

DEFINING MOMENTS AMERICAN INDIAN REMOVAL AND THE TRAIL TO WOUNDED KNEE



Kevin Hillstrom and Laurie Collier Hillstrom

*Omni*graphics

P.O. Box 31-1640
Detroit, MI 48231

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	ix
How to Use This Book	xiii
Research Topics for <i>American Indian Removal and the Trail to Wounded Knee</i>	xv

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

Prologue	3
Chapter One: European Colonization of the “New World”	5
Chapter Two: A Vanishing Way of Life	23
Chapter Three: Standing in the Way of Westward Expansion	35
Chapter Four: Sitting Bull and the Sioux Wars	49
Chapter Five: The Massacre at Wounded Knee	63
Chapter Six: American Indians in a White World	79
Chapter Seven: The Legacy of Wounded Knee	99

BIOGRAPHIES

Big Foot (c. 1820-1890)	121
<i>Chief of the Lakota Band Massacred at Wounded Knee</i>	
Crazy Horse (c. 1841-1877)	125
<i>Lakota Warrior and Resistance Leader</i>	
George Armstrong Custer (1839-1876)	130
<i>U.S. Cavalry Leader Killed in the Battle of Little Bighorn</i>	

Andrew Jackson (1767-1845)	134
<i>U.S. President Who Signed the Indian Removal Act of 1830</i>	
Red Cloud (c. 1822-1909)	138
<i>Lakota Chief and Resistance Leader</i>	
John Ross (1790-1866)	143
<i>Cherokee Chief during the Trail of Tears</i>	
Sitting Bull (1831-1890)	147
<i>Lakota Chief and Holy Man</i>	
Wovoka (c. 1856-1932)	152
<i>Paiute Prophet Who Created the Ghost Dance Religion</i>	

PRIMARY SOURCES

Tecumseh Calls for Indian Unity against the White Invaders	159
Andrew Jackson Praises Indian Removal	162
Cherokee Chief John Ross Denounces Indian Removal Policies	166
A Cheyenne Recalls the Deadly Impact of Cholera on His Tribe	170
Negotiating the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868	172
Eyewitness Recollections of the Battle of Little Bighorn	177
White Officials Call for Dismantling of the “Tribal Organization”	183
A Lakota Indian Recalls the Ghost Dance	187
A BIA Assessment of the Causes of Lakota Discontent	189
Black Elk Recounts the Massacre at Wounded Knee	192
Looking for Survivors at Wounded Knee	197
Life at an Indian Boarding School	200
Indian Activists Issue the Alcatraz Proclamation	206
One Indian’s Perspective on Modern Society and Traditional Ways	210
American Indians Take Stock on the Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition	213

Important People, Places, and Terms	221
Chronology	227
Sources for Further Study	237
Bibliography	239
Photo and Illustration Credits	241
Index	243

Chapter Four

SITTING BULL AND THE SIOUX WARS



I am a red man. If the Great Spirit had desired me to be a white man he would have made me so in the first place. He put in your heart certain wishes and plans, in my heart he put other and different desires.... Now we are poor, but we are free. No white man controls our footsteps. If we must die ... we die defending our rights.

—Sitting Bull, Lakota, 1876

Under the terms of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, the Lakota people received a permanent reservation of 60 million acres—or about 93,000 square miles—west of the Missouri River in South Dakota. They were also granted hunting access to a large area of unceded Indian territory outside of the reservation. In addition, the U.S. government agreed to build an agency for each tribal subgroup on the Great Sioux Reservation to distribute food rations, make annuity payments for lands given up in the treaty, and provide education and other services. In exchange, the Lakota promised to stop harassing white settlers and disrupting road and railroad construction outside of reservation lands.

Despite the seemingly generous terms of the Fort Laramie Treaty, however, many Lakota viewed the agreement with emotions ranging from disappointment to outrage. They resented giving up lands their ancestors had occupied for generations and submitting to the authority of a white government. “Millions of buffalo to furnish unlimited food supply, thousands of horses, and hundreds of miles of free range made the Sioux, up to the year 1868, the richest and most prosperous, the proudest, and ... the wildest of all the tribes of

the plains,” ethnologist James Mooney explained. “At one stroke they were reduced from a free nation to dependent wards of the government.”¹

Concerned about the erosion of tribal independence, culture, and pride, several prominent Lakota chiefs refused to sign the Fort Laramie Treaty. These “non-treaty Lakota,” led by Hunkpapa spiritual leader Sitting Bull (see Sitting Bull biography, p. 147) and Oglala war chief Crazy Horse (see Crazy Horse biography, p. 125), also refused to settle on the Great Sioux Reservation. Instead, they remained in unceded Indian territory along the Powder River in Wyoming, where they continued to hunt buffalo, follow traditional customs, and clash with white settlers and railroad builders. These bands of Lakota did not accept any government food rations or annuity payments.

Over the next decade, however, thousands of white settlers, hunters, traders, and miners flocked to the Dakota Territory by railroad and steamboat. The idea of “wild” Indians roaming the plains proved upsetting to them, as well as to the powerful eastern business interests that stood to benefit from unobstructed development of the western frontier. In support of these interests, the U.S. government sent military expeditions into Indian country in violation of the Fort Laramie Treaty. They hoped that a show of military force might convince the non-treaty Lakota to give up their nomadic lifestyle and move onto the reservations.

Gold Is Discovered in the Black Hills

The largest of these expeditions set out for the Black Hills of South Dakota on July 2, 1874. Its leader was Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer, an ambitious man who had earned a reputation as a fierce and determined fighter in the Indian Wars (see Custer biography, p. 130). Custer’s massive wagon train included 700 soldiers of the Seventh Cavalry and 300 civilian surveyors, miners, geologists, and newspaper reporters. Soon after reaching its destination, the expedition turned up evidence of significant deposits of gold in the Black Hills. “Gold has been found at several places,” Custer wrote in a letter to the expedition’s sponsors, “and it is the belief of those who are giving their attention to this subject that it will be found in paying quantities.”²

The discovery of gold in the Black Hills brought a rush of miners and speculators to the region. Seeking to stake claims, many white prospectors entered the Great Sioux Reservation illegally. The encroachment of whites on



This cover illustration from an 1876 issue of *Harper's Weekly* portrays gold prospectors looking to "strike it rich" in the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory.

reservation lands angered the Lakota and increased the potential for conflict. President Ulysses S. Grant was aware that the gold rush violated the terms of the Fort Laramie Treaty, but he made only a halfhearted effort to prevent miners from invading Indian territory. The U.S. economy had entered a recession, and Grant felt that the discovery of gold might provide a boost. In addition, he and many other white citizens believed that “the American continent should be given over to the progress of enlightenment and the temporal advancement of those who are willing to make use of God’s best gifts,”³ as an editorial writer of the period put it.

In 1875 a U.S. government commission, headed by Senator William Boyd Allison of Iowa, approached Lakota leaders with the goal of purchasing or leasing the Black Hills in order to exploit the gold deposits legally. They offered to

“I think that the Black Hills are worth more than all the wild beasts and all the tame beasts in possession of the white people,” Oglala Chief Red Cloud declared. “God Almighty placed these Hills here for my wealth, but now you want to take them from me and make me poor.”

pay \$400,000 per year to lease the land, or \$6 million to purchase it outright. But the Black Hills held great spiritual significance for the Lakota people. The area also served as a protective sanctuary against summer heat and winter cold, as well as an important source of game and lodgepole pine. Tribal leaders, who attended the meeting dressed in full war regalia, insisted that the land could not be sold. “I think that the Black Hills are worth more than all the wild beasts and all the tame beasts in the possession of the white people,” Oglala chief Red Cloud told the commission. “God Almighty placed these Hills here for my wealth, but now you want to take them from me and make me poor.”⁴

Unable to convince the Lakota to sell the Black Hills, the U.S. government decided that the best way to prevent further conflict was to force the non-treaty Indians onto reservations. In December 1875 the Bureau of Indian Affairs ordered the Lakota to abandon all unceded hunting grounds and report to the Great Sioux Reservation by January 31, 1876. Several bands spread across the countryside, including those led by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, did not obey the order. They were reluctant to submit to the government’s authority, and they also knew that it was impossible for their people to travel all that distance in the dead of winter. When the non-treaty Lakota failed to show up as ordered, however, the U.S. military planned a campaign to crush the Indian resistance and take control of the plains.

The Battle of Little Bighorn

As the spring of 1876 approached, the Lakota prepared to make a stand in defense of the Black Hills. Thousands of tribal members slipped away from the Great Sioux Reservation and joined Sitting Bull's band near the Little Bighorn River in present-day Montana. A number of Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho also traveled to the area, eager to aid in the fight. By June an estimated 10,000 Indians, including 1,800 warriors, had gathered there in huge camps that stretched for three miles.

On the morning of June 25, 1876, Custer led an estimated 700 soldiers of the U.S. Army's Seventh Cavalry toward the Little Bighorn. His forces were accompanied by about 50 Crow and Arikara scouts. Longtime rivals of the Lakota, they had agreed to assist the government in hopes of gaining more favorable treatment for their own people. Custer's scouts brought him to a high bluff where he could look down over the Lakota camp from a distance. Seeing little activity and few signs of military preparedness, he decided to launch an immediate attack.

Custer divided his troops into three groups. He assigned one column of cavalry, under the command of Major Marcus Reno, to attack the camp from the south. Meanwhile, he planned to circle around the camp with a second column of cavalry and attack from the north. He stationed the third group, under Captain Frederick Benteen, in the valley of the Little Bighorn to block off the Indians' best escape route. In devising his strategy, however, Custer severely underestimated the number of warriors in the camp. He also assumed that the Indians would choose to run away rather than stand and fight.

Pte-San-Waste-Win was with a group of young Lakota women digging turnips when Reno's column of cavalry launched its attack on the camp. "Like that, the soldiers were upon us," she recalled. "Through the tepee poles their bullets rattled."⁵ Although the sudden attack took Lakota leaders by surprise, they quickly recovered and prepared for battle. Sitting Bull was asleep when he realized that the camp was under attack. "I jumped up and stepped out of my lodge," he remembered. "The old men, the women, and the children were hurried away. There was great confusion." Sitting Bull rallied his warriors around him and announced, "Warriors, we have everything to fight for, and if we are defeated we shall have nothing to live for; therefore, let us fight like brave men."⁶

The Indians turned back the initial attack by Reno's troops and chased the first wave of cavalry toward the river, where they were pinned down on a

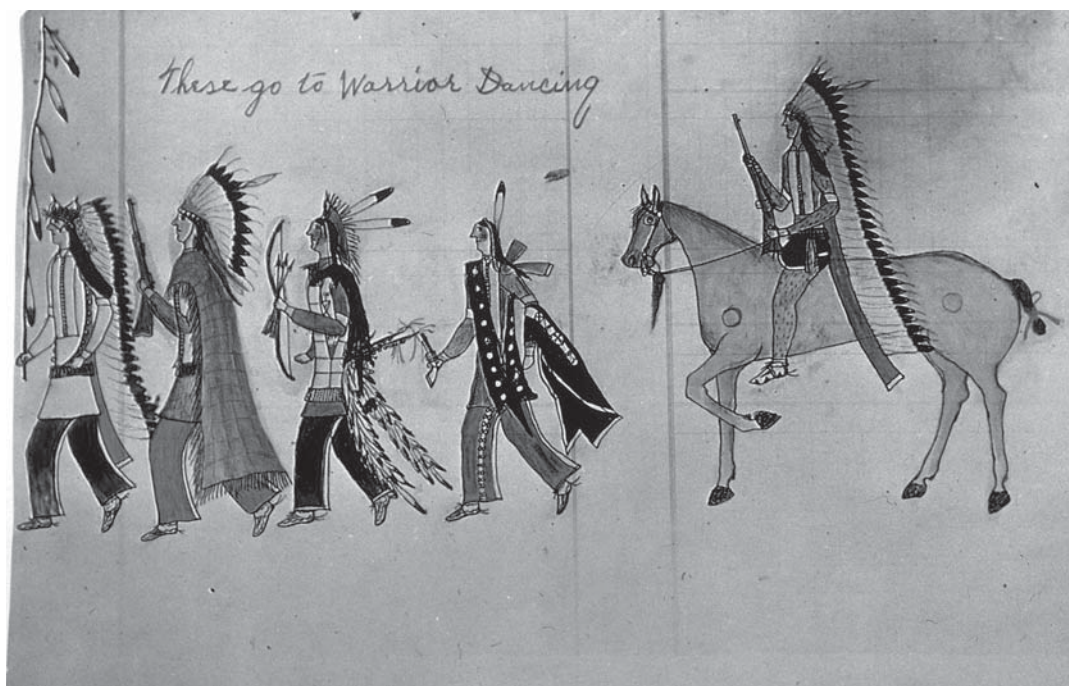
bluff. When Custer's forces arrived from the opposite direction, they were met by a large group of warriors led by Crazy Horse. The Oglala chief had studied the U.S. Army's tactics in a number of battles, and he had taught his warriors how to identify the enemy's weaknesses. They trapped Custer's troops in an indefensible position and swarmed in to annihilate them. "Some soldiers became panic stricken, throwing down their guns and raising up their hands, saying, 'Sioux, pity us; take us prisoners,'" Miniconjou chief Red Horse recalled. "The Sioux did not take a single soldier prisoner. They killed all of them. None were left alive even for a few minutes."⁷

By the time the clash ended, Custer and more than 260 of his men were dead, including his brothers Tom and Boston (see "Eyewitness Recollections of the Battle of Little Bighorn," p. 177). The Battle of Little Bighorn went down in history as one of the worst defeats the U.S. Army ever suffered in the Indian Wars. It had a tremendous impact on public opinion across the country. Many people had followed the exploits of the handsome and flamboyant Custer with great interest. Some supporters even predicted that the popular military leader would be elected president of the United States someday. Custer's disastrous defeat was widely interpreted as a massacre of heroic American soldiers by hostile savages, and it created a thirst for revenge that indiscriminately targeted all Native Americans.

Breakup of the Great Sioux Reservation

Following the Battle of Little Bighorn, the victorious tribal forces scattered. Some bands returned to the reservations, while others retreated into the wilderness to live off the land. But those Indians who refused to go on the reservations were harassed relentlessly by large U.S. Army forces seeking revenge. "The Lakota were on the anvil of civilization, and the hammer of American destructive power fell full force upon them,"⁸ wrote one historian. Within a year, most tribal members gave up the fight and gathered around the federal agencies.

Crazy Horse surrendered in the spring of 1877 at Fort Robinson in Nebraska. He lived on a reservation for a few months, but white authorities continued to view him with fear and suspicion. When rumors circulated that Crazy Horse planned to leave the reservation without permission, a military force was sent to arrest him. On September 5 the great war chief died of a stab wound that was inflicted under mysterious circumstances while he was being taken into custody. Sitting Bull thus became the last holdout among the Lako-



This drawing by Amos Bad Heart Bull, an Oglala Lakota Indian, shows Crazy Horse (mounted) and other warriors going to a celebratory dance after the Battle of Little Bighorn.

ta leaders. He avoided capture by taking 2,000 of his followers across the border into Canada.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Congress took advantage of public outrage over the Battle of Little Bighorn to grab more Lakota land. Even though Custer had attacked first, lawmakers claimed that the Indians had broken the Fort Laramie Treaty by going to war against the United States. They used this line of reasoning to circumvent the treaty and take control of the Black Hills. With the Indian Appropriation Act of 1876, Congress threatened to cut off all federal funding for food rations and annuities unless the Lakota handed over the Black Hills. “Your words are like a man knocking me in the head with a club,” said Brulé Chief Standing Elk. “By your speech you have put great fear upon us.”⁹ This policy, described by critics as “sell or starve,” left Lakota leaders no choice but to give up the Black Hills. This loss reduced the size of the Great Sioux Reservation from 60 million to 21.7 million acres.

The Lakota Reservations

The Lakota people, sometimes known as the Teton Sioux, can be divided into seven subgroups or bands: Oglala, Hunkpapa, Miniconjou, Brulé (Sicangu), Sans Arc (Itazipco), Blackfoot (Sihasapa), and Two Kettles (Oohenumpa). Toward the end of the nineteenth century, all of these bands were placed on reservations created by the U.S. government. The Oglala were placed on the Pine Ridge Reservation in southwestern South Dakota. The Hunkpapa received the Standing Rock Reservation, which straddles the border of North Dakota and South Dakota. The Miniconjou lived on the Cheyenne River Reservation in north-central South Dakota, adjacent to Standing Rock. The Brulé lived on both the Rosebud Reservation in south-central South Dakota and the Lower Brulé Reservation in central South Dakota. The Blackfoot were divided between the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Reservations, and the Sans Arc and Two Kettle also lived on the Cheyenne River Reservation. Although thousands of tribal members continued to live on the reservations in the twenty-first century, many others chose to live elsewhere.

Unfortunately for the Lakota, white demand for reservation lands did not end there. Although the Lakota lost the entire western section of their territory in 1876, they kept a tract of land stretching from the Standing Rock Agency at the northern edge of South Dakota to the Pine Ridge Agency at the southern edge. Before long, it became clear that the reservation blocked the most direct east-west route to the gold deposits in the Black Hills. Miners, speculators, settlers, railroad builders, and politicians all demanded better access for industrial mining operations. They sought a corridor from Rapid City, at the foot of the Black Hills, east to the Missouri River. Of course, the proposed corridor passed right through the middle of the remaining Great Sioux Reservation.

Under the Fort Laramie Treaty, three-quarters of all adult male Lakota tribal members had to approve any sale of reservation lands. Government officials made several attempts to acquire land to build a railroad line across South Dakota without gathering the necessary Lakota signatures, but these efforts



Lakota tribes were pried off their lands in the Black Hills to make way for white mining towns such as Lead City, seen here around 1890.

were blocked by non-Indian reformers. Then the officials came up with a new scheme to take control of reservation lands. Under the General Allotment Act of 1887, also known as the Dawes Act, they proposed distributing a plot of reservation land to the head of each Lakota family. Anyone who claimed an allotment of land and lived there for twenty-five years would be granted U.S. citizenship. Once all of the eligible Lakota tribal members had claimed their allotments, the government planned to sell off any “surplus” reservation land to white homesteaders. The money from the sale of the land would be used to fund Indian education and employment programs. The Dawes Act gained the approval of non-Indian reformers, who believed that “the law would replace tribal ownership with individual ownership, get the Indians to farm, and solve the problem of what to do with them,”¹⁰ as one historian explained.

In 1889 a commission headed by General George Crook met with Lakota leaders on the Great Sioux Reservation. An experienced Indian fighter and negotiator, Crook recommended that the Lakota accept the allotment deal or risk losing their land without compensation. “It is certain that you will never get any better terms than are offered in this bill,” he declared, “and the chances are that you will not get so good.”¹¹ Through a combination of



General George Crook was a tenacious Indian fighter, but unlike most of his fellow officers in the U.S. Army, he treated Indians as tough adversaries worthy of respect.

threats, promises, and bribes, Crook gathered the signatures of 4,463 of the 5,678 eligible Lakota voters, giving the allotment plan the three-quarters majority needed for approval.

Afterward, each Lakota family received 320 acres of land and basic farming equipment. The government moved quickly to sell off the surplus reservation lands, which amounted to 9 million acres. The overall size of the Great Sioux Reservation thus shrunk again, from 21.7 million to 12.7 million acres—or about 20 percent of its original size. Instead of possessing one continuous tract of land, the Lakota people were relegated to six small reservations centered around the federal agencies at Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne River, Standing Rock, Crow Creek, and Lower Brulé.

Despair of the Reservation Indians

The land allotment program was merely the latest in a long series of government initiatives designed to force the Lakota to abandon their traditional lifestyle and become more “civilized.” It encouraged Lakota families to settle on separate tracts of land rather than live in communal villages. It also attempted to turn them into farmers and ranchers rather than nomadic hunters. Other government efforts, instituted throughout the 1880s, had discouraged the Lakota from practicing their traditional religion and medicine and required Lakota children to be educated in government schools, where they were taught to speak English and assimilate into white society.

These programs destroyed Lakota culture and tribal identity and left the people completely dependent upon the government for survival. Educator Elaine Goodale Eastman remarked that the Lakota’s last buffalo hunt on the northern plains in 1883 marked “the end of their independence as a nation.

There remained a confused, depressed, and humiliated dark folk ... subsisting literally from hand to mouth upon a monthly or fortnightly dole of beef, pork, flour, and coffee.”¹² Although many Lakota leaders resented the government’s interference in their lives, they found themselves powerless to resist. With few weapons and no access to their old hunting grounds, they required government assistance to feed and clothe themselves. The agents in charge of the reservation used their control over food rations to reward “progressive” Indians who cooperated with them and punish tribal members who resisted.

Even Sitting Bull eventually gave up his steadfast resistance and agreed to live on the reservation. After returning from Canada in 1881, he was held at a military prison for two years before being transferred to the Hunkpapa agency at Standing Rock. James McLaughlin, the federal agent sent to Standing Rock to keep Sitting Bull under control, worked to isolate him from his followers and reduce his power.

The Lakota who submitted peacefully to U.S. government authority did not fare much better. Although the government insisted that the Lakota become farmers, they lacked the tools, training, and desire to work the land. To make matters worse, the reservation land was poorly suited to growing crops. “Dakota is an arid country with thin soil and short seasons. Although well adapted to grazing it is not suited to agriculture,” one historian explained. “Thousands of white settlers after years of successive failures had given up the struggle and left the country, but the Indians, confined to reservations, were unable to emigrate, and were also as a rule unable to find employment, as the whites might, by which they could earn a subsistence.”¹³

Stuck on hardscrabble farms, with the buffalo wiped out and other food sources scarce, the Lakota became completely dependent on government food rations for their survival. As part of the allotment deal the Lakota signed in 1889, Crook promised that the U.S. government would maintain the current level of food rations. But this turned out to be yet another in a long string of broken promises. When the results of a federal census showed a smaller population of Lakota living on the reservation than expected, the U.S. Congress used the data to justify reducing the amount of money budgeted for Lakota rations by \$1 million per year. Federal agents and non-Indian reformers argued that the count was wrong. They pointed out that many Lakota viewed the census with suspicion and avoided the census takers. But the U.S. government refused to listen to these arguments, and Congress let the budget cuts stand.



Lakota women and children wait outside the agency office at the Pine Ridge Reservation for government rations.

The reduction in rations took effect during the hard winter of 1889-90, shortly after the Lakota signed the allotment deal. At the Pine Ridge Agency alone, the beef ration was cut by one million pounds. Frederic Remington, a famous artist of the West, complained about the unfairness of the situation. “We are year after year oppressing a conquered people, until it is now assuming the magnitude of a crime,” he wrote. “The short ration which is issued to them keeps them in dire hunger, and if starving savages kill ranchmen’s cattle I do not blame them. I would do the same under similar circumstances.”¹⁴

Within the space of two decades, then, the Lakota had been transformed from a proud, independent people following the buffalo herds on the Great Plains, to a broken, desperate people forced to depend on the U.S. government for their survival. During these years, they endured the loss of their traditional territory and way of life, the destruction of their tribal identity and culture, and a steady deterioration in their living conditions. By 1890 they were even facing starvation. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that when a

spiritual movement promising a return to glory swept through the reservations in 1890, thousands of Lakota seized on it as an antidote to their pain and misery.

Notes

- ¹ Mooney, James. *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991, p. 824.
- ² Quoted in Clowser, Don C. *Dakota Indian Treaties: From Nomad to Reservation*. Deadwood, SD: Don C. Clowser, 1974, p. 169.
- ³ Quoted in Di Silvestro, Roger L. *In the Shadow of Wounded Knee*. New York: Walker, 2007, p. 55.
- ⁴ Quoted in Lazarus, Edward. *Black Hills, White Justice: The Sioux Nation versus the United States*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991, p. 82.
- ⁵ Quoted in McLaughlin, James. *My Friend the Indian*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1910, p. 168.
- ⁶ Quoted in Viola, Herman J. *Trail to Wounded Knee: The Last Stand of the Plains Indians 1860-1890*. New York: National Geographic, 2006, p. 118.
- ⁷ Quoted in Viola, p. 119.
- ⁸ Di Silvestro, p. 56.
- ⁹ Quoted in Hyde, George E. *Spotted Tail's Folk: A History of the Brulé Sioux*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974, p. 255.
- ¹⁰ Di Silvestro, p. 59.
- ¹¹ Quoted in Utley, Robert M. *Last Days of the Sioux Nation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963, p. 50.
- ¹² Eastman, Elaine Goodale. "The Ghost Dance War and Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890-91." *Nebraska History* 26, 1945, p. 26.
- ¹³ Mooney, p. 826.
- ¹⁴ Remington, Frederic. *The Collected Writings of Frederic Remington*. Peggy Samuels and Harold Samuels, eds. Seacaucus, NJ: Castle, 1986, p. 62.

Crazy Horse (c. 1841-1877)

Lakota Warrior and Resistance Leader

Crazy Horse was born in the early 1840s in the Black Hills of South Dakota. His name was Tashunkewitko in the language of the American Indian people known as the Lakota or Teton Sioux. Literally translated, it meant a horse that had great mystical or holy powers. His father, also named Crazy Horse, was a respected medicine man among the Oglala, one of the seven Lakota subgroups. His mother, whose name is not known, came from the Brulé subgroup. She died when Crazy Horse was young. He and his older sister, Laughing One, and younger brother, Little Hawk, were raised mostly by an aunt named Gathers Her Berries.

Limited details are available about Crazy Horse's early life. People who knew him described him as a quiet, solitary, and somewhat strange young man. He was called Curly as a boy because he had wavy hair. Like most Lakota boys, Crazy Horse grew up riding horses and shooting at targets with a bow and arrow. According to legend, he became an expert hunter and fierce warrior at an early age. He supposedly killed his first buffalo by the age of ten, stole horses from the rival Crow Indians at thirteen, and led his first war party before reaching twenty. Among his people, however, Crazy Horse was also widely admired for his generosity. When he returned from a successful hunt, he typically distributed food to elderly people, widows, and children of the tribe.



Goes to War against the United States

Crazy Horse came of age around the time that the United States began rapidly expanding westward. Wagon trains full of white settlers traveled across the Great Plains, which had traditionally served as hunting grounds for the powerful Lakota nation. As the flow of settlers increased, growing white demand for land and other resources created conflict with the Indians. In 1865 the U.S. Army began building a series of forts along the Bozeman Trail to secure the area

for white settlement. The Oglala chief Red Cloud and other Lakota leaders were determined to defend their territory and prevent the forts from being built. Crazy Horse was selected by tribal elders to be a “shirt-wearer,” or protector of the Lakota people. He thus became one of the foremost warriors in the sustained military campaign that became known as Red Cloud’s War (1865-68).

For more than two years, Red Cloud directed thousands of Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors in a coordinated series of attacks designed to disrupt the building of the forts. His war parties intercepted shipments of supplies, harassed construction workers, stole horses, stampeded livestock, and surrounded and besieged completed forts. It was the most cohesive and successful military action ever waged by an Indian nation against the United States. Crazy Horse played an important role in many of the raids and battles.

In 1866, for instance, Crazy Horse led a deadly ambush of U.S. troops in the hills surrounding Fort Phil Kearny in Wyoming. Early on the morning of December 21, a small group of soldiers left the fort to cut firewood. Crazy Horse and a handful of fellow warriors attacked the woodcutters, who sent up a call for help to the soldiers inside the fort. A special force of eighty men, led by Captain William J. Fetterman, rushed out of the fort to rescue them. Crazy Horse and his warriors immediately broke off the attack, but they taunted the soldiers as they rode away. Although Fetterman had been ordered not to engage or pursue the Indians, he took the bait and ordered his men to follow. Crazy Horse led the troops over a ridge to a place where 2,000 Lakota warriors waited. These forces quickly surrounded and killed Fetterman and all eighty of his men. This incident became known as the Fetterman Massacre among whites and as the Battle of 100 Slain among the Plains Indians.

Red Cloud’s relentless military campaign eventually convinced the U.S. government to forge a peace agreement with the Lakota. Under the terms of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, the U.S. Army agreed to abandon all of the forts along the Bozeman Trail. The U.S. government also granted the Lakota a permanent reservation of 60 million acres west of the Missouri River in South Dakota, as well as free access to hunting grounds in Wyoming and Montana. Although Crazy Horse did not sign the treaty, he was willing to follow the course set by Lakota leaders. Determined to stay as far away from white settlers as possible, he spent most of his time hunting along the Powder River in Wyoming.

In the relatively peaceful years that followed the signing of the Fort Laramie Treaty, Crazy Horse became involved in a personal scandal. For most

of his life, he had been in love with Black Buffalo Woman. But she had chosen to marry his rival, a warrior named No Water. Although Lakota traditions allowed people to divorce their spouses and form new romantic partnerships, Crazy Horse and Black Buffalo Woman did not follow the tribe's rules of honorable conduct. Instead, they ran off together while No Water was away. No Water tracked the couple down and shot Crazy Horse in the face. The bullet entered below his nose and shattered his jaw, but he eventually recovered from the injury. Still, the violent incident nearly started a war among the different Lakota bands. Tribal elders were so dismayed by Crazy Horse's selfish actions that they stripped him of his status as a shirt wearer. Black Buffalo Woman returned to her husband, while Crazy Horse eventually married Black Shawl and had a daughter, They-Are-Afraid-of-Her.

In 1874 a U.S. Army expedition discovered gold in the Black Hills of South Dakota. White prospectors and settlers flooded into Lakota lands in violation of the Fort Laramie Treaty. The U.S. government offered to purchase the Black Hills, but the Lakota refused to sell and vowed to defend their territory. Crazy Horse fully supported the defiant stand taken by the Lakota leadership. "One does not sell the land on which people walk,"¹ he reportedly declared.

A short time later, Crazy Horse joined forces with Sitting Bull, a respected Lakota spiritual leader, and launched a series of attacks upon the white miners and railroad builders who encroached on their territory. They also skirmished with the U.S. Army troops sent to protect these business interests. During one legendary battle, witnesses claimed that Crazy Horse calmly rode back and forth in front of a line of soldiers firing rifles without ever being hit by a bullet.

The Battle of Little Bighorn

In early 1876 the U.S. government ordered Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and all other "non-treaty" Lakota (tribal groups that had not signed the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty) to report to federal agencies on the reservation. White officials warned that anyone who failed to comply would be considered hostile and subject to attack by the U.S. Army. Crazy Horse ignored the order and became a leader of the Lakota resistance. Thousands of Lakota, as well as their Cheyenne and Arapaho allies, gathered along Rosebud Creek in Montana and prepared to fight.

The U.S. Army sent three main forces to South Dakota to subdue the Lakota. Crazy Horse encountered one of these forces, an infantry regiment under the command of General George Crook, on June 17, 1876. Leading a

force of between 1,200 and 1,500 Lakota and Cheyenne warriors, Crazy Horse attacked Crook's troops early that morning. The Battle of the Rosebud raged all day until high casualties and low ammunition finally forced the general to retreat. Crook and his troops returned to their base camp, where they remained out of action for six weeks.

After turning back Crook's infantry, Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull moved their forces to the valley of the Little Bighorn River. An estimated 10,000 Indians, including 1,800 warriors, gathered there in huge camps that stretched for three miles. On the morning of June 25, around 700 soldiers of the U.S. Army's Seventh Cavalry, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer, arrived in the area. Underestimating the strength of his adversary, Custer decided to attack immediately rather than wait for reinforcements.

Custer divided his troops into three groups. He assigned one column of cavalry to attack the Indian camp from the south and stationed a second column in the river valley to block off the Indians' best escape route. Meanwhile, Custer circled around the camp with a third column of cavalry and attacked from the north. When the first column of cavalry launched its attack, Crazy Horse quickly saddled his horse and prepared to join the battle. Just then, he noticed Custer's column approaching along a bluff directly across the river. Realizing that the enemy planned to attack from two sides at once, Crazy Horse led his warriors to the river to cut Custer off.

Crazy Horse prevented Custer's troops from crossing the river and trapped them on a ridge. Custer rallied his forces and tried to make a stand until help arrived. But Crazy Horse and his warriors advanced steadily from all sides. "We circled all around them—swirling like water round a stone," recalled Cheyenne Chief Two Moons, who rode with Crazy Horse. "We shoot, we ride fast, we shoot again."² By the time the clash ended, Custer and more than 260 of his men were dead. The Battle of Little Bighorn went down in history as one of the worst defeats the U.S. Army ever suffered in the Indian Wars.

Surrender of a Great Warrior

Following their victory over Custer, the Lakota who refused to go on the reservations were harassed relentlessly by large U.S. Army forces seeking revenge. Crazy Horse and his followers spent a rough winter of 1876-77 in the Badlands of South Dakota, where a shortage of buffalo and other food sources left them near starvation. These hardships finally convinced Crazy

Horse to surrender. On May 6, 1877, he led a procession of 1,000 people—including 300 warriors—into Fort Robinson in Nebraska. Crazy Horse was the last prominent Lakota chief to surrender except for Sitting Bull, who had taken his followers across the border into Canada. Crazy Horse laid down his arms without ever having been defeated in battle.

Although Crazy Horse was widely respected as a warrior, some Lakota leaders viewed him with envy or suspicion. They worried that he would cause trouble on the reservation and reduce their authority. In September 1877 Crazy Horse left the reservation without permission to take his sick wife to see her parents. His enemies spread a rumor that he had left in order to make war. General Crook issued an order for his arrest. Crazy Horse's friends urged him to report to army headquarters to explain his actions and reassure the general. When he arrived on September 5, however, tribal police officers grabbed him and started to take him to jail. Crazy Horse struggled with his captors, but they pinned his arms behind him. During the struggle, a soldier stabbed Crazy Horse in the abdomen with a bayonet. He died of his injuries.

Following Crazy Horse's death, his elderly parents took his body into the Badlands of South Dakota and hid it. The location of his grave remains unknown. In 1948 sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski convinced Oglala Chief Standing Bear to allow him to carve a memorial to Crazy Horse on the face of Thunderhead Mountain in the Black Hills. It depicts a Lakota warrior on horseback, pointing forward past the head of his mount. The completed work will be 563 feet high. The face of the warrior was dedicated in 1998. Since Crazy Horse refused to be photographed during his lifetime, the face symbolizes the proud heritage of all Lakota.

Sources:

Ambrose, Stephen E. *Crazy Horse and Custer: The Parallel Lives of Two American Warriors*. New York: Anchor Books, 1996.

"Crazy Horse: Story of a Brave Sioux Leader." *Brown Quarterly*, Winter 1999. Available online at <http://brownvboard.org/brwnqurt/02-4/02-4c.htm>.

Freedman, Russell. *The Life and Death of Crazy Horse*. New York: Holiday House, 1996.

McMurtry, Larry. *Crazy Horse: A Life*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1999.

"People: Crazy Horse." *The West*, PBS, 2001. Available online at http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/a_c/crazyhorse.htm.

Notes

¹ Quoted in Freedman, Russell. *The Life and Death of Crazy Horse*. New York: Holiday House, 1996, p. 97.

² Quoted in Freedman, p. 124.

Tecumseh Calls for Indian Unity against the White Invaders

As American settlers moved steadily westward in the early nineteenth century, some Indian tribes refused to give way without a fight. One of the most formidable native resistance movements was led by Tecumseh, a Shawnee warrior who worked tirelessly to unite Midwestern tribes against white incursions. The following excerpt provides an account of Tecumseh's effort to recruit Osage bands to his side in the struggle against the Americans. It provides valuable insight into Tecumseh's motivations and dedication to his cause.

*The author of this excerpt is John D. Hunter, who clearly admired Tecumseh. Kidnapped from a frontier community as an infant, he spent his childhood and youth living with various Midwestern tribes. He returned to white society at about age nineteen in 1816. After learning to read and write English, Hunter published a popular account of his early life with the Indians, called *Memoirs of a Captivity Among the Indians of North America*, in 1824.*

I wish it was in my power to do justice to the eloquence of this distinguished man: but it is utterly impossible. The richest colours, shaded with a master's pencil, would fall infinitely short of the flowing finish of the original. The occasion and subject were peculiarly adapted to call into action all the powers of genuine patriotism; and such language, such gestures, and such feelings and fulness of soul contending for utterance, were exhibited by this untutored native of the forest in the central wilds of America, as no audience, I am persuaded, either in ancient or modern times ever before witnessed....

The unlettered Tecumseh gave extemporaneous utterance only to what he felt; it was a simple, but vehement narration of the wrongs imposed by the white people on the Indians, and an exhortation for the latter to resist them.... This discourse made an impression on my mind, which, I think, will last as long as I live. I cannot repeat it *verbatim*, though if I could, it would be a mere skeleton, without the rounding finish of its integuments: it would only be the shadow of the substance; because the gestures, and the interest and feelings excited by the occasion, and which constitute the essentials of its character, would be altogether wanting. Nevertheless, I shall, as far as my recollection serves, make the attempt....

When the Osages and distinguished strangers had assembled, Tecumseh arose; and after a pause of some minutes, in which he surveyed his audience in a very dignified, though respectfully complaisant and sympathizing manner, he commenced as follows:

“Brothers, — We all belong to one family; we are all children of the Great Spirit; we walk in the same path; slake our thirst at the same spring; and now affairs of the greatest concern lead us to smoke the pipe around the same council fire!

“Brothers, — We are friends; we must assist each other to bear our burdens. The blood of many of our fathers and brothers has run like water on the ground, to satisfy the avarice of the white men. We, ourselves, are threatened with a great evil; nothing will pacify them but the destruction of all the red men.

“Brothers, — When the white men first set foot on our grounds, they were hungry; they had no place on which to spread their blankets, or to kindle their fires. They were feeble; they could do nothing for themselves. Our fathers commiserated their distress, and shared freely with them whatever the Great Spirit had given his red children. They gave them food when hungry, medicine when sick, spread skins for them to sleep on, and gave them grounds, that they might hunt and raise corn.

“Brothers, — The white people are like poisonous serpents: when chilled they are feeble and harmless; but invigorate them with warmth, and they sting their benefactors to death. The white people came among us feeble; and now we have made them strong, they wish to kill us, or drive us back, as they would wolves and panthers.

“Brothers, — The white men are not friends to the Indians: at first, they only asked for land sufficient for a wigwam; now, nothing will satisfy them but the whole of our hunting grounds, from the rising to the setting sun.

“Brothers, — The white men want more than our hunting grounds; they wish to kill our warriors; they would even kill our old men, women, and little ones.

“Brothers, — Many winters ago, there was no land; the sun did not rise and set: all was darkness. The Great Spirit made all things. He gave the white people a home beyond the great waters. He supplied these grounds with game, and gave them to his red children; and he gave them strength and courage to defend them.

“Brothers, — My people wish for peace; the red men all wish for peace: but where the white people are, there is no peace for them, except it be on the bosom of our mother.

“*Brothers*, — The white men despise and cheat the Indians; they abuse and insult them; they do not think the red men sufficiently good to live. The red men have borne many and great injuries; they ought to suffer them no longer. My people will not; they are determined on vengeance; they have taken up the tomahawk; they will make it fat with blood; they will drink the blood of the white people.

“*Brothers*, — My people are brave and numerous; but the white people are too strong for them alone. I wish you to take up the tomahawk with them. If we all unite, we will cause the rivers to stain the great waters with their blood.

“*Brothers*, — If you do not unite with us, they will first destroy us, and then you will fall an easy prey to them. They have destroyed many nations of red men because they were not united, because they were not friends to each other.

“*Brothers*, — The white people send runners amongst us; they wish to make us enemies, that they may sweep over and desolate our hunting grounds, like devastating winds, or rushing waters.

“*Brothers*, — Our Great Father [the king of England], over the great waters, is angry with the white people, our enemies. He will send his brave warriors against them; he will send us rifles, and whatever else we want—he is our friend, and we are his children.

“*Brothers*, — Who are the white people that we should fear them? They cannot run fast, and are good marks to shoot at: they are only men; our fathers have killed many of them: we are not squaws, and we will stain the earth red with their blood.

“*Brothers*, — The Great Spirit is angry with our enemies; he speaks in thunder, and the earth swallows up villages, and drinks up the Mississippi. The great waters will cover their lowlands; their corn cannot grow; and the Great Spirit will sweep those who escape to the hills from the earth with his terrible breath.

“*Brothers*, — We must be united; we must smoke the same pipe; we must fight each other’s battles; and more than all, we must love the Great Spirit: he is for us; he will destroy our enemies, and make all his red children happy.”

Source: Hunter, John D. *Memoirs of a Captivity among the Indians of North America*. London: Longman, Hurst, 1823, pp. 43-48.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE, PLACES, AND TERMS

Accommodationists

Native American groups that tried to cling to their ancestral lands by adopting white farming practices, political systems, religious beliefs, and other aspects of European culture.

Allotment

A U.S. government program that divided Indian reservation lands into small plots that were distributed to the head of every family; it was designed to encourage Indian assimilation into mainstream white society, but it spurred further losses of land, resources, and community cohesion within tribes.

Assimilation

The adoption of European-style religious, cultural, and political practices by Native American groups.

Big Foot (also known as Sitanka) (c. 1820-1890)

Chief of the Miniconjou Lakota band that was massacred by U.S. Cavalry troops at Wounded Knee Creek in 1890.

Bozeman Trail

A pathway connecting the Oregon Trail to gold deposits in Wyoming and Montana that passed through Lakota hunting grounds.

Collier, John (1884-1968)

Social reformer and advocate who served as head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs from 1933-1945.

Crazy Horse (c. 1841-1877)

Oglala Lakota warrior who played a key role in numerous battles against U.S. Army troops, including the Battle of Little Bighorn.

CHRONOLOGY

1500s

European explorers and traders begin arriving in the New World, which is inhabited by between two and ten million Native Americans. *See p. 5.*

1607

Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in North America, is founded in modern-day Virginia. *See p. 10.*

1609

French explorer Samuel de Champlain introduces firearms to the New World. *See p. 16.*

1620

English pilgrims establish the second permanent English colony in North America in Plymouth, Massachusetts. *See p. 11.*

1621

The Plymouth pilgrims and local Wampanoag Indians celebrate a successful harvest with a feast that becomes known as the first Thanksgiving. *See p. 11.*

1622

A major assault by Algonquin Indians on English settlements and tobacco plantations claims the lives of more than a quarter of the colonial population. *See p. 10.*

1640s

British military actions, combined with the ravages of European diseases, destroy the last remnants of the once-powerful Algonquin tribes. *See p. 11.*

1675-76

King Philip's War, a bloody clash between white New Englanders and area Indian tribes, reduces the Wampanoag and Narragansett tribes to a few hundred members. *See p. 12.*

1680

Pueblo tribes in Mexico, California, and the Southwest stage a stunning revolt and overthrow Spanish rule. *See p. 8.*

1692

Spain regains control of its territories in the Southwest. *See p. 8.*

SOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: The Illustrated Edition: An Indian History of the American West*. New York: Sterling Innovation, 2009. This version of Dee Brown's 1970 classic work of popular history is enhanced with hundreds of photographs, maps, and other images, as well as essays, book excerpts, and other contributions from major historians and American Indian leaders and writers.
- Deloria, Vine, Jr. *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. New York: Macmillan, 1969. Frequently described as the most influential and important book ever written by an American Indian, this entertaining but passionate work challenged white audiences to confront the historic mistreatment of native peoples of America, while simultaneously urging Indian readers to embrace their history and culture.
- Joseph, Alvin M., Jr. *500 Nations: An Illustrated History of North American Indians*. New York: Knopf, 1994. This coffee table-sized book supplements numerous beautiful and historically significant illustrations and photographs with a historical overview of American Indian history by one of the nation's leading experts on the subject.
- Riley, Patricia, ed. *Growing Up Native American*. New York: William Morrow, 1993. This collection gathers the personal recollections of twenty-two American Indians who grew up in the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- Rozema, Vicki, ed. *Voices from the Trail of Tears*. Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 2003. This work combines excerpts from journals, letters, military records, and other primary sources to trace the heartbreaking and deadly journey undertaken by the Cherokee nation in the 1830s from their longtime homeland in the Southeast to the Oklahoma Territory.
- Viola, Herman J. *Trail to Wounded Knee: Last Stand of the Plains Indians, 1860-1890*. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2003. This work by an eminent Indian historian traces the events that led up to the Massacre at Wounded Knee. It includes many high-quality photographs, maps, and other illustrations.
- "We Shall Remain." *American Experience*, 2009. Available online at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weshallremain/>. This multimedia website is the companion to a five-part series on American Indian history that was broadcast on PBS in 2009. Visitors to the website can watch all five episodes, which cover major events like the Trail of Tears,

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Armstrong, Virginia I., ed. *I Have Spoken: American History Through the Voices of the Indians*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1971.
- Ballantine, Betty, and Ian Ballantine, eds. *The Native Americans: An Illustrated History*. Atlanta: Turner Publishing, 1993.
- Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: The Illustrated Edition: An Indian History of the American West*. New York: Sterling Innovation, 2009.
- Deloria, Vine, Jr., ed. *American Indian Policy in the Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985.
- Di Silvestro, Roger L. *In the Shadow of Wounded Knee: The Untold Final Story of the Indian Wars*. New York: Walker, 2005.
- Eastman, Charles A. *From the Deep Woods to Civilization: Chapters in the Autobiography of an Indian*. New York: Little, Brown, 1916.
- Evans, Sterling. *American Indians in American History: A Companion Reader*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002.
- Geist, Valerius. *Buffalo Nation: History and Legend of the North American Bison*. Stillwater, MN: Voyageur Press, 1998.
- Iverson, Peter. *"We Are Still Here": American Indians in the Twentieth Century*. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1998.
- Jennings, Francis. *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest*. New York: Norton, 1976.
- Joseph, Alvin M., Jr. *500 Nations: An Illustrated History of North American Indians*. New York: Knopf, 1994.
- Joseph, Alvin M., Jr. *Now That the Buffalo's Gone: A Study of Today's American Indian*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982.
- Landau, Elaine. *Cornerstones of Freedom: The Wounded Knee Massacre*. New York: Children's Press, 2004.
- McMurtry, Larry. *Crazy Horse: A Life*. New York: Lipper/Penguin, 1992.

INDEX

A

- accommodationists, 16
- Adams, John Quincy, 135
- AIM. *See* American Indian Movement (AIM)
- Alcatraz
 - occupation of, 102, 206-09
 - Proclamation, 206-09
- Algonquins, 10
- Allison, William Boyd, 52
- allotment, 59, 89, 90, 108
 - consequences of, 83-86
 - explanation and defense of, 183-86
- Ambrose, Stephen, 216, 218
- American Horse, 87 (ill.)
- American Indian boarding schools, 80-82, 88, 200-05
- American Indian casinos, 113-15
- American Indian Movement (AIM), 99, 101, 103
 - occupation of Wounded Knee, 104, 106-10
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, 110
- American Indian removal, 26-34, 136-37, 144-46, 162-65, 166-69, 215
- American Indian reservations, conditions on, 80, 116, 185-86, 207, 217-18
- American Indians
 - citizenship and voting rights, 89
 - contemporary perspectives, 210-12, 213-19
 - impact of infectious diseases on, 6, 12, 20, 40, 86-88, 170-71, 191, 214, 216
 - introduction of firearms among, 16-17
 - media and popular culture
 - representations of, 110-11
 - military service by, 88-89, 92-93
 - pan-Indian unity, 100-02
 - political activism and social protests, 88, 98, 99-110, 206-09
 - pre-European discovery, 5-6
 - twenty-first century challenges facing, 115-16
 - views of land ownership, 13
- American Revolution. *See* Revolutionary War
- Antelope Woman, 177, 179, 182
- Apache, 36
- Arapaho, 36, 41, 42, 45, 53, 84, 127
- assimilation, 26-27
- Aztecs, 8

B

- Bad Heart Bull, Amos, 55
- Badlands, Battle of the, 147
- Banks, Dennis, 99, 106, 107
- Bannock, 36
- Battle of Gettysburg. *See* Gettysburg, Battle of
- Battle of Horseshoe Bend. *See* Horseshoe Bend, Battle of
- Battle of Killdeer Mountain. *See* Killdeer Mountain, Battle of