

## **This is a synopsis of the biography of Isaiah Dorman, written by Lilah Morton Pengra for the general public unfamiliar with events or people at the Little Bighorn.**

**Isaiah Dorman**, the only black man killed during the Battle of the Little Bighorn, died on June 25, 1876.

On that day, Lt. Col. Custer and five companies of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry approached a large Indian village from one direction. Maj. Marcus Reno and three companies of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry advanced on the village from another direction.

Custer and all his men were killed. Hence, that portion of the battle has been nicknamed Custer's Last Stand. Dorman succumbed during Reno's disastrous retreat from the other end of the village, although most of Reno's command made it to the top of a hill (now named Reno Hill) and continued to fight.<sup>1</sup>

The two-pronged assault on the village happened during the 1876 Yellowstone Expedition, mounted by the U. S. Army to force Sitting Bull's people to live on reservations. Instead, Lakota (aka Sioux), Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors were victorious that day.<sup>2</sup>

Dorman, who had already worked five years as interpreter at Fort Rice,<sup>3</sup> was hired by Custer to accompany Gen. Alfred Terry, overall commander of the expedition. When Terry revised his battle plan on June 22, he sent Custer, all the interpreters, including Dorman, guides, scouts and the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry to the Rosebud River, with the intention of joining them on June 26 with reinforcements. Instead, Custer thought he had been discovered so attacked the village on June 25 before Terry rejoined him.<sup>4</sup>

Dorman, an unusual presence on the battlefield due to his race, was an experienced guide, skilled interpreter, literate and adept at managing cultural differences. His remarkable life, obscured by prejudice and misinformation, merits a fresh look today.

### **Birth, early life and family**

Historians of the Battle of the Little Bighorn misidentified Dorman as definitely or probably a runaway slave<sup>5</sup> based on an unsourced article by Robert Ege in *Montana, The Magazine of Western History* (1966).<sup>6</sup> Fifteen years of archival research by Lilah Morton Pengra, for her 2016 book *Isaiah Dorman: Interpreting the Evidence*,<sup>7</sup> developed an entirely different biography.

Dorman was born free in 1832 in Pennsylvania of mixed African and Native American heritage. He was the sixth child of George and Rosetta (Hazard) Dorman, African-Jamaican and African Lenape (Delaware) parents, both formerly enslaved. The family lived in a village called Water Street where his father helped build the Pennsylvania canal.<sup>8</sup>

The village of Water Street, deeply shaded by two high mountain ridges looming over it and further darkened by smoke from the industrial boom in Pennsylvania, received little sunlight, needed by humans to produce vitamin D. Without adequate vitamin D, people, especially dark-skinned people, often developed rickets.<sup>9</sup> Later in life, Dorman's crooked legs,<sup>10</sup> probably due to rickets, made it especially difficult for him to ride a horse.

The 1850 Fugitive Slave Law propelled Dorman to venture west because unscrupulous men collected bounties on free persons of color that they erroneously claimed were runaway slaves. He probably worked his way west on the Pennsylvania Canal to the Ohio River and then the Mississippi to the Minnesota River. By 1852, he lived and traded in Mendota, Minnesota Territory.<sup>11</sup> In 1853, several officers at Fort Ridgely, then under construction, hired him as a servant.<sup>12</sup> By 1854, the Fort Ridgely quartermaster hired him to work as a laborer at the fort, although Dorman received \$20 a month while other laborers were paid \$1 a day.<sup>13</sup>

In 1855, Dorman married Celeste St. Pierre, a woman of mixed French and Native American heritage. Her father was Métis from Canada and her mother Hunkpati (aka Hunkpatina, Lower Yanktonai) from what is now the South Dakota and Minnesota border. Their first child, Baptiste Pierre (aka Baptist Black Hawk), was born in 1856 near Pembina, North Dakota.<sup>14</sup> Two more children, Maria Celeste Pierre (aka Saless) and Henry Black Hawk were born near Fort Sully and Fort Rice in 1861 and 1868 respectively. Father Pierre-Jean De Smet baptized Henry while traveling west to assist with peace negotiations at Fort Laramie.<sup>15</sup>

### Alfred Sully's servant, 1859–1865

When the Lower Yanktonai refused to sign an agreement in 1859 to relinquish their land, Capt. Alfred Sully accompanied the Indian Agent as military escort to force them to submit in



Photograph of original art, *Yale Collection of Western Americana*, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

exchange for food promised by treaty but withheld.<sup>16</sup> Dorman and his wife's starving family ran into Sully who offered him employment as his servant. They might already have known each other as Sully was garrisoned at Fort Ridgely in 1854 when Dorman worked at the post.

Sully transferred to Fort Kearney, Nebraska Territory.<sup>17</sup> He soon was granted leave to visit his family in Pennsylvania and then received orders to join Union troops in Virginia. He took Dorman with him, and in his letters home, wrote that Isaiah bravely fought by his side in the beginning but became sick of the war when thrown from his horse, probably due to his crooked legs. Sully's final mention of Dorman noted that "[Isaiah] manages to keep out of the way when the shells and balls are about. The late proclamation [sic] has ruined all the [ni\*\*\*rs]. He has become like all the rest, very impudent to some officers of my staff."<sup>18</sup>

Sully, outspoken and critical of his superior officers, was sent west with the rank of General to punish the perpetrators of an "Indian uprising" in Minnesota and Dakota Territory.<sup>19</sup> Dorman remained in his employ during the massacre at Whitestone Hill in 1863 (and once again fell off

his horse)<sup>20</sup> as well as Killdeer Mountain Battle and the Battle of the Badlands in 1864,<sup>21</sup> all three taking place in locations now in North Dakota.

Near the end of his life, Sully painted a self-portrait that showed him with his favorite horse and a shadowy figure lounging in the background near another horse. The figure might have represented his deceased servant, Isaiah Dorman, because, according to Sully's great grandson, Sully only cared for "his servant and his horses."<sup>22</sup>

### Dorman: Woodchopper and Mail Carrier, 1866–1871

In 1866, Dorman worked for Durfee and Peck<sup>23</sup> as a woodchopper. The following spring, Dorman established his own wood lot on Wood Hawk Bend, just above the Grand River Agency, supplying fuel to steamboats on the Missouri River. Six years later, he moved his operations upriver, above the new location of the Grand River Agency and closer to Fort Rice. After Dorman's death, his older son claimed the wood lot property. At the time of Baptist Black Hawk's death in 1917, the property and livestock were valued at \$30,000.<sup>24</sup>

Serial Number No. of each class	NAMES OF PERSONS AND ARTICLES	DESIGNATION AND OCCUPATION	SERVICE DURING THE MONTH		RATE OF HIRE OR COMPENSATION		Date of Contract, Agreement or Entry into Service.	BY WHOM OWNED	AMOUNT OF HIRE OR PAY IN THE MONTH		REMARKS, Showing by whom the buildings were occupied, and for what purpose, and how the vessels and men were employed during the month.	TIME AND AMOUNT DUE AND REMAINING UNPAID					
			From	To	Dolls.	Cts.			Dolls.	Cts.		From	To	Dolls.	Cts.		
1	Isiah Dorman	Interpreter	1	31	75	00	Mo	Sept 24		75	00	Employed as Interpreter	1	01	31	205	00
2	Isiah Dorman	Carrier								50	00	Carrying Mail to Fort Wadsworth	11	01	05	50	00
3	Isiah Dorman	Carrier	5	31	100	00	Mo	Dec 5, 66		80	00		5	01	31	50	00
4	Isiah Dorman	Carrier								20	00	Carrying Mail to Fort Wadsworth	5	01	01	20	00

Report of Persons and Articles Employed and Hired, Fort Rice, December 1866, showed Dorman's employment as mail carrier.

Dorman supplemented his seasonal income from woodchopping by carrying military mail from Fort Rice 210 miles to Fort Wadsworth on an unprotected route across the prairie. Soldiers and civilian guides refused to carry mail on such a long and dangerous route, especially in winter when snow drifted 2 to 3 feet deep. Dorman not only accepted the challenge but also made the trip on foot. His crooked legs and the deep snow precluded riding a horse across the prairie.<sup>25</sup>

### Northern Pacific Railroad Survey, 1871

Capt. Jarvan B. Irvine, 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, kept an extensive diary of his service with the first Yellowstone Surveying Expedition, sent to find a route through Montana suitable for building a railroad. When the steamboat transporting the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry stopped at Dorman's wood lot to refuel, Irvine learned that Dorman had traveled the proposed route in 1864 with Sully and convinced him to join the expedition as guide.<sup>26</sup>

On the expedition's return to Fort Rice, the post commander, Col. Thomas Crittenden, offered Dorman a job. Crittenden fired his interpreter and Indian Scouts because they were all involved in the whiskey trade. In October 1871, on Irvine's recommendation, he hired sober and reliable

Dorman as post interpreter.<sup>27</sup> Dorman spoke English and Dakota and could read and write; plus, his wife's Dakota relatives and friends signed on as scouts.

### **Fort Rice: Post Interpreter, 1871–1876**

Based on Quartermasters' monthly *Reports of Persons and Articles Employed and Hired, Fort Rice, Letters Sent* and *Reports to the Department of Dakota* (all now archived at the National Archives and Records Administration), Pengra reconstructed Dorman's duties and the gradual increase in his responsibilities at Fort Rice in her biography of him.<sup>28</sup>

As post interpreter, Dorman supervised four to eight Indian scouts at the fort: transporting mail, guiding military reconnaissance parties, herding the post's horse and cattle herds and harvesting hay. Eventually, he also managed guns and ammunition for the scouts and distributed annuities and built cabins for them and their families.

In October 1875 Capt. Frederick Benteen took command of Fort Rice and stripped Dorman of his responsibilities. Benteen did not believe black men to be competent. For example, he refused to hire Dakota scouts recommended by Dorman. Instead, Benteen, a heavy consumer of alcohol, hired a Native American known to be active in the whiskey trade. That scout later badly beat Dorman who was hospitalized as a result.<sup>29</sup>

Benteen ordered Dorman to perform a scout's duty and herd horses and cattle to Fort Abraham Lincoln to supply the Yellowstone Expedition.<sup>30</sup> Dorman's arrival at the fort coincided with Custer's return from Washington, D.C., where he had been testifying in the Belknap trial.<sup>31</sup> Their fortuitous meeting led Custer to issue Special Order #2 on May 14, 1876, which transferred Dorman to temporary duty as an expedition interpreter.<sup>32</sup> Custer did not get along with Benteen<sup>33</sup> so might have enjoyed the chance to hire Dorman away from him. For Dorman it meant he escaped Benteen's prejudice at Fort Rice. Also, he wanted to visit Montana again; and several Dakota scouts who formerly worked for him at Fort Rice had already been hired at Fort Abraham Lincoln for the expedition.

### **On the march to the Little Bighorn**

Interpreters Dorman and Fred Gerard, guides "Lonesome Charley" Reynolds and the Jackson brothers, and a contingent of Arikara<sup>34</sup> and Dakota scouts left Fort Abraham Lincoln on May 17, 1876.

At the beginning of the expedition, Dorman traveled with Gen. Terry and functioned as his guide as well as interpreter. Terry could not find passage through the mountains, so he sent Lt. Francis Gibson and Capt. Thomas Weir to locate a pass. When they could not, he decided to trust Dorman

11 Sunday  
Their not returned determined.  
To trust to Lonsome, Custer with an  
Company the advance. Self with  
main body. Start 5.00 A.M.  
To make road 6.15. Successive

to find a suitable trail. On June 11, he wrote in his diary that “Weir not returned determined to trust to Isaiah. Custer with own company the advance. Self with main body.”<sup>35</sup>

Eleven days later, Terry sent Dorman with Custer on the fateful march up Rosebud River to the Little Bighorn. Walter Camp’s notes, transcribed by several researchers,<sup>36</sup> recorded multiple interviews with actual participants and were used by later writers to describe and reconstruct Reno’s movements and Dorman’s death at the Little Bighorn River.<sup>37</sup>

### **Death on the Little Bighorn, June 25, 1876**

When Custer divided the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry to attack the village, the guides, interpreters and scouts were with Reno. As civilians, they were not expected to fight so marched behind Reno’s soldiers. However, Dorman and Reynolds defended themselves when the battle started and tried to follow Reno in his disorganized retreat to higher ground; they fell when their horses were shot. Dorman and Reynolds then provided covering fire for the retreating soldiers.<sup>38</sup>

In 1911, Pvt. Roman Rutten recalled that Dorman "was standing and firing into the Indians. . . As I went by him he shouted, Goodbye Rutten." A soldier who helped bury the dead saw Reynolds and Dorman "lying together as if they would not leave each other."<sup>39</sup>

Runs The Enemy, interviewed by Joseph Dixon in 1913, said, “We passed a black man in a soldier’s uniform, and we had him. He turned on his horse and shot an Indian right through the heart. Then the Indians fired at this one man and riddled his horse with bullets. His horse fell over on his back, and the black man could not get up.”<sup>40</sup>

Moving Robe Woman shot Dorman to exact revenge for her brother's death in an earlier battle. No one knows if that shot killed him because his body showed many other wounds. For example, Pvt. William Slaper saw Dorman "with many arrows shot into his body and head, badly cut and slashed . . ." Pvt. Henry Jones wrote Camp that the body "looked as though it went through a hash machine." Angry Lakota women pounded Dorman with stone hammers.<sup>41</sup>

However, one cut was a tribute from Dorman's wife's niece, Iron Antelope. She took a strip of skin to perform a Dakota death ceremony for Dorman to release his soul. In 1932, a descendant of Iron Antelope gave the dried skin to a North Dakota museum for safekeeping. In 1950, the *Bismarck Tribune* reported the death of Dorman's grandson, Sam King, and noted that a piece of Dorman's skin was in a local museum's collection.<sup>42</sup>

No one has ever established the exact location where Dorman fell.<sup>43</sup> The monument on the hill at the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument only noted Dorman’s first name, probably because Lt. Charles Varnum, Chief of Scouts, could not remember his last name and thus recorded him only as “Isaiah (colored)” on the muster roll of killed and missing soldiers and employees.<sup>44</sup>

### **Dorman and Sitting Bull**

Frank Zahn sent a story he heard from Bears Ghost to Stanley Vestal that Sitting Bull told his warriors at the Greasy Grass (aka Little Bighorn River), “Don’t kill that man, he is a friend of mine!” Sitting Bull then offered Dorman a buffalo horn of water as he lay dying. Some authors used this story to claim that Dorman and Sitting Bull were friends.<sup>45</sup>

The story, accepted as true by Vestal and David Humphreys Miller,<sup>46</sup> has since been discounted by Gregory Michno based on the impossibility of Sitting Bull being at the location where Dorman died and on Sitting Bull's anger toward former friends turned foe.<sup>47</sup>

However, questions remain. Did Sitting Bull and Dorman know each other well? Had they ever been friends?

Dorman and Sitting Bull might have learned about each other when they were on opposite sides at the Whitestone Hill Battle in 1863.<sup>48</sup>

Sully's report to Gen. John Pope, Commander of the Department of the Missouri, after the Battle of the Badlands was the first to mention Sitting Bull by name in military records.<sup>49</sup> During one night of that confrontation, one of Sully's guides called out, "We are thirsty to death and want to know what Indians you are." Sitting Bull identified himself and returned a taunt.<sup>50</sup> Dorman probably heard that exchange and thus learned Sitting Bull's identity.

The only recorded direct conversation between Dorman and Sitting Bull occurred in 1866. Lewis Crawford in his book, *Rekindling Camp Fires: The Exploits of Ben Arnold*, wrote that Sitting Bull and eight Hunkpapa warriors approached Durfee and Peck's wood chopping crew. Dorman took a bowl of mush topped with syrup, a pot of coffee and some tobacco to them. He then translated his conversation with Sitting Bull to Arnold and the rest of the woodchoppers, reassuring them that Sitting Bull denied being there to fight them.<sup>51</sup>

The claim that Dorman's wife, supposedly a woman named Visible,<sup>52</sup> was Hunkpapa and therefore knew Sitting Bull or was related to him turned out to be based on a confusion in nicknames.

### **Nicknames and Confusion with Others**

Cetan Sapa, translated as Black Hawk, led to the confusion of Dorman with his son and his brother-in-law, Peter Frank, all three of whom were called Black Hawk.

Dorman's son married Visible, aka Mary King, a Hunkpapa woman.<sup>53</sup> She later married George Hunt. When Camp wrote to Mrs. George Hunt, she responded that she had not been born yet when Dorman died.<sup>54</sup>

Stories about Frank, a freed slave, whiskey trader and interpreter at Fort Pierre in 1871, Grand River Agency in 1874 and Fort Yates after 1876, probably gave rise to the myth that Dorman was a runaway slave. To add to the confusion, Dorman's wife's sister was married to Frank.<sup>55</sup> After she was killed during a drinking party at Frank's residence, their two children were raised by Baptist Black Hawk, their brother by Dakota kinship.<sup>56</sup>

"Isaiah" when spoken aloud, sounded remarkably like the word, *Azépté*, translated from Dakota as "nursing place of a bison." Vestal translated the nickname as "Teat" when he used it in 1932 in *Sitting Bull: Champion of the Sioux*.<sup>57</sup> Miller claimed that John Sitting Bull told him in 1935 that Teat was Dorman's nickname.<sup>58</sup> Theodore Gould popularized the translation in his fictionalized story in 1936, *Teat: The Saga of an American Frontiersman* (Washington: World Promotions). Ege used the nickname in both his 1965 and 1966 articles about Dorman.<sup>59</sup>

Kenneth Porter, respected historian of African Americans in the west, inadvertently spread the erroneous story that Dorman was a runaway slave nicknamed Teat, based on his correspondence





Headstone commemorating Isaiah Dorman. Photo by Lilah Morton Pengra

with Zahn and Vestal. Zahn told both Porter and Vestal that Isaiah was Teat, a runaway slave employed as interpreter at Fort Pierre in 1871.<sup>60</sup> However, in 1871, Dorman was with Sully in Virginia and Frank at Fort Pierre. Zahn has since been characterized as an unreliable informant.<sup>61</sup>

### Aftermath

The U.S. Army owed Dorman for his employment as interpreter on the 1876 Yellowstone Expedition, \$50 for days served in May and \$62.50 for days served in June. He also had not yet been paid the \$25 owed him for the first 10 days of May for interpreter's services at Fort Rice. Isaac McNutt, his co-worker on a contract to build cabins for Indian scouts at Fort Rice, applied for the back pay but was denied because he could not provide written evidence that Dorman consigned his wages to him.<sup>62</sup>

The next application for Dorman's back pay was equally unsuccessful. Kathryn McKinney, president of the Barney L. Ford Memorial Association, Denver, Colorado, asked

John Melcher, U.S. Senator from Montana, to introduce a bill to designate Dorman's pay plus interest to fund a memorial for Dorman at the Custer Battlefield Monument, as it was then called.<sup>63</sup> Finally, the Adolph Coors Company donated funds for Dorman's headstone as a memorial to him.<sup>64</sup> It was erected on private land in 1983.

Dorman's heirs have never applied for his unpaid compensation.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-the-Little-Bighorn> Retrieved October 9, 2024.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.nps.gov/libi/learn/historyculture/battle-story.htm> Retrieved October 9, 2024.

<sup>3</sup><https://www.nps.gov/libi/learn/historyculture/isaiah-dorman.htm> Retrieved October 9, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Utley, *Custer Battlefield: A History and Guide to the Battle of the Little Bighorn*, US Department of the Interior, 1988, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> William Boyes, *Custer's Black White Man*, Washington, D.C.: South Capitol Press, 1972, p. 2; Evan Connell, *Son of the Morning Star*, New York: North Point Press, 1984, p. 26; James Donovan, *A Terrible Glory: Custer and the Little Bighorn*, New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008, p. 119; Thom Hatch, *The Last Days of George Armstrong Custer*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015, p. 160; Michael Lawson, *Winning the Battle, Losing the War*, New York: Facts on File, 2007, p. 72; and Tim Lehman, *Bloodshed at Little Big Horn*, Maryland: Johns Hopkins Press, 2010, p. 95.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Ege, "Braves of All Colors," *Montana, The Magazine of Western History*, 16 (1966): 35–40, [https://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/AfAm\\_docs/CensusData/BravesOfAllColors.pdf](https://mhs.mt.gov/Shpo/AfricanAmericans/AfAm_docs/CensusData/BravesOfAllColors.pdf) Retrieved October 9, 2024. Ege also published an earlier unsourced article, February 1965, "Custer's Negro Interpreter" in *Negro Digest* 14:4:29-35.

<sup>7</sup> Lilah Morton Pengra, *Isaiah Dorman: Interpreting the Evidence*, South Dakota: Lune House Publishing, 2016, p. xiv.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1. Early in her research, Pengra hypothesized a birth year of 1840 for Dorman, based on a Dorman family found in Philadelphia records. Later records indicated that the child born in 1840 was female. The 1860 US Census for Fort Kearney recorded Dorman as born in 1832.

<sup>9</sup> Lawrence Finberg, “Nutritional Rickets.” In *Saunders Manual of Pediatric Practice*. Finberg, L., and R. Kleinman, eds. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> *Alfred Sully Papers*, Yale Collection of Western Americana, The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

<sup>11</sup> Henry Hastings Sibley Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota, roll 21, <http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/m0164.pdf> Retrieved October 9, 2024.

<sup>12</sup> *Settled Accounts of Army Paymasters*, NARA, <https://www.archives.gov/findingaid/stat/discovery/217>

<sup>13</sup> *Fort Ridgely Post Returns*, April, May and June 1854.

<https://www.ancestry.com/sharing/16473816?mark=7b22746f6b656e223a22786d514b61507034346f646378672b5664796b6632415171477151776861656a5336787255504e616e78593d222c22746f6b656e5f76657273696f6e223a225632227d> Retrieved 2009.

<sup>14</sup> St. Peter’s Roman Catholic Church Records, roll 10385,

<https://www.history.nd.gov/archives/manuscripts/religious.html> Retrieved 2007.

<sup>15</sup> *Michael Shine Collection*, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

[https://history.nebraska.gov/collection\\_section/michael-allen-shine-1868-1927-rg3626-am/](https://history.nebraska.gov/collection_section/michael-allen-shine-1868-1927-rg3626-am/) Retrieved 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Williams, *The Dakota Conflict and Its Leaders*, North Carolina: McFarland, 2020, p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> Sully and Dorman were both recorded on the 1860 U.S. Census at Fort Kearney.

<sup>18</sup> *Alfred Sully Papers*, op. cit.

<sup>19</sup> Langdon Sully, *No Tears for the General*, California: American West Publishing, 1974, pp. 160–161.

<sup>20</sup> Henry W. Pierce diary, quoted in Richard D. Rowen, editor, “The Second Nebraska’s Campaign Against the Sioux,” *Nebraska History* 44: (1963), p. 32.

<sup>21</sup> Javan Bradley Irvine, *Letters and Diary*, H75-016, South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/dpg/recarea/?recid=79473> Retrieved October 9, 2024.

<sup>22</sup> Langdon Sully, op. cit., p. 155.

<sup>23</sup>

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/Rekindling\\_Camp\\_Fires/xsQCAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=durfe](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Rekindling_Camp_Fires/xsQCAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=durfe) Retrieved October 9, 2024.

<sup>24</sup> <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88076639/1917-02-22/ed-1/seq-1/#date1=1917&index=5&date2=1917&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&lccn=sn88076639&words=Baptist+Pierre&proxdistance=5&sort=date&rows=20&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=baptist+pierre&andtext=&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1> Retrieved October 9, 2024.

<sup>25</sup> Roland McConnell, “Isaiah Dorman and the Custer Expedition,” *The Journal of Negro History*, February 1965, 33:3:344-352. The date of Dorman’s mail contract was correct in McConnell’s footnotes but not in the body of the article, verified by Pengra reviewing the original contract at NARA.

<sup>26</sup> Irvine, op. cit.

<sup>27</sup> *Endorsements Sent, Ft. Rice*, NARA, RG393 E2.

<sup>28</sup> Pengra, op. cit., pp. 169–194.

<sup>29</sup> *Dakota Territory Hospital Record, Fort Rice*, NARA RG94 E544, No. 102.

<sup>30</sup> *Fort Rice, Letters and Endorsements Sent*, NARA, RG393.5 E1.

<sup>31</sup> Frost, Lawrence, *Custer Legends*, Bowling Green University Press, 1981, p. 180.

<sup>32</sup> NARA, RG92 E238, #395.

<sup>33</sup> Terrence Donovan, *Brazen Trumpet: Frederick Benteen and the Battle of the Little Bighorn*, California: MojaveWest Publisher, 2007:

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/Brazen\\_Trumpet/X\\_9bfaXEQUAC?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=custer%20dislike](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Brazen_Trumpet/X_9bfaXEQUAC?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=custer%20dislike) Retrieved October 9, 2024.

<sup>34</sup> Alfred Morsette, “The Custer Expedition,” In Parks, Douglas, *Myths and Traditions of the Arikara Indians*, University of Nebraska Press, 1996, pp. 276–282.

<sup>35</sup> *General Alfred Terry Field Note Book*, State Historical Society of North Dakota.



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- <sup>36</sup> Kenneth Hammer, *Custer in '76*, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1976; Richard Hardorff, *Lakota Recollections of the Custer Fight*, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1997; Bruce Liddic and Paul Harbaugh, *Camp on Custer*, Washington: Arthur Clark Company, 1995.
- <sup>37</sup> John Gray, *Centennial Campaign: The Sioux War of 1876*, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976; Gregory Michno, *Lakota Noon: The Indian Narrative of Custer's Defeat*, Montana: Mountain Press, 1997; Larry Sklenar, *To Hell with Honor*, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000; Frederic Wagner, III, *Marcus Reno in the Valley of the Little Big Horn*, North Carolina: McFarland, 2021.
- <sup>38</sup> Wagner, op. cit., p. 173.
- <sup>39</sup> *Walter Camp manuscripts*, Indiana University, Box 2, Folder 11, envelope C and Usher L. Burdick, *The Army Life of Charles "Chip" Creighton*, Maryland: National Reform Associates, Printers, 1937, 28.
- <sup>40</sup> Joseph Kossuth Dixon, *The Vanishing Race: The Last Great Indian Council*, New Mexico: Rio Grande Press, 1973, orig. 1913, p. 173.
- <sup>41</sup> Earl A. Brininstool, *A Trooper with Custer: and Other Historic Incidents of the Battle of the Little Big Horn*, Ohio: Hunter-Trader-Trapper Co., 1926, p. 65 and *Walter Camp field notes*, <https://cdm15999.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15999coll31/id/27174> Retrieved October 9, 2024.
- <sup>42</sup> <https://littleshorn.info/Articles/LilahPengra/StripofSkin.pdf> Retrieved October 9, 2024; *Bismarck Tribune*, September 25, 1950, p. 1 at <https://www.newspapers.com/image/413265569/?match=1&terms=%20king> Retrieved October 9, 2024 and Pengra, Lilah Morton. "Isaiah Dorman: Battlefield Mutilation and a Strip of Skin." The Brian C. Pohanka 29th Annual Symposium Custer Battlefield Historical & Museum Assn., Inc. (2015) 13–26.
- <sup>43</sup> John Carroll, editor, *The Benteen-Goldin Letters: Custer and His Last Battle*, Bison Books, 1974, p. 130.
- <sup>44</sup> Richard Hardorff, editor, *On the Little Bighorn with Walter Camp*, California: Upton & Sons, 2002, p. 48.
- <sup>45</sup> Thom Hatch, op. cit., p. 160; Edgar Stewart, *Custer's Luck*, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955, p. 182.
- <sup>46</sup> Stanley Vestal, *Sitting Bull: Champion of the Sioux*, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma, 1932; David Humphreys Miller, *Custer's Fall: The Indian Side of the Story*, New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1957.
- <sup>47</sup> Michno, op. cit., p. 105.
- <sup>48</sup> <https://www.ndstudies.gov/gr8/content/unit-iii-waves-development-1861-1920/lesson-4-alliances-and-conflicts/topic-2-defending-lakota-homelands/section-2-life-tatanka-iyotanke-hunkpapa-leader-known-sitting-bull> Retrieved October 9, 2024.
- <sup>49</sup> Kingsley Bray, "Before Sitting Bull," *SD History* (2010) 40:2:131 <https://www.sdhspress.com/journal/south-dakota-history-40-2/before-sitting-bull-interpreting-hunkpapa-political-history-1750-1867/4002-02.pdf> Retrieved October 9, 2024.
- <sup>50</sup> Michael Clodfelter, *The Dakota War: The United States Army Versus the Sioux, 1862-1865*, North Carolina: Macfarland, 1998, p. 185.
- <sup>51</sup> [https://www.google.com/books/edition/Rekindling\\_Camp\\_Fires/xsQCAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=syrup](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Rekindling_Camp_Fires/xsQCAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=syrup) Retrieved October 9, 2024.
- <sup>52</sup> James Donovan, op. cit., described Dorman as a former slave, married to Visible, with no children and cited Stanley Vestal as his source.
- <sup>53</sup> Lilah Morton Pengra, "Black Man at the Little Bighorn," *Wild West* June 2016, p. 42.
- <sup>54</sup> <https://cdm15999.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15999coll31/id/27547/rec/1> Retrieved October 9, 2024.
- <sup>55</sup> Pengra, *Isaiah Dorman*, op. cit., pp. 155–158.
- <sup>56</sup> Josephine Waggoner, *Witness: A Hunkpapa Historian's Strong-Heart Song of the Lakotas*, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 2013, p. 112.
- <sup>57</sup> Vestal, op. cit., p. 166.
- <sup>58</sup> <https://davidhumphreysmiller.org/john-sitting-bull/> Retrieved October 9, 2024.
- <sup>59</sup> Ege, op. cit.
- <sup>60</sup> Kenneth Porter, "Notes Supplementary to 'Relations between Negroes and Indians'" *The Journal of Negro History* 18:317 (1933).
- <sup>61</sup> William Lemons, "History by Unreliable Narrators," *Montana, The Magazine of Western History* 45:4 (1995), pp. 69–70.

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<sup>62</sup> *Docket Books of Miscellaneous Claims*, NARA, RG217 E621 Box 3 and RB217 E658 Vols. 21 and 25; *Report of Persons and Articles Employed and Hired*, NARA RG92 E238, May 1876.

<sup>63</sup> McKinney to Melcher letter, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument archives (LIBI) 00805 S2-1 F076.

<sup>64</sup> The Coors contribution was noted on the back of the headstone.

<sup>65</sup> Personal communication by Lilah Morton Pengra with Raymond Elk Nation, Alvina Long Chase, Elaine Matlow and Ernest Mutchler.