

Lakota woman

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



Mary Crow Dog was a Native American who wrote the book *Lakota Woman* as her autobiography. She was a half-blood Sioux Indian. She was born on the year 1953 and lives at the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation located in the state of South Dakota. Her given name was Mary Brave Bird. She became Mary Crow Dog after marrying Leonard Crow Dog, a medicine man and a spiritual leader of AIM or American Indians Movement who is also responsible in reviving the ancient Indian culture and ceremonies including the sacred but outlawed Ghost Dance. To date, Mary Crow Dog has already one daughter named Jennifer and three sons including her first child Pedro and the two from her husband, which they named June Bug and Anwah. *Lakota Woman* was one of the two books authored by Mary Crow Dog.

The book *Lakota Woman* started in a light manner where Mary begins to teach the readers some facts, which are not commonly known by many of us. Ethnically speaking and as taught by Mary, Sioux was divided into two parts: the eastern and the western. Eastern Sioux was called Dakota, and the Western Sioux was the Lakota. It was almost the same except that Dakota people cannot pronounce the letter "L".

Technically, Lakota was a formation of a seven tribes in Western Sioux also known as seven Sacred Campfires. One of the tribes was the Brule Tribe or Sicangu in a Lakotan language, which is also known as Burned Thighs, and which Mary described as great warriors as they were during their times. In this tribe Mary Brave Bird belongs.

It was in 1870 and 1880 when the Brule Tribe along with other Sioux were forced to put in a reservation camp and trying to create new people living in

an Americanized way including living without horses and hunting which Indians are born to live with.

Lakota Woman was merely a full-blown and a first-hand account of Mary's life. She collectively told everything she has experienced. She said that it was really hard and difficult to survive in any reservation camp, especially growing women like her. She lived fatherless in a one-room cabin inside the Rosebud Reservation. There she stated stories of some Indian women close to her whom she known was undergone maltreatment and injustice practices such as making them infertile against their will, beaten by their husbands or any men, brutality from American authorities, and the worse scenario of being murdered.

Mary's experiences in a Catholic boarding school were more of a distressing one rather than making happy memories. At her young age, she found out that being an Indian female is only a third-class human being. Inside the boarding school, teachers and nuns were trying these Indian girls to be Americanized, got whipped and beaten whenever found any disobedience practices in accordance to their upright monastery standard, which includes practicing their native customs, values and language.

Her adolescence was even worse especially when she decided to step out of the boarding school. She confessed her life was even more miserable as she got hooked into drinking and smoking, used drugs, victimized by poverty, racism and cruelty of the outside world. Mary was 14 then when she got raped. Age 17 when Mary finally had the best decision of joining the American Indian Movement where she participated right away in the 71-day

long Wounded Knee standoff at South Dakota. Then she married Leonard Crow Dog.

When her husband was arrested, Mary Crow Dog began empowering herself and made herself vigilant in her own way knowing that most Americans were trying to kill their old native traditions, religion and the ancient Indian heritage as a whole. Her active involvement in the AIM was getting stronger and stronger as she learned to be a public figure, delivering public speeches, informing the public about the mission and vision of their movement. While helping Leonard endure his prison life, she eventually established a new strength as she traveled to gain support for their advocacy of fighting for the rights of American Indians.

Although the Lakota woman was originally wrote as an autobiography book having personal accounts of Mary, it has to be consider one of the essential pieces of history volumes because it noted numerous historical facts and events that are important in American Indian history. For those who have scant knowledge about it, especially in this modern generation, reading Lakota Women would be a great help. Our interests in Indian stories should not just stop by having a fascination with it because there is more in reality, which contains the good and bad sides of it that we have to know and understand well.

R E F E R E N C E S

Dog, Mary C. Lak