THE SIOUX INDIAN LEGEND OF THE MIGRATION OF BIRDS OF THE BLACK HILLS COUNTRY

Story by Chief Sitting Bull -- retold by his nephew, One Bull

Translated by Robert P. Higheagle.

The Chief Sitting Bull was once saved by a golden winged woodpecker from the devouring of the bear in a dream and therefore, took special interest in birds of all Tribes and often dreamed of them, singly and in groups and has many interesting stories to tell about the bird kingdom.

A council of all species of birds was called by Wanblee, the eagle -- the bird that enjoys the highest supremacy over all the rest of the fowls of the air. The object of the council was to determine which birds are to remain in the Black Hills Country during the colder seasons. The spot, now know as Rapid City Municipal Park was designated as the place to hold the council. The time to hold this meeting was during the summer season just as soon as all the nestlings were full grown -- about the forepart of the month of June. This being definitely decided, Wanblee appointed Hinhan -- the owl, manager and chief of the council.

Hinhan, at once, assigned all Cetanhotanka -- the noisy Jay Birds -- to act as heralds. They got busy and made the announcements every where to all the birds. Some of the birds cared very little about the proposed meeting. They did not think that such a move was necessary as they feel that the Great Spirit had created them to enjoy all freedom and always lead a free and peaceful life. Others believed that free as they were they realized the more powerful ones seemed to rule the rest of the birds that, under the circumstances, there should be some understanding between all the birds of all sizes and Tribes or else the smaller and less powerful would be at the mercy of the bigger ones all the time.

The various Tribes got together and delegated some of their members to attend the council. Others agreed to go in bigger numbers so as to show