

Dear Editor:

You have heard the views of the Nebraska Press Association and those of Russel Means. Now I will give you mine from a different perspective.

I was born, raised and attended school on the Pine Ridge South Dakota reservation within 15 miles of Wounded Knee.

After the army I was working part time across the line in Nebraska and helping my dad on his ranch 10 miles north of Wounded Knee. Most of his brothers and sisters lived in the area also.

A lot of ranchers had CB radios to communicate with each other.

One evening coming over the CB radio was a porcupine rancher saying, "I just drove through the Wounded Knee junction, there are people all over and they are shooting at me." Fortunately he got through alright.

The federal agents surrounded the ridge leading down tho the Wounded Knee Valley to contain the militants and try to keep more weapons from coming in.

Some days later I heard of a Wounded Knee rancher's prize bull being butchered.

One of my uncles lived less than a mile down the creek.

One day, militants came and started driving off some of his cows that were around his house. Shooting started when they advanced on his house and he took his family out the back door to the highway. They burned his house to the ground.

They also burned down the Catholic Church that sat beside the Wounded Knee cemetery.

Wounded Knee also had a nice store at the junction with lots of supplies and things to attract tourism. After they took what they needed, they burnt that down too.

There has never been another store in the area for the people.

Many of the area people wanted the agents to go in and drive these invaders out whom a lot had come from outside the reservation.

The agents just sat there though, held back by the press and public opinion.

A year after it was over I married my lady from Gordon and we started our ranching headquarters on the ridge, just north of Wounded Knee, by Porcupine Butte.

Tensions remained high even among some family members.

To generalize, I believe the fracture was between "traditional Indians" and Indians who had more adapted to ranch life or BIA or tribal employment, mostly considered to be "Breeds" of different degrees.

I have heard the term "Goons" but have no evidence that they exist. I wouldn't blame Dick Wilson for having personal body guards when having to confront criminal elements.

To my recollection, Means ran against Dick Wilson twice and twice we voted him down.

Dick Wilson was the first tribal president in history to ever be re-elected into office.

I carried at least one rifle in my pickup and a pistol on my dash. I don't remember things being like this before the occupation.

As far as the Wilson administration being corrupt, I have yet to not hear this about any tribal administration.

I, myself, see no benefit to the occupation other than Means getting to rub elbows with the liberal elite, such as Marlon Brando. He also secured some acting in a couple of movies.

Rolly Coats

Grant

