

David Bald Eagle Tells of His Grandfathers & Crazy Horse - OSEU 5

My grandfather told me what happened. My grandfather, White Bull, was, you know, it came to a mouth, they came together right at the village, and that village was the oldest village, Indian village in the Sioux Nation. And he was living there. My grandfather lived up the Cherry Creek, Cherry Creek Ways. And he used to come over to my grandfather, my other grandfather's place, and they used to talk together. And he used to take me along to listen, because he wanted me to catch onto that history. So all the history.

So I used to go there and just sit, there's a little sheepskin I used to sit on, and they used to sit there and talk. My grandfather, White Bull, was Deaf, he could hardly hear, and White Feather wasn't. So they used to talk through a tube. My grandfather had the funnel part, you know, and he would stick that other part in his ear, and he would listen, and he talked through that. But my grandfather, White Bull, has a habit. Every time he talks, after he talks, he would say, ah, hey, Chetuelo, he'd say. And then he'd say that, he'd do that.

He had that habit. And so, at first I watched him, and then after I got used to him doing that, I just faded away. But they told me a lot of things. They told me to sit there, Heliakayo Kakosa, which means grandson, sit there. We want you to catch onto what we're telling you, to tell your grandchildren in the future, or your children. So they told me everything about the Little BigHorn. When they were at the first camp over there, they went over there, and they would go out on tuwea, they used to call it, tuwea.

In Indian, it would be, in translation, it would be scout, I mean, not really scout. It's tuwea, which means that they're kind of scouting around for enemies and so forth. So they... the camp, they circled around horseback. And one day they see the cavalry coming, and so the party went and they contacted them, and they asked them where they were going, so they were going back to the camp, which was way up north, and it was west instead of, so the cavalry turned and went north, looking for this camp.

And then they circled around the hill and came back toward the camp where the cavalry was looking for them.

Each time they contacted them, they would catch on. were sending them a different way. And then they finally found them. So when they found them, my crazy horse sent a scout out to them and told them, Prehinska, you better not come any closer because you're coming to your death. Prehinska means Custer. So they sent him the message to tell them not to advance. But he kept coming anyway. So they decided to get ready. So they got my grandfather. He had a bigger bunch of warriors. And they got him to stay back, stay behind those hills.

And when the cavalry comes, I'm going to ride across and draw fire. Crazy horse, he said. I'm going to draw fire. And when they start firing at me, I'm going to lead them off. And as they chased me, he says, they chased me behind. There's going to be something up on the hill, he said, that's going to start firing. Indians that have guns. Northern Cheyennes, I guess. They had guns. So they started firing over there. Not... at the cavalry when they started. And he told Wendell, my grandfather, not to use anything that makes noise.

In other words, don't use guns if that makes noise. When you come up behind the cavalry, their horses are going to be slow. Because they've been looking for us for weeks. And their horses are played out. And they're going to be slow. They're carrying too much equipment. And the men themselves are going to be so tired that they can't really do any fighting. This is a time to rush them. White Bull, they saw us, White Bull. They saw, he says, you come up behind them when the last cavalry comes through.

You come up behind them, keep knocking them off their horses with clubs, tomahawks. Don't use anything that makes noise. That's what the order was. So they kept knocking them off their horses. They just ran right up on them because they were so slow. And by the time the cavalry realized that he's coming from behind, it was too late. And they started running for their lives. They just kept at it until they killed them all.

And I read in one of the Indians, I said, Grandpa, did you kill Custer like they said you did? And he kind of chuckled. He said, oh, he said, oh, I mean, just the same as saying, hell no, heck no, you know. They all looked alike, so we don't know which one is Custer, but we killed them all, he says. So somebody did. And so he was telling the truth, you know. But the storybook tells him that he killed him, but he denies it. He said he didn't know who killed him, because he had his hair cut and everything, and he looked like the rest of them, he said.

So that's what he told me. What happened afterwards, he told me that they played him out so the horses can't run past them. He had other units that came to help them, but they saw what was going on and they abandoned him. Reno and all of them, they just took off, Cavanaugh and all of them, they started running away from them, and Crazy Horse told the northern Cheyennes to go after them. So they chased them south and took the flags away from them and brought them back.

And then Crazy Horse, they had a big tree dance, and Crazy Horse brought the only scout that was alive, they called him alive, Boyer was his name. He was a French half-breed scout, he tied him in behind, brought him, they called his wife out, said, your husband will let you decide what to do with him. And here she went, started walking towards him, and he was standing there with his head down, shamed, you know. She walked over, she grabbed Boyer's tomahawk and cut his head open, killed him, and he says, you, you traitor.

But Crazy Horse, there was a lady sitting there, and she had two grandchildren and a grandchild on her back that wrapped her under the blanket. She was sitting there, and here, Crazy Horse took that flag, American flag, and he didn't say this flag, he said, le shinaki le, which means this shawl here, he says, he put it around her, he put it around her, and he says, he said, take care of this, this shawl, in the future you will live underneath that flag.

He told him, take care of it, and he put it on that boy, he says, this belongs to the Indian women and children, he says, this shawl.

So that's what he told her, told that lady. And I don't know what that lady's name was, my grandfather said that lady's name, but I forgot what her name was. I should have remembered. What did your grandfather think about Crazy Horse? Did he see him as a great leader? Yeah, he was quite a leader. He didn't want to be a chief. He wanted to be a war leader, and he didn't want to be a chief. But he was spiritual, spiritually inclined.

And every time they see him coming to the camp, into the camp with a feather dangling on his back, down, feathers hanging down, they knew there was trouble, they knew there was something wrong. But if he wore it on the side, on the right side, it was okay, everything was okay. So every time they see him come into... the back, dangling in the back, they knew there was something wrong. So he didn't have to tell the people, they knew him through that. And when you say Crazy Horse was spiritually inclined, can you tell us a little bit more about that?

My grandfather always says, wakankel uwanlo, which means he is spiritual. He lived a spiritual way of life. In other words, he's kind of like, he could tell in the future what's going to happen. He has a feeling of what's going to happen, you know, but he has that way of life. My wife told me the other day, she was down with her great-grandkid here. One of my nieces came to her and she said, I had a, what was it, heart trouble, some kind of heart trouble, vein or something was wrong, and they were going to have surgery on her.

So they took her to the hospital. During the time she was there, she had a vision about me. And I came over, she was sitting there,... on her shoulder, and I prayed for her, and told her afterwards, you will be alright, you'll be okay when you have the surgery, that's what she told me when she came. And here, this lady, my niece, called me and told me about it, that you prayed for me where I lived. So afterwards, after you prayed for me, my feeling just was light, she said I was ready to go into surgery.

And I came out of it real good, so, and that's what she told me this morning, she told me that. So that's the kind, that's what he had, that's the way he had, I could just about tell what's going to happen in the future, as I sit here.