THIRTEEN

The Flight of the Nez Percés

1877—*January 1,* Queen Victoria proclaimed Empress of India. January 25, U.S. Congress passes Electoral Commission Bill requiring recount of electoral votes; Hayes-Tilden contest still in doubt. February 12, railroad workers begin strikes in protest over wage cuts. February 26, Southern Democrats meet secretly with Hayes's Republican representatives and conclude the Compromise of 1877, in which Southern Democrats agree to support Republicans in exchange for withdrawal of federal troops from the South and ending of Reconstruction. February 27, Electoral Commission declares recount in favor of Hayes. March 2, Congress confirms election of Hayes. March 5, Hayes inaugurated as President. April 10, President Hayes begins withdrawal of federal troops from Southern states, signaling end of Reconstruction era. April 15, first business telephone installed between Boston and Somerville, Massachusetts. July 14, general strike halts movement of railroad trains. July 20, strike riots spread across United States. July 21–27, troops battle railroad workers and force end to nationwide strike. October 17, contract between Pennsylvania Railroad and Standard Oil Company strengthens oil-transportation monopoly. December, Edison invents the phonograph. Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* is published.

From Dee Brown. Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, 1970.

The whites told only one side. Told it to please themselves. Told much that is not true. Only his own best deeds, only the worst deeds of the Indians, has the white man told.

—YELLOW WOLF OF THE NEZ PERCÉS

The earth was created by the assistance of the sun, and it should be left as it was. . . . The country was made without lines of demarcation, and it is no man's business to divide it. . . . I see the whites all over the country gaining wealth, and see their desire to give us lands which are worthless. . . . The earth and myself are of one mind. The measure of the land and the measure of our bodies are the same. Say to us if you can say it, that you were sent by the Creative Power to talk to us. Perhaps you think the Creator sent you here to dispose of us as you see fit. If I thought you were sent by the Creator I might be induced to think you had a right to dispose of me. Do not misunderstand me, but understand me fully with reference to my affection for the land. I never said the land was mine to do with it as I chose. The one who has the right to dispose of it is the one who has created it. I claim a right to live on my land, and accord you the privilege to live on yours.

—HEINMOT TOOYALAKET (CHIEF JOSEPH) OF THE NEZ PERCÉS

IN SEPTEMBER, 1805, when Lewis and Clark came down off the Rockies on their westward journey, the entire exploring party was half-famished and ill with dysentery—too weak to defend themselves. They were in the country of the Nez Percés, so named by French trappers, who observed some of these Indians wearing dentalium shells in their noses. Had the Nez Percés chosen to do so, they could have put an end to the Lewis and Clark expedition there on the banks of Clearwater River, and seized their wealth of horses. Instead the Nez Percés welcomed the white Americans, supplied them with food, and looked after the explorers' horses for several months while they continued by canoe to the Pacific shore.

Thus began a long friendship between the Nez Percés and white Americans. For seventy years the tribe boasted that no Nez Percé had ever killed a white man. But white men's greed for land and gold finally broke the friendship.

In 1855 Governor Isaac Stevens of Washington Territory invited the Nez Percés to a peace council. "He said there were a great many white people in the country, and many more would come; that he wanted the land marked out so that the Indians and white men could be separated. If they were to live in peace it was necessary, he said, that the Indians should have a country set apart for them, and in that country they must stay."

Tuekakas, a chief known as Old Joseph by the white men, told Governor Stevens that no man owned any part of the earth, and a man could not sell what he did not own.

The governor could not comprehend such an attitude. He urged Old Joseph to sign the treaty and receive presents of blankets. "Take away your paper," the chief replied. "I will not touch it with my hand."

Aleiya, who was called Lawyer by the white men, signed the treaty, and so did several other Nez Percés, but Old Joseph took his people back to their home in Wallowa Valley, a green country of winding waters, wide meadows, mountain forests, and a clear blue lake. Old Joseph's band of Nez Percés raised fine horses and cattle, lived in fine lodges, and when they needed anything from the white men they traded their livestock.

Only a few years after the first treaty signing, government men were swarming around the Nez Percés again, wanting more land. Old Joseph warned his people to take no presents from them, not even one blanket. "After a while," he said, "they will claim that you have accepted pay for your country." [1]

In 1863 a new treaty was presented to the Nez Percés. It took away the Wallowa Valley and three-fourths of the remainder of their land, leaving them only a small reservation in what is now Idaho. Old Joseph refused to attend the treaty signing, but Lawyer and several other chiefs—none of whom had ever lived in the Valley of Winding Waters—signed away their people's lands. The "thief treaty," Old Joseph called it, and he was so offended that he tore up the Bible a white missionary had given him to convert him to Christianity. To let the white men

know he still claimed the Wallowa Valley, he planted poles all around the boundaries of the land where his people lived.

Not long after that, Old Joseph died (1871), and the chieftainship of the band passed to his son, Heinmot Tooyalaket (Young Joseph), who was then about thirty years old. When government officials came to order the Nez Percés to leave the Wallowa Valley and go to Lapwai reservation, Young Joseph refused to listen. "Neither Lawyer nor any other chief had authority to sell this land," he said. "It has always belonged to my people. It came unclouded to them from our fathers, and we will defend this land as long as a drop of Indian blood warms the hearts of our men." [2] He petitioned the Great Father, Ulysses Grant, to let his people stay where they had always lived, and on June 16, 1873, the President issued an executive order withdrawing Wallowa Valley from settlement by white men.

In a short time a group of commissioners arrived to begin organization of a new Indian agency in the valley. One of them mentioned the advantages of schools for Joseph's people. Joseph replied that the Nez Percés did not want the white man's schools.

"Why do you not want schools?" the commissioner asked.

"They will teach us to have churches," Joseph answered.

"Do you not want churches?"

"No, we do not want churches."

"Why do you not want churches?"

"They will teach us to quarrel about God," Joseph said. "We do not want to learn that. We may quarrel with men sometimes about things on this earth, but we never quarrel about God. We do not want to learn that." [3]

Meanwhile, white settlers were encroaching upon the valley, with their eyes on the Nez Percé land. Gold was found in nearby mountains. The goldseekers stole the Indians' horses, and stockmen stole their cattle, branding them so the Indians could not claim them back. White politicians journeyed to Washington, telling lies about the Nez Percés. They charged the Indians with being a threat to the peace and with stealing the settlers' livestock. This was the reverse of the truth, but as Joseph said, "We had no friend who would plead our cause before the law council." [4]

32. *Chief Joseph of the Nez Percés. Photo from the National Archives.*

Two years after the Great Father promised Wallowa Valley to Joseph's people forever, he issued a new proclamation, reopening the valley to white settlement. The Nez Percés were given "a reasonable time" to move to the Lapwai reservation. Joseph had no intention of giving up the valley of his fathers, but in 1877 the government sent the One-Armed-Soldier-Chief, General Howard, to clear all Nez Percés out of the Wallowa area.

In the four years that had passed since Oliver Otis Howard treated Cochise and the Apaches with justice, he had learned that the Army was not tolerant of "Indian lovers." He came now to the Northwest country, determined to restore his standing with the military by carrying out his orders swiftly and to the letter. Privately he told trusted friends that "it is a great mistake to take from Joseph and his band of Nez Percé Indians that valley." But in May, 1877, he summoned Joseph to Lapwai for a council which was to set the date they must surrender their land.

To accompany him to Lapwai, Joseph chose White Bird, Looking Glass, his brother Ollokot, and the Wallowa prophet Toohoolhoolzote. The prophet was a tall, thick-necked, very ugly Indian with a gift for eloquent rebuttal. "A fugitive from hell," was the way one white man described him. At the opening of the council, which was held in a building across from the Fort Lapwai guardhouse, Joseph presented Toohoolhoolzote as spokesman for the Wallowa Nez Percés.

"Part of the Nez Percés gave up their land," the prophet said. "We never did. The earth is part of our body, and we never gave up the earth."

"You know very well that the government has set apart a reservation, and that the Indians must go on it," Howard declared.

"What person pretended to divide the land and put us on it?" Toohoolhoolzote demanded.

"I am the man. I stand here for the President." Howard was beginning to lose his temper. "My orders are plain and will be executed."

The prophet continued prodding the One-Armed-Soldier-Chief, asking him how the land could belong to white men if it had come down to the Nez Percés from their fathers. "We came from the earth, and our bodies must go back to the earth, our mother," he said.

"I don't want to offend your religion," Howard replied testily, "but you must talk about practicable things. Twenty times over I hear that the earth is your mother and about chieftainship from the earth. I want to hear it no more, but come to business at once."

"Who can tell me what I must do in my own country?" Toohoolhoolzote retorted.[5]

The argument continued until Howard felt he must demonstrate his power. He ordered the prophet arrested and taken to the guardhouse, and then he bluntly informed Joseph that the Nez Percés had thirty days in which to move from the Wallowa Valley to the Lapwai reservation.

"My people have always been the friends of white men," Joseph said. "Why are you in such a hurry? I cannot get ready to move in thirty days. Our stock is scattered, and Snake River is very high. Let us wait until fall, then the river will be low."

"If you let the time run over one day," Howard replied harshly, "the soldiers will be there to drive you onto the reservation, and all your cattle and horses outside of the reservation at that time will fall into the hands of the white men."

Joseph knew now that he had no alternative. To defend the valley with less than a hundred warriors was impossible. When he and his subchiefs returned home they found soldiers already there. They held a council and decided to gather their stock immediately for the move to Lapwai. "The white men were many and we could not hold our own with them. We were like deer. They were like grizzly bears. We had a small country. Their country was large. We were contented to let things remain as the Great Spirit made them. They were not, and would change the rivers and mountains if they did not suit them."[6]

Even before they started the long march, some of the warriors began talking of war rather than be driven like dogs from the land where they were born. Toohoolhoolzote, released from prison, declared that blood alone would wash out the disgrace the One-Armed-Soldier-Chief had put upon him. Joseph, however, continued to counsel peace.

To meet General Howard's deadline, they had to leave much

of their livestock in the valley, and when they came to Snake River the stream was swirling with melted snow from the mountains. Miraculously they got their women and children across on buffalo-hide rafts without serious accident, but while they were engaged in this task a party of white men came and stole some of their cattle from the waiting herd. Then, when they hurriedly tried to swim their livestock across the river, many animals were lost to the swift-flowing current.

More embittered than ever, the chiefs demanded that Joseph halt the march in Rocky Canyon and hold a council. Toohoolhoolzote, White Bird, and Ollokot spoke for war. Joseph told them it was "better to live at peace than to begin a war and lie dead." The others called him a coward, but he refused to back down.

While they were camped in the canyon, a small band of warriors slipped away one night, and when they returned the Nez Percés could no longer claim that they had never killed a white man. The warriors had killed eleven, in revenge for the theft of their stock and for being driven from their valley.

Like many another peace-loving Indian chief, Joseph was now trapped between the pressures of the white men and the fury of his desperate people. He chose to stay with his people. "I would have given my own life," he said, "if I could have undone the killing of white men by my people. I blame my young men and I blame the white men. . . . I would have taken my people to the buffalo country [Montana] without fighting, if possible. . . . We moved over to White Bird Creek, sixteen miles away, and there encamped, intending to collect our stock before leaving; but the soldiers attacked us, and the first battle was fought." [7]

Although outnumbered two to one, the Nez Percés drew Howard's soldiers into a trap at White Bird Canyon on June 17, turning the attackers' flank, killing a third of them, and routing the remainder. Ten days later the One-Armed-Soldier-Chief brought up heavy reinforcements to do battle again, but the Nez Percés slipped away across the mountains. In a succession of shrewd military actions, Joseph outmaneuvered the pursuing soldiers, severely punished an advance detachment, and then

raced to the Clearwater, where Chief Looking Glass was waiting with more warriors.

The combined force of Nez Percés now numbered 250 warriors, with 450 noncombatants, their baggage, and two thousand horses. At White Bird Canyon they had captured several rifles and a good supply of ammunition.

After withdrawing beyond the Clearwater (where their fathers had welcomed Lewis and Clark as the forerunners of white civilization), Joseph called a council of chiefs. They all knew they could never return to the Valley of Winding Waters or go without punishment to Lapwai. Only one course was left to them —flight to Canada. Sitting Bull of the Sioux had fled to the Grandmother's land, and the American soldiers dared not go there to kill him. If the Nez Percés could reach the Lolo Trail and cross the Bitterroot Mountains, they might be able to escape to Canada.

Because they were accustomed to crossing the Bitterroots to hunt in Montana, the Nez Percés quickly outdistanced Howard's baggage-laden army. On July 25 they were filing down the canyon near the mouth of Lolo Creek when their scouts sighted soldiers ahead. The Bluecoats were constructing a log barricade at a narrow place in the pass.

Under a white flag, Joseph, Looking Glass, and White Bird rode down to the barricade, dismounted calmly, and shook hands with the commanding officer, Captain Charles Rawn. The chiefs noted that there were about two hundred soldiers in the camp.

"We are going by you without fighting, if you will let us," Joseph said to the captain, "but we are going by you anyhow." [8]

Rawn told Joseph that they could pass only if they gave up their arms. White Bird replied that their warriors would never do that.

Knowing that General Howard was approaching from the west and that another large force under Colonel John Gibbon was marching from the east, Captain Rawn decided to stall for time. He suggested that they meet again the next day to discuss arrangements for passage. To this the chiefs agreed, but after two more days of fruitless parleying, the Nez Percé leaders decided they could wait no longer.

Early on the morning of July 28, Looking Glass moved the warriors into a screening line among the trees on the upper slope of the canyon. At the same time, Joseph led the noncombatants and livestock up a gulch, climbed to the top of a mountain, and was well around the canyon barricade before Captain Rawn discovered what the Nez Percés were doing. The captain went in pursuit of the Indians, but after a few skirmishes with Joseph's rearguard warriors he decided not to risk a real fight and returned to his now useless barricade.

Believing that they had escaped from Howard, and unaware of Gibbon's approaching army, the chiefs decided to move south to the familiar hunting country of the Big Hole. There they could rest their ponies and hunt wild game. If the white men would leave them alone, perhaps they would not have to go to the Grandmother's land and join Sitting Bull.

On the night of August 9, the One Who Limps (Colonel Gibbon) brought up a mixed column of local volunteers and mounted infantrymen and concealed them on a hillside overlooking the Nez Percé camp on Big Hole River. As dawn approached, the volunteers asked Gibbon if they should take prisoners during the attack. Gibbon replied that he wanted no Indian prisoners, male or female. The night air was cold, and the men warmed themselves by drinking whiskey. At first daylight several were drunk when Gibbon gave the command to attack. The infantry line began firing volleys, and then charged the Nez Percé tepees.

Fifteen-year-old Kowtoliks was asleep when he heard the rattle of rifle fire. "I jumped from my blankets and ran about thirty feet and threw myself on hands and knees, and kept going. An old woman, Patsikonmi, came from the tepee and did the same thing—bent down on knees and hands. She was to my left and was shot in the breast. I heard the bullet strike. She said to me, 'You better not stay here. Be going. I'm shot.' Then she died. Of course I ran for my life and hid in the bushes. The soldiers seemed shooting everywhere. Through tepees and wherever they saw Indians. I saw little children killed and men fall before bullets coming like rain." [9]

Another teen-age boy, Black Eagle, was awakened by bullets passing through his family tepee. In his fright he ran and jumped into the river, but the water was too cold. He came out and helped save the horses by driving them up a hill and out of sight of the soldiers.

The Indians, meanwhile, had recovered from the shock of the surprise attack. While Joseph directed the rescue of the noncombatants, White Bird deployed the warriors for a counterattack. "Fight! Shoot them down!" he shouted. "We can shoot as well as any of these soldiers." [10] The marksmanship of the Nez Percés, in fact, was superior to that of Gibbon's men. "We now mixed those soldiers badly," Yellow Wolf said. "Scared, they ran back across the river. They acted as if drinking. We thought some got killed by being drunk."

When the soldiers tried to set up a howitzer, the Nez Percés swarmed over the gun crew, seized the cannon, and wrecked it. A warrior fixed his rifle sights on Colonel Gibbon and made him the One Who Limps Twice.

By this time Joseph had the camp in motion, and while a handful of warriors kept Gibbon's soldiers pinned down behind a makeshift barricade of logs and boulders, the Nez Percés resumed flight. They turned southward and away from Canada, because they believed it was the only way left to shake off their pursuers. The warriors had killed thirty soldiers and wounded at least forty. But in Gibbon's merciless dawn attack, eighty Nez Percés had died, more than two-thirds of them women and children, their bodies riddled with bullets, their heads smashed in by bootheels and gunstocks. "The air was heavy with sorrow," Yellow Wolf said. "Some soldiers acted with crazy minds." [11]

The Nez Percé rear guard probably could have starved out Gibbon's barricaded soldiers and killed them all had not General Howard come to the rescue with a fresh force of cavalrymen. Withdrawing hurriedly, the warriors overtook Joseph to warn him that the One-Armed-Soldier-Chief was on their trail again.

"We retreated as rapidly as we could," Joseph said. "After six days General Howard came close to us, and we went out and attacked him, and captured nearly all his horses and mules." [12] Actually the captured livestock were mostly mules, but they were pack animals which had been carrying Howard's supplies and ammunition. Leaving the soldiers floundering in

their rear, the Indians crossed Targhee Pass into Yellowstone Park on August 22.

Only five years earlier the Great Council in Washington had made the Yellowstone area into the country's first national park, and in that summer of 1877 the first adventuresome American tourists were admiring its natural wonders. Among them was none other than the Great Warrior Sherman, who had come out West on an inspection tour to find out how fewer than three hundred Nez Percé warriors, burdened with their women and children, could make fools out of the entire Army of the Northwest.

When Sherman learned that the fleeing Indians were crossing Yellowstone Park almost within view of his luxurious camp, he began issuing urgent orders to fort commanders in all directions to put a network of soldiers around these impudent warriors. Nearest at hand was the Seventh Cavalry, which had been brought back to strength during the year since Custer led it to disaster on the Little Bighorn. Eager to vindicate the regiment's honor by a victory over any Indians willing to fight, the Seventh moved southwestward toward the Yellowstone. During the first week in September Nez Percé scouts and Seventh Cavalry scouts sighted each other's columns almost daily. By clever maneuvering, the Indians shook loose from the Seventh after a skirmish at Canyon Creek, and headed north for Canada. They had no way of knowing, of course, that the Great Warrior Sherman had ordered Bear Coat Miles in a forced march from Fort Keogh, on a course that would cut across their path.

On September 23, after fighting rearguard actions almost daily, the Nez Percés forded the Missouri River at Cow Island Landing. During the next three days scouts reported no sign of soldiers anywhere. On the twenty-ninth, hunters located a small buffalo herd. As they were short of food and ammunition and their horses were badly worn from the fast pace, the chiefs decided to camp in the Bear Paw Mountains. Next day, after filling their empty stomachs on buffalo meat, they would try to reach the Canadian border in one more long march.

"We knew General Howard was more than two suns back on our trail," Yellow Wolf said. "It was nothing hard to keep ahead of him." [13]

Next morning, however, two scouts came galloping from the south, shouting, "Soldiers! Soldiers!" While the camp was preparing to move out, another scout appeared on a distant bluff, waving a blanket signal—*Enemies right on us! Soon the attack!*

It was a cavalry charge ordered by Bear Coat Miles, whose Indian scouts a few hours earlier had picked up the trail of the Nez Percés. Riding with the charging cavalry were the thirty Sioux and Cheyenne scouts who had been bought by the Bluecoats at Fort Robinson, the young warriors who had turned their backs on their people by putting on soldier uniforms—an action which had precipitated the assassination of Crazy Horse.

The thunder of six hundred galloping horses made the earth tremble, but White Bird calmly posted his warriors in front of the camp. As the first wave of pony soldiers swept down upon them, the Nez Percé warriors opened with deadly accurate fire. In a matter of seconds they killed twenty-four soldiers, wounded forty-two others, and stopped the charge in a wild scramble of plunging horses and unsaddled troopers.

"We fought at close range," Chief Joseph said, "not more than twenty steps apart, and drove the soldiers back upon their main line, leaving their dead in our hands. We secured their arms and ammunition. We lost, the first day and night, eighteen men and three women." Among the dead were Joseph's brother Ollokot and the tough old prophet Toohoolhoolzote.

When darkness fell the Nez Percés tried to slip away to the north, but Bear Coat had put a cordon of soldiers completely around their camp. The warriors spent the night digging entrenchments, expecting another attack at daylight.

Instead of attacking, however, Bear Coat sent a messenger out with a white flag. The messenger brought a demand for Joseph to surrender and save the lives of his people. Joseph sent back a reply: he would think about it and let General Miles know his decision soon. Snow had begun to fall, and the warriors were hopeful that a blizzard might provide an escape screen to Canada.

Later in the day, some of Miles's Sioux scouts rode out under another truce flag. Joseph walked across the battlefield to meet them. "They said they believed that General Miles was sincere and really wanted peace. I walked on to General Miles's tent."

For the next two days Joseph was a prisoner, held by Bear Coat in violation of the flag of truce. During this time Miles brought up artillery and resumed the attack, but the Nez Percé warriors held their ground, and Joseph refused to surrender while he was a prisoner. On both days a bitter cold wind flung showers of snow over the battlefield.

On the third day, Joseph's warriors managed to get him free. They captured one of Miles's officers and threatened to kill him unless the general released their chief. That same day, however, General Howard and his lumbering army arrived to reinforce Miles, and Joseph knew that his dwindling band of warriors was doomed. When Miles sent truce messengers to arrange a battlefield council, Joseph went to hear the general's surrender terms. They were simple and direct: "If you will come out and give up your arms," Miles said, "I will spare your lives and send you to your reservation." [14]

Returning to his besieged camp, Joseph called his chiefs together for the last time. Looking Glass and White Bird wanted to fight on, to the death if necessary. They had struggled for thirteen hundred miles; they could not quit now. Joseph reluctantly agreed to postpone his decision. That afternoon in the final skirmish of the four-day siege, a sharpshooter's bullet struck Looking Glass in the left forehead and killed him instantly.

"On the fifth day," Joseph said, "I went to General Miles and gave up my gun." He also made an eloquent surrender speech, which was recorded in the English translation by Lieutenant Charles Erskine Scott Wood,* and in time it became the most quoted of all American Indian speeches:

> Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before I have in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. Toohoolhoolzote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led on the young men [Ollokot] is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are—perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs! I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.[15]

* Lieutenant Wood left the Army not long afterward to become a lawyer and an author of satirical poems and essays. His experiences with Chief Joseph and the Nez Percés influenced his later life; he became an ardent fighter for social justice and a defender of the dispossessed.

After dark, while the surrender arrangements were under way, White Bird and a band of unyielding warriors crept through ravines in small groups and started running on foot for the Canadian border. On the second day they were across, and on the third day they saw mounted Indians in the distance. One of the approaching Indians made a sign: *What Indians are you?*

Nez Percé, they replied, and asked: *Who are you?*

Sioux, was the answer.

The next day Sitting Bull took the fugitive Nez Percés into his Canadian village.[16]

For Chief Joseph and the others, however, there was to be no freedom. Instead of conducting them to Lapwai, as Bear Coat Miles had promised, the Army shipped them like cattle to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. There, on a swampy bottomland, they were confined as prisoners of war. After almost a hundred died, they were transferred to a barren plain in the Indian Territory. As had happened to the Modocs, the Nez Percés sickened and died—of malaria and heartbreak.

Bureaucrats and Christian gentlemen visited them frequently, uttering words of sympathy and writing endless reports to various organizations. Joseph was allowed to visit Washington, where he met all the great chiefs of government. "They all say they are my friends," he said, "and that I shall have justice, but while their mouths all talk right I do not understand why nothing is done for my people. . . . General Miles promised that we might return to our own country. I believed General Miles, or *I never would have surrendered.*"

He then made an impassioned appeal for justice: "I have heard talk and talk, but nothing is done. Good words do not last long unless they amount to something. Words do not pay for my dead people. They do not pay for my country, now overrun

by white men. . . . Good words will not give my people good health and stop them from dying. Good words will not get my people a home where they can live in peace and take care of themselves. I am tired of talk that comes to nothing. It makes my heart sick when I remember all the good words and broken promises. . . . You might as well expect the rivers to run backward as that any man who was born a free man should be contented when penned up and denied liberty to go where he pleases. . . . I have asked some of the great white chiefs where they get their authority to say to the Indian that he shall stay in one place, while he sees white men going where they please. They cannot tell me.

"Let me be a free man—free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade where I choose, free to choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to think and talk and act for myself—and I will obey every law, or submit to the penalty." [17]

But no one listened. They sent Joseph back to Indian Territory, and there he remained until 1885. In that year, only 287 captive Nez Percés were still alive, most of them too young to remember their previous life of freedom, or too old and sick and broken in spirit to threaten the mighty power of the United States. Some of the survivors were permitted to return to their people's reservation at Lapwai. Chief Joseph and about 150 others were considered too dangerous to be penned up with other Nez Percés, whom they might influence. The government shipped them to Nespelem on the Colville Reservation in Washington, and there they lived out their lives in exile. When Joseph died on September 21, 1904, the agency physician reported the cause of death as "a broken heart."

FOURTEEN

Cheyenne Exodus

1878—January 10, resolution introduced in U.S. Senate that women be given a hearing on suffrage. June 4, Britain takes Cyprus from Turkey. July 12, yellow-fever epidemic begins in New Orleans; 4,500 die. October 18, Edison succeeds in subdividing electric current, adapting it for household use; gas stocks fall on New York Exchange. December, in St. Petersburg, Russia, university students battle police and cossacks. In Austria, Ferdinand Mannlicher invents magazine repeating rifle. David Hughes invents the microphone. New York Symphony Society founded. Gilbert and Sullivan present *H.M.S. Pinafore.*

We have been south and suffered a great deal down there. Many have died of diseases which we have no name for. Our hearts looked and longed for this country where we were born. There are only a few of us left, and we only wanted a little ground, where we could live. We left our lodges standing, and ran away in the night. The troops followed us. I rode out and told the troops we did not want to fight; we only wanted to go north, and if they would let us alone we would kill no one. The only reply we got was a volley. After that we had to fight our way, but we killed none who did not fire at us first. My brother, Dull Knife, took one-half of the band and surrendered near Fort Robinson. . . . They gave up their guns, and then the whites killed them all.

—Ohcumgache (Little Wolf) of the Northern Cheyennes