

ITS EQUAL I HAVE NEVER SEEN Custer Explores the Black Hills in 1874

By Brian W. Dippie

COLUMBIA The Magazine of Northwest History, Summer 2005: Vol. 19, No. 2

Seventy years after Lewis and Clark began their epic journey up the Missouri River, Lieutenant-Colonel George Armstrong Custer led the Seventh United States Cavalry from Fort Abraham Lincoln on the west bank of the Missouri River—"Headquarters of the Black Hills Expedition" under his command. The "General" sounded at 7:00 am, "Boots & Saddles" at 7:50, "To Horse" at 8:00, and "Advance" at 8:10, reported Custer's adjutant and brother-in-law, Lieutenant James Calhoun. Private Theodore Ewert, a chronic grouser who left a vivid account of the expedition, conceded that its departure was stirring:

The companies wheeled by fours into line of march, guidons flying in the breeze, the band playing our battle quickstep, "Garry Owen," the officers dashing up and down the column with an air of importance, the men cheerful and full of chatter, and as we cast our eyes for the last time on Fort A. Lincoln up the valley, we saw the ladies of our command (the wives of officers and men) waving their scarfs and handkerchiefs in sad farewell, and just as we left the last ridge that overlooked the valley the men gave three hearty cheers, whose echoes must have been heard by the anxious women watching us from the fort.

It was July 2, 1874, and Custer was starting out just half a mile south of Lewis and Clark's October 20, 1804, campsite. "The Country is fine," Clark had noted in his journal, "the high hills at a Distance with gradual assents." The area teemed with game—elk, goats, and deer—and "great numbers of buffalow [were] swimming the river." The world, as for Custer in 1874, lay all before them. Lewis and Clark saw this site when they camped below the confluence of the Heart and Missouri rivers on August 18, 1806. They were on the last stretch of their epic "voyage of discovery," just over a month out of St. Louis where it had all begun two years, three months, and five days before.

Custer's Black Hills expedition was nowhere near so ambitious in its objectives or the time it would take to realize them. The Seventh Cavalry was back at Fort Lincoln on the 30th of August. But in its own right the 1874 expedition was a logistical marvel, involving over a thousand men and one African-American woman—Aunt Sally, as she was called—a cook.

General Orders of June 30 had established the "order of march." The Indian scouts would take the lead, followed by a battery of three Gatling guns and a cannon. Then came the ambulances and wagons, 110 in all, "the latter," according to orders, "when practicable to move in four columns." Next was an infantry battalion, marching in columns of two. Divided into two battalions, one company of the Seventh Cavalry would provide a rear guard while the other nine patrolled the expedition's flanks.

Captain William Ludlow of the Corps of Engineers was assigned to Custer's staff, and a small posse of scientists including Newton Winchell, geologist, and George Bird Grinnell, paleontologist, accompanied the expedition. Science, after all, along with the military objective of finding a suitable site for a new post, had been used to justify the expedition to skeptics who claimed its sole purpose was to invade Sioux lands in search of gold. Two "practical miners" managed to find a place among the expedition's civilian contingent, so judge for yourself.

In a shrewd political move, Custer had recruited the president's son, Frederick Dent Grant, from General Philip Sheridan's staff to serve on his own, presumably as Sheridan's representative since no one could figure why else he was along, though he was a congenial companion whenever a bottle was being passed around.

The band was along as well, of course—Custer could hardly do without its jaunty rendition of "Garry Owen" and such sentimental standards as "The Girl I Left Behind Me." If all worked out as planned there would be evenings in the Black Hills when music would enhance a few idle hours in paradise. Three hundred head of cattle were being herded on a one-way trail drive just in case paradise failed to yield enough wild game and trout for sustenance.

Five correspondents represented papers in New York, Chicago, St. Paul, and Bismarck. They were to fill the pages of the nation's press with first-hand reports of successive discoveries and triumphs that the military planners hoped would exceed even the most overheated expectations. The journalists did not disappoint. In advance, they told the public what the army wanted it to hear: the Black Hills were "unknown," "mysterious," and "unexplored." No white man had ever entered them. The only authentic map of the Black Hills was a blank sheet of paper. And so it went, building excitement and raising expectations.

"The press has praised the Black Hill country to the skies," Calhoun wrote in his diary on June 23: "We are informed in glowing terms 'that it is believed to be, a land of ambrosial luxury—flowing with milk and honey.' In fact so much has been circulated regarding this section of country, that thousands are wild with curiosity—longing to see it."

Their wish would be granted. St. Paul photographer William H. Illingworth had been hired by Captain Ludlow to prepare a set of photographs showing what some reporters had already dubbed "fairy-land." Though only 31, Illingworth was an experienced expeditionary photographer, having accompanied the Fisk expedition from Minnesota to Montana in 1866 with gold again the lure. His professional competence and gifted eye are responsible for the extraordinary visual record we have of the Black Hills expedition, his view of the expedition drawn up in marching order not least among them. It perfectly expresses the official position voiced by Lieutenant Calhoun: "Our little army has wrought wonders. Acting as one great pioneer corps, it has paved the way for civilization."

The expedition's commander was a figure familiar to fame. The "Boy General" held the regular army rank of captain in the Civil War but served as a Brevet Brigadier General when he was 23, and then as a Major General of Volunteers. At the age of 25 he earned the rank of Brevet Major General. In 1874 he still signed himself "Lieut. Colonel, 7th Cavalry" or "Brevet Major General, U.S.A.," and was correctly addressed as "General." In the Civil War, Custer had attracted attention for leading fearless cavalry charges, with his long cinnamon-colored hair streaming behind him and a red cravat topping off a self-designed uniform agleam with gold. While he fell from those heights of glory after the war, he was not demoted but promoted to the regular army rank of lieutenant-colonel in 1866 and assigned to the newly-formed Seventh Cavalry

Regiment. There would always be a colonel over him, but he took effective command of the Seventh in the field and, perhaps rightly, considered it his regiment. In a shrinking postwar army filled with veteran officers who had served at much higher rank, promotion was notoriously slow; Custer was still awaiting elevation to a full colonelcy when he fell on the Little Bighorn in 1876.

The Black Hills expedition had been mounted in part at Custer's urging. He "has expressed a desire on many occasions to explore the Black Hills, believing that it would open a rich vein of wealth calculated to increase the commercial prosperity of this country," Calhoun observed. Since the end of the Civil War, Western interests had wanted the Hills opened to white settlement. Despite a treaty signed at Fort Laramie in 1868 granting the Sioux "absolute and undisturbed use and occupation" of the entire area, settler pressure continued to build. In the end it was General Philip Sheridan, commander of the Division of the Missouri, who, in consultation with General Alfred Terry, commander of the Department of Dakota under him, approved a military reconnaissance of the Black Hills. Ignoring critics who said they were caving in to special interests that simply wanted access to the allegedly gold-rich region, Sheridan and Terry took the high ground, citing military necessity. "In order to better control the Indians making...raids toward the south," Sheridan explained, he "had contemplated for two or three years past, to establish a military post in the country known as the Black Hills." In turn, Terry, who had been party to the 1868 treaty negotiations, argued that duly authorized government officials had always been permitted entry upon the Sioux Reservation "in discharge of duties enjoined by law." "I am unable to see that any just offense is given to the Indians by the expedition to the Black Hills."

Custer, speaking off the record, was more forthcoming. "It is supposed," Calhoun wrote in his diary, that "in the vicinity of the Black Hills there are vast treasures of immense wealth. That rich mines await the industry of the hard--working miner. That precious metals invite discovery, and that in the bottoms of the many streams, and other parts of this domain, large deposits of gold are to be found." He had obviously mulled over the subject with his brother-in-law, noting: "General Custer, fully alive to the interests of the Northwest, wishes to see this country for himself." Custer's rather flimsy rationale for the Black Hills expedition corroborates William H. Goetzmann's observation that in America

exploration and science had to serve two ends.... Results from far-flung expeditions into the wilderness frontier, in the view of the emerging cadre of professional scientists, had to make significant contributions to the world's body of knowledge.... On the other hand, expectant capitalists and the legislatures which supplied the funds for expeditions saw them purely as instruments for practical material progress.

There was one thing more. Custer fancied himself as much pathfinder as Indian fighter. He had led the Seventh Cavalry into the field from Fort Riley, Kansas, in March 1867 on General Winfield Scott Hancock's 1,400-man expedition to cow the Southern Plains tribes. It proved one vast frustration—the Indians were maddeningly elusive, the expedition's objectives muddled, and Custer ended up court-martialed and suspended from rank and pay for a year. He was reinstated to command before the year was out through the intervention of General Sheridan and repaid the general's confidence with a victory over the Cheyenne on the Washita River in November 1868. His standing as an Indian fighter soared in some circles, and sank in others, where his victory was denounced as a massacre of women and children. Controversy never hurt Custer's image as a fighting officer. But what stands out in his service on the Southern Plains through the spring of 1869 were his long marches—indeed, gallops—across vast swaths of

country, and his carefully cultivated reputation as a peerless hunter and a man who liked to lead the way, riding with the scouts, not following them.

Reconstruction duty in Kentucky, even with ample opportunity to savor the pleasures of bluegrass horseflesh, grew wearisome, and Custer was elated when in February 1873 the Seventh was reassigned to the Department of Dakota for service against the Sioux. Within days of arriving at Fort Rice, 24 miles below Fort Lincoln, which was then under construction, he was back in the saddle leading his regiment on the Yellowstone expedition. Mounted to protect the Northern Pacific Railroad's surveyors in the contested territory between end-of-track at Bismarck, across the river from Fort Lincoln, and a point due west on the Yellowstone River, the expedition was under the command of Colonel, Brevet Major General, David S. Stanley. When it struck the Yellowstone, the expedition proceeded along the river to Pompey's Pillar, the take-off point for an unsurveyed stretch on the proposed Northern Pacific line. Without independent command in 1873, Custer chafed at the constraints imposed on him by General Stanley; in 1874 he was in charge of the expedition and could give his roaming propensities free rein.

The idea of visiting new country and bestowing names on the land naturally appealed to Custer, but he viewed himself not as another Lewis and Clark so much as a plainsman, a restless soul who liked to see what was over the next hill. He knew men like Wild Bill Hickok and Buffalo Bill Cody, and they were his ideal. They belonged to what has been described as a "flamboyant fraternity," with a dress code that ran to long hair, buckskins, and a broad-brimmed hat set at a rakish angle. Custer expressed his allegiance to the plainsman ideal in his own choice of attire—notably a buckskin hunting suit that allowed him to maintain his "Boy General" reputation for sartorial nonconformity.

Of course, the clothes only partly made the man. Custer also prided himself on his competence as a pathfinder. "I am here with six companies of cavalry, having separated from the main expedition several days ago...and marched to this point direct, a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles," he wrote his wife from General Stanley's "Stockade" on the Yellowstone River in 1873:

The country was entirely unknown; no guides knew anything of the route before us.... At headquarters it was not believed that I would get through. So strong was this impression, that in the official order issued for my movement there was a clause authorizing me to burn or abandon all my wagons or other public property, if, in my opinion such steps were necessary to preserve life. I could not help but smile to myself as I read that portion of the order. I had no idea of burning or abandoning a wagon.

This could all be chalked up to conceit. But even critics like Private Ewert said that Custer was undaunted when it came to scouting ahead, and as the Black Hills expedition neared its end, Custer would tell his wife how busy he had been, "and how hard and constantly I have worked to try and make the expedition successful. I have attempted to be several other things besides commanding officer—particularly guide—since the expedition started."

The Black Hills expedition, in accordance with General Terry's orders, was to reconnoiter the route from Fort Lincoln to Bear Butte and then explore the area to the south, southeast, and southwest. Since it had to march 292 miles before it was even in position to enter the Black Hills proper, getting there and back was more than half the fun. Of the 60 days the expedition spent in the field, less than 26 were spent in the Black Hills. The rest were occupied crossing the prairie and Bad Lands.

The expedition entered the Black Hills from the northwest on July 20 and exited them heading east on August 14. Prior to entering the Black Hills, the party's judgment on the country traversed appears to have been mostly negative. Members of the engineering and scientific party told Lieutenant Calhoun that "they had formed a very unfavorable impression concerning this region." But on the 20th, "their unfavorable opinions vanished like the 'morning cloud and early dew,' and they were astonished to behold such a sudden change." Captain Ludlow, in his official report, confirmed Calhoun's observation:

The change from the hot, dry, burned-up landscape...was wonderful. The temperature was delightful; the air laden with sweet wild odors; the grass knee-deep and exceedingly luxuriant and fresh; while wild cherries, blueberries, and gooseberries abounded, as well as many varieties of flowers. All these advantages, combined with that of an abundance of pure cold water, were ours....

On November 7, 1805, prematurely as it turned out, William Clark penned the immortal words: "Ocan in view! O! the joy!" His outburst can still send shivers down the spine. If Custer had an "O! the joy!" moment in the Black Hills, it occurred early, on July 25, when he led the expedition into what he named Floral Valley. In his official dispatch he wrote:

Its equal I have never seen. Every step of our march that day was amid flowers of the most exquisite colors and perfume. So luxuriant in growth were they that men plucked them without dismounting from the saddle.... It was a strange sight to glance back at the advancing columns of cavalry, and behold the men with beautiful bouquets in their hands, while the head-gear of the horses was decorated with wreaths of flowers fit to crown a queen of May.

Ah, Fairy-land! Custer, for all of his reputation as a flamboyant officer with a flair for the dramatic, wrote prose that was often mannered and stiff. But the Black Hills had freed up the poet in him, resulting in this unforgettable image of soldiers at play in the fields of the Lord. Depression might stalk the land, and politics, as always, were a corrupt mess. But out in Dakota Territory the world was fresh as morning and the prospect of exploring unfamiliar country—and literally prospecting for gold—kept hearts light. In this spirit, the exploration proceeded.

On July 26 William Illingworth perched his tripod and camera on a rocky promontory above Castle Creek valley and created a masterpiece—Western exploration's most thrilling photograph. Two strategies suggest themselves in portraying exploration. One can frame the subject from the explorers' perspective as they scan the country ahead. An artist at mid century, Thomas M. Burnham, did exactly that in painting "The Lewis and Clark Expedition." The area behind the two explorers is washed in the light of knowledge, while the area before them is cast in deep shadow. It is the dark mystery that they must penetrate, shedding light as they go. Illingworth favored a different strategy. He adopted the perspective of the uninhabited hills, observing the explorers' advance. He showed the expedition's wagon train snaking its way through the valley below—a serpent invading Paradise. Of course, that was not his judgment. His is the perspective from on high, God's view, the magisterial gaze. Capturing it involves a sleight of hand, of course, placing the photographer in advance of the explorers, though evidence of how Illingworth managed this trick can be seen in the valley below where close inspection reveals his spring wagon with its precious cargo of glass plates and chemicals, awaiting his return from the heights. In the full image one can even see his developing tent on the rocks to the left. But such details need not spoil the illusion. Illingworth's photograph fairly shouts, "Heeeere's Custer!!" Is there a finer picture anywhere illustrating the idea of exploration?

On July 31 several of the expedition's officers enjoyed a sparkling good time, a moonlight-and-magnolia moment in the Black Hills. The abstemious Custer was away from camp doing his pathfinding, climbing Harney's Peak five miles to the east with a small party of dedicated explorers. They had "great difficulty" in making the ascent, but enjoyed the view from its crest, "the highest point in the Black Hills," Custer noted. There, "we drank the health of the veteran out of compliment to whom the peak was named"—General William S. Harney, in short, and presumably with water on Custer's part.

The big party was back at camp. The enlisted men whiled away the long summer day playing a game of baseball—a genuine Black Hills "first," including a dispute over the umpire's impartiality. Afterward, some of the cavalry officers hosted a champagne supper. A tarpaulin was spread under the pines, a box of cigars passed around, and bottles of champagne—at least one per person, Illingworth's photograph shows—uncorked.

The gentlemen had become "rather 'boozy' before ten o'clock p.m.," Private Ewert observed; a reporter added, "The whole party were pretty well hobbled." Since Company H's captain, Frederick W. Benteen, was among the revellers, the H Company Glee Club provided musical accompaniment, then was sent to disturb the "peaceful slumbers" of a correspondent who had turned in early. The reporter repaid the quartet's renditions of "Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming," "Dinah's Wedding," "Vacant Chair," and "Under the Willows" with two bottles of whiskey, which, Ewert assures us, were gone before morning. Custer's group did not straggle back from its Harney's Peak excursion until one o'clock in the morning. By then, no doubt, all the revelers were enjoying their "peaceful slumbers."

I do not mean to minimize the expedition's hard work of clearing deadfalls, climbing mountains, and locating paths into the Black Hills' park-like valleys. Custer's party was so late getting back to camp from Harney's Peak because the return, Captain Ludlow reported, "was a struggle against almost every possible obstacle—rocks, creeks, marshes, willow and aspen thickets, pine timber, dead and fallen trees, steep hillsides and precipitous ravines." Perhaps having heard once too often that the Black Hills expedition was just an extended picnic, Private Charles "Chip" Creighton tartly remarked, "We had what you might call a picnic, with nothing to do but cut down trees and build roads."

In the opinion of most participants, however, it was all a grand picnic. Illingworth's views of the various camps in the Black Hills seem less martial than Arcadian fantasy fulfilled—including his pictures of the "permanent camp" (August 1-5) in Agnes Park, named after a Custer family friend. From here, exploring parties fanned out to the south and southeast, one under Custer himself, and near this camp the prospectors, panning on French Creek on August 5, confirmed earlier reports. There was gold in the Black Hills, "in small, yet paying, quantities," to quote Custer's report. Private Creighton put his own spin on matters:

I was detailed to accompany prospectors as one of a guard. This was a fine trip if you think looking for gold is fun. Try it sometime for your own enjoyment. Dig a hole four or five feet deep through gravel and sand until you come to what is called "bed-rock," then you commence to wash the gravel, and after having worked all day, you find no gold. If this doesn't satisfy you, repeat the process the next day and perhaps you will succeed in finding, by extra hard work, gold paying from four to five dollars; the next day nothing, and so on. It is fun if you like it, and it's fun if you don't.

Still, fun it was. The monotony of garrison duty over summer had been avoided, a relief to officers and men alike. Soldiers hunted the abundant game (no buffalo, however) and fished in

crystalline streams; the trout rose readily to the fly. Even Private Ewert allowed that Agnes Park "is as near faultless as nature, unassisted by human hands, could make it."

Everything considered, the 1874 expedition was a success. "In entering the Black Hills from any direction, the most serious, if not the only obstacles, were encountered at once, near the outer base," Custer reported. "This probably accounts for the mystery which has so long existed regarding the character of the interior." Many natural features now bore names—Custer's Gulch, Custer's Valley, Custer's Canyon, Custer Park. Like that veteran whom he toasted on July 31, Custer even had a mountain named in his honor, Custer Peak.

No picnic would be complete without a group photograph, and Illingworth obliged. On August 13 the officers and scientific men posed in camp on Box Elder Creek at the eastern edge of the Black Hills, with Custer lolling in the grass and his Arikara scout Bloody Knife seemingly standing guard over him. With that formality out of the way, it was time to head home. Wrote Custer:

Nearly every one [was] loath to leave a region which had been found so delightful in almost every respect. Behind us the grass and foliage were clothed in green of the freshness of May. In front of us, as we cast our eyes over the plains below, we saw nothing but a comparatively parched, dried surface, the sun-burnt pasturage of which offered a most uninviting prospect both to horse and rider.

Custer's prose was again pitch perfect, evoking the contrasting images of the West as garden and the West as desert. By extension, the expedition's departure from the Black Hills on August 14 could be considered an expulsion from a western Eden. Certainly, leaving the hills marked the end to the summer's idyll. Now the soldiers were impatient to be home.

The Black Hills expedition's return to Fort Lincoln on August 30 was triumphant but in striking contrast to its departure when the soldiers rode away with guidons snapping and the wagons in perfect formation. Now the caravan looked more like an army in retreat. Illingworth made a wonderful photograph of the returning expedition, bedraggled, certainly, but displaying the unmistakable swagger of success. And Elizabeth Custer provided such a good description of their arrival at Fort Lincoln that you can see in your mind what she saw with her eyes:

When the day of their return came, I was simply wild with joy I hid behind the door as the command rode into garrison, ashamed to be seen crying and laughing and dancing up and down with excitement. I tried to remain there and receive the general, screened from the eyes of outsiders. It was impossible....

When we could take time to look every one over, they were all amusing enough.... Many, like the general, had grown heavy beards. All were sun-burnt, their hair faded, and their clothes so patched that the original blue of the uniform was scarcely visible....

The boots were out at the toes, and the clothing of some were so beyond repairing that the officers wanted to escape observation by slipping, with their tattered rags, into the kitchen-door. The instruments of the band were jammed and tarnished, but they still produced enough music for us to recognize the old tune of "Garryowen," to which the regiment always returned.

By and by the long wagon-train appeared. Many of the covers had elk horns strapped to them, until they looked like strange bristling animals as they drew near. Some of the antlers were brought to us as presents. Besides them we had skins, specimens of gold and mica, and petrified shells of iridescent colors, snake rattles, pressed flowers, and petrified wood. My husband brought me a keg of the most delicious water from a mountain-stream. It was almost my only look at clear water for years....

In his reminiscences of service in the Seventh Cavalry from 1872 to 1876, Lieutenant Charles Varnum devoted a single paragraph to the Black Hills expedition since nothing startling had occurred. "We marched west to the Little Missouri river & south to the Belle Fourche, then entered the hills near Inyan Kara peak, and passed through the hills emerging near where Rapid City, S.D., now is," Varnum recalled. "We were gone sixty days & marched about 1200 miles in all." Private Creighton summed things up even more succinctly: "Without any particularly exciting events, we arrived back at Fort Lincoln...."

All things considered, predictions were right: the Black Hills expedition had proven a pleasant summer's excursion. A simmering garrison feud between two enlisted men did result in a fatal shooting, and two other soldiers died of natural causes. The fact of Sioux ownership of the Black Hills had been confined to a few distant glimpses and one close (but largely peaceful) encounter on July 26 with a five-lodge hunting party of 27 Sioux from the Red Cloud Agency in Nebraska. The Hills were *terra incognita* only to whites; for the Sioux who regularly travelled through them, they were simply an extended backyard. Smoke signals were seen and interpreted as dire warnings of impending hostilities, but none materialized. Anticipated dangers proved as ephemeral as the smoke. The biggest Sioux problem Custer encountered that summer was preventing his Arikara scouts from butchering the Sioux hunting party on the 26th. One of the Sioux was apparently wounded by a Santee scout when he chose to part company with Custer's column, but the general could fairly claim after his return: "Some thought I courted an engagement [with the Sioux]—such was not the case, and I congratulate myself and the country on the return of the expedition without bloodshed."

For Custer, the big news that summer was that "at last" he had "killed a grisly after a most exciting hunt and contest." On August 7 he finally bagged his bear—or so he claimed. Private Ewert insisted it was just an old cinnamon, not a grizzly, and doubt remained as to which member of the hunting party shown in the Illingworth photograph actually fired the fatal shot. "Colonel Ludlow, Bloody Knife, and Private Noonan are with me in the group," Custer wrote his wife, since "we constituted the hunting party." But, he added, "I have his claws." To the victor belong the spoils. That was Custer's bear.

Of course, scientific knowledge had been augmented in the process of getting Custer his trophy. Bill Goetzmann is not unkind in assessing the fruits of the Black Hills expedition, but clearly its scientific work was compromised by haste and mixed motives. In contrast were the reports issued in the wake of the Newton-Jenny expedition to the Black Hills the following year—a nearly five-month exploration mounted at the instigation of the Interior Department to determine "with accuracy whether the 'Black Hills' country does, or does not, contain valuable mineral deposits." Its final report, Goetzmann writes, "compared favorably with anything ever done by government explorers." Too, the 1875 expedition reflected a shift already under way from military reconnaissances like Custer's to "academic-oriented" civilian ventures "staffed by experts from Eastern and national institutions." The age of the pathfinder in army blue was drawing to a close.

Finally, gold had been discovered in the Black Hills in 1874 in quantities sufficient to make newspaper headlines and start excursionists outfitted with pick axes, shovels, and pans on their way to Dakota, in further violation of Sioux treaty rights. Wishful thinking propelled them, since, as Captain Benteen observed, on "our summer picnic to the Black Hills of Dakota,...monstrous

little of the root of all evil" was actually found. Nevertheless, "reports of having gotten such fabulous quantities, turned about half the West loose, searching for their share of the golden content of the Hills." The Indian scouts who in 1874 interpreted the smoke signals they observed as portents of trouble ahead had only to wait two years to see their prophecy fulfilled.

Brian W. Dippie, professor of history, has taught at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, since 1970 and published a number of books including Custer's Last Stand: The Anatomy of an American Myth, and The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy. This article is based on a presentation given during the Beyond Lewis and Clark Symposium at the Washington State History Museum in September 2004, dedicated to the scholarship of William Goetzmann.