

and the dried skins readily commanded sale at three to four dollars each. The news spread like wildfire, and soon the Union Pacific, Kansas Pacific, and Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroads, swarmed with hunters from all parts of the country, all excited with the prospect of having a buffalo hunt that would pay. By wagon, on horseback, and a-foot the pothunters poured in, and soon the unfortunate buffalo was without a moment's peace or rest. Though hundreds of thousands of skins were sent to market, they scarcely indicated the slaughter. From want of skill in shooting, and want of knowledge in preserving the hides of those slain one hide sent to market represented three, four or even five of dead buffalo.

"The merchants of the small towns along the railroads furnished outfits,

arms, ammunition, etc. to needy parties, and established great trades, by which many now ride in their carriages.

"The buffalo melted away like snow before a summer sun. Congress talked of interfering, but only talked. Winter and summer, in season and out of season the slaughter went on. In 1871-72 there was apparently no limit to the numbers of buffalo. In the fall of 1873 I went with some of the same gentlemen over the same ground we had hunted previously. Where there were myriads of buffalo the year before, there were now myriads of carcasses. The air was foul with sickening stench, and the vast plain, which only a short twelve months before teemed with animals, was a dead putrid desert. During the three years 1872-73-74, at least five million buffalo were slaughtered for their hides.

"The slaughter was all in violation of law, and in contravention of solemn treaties made with the Indians, but it was the duty of no special person to put a stop to it. The Indian Bureau made a feeble effort to keep the white hunter out of the Indian Territory, but soon gave it up, and these parties spread all over the country, slaughtering the buffalo under the very noses of the Indians."

Col. Dodge sadly notes: "Ten years ago the Plains Indians had an ample supply of food, and could support life comfortably without the assistance of the government. Now everything is gone, and they are reduced to conditions of paupers, without food, shelter, clothing or any of those necessities of life which came from the buffalo; without friends, except the harpies, who under the guise of friendship, feed upon them."

LAW AT LITTLE BIG HORN

By Charles E. Wright

A friend and distinguished attorney, Charles Wright of Lincoln, Nebraska has been working for the past eight years on a manuscript entitled **LAW AT LITTLE BIG HORN**. The book details the conspiracy between President Grant and Generals Sherman and Sheridan to use the Army to attack and forcibly remove the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians from their treaty lands located north of the North Platte River and east of the Bighorn Mountains. The story is told from the perspective of the Indians and their legal rights, and describes in detail Custer's defeat at Little Big Horn.

For those of us who consider the motives and actions of Custer to be a disgrace—including the earlier (November 1868), merciless, dawn attack led by Custer on a band of peaceful Cheyenne living with Chief Black Kettle in Oklahoma—the manuscript is loaded with relevant facts and insights.

The book is scheduled to be printed by Texas Tech University Press in January 2016. It will be available from the distributor at 800-621-2736 and Amazon.

Charlie Wright is a former Audubon of Kansas Trustee, has helped with our stewardship of the Hutton Niobrara Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary, and continues as an Honorary Trustee.



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Charles E. Wright
Foreword by Gordon Morris Bakken
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In 1876, the United States launched the Great Sioux War without a formal declaration of war by Congress. During the nineteenth century, the rights of American Indians were frequently violated by the president and ignored or denied enforcement by federal courts. However, at times Congress treated the Indians with good faith and honored due process, which prohibits the government from depriving any person of life, liberty, or property without a fair hearing before an impartial judge or jury. These due process requirements protect all Americans and were in effect when President Grant launched the Great Sioux War in 1876.

Charles E. Wright analyzes the legal backdrop to the Great Sioux War, asking the hard questions of how treaties were to be honored and how the US government failed to abide by its sovereign word. Until now, little attention has been focused on how the events leading up to and during the Battle of Little Big Horn violated American law. Though other authors have analyzed George Armstrong Custer's tactics and equipment, Wright is the first to investigate the legal and constitutional issues surrounding the United States' campaign against the American Indians.

This is not just another Custer book. Its contents will surprise even the most accomplished Little Big Horn scholar.



Born and raised in western Nebraska, **Charles E. Wright** is a retired lawyer who spent fifty years practicing in Nebraska and Colorado. He has long been associated with Indian rights and has funded scholarships and organized a mentoring program for promising Indian students from recognized tribes to attend law school.



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