

# LAUBINS DESCRIBE RECENT VISIT WITH INDIAN FRIENDS IN DAKOTAS

Reginald and Gladys Laubin, well known local interpreters of American Indian dancing, have returned to the "land of the Eastern Ocean" after a most interesting visit with Chief One Bull, Mr. Laubin's Indian "father," and other Indian friends in the Standing Rock reservation in North and South Dakota. At the present Mr. and Mrs. Laubin are living in their tepee at Gardner Lake.

### Describes Trip

The Norwich couple submit the following account of their recent trip:

When one goes to visit an Indian friend on a Sioux reservation, it is not always such a simple matter as going to see a friend in the city. There are no telephones to let one know of an intended visit and you may travel 100 miles to see some old-timer only to find that he is 300 miles farther on making a visit of his own.

This has been our experience on a number of occasions. After traveling 2,000 miles to Little Eagle, South Dakota, there to visit Chief One Bull, my Indian "father," we arrived on a Saturday evening to be greeted with the news that he and his family had left for the Black Hills that same morning. Learning from the Indian agent that he was expected to return in about a week, we decided to wait for him at Ft. Yates, North Dakota, 38 miles farther on.

There we stayed with our friend, Frank Zahn, the upper Missouri interpreter, whose father was the first white man to build a log cabin west of the Missouri river. After taking part in several dances and interviewing a number of old-timers we received word one day that One Bull and his family had returned to Little Eagle. This word came from two men, Little Bear and Has Horns, who live in Little Eagle, and whom we met on the street of Ft. Yates. When asked if One Bull had come home yet, they replied, "Yes, One Bull and White Bull came back yesterday." There was no reason to doubt their word, so we packed everything, laid in provisions, and were soon on our way to see the old folks.

### Seek One Bull's People

Imagine our disappointment on arriving in Little Eagle again not to be able to find a sign of the old chief nor of anyone who had seen him or any member of his family. There are no hotels there, and knowing no one but One Bull's people in this district, it looked like a case of sleep under the stars with the rattlesnakes and prairie dogs.

Finally an old friend, His White Horse, happened along, and through him we learned that Cecilia, whose Indian name is Brings Home a Blue Horse, One Bull's oldest daughter, was still in the vicinity but on the other side of the Grand river, in the very heart of Sitting Bull's country, eight miles farther on. We soon discovered that this happened to be the very worst gumbo road imaginable. It took us over an hour to drive that eight miles! Directions had been given to cross two bridges then take the first right hand road, but we crossed three bridges and still did not see any roads bearing right.

We finally saw a cabin far off to the right, nearly a mile off the road, so we stopped and hiked over to the cabin to be rewarded by finding no one at home. So we started toward the car again, quite discouraged. Suddenly we saw a horseman appear over the next rise, and we hailed him. He rode over to us and proved to be One Bull's nephew. This seemed more



Mrs. Laubin with her new boy friend "Makes Trouble" a veteran of Custer battle.

like it should be and partially revived our enthusiasm. He talked good English and gave us accurate directions as to how to proceed to Cecilia's house. But anyone who thinks this portion of South Dakota to be flat and uninteresting country should visit it. Treeless it is to a great extent, but full of low rising hills. We had been within a mile of Cecilia's place and there is a church with quite a steeple across from it but we had no view of it from any position on the road until almost upon it.

The rest of that little trip was uneventful. We soon found our friend and she was most happy to see us. But she told us that her father was still in the Black Hills and would be there all summer. Cecilia and her family had just moved into this house on this day, so that it was in just about the same condition as anyone's else house on a moving day. They had been staying across the flats in the old home of Sitting Bull, the cabin\* he first built on his return to the Grand river country after his surrender in Canada. Cecilia's oldest daughter was there on a visit. Cecilia helped us pitch a tent, as no poles were available there for our tepee, and we decided to turn in for a good night's rest before starting for the Black Hills on the following morning.

### Send For Doctor

But luck was not yet with us. About 2 o'clock one of Cecilia's daughters awakened us, saying that her oldest sister was very sick, and she wondered if we would go for a doctor. So we hurriedly dressed and went in to see what we could do. We asked Cecilia when the baby was expected. The reply was, "Yesterday." The way we worked out of this dilemma is a story in itself. To make it short, we went back over that awful road to Little Eagle, woke up the Indian agent, called the doctor from McLaughlin, 12 miles farther on, and went back to Cecilia's house to do what we could until he arrived. The outstanding reward for the trip over that terrible road was the most beautiful daybreak and sunrise we have ever seen.

On the doctor's arrival we learned there was still time to get the girl to the hospital in Ft. Yates, so he took her and Cecilia in his car and we followed in ours with the two other girls and little boy—five of us in our little coupe!

We did manage to get a good rest at Franks' home the next night, after all the excitement had died down, and eventually started off on our long delayed trip to the Black Hills, 280 miles away. We started off, happy and satisfied to have had the doctor tell us that we had been the means of saving this young mother's life and that she had been presented with a fine baby boy.

The Black Hills cover the extreme western end of South Dakota from north to south but we

hoped to find One Bull somewhere within these bounds. We thought first to try to find them in Rapid City, where they had originally gone to attend a conference, so we headed for that place. On arriving in Rapid City our best bet seemed to be to go to Duhamel's Trading Post, where Indians are employed each summer to entertain the tourists. But at Duhamel's we learned that the two Sitting Bull "boys" (One Bull, 37 years old and White Bull, 92) had left "yesterday," which might mean anything in Indian parlance. We inquired of a number of Indians as to their whereabouts but without success. Finally a half-breed came over to us and said he could show us how to reach the camp of some Standing Rock Indians. He was not sure our people were there but thought they might be.

So we all piled into our little old car and started off. We went several blocks across the town, down over the railroad tracks, through some terrible dirt roads to a little glade beside Elk creek and there we found a camp.

There, sure enough, was a group of Indians from Little Eagle and hardly did I open my mouth to speak when One Bull came out of one of the tents. He had recognized my voice and was so glad to see me that I thought he would shake my arm off. He said, "My son, it makes my heart sing to see you. I knew you would come."

### Set Up Tepee

We cut poles in the hills and set up our tepee, camping with One Bull, his family and brother. The two old men were born in the hills, in Spearfish canyon, and they were at home once more. They kept us busy each day, recording old-time customs and recounting exploits of earlier days. It was a thrilling experience to hear these stories in our tepee from the lips of the two most famous Sioux Indians still living. On one such occasion One Bull explained to me that according to old custom he would no longer bear the name of One Bull, for he had given that name to me when he had adopted me two summers before. This was the highest honor he could bestow. The old custom demanded that after a man had given away his name he choose a new one, but this is no longer carried out because of the confusion it causes on the agency records.

One Bull is a religious leader among his people as well as a famous warrior and chief and his brother White Bull is one of the most famous warriors the Sioux ever produced. The two brothers are nephews of Sitting Bull and the closest living relatives of that great chief. One Bull put on the Sun Dance last year, the first time it had been given since 1881. He gave it as a special prayer of thanksgiving for recovery from an injury received the previous winter and as a plea for rain to save his discouraged people. Rain fell at the close of the ceremony and more rain has fallen in his country this year than at any time since 1914. One Bull sang all of the songs of the Sun Dance for us in our own lodge.

One Bull and his wife had wanted to put up the tepee for us on our arrival but we suggested it would be better for us to put it up and for them to correct us on anything we did wrong. So we proceeded, but not a single correction was offered. The old folks were delighted that we could erect the tepee and arrange its interior in real Dakota fashion. "Our white son and his wife are better Indians than our own Indian children," they said. Then they told us that the previous summer they had gone to Bismarck for a celebration. There One Bull's youngest daughter erected a tepee for the benefit of a large gathering of tourists and spectators. The next day when the old folks went over to see it they found it was lopsided and nearly fallen over. How they laughed! They thought it a big joke that their own daughter did not know how to properly erect a tepee.

At the Sun Dance gathering at Cannon Ball, North Dakota, a group of Indian youths erected a tepee so poorly that it started to slide in a one-sided way. It was necessary for me, a white man, to show them how to set it up correctly.

### July 4th Celebration

We set up our tepee again at the big Fourth of July celebration in Bull Head, South Dakota. There we had Indian visitors all day long. It was surprising to hear young Indians ask us the same questions regarding old tepee life that are asked by uninformed white people. They seemed to be amazed that we had a fire in it, and yet that is the greatest advantage and the most romantic thing about the tepee. It is hard for white people to realize that Indians do not still live in tepee, but actually very few of the old tim e ways are known to the younger Indians.

One middle-aged woman insisted that her people had never had tepee furnished like ours. When asked how old she was she replied, "Fifty-one." She was then told to ask some of the old-timers to come in. She called to Makes Trouble and Red Fish, who were walking by. Makes Trouble is over 80 years old and fought in the Custer fight. I asked him if he had ever seen tipi furnished like ours. He said, "Yes.

# DELEGATE OF N. E. A. LEAGUE REPORTS

As delegate of the Norwich Teachers league to the convention, Miss Mary E. Shields has submitted to the league an interesting account of the annual convention of the National Educational association which was held at Detroit, Mich., June 28 to July 3.

Her report in part follows: "Detroit will always mean to me the 1937 convention of the National Educational association. It was the 75th annual convention and had the largest attendance of any since the convention held in Los Angeles in 1931. There were over 12,000 present."

Further strengthening of professional organizations was given emphasis by all the speakers, national, state, and local representatives.

Orville C. Pratt, president of the N. E. A., in his opening address pointed to the small percentage of teachers enrolled in their national professional organization as one of the weaknesses of the unified effort of the N. E. A., to advance teacher welfare, and to improve the public support of education.

He announced that the organization is taking steps to provide expert service in the fields of tenure, salaries, and retirement. He said that class room teachers now far outnumber other educators in the membership group, and that steps must be taken to extend and strengthen this and other types of membership, so that their may be "one dominant, powerful, and all inclusive educational organization which on occasion could speak authoritatively for education as a whole."

### Problems of Teaching

Secretary Willard E. Givens defined the problems and possibilities of the teaching profession at the opening morning session of the representative assembly when he said: Adequate salaries for teachers are a wide investment in the future of America, and mental and social security are essential if the teacher is to do high class work. A good tenure law protects the children against incompetent teachers by prescribing a legal and professional procedure for the elimination of unfit teachers. In the matter of professional strength, teachers are potentially the strongest professional group in the United States. In number they lead all professional groups. There are one million of them in immediate contact with thirty million young people, and through these young people in touch with thirty million families. As a profession we have not yet begun to achieve the possibilities within our reach. Our professional organizations have not wielded the social power which they have at their disposal. Education is not today receiving the attention and financial support which it merits and the responsibility is largely our own. We can be, if we will, a stronger social force than any other professional group in America.

He added: "We are told that genius is caught, not taught. It is caught but only from those who inspire us to develop our capabilities to the limit. Teaching is a task for persons with rich cultural backgrounds and with visions of things to come. A successful teach-

these friends who had been so good to us. On the morning we had to leave I drove over to One Bull's tent with a load of provisions as a parting gift. Hearing the car, he came out to greet me. Neither of us knew that the other had a present. One Bull was greatly surprised and delighted to receive the provisions and was I delighted with what he had for me? He presented me with two of his most prized possessions—two of the few remaining Indian articles he still owned—the war club he used in the Custer battle and the picture record, on skin, of his part in that famous fight. With this club he had knocked three soldiers off their horses in this battle.

One Bull shook hands with us, then he put his hands on my shoulders and looked into my eyes. Suddenly he put his hands over his eyes and cried and wailed as one mourning the dead. Being such an old man he was afraid that he would never see me again. He had been so happy during our stay that we hated to leave him in this way. While we were with him he sang all the time. He had a song for everything, always had a pleasant word or a funny story and had the most delightful laugh one could hope to hear. Many people think Indians have no feelings or emotions but this was the most touching thing I had ever experienced and if there is any way I can make this old man's heart sing and bring happiness to his people I intend to do what I can to bring it to pass.

Just before leaving One Bull had said to me, "My son, go to your people and tell and show them how we used to live in times past. The white people cannot all come to see us, neither can we all go to them. Your work on the stage should help us to understand each other better. It is better than

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