

# THE AFTERMATH PROJECT

## SURVIVING WOUNDED KNEE

DANNY FRAZIER, 2010 AFTERMATH PROJECT GRANT WINNER

---

### INTRODUCING "SURVIVING WOUNDED KNEE"

An exploration of the aftermath of the 19th century Wounded Knee massacre in South Dakota and of the 1973 stand-off between the American Indian Movement, which occupied Wounded Knee for 71 days, and the US government. Wilcox examines the plight of the Lakota Indian people who are still fighting for disputed lands.

---

### THE OGLALA LAKOTA

The sun begins to set in the Badlands of South Dakota, the region that is home to the Lakotas. The Oglala Lakota people have long resisted the US government and continue their legal battle over the sacred Paha Sapa (Black Hills). Originally confined to the Pine Ridge Reservation, most Oglala today live in abject poverty in what is the poorest region of the United States.



- What do you see in this photograph? What is occurring?
  - What details about the way this photograph is composed stand out to you? What roles do light, shadow, and color play?
  - What larger ideas come to mind in relation to the landscape and the title of this photograph?
-

## MASS GRAVE

A mass grave site at Wounded Knee honors over 300 men, women, and children who were massacred by the US 7th Cavalry on December 29, 1890.



- Imagine that you knew nothing about the title of this photograph or the context in which it was taken. What would you see? How does knowing the context impact your interpretation of the image? What do you think the photographer wants you to see? What do you think he wants you to think about?

- The cemetery/massacre site on the Pine Ridge Reservation is a site of atrocity and memory for Lakotas. It is the location of the massacre at Wounded Knee, the killing of over 300 men, women, and children in 1890 by the US 7th Cavalry. What role can sites of memory, such as this mass grave, play in our larger understanding of the Lakotas' history?

---

## LAKOTA TRADITIONS

Jay Waters holds a traditional bow and arrow on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Jay's father, John Waters, works to teach his children Lakota traditions, including the language. The Waters family, known on the reservation as traditionalists, are active in efforts to preserve Lakota culture.



- How would you describe what is occurring in this photograph?

- What strikes you about the composition of this image? Why?

- In the caption, photographer Danny Wilcox Frazier notes that young Jay Waters's father, John, is part of a larger movement to teach and preserve Lakota language and tradition. How does this image speak to this larger movement? What aspects of the image reinforce these ideas?

---

## WIKUCHELA WATERS

Wikuchela Waters sleeps on his parents' bed in Allen, South Dakota. Allen, part of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, has been called the poorest city in America, with a per capita income of \$1,539. Over 90% of the population on the Pine Ridge Reservation lives below the federal poverty line, while unemployment ranges from 85% to 90%.



- What words would you use to describe this photograph? What feelings does it inspire?
- Danny Wilcox Frazier notes that Allen, South Dakota, where this photograph was taken, has been called the poorest city in America. It is a place with a child poverty rate of nearly 75 percent, an unemployment rate of over 80 percent, and a per capita income of \$3,515. How does this information change the way you view this image, if at all? How would you describe the photograph with this information in mind?
- How could it be seen as symbolic that the child is sleeping alongside a blanket with the image of a wolf? What larger themes or ideas could the photographer be suggesting?

---

## BUFFALO KILL

Oglala tribal rangers shot a buffalo that will be processed and distributed to tribal members for ceremonial and social events across the Pine Ridge Reservation. The Lakota tribes of the Great Plains traditionally depended on the buffalo for food, clothing, shelter, and spiritual guidance. The US government supported the extermination of the buffalo from the American West.



- What do you see in this photograph?
- Why is the image titled "Buffalo Kill"?
- What is missing from this photograph that you might expect to see?
- What larger story of the Oglala Lakota might photographer Danny Wilcox Frazier be trying to tell by juxtaposing the dead buffalo and the modern car?
- What choices did the photographer make to shape your interpretation of this image? How did he use light and shadow? What other choices seem important?

## RACES

Wild horse races take place at the Oglala Lakota Nation Pow Wow on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Lakotas celebrate traditional life throughout late summer with Sun Dances and horse races across the reservation. The Pine Ridge region is America's poorest, but it is a part of the country rich in culture and tradition.



- How would you describe what you see in this photograph?
- What race is the photographer referring to in the title? Besides the horse race, what other races could the photographer be referencing?
- After reading the caption and taking time to look at the image, how do you think this photograph communicates the larger mission of the Aftermath Project—that is, the mission of telling the other half of the story of conflict, “the story of what it takes for individuals to learn to live again, to rebuild destroyed lives and homes, to restore civil societies, to address the lingering wounds of war while struggling to create new avenues for peace”?

---

See the full project: <http://dev.unchartedigital.com/project/surviving-wounded-knee>