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## Paul "Flying Eagle" Goodbear

Luella Thornburg

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## PAUL "FLYING EAGLE" GOODBEAR

*By* LUELLA THORNBURGH \*

ON June 26, 1954, in a hospital in Chicago, a full-blood Cheyenne Indian artist and writer passed away, leaving his widow and two children, three and five years old—alone to review his successes. His family was in Thoreau, New Mexico, at the time, waiting for the arrival of husband and father. His death cut off the fine works of Paul "Flying Eagle" Goodbear, a descendant of Warring Cheyennes during the 1850's through the year 1878. Paul Goodbear was the grandson of Chief Turkey Legs, the great great grandson of Chief Whirlwind and the great grandson of Chief Starr of Oklahoma.

His contribution to New Mexico history came with the restoration of prehistoric murals at Coronado Monument Museum near Bernalillo, and the techniques he used were akin to those of the Greeks and Italian masters. In this work, he was necessarily forced to paint on fresh plaster. His patience and understanding of his duty as a contractor for the job as well as his fidelity to his own style of painting is amazing, and the finished product is preserved for future generations.

Paul Goodbear was born near Fay, Oklahoma, where Cheyennes lived on disconnected farms instead of banded together. He was a gentle young man, always ready to interpret the old stories of the tribe; however, he did know that Turkey Legs was in the battle of the Big Horn—the one at which Custer and his men fell and died. An unidentified newspaper write-up of Paul "Flying Eagle" Goodbear quotes much from

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\* P.O. Box 36, Sandoval, N. M.

the World Book about the ancestors of Paul. The Cheyennes "became the most skillful and daring riders of the Plains. . . . They have always been a strong, brave people who held women in high regard."

In this atmosphere of tribal stories, Paul learned the dances, then became interested in expressing the movement and color of the living figures of the ceremonial participants. Furthermore, he became an educator of Indians of all tribes and injected his personality into manuscripts written about them.

Paul's mother was a bead worker and skilled in her art, and here again is background for his gentility and understanding of all peoples. He married a Choctaw, described as "small and vivacious," who was also interested in the teachings of the antecedents on both sides. On occasion, Mrs. Goodbear reminded her husband in a fond manner that while his people were roaming the plains, her people were being called one of the "Five Civilized Tribes . . ." and had begun to adopt log houses for abodes. She is a graduate of Southeast State College at Durant, Oklahoma, and her influence on her husband's short-lived future was tremendous.

World War II took Paul away from his dancing, his paintings, his writing and in general threw him again into the life of a "Warring Cheyenne." He was wounded twice in the Normandy Landing and in the Battle of the Bulge. Officially, his name of "Flying Eagle"—an Indian tag—was given to him after his return from his services with the United States. Not having enough to give to his country, he went to Japan as a staff artist with three American daily newspapers and a comic strip was born, entitled "Chief Ugh." Deep rooted humor poured from his pen. This proves the kinship of the pioneer and the living Indian tribe which, if founded in time, could have averted wars, costly to man and beast alike.

A painting of Cheyenne Buffalo Dancer, full of action and graceful lines was sold at the Capper Crippled Childrens art auction in \_\_\_\_\_ in the year \_\_\_\_\_. Paul, at this time, had already exhibited at the Metropolitan in New York, at the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts at Philbrook Museum and in the Santa Fe Art Gallery. Another painting, Cheyenne



PAUL "FLYING EAGLE" GOODBEAR



DRAWING BY PAUL GOODBEAR

War Dance, was also donated by Paul "Flying Eagle" Goodbear for private sale, with the proceeds designated for the crippled children's fund.

While contributing to art collections in New Mexico (paintings by Goodbear can be seen at the Hilton Hotel in Albuquerque), he had his heart in the education of the Indian tribes, and made some good comparisons on the methods of teaching in public schools of tribal Indians and teachings in white schools. His sense of competition was quite cast aside in favor of his sense of consideration for fellow man and obedience to human rights. This is why he championed, always, the Indian artist's right to retain his own expression and reflect his heritage.

Paul Goodbear's children live with their mother who still teaches in Indian Schools—Indian Mission Schools—and speaks of Paul with great respect and admiration for his works, the ones his untimely death left undone. She is remarried, and her two children are living the happy, educational life they embarked upon. The history of Paul Goodbear's contribution to New Mexico history should be recorded, for it was in the state of New Mexico where he left most of his estate, that of his paintings and the new generation he launched.

#### CHEYENNE SUN DANCE

*By* PAUL FLYING EAGLE GOODBEAR

It was early morning and the camp was already wide awake. This was the fourth day of preparation and the sun dance was about to begin. The Cheyennes came out of their teepees to watch for the parade of the clans. It was the clans duty to secure the poles for the sun lodge and they would soon be coming. Then came a shout from the far side of the camp—Some one had spied them approaching on horseback.

The dog soldier clan came to a halt. It was at the edge of the huge camp. They regrouped into a formation of four abreast, much like soldiers on parade. Indeed, some of them were old warriors. They had paraded like this many times

before. In olden days they had gone on the war path. They started slowly around the outer side of the camp. First came the old war chiefs all decked out in war bonnets. They wore breach cloths of bright colors, white beaded moccasins, and some had made willow wreath necklaces for their ponies. Scalps hung from lances that the proud chiefs had taken in battle. They were indeed a proud lot. Behind them rode the war dancers. They were mostly younger men. Dyed porcupine headdresses shimmered in the sun like Roman plumes. All wore exquisite beaded vests, gauntlets, and bells around their ankles jingled as they rode along. Next came the medicine men and buffalo dancers. Huge buffalo headdresses trimmed with eagle feathers made them look top heavy, which only added to their already majestic bearing.

As the clan advanced they began to sing an old war song. Men who watched shouted war whoops and women sang or cried. Memories were very real and near to some of them. It was indeed an inspiring sight, though a little sad I thought. The glory was a thing of the past and only memories remained. But what glorious memories these were I was to see for the next three days of the sun dance.

That evening the Elk Soldiers, the Black Arrows and the Chief Clan performed the opening dance in the sun lodge. It was soon filled with men, women, and horses. The loud singing, war whoops, and discharging of old winchesters filled the air with dramatic noises. After a special dance the horses were given away to friends. Men lead the horses away and women struggled along behind them loaded down with gifts.

Now it was time for the sun dance to begin. The most sacred of all the Cheyenne ceremonies, the most elaborate, and the most cruel. Cruel from the stand point of the hunger and thirst involved. The dancers must dance for three days and nights without food or drink. At night they get very little sleep.

The drums began to sound a vibrating rhythm of accent and unaccented time. A high-pitched falsetto voice started each long solo. Then the other singers would join in unison. Singers were divided into groups so that they could sing in relay fashion, day and night, without a break.

The sundancers stood up. Each was directed by a medicine man. Another man behind him guided his arms. He swung them toward the eagles nest on the center pole at the right instant. The eagle bone whistles between their lips were blown in unison and to the beat of the drum. This whistle, as the dancers found out later, would dry their throats to increase their thirst. Each man was painted with symbolic designs down to the waist. He wore a blanket wrapped around his waist like a skirt. A willow wreath was on his head. Green willow streamers dangled from his wrists. In one hand he held an eagle feather fan and four sacred arrows in the other.

They danced in an up and down motion not moving from the spot. At first I thought this was monotonous. But as the days went on it grew on me and I found myself singing along with the rest. Several times I shouted encouragement to a faltering dancer. Once in a while an exhausted dancer would fall to the ground.

The medicine men watched over these dancers carefully. They made them comfortable on their buffalo robes and massaged their bodies. Some lay in semi-consciousness most of the third day while others danced on. Some leaned on willow staffs to support their lean, starved bodies. They swayed backward and forward in a feeble attempt to dance. Others sat and stared at the huge piles of food set before them which they were forbidden to eat. Any one else might eat, but not the fasting sun dancers.

This last day, late in the afternoon, the sun stood still. That is, it seemed so to the dancers. They would, now and then, look to see how far the sun had progressed since last they looked. It crept so slowly across the sky and became so hot. The thirst, the hunger, and delirious delusions increased with the heat. Surely this day would never end, and all of them would slowly die. But they also knew that the sun must set as it always had and with it would come the end of the dance. Then they could eat and drink again, their sacrifice having been made. But right now the time stood still.

As if this were not torture enough, the dancers were lined up. They were to run out of the lodge, to an arrow stuck in the ground, around the arrow and back to the lodge again.

Once at each cardinal point this must be done. As weakened as they were, they formed a line. This was their final test of endurance and they could not falter now. The signal was given and the dancers rushed forward, more stumbling than running. Some of them fell, but were helped to their feet and allowed to continue. Finally all finished the run and another sun dance was over. Over except for the memories that would remain for years to come. Something to tell their grandchildren. Their faith and trust in their maker had been proven. Their belief had been strong enough to carry them through to the final completion of the sun dance.

"Well, how was it?" I asked a dancer walking along to his teepee.

"It was pretty tough. I didn't think I'd last till it rained last night and cooled everything off. Then I knew that God had seen us and taken pity on us. We all made it. Now it is over and it is good."

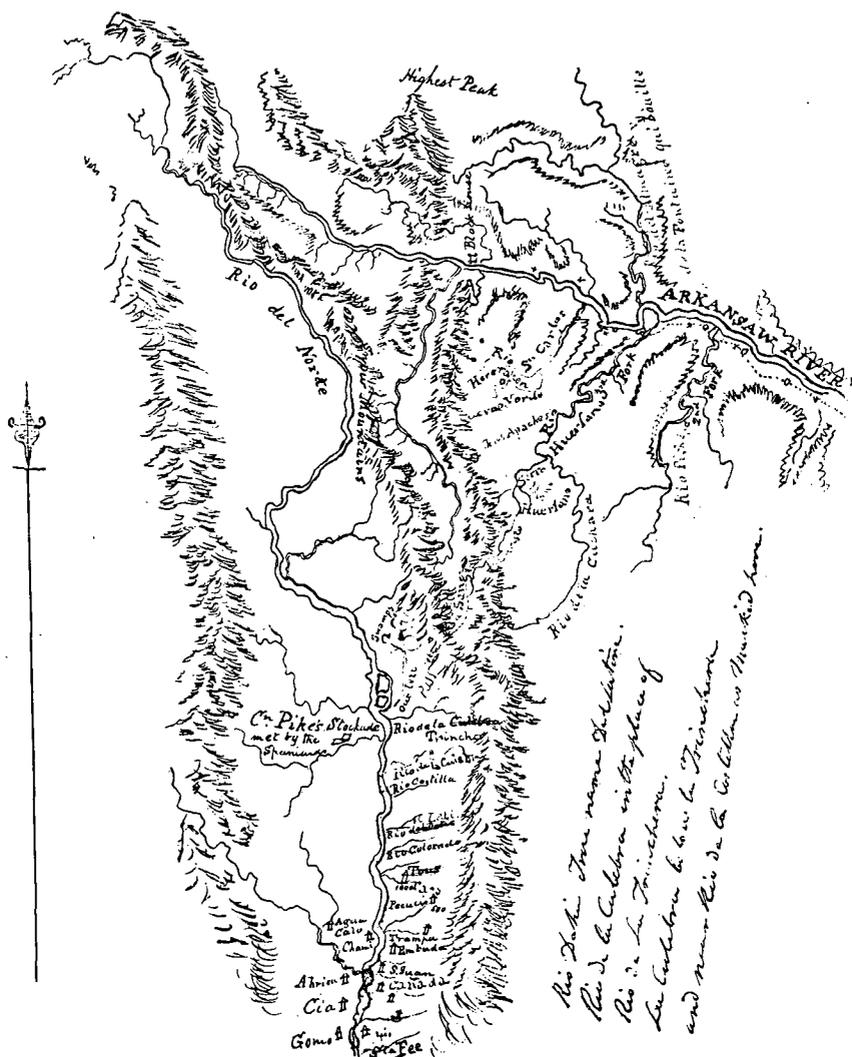
This was my father talking. He had just taken part in the sun dance the Cheyenne tribe had in 1950.

#### PIKE'S MAP

This map is a correct copy of Capt. Pike's map. All the alterations & additions which I have thought necessary and the Spanish names of rivers &c are made with red ink. Perhaps it will not be improper to observe that Rio del Norte is not correctly laid down on this map, as said river, from a little above Taos, runs almost a due west course, following the foot of the mountains (which at Taos form a right angle) till a little below the village of La Cañada, from whence it takes its course again to the South.

The place marked thus [] on the river Cuerno Verde (or Green Horne) is where we have been taken by the Spaniards.

Rio Sn. Carlos & its branch, Cuerno Verde, altogether left out on Pike's map. Serro Huerfano, or Orphan Mound is an isolated rocky mound about 150 feet high from which the river has derived its name. The pass of La Sangre de Christo is the pass most generally used by the Spaniards on their trading expeditions on the Arkansas. No Island in the Rio del Norte, as put down in Pike's map, he having mistaken the outlet of large swamps into the river for a channel of said river round the supposed Island. (Signed) Julius De Mun.



Map of Northern New Mexico

This is a copy of the map submitted to the Claims Commission by Julius Demun as proof that his party was "well within the recognized boundaries of the United States" when arrested by the Spaniards. On the lower right hand corner of the map are listed the rivers whose names he corrected.

The right hand margin on the original map is frayed and several words and parts of words are now missing. A complete copy of Demun's "Notes" including the missing words is given in Notes and Documents.