

The Indian Sketch Book also known as The Creek
Sketch Book
came upon by Jesse Hall c 1878-1879

In the mid years of the 1870's John Spaulding, Jesse Hall, and Bill Tomlins made their way to the Black Hills of Lakota Territory from buffalo hunting grounds of Nebraska. They were curious young men who had met somewhere in Nebraska, who had tired of the buffalo hunting adventure, were drawn by the gold rush stories drifting out of the Black Hills.

On The North Platte River they met up with a wagon train of Iowa's wanting there to join up with a group who would be heading to Custer in the Black Hills. The three ex-buffalo hunters became leaders and scouts for the Ames party and successfully led them into the southern Black Hills. At this time the big strike had been located in the northern hills so for them it was off to Deadwood.

Gold panning did not appeal to the three, but they quickly put to work their hunting ability and found it profitable to supply

2

meat for hungry miners. Both John and Jesse were expert shots, Bill was the business man who sold what the hunters brought in. They scouted out hunting areas from Deadwood to the Little Missouri River to the north, and rillies and pastures near Devils Tower and down the Belle Fourche River by way. Late in the season when the nights became cold enough to preserve meat they moved north of the Black Hills through the Bear Lodge Mountains toward the Little Missouri River. They came to a small creek area already known as Tie Creek, so named by railroad building crews who found desirable timber for railroad ties as the Great Northern Railroad had pushed westward across the Great Plains. This seemed like a good hunting area. Jess & John divided an area between them, set up camp for a few days and began their work.

One of the days of hunting Jesse Hall came upon an unexpected sight: a dead Indian man whose body was in the crotch of a tree

13

On the ground below the body was a packet wrapped in deer skin apparently fallen from the man's grasp. The man had probably climbed into the tree some time past and had died there. The hunter, Jesse Hall, retrieved the packet and buckskin moccasins the Indian had been wearing and left the area. Years later Hall and a nephew combed the area hoping to identify the tree and location. Trees and brush change appearances as time goes by, and he could not identify the area. For forty or more years Hall kept the sketch book found in the deer skin packet. It was shown to friends and family, all the grandchildren knew the exciting stories concerning the journal. In the summer of 1936 one of the oldest granddaughters who went to Oregon to visit the grand-parents. Jesse presented the sketch book to her and told ^{her} to take it back with her to South Dakota where he had found it and where he thought it belonged. (Tie Creek runs from south west to N.E. in present times in Montana. as the survey was made in marking state lines when Dakota territory was divided in 1889. It is very near the state line, of Montana and S. Dak. and joins the Little Missouri River just south of the town of Camp Crook, S. Dak.)

4 and admonished her to make efforts to find out who might have been the artist and to which tribe he belonged.

Granddaughter Lorie did as she was asked. For several years it seemed an appropriate place to have it at Bear Butte Museum. Bear Butte, at the North east corner of the Black Hills area, was a land mark for traveling pioneers as well as a sacred place for northern tribes of Indians to gather. At the time the curator there and his assistant made quite some effort to research the sketch book and moccasins. Contact was made with Smithsonian museum and with S. Dak. archeological officers, but no conclusions came about. Slides have been made of the pages in the sketch book and have been used for interpretation and study. It has had more leaning to be thought the artist probably is Cheyenne.

When the museum became somewhat in jeopardy as a safe place it was thought best to bring the book back into the possession of the family, and for the past few years the 85 sketches have been in a bank vault. A few sets of slides remain in the family and this story is written to be with them.

Lorie Eaton Shipley, granddaughter
of Jesse Hall; 2004