

Michael Bouyer. (b. 1837)

Mitch Bouyer was the Metis son of Jean Baptiste Bouyer and his Santee Sioux wife. His father was a trader with the American Fur Company. Mitch was an interpreter and guide following the American Civil war. General John Gibbon called Bouyer "next to Jim Bridger, the best guide in the country". He was killed at the Battle of the Little Bighorn

Michael's father was killed by Indians while trapping in about 1863. Mitch's Indian name was Kar-pash. He had three full sisters: Marie, Anne, and Therese, who seem to have been tripletsborn in 1840. He also had at least two half-brothers: John Bouyer (c. 1845-1871), who was hanged at fort Laramie for killing an Army scout in the first legal execution in Wyoming, and Antoine Bouyer born 1852).

Mitch was an interpreter at Fort Phil Kearny in 1868. In the fall of 1869, he married a young Crow woman named Magpie Outside (or Magpie Out-of-Doors), who became known as Mary. Their first child, also named Mary, was born in 1870. Sometime later they also had a son, apparently named Tom, but eventually called James LeForge..

Bouyer became a guide for the 2nd US Calvary, working with the Northern Pacific Railway's survey team. From 1872 on he was employed by the Crow Agency and the US Army. In 1876 Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer requested that Bouyer be transferred to the 7th Calvary as an interpreter for the Crow scouts when General Terry ordered the 7th south from the Montan Column to search for hostile Indians. At the Crow's Nest, Bouyer was one of the scouts who warned Custer about the size of the Indian village, which Custer claimed he couldn't make out. Bouyer told him, "General, I have been with these Indians for 30 years, and this is the largest village I have ever known of." After failing to convince Custer, it is reported that Bouyer gave away his possessions, convinced he would die in the coming battle. There was a report that Sitting Bull had offered a bounty of 100 ponies for Bouyer's head.



When Custer's command was divided into 3 battalions, about noon, Bouyer was assigned to accompany Custer, whose battalion would be almost completely wiped out. There were only about a dozen survivors of Custer's battalion, all of whom had left it before the battle began. Bouyer seems to have dressed in a flamboyant style. In the photograph, he is wearing a fur hat with 2 woodpeckers, one on either side, and he was wearing a piebald calf's vest the day of the fatal battle.



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