

controlled the bimolecular reaction between semi-deuterated water and chlorine.<sup>4</sup> Those experiments took advantage of the fact that overtone excitation of either the OH or OD bond remained localized long enough to permit selective chemistry to occur following a collision with a chlorine atom. The femtosecond photoassociation and its chirp enhancement—the work highlighted in Wilson's report—bypass the need for long-lived intermediates and promise a fertile new field of chemical investigation.

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## A minor scrape at Wounded Knee

The massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, was a major and infamous episode in US history that effectively put an end to Indian armed resistance. Given that it took place in 1890, I was puzzled to read in Val Fitch's obituary in the September PHYSICS TODAY (page 63) that "Val 'was born . . . on March 10, 1923 . . . just 20 years after the battle of Wounded Knee.'" That the misinformation is in quotes indicates it comes from something Fitch himself wrote.

The improperly truncated quote, it turns out, can be found in Fitch's autobiographical sketch on the Nobel Prize website. It reads, in part, "my father, Fred Fitch, had acquired a ranch of more than 4 square miles and had persuaded a local school teacher, Frances Logsdon, to marry and join him in living there. They moved to the ranch just 20 years after the battle of Wounded Knee, which occurred about 40 miles northwest." So his parents moved there in 1910, and he was born in 1923.

Purely anecdotally, there seems to be something about the hardy souls who grew up in that time and region that bred outstanding physicists. In addition to Fitch, Ernest Lawrence and Merle Tuve came from Canton, South Dakota, and Robert R. Wilson was born in Fron-

tier, Wyoming. There are probably others, maybe of not quite the same level of renown.

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■ **Smith replies:** We thank Alan Chodos for spotting the error that slipped by us in editing, and we are delighted that he used the opportunity to point out some other great scientists with backgrounds like Val's.

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## Tallying Harden McConnell's legacy

In Harden McConnell's obituary (PHYSICS TODAY, September 2015, page 65), the correct number of postdoctoral fellows that McConnell advised was 93. Thus the total number of postdoctoral fellows plus graduate students who received a PhD with McConnell was 172.

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