

Reservation *Akicitas*: The Pine Ridge Indian Police, 1879-1885

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On 8 September 1879, a small party of Northern Cheyennes stole twenty-two horses from the village of Young Man Afraid of His Horses and fled the Pine Ridge Agency. Led by Spotted Wolf, a traditional chief and purported troublemaker for Agent Valentine McGillicuddy, the Cheyennes traveled northwest through the Black Hills and into Wyoming. The agent recognized a perfect opportunity to test the loyalty and mettle of the recently organized tribal police force and sent for his police captain. When Man Who Carries the Sword (George Sword) reported to agency headquarters, McGillicuddy commanded him to organize a police detachment, track down Spotted Wolf's party, and bring the fugitives back to Pine Ridge.

Captain Sword immediately set out on the Cheyennes' trail, along with Sergeant Pumpkin Seed and eight Oglala Lakota, or western Sioux, police officers. Although Spotted Wolf's group had a twelve-hour lead, the mounted policemen overtook and surrounded them one hundred twenty-five miles from the agency. Sword ordered the Cheyenne leader and his followers to surrender, but Spotted Wolf threw open his blanket and reached for his gun. Sword and his policemen quickly took aim and fired a volley at the defiant Cheyenne. Clutching his wounds, Spotted Wolf stumbled back and fell to the ground dead. Seeing

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the futility in further resistance, the remaining Cheyennes returned with Sword and his men to Pine Ridge. Agent McGillicuddy could breathe easier knowing that the police force had carried out his commands.¹

This unfortunate episode demonstrated that native policemen, working for the United States government, could and would carry out orders, even if that entailed arresting or killing other Indians. Although tribal policemen were obliged to implement an agent's orders, sometimes to the detriment of traditional culture, they were not necessarily enemies of their people. The few major studies that have examined tribal police forces on nineteenth-century Indian reservations have used examples such as the shooting of Spotted Wolf and the 1890 murder of Sitting Bull by members of the Standing Rock reservation police force to focus on the role Indian policemen played in the assimilation of their tribesmen.² While this role cannot be denied, to portray all Indian policemen solely as agents of dispossession is not accurate.

Scholars have traditionally used a generic image of the young, progressive, and politically ambitious Indian to depict tribal policemen. Evidence from the original Pine Ridge police force,

1. The killing of Spotted Wolf has been well documented in official reports and secondary sources. See, for example, U.S., Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1879* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1879), pp. xii-xiii; U.S., Congress, House, *Congressional Record*, 46th Cong., 2d sess., 1880, 10, pt. 3:2487-89; William T. Hagan, *Indian Police and Judges: Experiments in Acculturation and Control* (1966; reprint ed., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), pp. 93-94; Julia B. McGillicuddy, *Blood on the Moon: Valentine McGillicuddy and the Sioux* (1941; new ed., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), pp. 123-26.

2. Only one book and several essays have been published exclusively on the Indian police. See Hagan, *Indian Police and Judges*; Richmond L. Clow, "Justice in Transition: The Murder Trial of Straight Head and Scares the Hawk," *South Dakota History* 27 (Fall 1997): 133-55; John P. Clum, "The San Carlos Indian Police," *New Mexico Historical Review* 4 (July 1929): 203-19; Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "The Light-Horse in the Indian Territory," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 34 (Spring 1956): 17-43; Paul Knepper and Michael B. Puckett, "The Historicity of Tony Hilleman's Indian Police," *Journal of the West* 34 (Jan. 1995): 13-18; Oakah L. Jones, Jr., "The Origins of the Navajo Indian Police, 1872-1873," *Arizona and the West* 8 (Autumn 1966): 225-38; and Michael L. Tate, "John P. Clum and the Origins of an Apache Constabulary, 1874-1877," *American Indian Quarterly* 3 (Summer 1977): 99-120. For mention of Indian police in larger studies, see also Sidney L. Harring, *Crow Dog's Case: American Indian Sovereignty, Tribal Law, and United States Law in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 175-85, and John R. Wunder, "Retained by the People": *A History of American Indians and the Bill of Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 35-36.

however, does not support such a stereotype. These officers were generally older than previously assumed and from distinctly traditional segments of society. In fact, traditional Lakota law enforcers (*akicitas*) filled the ranks of the early Pine Ridge police force. The service of large numbers of *akicitas* suggests that the force was an extension of traditional Lakota law enforcement rather than strictly a tool of the federal government.

Congress provided funds for establishing Indian police forces on western reservations on 27 May 1878. The statute allotted thirty thousand dollars to employ fifty officers and four hundred thirty privates at salaries of eight and five dollars per month, respectively. The number of policemen allowed on each reservation depended on population. Pine Ridge, with more than seven thousand people, received the maximum enlistment allowance of fifty native lawmen. The considerably smaller Cheyenne River reservation, on the other hand, had only nine policemen on its original police force.³

As outlined in the statute, Indian policemen were charged with keeping order and preventing "illegal traffic in liquor on the several Indian reservations."⁴ They arrested or evicted from their reservations any non-Indian intruders, liquor peddlers, illegal traders, horse thieves, cattle rustlers, timber thieves, and fugitives from justice. Policemen also arrested fellow tribal members for drunkenness, assault, and violations of agency rules. They served as reservation handymen, working as common laborers, messengers, and escorts. In still another capacity, they aided the agent in "civilizing" their people by preventing traditional practices such as dancing, plural marriages, and the practices of medicine men. The Indian policeman, who wore a white man's uniform, lived in a white man's house, and earned a monthly salary, served as an example of the "civilized" Indian to his fellow tribal members.⁵

Without a reservation police force, an agent had no way to enforce government regulations. Indian agents, therefore, strong-

3. U.S., *Statutes at Large*, vol. 20, Act of 27 May 1878, p. 86; *Congressional Record*, 45th Cong., 2d sess., 1878, 7, pt. 4:3271; Clow, "Justice in Transition," p. 134.

4. *Statutes at Large*, vol. 20, Act of 27 May 1878, p. 86.

5. For a comprehensive exploration of Indian police duties, see Hagan, *Indian Police and Judges*, pp. 51-81.



Indian police forces like that at Pine Ridge, pictured here, were essential for maintaining law and order on the reservation.

ly supported the implementation of native police units, and by 1880 Indian police forces operated at forty western agencies, including those of the Lakotas, who constituted the largest and most powerful tribe on the Northern Great Plains. They consisted of seven subdivisions: the Oglala, Sicangu, Hunkpapa, Oohenunpa, Itazipco, Sihasapa, and Minneconjou.⁶ As nomadic buffalo hunters, the Lakotas had traveled long distances and before the encroachment of white civilization controlled an area covering roughly western South Dakota and North Dakota, northern Nebraska, and eastern Wyoming. They proved to be a formidable foe against the United States during the

6. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (1880), p. ix; James R. Walker, *Lakota Society*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), pp. 18-19; William K. Powers, *Oglala Religion* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), pp. 26-27.

Powder River Indian expedition of 1865 and the Bighorn-Yellowstone campaign of 1876. By 1881, however, the government had forced all of the Lakotas onto the Great Sioux Reservation of western South Dakota, with agencies for the various bands at Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne River, Lower Brule, and Standing Rock.⁷ In August 1878, the Lower Brule Agency became the first Lakota agency to employ Indian policemen, followed within the next two years by the others.⁸

The concept of a tribal police force was not new to the Lakotas. Traditional law enforcers, known as *akicitas*, had always policed Lakota society. The *akicitas* came from within the ranks of several men's societies and were appointed to serve for one year by a band's *wakiconze*, or camp administrator. Their duties consisted of policing camp moves, regulating buffalo hunts, and enforcing tribal laws and customs. When dealing with lawbreakers, *akicitas* served as judges, juries, and, if necessary, executioners. Their decisions applied to the entire band, including its leaders. Because the Lakotas had always utilized law enforcers, the idea of Indian policemen on the reservations was one they recognized from their traditional culture.⁹

Prior to establishment of the native police force, men from the Oglala subdivision of the Lakotas had also worked as guards, watchmen, and escorts during their time at Red Cloud Agency (1873-1877) in northwestern Nebraska. The Oglalas comprised seven bands: the Kiyaksa, Payabya, Itesica, Waguhe, Tapisleca, Wazaza, and Oyuhpe. In 1873 and 1874, Red Cloud Agent J. J. Saville had ignited conflict among the Oglalas when he attempted to take a census and again when he attempted to erect a flagpole at agency headquarters. Both inci-

7. For background information on the Lakotas, see Catherine Price, *The Oglala People, 1841-1879: A Political History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996); Robert M. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1963); James C. Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965); Ernest L. Schusky, *The Forgotten Sioux: An Ethnohistory of the Lower Brule Reservation* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1975).

8. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (1879), p. 36.

9. Walker, *Lakota Society*, pp. 28-34, 60. For general discussions of men's societies and of police duties within them, see Clark Wissler, "Societies and Ceremonial Associations in the Oglala Division of the Teton-Dakota," *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* 11, pt. 1 (1912): 7-74, and Norman D. Humphrey, "Police and Tribal Welfare in Plains Indian Cultures," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* (July-Aug. 1942): 147-61.

dents occurred as "hostile" northern bands who had refused to sign the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 were moving to camp near the agency for the winter. When the visiting Indians threatened Saville's life, the *akicitas* of several resident bands sprang forward to protect him. White Crane Walking, an *akicita itancan* (head *akicita*), provided a personal bodyguard for Saville. Pumpkin Seed, an *akicita itancan* of the Wazaza band, offered the services of his *akicitas* if the agent would supply them with weapons. Saville subsequently sought permission from the Office of Indian Affairs to create a native guard at Red Cloud Agency. He eventually armed dozens of Oglalas who served as agency guards and escorts for fifty cents per day, redeemable in goods at the trading post. At least twelve future Pine Ridge policemen worked in this capacity, including Pumpkin Seed, Cloud Shield, Yellow Hair, and Three Bears.¹⁰ Similarly, the experiences of Indian men who joined the military as scouts may have influenced their later decisions to join the Pine Ridge Indian police force. In 1876 and 1877, more than five hundred Lakotas had served as army scouts in the Nez Perce campaign and in the pursuit of their tribesmen after the Battle of the Little Bighorn.¹¹

The Pine Ridge Agency, located in southwestern South Dakota, served as the principal reservation for the Oglala Lakotas after 1878. When Valentine McGillicuddy took charge of Pine Ridge in March of 1879, he found it equipped with a small and largely ineffective Indian police force. Although the agency merited a force of up to fifty native police officers, only four Oglalas had enlisted. James Irwin, the former agent, had failed to keep any records of the men's enlistments and duties or any

10. Walker, *Lakota Society*, pp. 19-21; Powers, *Oglala Religion*, pp. 27-32; Charles W. Allen, "Red Cloud and the U.S. Flag," *Nebraska History* 21 (Oct.-Dec. 1940): 293-304; George E. Hyde, *Red Cloud's Folk: A History of the Oglala Sioux Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1937), pp. 208-10; Smith to Saville, 8 Oct. 1874, Correspondence Received from the Office of Indian Affairs, Pine Ridge Agency (hereafter cited CR-PRA), Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group (RG) 75, National Archives-Central Plains Region (NA-CPR), Kansas City, Mo.; Saville to Todd Randall, 1 Mar. 1874, Saville to Smith, 2, 16 Feb., 24 Oct. 1874, all three in Letters Received from Red Cloud Agency (hereafter cited LR-RCA), RG 75, National Archives Microfilm Publication M234, Roll 718.

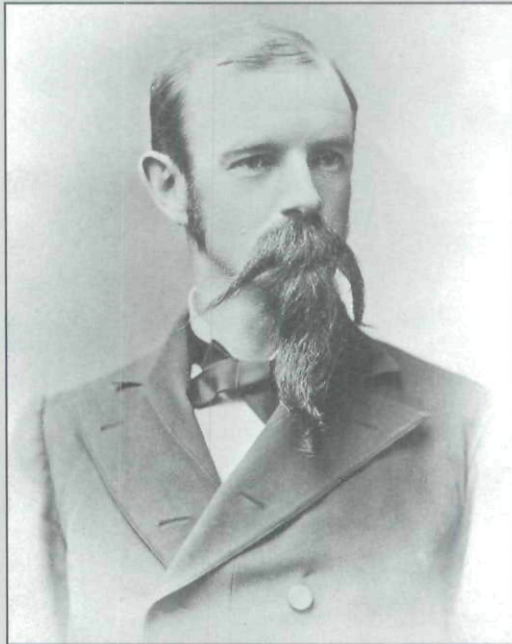
11. Registers of Enlistments in the United States Army, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 94, National Archives Microfilm Publication M233, Rolls 70, 71; Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers: Indian Scouts and Auxiliaries with the United States Army, 1860-90* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), pp. 138-45.

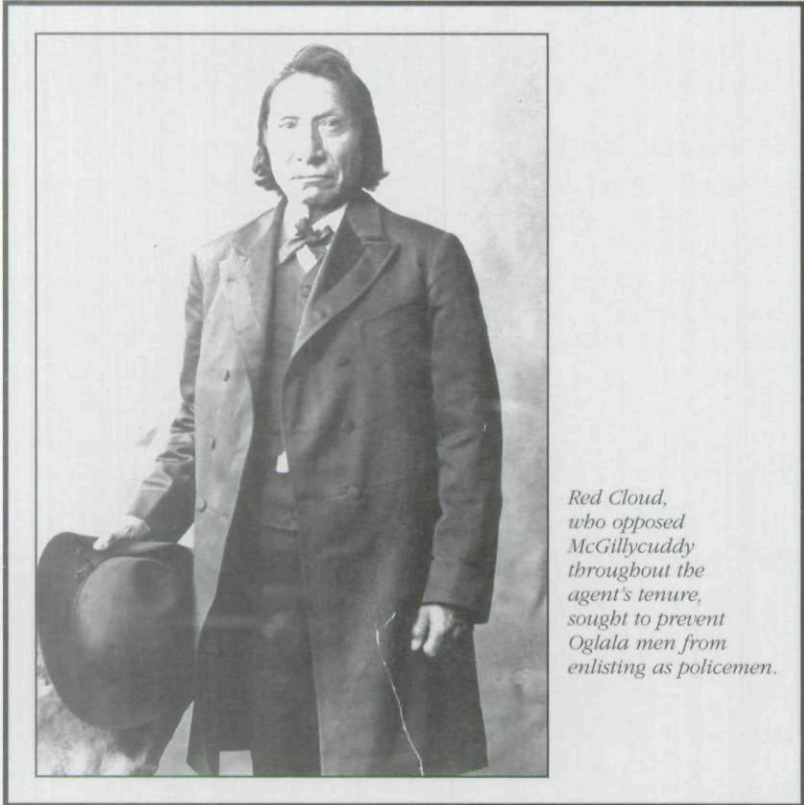
notes about their acceptance or rejection among fellow tribal members. In fact, Irwin had neglected to obtain the required commissions from the Office of Indian Affairs, an omission that prevented the policemen from being compensated for their employment. McGillicuddy quickly obtained the commissions, along with a monthly salary for the policemen, and set out to fill the forty-six vacant positions.¹²

The agent also called a general council of the Oglala chiefs to review agency policies and discuss the expansion of the police force. Even though McGillicuddy explained that more policemen would assist him in mediating tribal problems and help protect Pine Ridge from encroachment by unscrupulous

12. Ezra Hayt to Valentine McGillicuddy, 16 Apr. and 4 Sept. 1879 and Brooks to McGillicuddy, 9 June 1879, all in CR-PRA.

Upon becoming the agent at Pine Ridge in 1879, Valentine T. McGillicuddy worked to expand the reservation's Indian police force.





Red Cloud, who opposed McGillicuddy throughout the agent's tenure, sought to prevent Oglala men from enlisting as policemen.

whites, the assembled leaders immediately protested the plan. A native police force placed in the hands of a government agent would diminish both their own influence and that of the traditional *akicitas*. Red Cloud, the head chief with whom McGillicuddy would feud throughout his time at Pine Ridge, assured the agent that the Oglala *akicitas* would police Pine Ridge and could easily handle any problems that arose.¹³ During the months following the council, the agent enlisted only one Oglala, a member of Red Cloud's band named Cloud Shield who may have joined to keep an eye on McGillicuddy and his

13. McGillicuddy, *Blood on the Moon*, pp. 103-4.

officers. Any attempt to recruit more men met with stiff resistance from the chiefs and *akicitas*. According to McGillicuddy, the threat of being disciplined by the *akicitas* and having property destroyed served as an effective deterrent to enlistment.¹⁴

Just when it looked as if the agency would never have a police force, thirty-two men suddenly enlisted in August 1879. A month later, thirteen additional Oglalas joined, filling out the fifty-man allotment. Several factors aside from McGillicuddy's relentless pressure helped to explain the sudden change. Throughout the spring and summer of 1879, stock thieves from northern Nebraska and the Black Hills preyed upon Oglala herds. In May, rustlers hit the camps of Young Man Afraid of His Horses, American Horse, and Little Wound, making off with more than one hundred horses. According to McGillicuddy, this theft cost Little Wound alone more than six hundred horses. Losses for Pine Ridge as a whole during 1879 amounted to more than three thousand head. The agency's small police detachment was useless against the marauding gangs that roamed the reservation's large geographic area. The *akicitas* had the power to police the Oglalas but lacked authority to arrest non-Indian horse thieves, either on or off the reservation. Traditional policemen could not even leave the reservation to recover stolen property without risking conflict with the army or with white settlers. Nor would the military assist in apprehending thieves or returning stolen property. Having no other recourse, Oglala men joined McGillicuddy's official force.¹⁵ Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz's visit to Pine Ridge in August 1879 may provide another explanation for the rapid enlistment. At the Rosebud Agency, Schurz pressed the Sicangus to form an agency police force in order to avoid the introduction of mili-

14. Hayt to McGillicuddy, 4 Sept. 1879; McGillicuddy to Hayt, 1 Sept. 1879, LR-RCA, M234, Roll 725; McGillicuddy to Price, 6 Sept. 1881, Letters Sent to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Pine Ridge Agency (hereafter cited LS-PRA), RG 75, National Archives Microfilm Publication, M1282, Roll 3.

15. "Records of Changes in the Indian Police Service," 1879-1890, Pine Ridge Agency, RG 75, NA-CPR; Hayt to McGillicuddy, 4 Sept., 17 Oct. 1879, CR-PRA; McGillicuddy to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (CIA), 29 May 1879, M234, LR-RCA, Roll 724. For an account of the life and career of one Nebraska horse thief, see Harold Hutton, *The Luckiest Outlaw: The Life and Legends of Doc Middleton* (1974; reprint ed., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992).



Pictured here during his days as a traditional leader, Man Who Carries the Sword later took the name George Sword and commanded the Pine Ridge Indian police.

tary occupation troops. Schurz no doubt offered the same inducement to Oglala leaders at Pine Ridge.¹⁶

While threats from outside sources helped to raise the men needed for a viable force, the leadership of Man Who Carries the Sword, or George Sword, was the catalyst for its success. Appointed captain by McGillicuddy at the suggestion of Young Man Afraid of His Horses, Sword loyally performed his duties for thirteen years before resigning to become a judge on the court of Indian offenses. Sword belonged to the Itesica band led by Red Cloud and came from a family of hereditary chiefs—both his father and older brother had served as chiefs. At one time or another, Sword had been a *wicasa wakan* (holy man/shaman), *pejuta wicasa* (medicine man), *wakiconze* (camp administrator), and a *blota bunka* (war leader). He had taken part in the sacred Sun Dance on several occasions and fought in numerous battles against the Crows, Pawnees, and American soldiers, receiving wounds at least four times. At some point in the early 1870s, Sword began to change his tactics. Although he was a nephew of Red Cloud, he assisted Agent Saville in completing his 1873 census, an action that Red Cloud vehemently opposed. For his role in helping to quell disturbances at Red Cloud Agency, Saville nominated him for a recommendation from the Office of Indian Affairs. In the aftermath of the Little Bighorn, Sword enlisted as an army scout and later went as an emissary to persuade Crazy Horse to surrender. Thus, when Sword took command of the Pine Ridge police force, he was well known within Oglala society and had a history of government service. In short, he was the perfect candidate to captain the tribal police at Pine Ridge.¹⁷

What had led Sword from traditional Oglala leadership to the Indian police force? In an 1896 interview with agency physician James R. Walker, Sword himself explained his reasons.

16. Carl Schurz to Hayt, 4 Sept. 1879, LS-PRA, M1282, Roll 1.

17. Interview of George Sword, MSS, Reel 2, Tablet 16, Eli S. Ricker Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebr., and James R. Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), pp. 74-75. George Sword is sometimes confused with his distinguished older brother, also named Sword. The older Sword was a shirt-wearer (one of several men chosen by the tribal council to help govern the tribe) along with Crazy Horse, Young Man Afraid of His Horses, and American Horse. He later took over his father's position as chief and participated in councils and treaties with the American government. He apparently died at Red Cloud Agency during the early 1870s.

As a *wicasa wakan*, he had always performed protective ceremonies before doing battle with United States soldiers. When Lakota warriors suffered repeated defeats, Sword began to question his own spiritual power and that of his people. A trip to Washington, D.C., where he saw the extent and magnitude of white settlement, solidified his view that the white man "could not be driven away," he recalled.¹⁸ Fighting whites had proven costly; wars resulted in death, starvation, and loss of land. Like other Oglala leaders such as Young Man Afraid of His Horses, Sword decided to help his people survive the inevitable transition to reservation life by persuading them to accept white customs.

As captain of the Pine Ridge Indian police, Sword commanded forty-nine men, including two lieutenants, nine sergeants and corporals, and the balance privates. In 1885, Congress reduced the force to thirty-five men in order to raise the pay of the remaining members. Most of the policemen were full-blooded Oglalas, although several mixed-blooded Oglalas, a number of Sicangus, and a few Cheyennes also served. In addition, the Office of Indian Affairs required the agent to hire a white police chief. While agency reports rarely mention his activities, he appears to have handled administrative duties and served as a liaison between the agent and the policemen.¹⁹

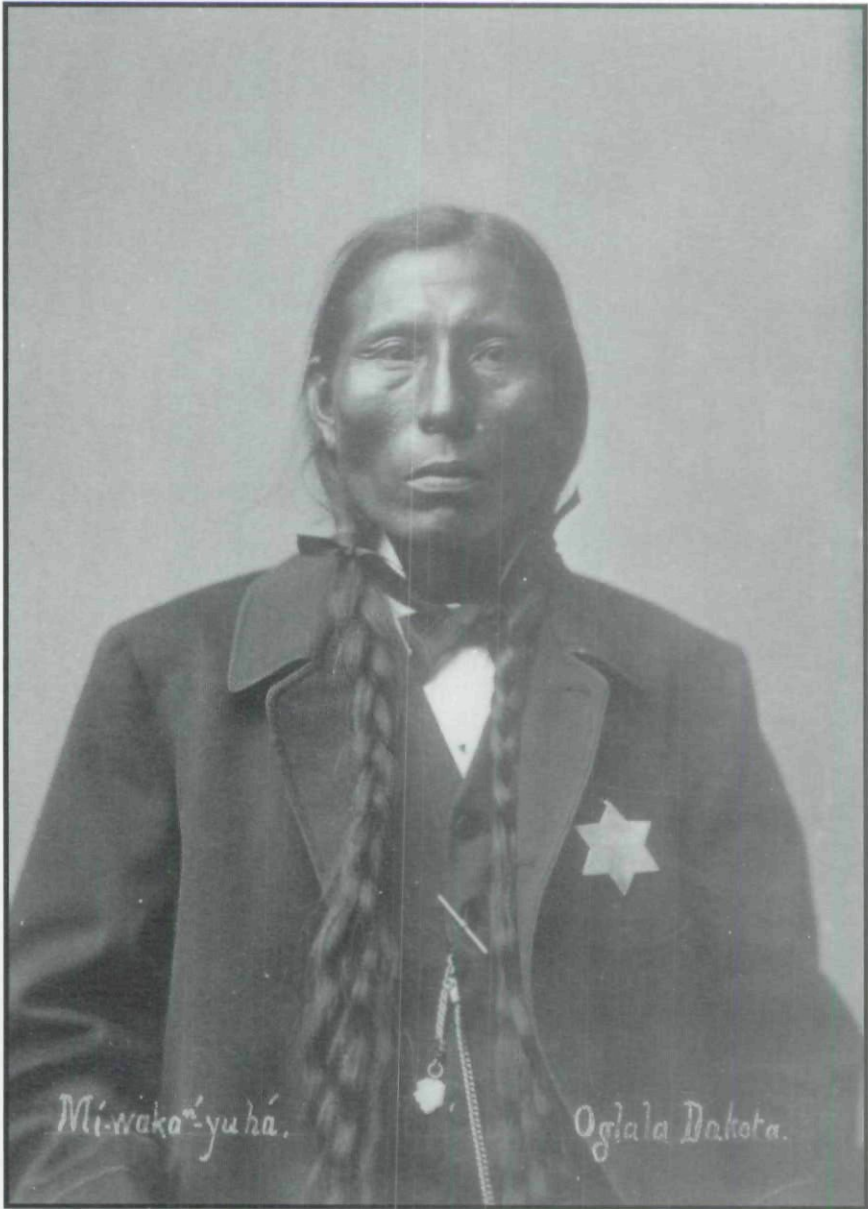
The image of armed and uniformed Indian police officers with cropped hair is often used to underscore that they were, in fact, agents of the federal government. In reality, the first Pine Ridge police officers carried out their duties in "plain clothes," wore their hair long, and went about unarmed. An early picture of George Sword shows that he wore his long hair braided, even after taking command of the Pine Ridge police force. Only a badge identified him as an Indian policeman. The Office of Indian Affairs had originally attempted to dress agency policemen in the left-over uniforms worn by guards at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition. Lakotas at Pine Ridge and Rosebud, however, refused to wear the gray clothing, which resem-

18. Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, p. 74.

19. "Records of Changes in the Indian Police Service," 19 Aug., 10 Sept. 1879, 1 Jan., 30 June 1880, 2 Aug. 1881, 28 Aug. 1882, 16 Oct. 1883, 25 Sept. 1885.

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The appearance of George Sword, whose badge provided the only clue to his identity as a police officer, typified that of the early Pine Ridge policemen.

bled that of Confederate troops during the Civil War. Within a few years, the Indian Office issued blue army uniforms adorned with gold buttons and chevrons for officers. The Lakota policemen, like white lawmen throughout the American West, also wore silver badges, earning them the name "metal breasts" from their fellow tribesmen.

Providing Indian policemen with effective weaponry was a greater concern. McGillicuddy knew that without effective weapons, his men would have trouble upholding law and order at Pine Ridge. Despite this fact, the Office of Indian Affairs hesitated to issue guns to Indian policemen. After an intensive letter-writing campaign to the Office of Indian Affairs, the secretary of the interior, and military officials, the agent finally acquired carbines on loan from Fort Robinson. By 1882, officials prohibited the Indians' use of rifles and issued revolvers in their place. Throughout his tenure as agent, McGillicuddy worked to obtain such other accouterments as ammunition, horses, clothing, hats, wagons, and even an artillery field piece.²⁰

In addition to procuring the equipment his men needed to enforce law and order on the reservation, the agent provided two buildings for police use. One housed the jail, sleeping quarters, and captain's office. The second contained the kitchen and mess hall, where on-duty officers prepared and ate three meals a day or relaxed by playing dominoes and cards. The regular agency detail consisted of six policemen who served a ten-day assignment at agency headquarters. These men guarded the jail, patrolled the compound, and served as messengers. One officer stood watch throughout the night, checking on agency buildings every fifteen minutes to prevent thefts and guard against mischief. The remaining policemen were dispersed throughout the outlying camps or at police substations from which they patrolled the countryside and kept law and order in the villages. After ten days, the agency detail rotated so that each man eventually served a term at headquarters.²¹

20. Schurz to Hayt, 4 Sept. 1879; McGillicuddy, *Blood on the Moon*, pp. 121-24.

21. Price to McGillicuddy, 25 Aug. 1882, and Hayt to McGillicuddy, 2 Feb. 1880, both in CR-PRA; McGillicuddy to CIA, 23 Aug., 1 Sept. 1880, LS-PRA, M1282, Roll 2; McGillicuddy to CIA, 16 Mar. 1882, LS-PRA, M1282, Roll 4; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (1880), p. xi, and (1882), p. 38.

Aside from its law enforcement intent, the police force under McGillicuddy undoubtedly served a political purpose as well—that of deposing traditional leaders. McGillicuddy viewed Red Cloud, in particular, as an obstacle to the Oglalas' progress toward civilization. In what may have been an effort to break the chief's power, he had enlisted two men from Red Cloud's band—George Sword and Cloud Shield—placing them in the force's highest-ranking positions of captain and first lieutenant. Both men had already proven themselves as agency guards and scouts, and McGillicuddy may have sought to build their stature in the eyes of other "progressive" Indians in the hope that one of them would supplant Red Cloud. By 1881, both Sword and Cloud Shield and a few of their followers had removed themselves from Red Cloud's band, but neither man had replaced the Oglala chief.²²

In recruiting police officers, McGillicuddy also apparently played upon intertribal rivalries. The conspicuous absence of other police recruits from Red Cloud's band, combined with the enlistment of eighteen men from the band of Little Wound, must have sent Red Cloud a warning (see table 1). Red Cloud's Itesicas had a history of conflict with Little Wound's Kiyaksas dating back to at least 1841, when members of Red Cloud's band murdered Bull Bear, Little Wound's father and the Kiyaksa head chief. Red Cloud himself reportedly fired the fatal shot. Fueling tensions in the early 1880s was the fact that the Kiyaksas had dominated the Oglala bands until the American government recognized Red Cloud as "head chief," or spokesman, of the entire Oglala tribe during negotiations over the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. The enlistment of a substantial number of Kiyaksa men, who made up 36 percent of the entire reservation police force, may have been their attempt to regain lost political power for their band.²³

Although it is impossible to determine the backgrounds and social standing of all fifty members of the original Pine Ridge police force, many came from distinctly traditional elements of

22. "Records of Changes in the Indian Police Service," 10 Sept. 1879; Hayt to McGillicuddy, 17 Oct. 1879, LR-RCA, M234, Roll 725.

23. Hyde, *Red Cloud's Folk*, pp. 53-55; Olson, *Red Cloud*, pp. 19-21; Walker, *Lakota Society*, pp. 18-21; "Records of Changes in the Indian Police Service," 19 Aug., 10 Sept. 1879.

Table 1
Band Composition of Original Pine Ridge Police Force

Band	Chief	Number of Policemen	Percent of Force
Itesica	Red Cloud	2	4
Kiyaksa	Little Wound	18	36
Oyuhpe			12
	Red Dog	2	
	Red Shirt	4	
Payabya			10
	American Horse	4	
	Young Man Afraid	1	
Tapisleca	White Bird	5	10
Wagluhe	(unknown)	1	2
Wazaza	(unknown)	5	10
(unknown)			16
	Black Bear	2	
	High Wolf	1	
	No Water	1	
	Three Bears	4	

Source: "Records of Changes in the Indian Police Service," 10 Sept. 1879, Pine Ridge Agency, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives-Central Plains Region, Kansas City, Mo.

Oglala society. Some had served among the ranks of the *akicitas*, where they had already gained experience and acceptance as law enforcers. Two head *akicitas*, Pumpkin Seed of the Wazaza band and Standing Soldier of the Wagluhe band joined the original police force. Standing Soldier worked his way through the ranks to replace Cloud Shield as first lieutenant in 1882. He also served as a judge for the first court of Indian offenses at Pine Ridge and represented the Pine Ridge police force at an 1886 meeting in Washington, D.C.²⁴ At least twelve

24. McGillicuddy to Price, 6 Sept. 1880, LS-PRA, M1282, Roll 2. McGillicuddy appointed Standing Soldier along with George Sword and High Wolf as the first judges on the court of Indian offenses at Pine Ridge. The trio of judges, however, quickly resigned, claiming inadequate remuneration in the face of tribal enmity. Price to McGillicuddy, 26 July 1883, CR-PRA; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (1884), pp. 40-41.

Table 2
Ages of Original Pine Ridge Policemen

Age	Number	Percent of Force
24 and under	4	8
25 to 29	14	28
30 to 34	14	28
35 to 39	7	14
40 and over	11	22

Source: "Records of Changes in the Indian Police Service," 10 Sept. 1879.

other members of the original Pine Ridge police force were *akicitas* who had served as guards and escorts at Red Cloud Agency in 1874.²⁵

Several chiefs and headmen also served as Pine Ridge lawmen. White Bird, leader of the Tapisleca band, joined the original police force along with four men from his band.²⁶ In 1880, Little Big Man, the noted warrior who fought alongside Crazy Horse, enlisted as a police officer. By May of 1881, at least seven other men listed on agency rolls as band leaders—Black Bear, Cloud Shield, George Sword, No Flesh, Pumpkin Seed, Tobacco, and Weasel Bear—were serving on the force.²⁷

The ages of Oglala police officers provide further information about their backgrounds (see table 2). In reports to the commissioner of Indian affairs, McGillicuddy repeatedly referred to the policemen as "young bucks." Those who served, however, were older than the agent implied. The men's aver-

25. These policemen included George Sword, Cloud Shield, Standing Soldier, Pumpkin Seed, Afraid of Eagle, Black Bear, Crazy Bull, Sioux Bob, Standing Bear, Thunder Bull, White Wash Face, and Yellow Hair. Saville to Todd Randall, 1 Mar. 1874, and Saville to Smith, 2, 16 Feb., 24 Oct. 1874, all in LR-RCA, M234, Roll 718.

26. Why Sword and McGillicuddy would permit the enlistment of a traditional chief such as White Bird is unclear. The chief may truly have supported the police force, or his enlistment may have been investigative in nature. However, because Sword personally recruited his policemen and the agent approved each enlistment, White Bird's intentions must have been known. McGillicuddy to Price, 6 Sept. 1880; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (1880), p. xi.

27. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (1880), p. xi; McGillicuddy to Commander of the Department of the Platte, 27 Dec. 1881, LS-PRA, M1282, Roll 3.

age age stood at thirty-three in 1879. McGillicuddy himself was just twenty-eight, younger than all but eight of the officers. The policemen ranged in age from the forty-seven-year-old Lone Wolf to the twenty-one-year-old Long Bull. Thirty-two of the fifty-man force were over thirty years of age, with eleven of them over forty. Only eighteen men, or 36 percent of the force, could claim to be under thirty years of age. Considering traditional roles in Lakota society, the Oglalas would have been more inclined to respect older men than the young and unproven.²⁸

The majority of Oglala policemen were also married and had large families. Forty-four, or 88 percent of the total, were married when they joined the force (see table 3). Policemen with families had an average of six dependents, and a few had many more. Kiyaksa policemen Yellow Hair, No Flesh, and Lone Wolf claimed eighteen, seventeen, and fifteen dependents, respectively. These men may have found some economic security in having a steady job with added benefits, but the pay—eight dollars a month for officers and five dollars for privates—was dismal, even for the time. Indian scouts earned upwards of twenty-five dollars per month, and common laborers on the reservation brought in fifteen dollars per month.²⁹

Despite Congress's ongoing refusal to increase remuneration for the Indian police, McGillicuddy found creative ways to reimburse his men for their services. In 1882, the agent provided wood-framed houses for George Sword and other officers. Sword's service also earned him a light spring-wagon and team of horses. In correspondence with the Office of Indian Affairs, McGillicuddy hinted that he had issued cooking stoves to police officers. Occasionally, the Indian Office granted him permission to give away excess and outdated equipment. The policemen undoubtedly profited from these giveaways and other benefits such as free forage for horses and government-issued weapons.³⁰

28. "Records of Changes in the Indian Police Service," 10 Sept. 1879.

29. *Ibid.*; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (1879), p. xii; *Congressional Record*, 46th Cong., 2d sess., 1880, 10:2487; Office of Indian Affairs to McGillicuddy, 16 Aug. 1881, CR-PRA.

30. George Sword Interview, Ricker Papers; Hayt to McGillicuddy, 5 Dec. 1879, Price to McGillicuddy, 8 Dec. 1881, 29 Mar., 6 June, 25 July 1884, CR-PRA.

Table 3
List of Original Pine Ridge Policemen

Name	Band	Chief Status	Marital Size	Family	Age
Afraid of Eagle	Payabya	American Horse	married	5	40
Bad Mocassin	(unknown)	Red Shirt	married	5	44
Bear Runs in Woods	(unknown)	Three Bears	single	0	32
Big Bellied Sorrel Horse	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	9	40
Black Bear	(unknown)	Black Bear	single	0	25
Bull Bonnet	(unknown)	Three Bears	married	6	33
Charging Bear	Wazaza	(unknown)	married	2	37
Cloud Shield	Itesica	Red Cloud	married	5	36
Crazy Bull	Wazaza	(unknown)	married	4	37
Eagle Horn	Oyuhpe	Red Shirt	married	4	28
Fast Horse	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	6	34
Feather Man	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	5	29
Hole in the Head	Payabya	Young Man Afraid	single	0	24
Hollow Wood	(unknown)	No Water	married	4	28
Hump	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	4	32
Iron Crow	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	4	28
Kills a Hundred	Oyuhpe	Red Dog	married	4	28
Kills First	Oyuhpe	Red Shirt	married	2	32
Last Horse	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	6	33
Little Bear	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	6	39
Lone Bear	Wazaza	(unknown)	married	6	31
Lone Wolf	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	15	47
Long Bear	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	10	39
Long Bear	Tapisleca	White Bird	married	3	31
Long Bull	Wazaza	(unknown)	married	5	21
Long Cut	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	4	29
Long Neck Yankton	Payabya	American Horse	married	4	28
Man Above	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	12	34
Man Who Carries the Sword	Itesica	Red Cloud	single	0	32
No Flesh	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	17	40

Continued on next page

Table 3, *Continued*

Name	Band	Chief Status	Marital Size	Family	Age
No Heart Bull	(unknown)	Three Bears	married	9	40
Pumpkin Seed	Wazaza	(unknown)	married	7	45
Red Kettle	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	9	42
Shuts the Door	Tapisleca	White Bird	single	0	22
Sioux Bob	(unknown)	Three Bears	married	2	28
Standing Bear	Oyuhpe	Red Shirt	married	3	26
Standing Soldier	Wagluhe	(unknown)	married	5	28
Strikes After	Payabya	American Horse	married	3	23
Thunder Bull	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	8	31
Tobacco	(unknown)	Black Bear	married	8	45
Weasel Bear	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	5	39
Whirling Horse	Tapisleca	White Bird	single	0	27
White Bird	Tapisleca	White Bird	married	5	40
White Cow Chief	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	3	27
White Feather	(unknown)	High Wolf	married	10	38
White Horse	Oyuhpe	Red Dog	married	4	30
White Wash Face	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	4	28
White Wolf	Payabya	American Horse	married	5	32
Yankton Charlie	Tapisleca	White Bird	married	5	30
Yellow Hair	Kiyaksa	(unknown)	married	18	40

Source: "Records of Changes in the Indian Police Service," 14 Sept. 1879, Pine Ridge Agency.

McGillycuddy also devised various schemes to put extra money into his policemen's pockets. Between 1879 and 1881, the agent apparently listed most of his force on agency payrolls as policemen and again as laborers or freighters, a violation of Indian Office rules against dual employment. In response to the department's demand for an explanation, McGillycuddy claimed that the names listed represented different sets of individuals. He did not furnish sufficient evidence to convince authorities, however, and the Office of Indian Affairs refused to pay both sets of salaries.³¹ Undaunted, the agent sought out

31. Schurz to Hayt, 4 Sept. 1879, LS-PRA, M1282, Roll 2; P. E. Northup to McGillycuddy, 13 July 1882, Price to McGillycuddy, 29 July 1882, James Delano to McGillycuddy, 13 July 1882, all in CR-PRA.

other avenues for compensating his policemen. For example, he charged wagon trains en route from Nebraska to the Black Hills a two-dollar-per-wagon fee for a police escort across the reservation. He then permitted the policemen to keep the money they collected. Indian officers also worked as guides and guards for survey parties, a service for which McGillicuddy allowed them to collect a twenty-five-dollar fee.³²

Fines assessed for minor offenses of agency regulations provided policemen with yet another means of financial support. Shortly after the force began operating, McGillicuddy created an informal court to deal with the crimes committed on the reservation by non-Indians. The agent allowed his men to impose fines of five and ten dollars on white men, mixed-bloods, African-Americans, and Mexicans whom they judged to have violated agency liquor, weapons, and gambling regulations. The arrest of John O'Rourke on 8 January 1882 demonstrated how the practice worked. When Oglala policemen found O'Rourke intoxicated on Pine Ridge, they arrested him and lodged him in the agency jail. At an improvised police-court hearing the following morning, members of the police force found him guilty of drunkenness, charged him a ten-dollar fine, and escorted him to the reservation border where they released him. Although the practice of allowing the same individuals to serve as lawmen, juries, and judges is questionable, no evidence exists to suggest that the policemen abused their power by fining innocent people for financial gain.³³

In these and other ways, McGillicuddy favored the men in his police detachment. Without their service he would have faced great difficulties in administering agency affairs. The Oglala policemen themselves may have viewed their government service as a means to obtain preferential treatment for their families and bands. If true, this fact might help explain why policemen who remained in the good graces of the agent continued to serve with such small salaries. George Sword, Standing Soldier, Fast Thunder, Iron Crow, and Fast Horse all served for more than ten years.³⁴ Not all policemen benefited

32. Price to McGillicuddy, 4 Aug. 1882, CR-PRA.

33. McGillicuddy to Price, 1 Feb. 1882, CR-PRA; McGillicuddy to Price, Pine Ridge Indian Police Report for the Month of January, 1882, 1 Feb. 1882, LS-PRA, M1282, Roll 4.

34. "Records of Changes in the Indian Police Service," 1 Oct. 1890.



Agent McGillicuddy (center) worked hard to retain officers such as Standing Soldier and George Sword (left). Seated at right next to interpreter William Garnett is Young Man Afraid of His Horses, who had advised McGillicuddy to have Sword head the force.

sufficiently, however, to remain on the force. Many resigned to pursue farming or Wild West show careers. Still others found themselves released from further service.

Five months after the formation of the Pine Ridge police force, McGillicuddy purged its ranks, discharging fifteen original members, or nearly one-third of the force (see table 4). In an official report, the agent informed his superiors that he had released less qualified men as he found more reliable recruits, a plausible explanation given the sudden enlistment of men that had swelled the ranks in 1879. After four or five months of observation, the agent and his ranking officers knew which

policemen were unqualified and needed replacing. By August of 1881, just two years later, only 52 percent of the original lawmen remained on duty. Reasons for discharge included immoral conduct, disobedience of orders, neglect of duty, incompetence, and sickness. Throughout the 1880s, police recruits came and went on a regular basis.³⁵

The most significant dismissal from the Pine Ridge police force came in 1882 with the court-martial of First Lieutenant Cloud Shield. The incident grew out of the ongoing feud be-

Table 4
Original Policemen Remaining in Service

Date	Number of Original Policemen	Percent of Original Force
10 September 1879	50	100
1 January 1880	35	70
30 June 1880	32	64
2 August 1881	26	52
28 August 1882	19	38
16 October 1883	15	30
25 September 1885	12	24
1 October 1890	5	10

Source: "Records of Changes in the Indian Police Service," 10 Sept. 1879-1 Oct. 1890.

tween Agent McGillycuddy and Chief Red Cloud, who continually sought one another's removal throughout the agent's tenure at Pine Ridge. Cloud Shield apparently became entangled in the conflict when he attended a meeting of prominent Pine Ridge full-bloods, mixed-bloods, and white men who drew up a petition calling for McGillycuddy's removal and sent it to the Office of Indian Affairs. When McGillycuddy learned of Cloud Shield's alleged participation, he had him arrested, locked in the agency guardhouse, and suspended from the force without pay. The agent then indicted the jailed lieutenant

35. *Ibid.*, 1 Jan. 1880, 2 Aug. 1881.

on charges including conduct unbecoming an officer and causing dissension among police ranks. On 29 April 1882, Cloud Shield's fellow officers assembled for his trial and after hearing the facts found him guilty on all counts.

Cloud Shield's removal was an unusual event. In fact, he appears to be the only Pine Ridge policeman ever to face a court-martial. McGillicuddy could have removed the lieutenant without cause at any time, but Cloud Shield's alleged defection must have created enough dissension among the ranks to prompt the agent's holding a court-martial as a warning to other policemen. McGillicuddy did not take part in the actual proceedings, but the outcome of the affair indicated the extent of his control over the force and sent a warning to Red Cloud as well.³⁶

Suppressing traditional culture was not the primary or even most important duty of the Indian police force, however. In 1880, their first full year of service, Pine Ridge policemen arrested more than thirty men for offenses such as horse thievery, bootlegging, living with Indian women, gambling, illegal trading of annuities, and larceny. During a typical month of police activity in January 1882, Oglala officers arrested a white man, Ruben Reynolds, for "cohabitating [*sic*] with squaws outside of matrimony." Reynolds found himself escorted to the reservation border and permanently excluded from Pine Ridge for his offense. Benjamin Claymore and William Irving, both white men, were charged with gambling and released with a warning and an order to stay off the reservation for a month. John O'Rourke, another white, paid a ten-dollar fine for intoxication. Melquiades Armijo, a Mexican, was arrested and fined ten dollars for bringing liquor onto the reservation. Several mixed-blood Indians from other reservations also faced the agency police court for criminal actions in January 1882. Daniel Gallinoux, a Sisseton Sioux, spent five days in the guardhouse for assault and battery, while Soldier Boy of Rosebud was ordered to pay forty dollars for selling stolen cattle. Agency chief clerk John Alder, who served as a United States court

36. Price to McGillicuddy, 15 Apr. 1882, and E. S. Stevens to McGillicuddy, 3 June 1882, both in CR-PRA; McGillicuddy to CIA, 1 May 1882, LS-PRA, M1282, Roll 4.

commissioner, held preliminary hearings for those arrested by Indian police officers. If he deemed that a felony had been committed, he sent the prisoner under Indian police escort to Deadwood for trial in federal court.³⁷

During the McGillicuddy era, the Pine Ridge police force played a prominent role in protecting the Oglalas from the evils of alcohol. Liquor dealers in Nebraska, less than two miles away from the agency, caused the greatest law-enforcement problems. To guard against liquor running and to prevent Oglalas from visiting Nebraska whiskey ranches, the agent established several substations where policemen could easily monitor the border. Patrols also routinely traveled the wagon roads from Rosebud Landing on the Missouri River. Those caught trafficking liquor were tried in federal court and had their wagons, mules, horses, and supplies confiscated. McGillicuddy was also concerned with the negative influence of certain white men and mixed-bloods. These men, the agent believed, preyed upon the Oglalas, cheating them out of annuities, supplying them with liquor, corrupting them with gambling, and encouraging them to carry on their traditional ways. The agent especially despised white men who had married Oglala women and lived at Pine Ridge. He continually pressured the Office of Indian Affairs to allow his policemen to remove immoral white men, deceitful traders, and corrupting mixed-bloods from the reservation.³⁸

The presence of tribal lawmen in early reservation society allowed the Oglalas to police themselves rather than submit to government occupation troops, easing to some extent their transition to reservation life. The concept of law enforcement was not new to the Oglalas, and Indian policemen represented one of the few reservation institutions they recognized from traditional culture. To assume that Indian officers simply betrayed their heritage and turned against their own people is to ignore the tribe's role in the formation of its police force.

37. McGillicuddy to A. M. Mable, 1 Sept. 1880, LS-PRA, M1282, Roll 2; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (1880), pp. xi-xii; McGillicuddy to Price, Police Report for January 1882, 1 Feb. 1882.

38. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (1881), p. 45; McGillicuddy to CIA, Police Report for February 1882, 3 Mar. 1882, LS-PRA, M1282, Roll 4.

Without the consent and participation of the Pine Ridge population, a fifty-man force could not have effectively policed a reservation with more than seven thousand people.

Those who served as Indian lawmen have left little documentation about their motivations for enlisting. Existing evidence, however, indicates that some, like George Sword, viewed police force service as a way to help the Oglalas adjust to reservation life. Others joined for political or economic reasons. Whatever their personal motivations, many officers shared common roots as traditional law enforcers. Police force service in many ways represented a continuation of the *akicitas*' societal responsibilities and duties. In a period of crisis, with their traditional life disappearing and reservation life becoming a reality, Indian police officers did what tradition required of them.

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