Chapter Thirteen

THE BLACK HILLS AS SACRED GROUND: THE CHRONOLOGY AND CONTROVERSY

There is a continuous record of evidence from prehistoric times to the present of the Black Hills' spiritual significance to the various indigenous peoples who once lived or still live in their vicinity. The Arapahos, Arikaras, Crows, Hidatsas, Kiowas, Mandans, Poncas, and Plains Apaches are among the tribal nations who retained stories in their oral traditions of the Black Hills and/or specific sites in their reaches. The Cheyennes and Lakotas, however, are the two populations who not only hold the richest body of published cultural narratives relating to the Black Hills, but who also maintained an active and continuing spiritual relationship to many sites within their range.

This chapter reviews much of the evidence on sites in and around the Black Hills that many tribal nations consider sacred, and it also discusses the controversy that surrounds at least one tribe's spiritual relationship to the region, the Lakotas'. In doing so, it sets the stage for a more exhaustive and in-depth coverage of materials on Wind Cave National Park and its environs.

I. THE CHRONOLOGY

Two comprehensive articles by Linea Sundstrom one entitled *"Mirror of Heaven: Cross-Cultural Transference of the Sacred Geography of the Black Hills"*(1996) and another *"The Sacred Black Hills: An Ethnohistorical Review"* (1997) offer exhaustive summaries of much of the existing ethnohistoric and ethnographic literature on the sacredness of the Black Hills. In order to place the information on the area in which Wind Cave National Park is located in some perspective, much of the territory that Sundstrom traveled so thoroughly must be covered here. This chapter contextualizes the evidence on sacred sites in relation to the time periods in which it emerged in order to document the overarching integrity and continuity of the sacred stories, ideas, and practices that Lakotas, Cheyennes, and other tribal nations associate with the Black Hills.

A. The Prehistoric and Early Historic Record, Pre-1877

There is a wide range of evidence in the form of rock art, cairns, and medicine wheels to suggest that various locations in and around the Black Hills had spiritual meanings and ritual uses. Some of the richest archaeological remains revealing a sacred connection to the area are exhibited in the region's rock art, and some of the largest concentrations of rock art panels, dating back over a period of 5000 years, are found in the Hogback canyons of the southern Black Hills (Bad Horse 1979; Sundstrom, L. 1984, 1989, 1990, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2001; Sundstrom and Keiser 1998). Certain panels contain motifs that bear striking resemblance to the sacred iconography of tribal nations known to have used the region in the protohistoric and historic eras, including the Cheyennes and Lakotas (Sundstrom, L. 1990, 2001; Sundstrom and Keiser 1998). The archaeological record reveals, as Linea Sundstrom (1997:208) puts it, that the Black Hills area had "considerable, religious significance for much, if not all, of its human habitation."

The spiritual importance of the Black Hills is also revealed in the writings of early European Americans who traveled in the northcentral Plains before 1877, when the United States extinguished tribal title to the area. Of those who wrote about the Hills and their inhabitants, only a few made any comment about their possible spiritual meaning or the sacredness of any of the sites associated with them. One of the earliest accounts is contained in the journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (Moulton 1987:3:179), where William Clark relates a conversation he had on October 1, 1804 with an Arikara chief, who told him that the Black Hills were the winter home of the animals. Although there is no suggestion that this association is sacred, it is entirely consistent with spiritual meanings attached to the Black Hills as a place of emergence and gathering for animals (see earlier discussions in Chapters Nine, Ten, and Twelve).

Also persistent over time is the observation that booming noises emanated from the Hills, a subject Clark reported in his journal entry for 1804, based on information he received from the fur trader, Jon Vallé. When the expedition stopped again at the Arikara villages on their return trip in 1806, Clark was told that local tribes believed the Black Hills made a great noise, which he compared with the Hidatsas' descriptions of the loud sounds originating in the Rocky Mountains (Moulton 1983-87:4:374-375). Again, nothing about the meanings of these sounds to local tribes was recorded, but fifty years later, another trader on the upper Missouri, Edwin Denig would offer further explanation.

Denig is generally credited with offering the first specific account of the Hills' sacredness to the Lakotas. In 1851, he wrote:

> Much superstition is attached to the Black Hills by the Indians. The principal peak, called the Hill of Thunder, is volcanic, and in 1833 was in almost constant action. In almost any clear day large volumes of smoke could be seen, which the Indians took to be the breathing of the Big White Man buried beneath. Unnatural noises are said to be heard, which, whether originating in their fancy or caused by wild beasts, are thought to be moans of the Great White Giant, when pressed upon by rocks as a punishment for being the first aggressor in their territory. They say that he issues forth on occasions and his tracks seen in the snow are twenty feet in length. He is condemned to perpetual incarceration under the mountains as an example to all whites to leave the Indians in quiet possession of their hunting grounds (in Ewers 1961:6).

It is difficult to make sense of what was meant by the "volumes of smoke" issuing from the peak, since the area was not volcanically active at this point in history (Sundstrom, L. 1997:186). It is true, however, that the Lakotas did associate the Hills' highest mountain, Harney Peak, with the *Wakinyan* or Thunders. Other than the echo of thunder, neither Denig nor earlier William Clark, were able to account for these sounds.[1]

Twenty-five years later, in 1875, while traveling in the vicinity of Harney Peak, Professors Henry Newton and Walter Jenney (1880:311), both geologists, would write,

> ...the Indians are said to desert the Hills in the summer on account of the lightening, and I can easily understand that a band of superstitious Indians, after experiencing such a storm, especially if any of their number were injured by lightening, would forever forsake the locality.

[1] Eight years later, Ferdinand von Hayden (1862:365-366) reiterated nearly word for word what Denig had written about Lakota beliefs surrounding the Black Hills.

In view of this, it is quite possible that the heavy plumes of smoke Denig wrote about were the result of an explosive wildfire caused by lightening, not a volcanic eruption (see also Case 1952a:39; Parker, W. 1985:590).

Denig's story about a white giant, on the other hand is remotely related to one of the Lakotas' spiritual figures, *Waziya*, commonly depicted as a giant and the harbinger of winter. Henry Boller (1972:327), a contemporary of Denig, described this figure based on information he learned from a Hunkpapa Lakota named Grindstone and also associated it with the Black Hills.[2] The idea that, in Denig's words, "superstition" surrounded the area only confirms what would be described in today's less off-putting terminology as its spiritual significance (Sundstrom, L. 1997:86-187). Notwithstanding some of the problematic aspects of Denig's representation, it does establish several things: one, the importance of this area as a hunting ground; two, its mysterious or *wakan* character; and three, its association with the Thunders [*Wakinyan*] and the Winter Man [*Waziya*].

Although Denig wrote explicitly about the "supernatural" character of the Hills in relation to the Lakotas, there were other writers before him who wrote about spiritual connections to the region and its surroundings. Washington Irving's account (1897:1:344), first published in 1836, of the 1811 Astoria Expedition describes the Black Hills as:

> …the abode of the geneii or thunder spirits, who fabricate storms and tempests. On entering their defiles, therefore, they often hang offerings on trees, or place them on rocks, to propiatiate the invisible 'lords of the mountains,' and procure good weather and successful hunting; and they attach unusual significance to the echoes which haunt the precipices.

Francis Parkman's record (in Feltskog 1969:156-157, 572-573 n21) of his travels along the Oregon Trail in 1846 contains references about Lakota spiritual associations to the Black Hills. He writes of a Lakota man named La Borgne or One Eye,[3] who fasted in a cave somewhere in the Hills during the early nineteenth century. While traveling in the Hills,[4] Parkman (in Feltskog 1969:286-287) himself encountered an elderly man engaged in solitary worship on a pine-laden precipice. Another early report, introduced previously, comes from E. De Giradin's journal (1936:63), which records his travels in the Badlands during 1849 and includes references to the use of the Black Hills as a place the Lakotas collected kinnikinick [bearberry], a sacred plant used in tobacco mixtures. In the same decade, Rufus Sage (in Haflen and Haflen 1956:268-272) recorded a story of how Lakotas warriors encountered an old spirit woman living in a cave on a butte west of the Black Hills, known as Old Woman's Butte. In the narrative, the old woman foretells the successful outcome of their raiding party against the Shoshones. When the warriors return to the butte to leave an offering to the old woman, the cave has disappeared, and in its place, they find a small springs and a stream.

Some of the same spiritual themes found in Denig, Boller, Irving, Parkman, De Giradin, and Sage's accounts also appear in the writings of journalists who accompanied the Black Hills Expe-

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[2] The same figure is also associated with stories that refer to the area where Wind Cave National Park now sits (see Chapter 14).

[3] One Eye was one of the leaders of a Sicangu band that wintered in the Sand Hills of Nebraska in 1839 (DeMallie 1976:261).

[4] As mentioned before, two of the scholars, Mason Wade (1939) and Feltskog (in Parkman 1969), who edited Parkman's journal, claim that many of his references to the Black Hills actually refer to the Laramie Mountains, not the Black Hills proper. Whether or not this refers to the Black Hills proper, it is an early document reporting on the Lakotas' use of mountain zones for prayer and other religious observances.

dition in 1874, and many of these are reprinted in Herbert Krause and Gary Olson's work *Prelude to Glory* (1974). N.H. Knappen (in Krause and Olson 1974:28), writing for the *Bismark Tribune*, reported that the Hills "has been held as a sacred spot to them as the Hunting Ground of the Great Spirit," while A. B. Donaldson (in Krause and Olson 1974:41), special correspondent to the *St. Paul Pioneer*, stated: "It is the famed stronghold and a favorite hunting ground of the red man...To the simple faith of the Indian, it is the most sacred spot of earth to him the 'holy of holies.'" William E. Curtis of the *New York World* and the *Chicago Inter Ocean* conveyed a similar picture and said: the "Black Hills are holy ground of the very holiest sort" (in Krause and Olson 1974:150). He depicted them as a "Mecca," a place the Lakotas jealously guarded because of their faunal riches (Krause and Olson 1974:149-150).

Beyond their special place as a spiritually protected game preserve, Curtis (in Krause and Olson 1974:150) argued that the Hills were a location for the Lakotas' "grand councils" and their most "solemn festivities," including the Sun Dance. He further described them as "the very antechamber of Manitou," containing the "springs of immortality." In a story he heard from the guide Bear's Ears, an Arikara who once lived among the Lakotas, he wrote that a cave ran underneath the Hills leading to a "living river." Magical deer and panthers were said to block the cave's entrance (Krause and Olson 1974:129,150). Individuals who were able to find it and cross to the other side were able to gain a "new lease on life till the eagles, whose eyrie was on the summit of the hill, entered another century of their eternal existence" (Ibid:150). The cave was the home of a very tall medicine man with a long white beard, who used the river and its springs to advance his death-defying schemes, but he was eventually engulfed by the Hills and never to be seen again (Ibid:129). Curtis (Ibid:129) further writes: "The same as to the eagles, but the thunder remained as a perpetual sentinel to guard their nest. A compensatory fountain poured out from the hill which still confers upon those who bathe in it the gift of invulnerability -- it is a Dakotan Lethe." From Bear's Ears, Samuel Burrows (in Krause and Olson 1974:192) of the *New York Tribune* also learned of a great nest located in the center of the Hills, a place "even the Indians themselves do not visit because of fear." Allowing for some misunderstandings and mistranslations of the Arikara and Lakota scouts' stories, the journalists recorded many ideas that continue to hold currency in modern tribal understandings of the Hills' sacredness. As Linea Sundstrom (1997:208) astutely notes: "The reporters, who reflected the prevailing sentiments of the day, had no motive for exaggerating the Indians' beliefs about the sacredness of the Black Hills."

Richard I. Dodge, another of the earliest European Americans to explore the interiors of the Black Hills, also described their spiritual associations. Following Castle Creek near Reynolds Prairie on June 11, 1875, Dodge (in Kime 1998:79) reported that the party arrived at a spring where they found the remains of a large camp ground where lodge poles had recently been cut and trimmed. The area was also used, according to Dodge, for "making medicine" because of the presence of a "Medicine Lodge." It is impossible, however, to determine whether this was a sweatlodge, which seems the most likely given its location, or as Sundstrom (1997:188) suggests, a Sun Dance structure. A couple of weeks later, while traveling near Rapid Creek, Dodge heard a story from one of his guides, California Joe, about a Lakota named Robe Raiser who is reputed to have said that his people rarely entered the Hills, and when they did so, it was to hunt and cut tipi poles. In the book *The Black Hills* (1965:138), the account Dodge himself published, he claimed the Hills were avoided because, among their other liabilities, they were "'bad medicine' and the abode of spirits." It is interesting to note, however, that Dodge did not include this as one of the liabilities he actually recorded in his original field journal based on the information that California Joe received from Robe Raiser (in Kime 1998:139). We can only speculate what motivated him to add this spiritual dimension to his published account, but as already indicated in Chapter Five, there are many reasons to be leery of his work, not the least of which was his

staunch support for opening the Hills to white settlement. As Edward Lazarus (1991:72) writes in reference to the remarks of people like Dodge:

> Those who wanted to dispossess the natives of their land seized with particular vigor upon the legends that related the Indians' fear of the Hills; but whatever beliefs the Indians cherished about the land were based on veneration not terror. The Indians did not value gold; the Hills themselves were their treasure and they guarded them vigilantly. At the Great Council held in their midst during the summer of 1857, the Sioux resolved to execute any tribesman who revealed the existence of gold in the Hills to the whites. And they took their vow seriously; even alcohol, one frontiersman lamented, could not loosen Sioux tongues about the Hills.

There are also a variety of more specific references in the early literature regarding the Hills' sacredness. Journals, expeditionary reports, and newspaper accounts from Harney's exploration of the Hills in 1857, Raynold's in 1859, Custer's in 1874, and Jenney's in 1875 not only contain Lakota names for places now widely regarded as sacred, but some of them also include specific references to the spiritual activity connected with these places. Some of the richest material comes from John Gregory Bourke's military diaries, written from 1872 to 1896, which contain rich accounts of the spiritual significance of various sites in and around the Black Hills (see, Sundstrom 1997:189, 192, 194, 200). Bear Lodge Butte a.k.a. Devil's Tower, for example, was described as a location where the Lakotas believed the Great Spirit placed the game animals to provide them with food (Ibid:192), and Bear Butte was characterized as a 'mecca' for the Cheyennes (Ibid::200). William Ludlow (1875:15), Chief Engineer of the Black Hills Expedition, described a location in the western Hills where there were enormous quantities of gypsum. As he wrote:

> One of the guides took me off to the right to see a huge mass of it, crystallized and shining beautifully in the sun. The Indians, for generations, have, in passing, split off pieces for ornaments, and by degrees cut a shoulder several feet deep on it at the level of the ground. Inyan Kara was in sight all day to the southward.

Samuel Burrows (in Krause and Olson 1974:208) of the *New York Tribune* wrote about Heeng-ya-kara (*sic* Inyan Kara) on August 24, 1874:

> The knob is composed of metamorphic sedimentary rock, granitoid in appearance, but difficult to characterize accurately. The strata dip toward the east and west at an angle of 40 degrees. On top of the ridge, small pieces of white quartz were found. As they had no geological business to be there, they were no doubt left there by the Indians, who are fond of making offerings to their gods from these lofty altars...

Burrows (in Krause and Olson 1974:87-88) also wrote about a stream in the Floral Valley that was believed to have its origin in an underground cave that supplied all the "luxuries of life." Near Reynolds Prairie, various members of the Black Hills Expedition reported the presence of a large pile of antlers (Ludlow 1875:17; Knappen in Krause and Olson 1974:28; Donaldson in Krause and Olson 1974:61; Grant in Krause and Olson 1974:250), a practice with known religious significance among the Arapahos and the Cheyennes (Grinnell 1972:2:276). Finally, William Curtis (in Krause and Olson 1974:150,192) related Bear's Ears and Goose's accounts of an area near Harney Peak where the Thunders had their nest.

Federal officials also recognized the area's spiritual value. Samuel Hinman (1874:95), in his appendix to the "Report of the Sioux Commission," wrote that the Black Hills were "high, bleak, and cold, traversed by fearful storms in winter and spring and in summer time almost truly said

by the Indians to be inhabited by the thunder-gods, ever angry at and jealous with hot displeasure of intrusion upon their sanctuary and mountain home." This refers, of course, to the well-known connection of the Hills to the *Wakinyan* or Thunders. A year later in September of 1875, E. L. Howard (1875:253), the Agent at Spotted Tail Agency, wrote in his annual report to E. P. Smith, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs the following:

> Other apparently insurmountable difficulties have been overcome by the same means, notably the preparations for opening the Black Hills, which it was predicted would surely precipitate an Indian war, so violently opposed had the Indians been, by tradition and education, to the presence of the white man *on that their sacred ground* (emphasis ours).

From these comments, it is clear that federal officials were well aware of the Hills' sacred significance to the Lakotas. Taken together, all of the early written sources suggest that the tribal nations who lived in the area had important spiritual connections to the Black Hills. Yet, ironically, a century later a number of historians and anthropologists would cast doubt on the time depth and veracity of Lakota claims that their ancestors held the Black Hills sacred.

None of the sources written before 1877 offer any in-depth interpretation of the spiritual meaning behind the region and its various sites, but all of them uniformly agree that it was sacred to the Lakotas and Cheyennes. Nevertheless, there is enough information to determine what sites were important, especially in the northern and central areas of the Hills where most of these outsiders traveled. There is also enough to suggest some of the reasons for their centrality in tribal religious traditions. It must be remembered that, with the possible exception of Hinman and some members of the Black Hills and Jenney expeditions, most of the early observers never reached locations in the southern Hills. The sites identified in most reports include places in the far north, Inyan Kara Mountain, Bear Lodge Butte (a.k.a Devil's Tower), and Bear Butte, and in the central Hills, Harney Peak and the Central Prairies. They also include, at least generically, references to the religious importance of the caves and springs located in the Hills. All of this documentation suggests at least seven significant religious interpretations of the Black Hills, all of which can be traced to later writings on the subject: 1) the area's association with the Thunders and renewal; 2) its link with game animals and ideas of emergence; 3) its relationship to winter and a spiritual figure of gigantic stature; 4) its connection to sacred caves and springs; 5) its importance as a location for collecting plants, stones, and minerals used in religious practice; 6) its position as a sanctuary for individuals seeking a relationship with the sacred; and 7) its ties to the conduct of tribal ceremonial observances, including the Sun Dance.

B. Ethnographic Writings and Texts: 1878-1945

From 1878 to the end of World War II, several ethnographers and historians began working with Native peoples to record their oral traditions, some of which include references to the Black Hills and specific topographic features within their range. American Indians themselves also drew, narrated, or wrote their own cultural accounts, and many of these contain revealing information about the region as well. The enormous body of material from this period can be divided into four general groupings. The first contains a wide variety of sacred texts that specifically mention the Black Hills as a location of genesis and emergence in myth time or as a place where mysterious events took place within historic memory. It also includes a large number of narratives where the Hills are not identified, but where, nonetheless, they can be inferred indirectly from the kind of landforms described in a text. The second encompasses a wide range of ethnographic descriptions of specific places where religious observances were actually conducted or where significant cultural institutions originated. The third contains stories from Euro-

pean Americans who lived in the Hills. These range from historically valid eyewitness observations to romanticized legends and lore of the type typically aimed at popular audiences. Finally, the fourth covers accounts by Lakotas and Cheyennes, who conveyed varied information about their own sacred knowledge of and spiritual experiences in the Hills.

Much of the early literature on sacred sites in the Black Hills, with a few possible exceptions, offer only hints of how some of these places may have been interpreted and used when the Lakotas, Cheyennes, Arapahos, and other tribes occupied the area. The common impression that information on the religious significance of the area is spotty is true, if examined in the absence of a wider body of traditional cultural texts. There are many bits of material in early sources that appear as isolates, unstitched pieces in a larger quilt pattern whose design remains elusive. This need not discourage the intrepid researcher, for as the archaeologist Robert Hall (1997: x) wrote in his classic study *Archaeology of the Soul* "texts were valuable for discovering mental associations between otherwise discrete classes of phenomenon, associations that provided clues to patterns of thought and belief that might otherwise escape attention." When taken as a whole and contextualized in a larger body of information on Lakota and Cheyenne cultural traditions, the record is far richer, allowing for the reconstruction of wider cultural patterns that shed light on the spiritual significance of the Black Hills over time.

Above all, the paucity of certain kinds of documentation should not be read, as some scholars have, as evidence of an absence of any sacred attachment to the area. Instead, it should be viewed first in light of the times and circumstances under which the knowledge was preserved as part of the written record. It must be remembered that the decades immediately following 1878, when ethnographers began their systematic efforts to salvage information on pre-reservation tribal cultures, were difficult and stressful times for the Lakotas and Cheyennes, who had been forcibly removed from areas to which they held strong emotional attachments. Two Lakotas, Battiste Good and Luther Standing Bear, as well as two Cheyennes, Wooden Leg and Iron Teeth, vividly conveyed the painful memories of their tribes' expulsion from the Black Hills. But the enormity of the loss to the Lakota and Cheyenne people and their reservoirs of cultural knowledge are incalculable and only hinted at in the published literature. One of the reasons some of the Lakotas and Cheyennes did not specifically identify sites of sacred significance is that their recollection brought with it the painful memories of losing the Black Hills.[5]

It should also be remembered that the late nineteenth century was a time when many Lakota and Cheyenne religious practices were being outlawed by missionaries and government officials. Understandably, people would have been reluctant to talk about some of these things, even with outsiders they respected and looked kindly upon. Many of the elders of the time certainly knew the whereabouts of spiritually significant sites, but as George Bird Grinnell (1910:574) wrote, nearly a century ago, certain sacred matters are simply not discussed and "excepting in rare instances the old men are reluctant to talk of these things, partly because the subject stirs up painful regrets and partly from the inherited feeling that these are matters which must not be talked of under any circumstances to anyone outside the tribe." Some twenty years later, when Dick Stone (in Shirl 1982:14) attempted to collect stories about Devil's Tower from Cheyenne elders, he was told: "There are some things we don't like to talk about, that was a very 'Holy Place' to us." There is no question that some of the rich body of sacred knowledge about the

[5] One of the well-known psychological effects of traumas associated with Diaspora is amnesia (Lifton 1961,1983). This can take many different forms, including the refusal to name and mention the places from which one has been dispossessed because it recalls the separation and the pain this evokes.

Black Hills held by the Lakotas and Cheyennes was kept secret during this time and off-limits to ethnographers.

A case in point involves one of the most important documents from this period. This is a map drawn by Amos Bad Heart Bull at the end of the nineteenth century that was not widely known until Helen Blish published a copy of it in 1967.[6] The map (Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289) locates and gives the names of several significant sites in and around the Black Hills, including Bear Butte, Bear Lodge Butte, the Black Mountains, Warbonnet Creek, Old Woman Butte, Thunder Butte, Slim Buttes, the Buffalo Gap, Hot Springs, and the Race Track. It is one of the earliest tribal sources that actually document many of the sites to which Lakotas and Cheyennes of the same and subsequent generations attributed sacred properties. Many of these are sites that hold spiritual significance for other tribes too, including the Arapahos, Arikaras, Crows, Hidatsas, Kiowas, Plains Apaches, and Mandans.

1. The Race Track

The Race Track was identified as *Ki Inyanka Ocanku* [The Running Path] on Bad Heart Bull's map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289), and it was called *Okin'inyanka Ocanku* by another Lakota Wawoslata (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:264; Manhart and Buechel 1998:452). Contemporary names in Lakota include *Wamaka Xhan O'Ki'inyanke* [Running Path of the Animals] or *We Ok'papsun Xkokpa* [The Valley Where They Shed Their Blood] (Black Elk, C. 1986a:208). Also known as the Red Valley, this depression nearly encircles the Black Hills and crosses the eastern section of Wind Cave National Park. Samuel Hinman (1874:93) referred to it as "the great Indian trail leading around the hills," when he toured the southern Black Hills in the late summer of 1874, and Henry Newton and Walter Jenney (1880:136) called it the "Race Course" when they traveled the area a year later.

In the early twentieth century, Eagle Shield, one of the Lakota consultants for Francis Densmore's monumental text *Teton Sioux Music and Culture* (1918:319) spoke about its meaning, and Little Cloud narrated a story about it in Lakota to Reverend Eugene Buechel that was transcribed by Ivan Stars and entitled *Unkcekiha Kin Kiinyanka Ohiya* [The Magpie Wins the Race]. Although Little Cloud's story was collected in May of 1915, it did not appear in print until 1978 when it was published in the book *Lakota Tales and Texts* (Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:94-96 [also, in Buechel and Manhart 1998:145-150]). In 1915, Wawoslata told Ivan Stars a story about Tall Dung performing a *Yuwipi* ceremony at an unspecified location along the Race Track that predicted the successful outcome of a raid (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:264-269; [also in Manhart and Buechel 1998:452-463]). In 1944, Nicolas Black Elk shared another Lakota rendition of the Race Track story with John Neihardt (in DeMallie 1984:309-310).

Four decades earlier, Alfred Kroeber (1900:161-163) published a narrative about the Race Track from the Cheyennes. In subsequent years, George Bird Grinnell (1926:252-254), Frank Marquis (collected in 1928 and published with Limbaugh in 1973:30-31), and Richard Randolph (1937:189-192) recorded other Cheyenne versions of the story as well. Described in greater detail in the next chapter, the various renditions of the story not only explain how the nature of relations between humans and animals was established, but they also account for many topographic features in the Hills including the Race Track itself. This is one of many cases where striking similarities are found in Lakota and Cheyenne interpretations of the cultural significance of sites

[6] The original map was buried with Amos Bad Heart Bull's sister when she died in 1947 (Blish 1967: xx).

associated with the Black Hills. It is also a site that cultural resource officers from different Lakota and Cheyenne tribes told us remains very important to their tribes and needs protection (Albers and Kittelson 2002).

Within and beyond the Race Track, most of the sites appearing on Bad Heart Bull's map can be organized into three general geographic groupings that roughly correspond with the southern, central, and northern regions of the Black Hills.

2. The Southern Hills and Their Peripheries

Closely connected to the Race Track and the stories of its importance is the Buffalo Gap. Marked and named *Pte Tali Yapa* [the Doorway of the Bison Cow] on Bad Heart Bull's map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289), the Buffalo Gap is located less than ten miles east of Wind Cave National Park. Another site in the southern Black Hills located on his map are the thermal waters at Hot Springs, *Mnikahta* [Hot water] also near Wind Cave National Park. Wind Cave, however, is not indicated on this map, although some of the spiritual significance attached to it by modern Lakotas is linked to early representations of the nearby Race Track, Buffalo Gap, and Hot Springs. Also not identified on Bad Heart Bull's map are the rich flint quarries at Battle Mountain and Flint Hill or the rock art sites in Craven and Red canyons in the southern Hills. Warbonnet Creek and Old Woman Butte, located just outside the Hills' southern borders, are located and named, however.

a. The Buffalo Gap

The Buffalo Gap was one of the sites singled out in early historic records because of its significance to local tribes. In early ethnographic sources, it appeared in a Cheyenne story about the Race Track published by George Bird Grinnell (1926:252-254), and it can also be identified as the location where quillwork originated among the Cheyennes because of its connection to the story of the Buffalo Wife in other Cheyenne texts (Grinnell 1972:2:385-391; Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:9-24; Powell 1969:2:472-475). The Buffalo Gap's name in Lakota also appears in a Little Cloud story published by Father Buechel (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:96). In this story and another collected from Lone Wolf (in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:242-245) in 1915, the Buffalo Gap is called *He Okiksahe* [the ridge with a gap] and the land inside the gap is known as *Tatanka makalhpaya* [the Stomping Grounds of the Bison Bull] (Little Cloud in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:95; Lone Wolf in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:242).[7] In Lone Wolf's story, the Buffalo Gap is the location where a spiritual bison bull transforms himself into a human (see translation in Chapter Fourteen). Another contemporary name for the gap is *Tatanka Ta Tiyopa* (Black Elk, C. 1986a:210), identifying the gateway with the bison bull [*tatanka*] instead of the bison cow [*pte*].

The Buffalo Gap and other Hogback gateways to the Hills are identified today with the hero figure Stone Boy (Young Bear and Theisz 1994:29; Bucko 1998:208). In his travels, the hero confronts various dangers including the double-teeth bison of the Cheyennes (Grinnell 1926:178-182) and *Iya* or *Waziya* of the Lakota (Bad Wound in Walker, 1917:193-202, in Walker 1983:140-153). In these and other versions of the story (Wissler 1907:199-201; McLaughlin

[7] Yvonne Kelly translated these names with the assistance of Jerry Dearly. These translations may very well have other meanings and metaphoric associations. They are different from Paul Manhart's translations of Buechel's texts. Manhart translates *He Okiksahe* as "Mount Abyss," which is not the best way to interpret the name of this site.

1916:179-197; Old Walker in Stars, Iron Shell and Buechel 1978:56-57 [also in Buechel and Manhart 1998:5-20]; Deloria 1978:87-95; Sword in Walker 1983:89-100), most of which were collected in the early twentieth century, he is associated with the origins of the sweatlodge. In George Sword and Old Walker's texts, he is also connected to the origin of pounds used in bison hunting.

Luther Standing Bear (1975:3), who was born in 1868, made references to the Buffalo Gap in two of the books he published between 1928 and 1934. In his work *My People The Sioux* (1975:19 [reprint of 1928 edition]), he described it as a passageway through which the buffalo entered the Black Hills to winter and where the people followed them to camp when he was a child. In the same era, Nicholas Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:155-156) also identified the Buffalo Gap as a location for hunting and camping. In a later book *Land of the Spotted Eagle* (1978:43 [reprint of 1935 edition]), Standing Bear again described the importance of the Buffalo Gap as a gateway to some of the Oglalas' favorite winter camping grounds. He wrote:

> According to tribal legend these hills were a reclining female figure from whose breasts flowed life-giving forces and to them the Lakota went as a child to its mother's arms. The various entrances to the hills were very rough and rugged, but there was one very beautiful and easy pass through which both buffalo and Lakota entered...Every fall thousands of buffalo and Lakotas went through this pass to spend the winter in the hills. *Pte ta tiyopa* it was called by the Lakotas, or 'Gate of the Buffalo.'

One observation is worth making here about Standing Bear's words, and that is the obvious contextual connection between the Buffalo Gap area and Lakota stories of fecundity and emergence, a linkage that is made very explicit in later published sources. His statement does not appear to identify the area as sacred in a literal sense, but metaphorically, his description of the Hills as a feminine force giving birth to life has strong spiritual roots not only in Lakota cosmology but also in Cheyenne and Kiowa traditions.

Although the Buffalo Gap is outside the boundaries of Wind Cave National Park, it is integrally connected to the Race Track and Wind Cave in Cheyenne as well as Lakota traditions. It remains a culturally important area today as evidenced in some of the contemporary sources discussed momentarily.

b. The Hot Springs

Although marked and named on Bad Heart Bull's map as *Mnikahta* [Hot water], the spiritual significance of the thermal waters at Hot Springs is not well documented before World War II. There is one story, however, recorded for the Cheyennes by George Bird Grinnell (1926:193-200), in which a hero figure, Red Tracks, triumphs over a "Bad Hearted Man," who has his lodge near these springs. A few references also appear in local history accounts, but most of them constitute the sort of legendary tales written for popular consumption. If we look beyond some of their flights of fancy, they contain certain elements of truth. In 1927, Badger Clark, the Poet Laureate of the state of South Dakota, published, through the Hot Springs Kiwanis Club, a book entitled *When Hot Springs Was Still A Pup* (republished in 1983). This includes a lengthy story about how Battle Mountain received its name from a hostile encounter between the Lakotas and Cheyennes over access to the region's hot springs, which were known and valued by both for their therapeutic properties. He describes how after the Lakotas discovered the area: "...a band of Cheyennes, coming to the springs with their sick people as their fathers had done before them, found the strange intruders in possession of the canyon, and were by no means pleased..."(Clark 1983:3). A battle ensued and afterwards, he goes on to write:

> That evening the Sioux plastered their wounds with mud made of the sacred red soil and spring water, and held a victory dance, but it was not long until they discovered that they were not to be left in undisturbed possession of their winnings. It was in the nature of a holy war, and the Cheyennes' religious feelings would not let them leave the shrine (Clark 1983:4).

Whatever else one might gain from the story, one may presume that local whites, at the very least, recognized these hot springs had some spiritual value to the area's native inhabitants. In their book *The Black Hills Trails*, Jesse Brown and A.M. Willards (1924:18) also wrote about the healing properties the Lakotas attributed to these waters. Twenty five years earlier, in 1899, Annie Tallent in her classic history *The Black Hills or The Last Hunting Ground of the Dakotahs* (1899:644,695) described the unverified battle[8] between the Lakotas and Cheyennes near this site, and the moccasin-shaped stone used by them for bathing at one of the springs. She also wrote down some of the "Indian" legends[9] that local whites associated with the springs, and one of these about a distraught maiden who flung herself over a precipice,[10] was republished by S. Goodale Price (1935:45) nearly forty years later. Even though none of her stories appear to be tribal in origin, they at least acknowledge an indigenous connection to the springs.

Two decades earlier, in 1877, John Setter (in Richter n.d:1) sighted Lakotas bathing at the thermal waters where Hot Springs now stands, and in 1888, S. D. Cook wrote that the Lakotas called the region of Hot Springs *mini kata* and the springs proper, *wiwila kata* [Hot springs]. He went on to write that prior to their occupation of the area, the springs were possessed by the Cheyennes, who "built an immense city here which covered many hundred acres. The remains of this once great Indian city are still plainly apparent and the evidence is seen upon the lands adjacent to and within a circuit of many miles around the springs." In fact, in 1940, a group of Cheyennes from Montana were reported to have visited one of their sacred springs near Hot Springs (Odell 1942:144). Over the years, many other local residents and visitors also commented on the Lakotas' frequent use of these thermal waters in the early days of Hot Springs (Rosen 1895: 473-474; Tallent 1899:651-652; Casey 1949:284; Petty 1973:3; Williams, B. 1973:16, 30-31; Fall River County Historical Society 1976:143; Clark 1983:9, 23,26; de Mandat-Grancey 1984:293-294). One of Hot Springs' long-time residents, Mary Bingham (1973:3-4), recalled how the Lakotas would cover themselves with mud from the springs and the Fall River to obtain relief from various ailments.

Although Luther Standing Bear (1978:51) did not single out these thermal waters in his writings, he does describe the reverent attitudes that Lakotas held towards springs and the reasons why they did so. As discussed earlier, springs were highly revered by all the tribal nations who occupied this region. Another Lakota name, *Mni Woblú* [Boiling Water], is the ascription for the nearby Fall River (Buechel 1970:339).

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[8] Although this battle is seen as an important event in local history texts, confirmation of its occurrence is lacking in the oral traditions and winter counts of either the Lakotas or the Cheyennes. While hostilities did exist for a short time between segments of these two tribes at the turn of the nineteenth century, the likely combatants for a major battle at this locale are the Lakotas and the Kiowas (who might have included some of the Wotapio Cheyennes that apparently lived among them) or the Lakotas and Crows (a battle between these two tribes is reported to have taken place at the Buffalo Gap in some Lakota winter counts).

[9] Tallent's legends represent a genre of stories with European American origins that were popularized during the Victorian era and commonly associated with thermal springs throughout the United States, including Saratoga Springs in New York State. They constitute one of the common ways in which native landscapes are culturally appropriated by whites in tourist settings.

[10] This story is remarkably similar to the suicide story of a young Dakota woman connected to one of the bluffs, called "Maiden's Leap," near Lake Pepin in Wisconsin.

Again, this area is located outside the borders of the park, but many of the stories associated with it are integrally tied to the Race Track and Wind Cave in the historic and modern cultural traditions of the Cheyennes and Lakotas (Herman 1965a, 1965b; La Pointe 1976:45-46, 79-84; Goodman 1992:61; Catches in Parlow 1983a:2-3; Catches in Gonzalez 1996:67).

c. Wind Cave

Wind Cave, also located near the Race Track, is not indicated on Bad Heart Bull's map, nor is it explicitly named in any of the Lakota and Cheyenne texts collected by ethnographers before World War I. Nevertheless, versions of three Lakota stories collected by James Walker, when he served as a physician at Pine Ridge from 1896 to 1914, became associated with this cave in later years. One story, told by Long Knife (George Sword) (in Walker 1917:181-182, 1983:204-206), refers to a cave from which *Tokahe* and the Buffalo people, the Lakotas' ancestors, emerged to the earth's surface. Two stories narrated by Left Heron (in Walker 1917:183-190,212-215, 1983: 109-117) specifically designate a cave in the mountains where a human man marries a woman of the underground buffalo nation. That the caves in Walker's texts are not located or specifically identified with Wind Cave is not surprising since few of the narratives in his collections have any geographic placement. What is significant, however, is that different renditions of these stories came to be identified with Wind Cave by later generations of Lakotas (Herman n.d.; Herman in One Feather 1972:102-105, 149; Black Elk, H. in Theisz 1975:16-18; LaPointe 1976:79-84; Powers, M. 1986:38-42, 50; Lone Hill 1996:550-553). Also important are the early and recurring symbolic connections between caves, bison, and ideas of human emergence in these and other narratives from the Walker collection (Walker 1980:144, 229), all of which are consistent with contemporary Lakota and Cheyenne ideas about the role caves play in the emergence and regeneration of animals and humans.

In 1915, Asa Bad Yellow Hair told another version of the Buffalo Wife story to Father Eugene Buechel (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:66-69 [also in Buechel and Manhart [1998:91-93]). In this story, the Buffalo wife's mother lives in a cave "in the hills" where she keeps the dead remains of the men she has taken captive. A third variation of the Buffalo Wife story was given by Left Heron to Dakota scholar Ella Deloria, who translated and published it in 1932 as part of a collection of Lakota (and Dakota) texts (Deloria 1978:86-89; also, in Rice 1994: 67-126). Joseph Eagle Hawk narrated an abridged version of the story to Martha Beckwith (1930: 399-400) in the 1920s. In his text, entitled "The Story of Blue Jay" he passes through a hill with a canyon in it that closes in on him, but there is no mention of a cave.

Lakota narratives of the Buffalo Wife have many of the same motifs as a Cheyenne story collected in the same time period and later associated with the Buffalo Gap and the Race Track (Grinnell 1926:87-103; Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:9-22; Powell 1969:2:472-475). As reported in the previous chapter, the story of the Buffalo Woman or Buffalo Wife is told among many tribes in the northern Plains (Parks 1996:165). Most of the tribal nations who tell the story associate it with the origin of some kind of sacred knowledge. Narratives about subterranean encounters between humans and bison are present in other early sources on the Lakotas too (Bushotter in Dorsey, J. 1894:476-477; Judson 1913:53; Robinson, D. 1928:515; Little Wound in Walker 1980:124), and as discussed in the next chapter, the connection between caves, bison, and the breath of life is a ubiquitous theme in the sacred stories of tribal nations throughout the Plains (Powers, M. 1986:38; DeMallie 1987:28).

There are other early sources that provide more concrete evidence about the Lakotas spiritual relationship to Wind Cave. One comes from Catherine Stabler's recollections of the cave (in Bohi

1962:391), in which she talks about a group of Lakotas singing as they toured the cave in the 1890s. This describes one form of prayerful communication common among the Lakotas when beholding a sacred place and encountering its spiritual presence. The other is found in an article from the *Custer County Chronicle* written by Rufus J. Pilcher (1964, n.p), a former superintendent at Wind Cave National Park. He describes an incident that took place in 1910 when Stinking Bear and his party requested permission to take a stone from the cave's floor. He explains why he reluctantly allowed them to do so "because the amulet would cure the old lady of her lameness and good luck would be had by everyone including myself." These are two of the earliest accounts we came across that suggest this cave had spiritual significance, and what they record is consistent with other early reports of the sacred nature and healing powers of caves in Lakota traditions.

There are also materials in park documents that suggest early spiritual connections to the area of Wind Cave National Park. A newspaper clipping from the Hot Springs Star (July 22, 1937) reveals how tribal elder Left Hand Bear associated the area with bison, health, and healing (his words are quoted in Chapter Six). In a letter sent to Edward Freeland the park superintendent, Charley Eagle Louse (1939) reiterates the connection between the park's lands, the bison, and good health (also quoted in Chapter Six). Another unpublished document from this period is especially instructive. In a letter written to Arno B. Cammerer, Director of the National Park Service, on July 25, 1937, William S. Campbell a.k.a. Stanley Vestal, the well known historian of Sitting Bull and White Bull's lives, wrote that Wind Cave was a "sacred spot" to the Lakotas and that they called it the "Cave of the Winds." Equivalent Lakota names provided more recently by Charlotte Black Elk (1986a:209) include *Tatoye Oyurlokapi* [The Opening of the Four Winds] and *Tate Waxun* [Cave of the Wind]. As Campbell's letter reads:

> I have just returned from a trip into the northern plains, where I was doing research among the old Indians. On my way through the Black Hills I stopped at the Wind Cave National Park...While there I was given a booklet on the Wind Cave National Park...
>
> In this booklet, I find a statement that the Wind Cave was discovered by a white man in 1881. Of course it was known to the Sioux Indians long before that. As I recall, their calendars show that they discovered the Hills about the time of the Declaration of Independence.
>
> As you may know, the four winds were major deities of the Plains tribes, and wind was associated in their belief with the breath of life and the vital principle. Hence the Cave of the Winds was a sacred spot to them. Many of the Plains tribes had myths in which the story was told of how the buffalo first came out of a cave (I suppose this was an objectification of the fact that all flesh is made of earth), and Chief White Bull (Pte San Hunka), Sitting Bull's living nephew, informed me that the Sioux believe that the Wind Cave in the Black Hills was the cave from which Wakan Tanka, Great Mystery, sent them out into the Sioux hunting grounds. This was a reason why the Sioux fought so hard for the Black Hills when they were invaded by the whites. The Chief also told me that some of his people still hoped that when they regained the favor of their gods, the buffalo would once more issue from that cave, and fill the Plains.

Not only does he identify Wind Cave as sacred to the Lakotas from information that White Bull shared with him, but he also clearly links it to Lakota stories of animal emergence. Campbell's letter appears to have been taken seriously, because in a statement issued by the National Park Service (n.d), entitled "Know Your Service" (No. 12) and contained in the same document box at the Wind Cave National Park Library as the copy of the letter, is a printed description of Lakota beliefs about the cave that reads as follows:

> One thing pretty special to the Sioux aside from the plentiful game and other Indians to fight, was a little hole in the ground through which air whistled in and out. To the Indians of the Great Plains this was the Home of the Four Winds, and thus a sacred spot, closely associated in their beliefs with the Breath of Life and the Vital Principle. To this general legend the resourceful Sioux added one of their own: According to Chief Joe White Bull (Pte San Hanka), nephew of the late great Sitting Bull, the Sioux like to think that Wakan Tanka, the Great Mystery, sent the buffaloes out through the wind crack to populate the plains with fresh meat. It was these convictions which fired the Sioux with such enthusiasm when they defended their Hills against the white man.

If we can assume that this was an officially approved document, probably one distributed to the general public, then we have evidence that the National Park Service agreed, almost word-for-word, with W. S. Campbell that Wind Cave was sacred to the Lakota people. A year later, in 1938, a similar statement about the cave appeared in *The Black Hills Engineer* written by the Superintendent of Wind Cave National Park, Edward D. Freeland (1938:272):

> From various sources have come colorful Sioux legends, the common theme of which seems to be that the cave was sacred, being the dwelling-place of the four winds. The buffalo lived there also, and when the Great Spirit is no longer displeased with his red children, the sacred animals will come forth again in great numbers from their subterranean home.

Excluding its message of divine wrath and redemption, this quote echoes some of the Lakota beliefs that Campbell spelled out in his earlier letter.

In the same era, Dick Stone gathered many stories from tribal elders about Devil's Tower or Bear Lodge Butte. Recently, some of these stories have been republished in a booklet entitled *First Encounters: Indian Legends of Devil's Tower* (edited by Shirl in 1982) and sold by the National Park Service at Devil's Tower National Monument. It contains a narrative by One Bull (Stone 1982: 24), who told Stone that his uncle, Sitting Bull, had visited Wind Cave sometime in the mid-nineteenth century, suggesting that the Lakotas knew about it before it was "discovered" by European Americans.[11]

The area of Wind Cave may also be associated with the genre of orphan boy narratives, including a Lakota Falling Star story that Nicolas Black Elk told Neihardt in 1944 (in DeMallie 1984:400-403) and that Iron Shell recounted in 1915 (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:24-36). In this cycle, the hero travels to several different star villages where he performs miraculous feats. In the one we believe is connected to the Wind Cave/Buffalo Gap region, Falling Star saves a village from starvation at the hands of *Waziya*. While this connection is entirely hypothetical, it is consistent with the theme underlying two other stories where *Waziya* or a giant figure is explicitly mentioned in relation to Wind Cave (Herman in One Feather 1972:149; Anonymous n.d., Manuscript in Wind Cave National Park Archives). As discussed in other chapters, the connection also makes sense given the long-held and ubiquitous idea among the Lakotas that bison come from the direction of the North Wind, *Waziyata*, and his grandfather, *Waziya.* Also, one additional story in Black Elk's Falling Star cycle (in DeMallie 1984:401-408) is specifically identified with a site in the Black Hills at Rapid Creek and another appears to be connected to *Pe Sla*, the high elevation central prairies of the Black Hills (Sundstrom, L. 1996:179-180, 1997: 195). There is also a parallel Lakota story of an encounter between Blood

[11] Another subterranean location connected to Sitting Bull is a cave the Duhamel's operated in the Black Hills and where Nicholas Black Elk performed. The name of the cave, Sitting Bull Cavern, was adopted because Sitting Bull was known to have camped in this area (Born 1994).

Clot Boy and *Waziya* near a cave that was preserved in the early twentieth century by Edward Curtis (1907-30:3:111-118). Cheyenne versions of the Falling Star (or Bow-Fast-to-His Body) cycles are very similar to those of the Lakotas. One cycle was recorded by George Grinnell (1926:189-190, 209-211) and another by Richard Randolph (1937:37-42). Both include the story of the Winter Man. In the Cheyenne stories, one of the villages the hero saves is clearly identified with the lake below Bear Butte (Grinnell 1926:185-186).[12]

d. Craven, Red, and Hell's Canyons

Also situated in the southern Black Hills are Craven and Red Canyons, where some of the richest displays of rock art in the Black Hills are located (Sundstrom, L. 1990). Neither of these is identified on Bad Heart Bull's map, even though later generations of Lakotas clearly held them in high regard. Craven Canyon is called *Maya Kaka* [The Cliffs of Writing] in Lakota (Black Elk, C. 1986a:210). Thomas Tyon told James Walker (1980:101), more than a century ago: "Some cliffs and hills are mysterious. A cliff with round rocks in it is mysterious. Certain cliffs had hieroglyphics on them; they were mysterious." Nor were Battle Mountain and Flint Hill singled out on Bad Heart Bull's map, even though both contain some of the richest flint quarries in the region (see Chapter Eleven). As the case with caves and springs, there are a number of sources on the Lakotas and Cheyennes that describe the generic spiritual importance of rock art but do not locate the specific sites to which it applies (Good in Mallery 1893:290; Densmore 1918; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984; Clark 1982 [reprint of 1885 edition]). These canyons are considered very sacred to the Lakotas today (La Pointe 1976:54-55; Around Him in Lewis, L. 1980:22; Eagle Hunter in Parlow 1983a:13; Red Owl in Parlow 1983a:21; Phyllis Young in U.S. Senate 1986:48; Good Eagle in Little Eagle 2000:212-213). Another location not designated on the Bad Heart Bull map is Hell's Canyon, which contemporary Lakota identify as one of the routes people followed in their ceremonial pilgrimages to the Black Hills (Black Elk, C. 1992a: 51).

e. Warbonnet (a.k.a. Hat) Creek and Old Woman's Butte

To the south and outside the Black Hills proper are Warbonnet Creek and Old Woman's Butte, both of which are located on Bad Heart Bull's map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289). Warbonnet (or Hat) Creek, *Wapaha Kagapi* [Warbonnet Maker] is a tributary of the South Fork of the Cheyenne River. It is reputed to be the place where warbonnets were originally created (Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:290). This may also be the location, reported by Clark Wissler in 1912 (p. 72), where a spirit wolf visited a Lakota war party and gave them instructions on the manufacture of regalia associated with the Brave Heart Society.

Old Woman's Butte, *Winurcala Wanti,* is a famous landmark north of Fort Laramie. Situated along the historic "Cheyenne" trail, which entered the Hills from the west along Stockade-Beaver Creek, it is associated with the story, reported earlier, about an old woman who predicts the success of a Lakota war party (Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:290; Sage in Haflen and Haflen 1956:268-272).

[12] Falling Star stories appear among tribes throughout the Great Plains and with considerable variation. Not uncommonly, the stories are linked to the geographic area in which a tribe lives, and they contain implicit or explicit references to specific local landforms. The Cheyenne narrator of the Falling Star stories that Randolph (1937) collected explicitly locates them in the Black Hills.

3. The Central Hills

Three locations in the central Hills are identified on Bad Heart Bull's map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289). Two are identified as *Pe Sla* [Bald Hill] and *Mnilusahun* [Fast Running Water]. The first name refers to the upland central prairie region of the Black Hills, specifically to Reynolds Prairie, and the second glosses the waterway known as Rapid Creek. The specific identity of the third location marked on Bad Heart Bull's map in the graphic image of a spirit figure is not clear. Later interpretations associate it with two different places, Harney Peak or Inyan Kara Mountain. Another location, Sylvan Lake, is not on Bad Heart Bull's map, but the region where it is located is widely regarded as a sacred place in Lakota traditions. All of these areas are important especially to contemporary Lakotas, and although they have a broad connection to the Wind Cave National Park region, the cultural meanings attached to them are different.

a. Rapid, French, and Grace Coolidge Creeks

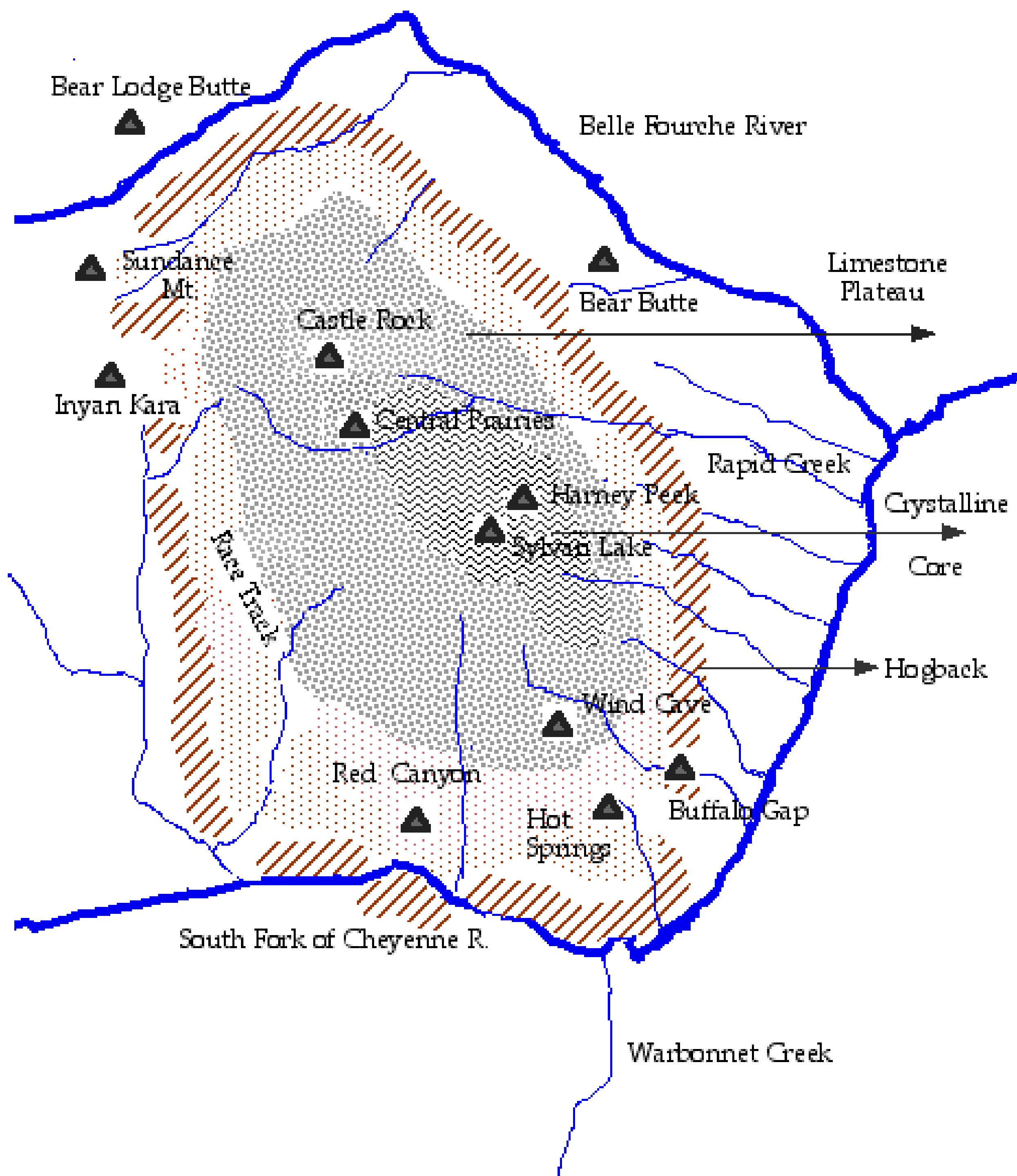
European Americans identified Rapid Creek, *Mnilusahun,* by its Lakota name as early as 1859 (Raynolds in McLaird and Turchen 1974:49), but little about its spiritual importance appears in ethnographic sources published before World War II. The Cheyenne name for this creek is *Haeoeohe* (Petter 1913-15:124). In Black Elk's myth cycle, this waterway is explicitly identified as one of the star villages that Falling Star visits (in DeMallie 1984:406). It is also the place where Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:159) reported that the famous medicine man Chips erected a sweatlodge in 1874 and received a vision warning people of danger. Areas along its mainstream and tributaries remain culturally significant to contemporary Lakotas (LaPointe 1976:89-91), and one of these Victoria Creek was the sight of the well-known and highly politicized Yellow Thunder Camp.

French Creek is not marked on Bad Heart Bulls' map, although it is an area where rock art sites are found with probable Lakota attributions (Sundstrom, L. 2002). Grace Coolidge Creek and the great Council Oak on its lower reaches are associated today with one of the routes Lakotas followed when they traveled to the high elevation interiors to conduct their ceremonial observances. The start of this pilgrimage coincided with the time when the bison moved through the Buffalo Gap to the open prairies from their wintering grounds along the Race Track near Wind Cave (Black Elk, C. 1992a:50).

b. The Central Prairies: Slate, Gilette, and Reynolds

As noted earlier, the high elevation central prairies of the Black Hills were identified in the 1870s with sightings of an abandoned "medicine lodge" and a large stack of elk horns, both of which have spiritual significance. Indeed, one of the modern sacred names in Lakota for Reynolds Prairie is *Heraka blaye* [Elk flats], which is also known as *Pe Xla* [Bare/Bald Head], and *Pe Hunkakoza* [Head of Peace Making Rite] (Black Elk, C. 1986a:208). Neighboring Gilette Prairie is called *Keyapia* [Meadow of the Turtle] (Ibid:209), while Slate Prairie is known as *R'e Xla* [The Bare Ridge] or *Tayamnipa* [Principle of the Three Relations] (Ibid:208). This region was not singled out in early ethnographic writings, although Sundstrom (1997:195) speculates that this may have been one of the places Falling Star visited in the myth cycle Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:400-407) narrated in the 1940s. It was identified, however, as a site for eagle trapping in a Lakota winter count for the year 1807 (Colhoff in Powers 1963:29). The three central prairies are considered highly sacred today and the location for a ceremony known as

FIGURE 23. Sacred Sites In and Around the Black Hills



Okslataya Wowahwala [Peace at Bear Spot] (Goodman 1992:8,13,16; Black Elk, C. 1992a:50-51).

c. Castle Rock and the Cathedral Spires

West of *Pe Sl*a on Bad Heart Bull's map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289) is a graphic image of a spirit figure with the name *Hinyankagapa* [owl maker/imitator hill] written below it. As Sundstrom (1997:190) notes, this name is frequently associated with Harney Peak, but the geographic placement is incorrect. She suggests that the figure, but not the name, might denote Inyan Kara Mountain, which is located west of these prairies. Based on some of the names that Charlotte Black Elk (1986a:209) compiled for locations in the Black Hills interiors, this image might refer to Castle Rock, known today as *Hinhan Karata* [Flapping Owl], which is located to the west of the upland prairies as opposed to *Hinhan Raka* [Rattling Owl], a name for the Cathedral Spires, situated to the east close to Harney Peak. Black Elk (Ibid.) also indicates that this site is connected to stories told to children that teach them how to properly behave or the "owl would get them." In both Lakota and Cheyenne traditions, according to Helen Blish (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:290), *Hinyankagapa* is also known as Ghost Butte, and it is associated with a spirit buffalo bull that was often sighted but always disappeared into the rock.[13] In 1940, a group of Cheyenne traveled to the nearby town of Mystic to locate their legendary "Hole-in-the-Wall" (Odell 1942 144).[14]

There are two famous stories, one Cheyenne (Marriott and Rachlin 1975:43-47) and another Lakota (Deloria, E. 1978:113-116), about an owl-maker associated with a high mountain whose geographic identity is unspecified. In these stories, which some Lakotas associate with Harney Peak, the owl captures and takes away small children (LaPointe 1976:89-91). I would suggest, however, consistent with Charlotte Black Elk's interpretation (1986a:209), that a more likely geographic placement is Castle Rock, *Hinhan Karata*. As Sundstrom (1997:190-191) also notes, the name for ghost in Cheyenne is the same as the name for owl. Owls, as already described in Chapter Ten, are not considered birds but ghosts by the Cheyennes. Given the likely Cheyenne origin of these stories, it is not surprising that ideas associated with the two became conflated. The Lakotas also link owls and ghosts and believe that when an owl hoots, it foretells of death (Tyon in Walker 1980:165). In addition, one of the names of the female figure that admits the spirits of the deceased into the spirit world is *Hinhan Kaga* [Owl Maker] or *To Win* [Blue Woman] (Little Day in Hassrick 1964:298; Goodman 1992:22-23, 38).

d. Harney Peak and Sylvan Valley

Harney Peak and Sylvan Valley do not appear on Bad Heart Bull's map. Many modern Lakotas (Black Elk, C. 1986a:206, 209) call the mountain *Ox'kate Paha* (Mountain of the Playful Thunder Beings) or *Rpanta Yate* [Territory Where Wakinyan Hatches His Young], names that are consistent with early historic descriptions of Lakota beliefs dating back to Denig's writings in 1851 (Ewers 1961:6). The South Dakota Writer's Project (1941:110), which collected Lakota oral traditions in the depression years, associated this site with the Thunders too, as did S. Goodale Price in his book (1935:44) on Black Hills legends. Harney Peak is most widely known as the place where Nicholas Black Elk was taken to the center of the earth as a child and received the Daybreak Star herb in an important and life-defining visionary experience (in DeMallie 1984:

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[13] Whether or not these are one and the same place is not known. David White (2002:203) claims that *Hinyankaga Paha* refers to a site at the head of the Moreau River near Spearfish, South Dakota.

[14] A similar story of a spirit buffalo bull, incidentally, is connected with Wind Cave (see Chapter 14).

46, 98, 133-135, 141, 230, 253, 258-259). In his narratives, he spoke about it as the "center of the earth" (Ibid:258), and today, another sacred ascription for the peak is *Opahata I* [Mountain at the Center Where He Comes]. The common household name for this mountain is *Paha Pestola* [Pointed Hill] (Black Elk, C. 1986a:209). This is another location where ceremonial observances were conducted during the Lakotas' spring ceremonial pilgrimages (Goodman 1992:12).

Also in the central Black Hills, but not on Bad Heart Bull's map, is the area around Sylvan Lake, which is considered sacred to many modern Lakotas. In Stanley Vestal's work (1934:73), it was identified as the location where, according to his nephews, One Bull and White Bull, the much revered Hunkpapa leader, Sitting Bull, had an important prophetic vision about his future role in Lakota society. In the stories he collected about Devil's Tower, Dick Stone (in Shirl 1982:23) was told by One Bull that his grandfather often camped at this location during the winter months because its climate was more moderate than the surrounding plains. Obviously, all of these places are now submerged under the lake that was created in the twentieth century.

In the 1930s, the South Dakota Writer's Project (1941:113-114) collected a story about the origin of Sylvan Lake's distinctive rock formations and S. Goodale Price published a story in his *Black Hills, The Land of Legends* (1935:25-28) about an owl maker that he attributed to the Cheyennes.[15] Its Lakota name does not appear in the published literature.

3. The Northern Hills and Their Peripheries

Five sites, Bear Butte, Black Mountain, Bear Lodge Butte, Thunder Butte, and Slim Buttes, on the northern side of the Black Hills or their peripheries are marked on Bad Heart Bull's map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289). Besides their importance to the Lakotas and Cheyennes, several of these sites have long been known to have sacred meanings for many other tribal nations too, including the Arapahos, Arikaras, Crows, Hidatsas, Kiowas, Mandans, and Plains Apaches. Indeed, most of the sites with documented multitribal cultural affiliations and with continuing spiritual significance to multiple tribes are located in this area. Two other sacred locations, the Cave Hills in northwestern South Dakota and the Medicine Rocks in southeastern Montana, are curiously not marked on the Bad Heart Bull map.

a. Inyan Kara Mountain

Inyan Kara Mountain is not identified on Bad Heart Bull's map, unless it is the figure associated with the name *Hinyankagapa* drawn at a location west of *Pe Sla.* The name of this site, which European Americans adopted directly from the Lakotas in the 1850s, refers to the first act of creation when *Inyan*, the spiritual essence of stone, produced earth and sky out of its own movement or flow, *Kara* (Sundstrom, L. 1997:189-190). Today, it is also called *Hor'ewin Ti Paha* [Mountain Home of Creation], which is a sacred name denoting an old woman who quills a bison robe representing creation (Black Elk, C. 1986c:206).[16] Intriguingly, in 1849, De Giradin (1936:62) learned that Harney Peak was called *Inyan Kaga*. How and why the Lakota names

[15] The tribal attribution of this story and the name of the owl figure are hard to trace. While the author acknowledges that he secured this and other stories in his book from the work of scholars like George Bird Grinnell, this one is hard to link with any story in the published literature other than one appearing some years later (Marriott and Rachlin 1975:44-47).

[16] This has intriguing connections to Arapaho ideas of a female whirlwind figure associated with creation and the art of quillwork (Anderson, J.2000, 2001:103-104, 127-128).

associated with these peaks became conflated over the years is a complete mystery for which there are no ready or obvious explanations.[17]

To add further confusion, Sundstrom (1997:189) points out that John Bourke was told in 1877 by some Cheyennes that the Lakotas called Inyan Kara Mountain, *Ihancaja-paja*, "the butte where ghosts live" (Sundstrom, L. 1997:189). This translation makes no sense in the Lakota language unless the word is a corrupted form of *inyan kaga pa* [stone maker butte], as Sundstrom (1997:189) suggests, or it might be another name entirely, which means "the hill that ice passes through."[18] In Lakota, *ihan* means "to stand in or at" or "to remain" (Buechel 1970:216), while *paja* when combined with a verb denotes an action that moves or passes "through" or "into" something (Ibid:427). *Caja* might be a corruption of the word for ice [*caga*] (Ibid:113; see also discussions in Appendix C). The crystalline, ice-like appearance of gypsum formations that wind their way like ribbons through limestone formations may very well be what the name, *Ihancaja-paja*, denotes. This translation also makes sense for the general area, which is well known for its rich gypsum deposits, but it probably applies to another location, perhaps even the one that Ludlow described north of Inyan Kara Mountain along Redwater Creek. Historically, at least, gypsum powder was used by the Cheyennes and Lakotas to mark lines around ceremonial altars (Densmore 1918:122; Grinnell 1972:2:292; Schlesier 1987:93; Whiteman in Schultz 1988:54). Other than the names associated with this mountain, there is little published information on its meaning before pre-World War II. More recently, however, the region has been reported as a location for important ceremonial observances (Goodman 1992:12; Chirinos 1991:86-88; Black Elk, C. 1992a:51).

b. Sundance Mountain and the Black Buttes

Sundance Mountain, which is located in the vicinity of Bear Lodge Butte in Wyoming, does not appear on Bad Heart Bull's map, although early references to its importance can be found in the literature on the Lakotas. Sundstrom (1997:193) reports that one account from 1886 identified it as the site of a summer rendezvous linked to subsistence activities and the Sun Dance. Nicholas Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984:366) described this area as the site of an old Sun Dance grounds for the Lakotas, and it was also recognized as such in the work of European American writers who wrote popular accounts about the Hills during the same period (Price 1935:42-43).[19] Several decades later, Rev. Peter Powell (1969:2:477) connected this site with some of the Cheyennes' earliest Sun Dances.

The Black Buttes, west of the Black Hills and northeast of Inyan Kara Mountain in Wyoming, are marked on the Bad Heart Bull map as *He Sapa* [Black Ridge], but there is little we could find in early published sources that describe the specific nature of their spiritual importance to any of the tribal nations known to have occupied this area. This may have been the general area, already reported previously, where Ludlow (1875:15) found an outcropping of gypsum that local tribes were mining north of Inyan Kara Mountain.

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[17] One possible explanation relates to the common practice of Lakota *Heyoka* (Contraries) inverting the names, and possibly even the locations, of places. Since Harney Peak is associated with their guardian, the Thunders, it is quite likely that they may have switched its name with another nearby site actually identified as Owl Maker Peak, *Hinhan Kaga Paha.*

[18] Yvonne Kelly translated this word with the assistance of Jerry Dearly.

[19] S. Goodale Price (1935:31-33) also offers a story about Spearfish Canyon, which comes from the work of the Rev. Peter Rosen (1895:438-442). The story is about the Little People. Although he claims the story is "Sioux," the native words included in the story appear to be from an Algonkian rather than a Siouan language.

c. Bear Lodge Butte (a.k.a. Devil's Tower)

This site is sacred to all of the tribes who were known to occupy the Black Hills in historic times and to other tribes as well. In the late nineteenth century, when they shared stories of their former homelands in the northern Rockies and Black Hills with James Mooney (1979:156-160, 322-324), the Kiowas talked about the spiritual significance of Bear Lodge Butte (Devil's Tower), which they call *Tso ai* [Tree Rock]. Other early ethnographers, including Elsie Clews Parsons (1929:9-11) and John Harrington (1939:169, 174-176), also collected stories about this site from the Kiowas. The Kiowas' story, common among other tribes, tells about a girl and her brothers being chased by a gigantic bear. As they stand on a tree stump, or rock in some versions, and pray to it for help, it begins to rise underneath them. The bear claws the side of the butte as it attempts to reach the children, who eventually are taken to the sky where they become the stars of the Pleiades constellation. Early on, similar stories were recorded about this site for the Arapahos (Dorsey and Kroeber 1903:152-153), Cheyennes (Wooden Leg in Marquis 1931:52-54; Randolph 1937:185-188), and the Hidatsas (Lowie 1939:220-227).

This landform appears on Bad Heart Bull's map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289) in a pictorial representation. Many tribes shared the same name for this butte, Bear Lodge, including the Cheyennes, who knew it as *Nakoeve* (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:51) and the Lakotas, who called it *Mato tipila*. It is explicitly named along with the Buffalo Gap in the Race Track story that Little Cloud shared with Buechel in 1915 (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:95), and it is also named as a vision questing site in a story Lone Man told Ivan Stars in 1920 (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:275-276; [also, in Buechel and Manhart 1998:472-474]). Harrington (1939:169) provided three other Lakota names for this land formation:1) *Witchatchepaha* [Penis Mountain], 2) *Hinyan kaga paha* [Owl Maker Mountain], and 3) *Wanaghipaha* [Ghost Mountain]. The last two names were also applied to Harney Peak, Inyan Kara Mountain, and Castle Rock as noted previously. Today, the Lakotas have many different names for it including *Hu Nump Otiwita* [Sanctuary of Wisdom], with which the sacred bear [*Hu Nump*] is closely associated, and *Inyan Wiconi* [Stone of Life Renewed], a name linked to the observance of the Sun Dance held in its vicinity (Black Elk, C. 1986a:207).

Today, Bear Lodge Butte continues to be widely regarded as a highly sacred site to the Lakotas (LaPointe 1976:66-68; Yellow Robe 1979:26-30; Bird Horse in U.S. Senate 1986:168, 207; Charging Eagle and Zeillinger 1987; Looking Horse in Parlow 1983a:43; Looking Horse 1987; Black Elk 1992a:51; Goodman 1992:12-13), Kiowas (Nye 1962:49-50; Marriott 1968:140; Momaday 1969:7-8; Boyd 1983:88-93), Cheyennes (Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:51-52), Arikaras (Parks 1991), Plains Apaches (McAllister 1937:162; Schwienfurth 2002:38-42), Shoshones,[20] and other tribes as well (Chirinos 1991; Hanson and Chirinos 1991; Sundstrom, L. 1996, 1997). During the 1930s, Dick Stone (in Shirl 1982) collected many stories about this site from the elders of many of these tribes. Another, although highly simplified, version of a Lakota story about this site was published by the South Dakota Writer's Project (1941:115-116).

d. Bear Butte

This site has long been recognized as a highly sacred place for many tribal nations. The Cheyennes and their close relatives, the Sutaios, called it, *Nowah'wus* (Teaching Hill). In his ethnographic monograph on the Cheyennes, first published in 1923 (1972:1:368-381, 2:201-202),

[20] I heard and read stories about the sacred significance of this sight to members of the Shoshone-Bannock tribes in Idaho when I conducted ethnographic and ethnohistorical work for them in the 1990s. This information, however, is privileged and confidential.

and in other publications (1909, 1910) as well, George Bird Grinnell ranked it as one of their most important ceremonial locations, the origin place of highly sacred religious objects, knowledge, and practices.[21] Earlier in 1905, George A. Dorsey (1905:1-15,30-48) also acknowledged its place in Cheyenne origin stories and in the emergence of two of their most important ceremonies, the *Oxhehoem* [New Life Lodge or Sun Dance] and *Massaum* [Animal or Contrary Dance]. Dorsey never identified the place by name or location, but it is obvious from Grinnell's later work that the "mountain" in Dorsey's writings is unquestionably Bear Butte. Finally, the local historian Thomas E Odell's self published book *Mato Paha: The Story of Bear Butte* (1942: 9-20,140-152) contains excerpts of interviews with Cheyennes that reveal Bear Butte's importance as an origin place for their Sacred Arrows as well as a major site for fasting and vision seeking. He also includes some of General Hugh Scott's recollections of the Cheyennes' strong religious attachments to this site in 1878 (Odell 1942:17-18).

In the same period, less substantial, but no less significant, information appeared on the importance of Bear Butte to the Lakotas, who call it *Mato Paha*. James Owen Dorsey (1894:448-449) quoted George Bushotter's recollections of his visit to Bear Butte as a child:

> The mountain had many large rocks on it...The children prayed to the rocks as if to their guardian spirits, and then placed some of the smaller ones between the branches of the pine trees...Some trees had as many as seven stones apiece. No child repeated the ceremony of putting a stone up in a tree; but on subsequent visits to the Butte he or she wailed for the dead, of whom the stones were tokens.

This site also appears on Bad Heart Bull's map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289), and there is an early reference to it in one of Eagle Shield's healing songs recorded by Francis Densmore (1918:256) that establishes its early connection to visions and medicine in Lakota traditions. Pretty Weasel narrated a story to Ivan Stars in 1915 that gives an alternate name for this site, *Wacinko Paha* [Pouting Butte], because of a young man who once sulked there. His actions led to wondrous events after which people left offerings of remembrance there (in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:121-130; [also in Buechel and Manhart 1998:201-225]). White Bull told Stanley Vestal (1934:92-93) that an elk spirit came to him in an oak grove west of the butte. The sacred importance of this site was recorded in a story about Crazy Horse collected by the South Dakota Writer's Project (1941:111-112) in the 1930s. Thomas Odell's book (1942:21-30) also includes materials from his interviews with Lakotas that reveal Bear Butte's significance as a major location for fasting, vision seeking, Sun Dances, and Scalp Dances, and as a place to memorialize the deceased. This site has other names in Lakota, including *Sinte O Cunku Paha Wakan* [Sacred Mountain on the Road Along the Trail], or simply *Paha Wakan* [Sacred Mountain], and *Okawita Paha* [Gathering Mountain] and (Parlow 1983b:xii; Black Elk, C. 1986a:207).

Additionally, there are references (Sundstrom, L. 1996, 1997) on its importance to other tribes. One early source (Rosen 1895:54) connects a Mandan tradition of the Great Flood to Bear Butte and an annual pilgrimage from their home on the Upper Missouri to conduct ceremonies at this site. Even the Kiowas and Plains Apaches, long removed from the Black Hills, remembered Bear Butte and the lake beneath it as the source for some of their most sacred stories and objects (McAllister 1937:162; Mooney 1979:322-324).[22]

[21] The origin of their Sacred Arrows, *Mahots*, comes from Bear Butte and the use of shields is also said to have originated here (Price, S. 1935:21-22).
[22] The Plains Apaches called this landform Black Rock (McAllister 1965:217).

Today, Bear Butte remains a highly sacred location to the Arapahos (Trenholm 1970; Fools Crow in Mails 1979:154), Cheyennes (Hoebel 1960; Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967; Powell 1969; Ottaway 1970; Schlesier 1974, 1987; Fools Crow in Mails 1979:154; Moore 1981; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:46-50; Red Hat in Schukies 1993:153-156), Mandans (Albers and Kittelson 2002), Plains Apaches (McAllister 1965; Schwienfurth 2002:60-66), and the Lakotas (Herman 1965a, 1965b; LaPointe 1976:66-68; Fools Crow in Mails 1972; Charging Eagle and Zeillinger 1987; Eagle Hunter in Parlow 1983a:13; Looking Horse in Parlow 1983a:41; Red Owl in Parlow 1983a:21;Two Dogs in Parlow 1983a:3; Young Bear in Parlow 1983a:27; Catches and Catches 1990; Black Elk, C. 1992a:51; King in Arden 1994:39-40; Forbes-Boyte 1996, 1999) among others.

e.Thunder Butte, Slim Buttes, and the Cave Hills

Makinyan Paha [Thunder Butte] and *Baha Zizipela* [Slim Buttes] are also marked on Bad Heart Bull's map (in Bad Heart Bull and Blish 1967:289). Located outside the Hills, these buttes and the Little Missouri Buttes *Unçi Yapi* [The Grandmothers] (Black Elk, C. 1986a:207) have cultural significance to the Lakotas and other tribes as well, most notably the Hidatsas and Mandans (Bowers 1950, 1963). Of particular importance here is Ludlow Cave, not placed on the map, which is located in the Cave Hills north of the Slim Buttes. Some of the older traditions associated with this cave were recorded by members of the Black Hills Expedition (Krause and Olson 1974:19; Sundstrom and Keyser 1998; Sundstrom, L. 2002:110; Sioux Ranger District 2003:3:60-73; see also, Chapter Twelve), and a few of these bear a striking resemblance to early narratives about subterranean locations in the Black Hills, including Wind Cave.

5. The Black Hills As A Whole

The literature from the pre-World War II era clearly suggests that a number of specific sites within or surrounding the Black Hills were held sacred because they were locations where spiritual happenings took place in mythic times, where sacred objects, knowledge, and performances originated in tribal memory, where communal ceremonial observances were held, and/or where individuals sought and received personal visions with extraordinary messages and meaning. But a question that remains unanswered is whether any of this earlier literature reveals a spiritual significance for the Black Hills as a distinct entity that transcends the sites contained within them.

In the case of the Lakotas, the answer is clearly yes. In 1893, Garrick Mallery published his work *Picture-Writing of the American Indian,* in which he included Brown Hat or Battiste Good's recollection (pp. 289-290) of a vision he received in the Black Hills (the specific location of which remains unidentified).

> In the year 1856, I went to the Black Hills and cried, and cried, and cried, and suddenly I saw a bird above me, which said: 'Stop crying; I am a woman, but I will tell you something: My Great-Father, Father God, who made this place, gave it to me for a home and told me to watch over it. He put a blue sky over my head and gave me a blue flag to have with this beautiful green country. [Battiste has made the hill country, as well as the curve for the sky and the flag, blue in his copy]. My Great-Father, Father God (or the Great-Father, God my Father) grew, and his flesh was part earth and part stone and part metal and part wood and part water; he took from them all and placed them here for me, and told me to watch over them. I am the Eagle-Woman who tell you this. The whites know that there are four black flags of God: that is, four divisions of the earth. He first made the earth soft by wetting it, then cut it into four parts, one of which, containing the Black Hills, he gave to the Dakotas, and because I am a

woman, I shall not consent to the pouring of blood on this chief house (or dwelling place), i.e., the Black Hills.

The time will come that you will remember my words; for after many years you shall grow up one with the white people. She then circled round and round and gradually passed out of my sight. I also saw prints of a man's hands and horse's hoofs on the rocks [here he brings in petroglyphs], and two thousand years, and one hundred million dollars ($100,000,000). I came away crying, as I had gone. I have told this to many Dakotas, and all agree that it meant that we were to seek and keep peace with the whites.

We cannot conclude very much from this because Good was speaking in bitter times, only a few years after the Black Hills had been taken from the Lakotas. In his text, the words, "sacred" and "spiritual" are never used to describe the Black Hills, but their presence is implied by the source of the narrative -- a vision, which by definition is *wakan.* We can also deduce that the Black Hills represented an extraordinary place. Not only did they constitute four distinct tiers of the cosmos, but they were also a space where blood was not to be spilled. This is culturally significant. Blood shed through war, parturition, and menstruation was understood by Lakotas to hold properties inimical to the *ton* of other phenomenon that possessed *wakan* or created it in acts of religious observance (Powers, M. 1980). Peace, therefore, was not simply a political strategy: it was a necessary observance in a consecrated setting. This may explain, in part, why many of the reported raids on the early white prospectors and settlers entering the Hills took place at the gateways to the Hills and in regions outside the Race Track.[23]

Similarly, Luther Standing Bear (1978:44-45) expressed the deep seated emotional suffering the Lakotas experienced after the Black Hills were taken, and he again alludes to their importance as a site of birth and emergence when he writes:

Two lovely legends of the Lakotas would be fine subjects for sculpturing -- the Black Hills as the earth mother, and the story of the genesis of the tribe. Instead the face of a white man is being outlined on the face of a stone cliff in the Black Hills. This beautiful region, of which the Lakota thought more than any other spot on earth, caused him the most pain and misery. These hills were to become prized by the white people for reasons far different from those of the Lakota. To the Lakota the magnificent forests and splendid herds were incomparable in value...If the Lakotas had been relinquishing any part of their territory voluntarily, the Black Hills would have been the last from the standpoint of traditional sentiment...

How long the Lakota people lived in these mid-west plains bordering the Black Hills before the coming of the white men is not known in tribal records. But our legends tell us that it was hundreds and perhaps thousands of years ago since the first man sprang from the soil in the midst of these great plains....So this land of the great plains is claimed by the Lakotas as their very own. We are of the soil and the soil is of us. We love the birds and beasts that grew with us on this soil. They drank the same water we did and breathed the same air. We are all one in nature. Believing so, there was in our hearts a great peace and a welling kindness for all living, growing things.

Standing Bear's association of the Black Hills with genesis and a feminine force matches cosmological connections made and recorded in the same period for the Cheyennes and Kiowas. The Cheyennes, as noted in Chapters Nine and Twelve, believed that two female spiritual figures,

[23] Similar prohibitions against the spilling of blood were also reported in the early nineteenth century for another site sacred to the Lakotas and Dakotas, the Pipestone Quarry in Minnesota (Nicollet in Bray and Bray 1976:72-85). Indeed, contemporary Lakotas believe the Cheyenne River is a road that connects the Hills to this quarry (Black Elk, C. 1992:51).

Grandmother Earth, *Esceheman*, and her daughter, the Yellow Haired Buffalo Woman, *Eyostopah,* lived in sacred caves underneath Bear Butte where they nourished and guarded the game animals upon whose flesh humans depended (Schlesier 1987:79,82,102-104). The Kiowas' called the Black Hills *Sadalkani K'op* [Tripe Mountains], which, as originally reported in the late nineteenth century by James Mooney (1979:419), referred to the intestines of a bison cow. *Gadombitsonhit*, Old Woman Under the Ground, is a Kiowa spiritual figure that is envisioned as a member of a dwarf-like race living in the subterranean habitats of the Black Hills and other mountainous regions (Mooney 1979:239).

Like Brown Hat, Standing Bear does not explicitly speak of the Black Hills as sacred or *wakan*, but, again by context and association, we can infer its implicit presence as a concept. He clearly emphasizes that the Lakotas saw the Hills and their surroundings differently than the Whites, and that the basis of this difference was rooted in the Lakotas' sense of the relatedness and oneness of all living things. As discussed in great detail in Chapter Nine, this is a foundational precept underlying Lakota religious thought: it speaks directly to the cosmic singularity that is *Wakan Tanka* (DeMallie 1987:27-28). Moreover, the overall respect and veneration that Standing Bear expressed for the Hills is consistent with a Lakota understanding of *wakan* as something possessing a sacred quality and capable of generating an ultimate state of goodness (Buechel 1970:525).

The same can also be said about Nicholas Black Elk's words regarding the Black Hills. Again, he never literally talks about them as sacred, but he refers to them in a variety of metaphorical ways typical of Lakota sacred forms of address (Black Elk, C. 1986b:192; Powers, W. 1986:11-41; New Holy 1997:113-154). This is especially clear in Black Elk's rendition (DeMallie 1984:310) of the Race Track story in which he said:

> ...The Thunder-being told Red Thunder: 'With this weapon the tribe shall expand and be mighty. So you go back to your people and teach them to make bows. Hereafter you can shoot buffalo.' (Red Thunder: Wakina Luta [*Wakinyan Luta*]) They further told him that at the place where they had the race was the heart of the earth. He said, 'Someday your tribe will be in this land.' It was the promised land. 'This land is a being. Remember in the future you are to look for this land.' I think at the present time we found it and it is the Black Hills.

Similar to Standing Bear, Black Elk attributed a distinct animate quality to the Black Hills, which as all other living things in the Lakota world, manifest some measure of *wakan* (Brown 1992:6-10; DeMallie 1987:28-32). This is made even more emphatic by the idea that they were "the heart of the earth," and in his vision at Harney Peak, "the center of the earth" (Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:296), a sacred position recognized by the central placement of the *hocoka* (altar) within the circle of the Sun Dance and all other important Lakota ceremonies (New Holy 1997:113-154). It is also implicated in the reference to the "place they had the race" or the Race Track, a location long recognized as culturally significant and sacred to the Lakotas.

If we go back even earlier in time, as discussed elsewhere, we can see in the words of Red Cloud and other Lakotas the use of metaphorical expressions that impute a sacred quality to the region. Certainly, some of the early government agents among the Lakotas understood this, as did various newspaper reporters writing of the area in the 1870s. Even military men, such as Richard I. Dodge, admitted to this, but only as way to justify seizing the Hills because the Lakotas purportedly did not occupy them. So, it is curious that a century later some scholars (Parker, W. 1985; Feraca 1990; Chirinos 1991; Worster 1992) and journalists (Bordewich 1996) would argue that ideas regarding the Hills' sacredness are recent inventions.

C. The Transitional Years, 1946-1981

From World War II until 1981, when Lakotas occupied lands at Wind Cave National Park, materials on the sacredness of the Hills as a whole or specific sites in their midst continued to appear in print. The published material, however, is very uneven. Although some of the richest information on Cheyenne and Kiowa sacred sites in the Black Hills comes from this period, the Lakota record is very sparse until the 1970s. This is the decade when a variety of publications begin to appear that explicitly identify sites in the Black Hills of sacred significance to the Lakotas and that also reveal the nature of some of their spiritual underpinnings. Most of these publications are based directly on Lakota sources and do not represent the views and interpretations of ethnographers.

1. Lakota Sources

Curiously, from 1946 to 1969, there is a striking absence of published ethnographic material on places in the Black Hills of spiritual importance to the Lakotas. It is difficult to know what to make of this except to note that anthropological interests at this time were generally directed towards documenting change and acculturation among the Lakotas, not recovering traditional knowledge, reinvented or otherwise. In his famous work *The Sioux: The Life and Customs of a Warrior Society,* Royal B. Hassrick (1964:75, 165) wrote that the Lakotas called the Black Hills their "meat pack," a reference to its value in their historic subsistence cycle. He made no mention of its place in their spiritual life, however. Yet, even ethnographers (Malan and McCone 1959; Hurt 1960; Feraca 1961, 1998; Kemnitzer 1970, 1976; Powers, W. 1977) who conducted studies on Lakota religion during the 1950s and 1960s did not give much attention to geographic places of sacred significance to the Lakotas, including sites in and around the Black Hills. Generally speaking, their work focused on some of the more abstract tenets behind Lakota religion and/or the conduct of the ceremonies, which remained important in the mid-twentieth century, especially vision seeking, the Sun Dance, the Native American Church, and *Yuwipi*.

This stands in marked contrast to a variety of different non-ethnographic publications, which were written locally and based on materials collected in the 1950s and 1960s. One of these is a remarkable book *To Kill An Eagle* published in 1981 by Edward and Mabel Kadlecek, local ranchers from Beaver Creek in northwestern Nebraska, and based on interviews conducted in the 1960s with over twenty different Lakota elders from the Pine Ridge, Rosebud, and Standing Rock reservations. The book is remarkable not only because of its geographic specificity, but also because it includes the verbatim narratives of the elders who described the significance of sites in Nebraska's Beaver Valley and the nearby Black Hills. Harney Peak, Bear Butte, and other high peaks in the Hills were noted as locations where the Lakotas fasted, prayed, and sought visions (Bordeaux in Kadlecek and Kadlecek 1981:90-91; Gregg in Kadlecek and Kadlecek 1981:107; Kicking Bear in Kadlecek and Kadlecek 1981:118, Swift Bird in Kadlecek and Kadlecek 1981:146-147). Wind Cave was singled out in a story Stella Swift Bird (in Kadlecek and Kadlecek 1981:147-148) narrated about her grandfather and so were the neighboring Hot Springs. Also collected in the 1960s but published two decades later is a story about an eagle who saved a young girl and married her, eventually taking her to his home on the highest pinnacle of the Black Hills, obviously Harney Peak, when the earth was flooded (Lame Deer in Erdoes and Ortiz 1984: 94-96).

Another source of stories about Wind Cave comes from *Ehanni Ohunkakan: A Curriculum Resource Unit*, first published in 1972 (revised in 1974) and compiled by Vivian One Feather for the Oglala Sioux Culture Center. It contains many stories drawn from tribal elders in the 1960s

and also from unpublished materials in the Dr. James Walker Collection at the State Historical Society of Colorado. It includes the Walker version of *Tokahe*'s emergence from a cave (Sword in One Feather 1972:102-105), but no explicit connection is made to Wind Cave. Instead, Wind Cave is linked to a different story narrated by Jake Herman (in One Feather 1972:149), a respected Lakota storyteller, well known rodeo clown, and a former member of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council, who passed away in 1970 at the age of 77 (Cash and Hoover 1971:102-103; Bettelyoun and Waggoner 1988:142 n4). Another version of Herman's story, whose lineage can be traced to an earlier narrative that Left Hand shared with James Walker, is found in an undated manuscript held at the Wind Cave National Park Library (n.d) and was probably recorded in the 1960s. Herman also wrote stories about the sacred significance of the Hot Springs, Bear Butte, and the Black Hills in general that appear in the One Feather collection (1972) and in other publications, including *Oglala Sioux Historical Pictorial Booklet* (1965a) and *Historical Stories and Legends of the Oglala Sioux Indians* (1965b), or as unpublished manuscripts in the collections of various libraries and archives, such as the South Dakota History Center and the American Indian Oral History Project at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion.

Wind Cave is also the subject of a story in Emerson Matson's *Legends of the Great Chiefs*, published in 1972 and narrated by Edgar Red Cloud four years earlier. Unlike Jake Herman's story, Red Cloud recounts an incident that took place within historic memory. This is also true of an article written two decades earlier on March 11, 1951, entitled "37 Years Haven't Dimmed the Memory of Being Lost in Wind Cave" by Joe Koller and published in the *Rapid City Journal*. Reprinted in 1970 in *Wi-lyohi, Bulletin of the South Dakota Historical Society*, this is the earliest published reference we were able to find that links Wind Cave to a Lakota story with spiritual significance. Wounded Horse's narrative is also not related to any stories that claim Wind Cave is the origin place of humans or bison. Instead, like Stella Swift Bird and Edgar Red Cloud's accounts, it is a story about a mysterious event that unfolded at some point in historic memory.

A collection of contemporary Lakota oral traditions, *Buckskin Tokens: Contemporary Oral Narratives of the Lakota* (1975), edited by Ron Theisz, contains a series of traditional stories told by Lakota elders and audiotaped at Sinte Gleska College in Rosebud, South Dakota in the late sixties. Some of these narratives are site-specific, including a story about Wind Cave by Henry Black Elk, a descendant of the famous Nicholas Black Elk. In its essential features, this story is very similar to Jake Herman's, and its lineage can be traced back to renditions of the Buffalo Wife story that Left Heron told James Walker and Ella Deloria in the early twentieth century. It also contains a Stone Boy story with possible connections to the Buffalo Gap by Kate Blue Thunder. Richard Erdoes also edited a collection of Lakota stories in a book entitled, *The Sound of Flutes and Other Indian Legends* (1976). In one narrative, Eagle Elk (pp. 33-36) tells how small thunderbirds once lived in the Black Hills near Harney Peak but left after the area became desecrated by tourist attractions, and in another text, Crow Dog (pp. 108-16) tells his version of a Stone Boy story.

Another very important work from this is period is *Legends of the Lakota* (1976) by James LaPointe, a boarding school educated Lakota who was born on the Pine Ridge Reservation on April 6, 1883 (Giago 1999:85-87). Wind Cave and most of the other places LaPointe writes about are located in the Black Hills, and many of them correspond with locations marked on Bad Heart Bull's early map of the region. In relation to Wind Cave, which he names *Washun Niya* [Breathing Cave], he tells the story of how *Taopi Gli* [Returns Home Wounded] brought the buffalo to the people through his marriage to a buffalo woman. This narrative shares many features in common with Left Heron's Buffalo Wife story. LaPointe writes about how Wind Cave is not only connected to the Buffalo Gap in Lakota traditions, but to the Hot Springs as well (LaPointe 1976:45-46, 79-84, see Chapter Fourteen for details). He also had things to say about

Harney Peak, which he describes as part of the *Chokata*, a sacred and centrally located altar. He names it, *Hinhan Kagha Paha*, and associates it with the story of an evil, owl-like figure that abducts children and young animals (Ibid:89-91). In LaPointe's version, the monster gets slain by Falling Star, the "divine helper of the Lakota people." Falling Star also intervenes on the people's behalf in another of LaPointe's stories (Ibid:74-76) that takes place on the northeastern side of the Black Hills at Rapid Creek, *Mini Lusahan Wakpa* [Fast Water Creek].[24] For Red Canyon in the southcentral Black Hills, he relates a story about the journey of Fox Man and the wisdom he gained from *Inyan Owapi* (rock writing) that served him well and laid the foundation for the formation of the *Tokala* (Kit Fox) Society, a warrior organization among the Lakotas (Ibid:54-55).[25] Bear Butte, according to LaPointe (Ibid:38-41), has many different spiritual meanings for the Lakotas, one related to healing and to the story of the bear after whom the mountain is named, another connected with the *Chekpa Oyate* [Twin Nation] who are guardians of twins and reincarnation, and many others associated with *hanblecheya* or vision seeking. Finally, Bear Lodge Butte is another site for a Falling Star story, but even more important, LaPointe claims it as the origin place for the Lakota Sun Dance (Ibid:66-68). [26]

Comparing LaPointe's stories for different parts of the Black Hills, it is clear that, more than any other location in the region, Wind Cave is closely associated with bison and game animals, although it is strongly linked to Little People, medicinal plants, and healing too. The other sites he describes don't focus as much on the procreativeness of game, nor do they place as much emphasis on a subterranean universe. Lakota notions about Bear Butte make connections to an underground world, but these are not as comprehensive as the Cheyennes', nor are they as extensive as those associated with the Wind Cave area.

The idea that the entire Black Hills is a sacred space for the Lakotas is also evident in La Pointe's writings. It is revealed in his narration of the Race Track story (1976:17-20), which tells how the Hills rose out of a flat space through the energy released by the animals' racing, and how the race determined the outcome, the present order, and relationship of humans to animals. LaPointe (1976:3,13) also argues that the Black Hills were the concrete embodiment of the Lakotas' worldview. As he states:

> The Lakota loved the Black Hills for reasons vastly different [from the whites]. They held the Hills as a shrine, a sanctuary for both beast and man. It was a winter haven for the beast of the land a traditional place of procreation, under the protective shelter of the pines and the deep canyons, a place for worship, where the spiritual yearnings of bewildered mankind were calmed (LaPointe 1976:142).

And that they:

> worshiped in the Black Hills ages before the white man came. Through this religious association he came to know every stream, the valleys, and from atop the craggy hills he knew awe when he viewed the breathtaking, panoramic land of the Black Hills, even as we see them now. With utmost devotion and faith, the Lakota traversed the very center of the

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[24] This is also a site in one of the Falling Star stories that Black Elk shared with Neihardt in the 1940s.
[25] This may be related to the origins of warbonnets and the Brave Hearts reported on earlier. In an interview with Lucy Lewis (1980:76), John Around Him, a Lakota elder, talked about how some of the petroglyphs in the Black Hills predicted whether there would be war or peace in the coming year.
[26] On a recent trip to Sinte Gleska Tribal University (June 2003), a visit to the college's bookstore revealed that this book and many of the others referenced here, written or narrated by Lakotas, were supplementary or required readings for classes on Lakota culture.

> Black Hills. The absurd notion that thunder gods, ghosts of ancestors, and evil spirits kept the Lakota from venturing into the very central part of the Black Hills is absurd (LaPointe 1976:15-16).

In the same year LaPointe's book was published, Gilbert Walking Bull (1976) published a book of Lakota stories, entitled *Wo-ya-ka-pi: Telling Stories of the Past and Present,* including one about the Race Track. Three years later, Rosebud Yellow Robe (1979) published another collection of Lakota stories, entitled *Tonweya and the Eagles and Other Lakota Indian Tales,* which contains references to areas in and around the Black Hills, including Bear Lodge Butte. Also in the 1970s, Thomas Mails (1972) published Fools Crow's autobiography. The most important aspect of this book is the detail it provides about the history of Fools Crow's fasts, prayers, and vision seeking at Bear Butte and also his involvement in the revitalization of Lakota religion in the 1970s. Starting in 1914, when he was taken to Bear Butte to seek a vision as a boy, until 1965, when he received his greatest vision there, he describes in some depth the chronology of the spiritual knowledge he received at this site, much of which was associated with his work as a *Yuwipi* and bear healer (in Mails 1972:86-87, 95, 102, 109, 149, 151, 169-171, 181-184). In the 1970s, Bear Butte gained considerable stature as a vision seeking location among the Lakotas and other tribal nations. This was not only a continuation of past practices for the Arapahos, Cheyennes, and Lakotas, but also a result of its association with spiritual leaders, such as Fools Crow and Pete Catches (and Catches 1990), who guided many young Lakotas through their own fasting and vision seeking at this spot. Today, many of the Lakotas who apprenticed under Fools Crow and Catches are now elders themselves, and they are currently training future generations of Lakotas in this tradition (Forbes-Boyte 1996; 1999).

There is no doubt from the perspective of people who were tribal elders from 1950 to 1981 that the Black Hills are sacred to the Lakotas, a focus of their deepest veneration and spirituality. Their position then, and in later years, is quite explicit in this regard and is stated even more strongly and directly than some of their predecessors (i.e., Battiste Good, Standing Bear, Black Elk), whose sentiments on this subject were recorded well before Red Power and the rise of Lakota political activism in the 1970s. It might be argued that the timing of James LaPointe's book lends credence to the position that its ends are political, and its stories shaped to justify the return of the Black Hills to the Lakotas on religious grounds. This seems unlikely. The author himself explains his reasons in the Preface, and these have everything to do with a nostalgic remembrance of his past, passing a cultural legacy onto his children, and little to do with political strategizing. Or it might be argued that Fools Crow's religiosity and reverence for the Black Hills were manufactured for a political purpose, since he was active in the treaty-rights movement and other political struggles of the time. But again, it is hard to sustain this position given the history of his spiritual attachment to the region that extends back to the early years of the twentieth century, even predating the popularity of tourism in the area after the 1920s.

Importantly, while specific references to sacred locales in the southern Hills are generally lacking in writings on the Lakotas prior to World War II, these represent a significant portion of the literature dealing with Lakota sacred geography in later decades. The reason for this is difficult to determine, but it is noteworthy that places such as Hot Springs and Wind Cave receive as much coverage in publications from the 1950s and 1960s as Harney Peak and Bear Butte, which are widely acknowledged as sacred places to the Lakotas.

2. The Ponca Material

James Howard's monograph (1965a:20) on the Poncas includes the first reference to Wind Cave in an ethnographic publication. It comes from an historical manuscript that Peter LeClaire,

a Northern Ponca, shared with James Howard. Originally written in 1928 and then revised in 1947, much of it was based on information LeClaire learned from an elderly Southern Ponca chief by the name of *Mazahade* a.k.a. John Bull. It reads:

> The Wind Cave in the Black Hills was found by the Poncas. It is called the hill that sucks in or the hill that swallows in *Pah-hah-wah-tha-hu-ni.*

The timing of this discovery is vague, but it probably took place sometime before the 1770s when the Ponca were still traveling to the Rockies and the Black Hills for their semi-annual bison hunts. There is no mention, however, of any sacred meaning attached to the site, although caves and other subterranean locations figure prominently in Ponca and Omaha origin stories (Dorsey, J. 1890).

3. Kiowa and Plains Apache Sources

A couple of important sources appear on the Kiowas and Plains Apaches from 1945 to 1969 that offer detailed readings of their spiritual connections to the Black Hills and its outlying formations, especially Bear Lodge Butte and Bear Butte. Even after a century of reservation life in Oklahoma, the Kiowas still remembered their former homeland in the Black Hills. They retained traditions about Bear Lodge Butte, which are connected to the origins of some of the their most sacred ceremonies (Nye 1962:49-50; Marriott 1968:140; Momaday 1969:7-8). One of the more detailed stories about a tribal connection to Bear Butte also comes from this period; it pertains to the origin of the Plains Apaches' Four Quartz Bundle, which was given to its original owner at the lake beneath the butte (McAllister 1965:210-224).

4. Cheyenne and Arapaho Record

In contrast to the Kiowas and Plains Apaches, who knew traditions associated with the Black Hills but do not appear to have maintained an active onsite ceremonial attachment to them, the Cheyennes continued to actively engage and renew their sacred relationship to the region, especially at their holiest site, Bear Butte. Three important works from this era, Lllewelyn Hoebel's *The Cheyenne People* (1960), John-Stands-in-Timber and Margot Liberty's *Cheyenne Memories* (1967:19-24, 41) and Reverend Peter Powell's two volume treatise *Sweet Medicine* (1969:1:4, 18, 41, 2:467-469, 472-475, 483, 571) offer modern renditions of sacred stories relating to the Black Hills, including more recent versions of Sweet Medicine's experiences on Bear Butte and the Race Track story. These and other sources (Marriott and Rachlin 1968; Ottaway 1970; Schlesier 1974) present concrete evidence of how sacred stories were remembered and recreated in the context of contemporary Cheyenne and Suhtaio religious observances. They tell how modern ceremonies conducted in Oklahoma and Montana, where the Cheyennes' reservation homes are now located, symbolically recreate the geography of Bear Butte, and they also explain why the Cheyennes continue to travel to this site to seek visions and conduct other religious observances, especially the renewal of their Sacred Arrows and Sacred Hat (Stands-In-Timber and Liberty 1967:89, 90; Powell 1969:1:xxiii, 366, 390-391, 2:412, 414, 416-419, 423-424, 494). Likewise, the neighboring Arapahos (Trenholm 1970:80) continue to look towards Bear Butte as a site for spiritual inspiration, the place where their sacred pipe was revealed and a location for fasting too.

D. Modern Readings, 1982 to Present

Over the past three decades, there has been a stunning outpouring of published materials dealing with the sacred significance of the Black Hills, not only for the Lakotas and Cheyennes but other tribal nations as well. The richness of more recent documentary sources is directly related to the renaissance of tribal religious belief and practice since the 1970s, and it is also linked to contemporary efforts to preserve indigenous languages and culture traditions through the work of tribal colleges and culture preservation offices. Although some of this writing involves new forms of interpretation, it does not depart in any significant way from earlier documents. Not only is there a striking continuity in the places regarded as sacred, but there is also a remarkable persistence in the spiritual meanings attached to these sites.

1. Lakota Narratives

Before 1981, most of the literature on the Black Hills' sacredness to the Lakotas was not politically motivated. The same cannot be said for some of the writings by Lakotas in subsequent years that were clearly influenced by the political climate of the times. In the early 1980s, the Black Hills Steering Committee (BHSC) played a major role in documenting the sacredness of the Hills and in making this information available to Congress as part of the testimony surrounding the Sioux Nation Black Hills Act sponsored by Senator Bill Bradley. According to Gerald Clifford (U.S. Senate 1986:168), coordinator of the BHSC, "Individuals affiliated with the Black Hills Steering Committee have been conducting primary research on oral traditions and cross-referencing these legends with accepted scientific research." Included in the report on the Sioux Nation Black Hills Act [S.1453], heard before the U.S. Senate's Select Committee on Indian Affairs, are the testimonies of well known and respected Lakota religious leaders, such as Fools Bear (U.S. Senate 1986:43), and Reginald Bird's Head (U.S. Senate 1986:83), who said:

> You would understand how we feel about the sacredness of these lands and why restoration is necessary. There are thousands of us who believe, as our ancestors before us believed, that the Paha Sapa, the Black Hills are very holy. All the Black Hills is like a temple to us. There are certain places in the Black Hills like ***Wind Cave*** and Mahto Tipi which the non-Indian identifies as the Devil's Tower, and others that are emergence sites for some of our people. There are numerous places where our sacred ceremonies and common ground are still being held (emphasis ours).

Also, there is the testimony of Lakota scholar Charlotte Black Elk, accompanied by several important written statements by her and the Black Hills Steering Committee. One of these presents information on two buffalo robes: the first contains a map of important topographical features in the Black Hills and the second a map of the constellations associated with them. These robes, which had been kept secret until then, reveal what Lakota elders had long said: that the Black Hills' topography mirrors the constellations in the Lakotas' Falling Star cycle (Black Elk, C. 1986:189-190). Another refers to Long Knife's narrative of *Tokahe* and the emergence of the Lakota people as well as a more recent version of the Race Track story (Black Hills Steering Committee 1986:196-202, 203-204). Finally, a list (Black Elk, C. 1986a:205-210) of names for sacred sites in the Black Hills is given along with their meanings.

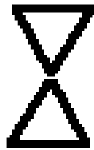
Directly related to, and indeed, some might even argue, a direct result of the research behind Lakota testimony for the Bradley Bill, is a book written and edited by Ronald Goodman (1992 [reprint of 1982 edition]) of Sinte Gleska University, entitled *Lakota Star Knowledge: Studies in Lakota Stellar Theology.* Its original purpose was to gather together curriculum materials for Lakota students in K-12 and higher education institutions (Goodman 1992:2), and it is the first

published effort to systematically link the Black Hills and its various sacred sites to a cosmologically integrated ceremonial complex. It is worth examining here in some depth.

According to Goodman (1992:1), certain constellations in the sky and certain physical features in the Black Hills are understood to mirror each other. Each spring, as these constellations moved across the sky, a select group of Lakota religious leaders would follow their movement through the Black Hills, performing particular ceremonies at specific times as directed in their star maps and oral traditions. He further asserts:

> Traditional Lakota believed that ceremonies done by them on earth were also being performed simultaneously in the spirit world. When what is happening in the stellar world is also being done on earth in the same way at the corresponding place at the same time, a hierophany can occur, sacred power can be drawn down; attunement of Wakan Tanka can be achieved (Ibid:1).

The link, as it is formed when the activities of the star world match those of the Black Hills, is represented by two cone-shaped vortexes attached together at their apex as follows:



Each vortex (the top one descends from the stars, while the bottom ascends from the earth) channels a force that twists together with the other to create a powerful emanation (Ibid:31). As Goodman (Ibid:18) writes: "Sacred above grandfather and sacred below grandmother represent the two cosmic principles which together form a single unity; restoring a oneness to the One, the always and the only One -- Wakan Tanka" (Ibid.).

During a three month period from the spring equinox to the summer solstice, the sun travels through four Lakota constellations which are connected by oral tradition to specific places in the Black Hills. By synchronizing their arrival at each of the four sites with the entrance of the sun into a corresponding constellation, the Lakotas were following the sun's path on earth. Furthermore, by being at the right place at the right time and doing the appropriate ceremonies, the Lakotas hoped to receive spiritual power from the *Wakan Waste*, the cosmic powers of good (Goodman 1992:11-12). As Goodman (Ibid:7) represents the Lakota perspective, the Black Hills constitute a "micro-cosmic hoop out of which annually new life is born." In other words, it is a "consecrated enclosure." The Race Track or the Red Valley is the physical manifestation of the circle within which the sacred space of the Black Hills was created, and it is linked to a circle of constellations known by the same name, *Ki Inyanka Ocanku* [the Race Track] or *Can gleska wakan* [the Sacred Hoop].

Later in the book, Charlotte Black Elk (1992b:44-45) gives her modern version of the Race Track story (the same one attached as a written statement in her testimony before the Senate, 1986c). In its essential features, it is basically identical to earlier ones appearing in the literature, including the version her great-grandfather narrated to John Neihardt. When a certain star, Capella, approached the sun, Charlotte Black Elk (1992a:50) wrote, people moved to an eastern entrance into the Hills for an annual ceremonial cycle which began and ended at this site:

> As the bison entered through the Buffalo Gap, the Lakota entered at the *Maka Can Opaya,* Valley of the Council Oak. We were now entering back into our home in the spirit of renewal

> and regeneration, passing through the *Wamakaskan Oki Inyanke*, Running Path of the Animals, the red formation circling the Black Hills.

In describing the entire ceremonial pilgrimage, Black Elk (Ibid:49) writes:

> Each spring a small group composed of especially devoted members from several Lakota bands journeyed through the Black Hills, synchronizing their movements to the motions of the sun along the ecliptic. As the sun moved into a particular Lakota constellation, they traveled to the site correlated with that constellation and held ceremonies there. Finally, they arrived at Devil's Tower at midsummer for the Sun Dance where they were joined by many western Lakota bands.

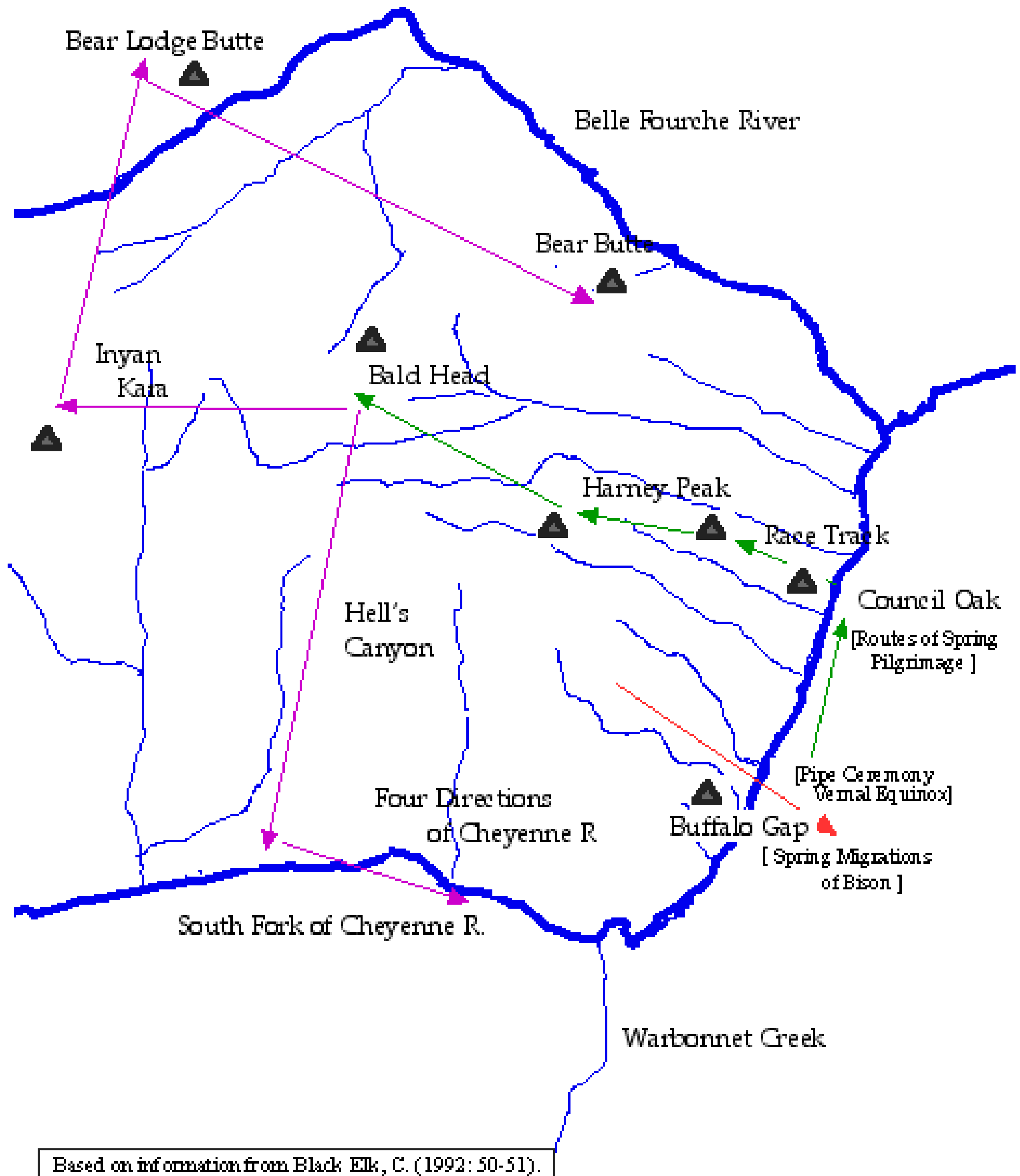
After entering the Hills in the Valley of the Council Oak, probably Grace Coolidge Creek near Hermosa, South Dakota, the celebrants moved to Harney Peak, which is associated with the constellation Pleiades and the story of the seven little girls, *Wicincala sakowin* (Goodman 1992: 1, 3, 7). At Harney Peak, the Lakotas performed a ceremony called *Yate Iwakcipi* [Dancing for the Thunders] (Ibid:12). Charlotte Black Elk (1992a:50-51) also describes what happened at this site:

> When the sun is aligned with the *Tayamnipia*, Principles of the Three Bodies, we are among the Grandfathers. The leaves of the shielding tree that whispers, the aspen, are now the size of a thumb nail. We travel to *Opaha Ta I,* Mountain at the Center Where He Comes, and welcome the thunders back for another season of renewal.

Once the ceremonies were performed to welcome the Thunders, the Lakotas moved to the prairies on the central Limestone Plateau to conduct additional rituals. This area is associated with the three stars of the *Tayamni Cankaku* constellation, each of which is linked to a different prairie -- *Keyapiya* (Turtle or Gillette), *Tayamni* (Bear or Slate), and *Pe Sla* (Bare Place or Reynolds) (Black Elk, C. 1992a:50-51). Here a ceremony of peace and renewal was conducted, called *Okslataya Wowahwala* [Peace at Bare Spot] (Goodman 1992:8, 13, 16; Black Elk, C. 1992:50-51). According to Goodman (1992:13), the ceremony involved "feeding the plants by pouring water into the earth; scattering seeds for the birds, and an offering of tongues for the meat-eaters." This has some parallels to the Cheyenne *Massaum* ceremony, which was also practiced in the Hills and coordinated to celestial markers (Schlesier 1987:88-104; Whiteman in Schwartz 1988:68-70).

After the ceremonies were completed on the central prairies, some of the people moved west and collected stones at *Inyan Kaga*, which carries the sacred name *Pte He Sapa* [Black Buffalo Horn], for use in the ceremonial sweatlodge at the Sun Dance. Others moved south through Hell's Canyon to conduct ceremonies of an undisclosed nature in the southern Hills (Goodman 1992:12; Black Elk 1992a:51). The main group then traveled to Bear Lodge Butte, whose sacred name is *Pte He Gi* [Grey Buffalo Horn], where the annual Sun Dance was held when the sun entered the constellation *Mato Tipila*. This site is identified with a Falling Star story too, and the origin place of the Lakotas' sacred pipe (Goodman 1992:4, 9, 12, 14; Black Elk 1992a:49,51). After the Sun Dance, people went to Bear Butte, which holds the sacred name *Pte Pute Ya* [Buffalo's Nose], where important national councils were held (Goodman 1992:13-14). This site also goes by the proper name *Sinte O Canku Paha Wakan* [Sacred Mountain on the Road Along the Trail], which refers to the idea that the Black Hills is a south facing buffalo (Black Elk 1986a:207). The last three sites on this ceremonial pilgrimage form a triangle which the Lakotas called the 'Buffalo's Head.' During the time when ceremonies took place before and after the Sun Dance, this head became spiritually alive, and its sites were addressed by their sacred names (Goodman 1992:13).

FIGURE 24. Spring/Summer Ceremonial Pilgrimage of the Lakotas



Returning to the location where the ceremonial pilgrimage begins and ends, there are some additional points of information with relevance to the general area of Wind Cave. The season before the people gathered at the Valley of the Council Oak to conduct their ceremonial cycle corresponded with the time when the sun approached a constellation the Lakotas call *Cansasa Ipusye* [Dried Red Dogwood], which is formed from stars in Triangulum and Aries (Goodman 1992:7). This time marked the season of the year when Lakotas gathered materials for their tobacco mixtures. These included various ingredients made up largely of the inner bark of the red dogwood combined with dried willow and kinnikinick, which in this region is found primarily in the Black Hills. The Lakotas believe that the red dogwood used in tobacco must be gathered after the first frost in autumn and before thunderstorms arrive in spring (Black Elk, C. 1992a:59). According to Goodman (1992:7), "*Cansasa Ipusye* was also an esoteric shamanic expression for the wooden spoon used ritually to carry a live coal from the fireplace to light the contents of the Pipe during the smoking of the Sacred Pipe." The pipe ceremony conducted at this season corresponded with the arrival of newborn buffalo calves who appeared on the prairies from their birthplace in the Black Hills by way of the Buffalo Gap (Black Elk 1992a50). When the buffalo moved through this gap in the spring, the Lakotas entered the Black Hills to conduct ceremonies to celebrate life and its renewal.

Another constellation, the Big Dipper, was sometimes called *Cansasa Ipusye*, and it also served as a metaphor for the ladle that lights the Sacred Pipe (Goodman 1992:7; Black Elk, C. 1992a:59). Curiously, one of the stars in this constellation is called *Tokahe* after the name of the leader of the Buffalo people *qua* humans who lived in the cave formations underneath the Black Hills (Black Elk, C. 1992a:58). The bowl of the constellation is associated with the story of Falling Star's mother who, while digging turnips, opens a hole in the sky and falls down to earth where she dies. Her son is raised by the meadowlarks. This woman, *To win* [Blue Woman], occupies the empty space between the four stars in the dipper's bowl, and she is regarded as the spirit who guides women in childbirth but also the one who helps the spirits of the deceased find their path to the Milky Way (Goodman 1992:3, 22-23, 38).[27]

This is the sky connection to the stories mirrored on earth that relate the ideas of birth and regeneration to Wind Cave and its environs. Wind Cave and the Hot Springs embody a primordial subterranean presence personified in the form of a buffalo. Goodman (1992:61) puts it this way, "We have heard the entire Black Hills frequently referred to symbolically as 'A Buffalo,' with Wind Cave as the opening of the womb, Hot Springs representing 'milk' and the Buffalo Gap leading to the outer world of the prairie." From the perspective of modern traditionalists, at least, not only does *Tokahe* appear as a star on the ladle of a constellation which gives life to the sun and the people, but he also appears on earth in connection with a cave and an area that begins a ceremonial cycle renewing the sacred fire and pipe each year, a cycle that connects the origin of the Lakotas to Wind Cave and their rebirth to Bear Lodge Butte with the coming of the White Buffalo Calf Woman, the Sacred Pipe, and the Sun Dance. Indeed, the timing of this ceremonial cycle makes perfect sense given the fact that this was the off-season in the local hunting cycle; it was a time when game was generally not taken because the meat was considered unpalatable (Young Bear and Theisz 1994:128).

Notwithstanding the political context in which the book *Lakota Star Knowledge* was produced, and notwithstanding the political purposes for which it was used, it does not produce in

[27] There are also accounts (Lone Wolf in Stars, Iron Shell, and Buechel 1978:135-136 [also in Buechel and Manhart 1998:232-233]; Tyon in Walker 1980:123; Red Rabbit in Walker 1980:127) where another spiritual figure, identified as *Waziya* or *Waziyata*, determines the path a spirit will follow.

principle anything that is inconsistent with stories collected and recorded in earlier times. It integrates sites in ways the older texts do not. Some of the details are new (the sacred names of sites in the Buffalo Head, for example). Many of the interpretations use a more modern language to express various Lakota philosophical ideas about sacredness and spirituality. But there is nothing to suggest, as some writers (Parker, W. 1985; Chirinos 1991; Worster 1992; Bordevich 1996) have, that all of this is a recent fabrication invented for political ends.

One year after *Lakota Star Knowledge* first appeared, Anita Parlow (1983a) edited a book on behalf of the Oglala Lakota Legal Rights Fund, entitled *A Song from Sacred Mountain,* that contains the words of many influential religious leaders among the Lakotas and Cheyennes. In addition to talking about the sacred character of specific locales in the Hills' region, including Wind Cave, Craven Canyon, Harney Peak, Bear Butte, and Bear Lodge Butte, the contributers discuss the importance of the Hills as an integrated totality. This is an important book because it offers further interpretation of some of the sacred meanings of the Black Hills to contemporary Lakotas. Also appearing in the 1980s is Tom Charging Eagle and Ron Zeilinger's book. *Black Hills: Sacred Hills* (1987), published by Tipi Press of St. Joseph's Indian School in Chamberlain, South Dakota. This book confirms the continuing importance of the Buffalo Gap, Wind Cave, the Hot Springs, Bear Butte, and Harney Peak to modern Lakotas, although some of it draws on ideas and quotes from other sources. Finally, Arvol Looking Horse (1987:67-68) contributed an article to a volume on Sioux religion edited by Raymond DeMallie and Douglas Parks that tells of the origin of the Lakotas' sacred Buffalo Calf Pipe and Sun Dance at Bear Lodge Butte.[28]

There are several more recent sources that echo the idea of the Black Hills' sacredness to the Lakotas, and they give additional interpretative evidence for the meaning of specific sites already identified in the literature as sacred. In 1994, the book, *Standing in the Light*, was published. Based on the joint collaboration of Severt Young Bear and Ronald Theisz, it also contains important insights on the spiritual significance of the Black Hills. Severt Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:33), a respected contemporary Lakota storyteller and a well-known member of the Porcupine Singers, revealed how the area's landscape is spiritually interpreted:

> Some of the elderly men that have died since also talked about the Black Hills as the center of the universe. They were born, raised, and became adventuresome, nomadic warriors. They would always go from here to the next highest point and then go on to the next highest point they could see. They would go on to see what's on the other side of that next point and keep going till they ended up someplace in a strange land and see the enemy and different animals. But they would always return to the Black Hills. There was always a center of the universe for them to return to. Many of our famous medicine men would go to Bear Butte or Harney Peak to seek their visions or dreams or their medicines. Even the movement of camps of the Lakota people always remained close, within eye vision from the Black Hills as much as possible, so they would always use them as a landscape they could identify. They could always find their way back to the He Sapa, the Black Hills.

[28] Historically, the territory north and west of the Black Hills was the area the *Itazipco* (Sans Arc or Bowless) band of Standing Walking Buffalo traveled, and these were the Lakotas who first received the pipe. To the present day, descendants of this band, including Arvol Looking Horse the pipe's current keeper, have guarded and passed on the pipe through their family line.. So it is not surprising that its origins would be attributed to this general region, even though the specific site might be disputed. Other Lakotas (Bird Horse in U.S. Senate 1986:168,207; Looking Horse 1987:67-68; Goodman 1992:2,12-13; Black Elk 1992a:50-51) also believe that Bear Lodge Butte is the origin site and/or a location for their early Sun Dances.

Elsewhere, Young Bear (and Theisz 1994: 31-32) tells a story about the interior region of the Black Hills, probably the area the Lakotas call *Pe Sla*, that describes a vision and the origin place of a particular kind of vocalization in singing. It is a long narrative and worth presenting at some length here because it is illustrative of the way locations in the Black Hills continue to be innovatively incorporated into religious discourse. The story is about an old warrior of fifty who becomes ill and finds a medicine man to doctor him. Nothing works. As his sickness worsens, he goes from one hilltop to another to find a place to rest. On one hill, he sees the Black Hills and decides to go there to seek some peace. He takes out his pipe and prays to the Great Spirit asking for guidance in finding a 'suitable place where I will feel good.' He travels to the center of the Black Hills where he finds a stream in a meadow surrounded by pine trees. Here, he makes some bedding with grass and fixes himself a resting place on a ledge. Then he lays down there and prays, "This will be my resting place. I will stay here and let you take me." When he awakes, he finds the spirits left him some medicine that he takes. Just as he starts to fall asleep again, he hears what sounds like singing. His first thought is that it might be an enemy but soon discovers it was some wild chickens. He sees a rooster leading a bunch of hens to a spring. The rooster turns his neck and makes a sound, and when his head started to shake, his comb would quiver. Seeing this, the warrior feels good so he lays back and listens to the rooster while it croons a song. He lies still and listens. The song has Lakota words in it, so he really listens, learns it, and starts singing it himself. Then he hears another man singing the same song and starts singing with him. Soon the man's skin is healed, and he feels better. He returns home to the *tipi iyokiye* (council lodge) and tells the elders what happened. 'I went to the Black Mountains to die, but I heard this rooster sing this song. By learning this song, I got well, so I brought it back and I want to sing this song to my people.' The camp crier tells everyone to come listen to this man sing. According to Young Bear (Ibid:32-33) that "was the first song that was openly sung to the people. After that traditional singers all put their neck sideways in a certain rooster way, and they would *iyaki s'sa'a* (give a high pitched yelp), crowing like a rooster, they'd start a song. It was done in honor of that rooster who sang the first special song in the Black Hills" (Ibid:33).

Among its other lessons, this story clearly links the Black Hills and this area in particular with healing as do so many other visionary stories associated with the region. In the process of revelation, some visions, like the one reported in this story, lead to the origin of an idea or practice of considerable cultural significance to the Lakotas. The area around Gilette, Slate, and Reynolds prairies is regarded as having a special position for the Lakotas, one which can be linked directly to the sites on Amos Bad Heart Bull's nineteenth century map and the abandoned medicine lodge that Dodge reported in 1875. Knowing that this area also contains many unique and diverse floral species with established medicinal uses among the Lakotas (see Appendix A), it is not surprising that it would still hold spiritual significance for people today. Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:29) also alludes to other ideas about the Hills when he says: "There are even little people, sort of small spirit people who are staying in the Black Hills who are believed to be taking care of the Hills for the people." This is consistent with stories told by Swift Bird and LaPointe, decades earlier, as are Young Bear's remarks (and Theisz 1994:29) about the Race Track and the Buffalo Gap. Although newer voices are telling stories about the Hills, their basic themes are much the same as the older ones.

There are a variety of other persisting ideas associated with the Black Hills in Lakota traditions. The notion that the Hills are a home and place of origin has long-standing roots. As Leonard Crow Dog (and Erdoes 1995:5) recently expressed it:

> My father told me that after *Ptesan Win* (White Buffalo Calf Woman) came four chiefs--a medicine man, a man of knowledge, a warrior, and a hunter. They dwelled together in the Black Hills. The White Buffalo Woman had taught the people sacredness. The four chiefs

> taught the people how to survive, how to live in this world, when to sleep and when to get up, how to make bows and arrowheads, and the different ways to make a fire. They taught them their language.

The connection between the Black Hills and death is also old, and evidence of it appears in the writings of European Americans as early as the 1840s (De Giradin 1936:63; Parkman in Feltskog 1969:156-157; Rosen 1895:130-131). Some of the accounts of early correspondents in the 1870s, including William Curtis and Samuel Burrows (in Krause and Olson 1974:129, 149, 192), reveal the links between the Hills and ideas of immortality as well. Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:30) offers a modern view of this relation when he states:

> A long time ago elderly warriors when they knew they were very sick would start to get very restless and keep moving around. they would call that *owanka iyokipi sni* (he doesn't like the ground he is sitting on). They would be so restless they would move here and there and moving and finally say, "Well, I might as well go into the Black Hills and prepare myself to die within the Black Hills." So after they were gone so many days, their relatives would go look for them in the Black Hills, and sometimes they would find them and sometimes they wouldn't.

In the 1980s, Fools Crow also gave testimony on the Hills' association with death and burial in the famous case *Fools Crow* v. *Gullet* as follows:

> The Black Hills are sacred to the Lakota people. The Black Hills are our church, the place where we worship. The Black Hills are our burial ground. The bones of our grandfathers lie buried in those hills...(*quoted from* Charging Eagle and Zeilinger, np).

Rich Two Dogs (in Parlow 1983a:6) told about one of his ancestors being buried near Wind Cave, and more recently, Olivia Pourier (in Neihardt and Utrecht 2000:135) remembered her father, Ben Black Elk, traveling the Hills to follow the spirit of his son who died in the 1940s.

Even more emphatic words about the Hills' holiness as a sanctuary in the afterlife and a source of regeneration in the present life come from an article Mario Gonzalez published in 1996. In this article Gonzalez quotes an important statement made by Pete Catches (presented in Chapter Nine), who describes the Hills as sacred because they contain seven spirits representing aspects or forces in nature, including, land fire, air, water, stone, animals, and plants. Taken together, these elements encapsulate the whole, the totality of all that is, the circle of life. Catches also explains the reasons why specific sites, including Wind Cave and the Hot Springs, are sacred. Elsewhere, Catches (Parlow 1983a:3-4) offers additional details about how the Hills encompass the universe in its entirety.

In the *Encyclopedia of American Indians,* Karen Lone Hill (1996:550-553) of Oglala Lakota College also described the significance of the entire region to the Lakota people as follows:

> The entire Black Hills region has always been known to the *Oceti Sakowin* as "the heart of everything that is," because within the Black Hills lie the psychological and physical curing elements for the people. Other places within the Black Hills of religious significance are Harney Peak, Devil's Tower, and Bear Butte. Stories tell of the creation of these particular formations. Religious ceremonies were conducted at these sites, beginning in the spring and continuing throughout the summer in accordance with the

> movement of the constellations. The *Oceti Sakowin*[29] as a whole never resided in the Black Hills for long periods of time, but they did return annually for their religious and social gatherings.

The sacred relationship Lakotas hold to the Black Hills, according to Alexandra Lyn New Holy (1997), in her recent work *The Significance of Place: The Lakota and Paha Sapa*, must be seen in its totality and in the multiplicity and complexity of the symbols and metaphors that express its pivotal placement in Lakota cosmology. The Black Hills are the center of the universe, and as told to her by Little Dog, they are the only place on earth that has survived intact "four cataclysmic cleansings." The Lakota people came from the Black Hills and returned to them to be reborn every time the earth was cleansed (New Holy 1997:4). Whether this process is expressed in the cycle of creation stories recorded by James Walker or the visionary narratives told by Black Elk, it reveals and embraces everything that constitutes and creates life, everything that makes up and builds the universe. In New Holy's perspective, it is not specific sacred sites in the Black Hills that inspire awe *per se*. Each place, whether it is the Race Track, Bear Butte, Harney Peak, or Wind Cave, has its own distinctive character and position in Lakota cosmology and in their sacred geography of the Black Hills. Yet, each place draws its uniqueness from its relationship to other sites as part of a larger spiritual whole that is the Black Hills.

2. The Literature on the Cheyennes and Other Tribal Nations

There are many recent sources that demonstrate the continuing importance of the Black Hills to the religious beliefs of the Cheyennes. Karl Schlesier (1987) published one of the most detailed descriptions of what Bear Butte means to this tribal nation in his book *The Wolves of Heaven.* His work reaffirms its status as their most sacred *axis mundi*, but it also gives a clearer picture of where this site stands in relation to the Black Hills as a whole. Of special interest is the association of the Hills and Bear Butte in particular with *Ehyophstah* (Yellow Hair on Top Woman) as the master of the animals and the underground world (Ibid:82, 04-109). This matches Lakota ideas, which are not as well articulated in the published literature, that the Hills embody a female presence who stewards the underground homes or caves of the animals.

Besides Schlesier, John Moore produced four important works (1981, 1984, 1987, 1996) that offer valuable information from Cheyenne oral traditions and from historic documents on the religious significance of the Hills to the Cheyennes. In his work, *The Cheyennes in Moxtavohona*: *Evidence Supporting Cheyenne Claims to the Black Hills Area* (1981:1-29), he describes the Cheyennes' continuing spiritual relationship to the Hills and their annual pilgrimages to conduct ceremonies, to collect sacred plants, and to gather minerals for paints. Elsewhere, Moore (1984:296) analyzes the significance of the Race Track story in Cheyenne cosmology, and he talks about the connections Cheyenne people make between caves, bison, and women. In his books, *The Cheyenne Nation* (1987) and *The Cheyenne* (1996), he offers more coverage of Cheyenne oral traditions concerning their movements to and occupation of the Black Hills and also their long-standing relationships with the Lakotas.

Also during this period, Wayne Leman (1987) recorded and transcribed texts in the Cheyenne language on many different topics. The monograph, *Naevahoo'ohtseme/ We are Going Back Home: Cheyenne History and Stories,* includes an important version of the Race Track story by James Ant (in Leman 1987:245-250) and a story with sacred implications of how the Cheyennes

[29] *Oceti Sakowin* refers to the seven council fires of the entire Sioux Nation, including the Teton, Yankton, Yanktonnai, Sisseton, Wahpeton, Wahpekute, and Mdewakanton.

came to the Black Hills by James Shoulderblade (in Leman 1987:17-20). Father Peter Powell also published another two volume treatise, *People of the Sacred Mountain* (1981), which contains numerous references aboout the Cheyennes' continuing sacred relationship to the Black Hills and especially its outlier, Bear Butte.

Two recent autobiographical accounts contain important references to the Black Hills in Cheyenne spirituality. One edited by Warren Schwartz (1988), *The Last Contrary: The Story of Wesley Whiteman (Black Bear)*, refers not only to the modern importance of *Noavos* (Bear Butte) (Ibid:46-50) and *Nakoeve* (Bear Lodge Butte) (Ibid:51-52), but also the sacred nature of the Antelope Pit at Belle Fourche, South Dakota and the Race Track (Ibid:50-51 67). Wesley Whiteman (in Schwartz 1988:68-70), born in 1897 at Lame Deer Creek in Montana, narrates his remembrance of a *Massaum* [Animal Dance] that his aunt sponsored in the Black Hills sometime in the early twentieth century. Even more significantly, he explicitly identifies the Buffalo Gap as the origin site of the Sun Dance, the place where it was performed by the buffalo who taught the tribe how to perform it (Schwartz 1988:72). Renate Schukies (1993:129, 153-156,158) work, *Red Hat: Cheyenne Blue Sky Maker and Keeper of the Sacred Arrows*, includes important material about the Cheyennes' connection to the Black Hills and the pivotal role that Bear Butte continues to play in their religion.

It is obvious from the literature published at this time and earlier that much of Cheyenne sacred knowledge is associated with Bear Butte, which serves metaphorically as a model and connecting point for the entire cosmos, bringing the sky, the earth's interior, and the surface world together at one central location: an *axis mundi.* This stands in contrast to the Lakotas' sacred landscape, which appears to have been much more diffuse, encompassing many more sites and covering a much wider area geographically.[30] Fools Crow implied as much when he told Thomas Mails (1972:154) that "Cheyenne and Arapahoe make much of Bear Butte." This is not to say that other sites in the Black Hills do not hold any religious importance for the Cheyennes, for they certainly do. It only means that much of what has been published on Cheyenne spiritual orientations are more focused on Bear Butte, while the literature on the Lakotas takes in the entire Hills and its major outlier formations as well.

There are also a few recent sources (Fools Crow in Mails 1979:154; Catches in Parlow 1983a:6; Young Bear in Parlow 1983b:276; Parlow 1983b:xiv-xv) that suggest the Black Hills and its outliers, Bear Lodge Butte and Bear Butte, continue to hold importance to the Arapahos. Unfortunately, very little about the specific nature of the Arapahos' relationship to these places appears in published sources.

Over the past three decades, Maurice Boyd (1983:88-93) added more to our understanding of Kiowa knowledge about Bear Lodge Butte and described how this remains an active and vital component of their sacred storytelling traditions. Red Hat, the Keeper of the Cheyennes' Sacred Arrows, also told Rene Schukies (1993:287) that the Kiowas received some of their sacred knowledge from Bear Butte. Recently, Kay Parker, W. Schweinfurth (2002:60-66, 90, 150) published a book on the spiritual universe of the Plains Apaches, which contains important references to the origins of their *Manitidae* in the Black Hills and their horse medicine at Bear Butte. She also includes another version of their story about Bear Lodge Butte (Schweinfurth 2001:38-42). Many of the Apaches' stories about the Black Hills region contained in Schwienfurth's work were recorded in the 1960s by William Bittle from interviews with Rose

[30] At least from the standpoint of the published literature, it appears this way. However, there may be a vast repository of stories in Cheyenne oral traditions for other sites, including Wind Cave, that have not been made available in a public forum. Therefore, this assertion might easily be challenged

Chalestin, Joe and Ray Black Bear, Connie Mae and Louise Saddleblanket, and Fred Bigman. Douglas Parks (1991:1-4:88, 179, 508, 511 ,733, 775) also recorded many narratives in the 1960s and 1970s about the Arikaras' knowledge of Bear Lodge Butte and the Black Hills proper.

3. Other Recent Sources

In more recent times, a number of books published for tourists also include references to the sacredness of the Black Hills. One of the Sierra Club's guides (1984:181) to national parks mentions the spiritual importance of the Hills and offers a brief description of the connection of Wind Cave to the bison. In 1989, Helen Rezatto published the book *Tales of the Black Hills*, which includes a compilation of many stories of different tribal origin that have been told about various landforms in the Hills (Ibid:175-176). None of the stories that she relates about Wind Cave, the Race Track (Ibid:20-26), and the Hot Springs (Ibid:51-54) is original. Taken from other sources, they are told as "legends," implying, given the context of the other stories that appear in the book, that they need not be taken seriously as legitimate understandings of the Hills. Another tourist-oriented publication *South Dakota's Black Hills and Badlands*, by Barbara Tomovick and Kimberly Metz (2000:364) includes a much abbreviated reference to the Lakota origin story connected to Wind Cave labeled again as "Legends and Lore."

Over the past decade, several other studies have appeared based on research pursuant to the significance of sacred sites as "cultural properties" (Hanson and Chirinos 1991; Chirinos 1991; Forbes-Boyte 1996, 1999; Dorst 2000; White, D. 2002). These studies have focused on Bear Butte, Bear Lodge Butte, and the Badlands. Already mentioned are the numerous studies of Linea Sundstrom (1990, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2002), which combine archaeological studies and oral narratives with ethnographic and ethnohistorical information on the Black Hills and its many sacred sites.

So what can we conclude from the various historic, ethnographic, and narrative accounts? On the one hand it is fairly obvious that the Black Hills as a whole and specific sites within or adjoining this range have a special place in the sacred stories of many tribal nations who are known to have occupied the area, and some of these can be traced back to historic sources in the nineteenth century. It is also safe to say that the stories, by virtue of their associations, impute a sacred quality to the Hills or, at the very least, certain areas within (or geographically related to) them. On the other hand it is clear that at least three tribal nations, the Arapahos, Cheyennes and Lakotas, have maintained active spiritual relations to various regions in the Hills or to their outlier formations and that some of these stretch far back in time as well. The most prevalent and widely documented spiritual use of the Hills is associated with fasting, prayers, and vision seeking at places such as Bear Butte, Bear Lodge Butte, Harney Peak, and the Central Prairies. Unpublished evidence, described in the next chapter, also points to the use of Wind Cave National Park for ceremonial purposes, but much more has appeared on the sacred importance of the park's landscape to the Lakotas and the Cheyennes. The performance of the Sun Dance by Lakotas and Cheyennes in or near the Hills has been documented for earlier times and in more recent decades as well. The ritual renewal of the Cheyennes' Sacred Arrows continues to periodically take place at Bear Butte. Local tribal peoples still collect medicinal plants and learn of their application in sweatlodges and in pipe ceremonies performed in the Black Hills. Finally, tribal nations near and far still narrate stories with sacred meanings and lessons that link fundamental cosmological principles to the Black Hills as a whole or to sites within and immediately surrounding them.

II. THE CONTROVERSY

In the 1980s, a series of writings began to appear that questioned the legitimacy of American Indian, but particularly Lakota, spiritual connections to the Black Hills. Most of the critics do not doubt the strength of the beliefs or the sincerity of those who claim the Black Hills are sacred and/or who hold spiritual attachments to specific places within the general region. What most of them question is the assertion that the Black Hills, as a whole or certain specific locales, Wind Cave among them, have always been sacred to the tribal nations who lived in the area. Instead, they argue in various ways and degrees that Lakota claims of an ancient connection to the Black Hills is actually of recent origin and integrally tied to their modern struggle to reclaim their proprietary interest in the Hills. Other writers have viewed this struggle in a less cynical light, and some have even amassed a considerable body of evidence to demonstrate that many Lakota ideas about the Black Hills have a much older legacy than many of the critics would lead us to believe.

A. The Critics

Richmond Clow (1983:315-324) wrote one of the first published articles to challenge the idea that the Black Hills has always been sacred to the Lakotas. Clow did not provide any evidence for his challenge, however. He contended that the Hills had become a "tribal symbol" in response to the Lakotas' united interest in the Black Hills' land claim and that their sacred attachment to them was recent in origin. He also argued that the Lakotas used the idea of the Hills' sacredness to pursue their claims and to drive a wedge between themselves and non-Indians (Ibid:322).

In 1984, E. Steve Cassells, David B. Miller, and Paul V. Miller wrote a report for the National Forest Service entitled *Paha Sapa*: *A Culture Resource Overview of the Black Hills National Forest, South Dakota and Wyoming*, in which they maintain that there is little dispute among scholars regarding the sacred nature of sites on the Hills' outer edge (Cassells, Miller, and Miller 1984:108). In terms of sites in the interiors, however, they assert there is little agreement (Ibid:112). When one of them went to Pine Ridge to take interviews in accordance with provisions of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, he acknowledged that "Lakota elders, medicine men, and other traditionalists" at Pine Ridge were reluctant to document the locations of sacred sites, although there was a general consensus that the "entire Hills were sacred" (Ibid:111). Following the historian, James Hansen, who expressed his ideas in interviews and court testimony in the early 1980s, Cassells, Miller, and Miller argue that there is little historical depth to the Lakotas' sacred relationship to the Black Hills (Ibid:112-113).

Watson Parker (1985), a long time historian of the Black Hills, is perhaps the staunchest critic of Lakota claims that the Black Hills are sacred to them. In a 1985 article, he challenged the time depth of the spiritual significance Lakotas assign to the Hills. He claimed the Lakotas did not occupy lands near the Black Hills long enough to "sanctify" the landscape or "build it up into a legendary shrine." Following remarks made by Colonel Richard Irving Dodge, he asserted that the Lakotas were afraid of the Black Hills and viewed them as a dangerous place to visit. As a consequence, they seldom entered the area. To defend his position, he also asserted that there was no discussion of the Hills' sacredness by Red Cloud or other Lakotas when negotiations for their sale were taking place. He further argued that the notion of the Hills being sacred was probably sparked by Lakota participation in the region's tourism after World War I (Ibid:588-591) and also an extension of the military, political, and legal conflicts between the Lakotas and the United States since the 1850s (Ibid:602). In many respects, Parker's argument mirrors the position of an

earlier commentator on the subject, James Hansen, who expressed his ideas in interviews and court testimony in the early 1980s (Cassells, Miller, and Miller 1984:112-113).

In 1990, Stephen Feraca (1990:68-69), a former Bureau of Indian Affairs administrator, took the position that the Black Hills were never sacred to the Lakotas and that modern Lakotas came to adopt as their own myths propagated by non-Indians for tourism. He claimed that the Black Hills were regarded as neither sacred land nor an original and long-term homeland of the Lakota people until American Indian Movement followers allegedly fabricated this story in the 1970s. He argued the Lakotas "have their origins" in what is now the state of Minnesota. Recalling a common phrase of the 1960s, "Cousin, I'll pay you back when I get my Black Hills money," he asserted that the spiritual aspects of the claim have no historical foundation and that what the Lakota really wanted was the money. A different perspective on how this phrase was being used comes from Severt Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:103-04), who interpreted it to mean that the Lakotas had no hope of ever receiving any compensation for the seizure of the Hills, and so borrowing money from one's cousin was likened to the taking of the Black Hills as an exchange transaction in which there was no expectation of any concrete or immediate return.[31]

A year later, Sally Chirinos (1991) wrote a master's thesis in which she asserted that the sacredness of the Black Hills is an idea the Lakotas constructed during the reservation era as an adaptive strategy to face poverty and powerlessness and to resist forced acculturation. Using Anthony Wallace's theory of revitalization, she argued that the Lakotas altered their cultural beliefs as a response to the broader societal Diaspora they were experiencing (p. 2). More specifically, she focused her attention on Bear Lodge Butte and its neighboring outliers, Bear Butte and Inyan Kara, to show that there is no historic precedent for the spiritual beliefs Lakota people are now investing in these sites. Acknowledging Watson Parker contributions to this discussion, she reviewed the historical record to determine the time depth of the beliefs and concluded from the sources she studied that beliefs in the sacredness of these sites are modern. In this work and another (Hanson and Chirinos 1991), which were based on a cultural properties study conducted for the National Park Service, she dismisses many modern Lakota attachments to Bear Lodge Butte. Not only does she question the idea that their sacred Buffalo Calf Pipe was received at this site, but she also challenges the rationale behind the use of National Park Service lands for holding modern Sun Dances and sweatlodges run by Gerald Clifford and Charlotte Black Elk in the 1980s (Chirinos 1991:50-53,73-84). She did acknowledge, however, that there was earlier evidence, which White Bull shared with Dick Stone in the 1930s, on the importance of this site for fasting, prayer, and vision seeking (Ibid:52). Essentially, she argued that there are no historical precedents for holding Sun Dances here, when, in fact, there are a number of accounts dating back to the 1880s that record locations south of the butte near Sundance Mountain (see Sundstrom 1997:186, 193). Similarly, Chirinos (1991:86-88) questioned the validity of Lakota claims that another site, Inyan Kara, had any sacred value before the modern era, although she does admit that the accumulated lithic debris at the site indicates a use with some considerable time depth. What she was unable to find from a one day foot survey of the site and from an interview with a local rancher, who owns and leases lands around this site, was any evidence of contemporary use in the form of prayer bundles except, as she put it, "a Native American poem was found in a coffee tin atop the mountain, placed upon the carved name of George Armstrong Custer" (Ibid:88). She clearly missed the irony here, but she also mistakenly assumed that prayer bundles are always present when a site has sacred significance. Nevertheless, and in spite of the testimony of the Lakota people she interviewed who told her they used it, she

[31] See also Edward Lazarus (1991:206) for a similar interpretation.

retained her skepticism about the historical depth of the Lakotas' sacred associations with this place.

Another advocate of the idea that the sacredness of the Black Hills is a recent phenomenon among the Lakotas is Donald Worster (1992:113, 135-136, 141). To support his argument, he took the position that neither Black Elk nor James Walker and his Lakota advisors ever mentioned anything about the spiritual importance of this area. He concluded that Lakotas invested the Black Hills with spiritual significance solely to regain the Black Hills. As the Lakotas' legal avenues for the return of the Hills were exhausted, Worster alleges, their spiritual attachment became more intense. He also argues that Lakotas created these notions out of a need for a nostalgic past to escape the grinding hardships they faced in the present. In a convoluted way, he maintained that the Lakotas' modern claims are not less valid because of the recency of their origins, and therefore, these should not serve as an obstacle to returning the Hills to them (Ibid:153).

The most recent work to raise questions about the validity of Lakota claims is Fergus M. Bordewich's *Killing the Whiteman's Indian: Reinventing Native Americans at the End of the Twentieth Century* (1996). Bordewich also maintains that the Lakotas occupied the Black Hills in late historic times and that the various creation stories they assign to the Hills actually originated in an era when they still lived in the Great Lakes. He writes "scholars similarly believe that the story of the emergence of the Pte people from the earth is a portable myth that the Sioux brought with them from the East and that it never applied to the Black Hills at all" (p. 224). Like others, he asserts that the Lakotas never advanced their claim to the Hills on religious grounds until the 1980s. He quotes William Powers, who began working among the Lakotas in the 1940s, that "Forty or fifty years ago you didn't hear people assert a spiritual connection to the Hills...You heard people talk about various vision quest sites as sacred but not the Black Hills. Monetary compensation is what people wanted" (pp. 229-230). In response, Bordewich (p. 234) later writes:

> It is hardly strange that many Sioux are ransacking both the real and the imagined past for values and practices that will give meaning to modern Indian life. Thus the Sioux campaign to reclaim the Black Hills has already succeeded in a quite unexpected way, transforming them from a shaming reminder of all that has been lost into a modern symbol of collective salvation. Although the Hills may not have been sacred in the past, that doesn't mean they are not sacred to the Lakotas now...There is no doubt that the Black Hills are extremely important to Lakotas today and that they are the source of a whole lot of spirituality. Religious attitudes can legitimize a place as sacred almost overnight. It is a natural evolution…

Whether or not the critics question the authenticity of the Lakotas' spiritual relationship to the Black Hills, critics uniformly agree that it is politically motivated and lacks temporal depth. They see the attachment as a modern creation, inspired by twentieth century challenges and circumstances.

B. The Supporters

Over the past decade, a number of studies have appeared that offer a more supportive reading of the Lakotas' spiritual ties to the Black Hills and their various outlier sites. Kari Forbes-Boyte (1996, 1999), a geographer, published two important articles in the 1990s based on cultural properties research she conducted at Bear Butte. She describes this butte as the Lakotas' "most sacred altar" because it contains the seven sacred elements that *Wakan Tanka* gave them, which are land air, water, rocks, plants, animals, and fire (Forbes-Boyte 1996:104). She also points out

that this site is strongly connected to the bear and its role in doctoring. Finally, she argues that the modern association of Bear Butte with medicine and the importance of this site for vision seeking or *hanbleceya* has a long historical legacy dating back to the late nineteenth century (Forbes-Boyte 1996:105-106). Even Stephen Fereca (1998:89n3), who otherwise questions the legitimacy of contemporary sacred attachments to the Black Hills, verifies the importance of Bear Butte in Lakota vision questing.

In her work, Forbes-Boyte does not tackle the question of the historical depth of Lakota beliefs surrounding this area, nor does she attempt to explain them away as a modern political phenomenon masquerading in traditionalist garb. Instead, she endeavors to show how their sense of this sacred place is embedded in a complex and integrated symbolic structure. As she puts it:

> Symbolically, Bear Butte exhibits bear power. Bear Butte is a type of hierophany; it is a physical representation of spiritual power. Physical locales or objects throughout the world are believed by various cultures to be sacred because of their symbolic resonance ...Geographer Robert Sacks describes the principle of mimetic sympathy in which objects sharing visible, spatial or geometric similarities can be considered representational of the whole. Bear Butte, for example, symbolizes the bear because it is shaped like one. The Lakota associate the bear with powerful medicinal properties. As a symbol, Bear Butte evokes this power; thus it has become associated with the medicine men of the society (Forbes-Boyte 1996:106-107).

She goes on to argue this is a place that powerfully and simultaneously expresses and inter-connects many different levels of meaning, from primordial stories of origin to personal narratives of regeneration (Forbes-Boyte 1996:106). It is a site of power because it quintes-sentially embodies all the elements that signify life to the Lakotas (Forbes-Boyte 1996:104). It is a mirror of the cosmos, an *axis mundi* that brings the sky, earth, and underground together at one place (Forbes-Boyte 1999:28). It is a location where culturally situated knowledges face existen-tial truths, where the time filled moment of experience meets and is transcended by the timeless-ness of mystical revelation (Forbes-Boyte 1999:26-27). Her writings offer a much fuller appre-ciation of contemporary Lakota spiritual attachments to Bear Butte and the wider religious world-views in which they are embedded, and they do so in a way that makes it difficult to simply dis-miss them as recently contrived imaginings to achieve political ends.

Linea Sundstrom is another scholar who views Lakota and also Cheyenne spiritual connect-ions to the Black Hills area in a more sympathetic light. In recent years, she has published num-erous works (1990, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2002) on the sacred importance of the Black Hills that are based on exhaustive studies of the prehistoric, ethnohistoric, and ethnographic record as well as tribal winter counts and oral traditions for all of the tribal nations known to have lived in the vicinity of the Black Hills. She presents a wide range of evidence to demonstrate that the Hills and its associated outlier sites have been sacred to many different American Indian tribal nations for hundreds of years. Although she does not tackle the question of the ultimate time-depth of the Lakotas' sacred attachments to the Black Hills, she presents a considerable body of evidence that demonstrates that these connections existed well before the legal battles and political struggles of the 1970s and 1980s. In addressing the idea that the Lakota people did not live in the Black Hills long enough to be able to "sanctify" the landscape, Sundstrom (1997:203) discusses how Ameri-can Indians moving into new areas "often adapted the sacred landscape of their predecessors to their own beliefs and traditions" She says that this phenomenon "may be viewed as a matter of perceiving an intrinsic sacredness of place that does not depend on beliefs specific to any one group for its definition" (Ibid:206). Sundstrom (Ibid:203-206) also writes that Lakota sacred stories of the Black Hills are closely related to Cheyenne traditions, and these in turn are linked to

Arikara, Kiowa, and Plains Apache narratives. In other words, the region itself holds traditions that have been shared cross-culturally for centuries, and as groups moved through the area, they came to learn the "customs of the country," so to speak.

Alexandra New Holy's dissertation, *The Significance of Place: The Lakota and Paha Sapa* (1997), also gives a favorable reading of Lakota relationships to the Black Hills. Unlike many other writers who cast modern Lakota religiosity in a cynical light, interpreting it primarily as a political foil to regain ownership of the Black Hills, New Holy (New Holy 1997:8) relates the religion and politics surrounding the Black Hills to a much more encompassing and holistic sense of Lakota identity and nationhood. More than that, she offers an in depth semiotic and interpretive analysis of Lakota religious symbolism, which expresses metaphorically the sacredness and centeredness of the Black Hills in Lakota cosmology. She argues that this cosmological positioning stands at the center of the way contemporary Lakotas see and create themselves as a people through their participation in Sun Dances, vision seeking, and other ceremonial observances.

Finally, John Dorst's recently published article (2000:303-320), "Postcolonial Encounters: Narrative Constructions of Devil's Tower National Monument," discusses the contested nature of the stories that surround this unique geological formation. In particular, he shows how European American narratives have come to dominate our cultural understanding of this site, and how, in the process, they have served to trivialize and delegitimize American Indian interpretations. A similar deconstructionist approach is followed in Jesse Larner's recent book, *Mount Rushmore: An Icon Reconsidered* (2002), which considers how American Indian cultural definitions of the Black Hills have become delegitimized in the shadow of European American myth-making.

C. The Question of Authenticity and Temporal Depth

It is not hard to refute the position of scholars who argue that the Black Hills and its various sites have not been sacred to the Lakotas and other tribal nations since the late 19th century (Giago 1999:10-11). There are ample ethnographic and historical documents to support the spiritual status of the Black Hills, and as Sundstrom (1990, 1996, 1997) argues, there is a great deal of archaeological evidence that suggests it had spiritual uses in prehistoric times as well. Nor is it difficult to challenge the idea that modern Lakota religious notions about the Black Hills are fabricated. There is simply too much continuity in their foundational premises, even in the particulars of their expression, to dismiss their traditional authenticity.

Worster's argument and evidence, as one example, can be easily refuted. He makes two allegations: one that there is no mention of the Black Hills being spiritual in any of James Walker's texts, and two that Nicholas Black Elk never used the word "sacred" in relation to the Black Hills in any of his narratives. In relation to Walker, the absence of any evidence in his texts to connections between spiritual beliefs/practices and the Black Hills neither confirms nor disconfirms their presence. As already noted, Walker and most of the other ethnographers who recorded native texts at the turn of the twentieth century made little effort to identify tribal geographic sites with spiritual significance. Even when they referred to a geographic feature, the association was generally vague and nothing more than a generic listing of a "mountain," "spring," or "cave." We can see this in the text of Walker's contemporary, George Dorsey (1905), who wrote much about the Cheyennes' sacred mountain but never linked it to Bear Butte. The same is true for many other texts from the same period, and this applies not only to the Lakotas but also to other tribal nations in the plains region at large (Parks and Wedel 1985:167). With respect to Nicholas Black Elk's narratives, there is plenty of internal evidence in his writ-

ings that show he viewed the Black Hills in the kinds of awesome, respectful, and reverential ways that would, in modern English usage, be termed as "spiritual."[32] That he never employed the word "sacred" does not determinatively eliminate it from his sense of what the Hills meant to him and his people. As mentioned earlier, Black Elk made a number of statements about the Black Hills which imply, given how Lakotas use and think about the word *wakan*, a holy relationship to these mountains. In fact, many of his statements refer to the Black Hills through the use of metaphorical allusions typically found in the sacred discourse known as *hanbloglaia* (Buechel 1970:165; Black Elk 1986a:192; Powers 1986106-107).

It is also fairly easy to challenge Parker's arguments (1985). With respect to his assertion that Lakotas never spoke of the Hills' sacredness when they were negotiating an agreement over its sale in 1876, two counter arguments must be made. First, we must be mindful of the context of these negotiations. Not only did they take place outside the settings where liturgical discourse is properly expressed, but they also involved people who lacked the authority to use it in the first place. Red Cloud, for one, was not trained as a medicine man, and even if he had been, the Allison Commission proceedings were not a fitting place to speak of the Hills in sacred terms. In a speech delivered by Crow Feather (in Allison 1875:191), however, there are references to the Black Hills that allude to their spirituality. When he said: "Our Great Father has asked me to give up the heart of this land where I was born and raised, and the heart of this land is big and good, and I have camped all around it and watched and looked over it," he was using "heart" as a metaphoric reference that has sacred moorings. When Red Cloud (in Allison 1875:189) described them as the "head chief of the land" he was referring to the stature of a place. Similar references are found in relation to animals as in the bison as "head chief of the animals" or the eagle as "head chief of the wingeds" (Brown 1992). In all cases, the use of this expression refers to something special, something that commands respect and reverence – something sacred. Certainly, a year later, when Running Antelope (in U. S. Senate 1876:48) was talking about the Hills as the "center of the land" he was using a metaphor charged with sacred meaning.

Secondly, we must consider the audience (see also, Sundstrom 1997:207). These were foreigners, most of whom had little respect for, much less an understanding of, Lakota culture. Appealing to them on the grounds of the area's sanctity would have been futile in all likelihood. So instead, Lakota leaders addressed them in terms of the pecuniary language the commissioners understood. But even here, under considerable duress and pressure, it is clear that the Lakotas were trying to make the case that the Hills' had a value far greater than any single monetary settlement. Its value was, in the words of many, including Crow Feather and Red Cloud, the very survival of the Lakota people for "seven generations to come," a phrase which, when used in particular contexts, also has spiritual implications (in Allison 1875:191). All of the speeches of the tribal representatives whose people had familiarity with the Black Hills conveyed the vital importance of this place to their lives and livelihoods, a worth that could only be equaled by providing perpetual support for the people's survival in this generation and all of those to come (Allison 1875:189-191; U.S. Senate 1876:33-89).

What is bewildering is why historians who took such great pains to attack the credibility of modern Lakota beliefs ignored many published and easily accessible historic sources that verify contemporary Lakota claims about the long-standing nature of their sacred attachments to the Black Hills. Neither Watson Parker nor Donald Worster examined the accounts from members of the Black Hills' expedition, nor evidence contained in the kind of standard documentary source most historians rely upon, the *Annual Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.* Indeed, some

[32] Alexander New Holy's dissertation (1997) offers a detailed analysis and interpretation of the sacred metaphors Black Elk uses in describing the Black Hills.

of the historians' interpretations appear to be guided by the same kind of politically inspired inventions they accuse the Lakotas of creating. The historians cannot be excused for their failure to examine and draw upon the full range of historical sources available to them, although they might be forgiven for their lapses in interpretation when reading cultural meaning from some of the ethnographic and historic document they did rely on. By failing to fully engage the historical record, much less the cultural contexts to which it refers, they end up giving a distorted picture of the history of Lakota cosmological beliefs and their sacred relation to the Black Hills.

Stephen Feraca (1990) and William Powers' (as quoted in Bordewich 1996) comments, however, are not so easy to dismiss. Both worked for many years with the Lakotas, and so we might expect that either of them would have heard about the sacredness of the Black Hills, especially since religion was the focus of much of their research. Feraca's words, on the one hand, need to be read cautiously because they are written in the context of a book that defends his own career with the BIA and that is highly critical of more contemporary American Indian political struggles including, but not restricted to, those of the Lakotas. William Powers' words, on the other hand, need to be taken very seriously, not only because he has "no axe to grind," but also because he is a fairly fluent Lakota speaker. Powers does not deny that Lakota people today hold a sacred attachment to the entire Black Hills, nor that they had spiritual associations with specific places connected to fasting and vision seeking in times past. What he questions is the historic depth of some of the Lakotas' modern claims, especially the view that the entire Hills were held sacred before the 1970s. But then neither Powers nor Feraca ever tell us whether they actually queried Lakotas about the spirituality of the Black Hills as a whole or specific places in or outside their reach, and if they did, how people responded to their queries.

I am not particularly surprised by Powers' observations because before the 1970s and the revitalization of traditional religious practice, Lakota people did not talk very much about spiritual matters in casual conversation and were reluctant to discuss them even when questioned. Based upon my own experiences since 1964 with Lakota and Dakota peoples, which, granted do not go as far back as Powers, I would also have to say that one never heard a lot of talk about the Black Hills as sacred or as spiritual much before the 1970s. But then, one did not hear these words uttered for most other places that nowadays are called sacred. The expression I often heard people use in relation to sites that are now considered spiritually significant is that they were "special," which means they had an incomprehensible presence -- one of the definitions for *wakan.* When I traveled through the Black Hills in the summer of 1970 with two Dakota female elders, Veronica Dunn and Martha Left Bear, this is precisely what I heard about the Hills: they were "special." The women did not know exactly why they were a subject of reverence because their community, Spirit Lake, was too far away. Yet, they knew this to be true from what they had heard from their parents, one of whose brothers joined ranks with the Oglalas after the Minnesota Conflict in 1862.

Forty years ago, places acknowledged as "special" were often accompanied by remarks such as, "If you respect that place, you won't mess around with it." This meant that people shouldn't go near it unless they knew how to approach it properly. Since many Lakotas and Dakotas in the 1970s no longer knew what was proper, their best course of action was avoidance. My sense was that there was a great deal of ambivalence surrounding such places, and that interference with them posed a danger to those who did not respect their spiritual presence. In fact, I heard countless stories about real life incidents of what befell people when they failed to leave a place alone or ignored admonitions to pray and leave tobacco there. Severt Young Bear (and Theisz 1994:19-22) talks about this in relation to a site at Pine Ridge called *Sio Paha* (Prairie Chicken Hill). In former times, this was a site for vision questing and other religious observances, but, as he put it, "People lost interest in the place" (Young Bear and Theisz 1994:21).

Generally speaking, anthropologists, including Feraca and Powers, have not been particularly helpful in identifying sacred sites in the Black Hills or disentangling some of the meanings that have surrounded them over time. Sadly, many of the ethnographers who write about Lakota religion and cosmology have failed to follow the kind of direction Keith Basso pursued in his classic work (1996) *Wisdom Sits in Places*, in which he shows how the historical memories of the Cibecue Apache are tied to their landscapes. For the Lakotas and other tribes of the Black Hills as well, landscapes act in mnemonic ways, embodying, preserving, codifying, and immortalizing cosmological precepts, while simultaneously carrying memories of a lived past. They do both because there is no clear line between what historians and anthropologists call history and cosmology in their epistemologies (Tyon in Walker 1980:119; Forbes-Boyte 1996, 1999; New Holy 1997). Although ethnographers might be forgiven for an excessive and often false presentism when trying to engage the cultural worlds of the Lakotas they consulted, they cannot be excused for failing to understand some of the grounds, no pun intended, on which Lakotas make their history. In the end, ethnographers who dismiss what the Lakotas and other tribes say about the Black Hills or who fail to appreciate the significance of this place in their world view are as remiss as the historians who fail to fully cover source materials that are their stock in trade.

When Charlotte Black Elk, Gerald Clifford, and other members of the Black Hills Steering Committee (1986) submitted stories of the Black Hills sacred significance in congressional hearings on the Sioux Nation Black Hills Act, they were not digging around the attic for the lost remnants of their nation's past. Instead, they were conveying a body of knowledge with demonstrable historical depth and unmistakable integrity in relation to a much wider corpus of knowledge about Lakota cosmology, much of which was recorded before the 1970s, although not always in published form. There is no question that there has been a reawakening of Lakota spirituality since the 1970s. Much of its impetus came from younger generations seeking to regain a knowledge of their religious heritage that had been silenced for so many years. In this era, there were many elders who still retained an awareness of some of this knowledge but who refused to speak about it casually, and when they did, it was for a specific reason or purpose. And yes, some of the elders did speak out at treaty conferences and in court testimony on the sacredness of the Black Hills when they had not done so before. In doing this, they were not creating something anew; they were telling what they understood to be true because they had been called upon to do so. People with spiritual knowledge are not supposed to call attention to themselves or what they know. Lakota cultural conventions are very clear on this, so it is not surprising that no one, especially outsiders, ever learned much about the sacredness of the Black Hills, or for that matter, any other place known to be *wakan.*

It is also true, as several scholars (Walker 1917:78-79; DeMallie in Walker 1983:17, 1987:29; Powers, W. 1986:23-25) of Lakota religion have pointed out, that esoteric understandings of the sacred, whether expressed in relation to particular places or spirituality in general, were not widely known among the common people, or at least, this knowledge was not casually shared with outsiders. Among the Cheyennes (Grinnell 1910:574; Schlesier 1987:14), sacred knowledge was held and guarded by select religious specialists who not only possessed the requisite spiritual gifts and training to speak about it, but who were also endowed with the right to determine when, with whom, and under what conditions it would be shared. Much of the esoteric knowledge that persists today among the Lakotas and Cheyennes is still kept secret and not a subject for public discourse and debate. Moreover, much of this knowledge is conveyed in a special and highly metaphoric language, where the sacred is not addressed literally but, rather, figuratively through commonplace as well as esoteric allusions (Powers, W. 1986:11-41).

Nor is there any question that the modern regeneration of Lakota spirituality has been closely tied to the return of the Black Hills. Indeed, in many ways it has defined and expressed itself

through its relationship to the Hills (New Holy 1997:9). As the center of the circle that is the totality of life, it stands as a concrete embodiment of the Lakota peoples' own aspirations to regain a sense of the centeredness and wholeness that were lost in the cultural Diaspora of the reservation era. Something that is lost, however, can be recovered. Most contemporary efforts to revitalize tribal languages and cultures today are built on the premise that it is not only possible but also imperative to make this recovery. Insofar as the efforts to achieve these goals have involved litigation and legislation, they are political. But to describe them solely in political terms is to deny their ultimate intent, which is to recover the very cultural foundations of a people's identity and being. For most contemporary Lakotas, reclaiming the Black Hills and all the sacred wisdom attached to them is fundamental to this effort (New Holy 1997:9).

Even if one acknowledges that the Lakotas hold the Black Hills sacred and that they have done so throughout the twentieth century, the question still remains: how far back in time does their spiritual relationship to the area extend? Many Lakotas claim it reaches back to the beginnings of time. But how does one respond to their harshest critic, Watson Parker, who argues that their historical association is hardly more than two hundred years of age, a time span much too short to have imbued the area with any real "sanctity"?

One way some Lakota traditionalists respond is through stories of a Diaspora and return to the Black Hills. In one of the appendices attached to the testimony in the congressional hearings over the Sioux Nation Black Hills Act, is a story entitled "*Ozuyeya Ig'lamna*" or "Legends of the Counter Attacking Journeys."

> *Maka* [earth] then sent a sign, instructions on how the journey would be undertaken. The *Ikce* [common Lakota people] would call on *Heyoka*, the counter attacking power, to accompany with them on their journey. They would travel in a counter clock-wise direction [starting in the Black Hills], going back west, then south, east and north until finally they would be home. But this journey would take ages and would require that messengers periodically return home with any information on how the world was and the behavior of the nations living on her.
>
> The *Ozuyeya Iglama* became the principle task of the *Ikce*. Some of the travelers would return home, new ones would join the journey. At times, a few grew tired of traveling and remained in the lands they liked. At other times, some of the people from nations that were visited, would join the Ikce (Black Hills Steering Committee 1986:202).

This is consistent, at least in part, with Nicholas Black Elk's story (in DeMallie 1984:307-316) of Red Thunder's vision of the Race Track, which foreshadowed the Lakotas' movement to the Black Hills. What is different is the presumption that the Lakotas originated in the Black Hills and returned after journeying to other places. It departs from Jake Herman's various versions of the "Legend of the Seven Camp Fires" (1965a, 1965b:4-5, 1966), which tell how a medicine man told the Lakotas to migrate with their dogs to *Re Sapa*, the Black Hills, where they came in contact with their friends, the Cheyenne, and it contrasts with William Bordeaux's version of Lakota history too (1929:16-19). So, how can the story of the *Ozuyeya Iglama* be reconciled with the historical evidence that the Lakotas did not enter the Hills in any great numbers until after 1775?

Linea Sundstrom (1996:187-188; 1997:203-206) offers one way to resolve the dilemma, and that is to propose that there was a regionally based, cultural knowledge about the Black Hills and its various sites. This knowledge was widely shared and transmitted across cultural bounders and over time as one tribal nation entered the landscape and eventually replaced another (Sundstrom, L. 1996:177). She offers a wide variety of site-specific evidence to demonstrate the close parallels in the beliefs that various tribes held about the Black Hills, their relation to constel-

lations, to origin stories, and to knowledge about the conduct of important ceremonial observances (Sundstrom, L. 1996:187). Her line of argument and the evidence she brings to bear on her case are very convincing, but these can be extended even further. There is also another argument that can be made for Lakota claims that their ancestors occupied the Hills for untold generations, and this rests on the strong relationships of marriage, alliance, and ceremonial collaboration that the Lakotas built with their neighbors during their movements to the Black Hills. Although much of this material is presented in the first two sections of the report, it is worthwhile to review some of the highlights as these bear upon the question being raised here.

D. Genealogical Connections

The Lakota people of today are not the same as the Lakotas four centuries ago. This is not intended to be either a trite or a self-evident statement. The Lakota nation of the twenty-first century represent a population whose ancestral roots extend back to the Lakota and Dakota speaking peoples of the western Great Lakes. But it also constitutes a population whose genealogical heritage can be traced to tribal nations known to have lived in the region of the Black Hills well before the late eighteenth century. In contrast to an older and simplifying view of tribal nations as discrete and well bounded units, there is another perspective that sees ethnic identity formation as much more complex and fluid (Moore 1987, 1996; Albers & Kay 1987; Albers 1993, 1996a; Hall 1997). In this perspective, American Indian cultures have always been dynamic and permeable, constantly changing and adapting their peoples and ideas to new circumstances. This has been accomplished through the borrowing of ideas and practices between tribes who were allies and who shared trading, hunting, military, and ceremonial partnerships. Even more fundamentally, it took place through extensive patterns of intermarriage and adoption that enabled people to make claims on the lands, cultural legacies, and social support systems of more than one tribal nation. The historic genealogies of today's Lakotas connect them directly to the Cheyennes, Arapahos, Poncas, and Arikaras. All of these populations were known to have lived in the general region of the Black Hills before the main body of the Lakotas arrived and eventually dominated the area.

Starting with the Cheyennes, there has been a long history of intermarriage and alliance between them and the Lakotas. Notwithstanding intermittent conflicts, these ties can be traced back to Minnesota, when the Cheyennes still lived there at the end of the sixteenth century. The Cheyennes' *Mazikota, Wotapio, Omisis*, and *Totoimana* bands, in particular, trace their ancestry to the Lakotas (Moore 1987:220-222,229-232), but the Dog Soldier bands also married Lakotas, especially Sicangus (Grinnell 1902:143, 1972:2:63; Powell 1981:1:247). According to Cheyenne and Lakota traditions, the Cheyennes introduced the Lakotas to the Hills and eventually became their allies (Grinnell 1956:36-37; Herman 1965b:4-5; Bent in Hyde 1968:25-26; Howard 1980: 20-21; Black Elk in DeMallie 1984:307-316). In the process, they created joint use and occupancy rights to the Black Hills. Much of this was accomplished through co-residency and intermarriage, so that by the reservation era, Cheyenne bands reckoned Lakotas in their midst and conversely many Lakota groups contained Cheyennes in their ranks (Hayden 1862:277; Warren 1875:51; Curtis 1907:6:139; Kindle in Beckwith 1930:351; Hyde 1937:89, 93, 1961:190-193; Grinnell 1956:165-262; Bent in Hyde 1968:137-222; Hurt 1974:125; Powell 1981:1:164-179, 375-390, 414-416; No Ears, Short Man, and Iron Crow in Walker 1982:125). As Wooden Leg (in Marquis 1931:121) described the relationship:

> The Sioux tribes had ways closely resembling those of the Cheyennes. We traveled and visited much with them, particularly with the Ogallahs, sometimes with the Minneconjous. The Sioux tribal governments were almost the same as ours. Each of them had numerous tribal chiefs, each had various warrior societies and chiefs of them.

In fact, some Cheyenne were parties to Lakota treaties and were considered by local Indian Agents to be part of the Sioux Nation (Twiss 1855:82-83, 1856:96; Cree, 1871:25; Lawrence 1876:200). Later in testimony before Congress (U.S. Senate 1879), the right of the northern Cheyennes to be included under the terms of the two 1868 Fort Laramie treaties was affirmed by government officials. During an investigation into the Dull Knife tragedy, Wild Hog (U.S. Senate 1880:6), a northern Cheyenne, said:

> Great numbers of Sioux have married our women; and some of our men have married Sioux women. This intermarrying has taken place principally with the Spotted Tail and Red Cloud bands of the Sioux. We used to live with Red Cloud and Spotted Tail and their bands just as if we were all one tribe; used to give each other our children in marriage, and mix with them in all ways as if we belonged to the same tribe.

Wild Hog and other Cheyennes who testified before Congress not only expressed the pain of removal to Oklahoma territory, but they also revealed their bands were not accepted by the Southern Cheyennes, who considered them "Sioux." As Wild Hog (1880:6) put it:

> No sooner had the Northern Cheyennes got down there than the Southern Cheyennes began to show dislike for them. They said: "What are you Sioux doing here?" Little Rogue pointed his finger at me and asked that. After there was quarreling between the Northern and Southern Cheyennes all the time.

Other northern Cheyennes, including Wooden Leg and Iron Teeth, described to Thomas Marquis (1931:308; Marquis and Limbaugh 1973) their intense emotional attachments to the Black Hills and their desire to remain in this country with their Lakota relatives and friends. Rev. Peter Powell (1982:2:1067-1070,1125-1131,1245-1261) also writes at some length about these strong ties. The famous book of Mari Sandoz, *Cheyenne Autumn* (1942), immortalized the story of the Cheyennes under Morning Star (a.k.a. Dull Knife) and Little Wolf returning to their home in the north among the Lakotas after their forced removal to Oklahoma in 1878.

In this light, one could argue that the incredible growth of the Oglala Lakotas in the mid-nineteenth century, even in the face of major epidemic disease outbreaks, was not simply the result of people being siphoned off from other Lakota divisions, as Kingsley Bray (1994) argues, but also a process where the Cheyennes were losing some of their members to the Oglalas and also the Sicangus. This would certainly make sense after 1868, when technically speaking, those who remained in the neighborhood of the Black Hills were considered part of the Sioux Nation. After 1877, many Cheyennes were still associated with the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies. Even though most of them were eventually relocated to agencies in Oklahoma and on the Tongue River in Montana, some remained and eventually settled at Pine Ridge (Eastman in Graber 1978:28, 132-134; Starita 1995:74-75). Today, many Oglalas at Pine Ridge are descended from Cheyennes, and until recent times, some were able to speak and/or understand the Cheyenne language (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:119 n9; Schukies 1993:129; Striata 1995:74-75). As John Stands In Timber (and Liberty 1967:119) tells it,

> They were allies for many years, and the Sioux are always mentioned in Cheyenne ceremonies when they call the names of four special friendly tribes. They mingled and intermarried, and today there are still quite a few Cheyennes over at Pine Ridge. That reservation even used to be called half Sioux and half Cheyenne.

It is not surprising, given the strength and intimacy of the alliances between these two populations that they came to share a great deal in common regarding the places they jointly occupied

and traveled. Lakota beliefs about the Black Hills and specific sites in the region closely parallel the Cheyennes' and in some instances, they are virtually identical.

Although these two tribal nations and others as well were closely connected to one another, they maintained separate identities and positions in intertribal camp circles. Each of them held distinct religious symbols as markers of their separate histories and identities. For the Cheyennes, it was the Sacred Arrows, for the Sutaios the Sacred Hat, for the Arapahos the Sacred Flathead Pipe, and for the Lakotas the Sacred Buffalo Calf Pipe. Yet, despite their differences, these tribal nations held a great deal in common. All of them shared a tradition of fasting, praying, and seeking visions in the Black Hills and their outlier formations, especially Bear Butte (Stands in Timber and Liberty 1967:89). All of them had stories of the emergence of humans and bison that were connected to underground cavern formations in the region. Some of the stories the Cheyennes and Lakotas shared, including the one of the Great Race and another of Falling Star's adventures, are nearly identical. Finally, all three tribes participated in the Sun Dance and sometimes even held their Sun Dances together (Powell 1981:1:248-249; Feraca 1998:12-13).[33]

If we move further back in time, we know the Cheyennes had close relations with the Plains Apaches and Kiowas. In fact, the present Keeper of the Sacred Arrows is descended from a Red Hat who was born in 1780 and had three Apache wives (Schukies 1993:187). John Stands In Timber (and Margot Liberty 1974:244-245) also tells how the Cheyennes learned about a certain kind of horse medicine from the Apaches who acquired it at Bear Butte. Apaches were located in the Hills well before the Cheyennes; some even hypothesize their presence as far back as the Late Archaic period of prehistory. Also, some of the Cheyenne stories about sacred places in the Black Hills are shared with the Kiowas and Plains Apaches (Sundstrom, L. 1996:183-184). The stories of the Kiowas' Sun-Boy are very much like some Cheyenne and Lakota culture heroes who are also the progeny of a falling star (Mooney 1979:238). *Gadombitsonhit*, Old Woman Under the Ground, who is envisioned as a member of a dwarf-like race living in the subterranean habitats of mountainous regions (Mooney 1979:239), is reminiscent of Cheyenne and Lakota ideas about an underground female figure sometimes associated with Little People in the Black Hills (Schlesier 1987:82,102-104; Herman 1974:149). Equally interesting in this regard is the Kiowa name for the Black Hills, *Sa'dalkani k'op,* which refers to the manifold or stomach rind of a bison cow (Mooney 1979:419) and the Lakota and Cheyenne image of the Hills embodying a female bison presence (Standing Bear 1978:43-45; Schlesier 1987:79).

The Cheyennes learned the Sun Dance from the Sutaios who, in turn, were taught the ceremony by the Arapahos (Mooney 1907:369-370; Schlesier 1990:18-19; Schukies 1993:214-215). One of the Kiowas' sacred Sun Dance bundles contains a *taime* image that originated with the Crow, who gave it to an Arapaho, who married into the Kiowa nation, and until the late 19th century, the keeper of this object had to be descended from an Arapaho (Mooney 1979:240-241). The Cheyennes learned the Night Dance from the Kiowas and taught it to the Lakotas (Wissler 1912:78-79). The Cheyennes also had close connections with the Arikaras and, at times, good relations with the Mandans and Hidatsas, and many of their ceremonies and cosmological traditions bear close resemblances to these tribes as well (Moore 1987:100-102; Sundstrom 1997: 200-205).

The Lakotas also reached out to other tribal nations in their movements to the Black Hills. There were close ties of marriage and collaboration with the Arapahos, who probably come to the

[33] Each tribe appears to have run their own Sun Dance; the dances were held at the same encampments but on consecutive days.

Hills around 1750 (Mekeer 1901b: 1; Curtis 1907-30:6:143; Fowler 1982:43). The Poncas, known to have used the southeastern Black Hills as a camping and hunting ground in the mid-seventeenth century, allied themselves with the Lakotas at certain times in their history. There is some evidence that Yankton Dakotas lived for a time in the villages of the Poncas (Howard 1980:21). In the early nineteenth century, some Poncas joined ranks with the Sicangus (Brules), intermarrying and jointly collaborating in ceremony, hunting, and trading (Howard 1965a:28; Hurt 1974:187,203-204). The *Wazazi,*[34] originally a band of the Sicangus and then Oglalas, had Ponca roots, and their territorial range covered much of the southeastern corner of the Black Hills after the 1830s (Hyde 1961:56,59-61,70,218; De Mallie 1975:353-356, 1976:260-261). Notwithstanding periods of hostility between the Lakotas and the Arikaras, there were also strong trade ties, many of which were associated with intermarriages and adoptions (Vestal 1934:22-24; Young Bear and Thiesz 1994:110). Indeed, some of the Oglalas and Minneconjous were reported to have lived among the Arikaras at the turn of the nineteenth century (Tabeau in Abel 1939:104). Once again, there are remarkable similarities between certain Lakota and Cheyenne oral traditions and those of the village tribes. The Arikaras, for example, have a Great Race story (Parks 1996:127-130), and so do the Arapahos (Dorsey and Kroeber 1903:395-404). These stories are not explicitly about the Black Hills. What is curious about them is that they include themes commonly connected to the Black Hills in Lakota and Cheyenne traditions.[35]

The kinship relations and intermarriages with Cheyennes, Arapahos, Poncas, and Arikaras, among others, indicate that the Lakotas did not just adopt certain beliefs from other tribes but could actually trace their ancestry, and thus their cultural origins, to a time prior to their occupation of the Black Hills *as a distinct nation.* One modern storyteller, Jake Herman, is a good example of this: his ancestry included Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arikara parentage (Bettelyoun and Waggoner 1988:34). Another case in point is the Lakota holy man, Pete Catches, who was descended from Arapaho, Cheyenne, Oglala, and Hunkpapa people (Catches and Catches, Jr. 1990:51). Thus, when today's Lakotas say that their peoples have always lived in the Black Hills, and that they have always considered them sacred, there is a legitimate historical and genealogical truth to their reasoning.

Certainly, the Lakotas were aware of other occupants in the Black Hills and maintained knowledge of this before and after their arrival in the area. Calico (in Wissler 1912:78-79), Black Elk (in DeMallie, 1984:314), and James LaPointe (1976:17) acknowledged as much and told about the earlier occupation of the area by the Kiowas, or a people named *Witapaha* (Island Hill), which is the ethnic ascription the Lakotas use for the Kiowas and possibly at one time the *Watapio* division of the Cheyenne. But this does not contradict the fact that people who are now identified as Lakota are indeed descended from tribes with a longer history in the region and an older tradition of knowledge associated with its various sites.

Some of the critics of Lakota spiritual attachments to the Black Hills take a very one-dimensional view of their history, which traces their movements in the region at a particular point in history. They do not account for the fact that small groups may have broken away from the larger body of the Sioux nation and become incorporated into neighboring tribes in protohistoric and even prehistoric times, or vice versa. In historic times, the Lakota nation did pick up peoples from other nations and drop off some of their own as they made their way back to the Black Hills. This is revealed in their centuries of genealogical relationship with other tribes, but this side of

[34] Wazhaze is the Ponca and Omaha name for the Osages (Fletcher & La Flesche 1972:1:47, 49-50, 57-60,101) and for the gens of the two tribes related to the Osage.

[35] There is also a Race Track story that the Dakotas once told about the area around Spirit Lake (a.k.a. Devil's Lake) in North Dakota (Eastman, C. 1971:163-170). This also reveals that certain common storylines were widely shared among the tribal nations of the northern Plains but applied, often simultaneously, to different geographic sites.

their history is generally hidden in the event-based, chronologically ordered records of their history. Many scholars dismiss Lakota traditions about an early Lakota relationship to the Hills, as posited in their traditions of an ancient Diaspora and long journey of return because these lack concrete proof, that is, verification in the hard copy of the written record. Their traditions end up being cast as legends and read as speaking to other aspects of their experience. What is being suggested here is that we think about the histories of the Lakotas and other tribal nations in terms of alternative historical paths. Along these trails, history is not marked by what historians identify as "events." Instead, it is shaped around what Raymond Fogelson (1989) labels "nonevents." These include things that happened but are not regarded as having saliency in conventional historic perspectives or that occurred but are represented by narratives that do not carry the kind of transparent meanings or "facts" upon which historians typically construct a peoples' history. It can be argued that Lakota history, as told in their stories of the "Return Journey" or the "Buffalo Wife," represent a tribal memory of movements associated with complex and diffuse webs of genealogical relationship. It is this kind of history that gives legitimacy to Lakota assertions of an ancient, "prehistoric" relationship to the Black Hills.

III. WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK AND ITS CHRONOLOGY

There is a strong body of evidence that supports the long-standing spiritual attachments of the Lakota people to the Black Hills and that predates by more than a century the political activism and legal struggles of the 1970s, when some historians and anthropologists claim the Black Hills became sacred to them. From 1851 to 1918, well before tourism developed and expanded in the region, there are several sources that describe the Lakotas' spiritual reverence for the Black Hills as a whole. There are also many references on their sacred regard for a variety of specific sites in and around the Hills, including, among others, Inyan Kara Mountain, Bear Lodge Butte, Bear Butte, Harney Peak, Castle Rock, Rapid Creek, Craven Canyon, Hot Springs, the Race Track, the Buffalo Gap, and of course, Wind Cave. In truth, there is an uninterrupted line of documents to the present day that attest to the spiritual importance of these sites to the Lakotas. In general, the sources strongly concur not only on which sites have been significant but also what they have meant and what oral traditions and ceremonial observances have been associated with them over time. Moreover, the evidence suggests strong connections to the beliefs and practices of other tribal nations who preceded their coming or who co-occupied the region once the main body of the Lakota nation arrived in the Black Hills.

In recent interviews (Kittelson and Albers 2002) with tribal cultural preservation personnel, it is clear that the Black Hills and specific sites within their reach continue to have sacred significance to a wide range of tribes. The southeastern Hills, including the area of Wind Cave National Park, holds significance as a location of historic occupation and use for the Arapahos, the Arikaras, the Cheyennes, the Lakotas, and the Plains Apaches. For two of these tribes, the Cheyennes, and Lakotas, this is also an area for which there is a long and well-documented history of spiritual attachments.