

Chief Plenty Coups: The Final Dignity

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Source: *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Autumn, 1966), pp. 28-39

Published by: Montana Historical Society

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4517093>

Accessed: 05-01-2018 21:35 UTC

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CHIEF PLENTY COUPS

THERE HAS been ceaseless conjecture among historians and philosophers about the role through history of the true patriot: when a nation or people is conquered, is the patriot one who leads his people in defiance—however hopeless—or is he rather one who seeks to lead them honorably to an inevitable new way of life.

The long history of relentless inevitability for the American Indian has been probed and subjected to inquiry. Conclusions have been drawn that vacillation and dishonor among whites have been as responsible as any other factors for the degradation of the redman, that there were great patriots to the Indian cause, but that there were also “bad” Indians—weak and wicked and cruel.

The purpose here is not to set forth the representatives of all these types, but rather to bring the story of one of them to honorable conclusion. For although many may yet classify him among those who “knuckled under,” Chief Plenty Coups of the Crows emerges in the light of history as a patriot, a great and intelligent “bridge” between the old ways and the new.

Neither is it the intent to emphasize the earlier career of Plenty Coups during the Indian Wars. For this, too, has been well documented and told many times. The emphasis will be on this good man’s later life and the perpetuation of his memory—the latter a project in which this writer has been deeply interested.

Plenty Coups was born in 1848 near the site of present-day Billings, Montana. He died on his farm at Pryor, Montana on March 3, 1932, so venerated that his people decided not to name a successor. Plenty Coups lived and died the last chief of the Crows.

During the first 35 years of his life, Plenty Coups lived the life of roaming Indians who traveled in bands, headed by a chief. They went where they could find the buffalo and other game. They knew nothing of the ways of the white man. Plenty Coups himself probably saw the first white man farming in the Gallatin Valley, but it effected him or his tribe little if at all, for their Yellowstone Valley and its adjacent valleys were still entirely unoccupied by whites.

But now comes the inevitability: after the Battle of the Little Big Horn and the subsequent surge of punitive warfare against the tribesmen, the Yellowstone country began settling rapidly. By the time the railroad arrived in 1882, the buffalo—the main staff of life—had all but disappeared.

The Crows, no less than other tribes, now had to depend upon the largesse of the Great White Father for food and clothing. It was at this juncture that the young chief, Plenty Coups, became a leader among his people. He saw that the Indian must adopt at least some of the white man’s ways or perish. By no means all his contemporaries agreed with him. The Sioux and Cheyennes still thought they could drive the white man from their country. Many of them preferred death if they could not.

The Crows, pushed by these two tribes against the mountains where the valleys were well occupied by white farmers and ranchers, now had to make a choice. Most of them decided to ally themselves with the white man. Undoubtedly, Plenty Coups’ was the decisive voice.

Plenty Coups had been a chief since he was 25 years old, and he achieved his rank by accomplishing the four classic deeds of valor: He had four times touched an enemy in combat; he had four times stolen a horse tied in an enemy camp; he had been a leader and “carried the pipe” of a war party 11 times, and

The Final Dignity

by FREDERICK C. KRIEG



PHOTO BY K. F. ROAHEN, BILLINGS

finally he had five times snatched a bow or gun from an enemy in combat.

The Crows had participated in the Battle of the Rosebud, the indecisive prelude to the Little Big Horn disaster of less than two weeks later. Plenty Coups, along with several other chiefs and 135 Crows, had been in the scouting forces of General George Crook.

He had been highly impressed with Crook's camp on Goose Creek where Sheridan, Wyoming is now located. There were 1,000 soldiers in this camp and the well organized appearance of the camp made a great impression on him. In turn, General Crook was impressed by the Crow warriors, dressed in all their finery and displaying expert horsemanship.

The Crows, together with about an equal number of Shoshones under Chief Washakie, were an important factor in the battle. Plenty Coups is personally credited with saving the life of Captain Guy V. Henry who had been seriously wounded by a band of Sioux.

Yet Plenty Coups was never slavishly loyal to the white man, and was more than once courageous in his criticism. A case in point was an incident near the mouth of the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone in the bitterly cold February of 1884. A band of Piegans raided the Crow camp and stole a number of horses, trailing them across the frozen Yellowstone near Park City. Here they also stole some horses from white settlers. Plenty Coups with seven of his tribesmen set out in pursuit. At Park City they were joined by four white men and Plenty Coups sent four of his Indians back to their own village. After riding all night in below zero weather, the combined posse caught up with the thieves in the Hailstone Basin. In the ensuing skirmish, two of the white men were killed and one seriously wounded. Two of the Piegans were killed by the Crows, according to Plenty Coups. About 60 horses were recovered, but some were shot in the skirmish.

One of the horses lost was a valuable stallion belonging to Matthew M. Brown.



An original of this picture, taken of the Crow delegation in Washington, D. C. in 1879, still hangs in the Plenty Coups Museum. It was undoubtedly one of the most highly prized of all

Brown filed a claim against the Government for the value of his horse on the theory that since the Indians were wards, the Government was responsible for their actions. In support of his claim he presented a number of affidavits. One was from Plenty Coups, who described himself therein as "a farmer and stockgrower and chief of the Crow Indians." Plenty Coups was very critical of the manner in which the white men conducted themselves. He said he would have preferred to fight the Piegans without the help of inexperienced white men.



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, NATIONAL ARCHIVES PHOTO

the chief's possessions. Standing, left to right: A. N. Quivey, Two Belly, A. R. Keller, and Tom Stewart. Seated, left to right: Old Crow, Medicine Crow, Long Elk, Plenty Coups, and Pretty Eagle.

In contrast with the above account, the *Billings Stockgrowers Gazette*, in its issue of January 21, 1886, gave an interesting account of how Plenty Coups recovered stock stolen by white men:

The Crow Chief Plentycoues (sic) whose stock was run off by white horse thieves last week, returned from the chase Saturday, and reports having completely turned the tables on the thieves. He and his braves tracked the horses through Pryor Gap and into Wyoming, and finally overhauled the band between Stinking Water and Gray Bull Creek. The thieves had halted to

lay in a supply of beef, and when first seen had just killed one of Mr. Lovell's steers, at some distance from their camp and the horses.

Plentycoues waited until the men were absorbed in the operation of skinning the beef. And then took possession of the horses, loaded on the saddles, tent, and other camp outfit, and immediately started on the return trip, feeling very proud of having secured not only his own horses, but those of the thieves, with some good saddles and other collaterals.

When the Indians left the men were still busy skinning the steer, and Plentycoues was unable to report their remarks when they found themselves "set afoot" and stripped of everything except the beef. It is supposed that the usually silent hills echoed with a continuous torrent of the most vehement profanity that has been heard in northern Wyoming since the discovery of Colter's Hell. The Indians believe that one of the thieves has been an employe on the Lovell range. It seems though the Wyoming authorities ought to capture these worthies, and put a summary stop to their depredations.

Plenty Coups took an important part in the negotiations for the Northern Pacific Railroad right-of-way across the Crow Reservation. Few of the chiefs had realistic ideas of the value of money or property. One Crow summed up a typical attitude by saying, "All I want is food for myself and my children as long as I live." Plenty Coups, however, asked \$400 for each lodge of the Crows. The final settlement was to be \$20,000, paid in annuities. There were approximately 500 lodges in the Crow Tribe at the time. His demands were met.

In the month of August, 1883, a subcommittee of the special committee of the United States Senate on Indian Affairs, headed by Senator H. L. Dawes of Maine, visited the Crow Agency, at that time located about four miles south of Absarokee. The ostensible reason for the visit: to investigate grievances Montana Indians might have against the govern-

ment. The real reason insofar as the Crow Indians were concerned: to induce them to give up a large portion of their reservation. At that time their lands extended from the Boulder Valley on the west to the Little Big Horn Valley on the east. A number of chiefs spoke, but as usual Plenty Coups had a better understanding of the situation than any of the others.

Following are excerpts from his testimony, as recorded in Senate Report No. 283, 48th Congress:

Q. Do you want to go to farming and take care of yourself like a white man?

A. *We want houses and farms along the creeks and if the Great Father will give us cattle we will raise them, and kill a calf once in a while and eat it with potatoes.*

Q. If the Great Father gives you farms and cattle, will you want rations too?

A. *Yes.*

Q. Do you want the Great Father to do more for you than he does for the white man? He doesn't give both to the white man.

A. *We would like to have rations all the same, because we don't know anything about farming yet.*

Q. Have you planted any corn yourself this year?

A. *All of us raised pretty good corn this year.*

Q. How much have you planted yourself?

A. *I put the corn in the ground and covered it myself.*

Q. Have you a squaw?

A. *Yes, I have a squaw; and I think all these men here are married too.*

Q. Did you or your squaw put the corn in the ground and do the work on the farm?

A. *I did the hardest work myself, and my squaw did the lightest work.*

Q. Would you like to live and dress just like a white man or be like an Indian, and dress like an Indian?

A. *I would like to have clothes like the white man, to put on when I go to work. We are not fools; the white man*

killed some of my relations in the lower country and I have said nothing about it, but I was not asleep; and they took my horses from me in the day time too.

Q. Who did this?

A. *The white men did it over on the other side of the Little Big Horn in open day.*

Q. The white men punish their people when they steal horses. Do Indians punish Indians when they steal the white man's horses?

A. *If Indians go and steal horses we follow them and kill them, but we point our guns away from the white man when he steals horses.*

Q. Is there anything else you wish to say?

A. *I have nothing else to say except to tell you that I do not want the Agency moved, but want to keep it where it is.*

The Government had already decided to move the Crow Agency from the Rosebud Valley to the Little Big Horn Valley, and buildings were already under construction at the site of the present Crow Agency. A number of other Indian chiefs and white men—principally army officers from Fort Custer—also appeared at this hearing. All the whites wanted the Big Horn River as the western boundary of the Crow Reservation. The Boulder Valley was the western boundary at that time so they wanted the Crow Indians to surrender for a consideration all the territory lying south of the Yellowstone between the Big Horn and the Boulder. All the Indian chiefs were opposed to this change. Chief Plenty Coups had already established himself on Pryor Creek. Jim Annin in his book, *They Gazed on the Beartooths*, published in 1964, says that Plenty Coups selected his allotment on Pryor Creek because there were many wild plums in this valley and "he loved to spit plum seeds."

The main argument used in proposing reduction of the reservation was that it was entirely too large for 3,500 wild Indians, that the only way to make the Crows self-supporting was to teach them how to farm and raise enough food for

themselves. The treaty, it was contended, provided for annuities for only a certain number of years. This the Crows did not understand; they assumed annuities would be in perpetuity.

I shall now quote the testimony of only one white man—Deputy United States Marshal Addison N. Quivey—a man who had lived among Indians for over 30 years. He was a self-admitted expert on Indians, and Crow Indians in particular. He said, "Indians are like children and would have to be treated as such." But he added, "The Crow Indians could be made self-supporting in five years if given the proper assistance." This is an indication of the confusion which prevailed regarding the Indian problem.

One writer quotes Plenty Coups as he spoke to his people at a time of deep discouragement. They could not move their camps because they were dependent upon the food supply handed out at the agency.

You, who were brave men, have turned into pigs. I am ashamed of you, self pity has stolen your courage, robbed you of your spirit and self-respect; stop mourning the old days—they are gone with the buffalo. Go to your sweat-lodges and cleanse your bodies so you may be fit to pray to Ab-badt-dabt-deah for forgiveness. Then clean out your dirty lodges and go to work! I, Plenty Coups, ask you to do this before you are ruined forever.

C. H. Bartsow, who came to Crow Agency as a clerk in 1879, kept a scrapbook for many years. Containing newspaper clippings from both eastern and local papers, this treasure recently became available to the writer. One interesting item contained therein is Charles Hallack's account of his trip up the Yellowstone, published on February 18, 1882, by *American Field*. Hallack came by stage from Fort Keogh and passed through Huntley and Coulson. Coulson at the time had a good frame hotel, a large store, and a sawmill. The writer described Crow Agency as follows:

The Crow Agency occupies a picturesque site in the valley of the Big

Rosebud, a dashing stream filled with trout, which must not be confounded with the other Rosebud, which empties into the Yellowstone some miles above Keogh, the two streams being 250 miles apart. The location is beautified by numerous groves of timber. The principal buildings are built of adobe brick, arranged in Mexican style on three sides of a plaza or court, with an arched entrance in the center; a part of the court is devoted to a kitchen garden which is irrigated by acequias or ditches supplied by the Rosebud stream. A large frame warehouse occupies the fourth side of the plaza. Outside of the court are numerous workshops, stables, stores and a sawmill. In front of the main entrance is a range of comfortable, one-story adobe cottages, fronting a street, and occupied by "squaw men" that is whites with Indian wives who draw Uncle Sam's rations by virtue of their dusky alliances. Some of these dwellings are furnished with the comforts and good taste of well-to-do white people. Near by, on the borders of a little stream which runs through a grove is an Indian burying ground, with the boxed remains of the dead perched on scaffolds, and some in the forked branches of the trees. The burial caskets are chiefly merchandise boxes obtained from the post trader. One of these substitutes for coffins was marked "D W" in a diamond, and inscribed, "Improved Double Weight" in the customary place of the plate. About a mile above the Agency is the permanent Crow village, usually comprising about 200 lodges, but varying according to the number of Indians in camp. Some of the lodges have large fenced gardens attached, the best of which belongs to a fine old chief named Iron Bull.

Some of the Indians were really making a serious attempt to farm and raise at least garden produce. An article published at Hampton, Virginia, in the *Southern Workman* August 3, 1883, relates that there was a 75-acre garden patch divided into 24 tracts on which were raised potatoes, beans, carrots,

turnips, cabbages, corn, and even lettuce. The article continues:

We found Chief Plenty Coos (Lots of Scalps) and his wife Magpie, picking summer and other squashes, to slice up and dry for winter use or to eat right away—much fruit is thus put up by them. Others were weeding crops. Of the 80 in all who worked in the tracts, but 20 had ever worked before in their lives.

Major Henry J. Armstrong called the most thoughtful men together, talked to them as he would to white men, showed the wisdom and ultimate necessity of learning to take care of themselves. They readily agreed to do what they could. On his summons they came to the fields with wild, kicking ponies that had never been harnessed before. They knew nothing about harnessing or plowing.

It was planned to make the Indians self-supporting by small farming and raising cattle. Their ponies were frequently stolen by roving Piegan, and Thin Belly, who claimed to be chief of all the Crows at that time, said frost killed crops and rocks broke wagons and plows. He hoped Major Armstrong would choose a better place for his people.

One writer commented: "The task of teaching the Indians to work is exceedingly vexatious, the first lesson begins with the harnessing of a horse. This learned, the next step is to instruct them how to attach the animal to a plow, then the manner of using the implement."

Late in 1884 and early in 1885 negotiations were under way to lease—at a very nominal figure—the entire Crow Agency to a syndicate of Colorado stockmen. When this became known in Billings the Board of Trade took steps to stop the negotiations. Most of the Crow Chiefs had already signed the lease—that is, "they touched the pen." But when a hearing was held most of the chiefs testified they did not understand the provisions of the lease and they had been told that if they did not sign, their rations would be cut off.

Plenty Coups was not present at the

hearing but a Billings paper carried this article under date of February 19, 1885:

Our readers will recollect that Plenty Coues, who is the most influential chief among the Crows, and has the largest band of Indians under him, was absent from the Agency when the Board of Trade Committee was taking the testimony about the lease. He has sent in word that he has had a very successful hunting trip, killed forty elk, and that he and his band are going to visit their good friends in Billings to trade. That he is very thankful to his friends in Billings for opposing the lease. That he was deceived into signing it, but now he wants the Great Father to stop it. They are now camped on Blue Creek, (probably Blue Water Creek) which heads in the Pryor Mountains, a tributary of Clark's Fork. Plenty Coues is the head of 47 lodges.

The lease was not confirmed, much to the satisfaction of the local stockmen in the Billings area.

In the fall of 1885 a Billings paper had this to say:

Plenty Coues is ambitious to become a farmer. He and his tribe have settled on Pryor Creek,—the monster potatoes the Chief brought with him to town show that he has had some measure of success. He has fourteen log houses, one story, and one and a half, and four wagons that he purchased with his own money, besides the one he received from the agency, and Camp Bros. have just sold the ambitious aborigine a forty dollar cook stove. He shows with pride the marks of labor on his hands, and wants his people to adopt the ways of the whites.

A few years later, on March 27, 1890, the Billings *Gazette* gave this account of a tribal meeting:

At the recent Crow Council, a number of Chiefs spoke on reservation matters. The following spoke, Pretty Eagle, Plenty Coos, Old Dog, Bell Rock, Wet, Takes-a-Wrinkle, Big Ox, Big Snake, White Mouth, Broke - a - Horse's Leg, Bob Tail Crow, Medicine Crow, and Spotted Horse. Plenty Coos spoke as fol-

lows: "These are my people here today, I am their Chief, I will talk for them. I would like to see all of them supplied with wagons, plows, mowing machines, and such farming implements as they may need. I understand that the money obtained by leases is used towards purchasing these things. That is a good plan. Let the cattlemen stay who pay; those who don't put them off. Don't let any more come on, don't let those who are on now bring any more stock and put them with theirs. *I want the men who have cattle here on the Crow lands to employ half Crow and half white men to work their cattle. I want them to pay the Crows as much as they pay white men. I want them to make them work and teach them the white man's ways so that they may learn.* We may have stock of our own some day, if we don't our children will. I don't want any white man to cut hay on Crow lands. The Great Father has given us mowing machines to cut hay with, we want to cut our own hay; we want the white man to buy hay from us, we don't want to beg and buy our hay from them. This is our land and not white men's. The Great Father has sent us this agent, we all like him, we know he is good, we know what he says is for our benefit, if we did not like him we would say so. I don't like sheep on Crow lands. I don't like horses on Crow lands, if they won't employ Crows to work, put them off entirely. I have spoken, if my people are not satisfied, let them get up and come here and talk, I am ready to listen.

By this time it will have become apparent to the reader that our chief's name was spelled a number of different ways. Plenty Coups is the correct way of rendering his name, because it has the same meaning as Alech-cheah-ahoosh, which in the Crow language means "Many Achievements." Oddly enough, in governmental records his name is given as Plenty Coos. This is probably due to an error on the part of a clerk, who did not know the meaning of the word *Coup*. To add to the confusion here is a quote from



MARSHAL FOCH of France, supreme commander of Allied forces during World War I, made a special side trip to visit Chief Plenty Coups in March, 1921. This picture was taken at Crow Agency.

PRESENTATION of Plenty Coups' home as a memorial was the occasion for this photo, taken Aug. 8, 1928. Former State Sen. F. B. Connelly of Yellowstone County and Major Gen. James G. Harbord stand with the aging chief of the Crows.



PHOTO BY F. C. KRIEG

the *Kimball Index* of Kimball, South Dakota, May 7, 1891:

Plenty *Cause*, the Crow Chief, with about 1,000 Indians visited Fort Custer, Montana, and talked with Gen. Brisbin about the proposition to lease their land to the cattlemen for grazing purposes. They have cattle of their own, he said, and did not want strangers on the reservation. Several firms had 50,000 head of cattle grazing on their lands and they were enough. No more must come. The Indians appeared angry and Gen. Brisbin said he would notify the Great Father of what they said.

The Indians at this time had a great many ponies and dogs. At the hearing before the Dawes Committee many white men advocated that the Indians be induced to sell their ponies and buy cattle with the money. This the tribesmen were reluctant to do. One writer complained that the agent had not done his full duty on the matter of killing dogs: "he has killed only about 5,000, there are some 3,000 left. We saw one family with fifteen."

The process of civilizing the Crows and making them self-supporting could not, of course, be accomplished in the lifetime of one man. In the early days the Crow Chiefs were anxious to have the white men who had married into the tribe remain with them and many did. But these men had little or no interest in teaching the Indians how to farm. Most of them married into the tribe because they preferred the Indian way of life to that of the white farmer. Over the years the government provided men to teach the Indians how to farm and some of them have become good farmers and stockmen. But others have a common human failing: they won't work if they don't have to in order to obtain the necessities of life.

During all these years, Chief Plenty Coups frequently represented his people in Washington, D. C. The government early recognized that he was a man of intelligence. As early as 1890 he was recognized as the leading chief of the Crow Indians, although there were many



PRESIDENT WARREN G. HARDING poses on the White House lawn in 1921 with a delegation of Crows, including Chief Plenty Coups standing

chiefs older than he. In a census taken of the Crow Tribe in 1885 there are listed 26 different chiefs, each with a band of followers. Plenty Coups had 47 lodges with 294 persons in his band. The Crow Tribe at that time had 514 lodges with a total population of 3,123.

Chief Plenty Coups was selected to represent all American Indians at the burial of the Unknown Soldier of World War I, in Arlington National Cemetery in 1921. High ranking representatives from all of the allied nations who participated in that memorable conflict were present. It was a most impressive ceremony, but none were more dignified than Plenty Coups as he placed his chief's headdress and coup stick, with feather attached, on the monument. These objects may be seen today, preserved in a glass case. He met Marshal Foch, supreme commander of all the allied forces, and when that illustrious



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second from the left. Between the Crow leader and the President is Indian Commissioner Charles H. Burke. Other Indians in the picture are unidentified.

warrior made a triumphal tour of the United States, he had his special train detoured from Billings to Crow Agency so he could again meet the Chief in his own land. This event made such an impression on Plenty Coups that he spoke of himself as "Chief of All Chiefs."

On March 4, 1928, Plenty Coups and his wife, Strikes-the-Iron, executed a Deed of Trust providing that 40 acres of his 190-acre farm was to be "set apart as a park and recreation ground for the members of the Crow Tribe of Indians, and white people jointly . . . in trust and perpetuity." It was the intention of Plenty Coups to will his property to the United States Government. It was found that this could not be done, but the government went through the motions of accepting the farm so as not to offend the kindly old chief.

An elaborate ceremony took place at his home on August 8, 1928. Scores of

Crows and white men gathered there as General James G. Harbord received the gift of land on behalf of the American people.

The county commissioners of Big Horn County became trustees when Plenty Coups died in 1932. For nearly 20 years the income from the farm was used to repair the buildings and fences on the farm, but nothing was done to establish the museum in one room of his dwelling as provided in the trust deed. In 1951 the county commissioners of Big Horn County resigned as trustees and the Billings Kiwanis Club, a corporation, became the trustees under a court order dated August 8, 1951.

One room in Plenty Coups' home had been left undisturbed for nearly 20 years when a committee from the Kiwanis Club—with the assistance of Claude E. Schaeffer, Curator of the Museum of the American Plains Indian at Browning, Montana—arranged the mementos found there in a downstairs room of the dwelling. This is now the Plenty Coups museum. Perhaps the most important item among the exhibits is a coil of hair from the head of Chief Long Hair who died about 1837. It had been preserved as a sacred item and is reputed to be 100 hands, or approximately 26 feet, long. There are other items such a Plenty Coups eagle wing fan, a rifle presented to him by the Prince of Monaco, coup sticks, and a tobacco cutting board. There are also a large number of photographs—many of them autographed by such men as Senator Kendrick, President Theodore Roosevelt, Marshal Foch and other prominent people.

In a cheap suitcase there were numerous letters and papers—indeed, every letter or paper of significance which had come to the Chief was preserved in this modest suitcase. The oldest was a paper signed by Brigadier General Ruger, commandant of Fort Custer in 1887, stating that Plenty Coups was a trustworthy Indian and had permission to leave the reservation. Other letters were from tribal attorneys in Washington, D. C., from senators and congressmen, in regard to legislation affecting the Crow Tribe, and



PHOTO BY F. C. KRIG

80-YEAR-OLD PLENTY COUPS, WHOSE EMINENCE IN HIS TRIBE WAS SO GREAT THAT NO SUCCESSOR AS CHIEF OF THE CROWS HAS EVER BEEN NAMED, MAKES THE DRAMATIC PRESENTATION OF HIS HOME AS A PERMANENT MEMORIAL TO HIS PEOPLE. IT WAS AUG. 8, 1928, LESS THAN FOUR YEARS BEFORE HIS DEATH.

personal letters from Blackfeet and Sioux Indians. One letter was from a trader in Cody, Wyoming who had eagle tail-feathers he wanted to trade for moccasins. One interesting letter was from a Mrs. Flora L. Corby in California. She was married to a descendant of Caleb Greenwood, who married a Crow woman in 1811 and went to California in 1844 where he raised a large family. Mrs. Corby had written to the Crow Tribal Council asking that the descendants of Caleb Greenwood be enrolled as members of the Crow tribe. Her request had been denied and she was now appealing to Chief Plenty Coups. There was also a letter from President Wilson thanking the Chief for an Indian head-dress, which he had presented to the President on one of his visits to Washington, D. C.

Long before the Billings Kiwanis Club became trustees of the park and farm for which provisions were made in his will, they had erected a monument at his grave. It is a five-ton boulder, to which was attached a bronze plaque designed by artist Leroy Greene. Plenty Coups had been an honorary member of the Billings Kiwanis Club since May 14, 1924, at which time George E. Snell of Billings, later to become vice president of Kiwanis International, was adopted as an honorary member of the Crow tribe in an impressive ceremony held on the Yellowstone Co. Courthouse lawn.

There is no doubt that Plenty Coups in his own mind knew that he had done the

right thing when he encouraged his people to adopt the ways of the white man.

But there is room for doubt that the chief was satisfied with the progress they had made. There is a hint of this in the dedication speech he made four years before his death:

This park is not to be a memorial to me, but to the Crow nation. It is given as a token of my friendship for all people, both red and white. The Great Spirit is good to all his children but it seems he loves his white children most. He has never shown my people how to do so many wonderful things his white children are doing. He did give us patience and love of home and children. Our old men have long pondered this matter in their councils and we have come to believe it is because we were late in finding the true God.

Early in 1962 the State of Montana assumed the trusteeship of the Plenty Coups Memorial Park and Museum, making it a part of the State Park system. During the time the Billings Kiwanis Club had acted as trustee, they renovated the room in his home where the museum is located. They also erected a suitable sign at the entrance to the park, placed markers on his grave and on the graves of his wife Kills Together and her sister, Strikes-the-Iron, whom he married after Kills Together had died.

The thousands who have visited this spot would agree that it is fitting to honor this wise and compassionate Indian leader. For he has honored all of us.

FRED C. KRIEG, veteran farm management specialist, civic leader, legislator, and a Montanan since 1917, has long nurtured an interest



1914 graduated from Ellsworth College at Iowa

in the history of the State, especially relating to the Crow tribe. For a number of years he was chairman of the Plenty Coups trust committee of the Plenty Coups museum and restoration of the great chief's one-room log cabin near Pryor, Montana. A native of Lamar, Ark., Krieg moved to Iowa with his family in 1902 and in

Falls. He taught school in Iowa for two years, and after a short stint in banking in Minnesota, came to Montana in 1917 as district manager for a firm of mortgage investment bankers. During World War I, he served with the 28th Division, participating in the Battle of the Argonne. He rejoined his firm after the war, and after a short period as their district manager in Calgary, Alberta, he returned to Billings in charge of Wyoming operations. In 1922, Mr. Krieg established his own firm of farm management and liquidation service, and has operated it ever since. He served in Montana's House of Representatives in 1943, 1945, 1947. Active in Billings service and fraternal organizations, Mr. Krieg was one of the organizers of the Yellowstone Historical Society, serving as secretary and president as well as a board member.