

The Battle of the Little Big Horn: A Lakota Account

Introduction

The Battle of the Little Bighorn, fought on June 25, 1876, stands as a pivotal moment in American history, marking a watershed in the relationship between the United States and the Lakota and Cheyenne nations. This comprehensive book delves into the historical context, events, and aftermath of this iconic battle, shedding light on its profound significance.

The narrative unfolds against the backdrop of the Great Plains, where the Lakota and Cheyenne tribes, fiercely protective of their ancestral lands and traditional way of life, clashed with the relentless encroachment of white settlers and the U.S. government's relentless pursuit of westward

expansion. The discovery of gold in the Black Hills, a sacred site to the Lakota, further ignited tensions, leading to the outbreak of the Great Sioux War of 1876-1877.

At the heart of this conflict lay the indomitable spirit of Lakota leaders such as Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, who valiantly resisted the forced removal of their people to reservations. Their unwavering commitment to preserving their cultural identity and sovereignty fueled their resistance against the overwhelming military might of the United States.

The Battle of the Little Bighorn, a resounding Lakota and Cheyenne victory, stands as a testament to the resilience and determination of these Native American nations. The defeat of Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer and his 7th Cavalry Regiment sent shockwaves through the nation, challenging the prevailing perception of Native Americans as inferior and incapable of organized resistance.

Yet, despite this triumph, the Lakota and Cheyenne faced a relentless campaign of subjugation and assimilation. The Dawes Act of 1887, a piece of legislation aimed at dismantling tribal lands and forcing Native Americans into individual land ownership, dealt a devastating blow to their traditional way of life. The establishment of boarding schools, designed to strip Native children of their cultural heritage and forcibly assimilate them into white society, further compounded their suffering.

Throughout the 20th century, the Lakota and Cheyenne continued to endure hardship and discrimination. The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 granted them U.S. citizenship, yet they remained marginalized and deprived of basic rights. The Termination Policy of the 1950s sought to terminate the federal government's relationship with Native American tribes, further eroding their sovereignty.

In recent decades, a resurgence of cultural pride and activism has emerged among the Lakota and Cheyenne nations. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 marked a significant step towards self-governance and the revitalization of their cultural identity. Today, the Lakota and Cheyenne continue to fight for the preservation of their traditions, languages, and sacred lands, while navigating the challenges of contemporary life.

The Battle of the Little Bighorn and its aftermath serve as a stark reminder of the complex and often tragic history of Native Americans in the United States. This book aims to shed light on this pivotal event and its enduring legacy, paying tribute to the resilience and unwavering spirit of the Lakota and Cheyenne people.

Book Description

This meticulously researched and engaging book delves into the historical context, events, and aftermath of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, a pivotal moment in American history. The narrative sheds light on the complex relationship between the United States and the Lakota and Cheyenne nations, highlighting the resilience and unwavering spirit of these Native American peoples.

Against the backdrop of the Great Plains, the Lakota and Cheyenne tribes fiercely defended their ancestral lands and traditional way of life against the relentless encroachment of white settlers and the U.S. government's westward expansion. The discovery of gold in the sacred Black Hills ignited tensions, leading to the outbreak of the Great Sioux War of 1876-1877.

The book delves into the strategies and tactics employed by both sides during the Battle of the Little

Bighorn, providing a detailed analysis of the military engagements and the factors that contributed to the Lakota and Cheyenne victory. The defeat of Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer and his 7th Cavalry Regiment sent shockwaves through the nation and challenged prevailing perceptions of Native Americans.

Beyond the battlefield, the book explores the aftermath of the battle and its lasting impact on the Lakota and Cheyenne nations. It examines the Dawes Act of 1887, which aimed to dismantle tribal lands and assimilate Native Americans into white society, as well as the establishment of boarding schools designed to forcibly strip Native children of their cultural heritage.

The book also highlights the resilience and activism of the Lakota and Cheyenne people in the 20th century. It discusses the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, which granted them U.S. citizenship but left them marginalized and deprived of basic rights, and the Termination Policy of the 1950s, which sought to end

the federal government's relationship with Native American tribes.

In recent decades, the Lakota and Cheyenne nations have experienced a resurgence of cultural pride and activism. The book explores the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, which marked a significant step towards self-governance and cultural revitalization. It also examines the ongoing challenges faced by the Lakota and Cheyenne people as they navigate contemporary life while preserving their traditions, languages, and sacred lands.

This book stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of the Battle of the Little Bighorn and the remarkable resilience of the Lakota and Cheyenne nations. It provides a comprehensive understanding of this pivotal event and its profound impact on the history of Native Americans in the United States.

Chapter 1: Dawn of the Conflict

Tensions on the Great Plains

The vast expanse of the Great Plains, a land of windswept prairies and rolling hills, was home to a diverse array of Native American tribes, including the Lakota and Cheyenne. For centuries, these tribes had lived in harmony with the land, following the herds of buffalo that roamed the plains and maintaining a deep spiritual connection to their surroundings.

However, the arrival of white settlers in the 19th century brought profound changes to the Great Plains. The relentless westward expansion of the United States government and the encroachment of settlers on Native American lands led to growing tensions and conflicts.

One of the key factors contributing to these tensions was the discovery of gold in the Black Hills, a sacred site to the Lakota people. In 1874, news of gold in the

Black Hills spread like wildfire, attracting a flood of prospectors and miners. The Lakota, who considered the Black Hills to be the heart of their spiritual world, were outraged by this intrusion on their sacred land.

The U.S. government, eager to exploit the riches of the Black Hills, pressured the Lakota to sell their land. However, the Lakota refused, asserting their right to maintain control over their ancestral territory. This refusal led to further escalation of tensions between the Lakota and the U.S. government.

In addition to the conflict over the Black Hills, there were other factors that contributed to the rising tensions on the Great Plains. The U.S. government's policy of forcing Native Americans onto reservations disrupted their traditional way of life and led to widespread poverty and hardship. The Lakota and Cheyenne, who had long been accustomed to a nomadic lifestyle, found it difficult to adapt to life on reservations.

Furthermore, the U.S. government's attempts to assimilate Native Americans into white society through policies such as forced education and the suppression of traditional religious practices further alienated the Lakota and Cheyenne. These policies were seen as an assault on their cultural identity and a denial of their inherent rights.

As tensions continued to mount, it became clear that a conflict between the Lakota and Cheyenne and the U.S. government was inevitable. The Battle of the Little Bighorn, which took place in 1876, stands as a pivotal moment in this conflict, forever altering the relationship between the Lakota and Cheyenne nations and the United States.

Chapter 1: Dawn of the Conflict

The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868

The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 stands as a pivotal agreement in the history of Native American-U.S. relations, particularly in the context of the conflict between the United States and the Lakota and Cheyenne nations. This treaty, negotiated between the U.S. government and representatives of the Lakota, Cheyenne, and other tribes, aimed to delineate territorial boundaries, establish peace, and address grievances.

In the years leading up to the treaty, tensions had been mounting between the Lakota and Cheyenne and the U.S. government due to the encroachment of white settlers and the discovery of gold in the Black Hills, a sacred site to the Lakota. The U.S. government sought to acquire these lands, while the Lakota and Cheyenne fiercely resisted, asserting their right to maintain their

traditional way of life and sovereignty over their territory.

The Fort Laramie Treaty was an attempt to resolve these conflicts and establish a peaceful coexistence between the U.S. and the Lakota and Cheyenne nations. The treaty stipulated that the U.S. government would recognize the Black Hills as part of the Lakota territory and would provide annual payments and supplies to the tribes. In return, the Lakota and Cheyenne agreed to cease hostilities and to relocate to reservations established by the U.S. government.

However, the Fort Laramie Treaty faced numerous challenges and ultimately failed to achieve its intended goals. The U.S. government failed to uphold its promises, leading to widespread dissatisfaction among the Lakota and Cheyenne. The discovery of gold in the Black Hills further exacerbated tensions, as miners and settlers flooded into the area, disregarding the treaty's provisions.

The Lakota and Cheyenne felt betrayed by the U.S. government's actions, and they began to resist the forced removal to reservations. This resistance culminated in the Great Sioux War of 1876-1877, which included the Battle of the Little Bighorn, a significant Lakota and Cheyenne victory that dealt a major blow to the U.S. military.

The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, despite its initial promise, ultimately failed to bring about lasting peace and reconciliation between the U.S. and the Lakota and Cheyenne nations. The U.S. government's failure to honor its commitments and the ongoing encroachment on Lakota and Cheyenne lands led to a series of conflicts and injustices that continue to shape the relationship between the two parties today.

Chapter 1: Dawn of the Conflict

The Black Hills Gold Rush

In the heart of the Great Plains, the Black Hills stood as a sacred and revered landscape for the Lakota and Cheyenne nations, a place imbued with spiritual significance and abundant natural resources. However, the discovery of gold in these hallowed grounds in 1874 sparked a relentless influx of fortune-seekers and prospectors, forever altering the delicate balance of the region.

The Black Hills Gold Rush, like a raging torrent, swept across the land, attracting thousands of eager miners and settlers, drawn by the promise of riches and the allure of untapped wealth. Mining camps sprang up like mushrooms after rain, scarring the once pristine landscape with their unsightly presence. The Lakota and Cheyenne watched in dismay as their sacred lands

were desecrated, their hunting grounds ravaged, and their way of life threatened.

The U.S. government, ever eager to expand its dominion and exploit the resources of the West, encouraged the gold rush and turned a blind eye to the encroachment on Lakota and Cheyenne territory. Despite the clear violation of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, which guaranteed the Lakota and Cheyenne possession of the Black Hills, the government remained indifferent to their plight.

The Lakota and Cheyenne leaders, recognizing the existential threat posed by the gold rush, vehemently protested against the invasion of their lands. They sent delegations to Washington, D.C., seeking recognition of their rights and the enforcement of the Fort Laramie Treaty. However, their pleas fell on deaf ears, as the government prioritized the interests of miners and settlers over the preservation of Native American sovereignty.

As tensions mounted and the Lakota and Cheyenne grew increasingly desperate, they began to raid mining camps and settlements in the Black Hills, hoping to reclaim their lands and protect their way of life. These raids, fueled by anger and frustration, further strained the relationship between the Lakota and Cheyenne and the U.S. government, setting the stage for the inevitable conflict that would soon engulf the Great Plains.

The Black Hills Gold Rush stands as a stark example of the U.S. government's disregard for Native American rights and its relentless pursuit of westward expansion at any cost. The Lakota and Cheyenne, forced to defend their homeland and their way of life, found themselves on a collision course with a powerful and determined adversary, leading to the tragic events of the Great Sioux War of 1876-1877.

This extract presents the opening three sections of the first chapter.

Discover the complete 10 chapters and 50 sections by purchasing the book, now available in various formats.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Dawn of the Conflict - Tensions on the Great Plains - The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 - The Black Hills Gold Rush - The Death of Crazy Horse - The Battle of the Rosebud

Chapter 2: The Red Cloud War - Red Cloud's Leadership - The Fetterman Massacre - The Wagon Box Fight - The Peace Commission - The Treaty of Fort Laramie (1868)

Chapter 3: The Great Sioux War of 1876-1877 - The Battle of the Little Bighorn - The Death of Custer - The Flight of the Lakota and Cheyenne - The Surrender of Sitting Bull - The Cheyenne Exodus

Chapter 4: The Aftermath of the War - The Dawes Act and the Allotment of Indian Lands - The Rise of Ghost Dances and the Wounded Knee Massacre - The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 - The Termination Policy of the

1950s - The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975

Chapter 5: The Lakota and Cheyenne Today - The Pine Ridge Reservation - The Rosebud Reservation - The Northern Cheyenne Reservation - The Lakota and Cheyenne in Urban Areas - The Challenges Facing the Lakota and Cheyenne

Chapter 6: The Battle of the Little Bighorn: A Deeper Look - The Immediate Causes of the Battle - The Military Strategies of the Lakota and Cheyenne - The Role of Women in the Battle - The Impact of the Battle on the Lakota and Cheyenne - The Battle's Legacy

Chapter 7: The Lakota and Cheyenne Culture - Lakota and Cheyenne Social Structure - Lakota and Cheyenne Religious Beliefs - Lakota and Cheyenne Art and Music - Lakota and Cheyenne Games and Sports - Lakota and Cheyenne Traditional Foods

Chapter 8: The Lakota and Cheyenne and the U.S. Government - The Treaty-Making Process - The U.S. Government's Violation of Treaties - The Indian Wars - The Boarding School Era - The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934

Chapter 9: The Lakota and Cheyenne in the 21st Century - The Lakota and Cheyenne Renaissance - The Challenges Facing the Lakota and Cheyenne Today - The Lakota and Cheyenne's Fight for Sovereignty - The Future of the Lakota and Cheyenne - The Lakota and Cheyenne's Contributions to American Society

Chapter 10: The Battle of the Little Bighorn in Popular Culture - The Battle in Literature - The Battle in Film and Television - The Battle in Video Games - The Battle in Music - The Battle's Impact on American Culture

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