

A Northern Cheyenne Called Roman Nose

by Orvel A. Criqui



Fig. 1 "The Surprise"



Fig. 2 "The Defiance of Roman Nose"

ABOUT FORTY MILES NORTH OF BURLINGTON in eastern Colorado is the site of a battle fought in 1868 between a small group of white men and a large band of Indians. First known as the "Battle of the Arickaree," it was later designated as the "Battle of Beecher Island" by Col. George A. Forsyth. Indians remember it as the battle in which Roman Nose was killed. Although much has been written about the battle and the loss of the Cheyenne fighting spirit, considerable confusion has existed about the principal Indian warrior, a Northern Cheyenne called Roman Nose.

While early reports of the battle did not mention Roman Nose, later reports contained innumerable discrepancies about his description, his participation, his death, and the place and manner of his burial. Even now, the mystery surrounding the true identity of the Beecher Island Roman Nose surfaces in books, museum exhibits, and collections, resulting in confusion. Many incidents have been incorrectly attributed to Roman Nose, and the photographs of several different Indians have been used to portray him. Although there was more than one Roman Nose, many have assumed that there was but one, and that he was the one of Beecher Island fame. The purpose of this article is to set the record straight.

Several months before the battle, during the summer of 1868, Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan directed 1st Lt. Frederick H. Beecher and four civilian scouts to observe the Indians in western Kansas. Unknown to many military men of the time, Lieutenant Beecher and scouts William Comstock, Sharp Grover, Dick Parr, and Frank Espey visited the various villages, reporting directly to General Sheridan. The reports

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gave the locations of the camps, the tribes represented, the leaders, and the approximate number and condition of warriors, arms, and ponies.¹ Obviously, through these "visits" Beecher was able to keep Sheridan apprised of the total situation as the Indians gathered in western Kansas.

On the evening of August 16, 1868 (although the circumstances have been questioned), it was reported that after leaving a Cheyenne village, Comstock and Grover were attacked and Comstock was killed.² General Sheridan was aware of the many Indian depredations and the large number of Indians gathering in the area, and he was particularly concerned about the death of Comstock. Although the Indians maintained that their intentions were peaceful, General Sheridan directed Forsyth on August 24 to "employ fifty hardy frontiersmen to scout against the hostile Indians."³ Because of their scouting activities for Sheridan, it is not surprising that Beecher was made second in command and Sharp Grover was designated as head guide. Colonel Forsyth's command consisted of civilian scouts who had signed up in Kansas and not of enlisted soldiers. The first group, many of whom were from the Saline Valley, was enrolled at Fort Harker. About twenty more were enrolled at Fort Hays, and two replacements were made at Fort Wallace.

On September 10, Forsyth and his company of fifty scouts left Fort Wallace. Seven days later, Forsyth and Roman Nose of the Northern Cheyenne were the main antagonists in the battle that began on September 17 on a small island in the Arickaree Branch of the Republican River, about seven miles from the Kansas border. During false dawn of that historic morning, the command was surprised by a horse raid conducted by a few ambitious young Indians. Immediately after the sighting of hundreds of Indians on the horizon, the scouts, under the command of Forsyth and Beecher, were forced to set up defenses on the island. They dug pits in the sandy soil and made breastworks of the carcasses of their horses and mules. The scouts were able to repel the Indians but suffered heavy

losses, most of which were incurred during the first morning while protective cover was being developed.

The attacking force of several hundred Indians consisted of Northern Cheyenne, the Brule and Oglala tribes of Sioux, a few Northern Arapaho and Kiowa, and the aggressive Dog Soldiers. The Indians attacked with vigor during most of the first day but were unable to storm the island. Much of the Indians' enthusiasm

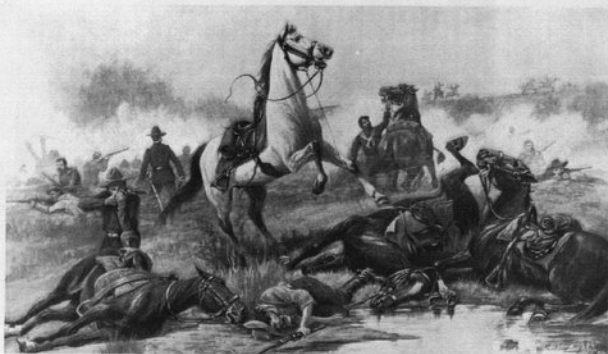


Fig. 3 "The Defence from the Island"



Fig. 4 "In the Pits"

Five views by Rufus F. Zogbaum (1849-1925), an illustrator noted for his military scenes, accompanied Forsyth's account of the battle published in the June 1895 Harper's New Monthly Magazine (figs. 1-5).

1. "Reports of First Lieutenant Fred. H. Beecher, 3d Infantry of Scouts Made by Him in Obedience to Orders Received by Him from Major General P. H. Sheridan," July 22, 1868, Philip H. Sheridan Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

2. Capt. H. C. Bankhead, "A Report on William Comstock's Death, August 19, 1868," Fort Wallace, Letters Sent, 1868-1869, 59:56-58, Records of the War Department, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (microfilm).

3. Bvt. Brig. Gen. George A. Forsyth, "The Report of the Organization and Operations of a Body of Scouts under My Command from August 29th to September 30th," filed with Bvt. Brig. Gen. Chauncey McKeever, A.A.G., Department of the Missouri, March 31, 1869 (copy from Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, National Archives).

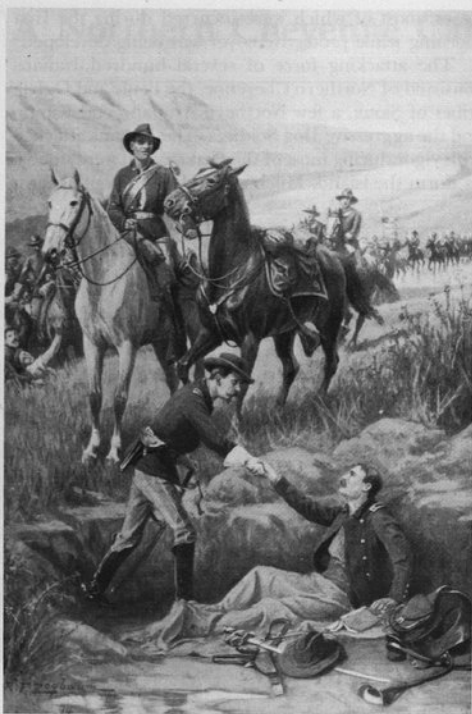


Fig. 5 "The Rescue"

for the fight was lost when the great Northern Cheyenne warrior, Roman Nose, was killed while leading a charge during the early afternoon of the first day. After serious challenges on the first day and sporadic fighting on the second, most of the Indians left. However, enough stayed to maintain the siege until the fifth day, when they too moved out. The scouts withstood the attacks of the Indians, but because their horses and mules were all dead, they had to remain on the island until relief came on September 25, the ninth day.

According to Forsyth's report, Lt. Frederick H. Beecher and four others were killed, and sixteen of the command were wounded.⁴ Colonel Forsyth had a bullet in his right thigh, a leg broken below the knee, and a scalp wound that gave him an intense headache.

The number of Indian casualties will never be known, but there are many and varying estimates.

4. Ibid.

George Bent and George Bird Grinnell claimed that only nine men were killed on the Indian side, yet Winfield Freeman's informants convinced him that the Indians lost between seven hundred and eight hundred braves.⁵ Forsyth counted and reported thirty-two dead Indians.⁶

Most agree that the impact of the death of Roman Nose was immeasurable, since the young Cheyenne warriors had been sustained by his "great medicine." Roman Nose was a member of the Hi-moi-yo-quis or Crooked Lance Society, but he liked the Dog Soldiers so well that he lived with them during the war years.⁷ Although the history of Roman Nose is full of controversy, the warrior had many characteristics that were constant. His attitude toward whites did not vary—he didn't like them. His disdain for white officers was shown by his conduct during a meeting with Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock on April 14, 1867, near Pawnee Fork. Donald Berthrong writes that "Roman Nose, according to both George Bent and [Edmond] Guerrier, threatened to kill Hancock and was only prevented by Bull Bear, who prevailed upon the warrior to consider the consequences upon their women and children."⁸

The characteristic that encompassed Roman Nose's whole being was his sincere belief in his protective medicine. The source of his great medicine was his magnificent but sacred one-horned war bonnet. This protective medicine gave him overwhelming confidence and made him a dauntless warrior. His actions in battle were so fearless that he gave strength and spirit to others. Stan Hoig summarized the many strengths of Roman Nose when he called him the "warrior of warriors."⁹

Although he was not a chief or medicine man, Roman Nose was the heart of the fighting spirit of his people. His part in the battle has been described many times with much flair and imagination. Since few whites actually knew much about him, and fewer still were able to recognize him, there is doubt as to who, if anyone, actually recognized him at the battle. In 1927 a former scout, Sigman Schlesinger, wrote:

5. George E. Hyde, *Life of George Bent, Written from His Letters*, ed. Savoie Lottinville (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), 305; George Bird Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 281; Winfield Freeman, "The Battle of Arickaree," *Kansas Historical Collections, 1897-1900*, 6:357.

6. Forsyth, "Report of the Organization and Operations of a Body of Scouts."

7. Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 306-7.

8. Donald J. Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 276.

9. Stan Hoig, *The Peace Chiefs of the Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 99.



Fig. 6. This recent painting by Danny Miller depicts Roman Nose, Medicine Man, and an unidentified Dog Soldier leading a charge on Beecher Island. As Roman Nose has lost the protective power of his war bonnet, his death is imminent. Thus, the spirit of the war bonnet is shown floating mystically over the island. Miller, an Oklahoma Choctaw, studied under the Cheyenne artist Richard West and taught art at Haskell Indian Junior College, Lawrence. His works were included in the 1985 exhibit, "A Circle of Tribes," at the Kansas Museum of History.

My recollection & impression of this incident was always that nobody Know[s] who Killed R. N. The memory abides with me that we did not Know the name of the chief in command of the Indians, at least there was no name mentioned in my hearing. I am therefore somewhat puzzled why some of our men mention R. N. Thinking the matter over & analyzing [sic] that contention is, that the reason may be owing to the fact that history of Beecher Island lying dormant until about 1895 or later when Gen. Forsyth published his account of the fight in Harpers Magazine in which he mentioned Roman Nose. The public up to this time Knew nothing or very little of the fight on the Arickaree, but his story was so interesting that its fame spread & was recognized as an event in Indian warfare. . . .¹⁰

10. Sigman Schlesinger, letter sent to the editor of the *Kansas City Star*, February 1927, in response to an article of January 30, 1927 (author's collection).

It is doubtful if Colonel Forsyth knew or recognized Roman Nose. According to Col. Homer Wheeler, "it was not positively known [to the scouts] for some time after the battle that Roman Nose was the head chief in the Beecher Island fight. . . ."¹¹ In his belated official report of March 31, 1869, then Brevet Brigadier General Forsyth did not mention Roman Nose. When he wrote his memoirs in 1895, however, he described him in great detail.¹² As Forsyth had been wounded, had suffered a brain concussion, and had become disoriented, his description should be viewed with caution.

George Bent's account of the fight should be con-

11. Homer W. Wheeler, *Buffalo Days: Forty Years in the Old West: The Personal Narrative of a Cattleman, Indian Fighter and Army Officer* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1925), 14.

12. George A. Forsyth, "A Frontier Fight," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 91 (June 1895): 41-62.

Roman Nose

by George Bent

Runners had been sent to the Indian camp to ask Roman Nose to hurry to the fight, but it was not until late in the day that he came. Because of the fact that a Sioux woman had used an iron fork in serving food to him at a feast a few days before, Roman Nose felt that his protective medicine had been so weakened that he was in great danger if he entered the fight. Tall Bull and White Horse and other Dog Soldier leaders knew this and talked with Roman Nose when he arrived. There was a great deal of excitement among the Indians as the news was passed that the great Roman Nose had come up. . . . Finally, as was the custom, one of the chiefs asked him if he would lead another charge. He instantly consented. Donning his famous one-horn war bonnet, he rode to the head of the Indian line. It was now late in the day. In this charge there were fewer warriors than in the one made in the morning. As they charged down on the island in a hail of bullets, Roman Nose rode near the scouts lying in the hole on the river bank and was shot in the small of the back as he passed. . . . Some women had now come up to look after the wounded, and Roman Nose was taken back to the camp. He lingered through the night and died at daybreak next day. . . .

Roman Nose was the most famous Cheyenne warrior of his day. . . . As a boy Roman Nose was called Sautie (the Bat); but when he became a warrior he was given the name Woqini, meaning Hook Nose, which the whites always interpreted Roman Nose. . . . Contrary to the general opinion, Roman Nose was never a chief, nor was he even the head man of any of the soldier societies. He was a member of the Hi-moi-yo-qis, or Crooked Lance Society, so called from the peculiar lance carried by the leader. This society is sometimes called the Bone Scrapers, from a peculiar piece of elk horn made in the shape of a lizard and used in the dances of this society. I also belonged to the Crooked Lances and it was at ceremonies of this society in the North in 1865 that I first made the acquaintance of Roman Nose. At the time of the great wars in the 1860's he was known as a great warrior to all the Indians of the Plains, and his fame so spread to the whites that they credited him with being leader in all the fights where the Cheyennes were engaged. Thus he was reported as being one of the leaders in the Fetterman battle near Fort Phil Kearny, in December, 1866, though at that time he was living quietly with the Dog Soldiers south of the Platte. In the summer of 1866 he had come south with Black Shin's Sutaio and Gray Beard's band of Dog Soldiers and he never went north again. He liked the Dog Soldiers, who were the wildest and most aggressive fighters in our tribe, and he continued to live with them until his death. I knew him very well and found him to be a man of fine character, quiet and self-contained. All the Cheyennes, both men and women, held him in the highest esteem and talk of him a great deal to this day. Roman Nose always wore in battle the famous war bonnet which was made for him up

North in 1860 by White Buffalo Bull (or Ice Bear), who is still living at Tongue River Agency and is one of the most famous of the old-time Northern Cheyenne medicine men. This war bonnet was the only one of its kind ever made. When a boy, Roman Nose fasted for four days on an island in a lake in Montana, and in his dreams saw a serpent with a single horn in its head. This was the reason White Bull came to make this peculiar war bonnet. Instead of having two buffalo horns attached to the head-band, one on each side, it had but one, rising over the center of the forehead; it had a very long tail that nearly touched the ground even when Roman Nose was mounted. This tail was made of a strip of young buffalo bull's hide, and had eagle feathers set all along its length, first four red feathers then four black ones, then four red feathers again, and so on, forty feathers in all. In making this famous war bonnet, White Bull did not use anything that had come from the whites: no cloth, thread, or metal. Usually war bonnets required little medicine-making when going into battle, but Roman Nose's bonnet was very sacred and required much ceremony. In taking it out of its hide case, it was held over a live coal on which was sprinkled a pinch of powder from a medicine root; then the bonnet was raised toward the sun four times, next unwrapped from its covering and held up to the north, west, south and east, after which Roman Nose carefully put it on his head. With the war bonnet went sacred medicine paint for the face, which was for the forehead, Indian yellow, red across the nose, and black across the mouth and chin. A strict set of rules of conduct went with the war bonnet: certain things Roman Nose was forbidden to eat; he must not go into a lodge where a baby had been born until four days had passed; and there were other rules. White Bull particularly cautioned Roman Nose never to eat any thing that had been touched by metal, and was told that if he neglected this rule he would be killed in his next battle. . . .

. . . And this was the reason why Roman Nose, always eager for battle, took no part in the fighting during the early part of the day. He firmly believed that his medicine was so weakened that he would be killed if he went into the battle; yet, when Bull Bear and White Horse came to him late in the day and begged him to lead a charge, he could not resist the temptation and went to his death. Roman Nose had never before been wounded except by an arrow in a fight with the Pawnees, yet he was always in front in battle and rarely had a horse shot under him. Roman Nose was killed in the prime of life; he was strong as a bull, tall even for a Cheyenne, broad-shouldered and deep-chested.

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sidered seriously, as it appears that he was probably at the battle. In his letter of July 22, 1868, Beecher reported that he had talked to Bent near Fort Larned, placing him in the area and during the time that the Indians were gathering.¹³ Everette S. Sutton, a historian who collaborated with Mari Sandoz, Col. Ray G. Sparks, and George E. Hyde, concluded that "there is no question but what George Bent was at the fight."¹⁴

In his correspondence with Hyde, Bent wrote of Roman Nose in great detail.¹⁵ Since Bent also belonged to the Crooked Lance Society, he knew Roman Nose well. Bent's descriptions of Roman Nose are presumed to be the most authoritative available. His letters tell of the battle and the death of Roman Nose, but more significantly, Bent describes the warrior and his famous war bonnet and its medicine.

In keeping with the mystique that surrounded his being, it is appropriate that after his death, the location of Roman Nose's body and his war bonnet was kept secret from the whites. The sanctity of his spirit was protected. Based on conversations with Indians about Roman Nose, Simon E. Matson wrote: "After his death about sundown he was taken to the South Fork of the Republican close to where Hale, Colorado, and Bonny Dam are now located. There he was buried on a scaffold as was the Indian custom. An Indian squaw, Medicine Woman, helped Roman Nose's wife to bring her lodge poles to raise the scaffold for his burial."¹⁶ Bent and Grinnell agree that Roman Nose and others were buried on scaffolds in the valley of the South Fork of the Republican.¹⁷

In 1912 Brig. Gen. L. H. Carpenter related that when he was on his way to relieve Colonel Forsyth and his command, he found Indian scaffolding such as was used for the burial of the dead. He further reported: "On the opposite side [of] the river and up a small ravine we found a small teepee of clean, white robes, and on a frame inside lay the body of a warrior wrapped in buffalo robes. He was evidently someone of consequence, and later was identified as Roman

Nose. . . ."¹⁸ According to Schlesinger and others, the scouts and troops on their return to Fort Wallace continued the wanton destruction of the Indian burials.¹⁹

It is difficult to determine if Bent and Grinnell were sincere in their reporting, or if they were protecting Roman Nose in order to deprive the scouts of the satisfaction of a last indignation. In reference to Carpenter's report, Bent wrote:

. . . Carpenter stopped long enough to pull the bodies to the ground and leave them there. One of Carpenter's scouts identified one of the bodies as that of Roman Nose. The body was really that of Killed by a Bull, a Northern Cheyenne. This body had been put on a scaffold and a new lodge erected over the scaffold. His medicine drum was hung over his head. Because of all these attentions Carpenter and the scout made the mistake of thinking the body was that of Roman Nose, just as Forsyth and his scouts mistook the medicine man, Wolf Belly, for Roman Nose.²⁰

Grinnell concluded that it was Killed by a Bull who was buried in the lodge, and that the troops were mistaken in believing the body to be that of Roman Nose.²¹

There appears to be agreement that the special war bonnet did exist, yet in their memoirs none of the scouts reported having seen it at the burial grounds. The bonnet was so unusual that if it had been recovered, it would have commanded attention.

To add to the confusion, more than one Indian was named Roman Nose; according to John Moore of the University of Oklahoma, "Apparently, there are nine men named Roman Nose on the 1880 census, so the name was one of the more common Cheyenne names."²² The individuals whose identities and accomplishments have been confused most often with Roman Nose of the Northern Cheyenne are Roman Nose, the Sioux Chief; Henry C. Roman Nose, the Southern Cheyenne chief; and Little Chief.

Three different photographs and various alterations of each have been used to portray Roman Nose, the Northern Cheyenne. Two of the three technically are of a Roman Nose but not of the Northern Cheyenne of Beecher Island fame. The third photograph was originally identified as Little Chief but later was labeled Roman Nose. The three pictures are identified

13. "Reports of First Lieutenant Fred. H. Beecher," Sheridan Papers.

14. Letter from Everette S. Sutton, August 8, 1984. George Bent was the son of William Bent, a founder of Bent's Fort, and Owl Woman, a Cheyenne. From 1905 until 1918, George Bent corresponded with George Hyde about life at the fort, his experiences with his Cheyenne kinsmen, and the military suppression of the Indians.

15. Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 306-8.

16. Simon E. Matson, "The Indians' Story of Beecher Island Conflict," *The Beecher Island Annual: Ninety-third Anniversary of the Battle of Beecher Island, September 17, 18, 1868* (Beecher Island: Beecher Island Battle Memorial Association, 1960), 114.

17. Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 305; Grinnell, *Fighting Cheyennes*, 280.

18. L. H. Carpenter to George Martin, Secretary, Kansas State Historical Society, April 22, 1912, *Beecher Island Annual*, 96.

19. "Scout Schlesinger's Story," *Beecher Island Annual*, 52.

20. Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 306.

21. Grinnell, *Fighting Cheyennes*, 280.

22. Shelley Arlen, "Roman Nose," reference report, March 29, 1983, Western History Collections Library, University of Oklahoma, Norman.



Fig. 7. Dakotas at the Fort Laramie treaty council, photographed by Alexander Gardner in 1868. Left to right: Spotted Tail, Brule; Roman Nose, Miniconjou; Old Man Afraid of His Horses, Oglala; Lone Horn, Miniconjou; Whistling Elk, Miniconjou; Pipe, Oglala; Slow Bull, Oglala (neg. 3678, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.).

as Roman Nose, the Sioux chief (fig. 7); Henry C. Roman Nose (fig. 8); and Little Chief (fig. 11).

The photograph labeled fig. 7 was apparently made at Fort Laramie in 1868 and shows seven Dakota Sioux. As was the common practice with many photographs of the era, only part of the original was retained, and in this case, the tribal designations were dropped and only the names were used. Thus, the group picture that was used to identify Roman Nose consisted of Spotted Tail, Roman Nose, and Old Man Afraid of His Horses. For a time this was believed to be a picture of the Roman Nose of Beecher Island and as such was used in some recognized publications.²³ Stanley Vestal, who was certain that this was a picture of the Beecher Island Roman Nose, wrote:

Earlier that same year he had attended a council at Fort Laramie, where he was photographed along with Spotted Tail, Old-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses, and other chiefs. This, almost certainly the only photograph of Roman Nose in existence, shows a big man in early middle life, with an easy, confident bearing, a

high forehead, the prominent brows of a fighter, a firm chin, and a large nose; he squints at the photographer, Gardner, with a quizzical, somewhat contemptuous smile. He wears beaded buckskin leggings, a flannel shirt, a buffalo robe—and a single upright eagle feather in his back hair.²⁴

However, it is now generally accepted that the photograph is of a Miniconjou Sioux chief named Roman Nose, as originally identified. Moore declared: "The man is a chief (single vertical feather) and therefore cannot be the Roman Nose. Also he is too old."²⁵ Further, in a statement about this photograph, the Smithsonian Institution has concluded that "a photograph made at Fort Laramie in 1868 was for some time thought to include Roman Nose, the famous

23. Stanley Vestal, *Warpath and Council Fire: The Plains Indians' Struggle for Survival in War and in Diplomacy, 1851–1891* (New York: Random House, 1948), 135; Berthrong, *Southern Cheyennes*, following 368.

24. Vestal, *Warpath and Council Fire*, 135.

25. Arlen, "Roman Nose."

Cheyenne. . . . However, it now seems certain that this man is Roman Nose, a Miniconjou Sioux.²⁶ Although the picture of Roman Nose, the Sioux, has been used mistakenly to portray Roman Nose, his activities have not been confused with those of Roman Nose, the Northern Cheyenne.

Perhaps the best known of all those called Roman Nose was the Southern Cheyenne who took the name Henry C. Roman Nose. This Roman Nose, a full-blood Southern Cheyenne, was born on June 30, 1856, somewhere in western Kansas. His Cheyenne name was Woquini, translated "Hook Nose" or "Roman Nose."²⁷

In May 1875, this Roman Nose was imprisoned in St. Augustine, Florida. He was chosen at random and no special charges were brought against him. While in prison he received the equivalent of a third-grade education. Embarrassed by not having a given name, Roman Nose took the name of his white friends and patrons, Amy and Horace Caruthers, and perhaps that of Richard Henry Pratt.²⁸ "Roman Nose was baptised Henry Caruthers by the Rev. John H. Denison, chaplain of the Normal School . . . in March, 1879."²⁹ Henry C. Roman Nose attended Carlisle until March 15, 1881, when he returned to his people. He was disappointed that he could not find employment as a tinner and that he had no house.³⁰

Henry C. Roman Nose was given a chief's medal and was recognized as a leader and chief of his people.³¹ On February 10, 1899, Commissioner W. A. Jones issued a commission naming him as chief of the Cheyenne. He died June 12, 1917, at his home in Roman Nose Canyon at the age of sixty-one.³²

Roman Nose State Park, near Watonga, Oklahoma, was established in 1937 in the canyon where Henry C. Roman Nose lived while attempting to lead his Southern Cheyenne people into the white man's ways. At the same time, he was also trying desperately to retain the proud traditions of his people.

The exploits of Henry C. Roman Nose and Roman Nose are often confused, since both were Cheyenne. Although Henry C. Roman Nose was only twelve years old at the time of "the fight when Roman Nose was killed," many accept a common time span and are misled into believing that their accomplishments were those of one man. An example of this erroneous idea may be found in a recognized source which gives the following summary:

Roman Nose

This was a war chief of the Himoiyoqis, better known as the Cheyenne, called "Roman Nose" because of the shape of his nose. The Indian name was Woquini or "hooked nose." Roman Nose State Park in Oklahoma was named after chief Roman Nose. He was killed in a battle with the soldiers at Beecher's Island, Colorado, in September, 1868.³³

The story of the Henry C. Roman Nose photograph is an interesting one. The picture of Henry Roman Nose standing alone, wearing white man's clothes, his chief's medal, and a "messiah" hat, is the principal photograph used in identifying him. The picture originally was part of a group photograph of three Southern Cheyenne: Henry C. Roman Nose, Yel-

33. John L. Stoutenburgh, Jr., *Dictionary of the American Indian* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), 353.



Fig. 8. This group of three Southern Cheyenne shows (left to right) Henry C. Roman Nose, Yellow Bear, and Lame Man (Cohoe). The left figure has sometimes been published alone with the caption "Roman Nose," thus giving the erroneous impression that this was the Roman Nose who was killed at Beecher Island. Photograph by DeLancey Gill, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, D.C. (neg. 345, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution).

26. "Photographs of Roman Nose," National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (mimeographed).

27. Ellsworth Collings, "Roman Nose: Chief of the Southern Cheyenne," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 42 (Winter 1964-65): 438. Collings prepared a well-researched paper on Chief Henry Roman Nose; for further details, see 429-57.

28. Karen Daniels Peterson, "The Writings of Henry Roman Nose," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 42 (Winter 1964-65): 458-63. This article was published in the same issue as Collings' paper (458-78); both are thorough but relate to different aspects of Henry Roman Nose's life.

29. "Record of Indian Progress," *Southern Workman* 8 (May 1879): 55.

30. Peterson, "Writings of Henry Roman Nose," 472-76.

31. *Ibid.*, 477.

32. Collings, "Roman Nose," 446-47.

low Bear, and Lame Man, also known as Cohoe (fig. 8). According to Hoig, the photograph was taken "after their release from Fort Marion, Florida."³⁴ An adaptation of the photograph is described by the editors of the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* as "a photograph of Chief Henry Roman Nose taken when he served on a Cheyenne delegation to Washington in 1899. He is wearing the Chief's medal and the round 'Messiah' hat which he wore in his late years. . . ."³⁵ This date appears to be supported by the facts that Chief Henry Roman Nose would have been about forty-three at that time and

that he was wearing his peace or chief's medal which Big Jake, the previous Cheyenne chief, had given him in about 1897.

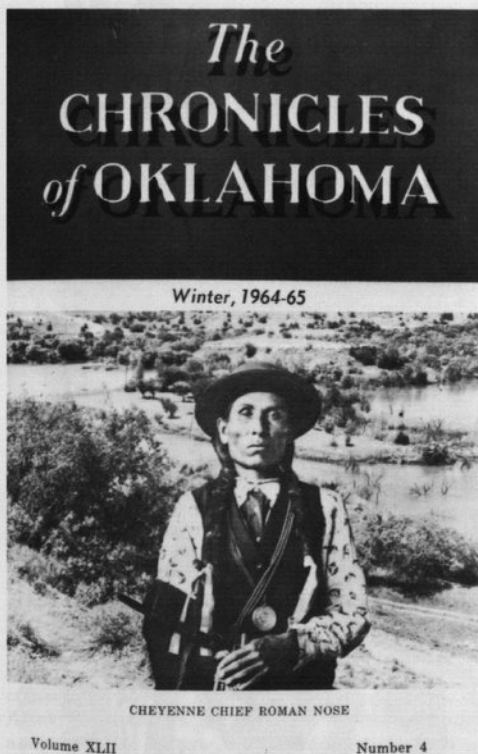
The photograph originally was of the three Southern Cheyenne, but the picture of Chief Henry Roman Nose was clipped from the group and widely distributed. This photograph of a proud man standing alone commanded interest and was used by some as a supporting picture for Beecher Island writings. Hoig, however, realized the true identities and warned, "This Roman Nose [Henry C.] should not be confused with the warrior who was killed at Beecher's Island."³⁶

The Winter 1964–65 issue of the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* has an interesting adaptation of the photograph on its cover (fig. 9).³⁷ It is obviously the photograph of a standing Henry C. Roman Nose clipped from the group picture. The negative apparently has been reversed. He holds his pipe in his left hand instead of his right; his medal hangs to his left instead of to his right; and the photograph is superimposed over a picture of a lake and a wooded area.

The photograph labeled fig. 10 has often been inaccurately identified. The original picture was probably taken in 1851 when White Antelope, Alights on the Cloud, and Little Chief visited in Washington, D.C. Hoig notes that this is the "earlier Little Chief."³⁸ Hoig and Hyde both used this photograph in their books and identified the three as White Antelope, Alights on the Cloud or Man on a Cloud, and Little Chief.³⁹

The 1851 date appears accurate as the time that this photograph was taken. The three were in Washington, D.C., that year, and Hoig describes them as "the first of their tribe who dared to visit the Great Father."⁴⁰ According to Grinnell, Alights on the Cloud was killed in a battle with the Pawnee in 1852, and White Antelope was killed at Sand Creek in 1864.⁴¹

The disturbing aspect of this photograph is that the picture of Little Chief was distributed as being of "Roman Nose" (fig. 11). There is no doubt that the photograph identified as Roman Nose in Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* is from the described photograph and is that of Little Chief.⁴² The Roman



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Fig. 9. The cover of the Winter 1964–65 issue of the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* shows a standing Henry C. Roman Nose obviously clipped from the group picture (fig. 8). The image was apparently reversed and then printed over a lake and a wooded area.

34. Hoig, *Peace Chiefs*, 79.

35. Table of Contents page, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 42 (Winter 1964–65): 371.

36. Hoig, *Peace Chiefs*, 79.

37. Cover, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 42 (Winter 1964–65).

38. Hoig, *Peace Chiefs*, 54. Information involving both Little Chiefs and their identities was thoroughly researched by Hoig.

39. Ibid.; Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, following 198.

40. Hoig, *Peace Chiefs*, 54.

41. Grinnell, *Fighting Cheyennes*, 75, 171.

42. Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 155.



Fig. 10. White Antelope, Alights on the Cloud, and the earlier Little Chief (left to right). The photographer and date are not recorded, but the photograph was probably taken in 1851 while the three Cheyenne were en route to or in Washington, D.C. (neg. 240A, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution).



Fig. 11. A photograph of the earlier Little Chief, often inaccurately identified as being of a Southern Cheyenne and of Roman Nose (neg. 240B, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution).

Nose version of Little Chief's picture in Brown's book is described as "Roman Nose, of the Southern Cheyennes. Either photographed or copied by A. Zeno Shindler in Washington, D.C., 1868, courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution."⁴³

It appears that photographer A. Zeno Shindler was responsible for the creation of the individual picture and of the new identity. The confusion is multiplied in trying to determine which of the Roman Noses Little Chief was supposed to be. The Roman Nose pictured is described as "Southern Cheyenne,"⁴⁴ while the Roman Nose of Beecher Island was Northern Cheyenne. The Southern Cheyenne Roman Nose was actually Chief Henry C. Roman Nose.

No photographs are known to exist of Roman Nose Thunder, but some of his deeds are recorded, contributing to the confusion. On November 26, 1868, Gen. George Armstrong Custer, with eleven companies of the Seventh Cavalry, attacked Black Kettle's village on the bank of the Washita. During this battle, Maj. Joel H. Elliott with sixteen men moved down the river to cut off fugitives. Elliott and his command were surrounded and killed. It is recorded in Bent's letters that in the beginning of this encounter, "Roman Nose Thunder, a Cheyenne, rushed in and counted coup on a private."⁴⁵ In 1913, Roman Nose Thunder told Vestal about the action and concluded, "The fight did not

last longer than it would take a man to smoke a pipe four times. Always remember, *I struck the enemy first.*"⁴⁶

There is no record of Roman Nose Thunder having been confused with the Northern Cheyenne Roman Nose, but Chief Henry C. Roman Nose was given credit as having been "famous for his part in the Battle of the Washita as a member of Black Kettle's Band."⁴⁷

Conflicting descriptions, mistaken identities, and historical controversies have clouded today's perspective on the great Northern Cheyenne warrior, Roman Nose. It is clear that the confusion surrounding alleged photographs of "Roman Nose" has contributed in no small way to the problem. It is now apparent that no known photographs of Roman Nose of Beecher Island exist.

Forsyth and the scouts are gone. Roman Nose's war bonnet and his protective medicine are gone, but still his legend confounds writers and researchers.

Roman Nose would have liked that. KH

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 320.

46. Vestal, *Warpath and Council Fire*, 159.

47. "Roman Nose State Park," Watonga, Oklahoma, Chamber of Commerce (mimeographed).