

Walt Whitman Quarterly Review

<http://ir.uiowa.edu/wwqr>

The Poet-Chief Greet the Sioux

Martin Murray

Volume 17, Number 1

(Summer 1999)

pps. 25-37

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE:
The Many Cultures of Walt Whitman: Part Two

Stable URL: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/wwqr/vol17/iss1/5>
ISSN 0737-0679

The Poet-Chief Greet the Sioux

Martin Murray

Abstract

Explores the historical circumstances surrounding Whitman's writing of "Real American Red Men," including the identities of the various American Indian chiefs Whitman met, the reasons for their visit to Washington, D.C., and Whitman's attitudes toward Indians.

THE POET-CHIEF GREETSS THE SIOUX

MARTIN G. MURRAY

ONE DAY, WHILE perusing the Whitman manuscripts in Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, I found myself drawn to the prose piece called "Real American Red Men" (see back cover).¹ The manuscript's arresting title, its interesting subject matter (an official Sioux delegation to Washington being photographed by Alexander Gardner), and its curious description of the Sioux's encounter with the "poet-chief" Walt Whitman, made me eager to know more about this Whitman work.

Unfortunately, other than an educated guess by Edward Grier (the editor of Whitman's unpublished prose manuscripts) that "Real American Red Men" was probably written by Whitman during his Washington residence for a local newspaper, its provenance was largely unknown.² Spurred by the challenge and guided by Grier's suggestion, I conducted a search of Washington's newspapers. Eventually I was rewarded when I found Whitman's prose published as an unsigned article in the September 20, 1872, edition of the Washington *Evening Star*. It appeared on page one, in the middle of the center column, under "Washington News and Gossip."

With a publication date established, I am able now to place Whitman's work in some historical context, to provide some background information about the particular Indian delegations and the Gardner photographic session, and to explore some of Whitman's personal, professional, and political motives in writing this piece of journalism.

Let's begin with a transcription of Whitman's prose as it appeared in the *Evening Star*, with endnotes highlighting the differences between the published and manuscript versions.

REAL AMERICAN RED MEN.³—The Sioux chiefs⁴, and their party, from the far Dakota⁵, now temporarily in Washington, are men more than usually characteristic of their race, and⁶ at least as noble specimens of savage and hardy nature⁷ as have ever yet visited the cities of the pale face. Any first-class artist or sculptor would never tire of their powerful and massive forms, the gnarly and luxuriant amplitude of their limbs and chests, and the antique and⁸ homely fascination of their physiognomies, calling to mind the best profiles of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities, but more splendid even than they, and in some respects ahead even of the Greek, and absolutely unapproachable as pronounced aboriginal portraits, with all the eloquence of silent but most vital expres-



Figure 1: Medicine Bear.



Figure 2. Afraid of the Bear.



Figure 3. Man Who Packs the Eagle.

sion, deep-cut lines, and the great eyes of the superior birds and⁹ animals. The inherent and athletic royalty of the man of the woods and mountains, amid all the general deprivations and squalor of the race, is triumphantly vindicated by these natural kings¹⁰, in shapes that make the types and samples of our civilized manhood, in America and Europe, shrivelled¹¹ and puny in comparison.

Yesterday afternoon¹² Walt Whitman, who was walking down the avenue, stepped in by invitation of the agent¹³, and made them a short impromptu visit. "Tell them," said the agent to the interpreter, "that the poet-chief has come to shake hands with them, as brothers." A regular round of introductions and hearty hand-claspings, and "How's!" followed. "Tell them, Billy," continued the agent, "that the poet-chief says we are all really the same men and brethren together, at last, however different our places¹⁴ and dress and language." An approving chorus of guttural "Ugh's!" came from all parts of the room, and W.W. retired, leaving an evidently captivating impression.

This forenoon the chiefs are being photographed at Gardner's¹⁵ establishment,¹⁶ on the avenue. They appeared just before noon in all their war-paint, bears'¹⁷ claws¹⁸ and eagles'¹⁹ feathers, with much scarlet cloth²⁰ and fringe, and made a strange and impressive group, waiting in the ante-rooms.

Some of Whitman's language in describing the Sioux, as well as the author's lack of modesty in referring so prominently to himself, may strike the modern reader as peculiar and perhaps even offensive. But consider the context in which an informed reader of the *Washington Evening Star* would have read this newspaper article on September 20, 1872.

First, let's consider the Indians themselves, and their purpose in visiting Washington, D.C. The visitors consisted of two delegations of Sioux Indians: one from the vicinity of Fort Peck within the boundaries of the Milk River Agency in the Montana Territory, and the other from the Grand River Agency on the Great Sioux Reservation in the Dakota Territory. The former group was led by chiefs Medicine Bear (Figure 1), Afraid of the Bear (Figure 2), and Man Who Packs the Eagle (Figure 3) of the Upper Yanktonai band, along with sixteen other chiefs,

warriors, and braves.²¹ They were accompanied by the Milk River agent Andrew J. Simmons and an interpreter, William Benoiste. It is a good bet that Medicine Bear, dressed as he is in “bears’ claws and eagles’ feathers” in the Gardner photograph, is the chief described in Whitman’s article, Simmons the “agent,”



Figure 4. The Grass.



Figure 5. Running Antelope

and Benoiste “Billy” the interpreter.²² The second delegation, from the Grand River Agency, was led by The Grass (Figure 4) of the Blackfeet Sioux, Running Antelope (Figure 5) of the Hunkpapa, Two Bears of the Lower Yanktonai, and Big Head of the Upper Yanktonai.²³ They were accompanied by the agent J. C. O’Connor²⁴ and interpreters John Bregnier and the Sioux Matilda (Eagle Woman That All Look At) Galpin.

The visit to Washington was the culmination of the work of a special commission led by Assistant Secretary of the Interior General Benjamin R. Cowen which had journeyed to the Montana Territory in the summer of 1872 to engage the so-called hostile Sioux, under the Hunkpapa chief Sitting Bull, in a peace dialogue. That summer, Sitting Bull’s camp was located south of Fort Peck, along the Yellowstone River. One of a handful of Sioux chiefs who had refused to sign the Fort Laramie Treaty in 1868 creating the Great Sioux Reservation, Sitting Bull did not feel obligated by its terms requiring the Sioux (when not specifically pursuing the buffalo) to reside within Reservation boundaries. Sitting Bull’s followers had engaged in several well-publicized attacks against white encroachment in the upper Missouri and were particularly hostile to the plans of the Northern Pacific Railroad to lay tracks through this area.

General Cowen’s mission, however, was only a partial success. While able to draw some of Sitting Bull’s former compatriots such as Medicine Bear into peaceful dialogue, Cowen could not persuade Sitting Bull himself to meet with the commission.²⁵ Nevertheless, Cowen still hoped to influence Sitting Bull and other hostiles through the Agency Indians who had agreed to come to Washington.²⁶ As the report of the Honorable F.A. Walker, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, put it: “The absence of Sitting Bull and Black Moon, the most influential chiefs of the ‘hostile camps,’ prevented that complete success which had been

hoped for from the visit of this delegation; but the Indians thus brought to Washington were genuine Indians, out of the hostile camps, and of no mean reputation and influence among the 'implacables.'"²⁷

Cowen's 1872 initiative was part of the Indian Peace Policy associated with the administration of President Ulysses S. Grant. That policy sought to promote peace between the government and the native population by living up to the terms of the peace treaties that had already been entered into, and through reform of the Indian agencies that administered the reservations created under the treaties. At the same time, the policy gradually backed away from the long-standing practice of relating to the Indian tribes as if they were sovereign nations, and regarded them increasingly as mere wards of the state. An important aspect of the policy was to "civilize" the Indian by encouraging land cultivation (in place of the hunt), formal education, and Christian baptism. To effect its civilizing program, the government encouraged Christian missions to adopt, and in some respects effectively staff, particular agencies. The Milk River Agency, for example, was administered under the auspices of the Methodist Church, and the Grand River Agency under the Missionary Society of the Catholic Church.²⁸

The federal government's overt purpose in bringing the Milk River and Grand River agency delegations to Washington was to discuss compliance with the terms of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. The covert purpose was to impress the Sioux with the power, size and cultural magnificence of the Euro-American civilization. For this purpose, the Indians were escorted through the great public buildings—the Capitol, the Treasury and the Patent Office. They were shown the military arsenal and the Navy Yard, and taken on the steamship *Arrow* down the Potomac River to Mount Vernon, the home of the first Great Father, George Washington. They were housed in a fine hotel, the Washington House, entertained at the Theater Comique, and taken to services at the Metropolitan Methodist and Saint Aloysius Catholic churches. In addition to Washington, D.C., these same delegations visited Chicago and New York City, where similar activities were arranged for them.

One might expect Whitman, in the very public role of journalist, to be supportive of Grant's Indian policy. After all, Whitman was an Executive Branch employee in an era of political patronage. Formerly an employee in the Interior Department's Office of Indian Affairs, Whitman had been since July 1865 a clerk in the U.S. Attorney General's office, which by 1872 was part of the new U.S. Department of Justice. Also, the article was written in the midst of a presidential election campaign (Grant versus the Liberal Republican and Democratic party nominee Horace Greeley) during which the administration's Indian policy came under attack. And finally, the *Evening Star*, which published Whitman's article, was a pro-Grant newspaper. Edited by Crosby Stuart Noyes, the *Star* was also partly owned by Alexander Shepherd, known

in Washington City as “Boss” Shepherd because of the enormous power he wielded as Grant’s appointee to the city’s Board of Public Works.

In “Real American Red Men,” however, the contrary Whitman defies this expectation. Indeed, his article verily undercuts the philosophical foundation of Grant’s Indian policy. First, while Whitman is clearly endorsing peaceful relations with the Sioux, he derides a fundamental objective of the administration’s policy—that is, the assimilation of the Sioux into the presumably superior European-based civilization. Rather than celebrating the Euro-American, Whitman describes him as “shrivelled and puny in comparison” with his native counterpart. Second, by referring to the Indian chiefs as “natural kings,” Whitman suggests an inalienable sovereignty, immune to the diminishment implied by Congress’s 1871 action ending the treaty relationship with the tribes.²⁹ Significantly, Whitman’s manuscript capitalized the expression, “Natural Kings,” for emphasis, which the *Star*’s editor reduced to lower-case. Third, and perhaps most importantly, Whitman usurps the entire political and ecclesiastical apparatus surrounding Indian relations by asserting his own moral authority as “poet-chief” to directly address his Sioux brethren. He offers affection as the antidote to the poisoned relationship between the white man and the red, the same balm he prescribed to heal the sectional hatreds between Northerner and Southerner before and after the Civil War.

As contrary as Whitman’s views were to the administration’s party line, they were even further afield from those of the political opposition under Horace Greeley, thus providing Whitman with the political cover he needed to publish such a subversive piece. Greeley’s long-standing impatience with the Indians’ unwillingness to adopt Euro-American ways is best expressed in his *An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco* (1859). In it, he observes:

It needs but little familiarity with the actual, palpable aborigines to convince any one that the poetic Indian—the Indian of Cooper and Longfellow—is only visible to the poet’s eye. To the prosaic observer, the average Indian of the woods and prairies is a being who does little credit to human nature—a slave of appetite and sloth, never emancipated from the tyranny of one animal passion save by the more ravenous demands of another. As I passed over those magnificent bottoms of the Kansas which form the reservations of the Delawares, Potawatamies, etc., constituting the very best corn-lands on earth, and saw their owners sitting around the doors of their lodges at the height of the planting season and in as good, bright planting weather as sun and soil ever made, I could not help saying, “These people must die out—there is no help for them. God has given this earth to those who will subdue and cultivate it, and it is vain to struggle against His righteous decree.”³⁰

During the 1872 election campaign, the Grant administration, despite its ongoing military operations to contain the Indians on their reservations, was derided for being soft on the Indian. The pro-Greeley *Springfield Republican*, for example, used the Sioux visit as an opportu-

nity to denounce the president's Peace Policy as a failed appeasement policy.³¹ Noting constant Indian unrest, the *Republican* insisted that "the uncivilized Indians are virtually a criminal class." It advocated giving the reservations "the mixed character of penal and reformatory and philanthropic communities." Should the Indians be unwilling or unable "to become industrious and civilized," the *Republican* continued, then "we don't know of any nobler end that they are likely to come to than to perish in the process."

Now, let's consider the photographic session described by Whitman in the news article. The photographs of the Sioux chiefs were taken by Alexander Gardner, best known for *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War* and his Lincoln portraits. Whitman considered his friend Gardner as perhaps the best photographer of his time. Indeed, Whitman's favorite photograph of himself was taken by Gardner.³² No doubt, then, it gave Whitman personal pleasure to promote his friend's studio "on the avenue," that is, at 921 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Gardner had been photographing Indian delegations since 1861. Among his greater achievements was to record the proceedings surrounding the signing of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty with the Sioux chiefs described earlier.³³

The particular photographic session described in Whitman's prose work was financed by the Blackmore Museum of Anthropology in Salisbury, England, in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution, to advance scientific study of the Sioux.³⁴ The Smithsonian's interest originated with its director, Joseph Henry, who in 1867 had suggested such a photographic project, lamenting that "the Indians are passing away so rapidly that but few years remain, within which this can be done and the loss will be irretrievable and so felt when they are gone."³⁵

Whitman shared Henry's interest in preserving an ethnographic record of the native population as it disappeared under the onslaught of western expansion. As early as 1846, when Whitman was editor of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, he supported Henry's desire to have the federal government purchase George Catlin's Indian Gallery for the new National Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. Catlin's collection consisted of hundreds of portraits of Native Americans, as well as sketches of their homelands and artifacts, which Catlin painted and collected during his travels among various tribes between 1830 and 1838. On July 9, 1846, Whitman's *Eagle* editorialized:

By all means the Government must purchase Catlin's Indian collection for the National Institute which is to be founded under the Smithsonian bequest. The aborigines of America are truly melting away like the snows of spring. An age or two, and for all that we have of them we shall be debtors to the pen, the pencil, and the chisel of the sculptor. Is it asking too much then, that the government will take measures for the concentrated perpetuity of this great collection?

The federal government did not purchase Catlin's Indian Gallery in 1846. However, by lucky circumstance, Catlin did exhibit his Indian portraits at the Smithsonian Institution in 1872, in what proved to be



Figure 6. Osceola.

Catlin's last (and ultimately unsuccessful) attempt to persuade the government to buy them.³⁶ Catlin's presence in Washington gave Whitman an opportunity to renew an acquaintance made three decades before in New York and very likely influenced Whitman's "Real American Red Men" sketch. It is conceivable that Catlin gave to Whitman at this time the painter's 1838 lithograph of the Seminole chief, Osceola (Figure 6).³⁷ Edgeley Todd has established that Whitman's 1890 poem of the same subject was inspired by Catlin's lithograph that hung in Whitman's Camden home, as well as (and more pronouncedly) by Catlin's published prose description of Osceola's death at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina.³⁸ "Real American Red Men" certainly reflects

the same reverence for the Indian that is exhibited in Catlin's heroic portrait.

Whitman's declaration in his 1872 newspaper article that "any first-class artist or sculptor would never tire" of rendering the Indians applies even more to Catlin than to Gardner. As the painter explained in the catalogue to his latest Indian exhibition, Catlin "was the first to commence a pictorial history of these people, and has devoted the best part of a long life in endeavoring to save from oblivion the types and customs of a numerous, and purely American race, decimated and driven from their countries by civilization, and who will soon be known only in history." In summing up Whitman's treatment in his own medium of the North American Indian, Ed Folsom perceives an objective similar to that espoused by Catlin: "Whitman's plan to absorb the Indian via his poetry was . . . double-edged: his project admitted the inevitable loss of Indian cultures, but it simultaneously argued for the significance of those cultures and for the necessity of preserving them—as a warning, lesson, inspiration—at the heart of our memories, deep in the lines of authentic American poems."³⁹



Figure 7. Pigeon's Egg Head.

The Sioux of the upper Missouri were well represented in Catlin's collection, comprising a large portion of his Indian portraits and sketches. Several of the more picturesque landscapes were scenes around the trading post of Fort Pierre in the vicinity of what would become the Grand River Agency.⁴⁰ One of the more striking of Catlin's images on display at the Smithsonian in 1872 was that of "Pigeon's Egg Head, going to and returning from Washington" (Figure 7). The diptych of this leader of the Assiniboin Indians (an offshoot of the Sioux) contrasts the chief's dignity upon arrival in the nation's capital as part of a formal delegation with his dissipation upon leaving as a result of exposure to Washington's "civilizing"

influences. Catlin's perspective is echoed in Whitman's journalistic scorn for the civilized "pale face" of the eastern cities, in contrast to "the inherent and athletic royalty of the man of the woods and mountains" (*NUPM*, 880, 881).

In describing the Sioux Whitman employs language commonly associated with anthropology. This includes Whitman's description of the Sioux as a distinct "race," his use of such terms as "aborigine," and "savage," as well as his reference to the "Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities." Even Whitman's emphasis on the Sioux' "physiognomy" and costumes of "bears' claws and eagles' feathers, with much scarlet cloth and fringe," has an anthropological basis. Anthropologists in a sense read the native costumes and even physical characteristics of a pre-literate society for information about the studied group's origins, as well as for help in understanding the groups' current practices and beliefs.

Whitman's journalism, like Catlin's work before him, however, was more in keeping with the tenets of an eighteenth-century philosophical anthropology rather than the nineteenth-century's scientific anthropology, or ethnology, as the modern science was then called. With his own roots in the western Romantic tradition, Whitman proffers the Rousseauian view that mankind had descended from a so-called noble state of savagery to a "shrivelled and puny" state of civilization. Whitman's acceptance of the noble savage formulation can be traced to his earliest edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1855), in which the poet muses, "The friendly and flowing savage. . . . Is he waiting for civilization or past it and mastering it?"⁴¹

Whitman's reformulation of the noble savage myth challenged what was quickly becoming the accepted ethnological belief in cultural evolution. This belief, which evolved through the mid-nineteenth century and found its theoretical exposition in Sir Edward Burnett Tylor's 1871 *Primitive Culture*, proposed that mankind developed progressively from a savage to a civilized state, with Western European civilization being the apotheosis. The scientific belief in the aborigine's inferiority lent justification to the political slogan of "civilize or perish," endorsed in varying degrees by most Euro-Americans.

Whitman thus plays the role of retrograde to the scientific, as well as the political, community in "Real American Red Men." In a sense, Whitman sabotages the ethnologists by appropriating their language and ethnographic study (Gardner's photographs) to promote a primitivism that these scientists came to reject. Whitman may have borrowed this tactic from Catlin. As William Truettner observes:

Catlin at last provided a study of the Indian that was meant to justify the ideal of primitivism. Indeed, it becomes clear that he wished to bolster the arguments in favor of nature and savage life that prevailed in the eighteenth century, to update them, in effect, with more advanced scientific methods and an abundance of personal testimony that spoke passionately of his high regard for the inhabitants of the Great Plains.⁴²

It is worth keeping in mind that by 1872, the view espoused by Whitman and Catlin would have been regarded by their "civilized" contemporaries as unwisely pro-Indian, not merely dated but dangerously anachronistic.

There may be an additional motive for Whitman's article: self-promotion. Emory Holloway suggests that Whitman included himself as a character in his published journalism as a means of keeping his name in front of the public, or, as Holloway puts it, Whitman was acting as his own "press-agent."⁴³ Holloway lists a half-dozen such instances, including Whitman anonymously reviewing his own poetry readings at The American Institute in 1871, and at Dartmouth College in 1872. A certain deviousness is suggested by these unsigned plugs. However, keep in mind that journalism at that time rarely carried a by-line, and Whitman's reference to himself in an instance such as "Real American Red Men" may actually have been his way of signing the piece. After all, Whitman had signed his first book of poetry in a similar manner, burying his identity deep in the text of the 1855 *Leaves* with the (now-famous) signature line, "Walt Whitman, an American."

The Washington Friends of Walt Whitman

NOTES

1 I am indebted to Ed Folsom whose treatment of Whitman and the North American Indian in his *Walt Whitman's Native Representations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994) served as my lodestar, and to Saundra Maley, John McClenahan, Beth Seely, Kurt Vorndran and Rosemary Gates Winslow for their valuable commentary on an early draft of this paper.

2 See Walt Whitman, *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts*, ed. Edward F. Grier (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 2:880-882.

3 MS capitalizes only the first letter in each word of the title, that is, "Real American Red Men." In MS, title is double-underlined. In this and a few additional punctuation cases, my transcription of the MS differs from Grier.

4 MS capitalizes "Chiefs."

5 MS spells it "Dakotah."

6 MS uses an ampersand, "&."

7 MS capitalizes "Nature."

8 MS uses an ampersand, "&."

9 MS uses an ampersand, "&."

10 MS capitalizes both words, "Natural Kings."

11 MS has a different misspelling of this word, "shrivilled."

12 MS inserts a comma here.

13 MS capitalizes "Agent."

14 MS inserts a comma here.

15 MS lacks a possessive, "Gardners."

16 MS does not have a comma here.

17 MS has the singular possessive, "bear's claws."

18 MS has a comma here.

19 MS has the singular possessive, "eagle's feathers."

20 MS has a comma here.

21 The delegation members and their band affiliation (where known) are chiefs Black Eye, and Skin of the Heart, brave Red Lodge, and wife of Man Who Packs the Eagle of the Upper Yanktonai; chief Bloody Mouth and braves Black Horn, Bull Rushes and Lost Medicine of the Hunkpapa; and chiefs Black Cat Fish, Red Thunder, Long Fox, and Gray Crane Walking, and braves Many Horns, Good Hawk, Man that Brandishes His War-club Walking, and Yellow Eagle of unidentified band. See "Report of Hon. B. R. Cowen, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Hon. N. J. Turney, and Mr. J. W. Wham, Commissioners to visit the Teton Sioux at and near Fort Peck, Montana," dated Washington, D.C., October 15, 1872, in *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Indian Affairs, 1872), 456-460. For band affiliation, see records of the Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives, Washington, D.C.

22 Contrary to Whitman's suggestion, the extant photographs in the collections of the Smithsonian and the National Archives do not depict the Indians in "war-paint."

23 The other Grand River Agency Sioux included: Bear's Rib, Thunder Hawk, Iron Horn and Walking Shooter of the Hunkpapas; Sitting Crow and Iron Scare of the Blackfeet Sioux; Mad Bear (misidentified in Cowen's report as Red Bear) and Bull's Ghost of the Lower Yanktonais; and Black Eye and Big Razee of the Upper Yanktonnais. The agency physician Dr. S. S. Turner also came with the delegation. See "Report of Hon. B. R. Cowen, et al.," cited above.

24 Whitman and J. C. O'Connor apparently formed a fast friendship during this visit. Whitman wrote O'Connor's name in his notebook at that time (*NUPM*, 829), and inquired after him with an Indian agent in Kansas during Whitman's 1879 trip (*NUPM*, 1036).

25 Indeed, during the summer and autumn of 1872, Sitting Bull's followers agitated a surveying party for the Northern Pacific Railroad under Colonel David S. Stanley and threatened warfare should the railroad insist on its development plans. See Francis B. Robertson, "'We Are Going to Have a Big Sioux War': Colonel David S. Stanley's Yellowstone Expedition, 1872," *Montana, the Magazine of Western History* 34 (Autumn 1984), 2-15.

26 The Hunkpapa Running Antelope, for example, was one of the original four Shirt Wearers of the Sioux confederation and had been present at Sitting Bull's investiture as the confederation's supreme chief in 1869. Thunder Hawk, also a Hunkpapa, was a boyhood friend of Sitting Bull and as a fellow warrior had witnessed the death in battle of Sitting Bull's father, Jumping Thunder. Eagle Woman was the daughter of the distinguished Two Kettle Sioux chief Two Lance and the granddaughter of the Hunkpapa chief Iron Horn, as well as the widow successively of Honoré Picotte and Charles Galpin, fur traders well regarded for their fair dealings with the Sioux. Indeed, Running Antelope, Thunder Hawk, and Eagle Woman had once before been enlisted by the federal authorities to negotiate peace with Sitting Bull, accompanying in 1868 the revered Jesuit missionary Jean-Pierre De Smet to Sitting Bull's camp in an unsuccessful effort to persuade the Hunkpapa chief to sign the Fort Laramie treaty. Other chiefs, such as The Grass, were chosen because of their long-standing commitment to peaceful relations and their acquiescence to the reservation system. See Robert M. Utley, *The Lance and the Shield: The Life and Times of Sitting Bull* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993), 87; T. Emogene Paulson and Lloyd R. Moses, *Who's Who Among the Sioux* (Vermillion, SD: The University of South Dakota, Institute of Indian Studies, 1982), 243 (I am grateful to Margaret S. Quintal and Steven Baggs of the Institute of Indian Studies for providing me with this material); and John S. Gray, "The Story of Mrs. Picotte-Galpin, a Sioux Heroine," a two-part series published successively in the Spring 1986 and Summer 1986 editions of *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*.

27 *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (1872), 98.

28 J. C. O'Connor, for example, received his Grand River Agency commission through the endorsement of Peré De Smet. See Letter of February 11, 1871, from Secretary of Interior Columbus Delano to the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, in "Letters Received by the Office Of Indian Affairs, 1824-80; Grand River Agency, 1871-72," National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 75, microfilm M-234, Roll 305.

29 Indian Appropriations Act, approved March 3, 1871. Cited in Paul Stuart, *The Indian Office: Growth and Development of an American Institution, 1865-1900* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1979), 19.

30 Horace Greeley, *An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco* (1859; rpt. New York: Knopf, 1964), 151-152.

31 See *The Springfield Daily Republican*, September 24, 1872. I am grateful to Russell L. Martin III, Curator of Newspapers and Periodicals at the American Antiquarian Society, for providing me with this material.

32 See Ed Folsom, "'This Heart's Geography's Map': The Photographs of Walt Whitman," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 4 (Fall 1986/Winter 1987), 45.

33 For an excellent description of Gardner's role as photographer of Indian delegations, see Paula Richardson Fleming, "Scenes in the Indian Country: The North American Indians," in Brooks Johnson, ed., *An Enduring Interest: The Photographs of Alexander Gardner* (Norfolk, Virginia: The Chrysler Museum, 1990), 97-107.

34 The 1872 Gardner photographs are now part of the collections of the Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives, and the National Archives and Records Administration (Records of the Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs). Photographs in the latter collection can be viewed on the Internet at the following address: <<http://monitor.nara.gov/nara/nail.html>>. Of the thirty-three members in the Milk River and Grand River agency delegations, all but two—Black Catfish and Brandishes His War Club Walking—are included in one or both of these photograph collections.

35 Quoted in Fleming, 106.

36 See Brian W. Dippie, *Catlin and His Contemporaries: The Politics of Patronage* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 420-429. Catlin resided in Washington from February 1872 to October 1872. The 1872 exhibition featured Catlin's Indian "Cartoons," rather than his Indian "Gallery" which at the time was not in Catlin's possession. The cartoons included virtually all of the portraits and scenes of North American Indians exhibited in Catlin's Gallery from the late-1830s and 1840s, as well as new illustrations from his 1850 visits to South America. See "Catalogue Descriptive and Instructive of Catlin's Indian Cartoons," (New York: Baker & Godwin, 1871), Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Although the Smithsonian did not purchase Catlin's gallery and cartoons in his lifetime, it eventually came into possession of most of these works through bequests and purchases made over the ensuing century.

37 In later years, Whitman could not precisely remember when he had received this lithograph from Catlin, telling Traubel in 1888 that it was given to him "as many as forty years ago," (Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, II, 354), but telling Dr. J. Johnston that "I got it in Washington during the war" (J. Johnston and J. W. Wallace, *Visits to Walt Whitman in 1890-1891* (New York: Egmont Arens, 1918), 54. To Thomas Donaldson, Whitman reiterated his belief that it was given to him "over forty years ago," but claimed that "Catlin was already old when I knew him" (Traubel, II, 348-349). Catlin's portrait of Osceola was done in 1838. In November 1839, Catlin left the United States for Europe, and did not return to the eastern U.S. until 1871. Given that Whitman resided out on Long Island in 1838 and 1839, it seems unlikely that he would have had any significant exposure to Catlin at this time. From Whitman's physical description of Catlin "as already old when I knew him," it is clear that Whitman's primary exposure to the artist occurred in Washington, D.C. in 1872. Catlin (b. 1796) died on December 23, 1872.

38 See Edgeley W. Todd, "Indian Pictures and Two Whitman Poems," in *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 19 (November 1955), 1-11.

39 Folsom, *Walt Whitman's Native*, 98.

40 By interesting coincidence, Catlin's exhibition catalogue contained an endorsement of his Indian portraits given in the late 1830s by Honoré Picotte, the first husband of the Grand River Agency interpreter Eagle Woman.

41 Walt Whitman, *Collected Poetry and Prose* (New York: Library of America, 1982), 71.

42 William Truettner, *The Natural Man Observed: A Study of Catlin's Indian Gallery* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), 71.

43 Emory Holloway, "Whitman as His Own Press-Agent," *The American Mercury* 18:72 (December 1929), 482-488.

Illustration Credits: Figures 1 and 3, courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives; Figures 2, 4, and 5, courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, Records of the U. S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, Series ID; Figures 6 and 7, courtesy of the Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations; and Back Cover, courtesy of Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.