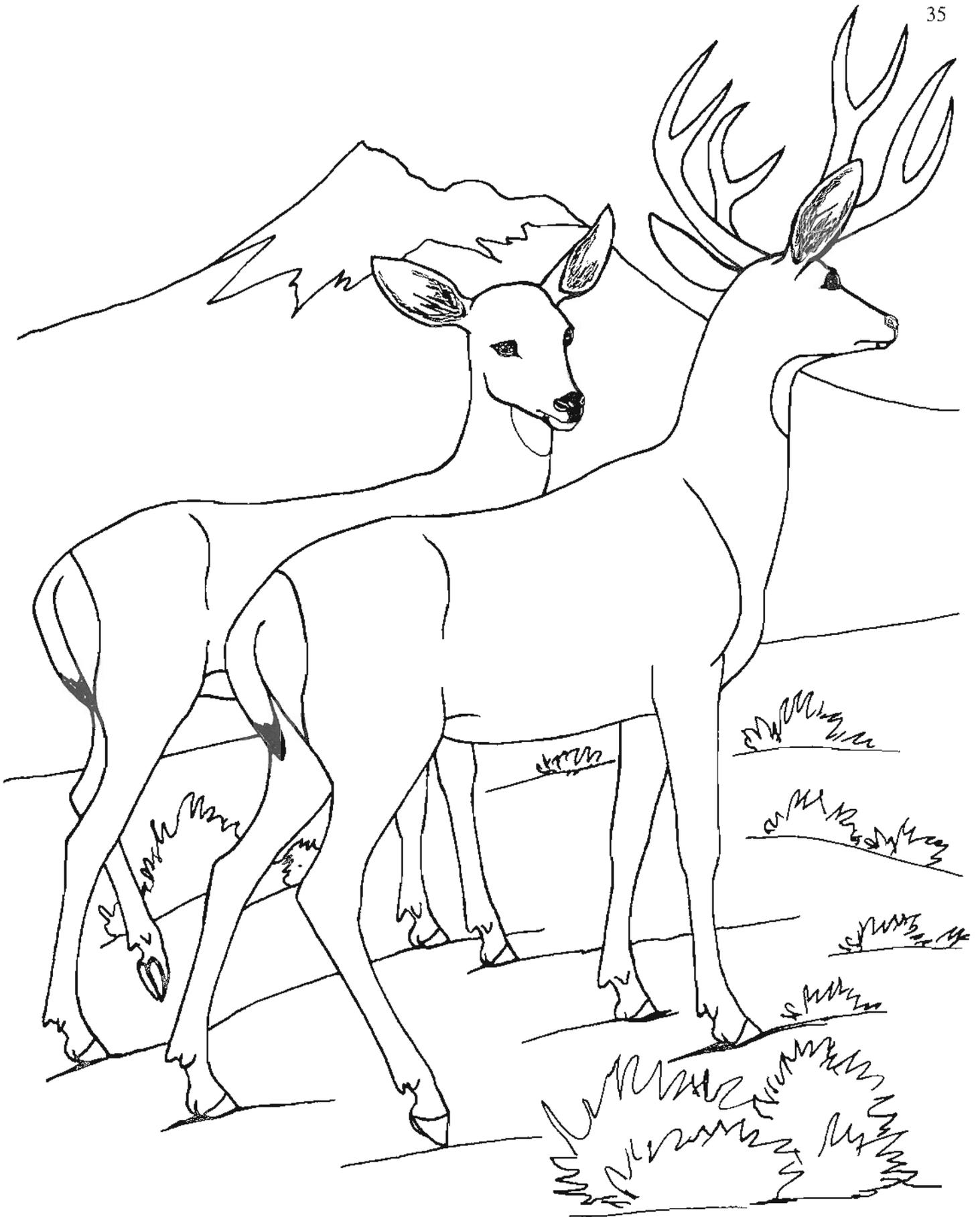


Bull Elk

Deer

The Nez Perce also hunted the elegant, graceful deer on their journey along the "Lolo Trail". Both white tail and the larger mule deer (so called because of their extra large ears) were abundant. What we know as mule deer Lewis and Clark referred to as "black tail deer".

Draw and color your own deer on this page. Use the artist's drawing of a deer as a reference or create your own.



Buck & Doe

He-Ye's

Bighorn sheep were among the game found in Montana. The horn of the ram was used not only for making spoons and ladles but also for saddle stirrups and other items. Ram's horn was also used to make powerful hunting bows.

Draw and color your own sheep on this page. Use the artist's drawing of a ram as a reference or create your own.



Big Horn Ram

Medicine Tree

"About 400 years ago when this Ponderosa Pine was a mere sapling," according to a Salish legend, "a massive mountain ram (he-yets), with gigantic horns accepted a challenge from his hereditary enemy, Old Man Coyote, and tried to butt it down.

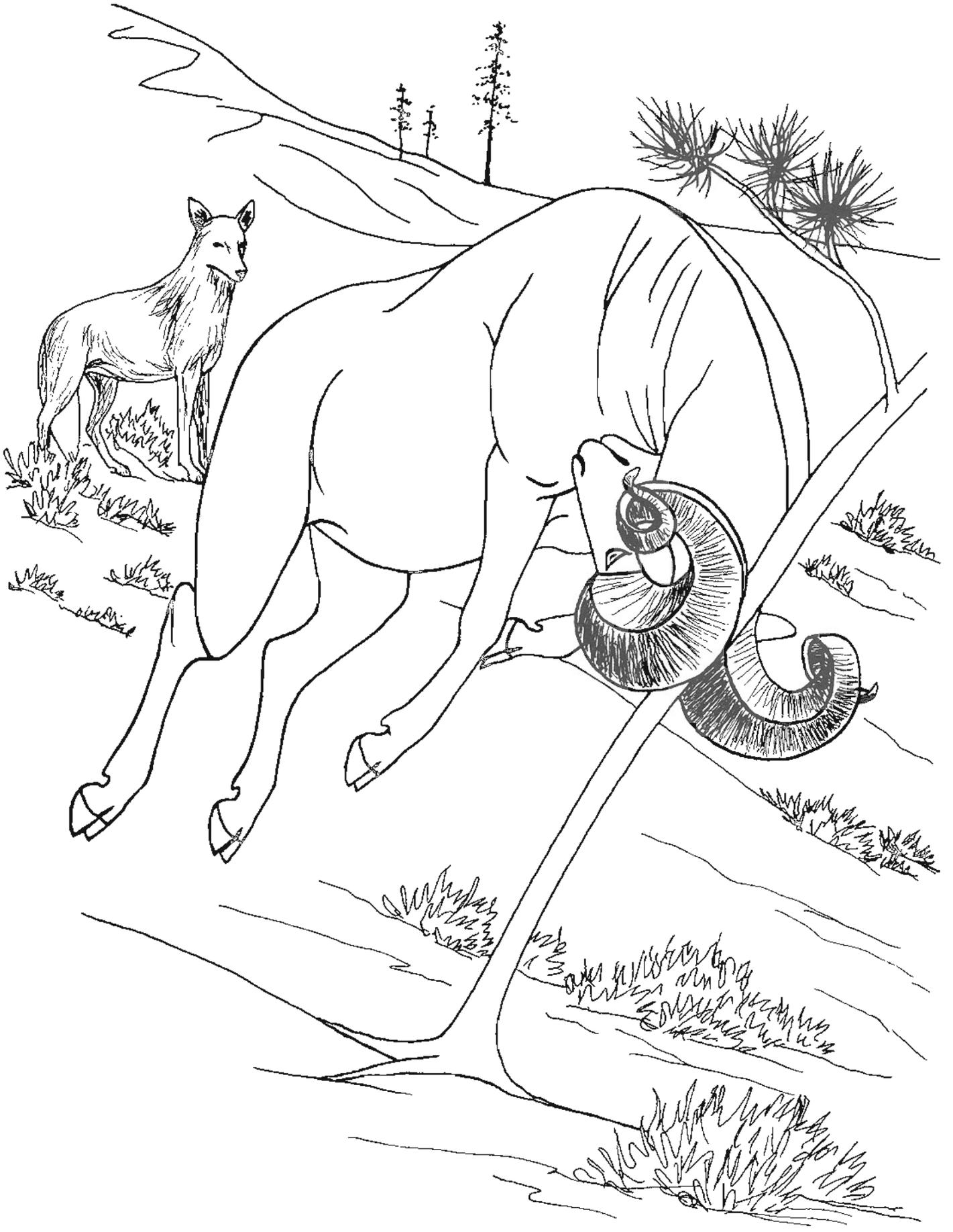
"The little tree did not fall, but the ram's horns caught around its trunk, trapping him there, where he died. Warriors chased the coyote away before he could eat the ram, and hung beads and wampum on the horns to honor the ram's bravery, and to chase away evil spirits."

This practice continued as the tree grew and began to swallow the ram's horns. It became a sacred place to native peoples. A place to leave spiritual offerings.

By the time the Nez Perce passed by on their way to what we know as the Big Hole the horns were about 8 feet above the ground, and only a tiny tip still showed. The Nez Perce stopped to pray, and to leave their gifts. It is most sacred - Tematnepitpi."



Offering



Left to His Fate

The attack at Big Hole came at 3:30 a.m. August 9th, as the Nez Perce slept in their tipis, having assumed they were safe from attack once they had left Idaho. In spite of dream and vision warnings, and protests by many, Chief Looking Glass, now in charge, had posted no sentinels.

There seems to be no question as to whether or not a no-quarter assault was deliberately planned. The soldiers were told to take no prisoners. In the attack on eighty-nine lodges, Gibbon's volunteers and soldiers aimed low, killing and wounding many sleeping men, women, and children. About seventy women and children were killed, and nineteen warriors. Many Nez Perce maintain that a Gatling gun was used to massacre these people in their beds.

Three good warriors were lost here, Wahlitits, Sarpsis Ilppip, and Wetyetmas Likeinen. These were the three young men who set out to take vengeance on white men (who had murdered Indians) at Tolo Lake. Wahlitits' wife picked up the rifle and shot the soldier who killed him. She was shot and killed immediately. She may have been the only woman to kill a white man in this war. Joseph lost his young wife, who left a baby. Ollokot lost his older wife, who left an infant son. Joseph's baby daughter died in Oklahoma, Ollokot's son died from malaria at Nespelem. He was sixteen. He was the only baby who did not die in Oklahoma.

In spite of the slaughter and outrage at the onset of the battle, the Nez Perce rallied and drove the enemy from their burning camp, laying siege for twelve hours against the soldiers entrenched on the hill above, cutting Gibbon and his men off from water and medical aid.

The Nez Perce also captured Gibbon's howitzer and one pack mule loaded with over two thousand rounds of ammunition for Springfield rifles, many of which the Nez Perce had picked up in the battlefields. They had started out in White Bird with mostly bows and arrows. They were now well armed.

"....It was not good to see women and children lying dead and wounded," said Yellow Wolf (Joseph's Nephew) while visiting the battle ground years later with L.V. McWhorter. "A few soldiers and warriors lay as they had fallen, almost together; wounded children screaming with pain, women and men crying, wailing for their scattered dead! The air was heavy with sorrow: I would not want to hear, I would not want to see, again...."

People willingly sacrificed themselves for the sake of the rest. They were not afraid to die, knowing that dying is as natural as being born, and that everything that is born here dies here, whether plant or man, and its life force, or soul, continues on, that there is a continuity to life that is not just the recycling of the elements of the body. Our life here is but a short side trip on the train of life. An eternal chain. Time and space are one.





"Please Don't Die"

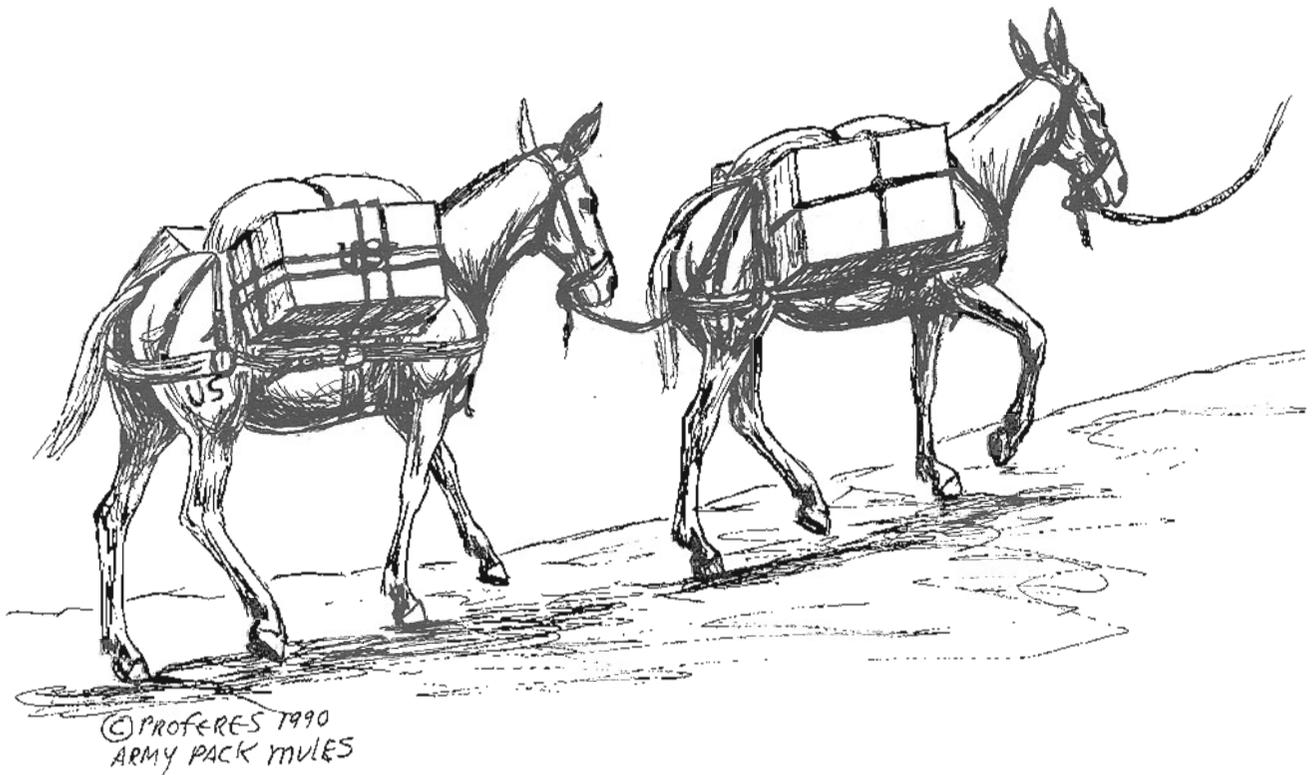
This elderly man, badly injured, dying after the surprise attack at the Big Hole, has stopped to die along the trail. Ordinarily it was the person's choice, and their custom not to interfere. The others left him there. But a favorite little grandson refuses to let him go.

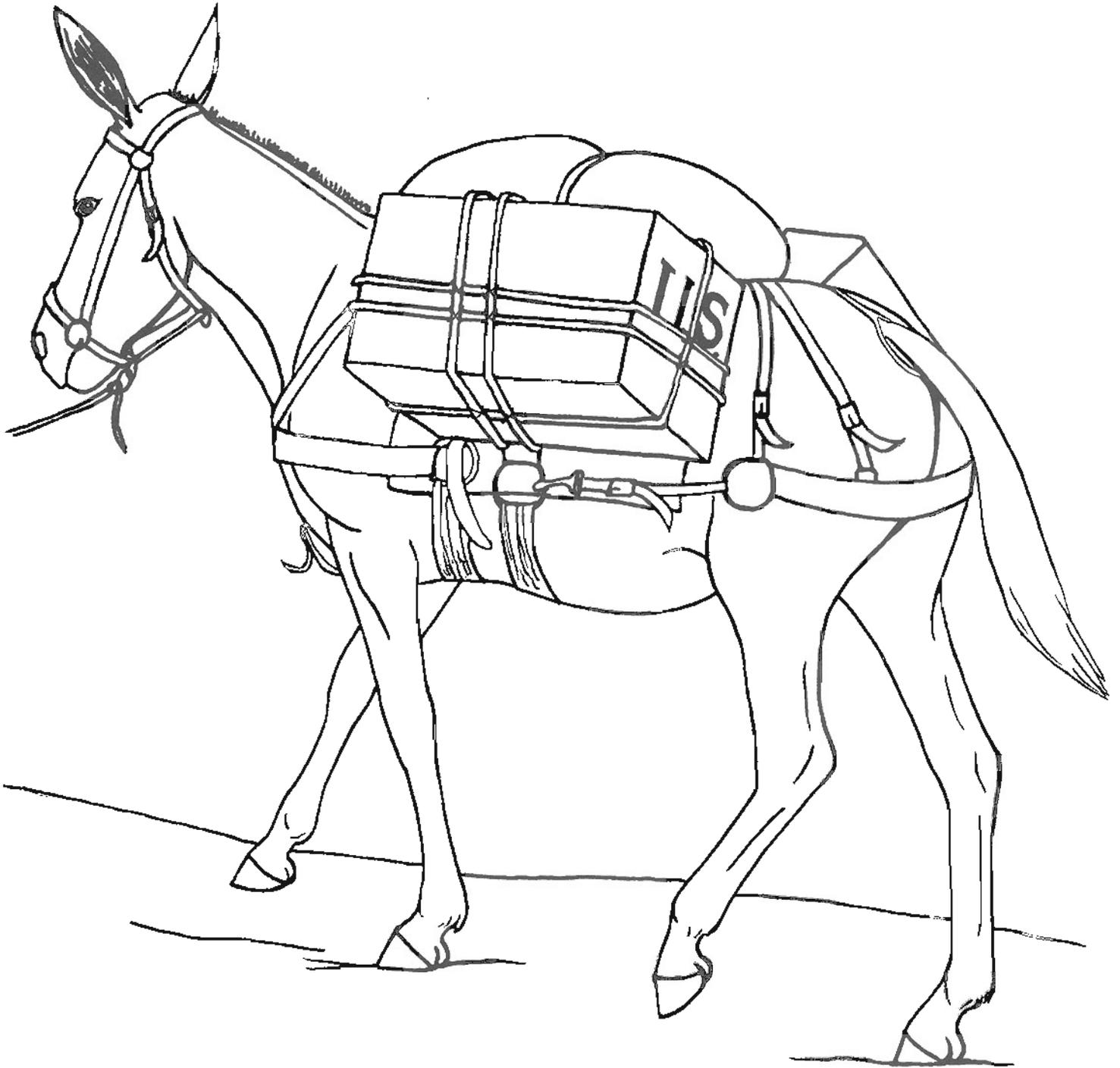
Army Pack Mules

The mule, the ornery, hybrid cross of horse and burro, was what transported freight, for both civilians and the military. The mule not only "packed" it on his back, he pulled it in wagons. Teams of mules (or horses), pulled the weight of the world. Later, steam, and then gasoline engines furnished this power. Early freight wagon drivers were called "teamsters". That is now the name designating the truck drivers' national union.

The mule is about the size of a horse, but much stronger. His other genetic donor, the burro, was preferred by the miner because he could pack about 800 pounds of ore, and weighed little more than that himself. He was also small enough to stand in tunnels with low ceilings.

When the Nez Perce seized General Howard's mules at Camas Meadows, even though they were after the horses, they temporarily stopped him.





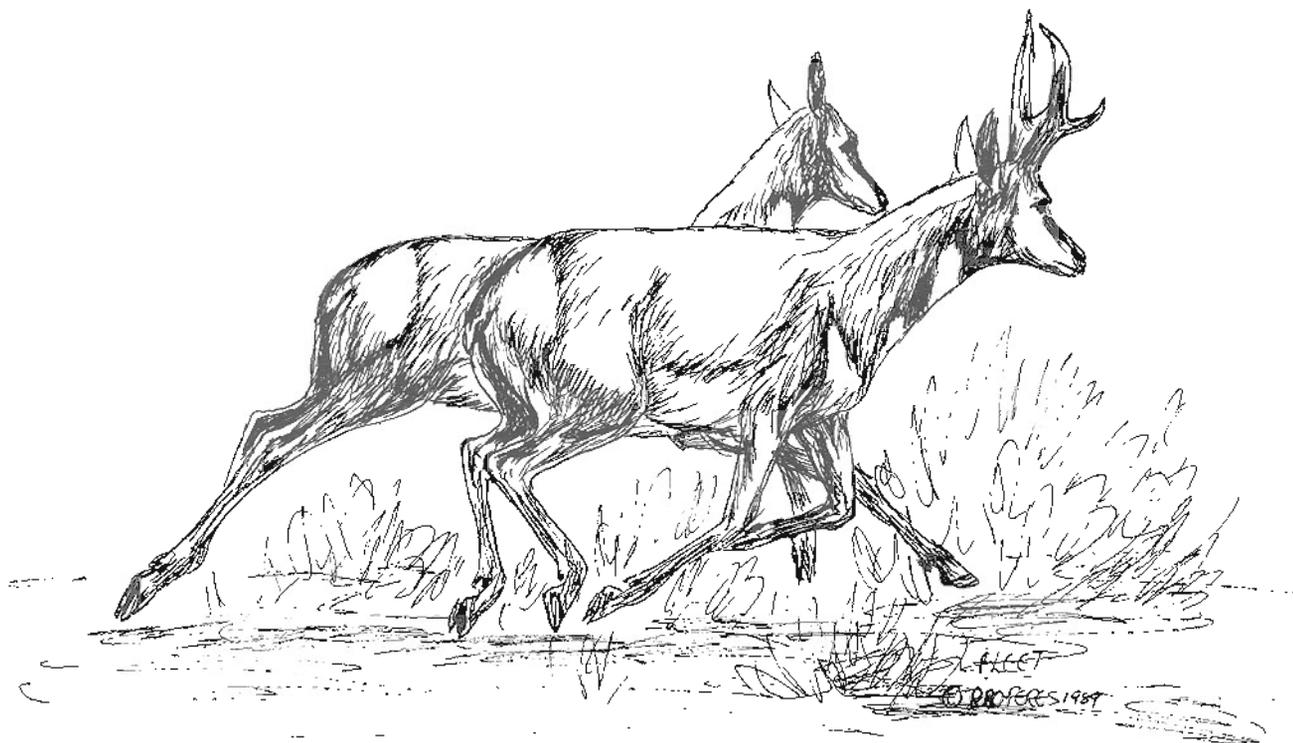
Army Pack Mule

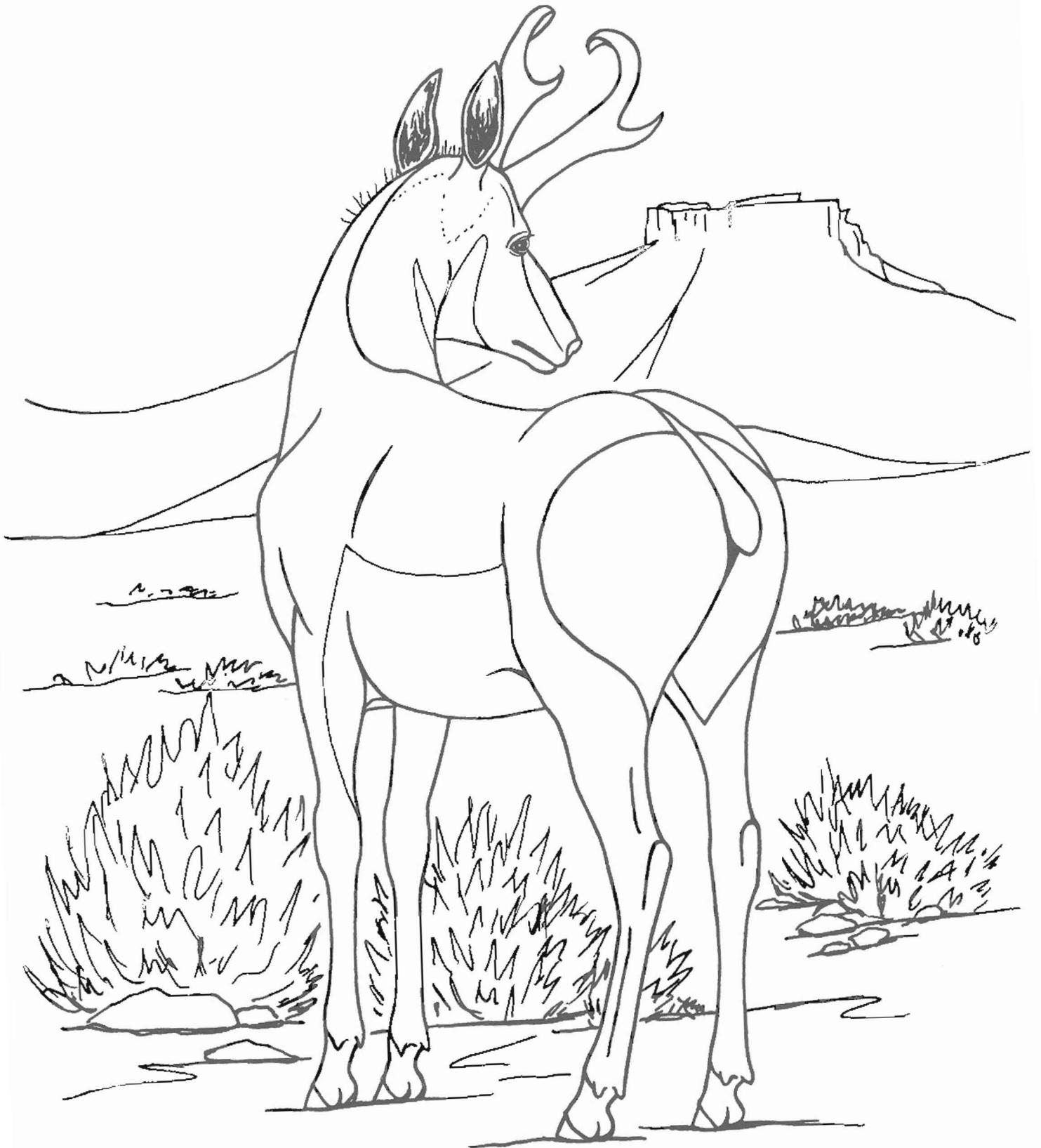
Antelope

In addition to buffalo there were herds of antelope, or pronghorn, on the prairie. These animals are long legged and graceful, and though they resemble deer are actually of the goat family. They have horns that are permanent, bony cores over which grow hollow, unbranched sheaths of hair that harden. This actually appears to be made of hair that has been fiber glassed together, and only this part is shed, the core is not. The hair on their body is very coarse, with a strange texture. It is actually hollow, having a pin sized hole in the center.

The pronghorn is native to North America. It has an especially large windpipe and lungs, and a heart twice the size of a sheep that equips it for speed. Pronghorn have been clocked at almost 60 miles per hour, and are the fleetest mammal in North America

Though nothing native can outrun them, and they are easily startled and take off like a shot, the wise hunter can get within range. These are curious creatures. Hang anything on sagebrush and they will return to see what it is. They are the size of a deer, weigh about the same as a large sheep, and also chew their "cud".





Pronghorn

*Woo-in!
(Flee!)
"I Gave Her a Rope...."*

Many of the Nez Perce were still eating breakfast the cold, stormy morning of September 30th, 1877, when Colonel Miles' men attacked them at Snake Creek at the Battle of the Bear's Paw. There were six hundred soldiers, led by many Cheyenne warriors who had been promised horses as loot.

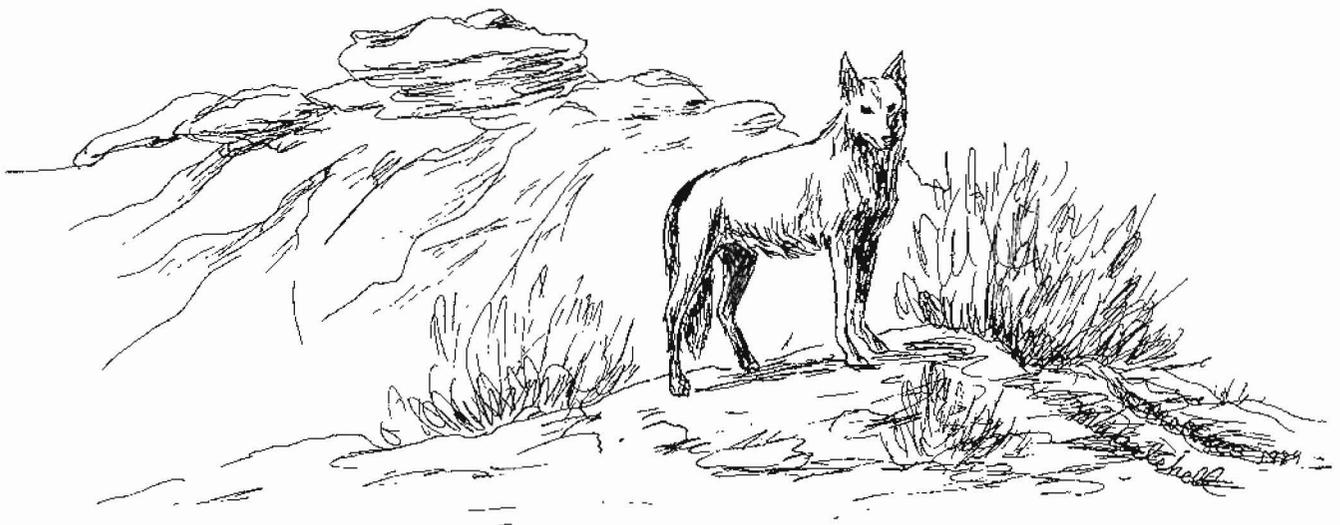
The earth shook with the charge as the mounted soldiers and Cheyenne circled the camp in two wide wings.

People already mounted managed to escape to Canada. Joseph took his twelve year old daughter and ran to try to save the horse herd. He gave her a rope and told her to catch herself a horse and to escape with the others, which she did.

Joseph caught himself a horse and rode back to camp where he was met by his surviving wife, who handed him his rifle. He and a handful of others managed to stop the advance of infantry and drive them out of the camp, losing six of their best warriors.

At the onset of the attack some warriors managed to gain a hill directly south of the camp, where they inflicted heavy damage to the cavalry. The soldiers withdrew to lay siege to the camp.

Joseph never saw his young daughter again. She returned to Idaho and died there as a young woman. The one time Joseph was permitted to visit her she was deliberately taken away on a hunting trip so that they would not meet. She was terribly unhappy. The children she bore died in early childhood. Is it any wonder that she died of consumption?





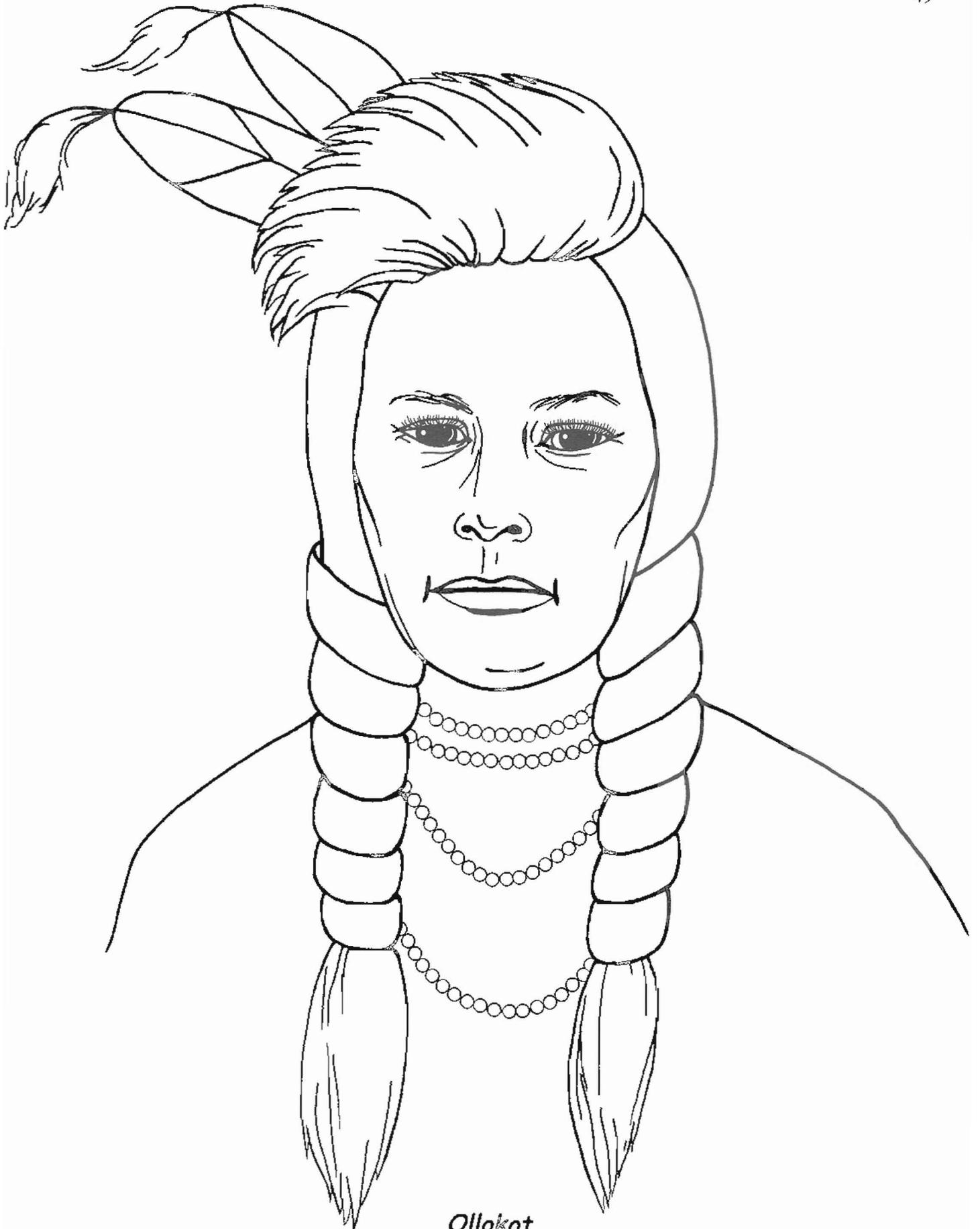
"I Gave Her a Rope...."

Ollokot

"He who led the young men" was Ollokot. Tall, handsome, extremely popular, this great warrior's death at the beginning of the siege at the Bear's Paw on Snake creek was a crippling loss to the Nez Perce, and especially to Joseph, who had just told his young daughter to catch herself a horse and flee to Sitting Bull's village in Canada. At this time he didn't know if she, too, had perished.

Looking Glass, another great chief, perished on the first day of this battle. He too, was a man who wanted only to be left in peace, at his village on the Clearwater River.





Ollokot

Tekh-ta-ka Tin
(Weary, Full of Despair)
In the Pits

When darkness came the evening of September 30th, though it was bitterly cold and snowing, the ground and rock (alluvial deposits) frozen, the women dug shelter pits with their knives and kitchen utensils in the gullies beyond the camp, in which they, the elders, and children huddled with the wounded. They were shelled while caring for the wounded. Once again they mourned for their dead.

Here they stayed until the surrender, cut off from food, cold and miserable. They didn't dare build a fire, and had no fuel anyway. What little food they had was passed around to the children, and was soon gone.

It was this dire situation that prompted Joseph to surrender, that and the fact that his own children were missing and he wanted to find them. One of the pits was hit by a shell and caved in, smothering two people before they could be dug out.

The warriors had their own, shallower pits, up on the ridges of the low hills above the camp, where they, too, were entrenched until the surrender.



In Mourning



Digging a Pit

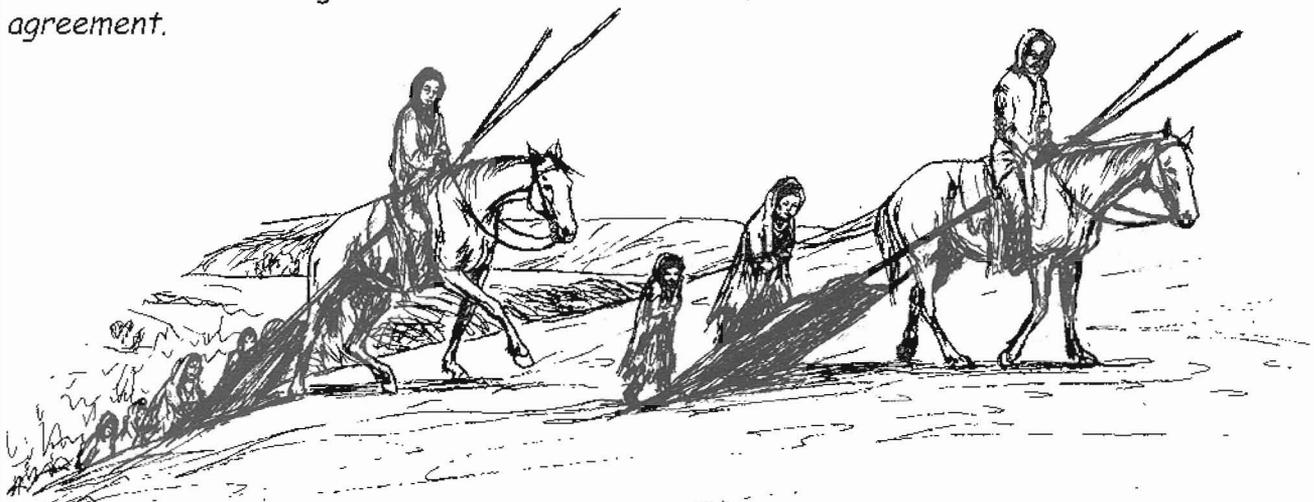
Tu-koe-pa-la-ut
(The Surrender)

The afternoon of October 5, 1877, with the snow falling lightly and the wind blowing, Joseph rode out from camp to meet Colonel Miles at the halfway point with the understanding that they would all be returned to Idaho. He had a prior agreement with Howard and Miles that they would all quit fighting, the army as well as the Nez Perce.

According to the *The San Francisco Chronicle* the *Portland Weekly Standard*, and excerpts from Lieutenant Wood's account, Joseph rode a borrowed black horse with a Mexican saddle and was accompanied by Yellow Bull on one side, and Wounded Head on the other. Three warriors trailed behind. Lt. Wood said Joseph dismounted, offered his gun to Howard, who refused it, then handed it to Miles. Soon after that the people began to trickle in to exchange their weapons for warm food and blankets. So ended the great, independent Nez Perce Nation, on a bitter, cold day, thirteen hundred miles from home. Snow lay five inches deep on the bleak, rolling hills of northern Montana.

Joseph had, prior to the October 5th meeting, made a speech to the remaining chiefs and warriors (and the two Nez Perce army scouts sent by Howard), explaining why he was going to make peace: "Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before, I have in my heart. I am tired of fighting, our chiefs are killed, Looking Glass is dead. The old men are all killed. It is the young men who say yes, or no. He who led the young men is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food: no one knows where they are, perhaps freezing to death. I want time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me my chiefs, I am tired, my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will warfare no more forever."

"He who led the young men..." was Ollokot, Joseph's brother. Joseph was the only major chief left alive to make the surrender besides Chief White Bird, who refused to surrender. Under Nez Perce custom White Bird was not obligated to surrender. Joseph spoke only for his own band and the leaderless bands who had joined his. After having once before been betrayed and captured (on October 1st) when he had responded to a white flag and met Miles at the halfway point between the two camps, Joseph had been hopeful, but suspicious, when Miles and Howard again indicated they were ready to cease fighting. At the time of Joseph's capture on October 1st, warriors had immediately grabbed Lt. Jerome when he was sent to spy on them. Each side then had a hostage. They had traded. Peace negotiations were then resumed, which resulted in the cease fire agreement.





The Surrender

"Bear Coat"

General Howard, way behind, had sent a telegraph dispatch to Miles at Tongue River in eastern Montana. The U.S. 7th Cavalry, Company K, under Colonel Nelson A. Miles, had, on September 18, 1877, immediately headed northwest, across the Montana prairie. This was the beginning of the end for the great Nez Perce Nation as a free, independent entity.

Ad Chapman, an army scout married to an Indian woman, had fired the first shot at The Battle of White Bird, officially opening the war. He served as interpreter for Miles, while the others looked on at the surrender.

Colonel Nelson A. Miles, whom the Nez Perce called "Bear coat", to whom Chief Joseph handed his rifle on that bitterly cold afternoon of October 5, 1877, was to become famous as the general who finally put an end to the Apache wars in Arizona with his capture of Geronimo.



U.S. 7th Cavalry, Company K

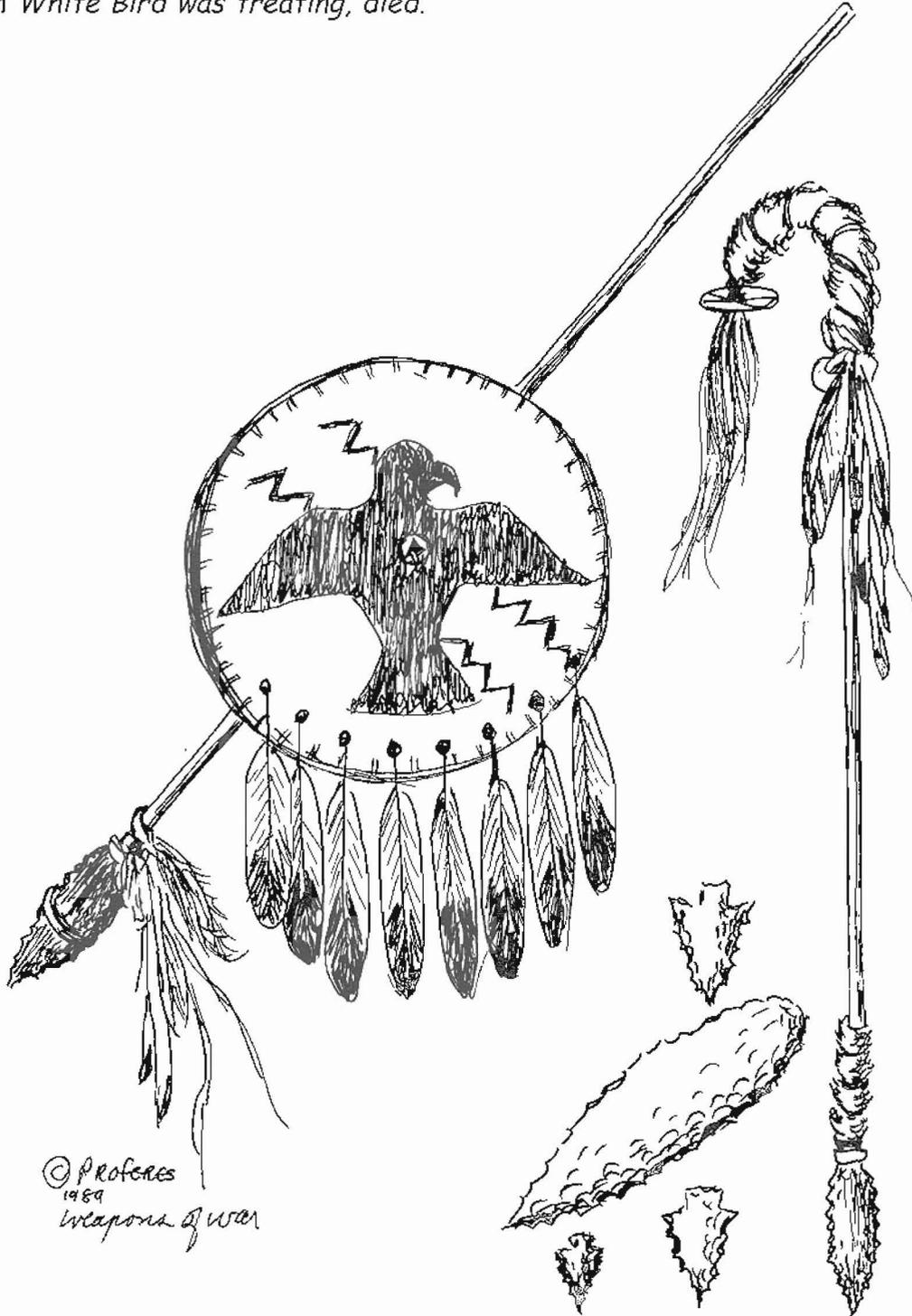


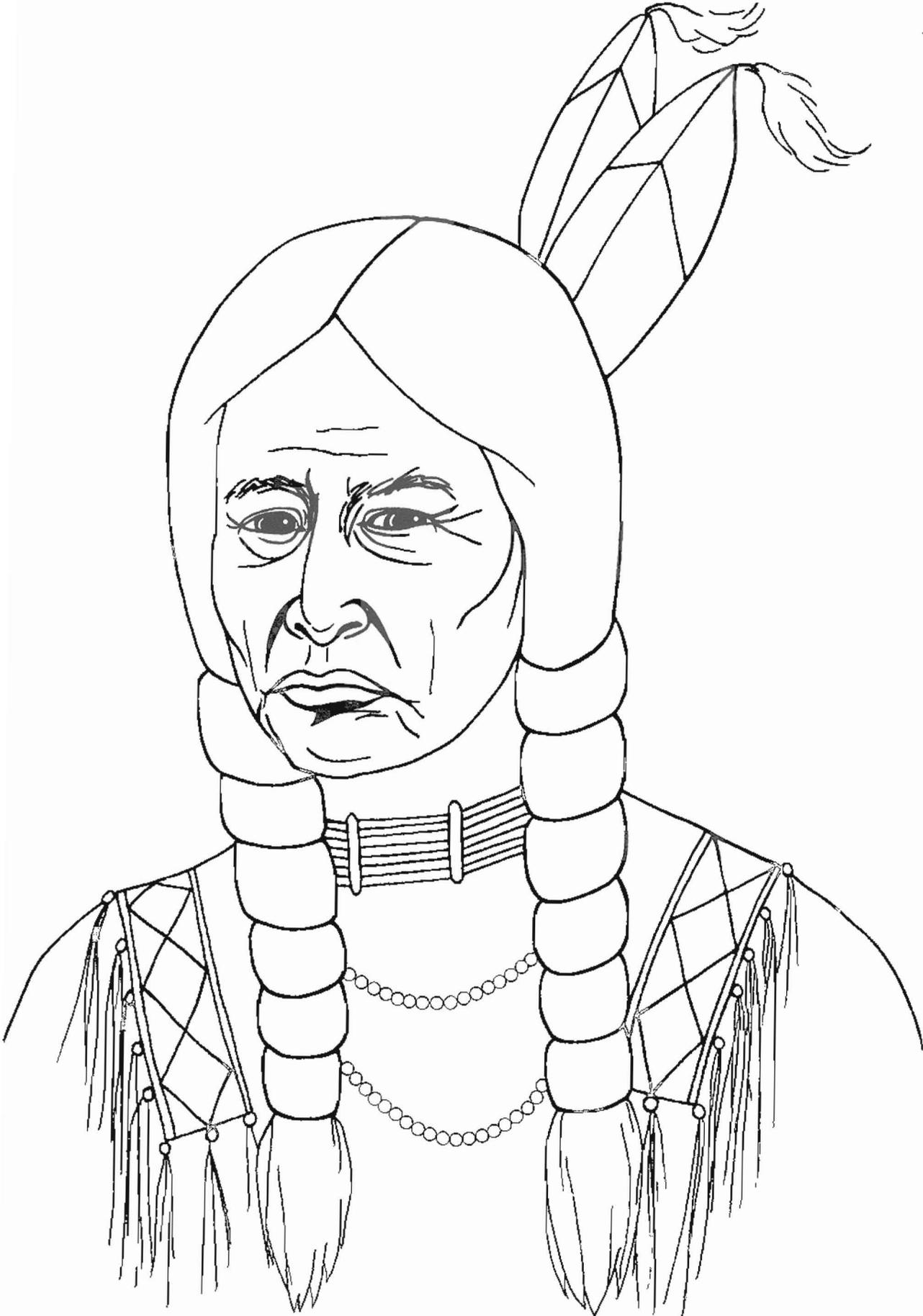
Colonel Nelson A. Miles

White Bird

Chief White Bird refused to surrender to a "deceitful white chief". When night fell the day of the surrender, White Bird and twenty some followers walked away from camp and made their way to Milk River, where they were given a few horses. From here they went to Sitting Bull's village in Canada. (Another branch of the Nez Perce tribe claims that White Bird and his band left Snake Creek the night before the surrender.)

Chief White Bird was a powerful man who would not yield when he knew he was right. He had great physical strength, but his real power was mind control and character. He was a medicine man, and was killed by another Nez Perce whose son, whom White Bird was treating, died.





Chief White Bird

BUCKSKIN, BUFFALO, OR BOVINE

This too is a recipe, a Nez Perce recipe for tanning hides.

You need: A green hide, about 6 lbs. of beef brains, salt, a scraping tool, 1 ton of patience, and 1 ton of energy. This is for a very large buckskin. A cow hide takes proportionally more.

You may stake the green hide, stretched all ways, to the ground, or you can throw it over a log and have a hard surface to work on. Scrape hair and flesh from hide.

Remove outside membrane from 3 lbs. of brains put into a cook pot, add 1 1/2 qts. of water, a small handful of salt and bring to boil. Simmer until brains will mash between fingers. Mash brain, or beat with mixer until mixture is smooth.

Place brain mix into a tub that's large enough to hold the hide. Work the hide into the solution, add warm water as needed, to cover hide with brain mixture. Soak until moist, get solution into and all over hide. Remove, stretch until soft and dry. This takes two people. Work the hide back and forth from all sides, like a tug of war with a rope.

Repeat process with new brain solution made with the remaining 3 lbs. of brains. Don't forget the salt. Hide will be white and velvety.

TO SMOKE: Sew hide sides to form a cylinder. Attach a wide strip of denim to bottom. Hide needs to hang over a smoke pit on a tripod that is short enough so that the denim strip comes to the ground. The denim strip flares out at bottom to form a funnel to catch the smoke. Smoke pit should be about 16" in diameter and a foot deep.

Start fire with dry chips and let burn to bed of coals. Lay a fair sized pile of green alder chips over the coals, and once it begins to dry and burn, sprinkle water over chips to make a heavy smoke.

Now put hide over tripod, spread denim at bottom and weight down with a few rocks. Let hide smoke for about 20 minutes. Check inside for color desired. Smoke not only colors the hide, it makes it water resistant. If used for tipi covers, the hides were also oiled or fat was used with the brain.

Keep adding chips and sprinkling with water. When inside of hide has attained the desired color, turn wrong side out and smoke the other side.

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Horace Axtell, Nez Perce elder, world wide lecturer, teacher of the Nez Perce language at Lewis Clark State College at Lewiston, Idaho, Priest of the Seven Drum Religion, and author (with Margo Aragon) of *A Little Bit of Wisdom* Conversations with a Nez Perce Elder (published in 1997 by Confluence Press at Lewiston, Idaho) had this to say (in English and Nez Perce) about The Nez Perce War of 1877:

“ *Never sell the land where your father and mother’s bones are buried.*’

The Nez Perce were strong people. They had precious land in the Wallawas. All of them were made to move from there. That is why there was a war, because they took away the people’s land, traditions, culture, and spirituality. This caused much bloodshed and tears and many lives lost.

All of them were our ancestors and relatives.”

Horace Axtell

“ *Wetu mowa eetumyayo wetes ke kona imim pisitnim ka pikenm piips ewsix’ temikiin.*’

Geps gepš Nimiipu titogan Hetewiisnix wetes ewsiine Wallwape ka koniix hepewceye septeyekey kin oykalo-konwa caan hewceye pewapceyown - henewuycene iman titogan na wit oykala ka hetew mitskuynekt kinwecet hewceye elexliiwe wapeeyownin - eleexli kiiket wele ka sipus - oykalo hewcene nunim hetew himyume.”

‘Isuumts (Horace Axtell)

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