

Red Men and White Meet Once More on Medicine Lodge's Historic Ground

Kansas Celebrates the Seventieth Anniversary of the Peace Treaty That Helped Open to Settlement an Empire in the West

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

ON THE spot where red men and white once held one of the most important councils in the history of the Great West, white men and red will soon be meeting to celebrate the event which took place there nearly three-quarters of a century ago. The place is in Barber county, Kansas, where Elm creek joins the Medicine river, and there on October 6, 7 and 8 the modern city of Medicine Lodge is staging a pageant which re-enacts the signing of the Medicine Lodge peace treaty of October, 1867.

Joining in the celebration is a delegation of Indians from Oklahoma—Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Comanches, Kiowas and Apaches, descendants of the red signers of the treaty. A troop of the Seventh cavalry from Fort Riley, Kan., will also be there because soldiers of this regiment helped escort the white commissioners to the treaty ground.

This treaty was a consequence of the new "peace policy" inaugurated during the administration of President Andrew Johnson. It was more a policy of necessity than one of choice. The government's "war policy," adopted to put an end to the Indian raids that devastated the frontier after the Civil war, had been a failure. So the "Great White Father" in Washington, after his military had failed to whip his erring red children, decided to conquer them with kindness. At least, his advisers who were advocates of the new "peace policy," told him that it could be done that way.

Accordingly, Col. Jesse H. Leavenworth, agent for the Kiowas and Comanches, was instructed by Nathaniel Greene Taylor, commissioner of Indian affairs, to try to bring together all the hostile southwestern tribes for a peace council.

Leavenworth called upon George Bent, the half-breed son of the founder of Bent's Fort on the Arkansas, to use his influence with his mother's people, the Cheyennes, as well as the other tribes, to get them to assemble at a Wichita village near the mouth of the Little Arkansas river. At a conference there with some of the leading chiefs of the five tribes, Leavenworth told them of his orders and asked them to name a place where they would meet with commissioners who were coming from Washington to make a treaty. After some delay the Indians designated the junction of Elm creek and the Medicine river. Here a great grove of elm trees provided a favorite camping place where they could drink and bathe in the healing waters of the Medicine and allow their ponies to graze on the sweet native grasses which carpeted the valleys.

In the meantime Thomas Murphy, superintendent of Indian affairs for that district, had arrived at Fort Larned where great quantities of supplies were being shipped for distribution at the



The Peace Treaty Monument in Medicine Lodge, Kan.

already pitched along the two streams and that he expected more than 5,000 Indians to be present by the time the commissioners arrived. They reached Medicine Lodge on October 14.

A Congress of Notables.

Famous as is the Medicine Lodge treaty in western history, it would be memorable for the number of notables who had a part in it, if for no other reason. Among those who helped in the preliminary work were Kit Carson, the renowned scout and guide; Jesse Chisholm, the half-breed Cherokee whose name is immortalized in the most famous of all cattle trails; Col. A. G. Boone, grandson of the immortal Daniel; William Matthewson, the original "Buffalo Bill"; Black Beaver, the celebrated Delaware Indian scout; and a number of other frontier characters of lesser fame.

The commission itself, headed by N. G. Taylor, United States commissioner of Indian affairs and chief exponent of the "peace policy," was composed of Senator John B. Henderson of Missouri, A. S. H. White, secretary, Gen. Alfred H. Terry, Gen. C. C. Augur, Gen. W. L. Harney, Gen. John B. Sanborn and Col. S. F. Tappan.

General Augur was added to the commission to take the place of Gen. W. T. Sherman, who was recalled to Washington before the party left Fort Larned. Sherman, it will be recalled, was credited with that frank, if brutal, declaration that "the only good Indian is a dead one."

Presumably General Harney subscribed to that sentiment, too. Twelve years earlier he had won a reputation as a successful Indian fighter by attacking the camp of Little Thunder, a friendly Brule Sioux chief, and by killing nearly a hundred men, women and children.

Both Harney and Sanborn had been members of another peace commission, which included William Bent and Kit Carson and which had made a treaty with these same tribes at the mouth of the Little Arkansas in October, 1865. Since neither the whites nor the Indians had kept this treaty, both of these generals can be forgiven if they were cynical as to the value of making another here at Medicine Lodge.

Other Witnesses.

Entitled to the same cynicism were Gov. Samuel J. Crawford of Kansas, ex-Lieut. Gov. J. P. Root and Senator E. G. Ross, who were also present at Medicine Lodge. Within a year some of these red warriors would be raiding through Kansas, killing settlers, burning their homes and carrying women and children away into captivity and Governor Crawford would resign his office to lead the Nineteenth Kansas cavalry in an expedition against the hostiles. And then, ironically enough, this expedition, led by Gen. George A. Custer, would attack a camp of the Cheyennes on the banks of the Washita river in Oklahoma (where they had a perfect right, under the terms of the Medicine Lodge treaty, to be) and kill their chief, Black Kettle, and with him 13 men, 16 women and 9 children.

Other witnesses to the treaty were Maj. E. W. Wynkoop, Superintendent Murphy, Colonel Leavenworth and Col. J. K. Rankin, representing the Indian department, and John Smith and George Bent, who acted as interpreters. In addition there was present also a considerable "press gallery" composed of representatives from the leading newspapers of the country. Outstanding among these was Henry M. Stanley, correspondent for the New York Tribune, who later became famous as an African explorer when James Gordon Bennett of the Herald sent him to the Dark Continent to "find Livingstone." A photographer named Willis also

accompanied the party and two of the leading national weeklies were represented by "special artists." John D. Howland, later prominent in Colorado history, was there for Harper's and James E. Taylor, well known for his spirited drawings of incidents in the Indian campaigns of the next few years, represented Frank Leslie's.

Among the Indian leaders were such famous chiefs as Little Raven, Spotted Wolf, Yellow Bear, Storm, Powder Face and Ice of the Arapahoes; Black Kettle, Bull Bear, Tall Bull and Grey Head of the Cheyennes; Satanta, Satank, Stumbling Bear and Kicking Bird of the Kiowas; Young Bear, Ten Bears and Painted Lips of the Comanches; and Wolf Sleeve, Poor Bear, Iron Shirt and Crow of the Apaches.

Although Black Kettle, Bull Bear and the other Cheyenne chiefs were present to talk with the representatives of the "Great White Father," their main camp was pitched several miles up the Medicine river. They weren't taking any chances on another Sand Creek! In fact, despite the commissioners' military escort of some 6,000 men—three troops of the Seventh cavalry, two companies of infantry and a battery of Gatling guns—the Indians were so numerous that they might well have exacted revenge for that massacre if they had been so minded.

A Thrilling Spectacle.

Two weeks later they staged a demonstration which probably caused the white men some uneasiness. One of the teamsters who had been freighting supplies from Fort Larned was Billy Dixon, later famous as a participant

stood at rest, waiting for the negotiations to begin."

The conference and distribution of gifts dragged along for two weeks. Finally, after the terms of the proposed treaty had been fully explained to the Indians, the Kiowa, Comanche and Apache chiefs signed it on October 21 and the Cheyennes and Arapahoes on October 28. The Indians agreed to accept reservations in what is now Oklahoma, although retaining the privilege of hunting buffalo in Kansas as far north as the Arkansas river, to refrain from further attacks on the whites and to withdraw all opposition to the construction of railroads and other roads and the building of forts in the western country.

In return the government solemnly promised to "set apart for the undisturbed use and occupation of the tribes" the reservations designated in the treaty, to provide certain annuities for these tribes for a period of 30 years and to establish agencies, schools, etc., for their use. However, congress was slow in ratifying the treaty and it was more than a year before some of its provisions were carried out. Angered by this delay, and seeing in it another evi-



CHIEF SATANTA

dence of the white man's bad faith, war parties from some of the tribes resumed their raids in Kansas and in Texas.

Even if the government had lived up to the letter of its agreement, it is doubtful if peace would have prevailed throughout the region. The authority of chiefs over their followers was slight, at best, and a leader who may have wished to live at peace with the whites could not always control his young braves who wished to win honor on the war trail. Then, too, as George Bird Grinnell has pointed out in his book, "The Fighting Cheyennes," "the giving of a few presents and the signing of treaties by a few chiefs would not appease the Indians, whose livelihood, the buffalo, was being destroyed and driven away." The clash of conflicting interests was inevitable, and when it came, nothing could restrain the Indians from raiding the settlements and the government could not turn a deaf ear to the settlers' demands that military force be used against the marauders.

Importance of the Treaty.

So the "peace" that was made at Medicine Lodge proved to be a hollow one and another ten years was to elapse before the Indians were finally conquered and forced to remain within the bounds of their reservations. However, the Medicine Lodge treaty was important because it gave the white man a basis for his claims to the right to settle western Kansas and certain parts of Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona, and it cleared the way for the completion of the Union Pacific railroad and building the Santa Fe.

When the "iron horse" entered this vast empire, the buffalo was doomed and that meant the end of the Indian, also. Tall Bull of the Cheyennes would lead a few more raids against the hated white men, then die at the Battle of Summit Springs in Colorado two years after he had signed the Medicine Lodge treaty. Satanta of the Kiowas, the "Orator of the Plains," would fight vainly against the fate that was overtaking his people and die in a Texas prison, a suicide. Little Raven, great chief of the Arapahoes, would bow to the inevitable and end his days peacefully on the reservation allotted to him by the "Great White Father." But before that came about, the land over which his tribesmen had roamed for centuries would be coming into the Union as the new state of Colorado and within a few years more Arizona, New Mexico and Oklahoma, once the hunting grounds of the tribes who signed at Medicine Lodge, would be joining Colorado in the sisterhood of states.

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Ask Me? Another?

A Quiz With Answers Offering Information on Various Subjects

1. How much wood will a giant Sequoia tree yield?
2. How many persons out of a million will live to be one hundred years old?
3. Who was the first American to receive the Nobel prize for peace?
4. How fast can currency be counted?
5. Where is the oldest painting of the Virgin and Child in existence?
6. Does it cost more to educate a child in a city school than in a rural school?
7. When gold is hammered into the thinnest gold leaf possible, what color is it?
8. What is the definition of a split infinitive?

Answers

1. A giant California Sequoia tree yielded 3,000 posts, 650,000 shingles and 100 cords of firewood. The upper one-third and the branches of the huge tree were not used.
2. It is estimated about thirty in a million will live to this advanced age.

3. Theodore Roosevelt, for his efforts in bringing about the treaty of peace between Japan and Russia in 1905. It was awarded him in 1906.
4. The expert counters of the Department of the Treasury have counted approximately as many as 40,000 new notes a day, and 25,000 old ones.
5. The oldest painting of the Virgin and Child in existence, done about 150 A. D., is on a wall in the famous Priscilla catacombs in Rome.
6. The average cost to educate a child in a rural school in the United States is \$53.31 a year, and the average in a city school is about \$96.18.
7. In this condition it appears green by transmitted light.
8. A split infinitive is one in which an adverb is introduced between the word "to," and the verb form, such as "to largely decrease." The word "to" as used with the infinitive is not to be classed as a preposition; it is an integral part of the infinitive and hence should not be separated from the verb form.

Achievement of Peace

YOU may either win your peace or buy it; win it, by resistance to evil; buy it, by compromise with evil. You may buy your peace with silenced consciences; you may buy it with broken vows—buy it with lying words—buy it with base connivances—buy it with the blood of the slain, and the cry of the captives over hemispheres of the earth, while you sit smiling at your serene hearths, muttering continually to yourselves, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace; but only captivity and death for you.

We Humans

In going through life we often bewail our misfortunes, but seldom dwell upon our blessings; the illness is reckoned to a day, the bad debt to be computed to a cent, the sleepless night is spoken of with deep self-commiseration; but we forget to reckon the many months of our health; we take as a thing of course, and not worth mentioning, that we enjoyed hours of calm and refreshing sleep undisturbed even by a dream. — Warrego Times.

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council. These included a herd of beef cattle, much coffee, sugar, flour and dried fruits and a vast amount of blankets and clothing which had been left over from the Civil war and which the War department agreed to turn over to the Indian department for distribution to its charges. So for more than a month six-mule teams were engaged in hauling this material from Fort Larned to the treaty grounds.

As the Indians gathered there they found Murphy on hand to welcome them. Early in October he reported that 431 lodges were