

Reports  
by Inspector Walsh  
Commanding NWMP at Fort  
Walsh and posts at Wood Moun-  
tain and East End

*on Indian and US Army  
activities at Wood Mountain and  
the boundary line: July 1879*

*To James Macleod,  
Commissioner of the NWMP*



DWRG  
Press

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This version is reprinted from microfilm of the records of Indian Affairs held at the National Archives of Canada.

These reproduced reports from Superintendent or Inspector (later referred to as Cpt. and Major) Walsh to NWMP Commissioner, James Macleod, place him at the Wood Mountain post at the end of July 1879.

Walsh provides an immediate sense of the situation just south of Wood Mountain. He describes the relations between the Sioux and US (General or Colonel - depending on who is writing) Miles who camped just south of the Line waiting for the Sioux to surrender. The Sioux, Nez Perces, Uncapapas and others whose food supply is buffalo hunt buffalo on the US side. In the case described here Miles allows the Crow and Cheyenne to act with impunity attacking and killing some Sioux who crossed the Line, while complaining to Canada that insurgents were attacking US citizens from Canada. To their credit, Canadian officials suggested that Miles and others were mistaken about who was causing the "degradations" in US territory.

The Indians (the term used then), more than 3,000, had taken refuge between Wood Mountain and Fort Walsh, sometimes along the White Mud Creek (also known as the Frenchman). They fled to Canada after Sitting Bull defeated Custer at the Little Big Horn in 1876. A year later, in September/October 1877, Miles defeated the Nez Perce at Bears Paw Mountain within a day or two he went to the Line escorting US Gen. Terry from Fort Benton to the Boundary. Terry, as part of a Commission, was under instructions from the President to seek the surrender of Sitting Bull and other chiefs.

General Alfred Terry was escorted from the Line by Macleod to Fort Walsh (see Macleod's letter in of October 12, 1877 at the Glenbow) and, with Walsh present and some 25 Indians, he laid down conditions for their return to the US. The Indians rejected the offer of "liars" stating that their people had been systematically murdered and chased out of their own lands (see the Report of the US Commission on the Surrender of Sitting Bull for a transcript of their comments).

Walsh believed the Indians and had great sympathy for their demands, for their belief in their national strength, their determination and independence. They were faced with impossible odds (starvation one significant factor) and a relentless and ruthless enemy, the US Army.

Canada decided to wait, negotiate, persuade the Indians to return to the US. When they were starving Canada refused the Indians assistance. You can read in these Indian Affairs files that in the early 1880s Dewdney and Macleod, under instructions from the Minister of the Interior and the Privy Council, refused the food the Sioux so desperately needed; a deliberate strategy intended to starve them into submission and force their surrender to the US. However, the Sioux, even then, having appointed Walsh as their representative trusted him to help them.

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Photographs: the Glenbow Museum and unidentified archives and photographers.



James Macleod, c. 1880



US General Miles



Sitting Bull, c. 1880

Wood Mountain

July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1879

Sir

I have the honor to report that on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> inst. Lieut. Sillens U.S. Army arrived at this Post and showed me his instructions from Genl. Miles. The following morning I started for the Camp taking with me Mr. Stearus to identify Indians, after proceeding about three miles I met the father of "Broad Trail" bringing a message informing me, that a party of their people men and women who had gone to Milk River three days previous had been attacked by <sup>white men</sup> Cheyenne and Crow Indians. That two of their men and two women had been killed, and two men wounded, that they had killed in the fight one Crow and one Cheyenne, that they had lost a great number of pack horses, and that Broad Trail requested me to come at once to the Camp, on receiving this report I sent Mr. Stearus back to the Post, and proceeded to the Camp which I found about eighteen miles south west from this Post arriving there at 6 P.M. immediately on my arrival the head men assembled and commenced relating what had taken place on Milk

River they said that owing to starvation they were obliged to send south of the line for Buffalo and the hunting party left their camp 600 men, women, and children on the 15<sup>th</sup> inst proceeding to Milk River where they arrived on the 16<sup>th</sup> inst and found a few Buffalo on the north side of the River made a run and killed quite a number they then crossed the River to the South side and there made a run killing a great number. Men, women, and children set to work skinning the beasts and cutting up the meat at about one o'clock almost all the horses were loaded, and two large parties commenced moving off, a party of about 120 men and women appeared not to be ready to move. They were advised not to stay behind, but replied that there was no danger, that they wanted a little more meat and would not be long getting it. The two large parties had not been gone more than an hour, when those that remained saw a party of Indians coming over the hill, and immediately after them a number of whites, some of the party carried red handkerchiefs tied on their guns and the Sioux thinking it was an invitation to talk, allowed them to

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approach quite close, when, they commenced firing on the Sioux killing two of them, the Sioux then ran to their houses but the warriors seeing that the women and children would be captured, rallied, and returned the fire killing two of the attacking party. This gave time to the women and children to reach the houses when the whole retreated having two men and two women killed and two men wounded.

They said we have left many houses on the road but are not return for them as Crow and Cheyenne Indians also white men that we believe to be scouts have been seen north of the line, we do not want blood on our hands in the white mother country, she promised to give us her protection if we obeyed her laws, we have done so, we have listened to every demand made on our camp, now we ask you to take your Red boats and put them between us and those people who are following our trail to either murder us, or steal our horses, do this, and we will feel that the white mother spoke true to us. I replied to them that I felt sorry for what had occurred that I sympathized with those

families that had lost some of their members that I believed as they said that starvation drove them south of the line to seek for food that they went there with no hostile intention was my firm belief (their women having their babes on their backs was a proof of this) That if they were pursued north of the line the parties who did so violated the law of the white mother, that they were aware I had very few men and though it was my duty to prevent any person from pursuing them north of the line, I could not place between them and the line more than two or three men and myself, and as the Patrol was wanted at once that it was useless to send to Ft. Walsh for assistance as I hoped before a messenger could get half way there that everything would have again become tranquil. That the following day I would take the two men who accompanied me and move out several miles and take up a position where I could see the surrounding country and kept a good lookout, and do all in my power to check any pursuit of them.

The next morning I started but the chiefs thinking I had too few men for the purpose sent fifteen young warriors with me.

We proceeded about ten miles and took up our position on a Butte which commanded a view of the boundary line and surrounding country for miles, we were accompanied thus far by Black Moon who was in search of his sister that had been missing since the fight and two other Indians who were looking for horses that had been left on the road, these three left us here and proceeded on their way to the Battle ground, when a few miles <sup>North</sup> ~~South~~ of the line Black Moon separated from his companions and in looking for them with his glasses discovered ten horsemen approaching which he said were Crow Indians, he returned in all haste to our camp and notified me of the fact, I, fearing that the party if crows might meet the two other Indians and kill them, immediately started with my whole force to the place pointed out



by black moon, and there found the tracks of the party, and one horse which had been left as the party had evidently become alarmed at our approach and had escaped across the line, it being then dark I returned to camp and the next day went out again to reconnoitre but discovering no further signs of the party and the two Sioux returning without having met them. I started next morning for the Post to obtain fresh supplies, intending to return to the line on the following day.

On my return I passed through the camp and made enquiries for the Nez Perces of whom Mr. Clearus is in search, and was informed by Spotted Eagle and other chiefs that the "White Eye" had been killed <sup>fourteen days ago</sup> on Snake Creek near Fort Miles battle ground while returning from a war party with horses which they had stolen, two other Nez Perces were killed at the same time. it is reported, by white men but the Indians are not sure whether by Whites or Indians, on my return to the Post to day I

reported this to Mr. Tellow, "Johniow"  
the other Nez Percé remains yet to be  
seen, and I will endeavor to have  
him brought face to face with Mr.  
Stearns before the latter leaves here.

Mr. Tellow being desirous of re-  
joining Genl Miles, whom I am just  
informed is camped near the Boundary  
Line in the neighborhood of the White  
Mud River, I will start tomorrow  
morning to escort him to the  
command

I have the honor to be  
Sir

Your most obedt Servt

*[Signature]*  
Supt Comdg mwm  
Wood Mountain

Officer Commanding  
Drum Police  
J. Walcott

Forwarded  
James MacLeod  
Comr

09414

Wood Mountain

July 25<sup>th</sup> 1849

Sir,

I have the honor to report that on the 23<sup>rd</sup> inst I left the Post with Corporal Connor and Consts Bliss, Daniels and Parke to escort Lieut Ellison and Mr Stearns to great Mules Command. I intended to pass through the Sioux Camp in order to give Mr Stearns an opportunity of looking for his horse and also to see Johnson the Nez Percé whom he said was one of the party that attacked him on the Yellowstone, when about fourteen miles from the Post we met the whole camp on the move to this place, in passing through Stearns had an opportunity of seeing a great number of the horses but failed to recognize any of which he had descriptions - I caused Johnson to go up and speak to Stearns, when he (Stearns) said positively that he was not one of the party who committed <sup>the depredations</sup> at this house on the Yellowstone, owing to the Detachment at this Post being so small I was unable to take a sufficient number of men with me to herd

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the horses and do the work on the trip  
I therefore when passing through the  
camp got "Lone Bull" the nephew of Sitting  
Bull "Galopa" the nephew of Spotted Eagle  
and another young Indian to accompany  
me, shortly after leaving the camp I was  
joined by three other young men who  
wished to go with us, as I knew them  
I allowed them to do so, when about  
15 miles from the line the Indians  
discovered parties moving on the Butte  
in the neighborhood of the boundary  
almost due south from this Post - I  
proceeded at once in the direction where  
they were seen and upon arriving  
at the boundary line saw Genl Miles'  
camp situated about three fourths of  
of a mile south of it, I camped with  
the Indians about a mile north of  
the line and Lieut Ellison and Mr  
Stearns proceeded to the camp -  
In a short time Lieut Bailey arrived  
at our camp with an invitation  
from Genl Miles to me to come to  
the camp and bring my Indians  
with me, fearing however that there  
might be some trouble with the  
crows and Cheyennes that were



in his camp, I declined, but went myself to the line to meet Genl Miles returning to sleep on the Bull with the Indians. next morning I started the Detachment for the Post with the Indians and then went myself to Genl Miles camp. which I found to be about eleven hundred strong. I gave Genl Miles all the information I could in regard to the Sioux on this side of the line and explained to him that they had no hostile intent in crossing to Milk River but were driven to it by actual starvation the camp having been for four days absolutely without food previous to starting on the hunt, and that I firmly believed that if they had not been attacked they would have returned peacefully after having obtained a sufficient supply of meat to satisfy their present wants. Genl Miles said that the country south of the border was an Indian Reservation and he would not allow any man either White, Half Breed or Indian to come over it for any purpose

without a permit except those Indians who belonged on the reservation, and if the Sioux wished to come south of the line they must surrender themselves to the American authorities and be placed on an agency, that none of them would be harmed and that they would each day receive sufficient food for every man woman and child in the camp but they would have to give up their horses and guns - I told him I would report what he had said to the Sioux. He also spoke of the number of horses stolen from Whites and Crows and brought to this side - I said to him that I believed that more horses had been stolen by the Crows from this side by two to one, than had been stolen from them by parties from this side, I gave him instances of 23 having been taken on one occasion from the Half Breeds 53 from the Sioux and on another occasion 30 from the Sioux, and out of all this number not one had been recovered, and that I supposed the young men of the Sioux had gone out to try

and recover them from the Crows and that in some instances they had taken horses belonging to the whites mistaking them for Crow horses, but when this had occurred they had been handed over to me on their arrival at the Camp, and that I had returned them to the owners as soon as identified, and that if he would stop the crows from stealing from this side I could assure him there would never be a horse stolen from American Territory by Sioux from this side - Two men from Fort Custer were in Gent Miles Camp in search of stolen horses, and they accompanied me to this Post last night for the purpose of identifying some horses which have been returned here by the Indians, They recognized four as belonging to one of them which I have handed over to him Gent Miles requested me to furnish them with an escort to return to the line, and in case I came myself to accompany them to his camp and inform ~~them~~ him as to the feeling of the Sioux Camp

On my return here I found that the whole camp had moved near the Post and I today held a conference with a number of the Head men, when I told them what Guel Miles had said, and it was now for them to say whether they would accept his offer or not, but that he said they could not go south of the Line on any other terms, that I could not say to them go or stay, that there were no Buffalo in the country, and perhaps might never be again, for Guel Miles said he would do every thing in his power to prevent the Buffalo coming this way. From their remarks in reply (a copy of which I enclose) I can see they are determined not to return to the United States. They told me to say to Guel Miles that they did not want to fight, that they were no longer hostile, although four of their people had been killed, their hearts were not bad, and he could sleep assured that not one man would cross the line to injure him. I believe it is the intention of the Tribes to divide here and go north

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 3652, File 8589 Pt. 1)



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to the neighborhood of Old wife Creek  
for the purpose of getting a few fish and  
turnips, in the hope that the Buffalo  
will soon come north of the line

I do not know how they will manage  
to exist but such is their determination  
not to surrender themselves to the United  
States authorities that I think they  
will actually die of starvation before  
they will return

I handed over to Mr Stearns one horse  
which he recognized as belonging to  
a friend of his on the Yellowstone

I have the honor to be  
Sir

Your most obedt Servt

Sept 29 1871  
Wood Mountain

Officer Commanding  
Wood Police  
J. Walcott

Forwarded  
James T. Macdonald  
Comr

Interview referred to in the attached  
letter from Supt. Walsh  
25<sup>th</sup> July 74

Sally Bear

I don't like your seeing the Americans  
at the line yesterday. They are trying to  
make some trouble for us on this side.  
I do not want to do any wrong. My great  
mother told me to speak the truth and  
I have only one heart, I am only seeking for  
Buffalo on the Prairie. I will listen to your  
words. we will not make you ashamed  
for us the Americans will be ashamed  
first. You know what is best for us  
and we ask you to help us, all we  
ask is for the Americans to leave us at  
peace in this country. You tell us they  
will not cross the line, and my heart  
is glad

Broad Trail

I came to this country to have peace  
from my enemies, The Americans still  
follow me and are close to the line.  
I have not slept for two nights. I see  
all my children round me. I am seeking  
for Buffalo to feed them. The Americans  
will receive no annoyance from my  
people. You know what they done to  
me before. You can tell them that I like  
your people and do not like them. The  
farther they are away from me the

better, they are bad people. No man can  
 point out a wrong act that I have done  
 I do not want blood God does not want  
 to see it on my hands. you can tell the  
 Americans they will not be disturbed by  
 me, they can sleep sound where they are,  
 no matter what they are doing at the  
 line it is their business. I know they try  
 to make the poor man poorer but I  
 look to the whole nation alone for my  
 life

The Crow.

I keep all your words in my heart -  
 you know that my heart is strong to  
 every man on this side of the line, I like  
 your country, and I want to keep my  
 horses for my children. I am always  
 looking to the north. my blood may  
 be dark but my heart is good. I  
 am seeking to do right and not wrong.  
 I will do nothing to the Americans  
 although they have come to the line  
 my heart is not bad, and no one from  
 our camp will harm them. You cannot  
 believe their words. They promise to give  
 us food for our families everyday. all  
 I ask of them is to let me live in  
 peace. The Americans are sick, they

can keep their money, I know they tell  
lies. I do not want to fight them I  
ran away from them but they follow  
me up. All I ask is that you will stop  
them from coming across the line

Spotted Eagle

I will not return to the Americans. The  
have got no heads I told them good words  
and they would not listen, I am seeking  
for Buffalo they do not belong to the Americans  
they have plenty of flour and do not want  
the Buffalo to feed their children, God  
gave the Buffalo to the Red man, you  
know my heart loves the white mother  
The Americans stole my land I came  
to the white mother and asked her  
to pity me. I went the other day to  
hunt the Americans attacked me  
they killed my horse, you can tell  
the Americans I do not fear them,  
but you have told me not to fight  
them, and I will not -

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 3652, File 8589 Pt. 1)

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09414

Wood Mountain  
July 31<sup>st</sup> 1879

Sir

I have the honor to state that I left this Post on the 27<sup>th</sup> inst for feet miles camp on Rock Creek, taking with me the two men who accompanied me from feet miles camp on 27<sup>th</sup> inst and seven horses belonging to them which I had recovered from the Sioux. A Half Breed scout of feet miles who arrived at this Post on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> also accompanied me. I took with me "Long Dog" and another Indian who wished to visit the American camp to see his brother who is employed as a scout by feet miles.

We reached feet miles camp on the 28<sup>th</sup> inst at 2 P.M. He having moved his command twenty two miles down Rock Creek from his previous camp ground, at about ten miles from the camp large numbers of Buffalo were seen moving northward, I was there met by Lt Long U.S.A. and party

Officer commanding  
Morm Police  
J.H. Walsh

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and escorted by them into Jew. Miles camp  
Jew Miles explained to Long Dog and  
the other Indian (The one who kills the white  
man) the terms and conditions upon  
which they would be allowed to return  
and told them to inform the Indians  
that if any of them wished to return  
upon those terms they could apply  
to me and I would give them a  
letter to him

"Long Dog" and "The one who kills the white man"  
returned with me. Mr. Fierby Reporter  
for the Chicago Times who wished to see  
and talk with the Sioux chiefs also  
accompanied me.

I have the honor to be  
Sir

Your most obedt servt

*[Signature]*  
Supt Comdg Minn?  
Wood Mountain

Officer Commanding  
Minn. Police  
St. Walsh  
Forwarded  
James T. Mather  
com

For  
S. S.  
and  
E. W.



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